



## The Story of Elephants

### (Male Initiation of Young Men)

There is that well known story about orphaned young male elephants of East Africa misbehaving and creating disturbances in the elephant colony. With the absence of authority figures in their lives, the young elephants trample crops, rip up trees and behave mindlessly.

The animal psychologist solution to this problem was to air-lift some older bull elephants into the community.

The bull elephant example of wandering around the orphaned teenagers was sufficient for them to calm down and learn the way of the group. The result was a settled group of young male elephants.

Connections to human society are obvious especially when the "bull human" equivalents are missing from many of the New Zealand schools and families. e.g. The number of men in primary teaching is very disturbing.

Young men growing up have many mixed messages about who they should be and what they can do. They miss the 'bull elephant' of men who read poetry, listen to classical music, play sport and who speak from the heart rather than about cliques and legalities.

But the task of initiating young males into

the adult world is a task like any other. It must be planned, taught, reflected upon and celebrated.

Writers in this area reflect upon five principles which go across all cultures and need to be communicated to young men. I am indebted to Richard Rohr ofm for his insights here.

- 1 **Life is hard.** We would have less suffering in the long run if this principle is accepted and not a notion to be avoided. Men should get used to this fact of being human.
- 2 **You are going to die.** This certainty and reality of one's own death needs to be made real. Attendance at funerals of relatives/family should be compulsory upbringing events for young men.
- 3 **You are not that important.** Personal humility is of utmost importance for happiness in this world. Being humble in the presence of God's awesome creation is to be encouraged. So while "I am special" themes are practised, ritualized, and are cute, we need other themes of recognizing one's place in the world.
- 4 **You are not in control.** The suffering man, in an unjust situation with elements he cannot change, understands this. Ultimately God is in control. Men need to get used to this fact.
- 5 **Your life is not about you.** Everyone is



part of something bigger than himself. Boys learn this with their commitment to school sport and music. Ultimately life is about a return to God. In theology terms this is called holiness!

So in terms of boys at St Peter's College in 2009:

a) Boys learn that **life is hard** when their parents separate, argue about money in front of them, and abuse each other with hurtful words and action. They learn that study is hard and academic expectations can be overwhelming, and struggle to achieve is part of the equation

b) Boys learn that one of their own year 12, Rowan – who wheeled himself around St Peter's College for four years – died unexpectedly – and that **death is a certainty** for all of us.

c) Boys think they are of bullet proof importance until they fail an exam, get sent off from a game, get suspended from school for misbehaviour or their girl friend drops them.

d) They learn from sport they are **not in control**, by the loss of a 1<sup>st</sup> XV game by one point, the poor decisions of a referee, the unfairness of the media and sometime arbitrary decisions of their coach.

e) And boys learn from their College whose motto is "**To Love and To Serve**", that the men of St Peter's are Men for others. Their lives are about the other person, and not about themselves and achievement in this area is as important as following one's dream!

And as I write this, Kashin our Auckland Zoo elephant has just died! Burma is orphaned. He will need a "bull elephant" mentor and companion.

But there again – so do 1200 young men at St Peter's College in 2009 and the years ahead.

*In His Peace*  
**K F Fouhy**  
Principal

The College celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary on St Peter's Day with Mass in St Patrick's Cathedral. A number of First Day students attended and received a special blessing from Bishop Pat and sustained applause from the congregation.



# The Spirit of Adventure

by Peter Buffalora

In term one I had the privilege of going on a 10 day voyage aboard the Spirit of Adventure. It is a 148ft yacht which is owned by the Spirit of Adventure Trust and which aims to teach leadership, independence and community spirit through the medium of the sea to 15 – 19 year olds. The yacht has a permanent crew of 10 plus two leading hands.

On my voyage there were 40 trainees – 20 boys and 20 girls – from all around New Zealand and other parts of the world. On stepping aboard we had our ipods and cell phones taken from us and were split into four groups named Port A, Port B, Starboard A, and Starboard B. In these groups we competed in challenges in which we all had turns at a leadership role. We sailed from

Auckland’s Viaduct Harbour to Waiheke Island, Kawau, Great Barrier, Coromandel and back to Auckland. During our voyage we experienced some horrendous weather with 50 knot winds and 6 metre swells. This made the voyage even more enjoyable as we were put through our daily routines of getting up at 6.30am to swim around the boat and to climb the 20 metre mast.

We also learnt the basics of sailing, navigation and charting the course of the ship. We also helped with the meals for the entire crew and explored the shore environment.

On the last day we had the opportunity to elect our own crew. I was appointed captain and had to select my crew to sail the ship, unaided by the regular crew, from Coromandel to Auckland.

I strongly recommend this voyage to anyone who wants a life changing experience. For me it was a great voyage. I have made lifelong friends, have taken on leadership skills (like talking to a group of people you don’t know) and having some wonderful memories.

