

The accolades keep coming

'To mark its centenary in 2005, Stations of the Cross were commissioned for the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch. Alongside these, Christchurch poet Bernadette Hall was invited to write poems, one for each station. Llew Summers' stations and the poems are beautifully presented in this 46-page book, each station and its corresponding poem being given a full page.



The Way of the Cross
SCULPTURES LLEW SUMMERS
POEMS BERNADETTE HALL

The Stations, in their white-grey marble, focus on the central figures, the core emotions and relationships at the heart of each captured moment. They look as if all artifice has now been stripped away; the figures are solid, grounded on heavy feet, bulky with earthy humanity, and a gesture, a look, a perspective invites us in. These sculptures draw us into stillness, feelings we recognise, into contemplation.

Bernadette Hall's poems result from such contemplation as another creative mind gazes and responds. She does not fasten the sculptures to an interpretation, but rather loosens our associations, drawing our minds towards the scenes depicted, inviting us to notice more. Her words take us to the Christ, yet speak in our own language, the language of a parent - the language of this country.

The nakedness of Summers' Christ has been controversial, but it is essential to his vision. It is the nakedness of one who is defenceless and wholly laid open to what is occurring both in its human dimension and its theological.....

In the splendour of the Cathedral these works sit as a reminder that, as Albert Nolan once said, in the midst of the pomp of the Church and its apparatus hangs this incongruous thing, a naked man on a cross. The book draws us back to that reality and to the mystery of Christ's life and our own ...

This is a carefully prepared book with pictures locating the stations in the Cathedral and text explaining the tradition of the Stations of the Cross and the genesis of this art work. It is a book for prayer, a lovely gift. For me it has borne many readings. And for those who do not read poetry, even a poetry-phobic friend admitted - I really liked this.' (Sandra Winton OP)

ASSOCIATED BOOKS
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NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF THE CATHEDRAL



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THE 'STADIUM WALK'

When New Zealand was picked to host the Rugby World Cup of 2011 there was jubilation among rugby enthusiasts and entrepreneurs of every kind. They could hear the cash registers ringing before, during and after.

Then came the question of suitable venues, Jade Stadium among them. A full page advertisement in 'The Press' on Friday March 2nd informed readers that the group which manages the stadium had sought resource consent for a \$60 million dollar upgrade, which hopefully will not be a burden on the ratepayers.

The 'Friends of the Cathedral' will have been pleased to read the comments of Ian Athfield, of Athfield Architectus Ltd, consultants of the project.

He said the first thing he always took into consideration was how a project like this would fit into the immediate and wider community. 'We want to make people feel good about it,' he said, 'and to enjoy having it in their neighbourhood.'

He went on: 'Christchurch's major trading route used to be along Ferry Road, High Street, Victoria Street and Papanui Road. We hope to see the redeveloped Jade Stadium contributing to the revival and celebration of that historical pathway.'

The proposed 'Stadium Walk' is a marked, safe walking route from downtown entertainment areas to the stadium, just 15 minutes from the central city. As their part in the project, the City Council is being asked to carry out the necessary street-scaping and traffic management required to develop the 'Stadium Walk.'

This scheme did not come out of the blue. It had its beginnings in a 2005 City Council proposal to ease traffic congestion in the area by reducing parking spaces on Barbadoes Street. Don Whelan, the Cathedral's Musical Director, never one to pass up a challenge, gathered the forces of the neighbouring institutions - the School of Music, the Polytechnic, and Cathedral College, to challenge what was proposed. Surely this was the time for an imaginative solution to the problem of the one way street system? Had the area not been zoned 'cultural' a few years ago? Had Don Donnithome, the architect, not pleaded for greater prominence to be given to the heritage area of the Catholic Cathedral, the former convent, and the chapel beside it? Did this group of buildings not complement the Arts Centre and the Canterbury Museum on the other side of the city?

