



An Exhibition of  
**Maori Christian Art**

at the  
Cathedral of the Sacred Heart,  
Wellington

From 28 March to 4 April 1999

# Maori Christian Art

When Pope John Paul II visited New Zealand in 1986 he said there is no conflict between being Maori and being Catholic – that in fact the Church must build on Maori culture and customs if we are to be truly Catholic.

The Gospel transcends cultures and it is almost impossible to encounter an expression of the Gospel which is culture-free. Our growing awareness of the importance of culture has paved the way for us taking the diversity of local cultures more seriously. And yet, to date, we have been slow to reflect that diversity in our churches. The style of our buildings, their interior decoration, vestments and other items is still predominantly European.

This Maori Christian Art exhibition shows some of the richness of Maori spirituality while affirming Maori Catholic faith.

Maori are sensitive to the world of the Spirit. This spirit embraces the sacredness of the land and of all creation. Karakia – prayer – both before and after most gatherings, journeys and events in life is a natural expression of that spirituality.

Speaking in Auckland in 1986, Pope John Paul II said: “The strengths of Maori culture are often the very values which modern society is in danger of losing . . . . As you rightly treasure your culture, let the Gospel of Christ continue to penetrate and permeate it, confirming your sense of identity as a unique part of God’s household. It is as Maori the Lord calls you: it is as Maori you belong to the Church, the one body of Christ.”

This exhibition of Maori Christian Art expresses that meeting of Gospel and culture. We hope it is the beginning of similar exhibitions in other parts of the Wellington Archdiocese.

1999 is the final year leading to the Great Jubilee Year 2000. Two themes for this year are God the Father and reconciliation. God the Father created all of us in his image and likeness so we are all equal in dignity. It is for us to recognise the diversity and complementarity of all cultures.

The organisers would like to thank Henare Walmsley and Mandy Scanlan for helping to mount this exhibition. They thank both Caritas for assistance in funding the project and those who have allowed us to display some of their treasures in this exhibition of Maori Christian Art.

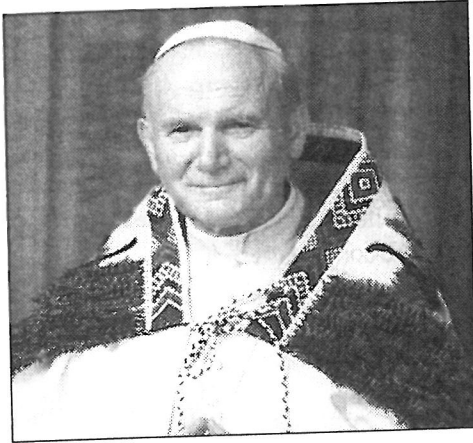
by Ruth Smithies

Convenor of the Jubilee 2000 Task Group for Social Justice

23 March 1999

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*The Maori Madonna and child on the front cover was painted by Julia Lynch — Sr Mary Lawrence RSM. It is on loan to the exhibition from Hato Paora College in Feilding*



### **Pope John Paul II wearing a korowai**

This portrait of Pope John Paul II was taken at the Apostolic Nunciature in Wellington on 23 November 1986

The portrait is distinctively New Zealand. His Holiness wears the korowai (cloak) and greenstone cross presented to him the previous day at the national Maori welcome in Auckland

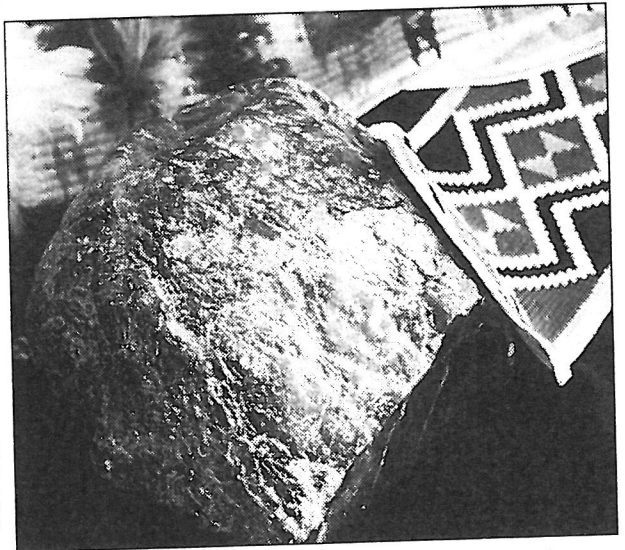
## **Pilgrimage of reconciliation and peace**

During Waitangi weekend, there was a hui at Otaki's Catholic Marae to prepare for Jubilee Year 2000. Hundreds accepted the invitation from the people of Pukekaraka to join them for this special celebration. It was built around the themes of reconciliation and peace being taken up worldwide in this final year of preparation for the Great Jubilee.

