

Views from the Pews - Anglo-Catholic Hui

From the 7th to 9th September, St Peter's hosted the fourth Anglo-Catholic Hui. These are meetings of Aotearoa Anglicans who treasure the traditions and theological thinking which have been the Catholic heritage of the English Church and its daughter churches from its very earliest days.

Our meeting was framed by acts of worship typical of Anglican Catholic practice, two High Masses, one Low Mass (said Eucharist), Divine office for morning and evening, and Benediction and Veneration of the Sacrament.

Our overall theme was "Mary Grace and Hope in Christ" with its two-fold focus of pilgrimage – Walking with Mary – and celebration of the place of Mary in the history of salvation. We heard about Bishop Cherrington, our Diocese's first Bishop (1926 – 1950) and his vision for this Diocese as a centre of Anglo-Catholicism.

As was entirely appropriate for a meeting in the Waikato, many of our activities had a Māori focus; the opening High Mass was conducted entirely in Māori, one of the presentations was a discussion by Fr Cruz of sacramentalism and its relationship to traditional Māori ways of thinking about the world and the nature of reality. Our hīkoi was a visit to the site of the battle at Ōrākau, where we were privileged to meet and hear from a descendant of Rewi Manga Maniapoto's brother, and a visit to Rangiaowhai, where we learnt of the destruction and atrocity wrought at that peaceful and prosperous village by colonial forces in February 1864.

In keeping with the theme of the hui, on 8th September we celebrated the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We often downplay or ignore Mary's significance, but God's call to her and her willing acceptance of that call to be the theotókos, the God-bearer, were the crucial first step in the Incarnation of God in Jesus, and all that followed. Bishop David, Cynthia Piper, and Dr Turi Hollis, the Māori Missioner for this region, discussed Mary's role and significance, and Bishop David explained some of the detail of the agreement reached between negotiators for the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church on the importance of Mary in our Christian lives. A beautiful icon of Mary also accompanied our hīkoi to the sites so in need of reconciliation and forgiveness.

No account of the hui would be complete without tributes to Fr Cruz for his energy and coordination and to Bishop David for his wisdom and guidance.

Ray Harlow and Anne McAloon