

FROM THE BEGINNING: -

T.A. RIST

St. Anthony's Parish was born from Onehunga and a Mass Centre was built by Onehunga Timber Co. Ltd., on a piece of land left to the church by Mr. & Mrs. John Geddes, this was conditional on the parish caring for their daughter, Eileen, for the rest of her life.

The building was supervised by the late Ken Ashworth, a piece of land was sold to Villa Maria and top soil was removed to help pay the difference between the loan and total cost of the Mass Centre. The first officiating priest was Father Green from Onehunga.

The Diocese appointed the Friars to our Parish and Father Munday Claver was our first parish priest, assisted by Br. Andrew who lived in the rooms down side of the church and at the rear. Brother Andrew's room was the men's toilet, disguised for that purpose. A gentle kind and generous man, loved and remembered by so many.

On the then remaining land, it was planned to build a proper church and a primary school, the Mass Centred then becoming the building it was designed for, a hall. Growth in the schools changed direction, and our school and church plan fell by the wayside.

The Church was in need of music and so Gerrard Van Dem Bemd took upon himself to run a fund-raising campaign to purchase an organ, which was very successful. Demands on Parish Priests became too strong, and on direction of the Diocese, general meetings were held in all parishes, to hear the guide lines set down by the Diocese, and so we saw Parish Councils formed, and our parishioners moved that a Chairman be selected at Annual General Meetings. The late Frank Sullivan was the first Chairman and so the nucleus of then is what we have today.

C.C.D Religious Education, flourished in the Parish with many of our children attending public schools. Diane Cameron was very much involved in that programme, supported by many parishioners. The need for a Parish House became strong, and so the building was supervised by Father Barnabas Brown, including the steel reinforced concrete up and around the house.

Parish fairs were an annual event & finally saw the Parish debt which had increased with the building of the presbytery finally beaten. However Father Bede saw the need to expand the church and increase facilities but agreement to pursue was not encouraged by the Parishioners, even after alternative plans were presented.

The sisters were introduced into the parish, and did a tremendous amount of work caring for the sick, assisting the parish priest prepare young ones to receive the Sacraments, and giving Holy Communion to the sick and invalid.

Father Bede passed away and the parish returned to the secular order and the arrival of Father Joe. Ground maintenance became a problem as the land was developed, and so a small tractor was purchased with a mower. It did the job well but maintenance fell on one pair of hands, and it was hard to keep small hands off it. We are indeed grateful to the Cemetery Board who support us with our ground maintenance.

## OUR CHURCH



**SAINTE ANTHONY'S PARISH, MANGERE BRIDGE,**

as a response to the number of unemployed in the area, and as a way to help families, has turned parish lawns into market gardens. With additional assistance from the Community Taskforce Scheme, the gardens are a valuable community enterprise.



**YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESS** 