The themes came to life through the day's symbols and hymns. They included a pounamu — greenstone — koha presented to the tangata whenua by those visiting the marae. A symbol of reconciliation was the building of a permanent memorial cairn. Groups and individuals had been invited to bring stones or rocks to place on this cairn. Nearly everyone present became involved as it took shape on a stand specially carved for the ceremony by Geoff Pryor from the Plimmerton parish.

The cairn was soon filled and included stones with a special significance for those who placed them. The visitors then sprinkled themselves with water and moved across to hongi with their hosts in a sign of peace.

As this was happening, those taking part in the hui joined in singing hymns which reflected both the themes of the day and the majesty of God.



The pounamu koha presented to Pukekaraka Marae

## Pukekaraka Marae, Otaki



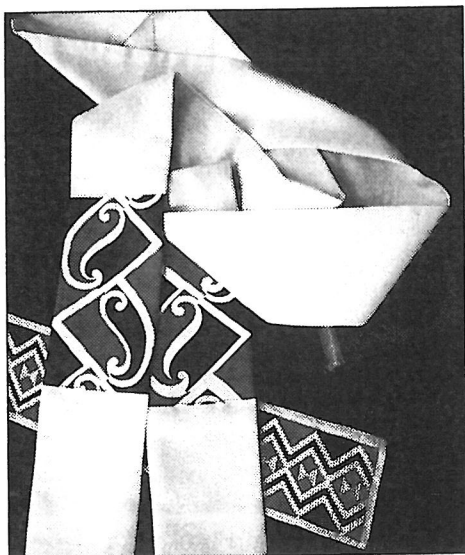
Pukekaraka Marae is the Catholic parish at Otaki. Established in 1844, it is the oldest parish in the Wellington Archdiocese.

The items from Pukekaraka in this exhibition include:

- The silver chalice that belonged to Fr Melu SM, the French Marist who served at Pukekaraka for 50 years.
- In a silver frame the medallion of Our Lady of Fouvriere. In Lyon, Fouvriere is the birthplace of the Society of Mary. The medallion was given to Makuini Johnson from Pukekaraka during a visit to Lyon. It links the birthplace of the Marists with their Marae.
- A booklet telling the story of Pukekaraka Marae

## Kinship — whanaungatanga

Priests' vestments with Maori design work



## Proverbs — whakatauki



Hei maungarongo ki te whenua  
Hei whakaaro pai ki te tangata

Peace on earth and  
good will to all men

The manaia figure shown with this whakatauki panel is also used on the waka huia and on the pou rakau located above the fountain on the piazza outside the Cathedral

## He Kupu

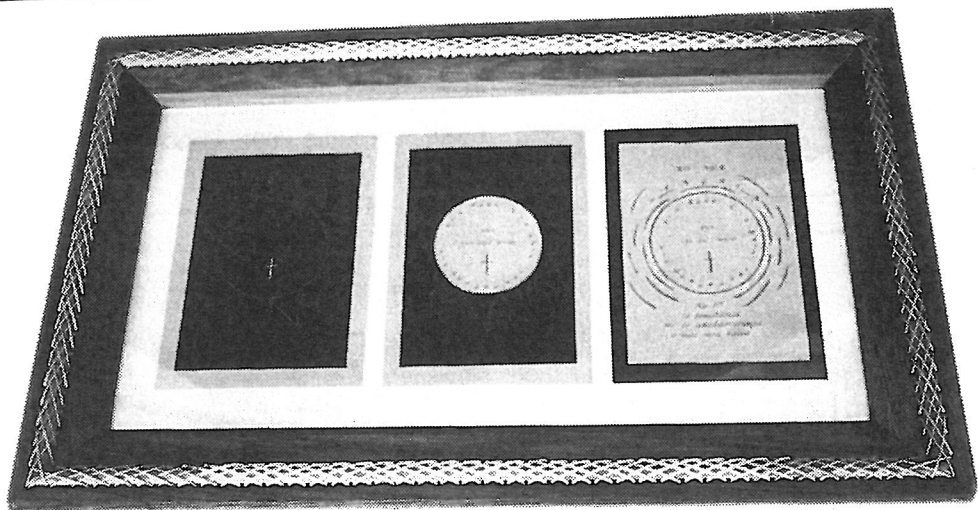
Impressions by artist Mandy Scanlan

This is my vision of the Holy Trinity.