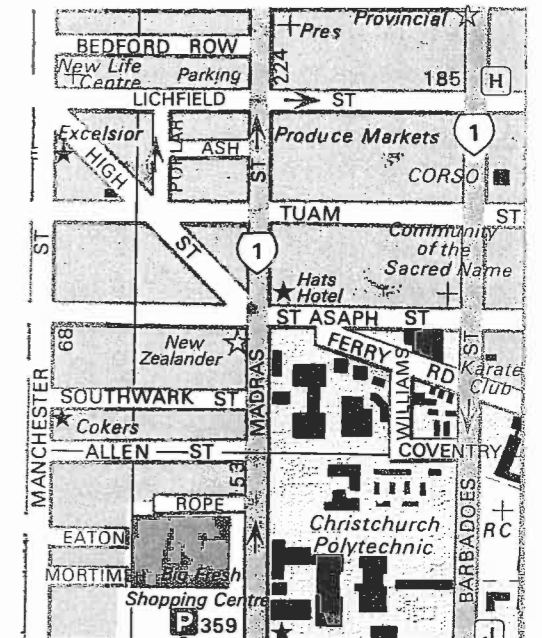
Let us hope that the rethink that has taken place as a result of consultation and discussion will see the 'Stadium Walk' down High Street, through the CPIT grounds, past the Cathedral precinct and on to Jade Stadium become a reality for the Rugby World Cup of 2011 and beyond.



*A very happy Easter
and every blessing to the
'Friends of the Cathedral'.*

For the Cathedral Trust

John Harrington
Monsignor J.M. Harrington



The proposed 'Stadium Walk'

'WHAT IS TRUTH?' (Jn 18:38)

Over the years the 'Friends' newsletter has carried all manner of historical material. Judging by the letters and cards received, these varied pieces have been appreciated by many. The one below first appeared some years ago in 'Priest to Priest' – an in-house newsletter for priests of the Christchurch Diocese

It has been said that the pioneers of Westland were too busy making history to write it down. And that may well be true. Stories of the 'days of old, days of gold', were mostly handed down by work of mouth.

And so it was that people, far removed in time, put pen to paper when interest prompted it or the need arose. Take the case of the first Mass celebrated on the West Coast. There we have an example of just how little it takes for folklore to become 'fact.'

The earliest known reference to the first Mass in Westland is found in a document written by Francis Redwood SM, newly elevated to Archbishop and Metropolitan of New Zealand. In this hand written document dated 1887, there is a description of the parishes of Canterbury and Westland, until then part of the Diocese of Wellington, but now incorporated in the newly established Diocese of Christchurch. Under the heading 'Hokitika' there appears the following:

'The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered for the first time on the West Coast in 1864, by Father Hallum a French secular priest, in the store of Messrs. Kennedy Brothers, a fitting tribute to the prosperity which has since attended that firm.'

While the statement has a ring of confidence about it, the Archbishop was, of course, simply recording what someone else had told him. In the year 1864, when Hokitika was little more than a collection of soggy tents, Francis Redwood was teaching philosophy and theology in the Old World, 13,000 miles away. Certainly, when he began his 'Historical Sketch' he was in his fourteenth year as Ordinary of the Diocese which included Westland, to which he had paid a number of visits. Certainly he was well acquainted with the prosperity of the Kennedy Brothers. Earlier in the same year (1887) he had laid the foundation stone of a new church in Greymouth, lauding Martin Kennedy then en route to England, for his promised donation of all the bricks needed to erect the building. He would also have known something of the shadowy Fr Stephen Hallum, at that time an old man living privately in Ponsonby. But for all that, the 1887 account of when and by whom the first Mass was celebrated on the West Coast had come to Francis Redwood secondhand.

