

Dear Fr Mark, Guests and Parishioners

1. My husband Robert and I have experienced saying our farewells to St Francis Xavier Catholic Church (100 years old) in the CBD Bank Street in Whangarei that was condemned and was being replaced in the suburb of Kensington adjacent to St Francis Xavier Catholic School (formerly St Mary's Catholic School) on land which the school had used as a playing field. The weekend Masses use the school concrete playing area in the school grounds for extra parking. After many venues it was lovely to be all in the one place to worship in Kensington.
2. There was a three year gap between the old and new Churches being used. During this time four different venues were made available in different areas of the City. The Anglican Church at the Regent (Saturday evening Masses), Pompallier Catholic College Hall (Easter Vigil), Forum North Council Hall (Christmas Masses) and St Peter Chanel Hall in Kamo for Easter Sunday, Christmas and Sunday Masses. The Liturgy Committee were responsible for setting up these venues as they were required.
3. Parishioners were kept informed with detailed information regarding the sale and demolition of the existing Church and the new Church to be built on the corner of Percy Street, Kamo Road and Park Avenue.
4. St Francis Xavier Catholic School for their Masses and Pompallier Catholic College whole school for their Special Masses use the Church. Pompallier Catholic College bus their students to Kensington from Maunu.
5. It was sad leaving the beautiful old Church on Bank Street in Whangarei and having it demolished. It was a special part of my parents, siblings and our own family history. Now they are very Holy and cherished memories.
6. We have been attending Mass on a regular basis at St Mary Immaculate, Thomas Aquinas Parish since moving to Tauranga early March this year. I am appalled that so much funding is required to repair the existing Church that from my understanding it is in the vicinity of 25 years old. We have not found parking particularly difficult when attending weekend Masses, but acknowledge that there is a problem during the week.
7. I believe that Aquinas College is a great place for a new Church if it is to be and more of our young people will have direct access to it. For me distance isn't an issue as not everyone can be handy as far as that is concerned and for me I would travel anywhere to get to Mass even if it meant finding a ride.
8. On its own it is just a building we are talking about. All those who celebrate our Religious beliefs in that building are what make it a Sacred and Holy place of Worship for everyone who enters, "The Church".

Gods Blessings on those who will be making difficult decisions to ensure that the best outcome is made possible. May they be given courage and understanding in making these decisions by the Grace and Love of God.

Blessings to you all.

Maxine Hayson