The three panels are actually the one peeled back in stages to show the deepening picture beneath. The thought . . . that Christ has always been with Maori from the beginning of time.

'As it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be world without end.'

The final panel calls Maori, now in this time, to be strong and determined for our Lord God in the light of this certainty. The work is from Kawiu Pa, Levin



## Faith journey in Oamaru stone



The Oamaru stone carving standing in the foyer of the Sacred Heart Cathedral represents the faith given to us by Jesus Christ. Carved by Lou Kereopa, a former tutor at Maraeroa Marae, it was unveiled on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1988.

The foundation of this carving represents the Trinity, the commandments and the sacraments as well as the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

The mid-section depicts our journey of faith represented by four figures in traditional Maori style. Together they hold up the world encircled with a crown of thorns which represents human suffering and disobedience.

The first figure has no knowledge of, or interest in God. The second knows God but regards faith as secondary to material needs. The third knows God but drifts along with no real faith commitment. The fourth figure knows and listens to God while expressing, through example, sacrifice and obedience, a commitment to faith.

At the top of the carving is the Church as a sign of the guiding light. Its cross represents the Pope, bishops, clergy and laity.

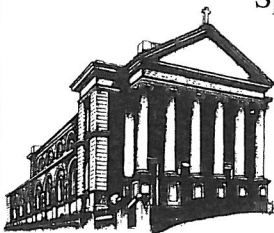
Sponsorship for this booklet has been received from the

### **Diocesan Car Fund**

Catholic Centre, 22-30 Hill Street,

Wellington

Phone (04) 496-1705



# Pou Rakau of Hill Street

Pou Rakau is the carved spiritual tree above the piazza that links the Catholic Centre and the Cathedral in Hill Street, Wellington.

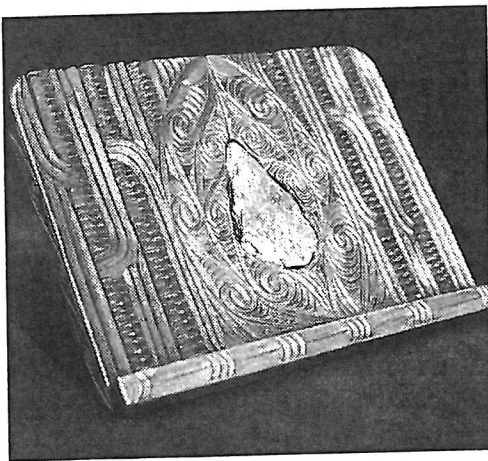
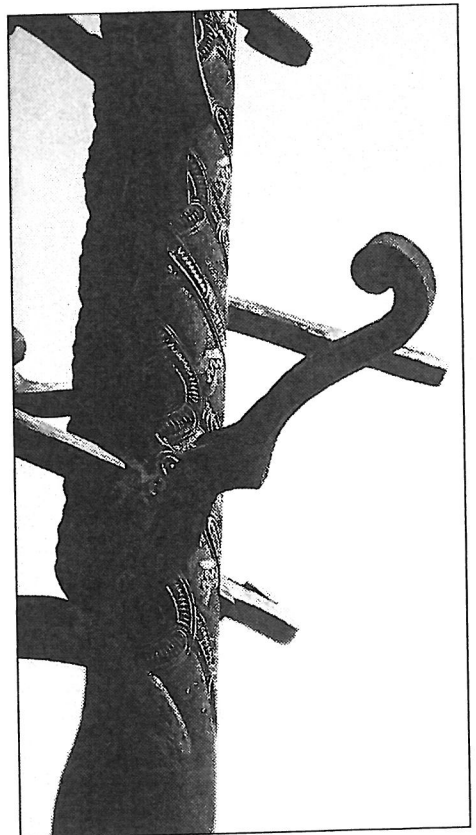
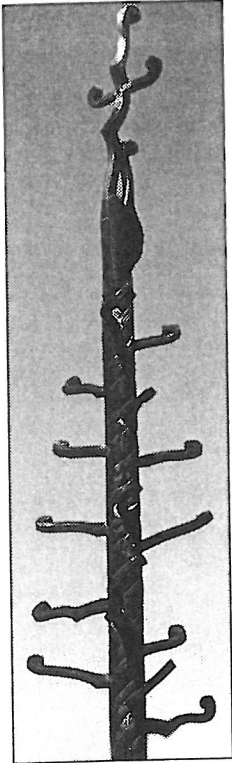
It is the work of Lou Kereopa, a former carving instructor at Maraeroa Marae, Porirua.