Ten years on, the 'Historical Sketch' became part of a larger work presented to Pope Leo XIII on the occasion of his sacerdotal Golden Jubilee. Although the Archbishop updated some facts and figures, the account of the first Mass in Westland remained unchanged. One wonders, however, if doubts were already being cast on its veracity. J.J. Wilson's memoirs of the early days, 'The Church in New Zealand', makes no mention of the first Mass, even though Wilson was obviously making use of the 'Historical Sketch' as a reference source.

But if the Redwood story waned for a time, it was to wax again with the publication of Miss Lillian Key's life of Bishop Viard. In treating of the growing importance of the South Island, she devotes some pages to the beginnings of the Church in Westland. But the source of some of her material was not Bishop Viard. Her reference to the first Mass bears the legend (Redwood op.cit. p59).



Archbishop Francis Redwood SM, Second Bishop of Wellington, who would mark the milestone of 60 years a bishop.

She begins, however, with a hint of hesitation. She says that although the rush which brought goldseekers to the Coast did not set in until the following year (1865)

'... Nevertheless Bishop Viard sent to the Coast in 1864 a French secular priest Father Hallum, previously in Auckland. Father Hallum offered Holy Mass for the first time in a store belonging to the Kennedy Brothers at Hokitika ..'

Right or wrong, Lillian Keys, careful historian that she was, at least quoted her sources correctly. Others did not. In November 1962 the 'Marist Messenger' devoted much of its issue to the Church in Westland. In an article about the first priests on the Coast we are told that:

'... according to the late Archbishop Redwood, SM, the first Mass was said in a store of Kennedy Brothers' at Greymouth'

Note that in one small step, the place of the first Mass has now moved 25 miles north, from Hokitika to Greymouth! In May 1978 a booklet was produced on St Patrick's Church, Greymouth, to commemorate its ninetieth birthday, and the remodelling of its sanctuary. In the opening paragraph we read:

'... As far as available records show, the first priest to celebrate Mass in Greymouth was a French secular priest, Father Stephen Hallum. This took place in Martin Kennedy's garage sometime in 1864 ...'

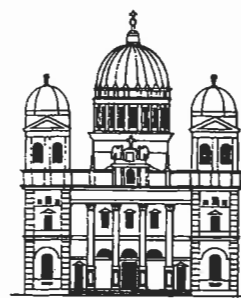
Note that the setting of the Mass, has now changed significantly – from a store to a garage, and the honour of hosting the Mass has passed from one Martin Kennedy to another – to the 'Bus Kennedy's, pioneers of Road Services in and around Greymouth, who had no connection with the Kennedy Brothers originally named.

While all accounts at least agree on a date (1864), not even that can be taken for a fact. In May 1984 I received a letter from a man who claimed to have the collection plate used at the first Mass on the Coast. The writer said:

'Our people helped make possible the first Mass celebrated by Fr Stephen Hallum in Martin Kennedy's shed in 1863 (where Ford Motors are now, opposite Revington's Hotel). This I believe was the first Mass to be said on the Coast. I see Archbishop Redwood refers to it ...'

So there we are – from Hokitika to Greymouth; from store to garage to shed; from one family to another; from one year to another even less probable. 'Truth', said Pilate, 'What is that?' (Jn 18:38).

JMH



**'ECCE TABERNACULUM
DEI CUM HOMINIBUS'**

**BEHOLD, THE DWELLING
PLACE OF GOD AMONG
HIS PEOPLE.**

IN AND ABOUT THE CATHEDRAL

Did you know that the Cathedral was filled to capacity for a concert earlier this year conducted by Sir David Wilcocks? Anyone who had been present at his earlier concerts in the Cathedral would know why.

Did you know that an anonymous donor has pledged \$100,000 a year over the next five years to ensure the musical heritage of the Cathedral will be maintained and enhanced into the future? Already bursaries have been put in place for organ tuition, and singers willing to develop talents while they support the Cathedral liturgies.

Did you know that the Cathedral choir and orchestra are planning another tour to Australia? They will visit Sydney and Brisbane in September, where they will sing at Masses and concerts in cathedrals and churches.