

Death of Very Rev. Dean Thomas McKenna

We are in receipt of the following telegram from an esteemed correspondent:—

The death of Very Rev. Dean Thomas McKenna, parish priest of New Plymouth, which occurred on Sunday last, the 8th inst., has robbed the Archdiocese of Wellington of one of its most amiable and devoted priests. He was one of nature's gentlemen whose qualities were enabled by grace. To the priests who loved to visit him during the last thirty years he was a perfect host, while as a guest his cheery manner brightened many a presbytery. By the priests, he will be long missed, and most by those who knew him best. His devotion to the people was self-sacrificing to a marked degree, and many acknowledgments of this has been forthcoming from the parishes in which he has labored. Succeeding him in one of the parishes of Taranaki thirty years ago, the writer of these notes found a chain of eight Christian doctrine classes stretching through the parish. This was Dean McKenna's first work in that parish, of which he was founder. These classes he visited once a week without a single break, as the parish records show, with the result that the children, even in the remotest places, were as well instructed in their religion as those in the favored towns and cities. His zeal for the religious education of the young was a characteristic of his whole priestly life. In this he lived up to the dictates of St. Paul. To the poor, also, he was devoted. He had little opportunity of coming into personal contact with them until his appointment to the city of Wellington a few years ago; but during his time there he loved to visit the homes of the poor, and many stories are told of how, after giving the sacraments and the spiritual consolations of the Church, he would, with a simple grace that could not offend, leave something to procure those material comforts that mean so much to the sick-poor.

His obsequies were begun at New Plymouth on Tuesday with Requiem Mass which was sung by his brother (Right Rev. Mgr. McKenna, V.G.), Fathers O'Dwyer, Phelan, and Lynch being the ministers. His Grace Archbishop O'Shea presided, and with him in the sanctuary was the Right Rev. Mgr. Power. In the choir were Fathers Maples, Harnett, Meynard, J. Moore, N. Moore, Forrestal, Outtrim, Dillon, Carmine, and Father O'Shea, of the Chinese Mission. The music of the Mass was beautifully sung by the priests under the leadership of Mr. Clarke. The Archbishop spoke very touchingly of the zeal and the labors of the deceased priest. He conveyed the sympathy of the Archbishops and priests to Monsignor McKenna (his brother), and other relatives. His Grace reminded them that death was not the end of all things: that Christian sorrow for the dead is not like that of the pagan without hope, for Christ the head of the mystic body rose from the grave as the first fruits of them that sleep. He recounted his first meeting with the Dean, whom he had met thirty-five years ago—a splendid type of manhood. He traced the late Dean's labors in Masterton, Hawera, Patea, Pahiataua, and Wellington, and commented on his true spirit of ecclesiastical obedience which led him, at the call of the Archbishops to leave a parish which he had founded and in which he had spent more than a quarter of a century, to undertake more arduous duties in an important parish in a big city. After three years' labors there he was appointed to New Plymouth, but owing to a severe and lingering illness, which gradually but surely carried him to the grave, he was unable to take an active part in parish work. His Grace was confident the deceased priest would be remembered in the prayers of all. By the law of the Archdiocese each priest would offer three Masses for the repose of his soul, and he knew many of them would not be content with this. The faithful, too, by their Masses, Holy Communion, and prayers, would obtain for him refreshment, light, and peace, and help him to pass quickly from the cleansing prison of Purgatory to the eternal abode of the saints. The body was taken by mail train on Wednesday to Pahiataua, where the funeral took place.—R.I.P.

We sanctify ourselves to communicate, we communicate to sanctify ourselves.—Eucharistic Thoughts.

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

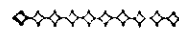
(From our own correspondent.)

July 6.

The Marist Brothers' Old Boys' Association is at present busily engaged in organising a big bazaar to raise funds in order to extend its activities in banding the Catholic young men of the city together in sporting, social, and literary fields. The association has done and is doing a great work for the Church by keeping Catholic young men in a Catholic atmosphere from the time they leave school, and thus helping them in the various walks of life in which they earn their livelihood, and where they are exposed to grave dangers at an age when evil environment, unless counteracted by the aid of Catholic societies means, in a large number of cases, loss of faith. The work of the Marist Brothers' Old Boys, therefore, deserves every encouragement, and the various parishes of the city are asked to assist in this good and most necessary work. The bazaar will be held in the Town Hall, and already committees have been organised in several of the parishes, and functions, preliminary to the bazaar, are now being held. It is to be hoped that the old boys will as a result of the bazaar, improve their financial position.

Clients of St. Anthony of Padua who desire to make offerings in gratitude for favors received may not be aware that a shrine of the saint has been erected for some few years at St. Francis de Sales' Church, Island Bay. The offertory box for St. Anthony's Bread is placed at the foot of the shrine, and nearly £40 has been taken out of the box since the shrine was erected. This money is handed to the Rev. Mother Aubert for the noble work of the Sisters of Compassion in tending to the poor and afflicted. Those, therefore, who are indebted for favors obtained through St. Anthony's intercession may place their offerings in this box, or if they are not able to visit the church personally, a postal note or other documents of value may be posted to the Ven. Archdeacon Devoy, Island Bay, who will dispose of them for this deserving object.

The many friends of Mrs. C. A. Seymour, of Island Bay, will regret to hear of her serious illness which is causing her family, relatives, and friends much concern. Father Seymour, of Greenmeadows, and Father Seymour, of St. Mary's, Christchurch, are her sons, and have been in Wellington for the past few days.



New Plymouth

(From our own correspondent.)

July 1.

The interior painting and renovating of St. Joseph's Church is now completed. The walls are finished in a rich cream with a base of battleship grey, whilst the ceiling is of an azure blue with oak rafters. The sanctuary is painted a deeper cream, and bordered by a gold stencil design to a depth of two feet. The whole work has altered the general appearance of the church, and with the completion of the altars and statues has brought the church up to a standard to compare with those of any town of the size of New Plymouth.

Thursday, July 7, will be the first anniversary of the death of our late beloved parish priest Déan James McKenna, on which occasion Solemn Requiem Mass will be celebrated at St. Joseph's Church.

Mrs. J. Crompton, who has been a valuable member of our choir, has been obliged to leave New Plymouth on account of the death of her mother in Wellington. She will be greatly missed, as her attendance and excellent work set a splendid example to all.

The cold weather at present being experienced is having a detrimental effect on business, whilst the prevalence of colds, etc., is keeping large numbers of children from school.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Hansberry, of New Plymouth, and parishioners of St. Joseph's Church, are visiting Australia. Both have associated themselves with church affairs here at various times, and now, on the retirement of Mr. Hansberry from the Government service, are taking a well-deserved holiday. Among other Catholic visitors from New Plymouth in Sydney are Mr. McGinty, former licensee of the Grosvenor Hotel, Mr. E. Whittle, and Miss Maisie Whittle.

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