

The History of the Carvings and Statues

ST FRANCIS XAVIER



The wood for this was donated and prepared for use by Bill Hiscock. Carl McCann did the initial research and due to his diligence the present carving is based on a portrait by a Japanese artist, which hangs in the museum in Japan. Patricia Bourke did the actual drawing on wood before the carving commenced. Deirdre O'Donnell forwarded the Celtic design transfers from Dublin. Janet Gilbert applied these to the wood before carving commenced on them. Denis Kane was of great assistance in sanding the completed work before varnishing. Gary Simpson donated the paua shell squares. Sharon Kelly designed and executed the Kowhaiwhai pattern. Fr Jim Davis did the actual carving, executed the celtic design, carved the Maori surface decoration and applied the finishing touches. This project took about six months to complete.

ALTAR



The main altar was designed by Fr. H. McHale P. P.

It was built and denoted by Bill Hiscock.

It was used for the first time at Fr. McHales's Silver Jubilee Mass in the Community Centre, Stokes Valley on the 19th June 1974, having just been completed the day before.

It was then stored in the old church hall and not used again until the 22nd November 1975 when it was reassembled and used for the open-air televised Mass at the Lower Hutt Recreation grounds on the 23 November 1975.

It was then installed in the new Church ready for the official opening on the 30th November 1975.

THE TABERNACLE



Looking around at New Zealand Churches, most of them, with the exception of those around Taupo and Rotorua, could be anywhere in the world. To make our Church in Stokes Valley more distinctive and “New Zealand” in style, it was decided to investigate the possibility of building a special tabernacle. Parishioners of various nationalities and cultures were approached and asked their advice and assistance.

As a result the finished article has the following story attached to it:

Commencing at the foot of the tabernacle, the base was made and donated by a Swiss member of our “family” John Scherrer.

The wood for the solid post and the rest of the tabernacle was donated by a Dutch member of the community Henry Hendriks.

The post was inlaid in Tiwha “Father of Pearl” by Peato Perez who is from Tokelau.

The Paua was donated by Garry Simpson, a New Zealander who also had the greenstone cut to the correct shape for the tabernacle base. He also donated the greenstone key. Akenehe Niko and Melehetu Tuilava who are Tokelauns did the weaving for the inside of the tabernacle.

Jan Gilbert who is English made and donated the inside floor covering and inside curtains. The tabernacle itself was cut, assembled and varnished by Bill Gilbert who is also English.

Mai Doherty donated the Celtic Cross, she lives in Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

Fr Davis donated the greenstone, carved the decorative Maori panels on the front of the tabernacle, cut and inlaid the paua and also inlaid the greenstone and celtic cross in marble.

Daphne Pewhairangi and her daughter Kathleen Anderson wove the tabernacle veil for the outside, representing the Maori Community.

The whole concept of this tabernacle is based on the pataka of Maori culture. The pataka is the Maori food store. Here we use it as a tabernacle to house Christ who is the food of our souls.

The twelve inlaid pieces of Tiwaha (which is a shell used in Tokelau on very special occasions) six on each side of the post, represent the twelve Apostles. The three centre "stars" of Tiwaha represent the three atoll islands known as the Tokelaus:- Nukunonu, Fakaofu and Atafu, showing how the Tokelau people came to New Zealand to find a new way of life; this they did through Christ and the Apostles, Christ being represented by the host and chalice inlaid in Tiwaha.

Moving to the top of the tabernacle we see twelve holes – six on each side. These again represent the twelve Apostles. The diamond notch carving represents all the people who were brought into the Church through the Apostles and Passion and Death of Christ on the Cross, represented by the Celtic Cross in marble at the apex.

The uprights or "Amo" of any Maori meeting house always told the ancestry of the person to whom the place belonged. Seeing as Christ will live in the tabernacle, his ancestry is the Alpha and the Omega –the beginning and the end, inlaid in the amo in paua shell. Also as Christ lives in the tabernacle the Trinity must also be present and is represented by the traditional idea of three equal circles, here done in the greenstone – to represent the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Inside there are five crosses incorporated into the Tokelau weaving – each cross standing for a letter of the word ALOHA which means love and God is love.

The black edging along both sides of the tabernacle veil represent sin in the world. The green cross is the traditional colour of mourning. The red background shows how Christ shed his blood for the redemption of the world and the two white Kotuku feathers symbolise the peace that Christ's redemption brings to the world.

PRESENTATION

The tabernacle was presented to Father H. McHale on the Wednesday before Easter Sunday 1973 to be used in the new Church in Stokes Valley. The tabernacle was used for the first time on Holy Thursday as the Tabernacle of Repose 1973. It was used again for the same purpose in 1974. It was taken to the Community Centre on 19 June 1974 for Father McHale's Jubilee Mass. From then it was used in the oratory in the back room of the Presbytery while the new Church was being built.

It took almost two and a half years to complete the tabernacle.