The base of the Pou Rakau represents the tangata whenua, the People of the Land, and is described by Mr Kereopa as Maungarongo ki te Whenua — Peace of the Earth. The main trunk is Whakaaro Pai ki nga Tangata Katoa - Goodwill to all People. Together they sit beneath the uppermost branch of Pou Rakau which represents the Trinity and offers glory to God — Kororia ki te Atua.

The branch below that represents Mary, our heavenly mother and the name given is Tumanako which means hope.

All of the other branches on the Pou Rakau are called Te Aroha and they represent all of God's children. Finally bringing all these together is Whakapono or faith in the form of Te Taura.

The carving was erected on the site in December 1990.



A carved lectern with a greenstone insert. It is on loan from the Maori Pastoral Care Team

## To hold the bread and wine

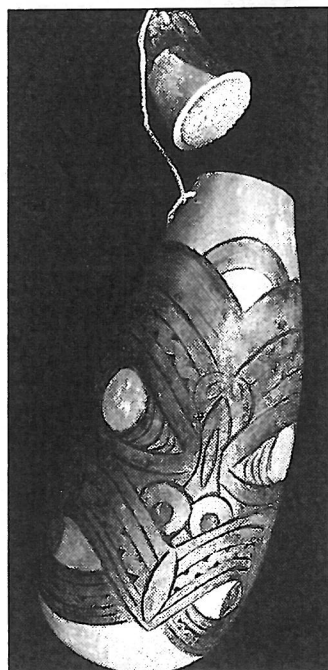
These items are used at Mass for the bread and wine



Waka huia were traditionally vessels used to keep precious articles. This waka huia, carved by Geoff Pryor, for use in St Theresa's parish, Plimmerton has been used for more than ten years to hold the blessed Eucharist at Mass.

The main features of this waka huia are the large takarangī spirals which indicate confusion and contrast with Christ as the still centre of the turning world. Manaia figures at either end indicate the authority attaching to this container and on the inside of the lid is carved in Latin "Vivat" — he lives — which links the Maori tradition with the ancient liturgy of the Church

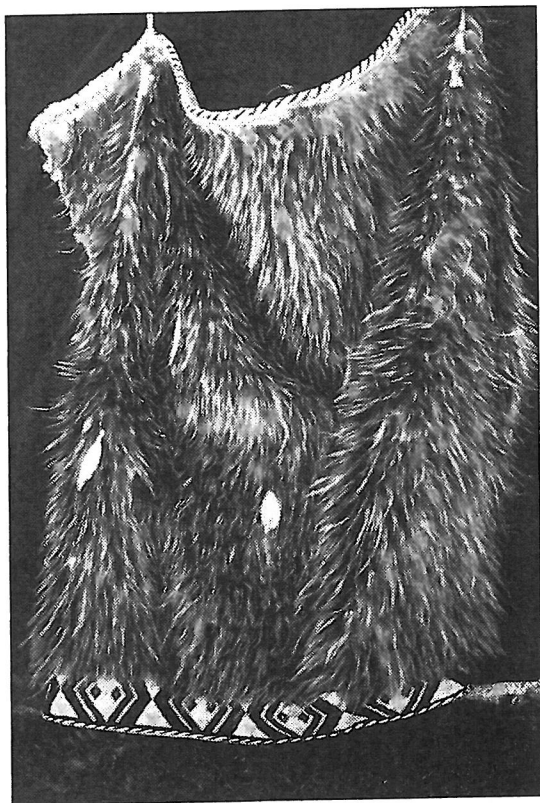
This decorated gourd, which has been loaned by Cardinal Williams, is used for holding wine at Mass.



