

GREG MURPHY.... Senior New Zealand Prison Chaplain and Passionist

On 17th February 2011, Greg Murphy was commissioned to be New Zealand Senior Catholic Prison Chaplain, appointed by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, and Commissioned by Archbishop John Dew.

The Commissioning was unique in that it was held in conjunction with the commissioning of Rev. Maku Potae, an Anglican Priest, into the role of National Director of the Prison Chaplaincy Service, and was held in the Anglican Cathedral, Wellington. A truly ecumenical event.

During the service, Lynn & Rob Hill NZ Passionist Family Group Movement Directors, presented a Passionist lapel cross to the Archbishop, so that he could pin it on Greg's collar. "Often I am asked by prisoners about the Passionist ring that I wear", Greg commented. "This cross is something else for them to refer to. Paul of the Cross had his own prison ministry."

That whole day gave Anne & Greg the chance to reflect on their Ministry journey over the last twenty years. It started with Fr Paddy Kinsella SM, knocking on their door. His visit was to ask if they would consider being the Parish Coordinators of the Passionist Family Group Movement, that he was pushing to be set up in Otaki parish, seventy kilometres north of Wellington. Several weekends later, the set up team arrived, including Lynn and Rob Hill, Gabrielle and David Burt, and it was led by Paul Traynor CP, (Brian's brother). That weekend was a new beginning.

Not only for Anne, and Greg was there this new parish involvement, but they soon were involved with the team that set up other parishes. Then Brian Traynor CP, at Ingelwood, the evening before the Sunday set up, suggested to Greg that he give the homily the following morning. Greg remembers that he never slept all night.

However that was the start of the public life Anne & Greg developed within the church. They went on to lead the Lay team that setup PFG's in parishes from Rotorua in the North, to Timaru in the South; Fifteen parishes in all. Greg or Anne would do the homily for each Mass, and the other would lead the actual set up event. For most of those set ups they were aided by Linda & Jim McSorriley from Hamilton Cathedral parish, who allocated the family or individual names to each Family Group. There was of course a lot of help from the Holy Spirit!

During that time, Anne and Greg participated in the fifty-five hour Passionist Effective Leadership Training course, and after becoming Passionist Companions, they attended a Passionist Institute in Marrickville, Sydney and another in New Zealand..

Four years ago Greg was appointed to be the Catholic Prison Chaplain at Spring Hill men's prison by Bishop Denis Brown. At the same time, Bishop Pat Dunn appointed him to be the Catholic Chaplain at Auckland Women's prison. Both these roles together meant Greg was working full time in Catholic prison ministry. Greg says that he has experience in many diverse jobs in his life, but this is the best.

Being asked to consider putting his name forward for the present role, reminded Greg that Jesus himself was a prisoner, along with most of the Apostles. Greg is inspired by this motto. "Jesus tell me how you yourself would respond to this issue in front of me."

The Passionist Family extends sincere congratulations to Greg on this appointment.