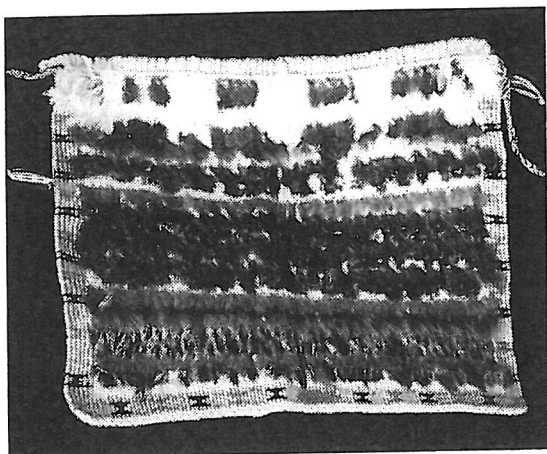
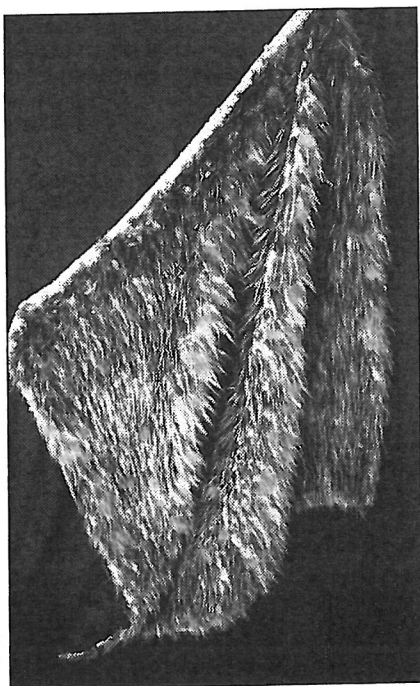


# Ceremonial Cloaks— Korowai

Cloaks are symbols of prestige and mana worn by high priests and chiefs



These two Kiwi cloaks have been loaned to the exhibition by Cardinal Williams



This Baptismal korowai was made by Lexi Starkey from Blenheim and has been loaned by Father Piripi Cody SM, Maori chaplain for the Archdiocese of Wellington

## 1840 Madonna and Child



This Madonna and Child tekoteko is thought to have been carved in 1840 by Te Arawa master carver, Patoromu Tamatea — a man of high rank who was highly regarded in his community.

It represents an attempt by the carver to shape his people's experience of a new religious insight — a virgin giving birth to the Son of God.

How does the carver convey the idea of a virgin who gave birth?

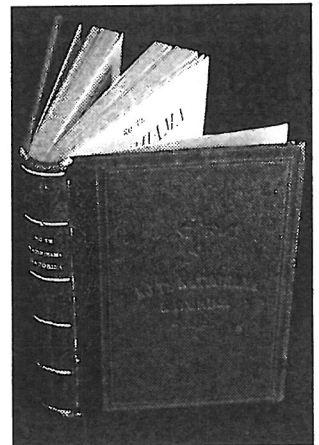
It is recorded that during that time, the full facial tattoo was reserved for men. By having the full facial tattoo on the Madonna, the carver marks her as a virgin. The carver had clearly attempted to integrate the new religious insight of Jesus and Mary as part of Maori religious thought and practice.

This took place at a time when Christian missionaries did not encourage the adaptation of carvings towards a Christian purpose in their churches. In the 19th century, Maori religious knowledge was called superstition and regarded as primitive nonsense. Their carvings were seen as graven images.

Nonetheless, the carving is a testament that Maori Catholicism had its own contribution to make to the universal Church.

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One of the Maori catechisms used by the early Maori missionaries who travelled on horseback to bring the Catholic faith to scattered communities



## Julia Lynch Paintings

Julia Lynch, also known as Sister Mary Lawrence RSM, was recognised as one of New Zealand's foremost portrait painters. She won first prize in portraiture from the Slade School of London and her portraits have been hung in galleries around the world.

In 1945 she was commissioned by the Society of Mary to paint a series of Maori portraits of Jesus and Mary. The Marists hoped these painting would be part of a revival of the Maori Mission in New Zealand.

Four of Julia Lynch's paintings are on display at this exhibition. One of the Maori Madonnas she painted is shown on the cover of this booklet. It has been loaned by Hato Paora College in Feilding. Below are two of her paintings of Christ.



The Young Christ above is held at St Mary's College, Wellington and is on loan from the Sisters of Mercy

The Risen Christ below is on loan from the Maori Pastoral Care Team