More information on [www.spiritofadventure.org.nz](http://www.spiritofadventure.org.nz)



## My Cenotaph

by Eddie Webster

The reason I made my cenotaph the way it is, is because I wanted to be original so I used steel to build. I designed it and then gave it to my dad to be specially cut by a machine. The base and steps are made out of wood to provide thickness and stability. Its flagpoles are steel so they are strong and they will bend without breaking. The base is spray-painted a matt grey.

I remembered the epitaph (“we will remember them”) from the many dawn parades I have been to. I went to buy special paper that would iron onto fabric so that the flags would droop down over the cenotaph. I chose the four New Zealand ensigns over other flags because those are the flags you see on the cenotaphs in New Zealand on Anzac day.

The reason it is four sided is so that if it was a real cenotaph where people gather, there would be more room for people to stand and so it would fit my epitaph.

by Gianni Thapliyal

I made my cenotaph using a cross because it signifies Jesus and Jesus died for us. The Anzacs also died for our freedom.

I put stones and sand to resemble the environment at Gallipoli during World War I. I put soldiers on my cenotaph to remember the countless battles they fought and the braveness of these men. I also put a flag in one of the soldier’s hands because that what they died for. They died for our country, New Zealand. Finally I put the wreath with poppies on to honour all those soldiers who died at Gallipoli.

## Musicians get the Gold!

At the recent Auckland KBB Music Festival both the Senior Concert Band and the combined St Peter’s College and St Mary’s College Sinfonia achieved great success, being chosen to perform in the Showcase Finale. Both achieved Gold Awards for their participation in this highly competitive festival.

The standard of playing of the 31 Concert Bands and 19 orchestras who entered the competition was very high and four schools in the concert band category and three schools in the orchestral category received Gold Awards.

Both band and orchestra, prior to the KBB Festival, played on many charitable occasions. The orchestra went on a mini-tour to South Auckland and played to small primary and intermediate schools to the delight of the children.

The Senior Concert Band is involved in many occasions in school life from liturgies to assemblies and, just prior to the contest, they visited Selwyn Village Community and played to a very appreciative audience. Both groups, orchestra and band, recently played for St Benedict’s parish at St Benedict’s church fundraising for their concert grand piano. They received accolades for their disciplined, mature attitude as well as their exciting playing.



## Having a Go at “Fair Go”

by Pat Griffith

Drama in Year 10 has produced a piece for the “Fair Go” student advertisement competition. The brief was to make a 30 second commercial for an unpopular school subject – we chose dancing, even though technically, this is not a stand alone school subject at St Peter’s. Ben Wickens put the finishing touches on the product and we turned in a competent entry. If we make the finals they will be screened on TV One during their September “Fair Go Ad Awards” show.

# St Peter's Sport on a High

St Peter's experienced a number of highs during the winter terms. Year 11 golfer, Lance Go, kick started term two by winning the Auckland Secondary Schools Golf Strokeplay Title. Lance shot 72 to head off 175 other top golfers in the greater Auckland area to claim the title. The win is Lance's first big tournament title and was very satisfying for the 15 year old who was up against a number of golfers on handicaps lower than his two.

The First XV had their best season for a number of years. Unfortunately the side came unstuck in the semi-final against eventual winners Mt Albert Grammar, losing 17 – 16. Despite this the side can reflect on a season which had a number of highlights. These included winning and retaining the Hibernian Shield; finishing at the top of the table after round robin play; beating Auckland Grammar, 12 – 5, for the first time in nine years. A by-product of the team's success has seen a number of players gaining selection for representative teams. Francis Saili has been selected for New Zealand Secondary Schools who tour Australia in October. Congratulations to Ben Lam, Matt Gandy, Francis Saili, Bryn Hall, Nepia Fox-Matamua, Zac Moimoi and Conrad Lam for being selected for the Auckland Secondary Schools Team. DJ Solomona and Patrick Tuipolotu have been selected for the Auckland U16's.

In addition to the success of the First XV the 2A's, 2B's, 4A's and 6C's made the finals in their respective grades. The 2A's won their final against Kings 10 – 9 and the 2B's overpowered Otahuhu 17 – 8 to claim the title. Winning these two titles in the same year is a first for St Peter's. It's a credit to the Yr 11 – 13 boys who represented these teams and shows St Peter's rugby is in great heart.

In the highly competitive Auckland Premier Soccer League the 1<sup>st</sup> XI finished in fourth position. This included seven wins. After suffering some heavy losses at the start of the season the

### **Most Unusual:**

**Daniel and Riley Coll made First XV history when, as brothers, they played on the two sides of the scrum in a game against St Paul's College First XV recently.**



side showed great spirit and resolve to finish in the top four. One of the most memorable games was a 7 – 1 win against Macleans. In this match Rory Kelly netted a phenomenal six goals. Rory Kelly's exceptional form has not gone unnoticed. He has been selected for Auckland FC mens team. The side recorded three hard fought wins against Sacred Heart in doing so they retain the Catholic Cup. The First XI also progressed through to the Final of the prestigious Knock Out Cup. They are playing Auckland Grammar in the final. Stand out performers for the side include; Isaac Fitzgerald, Ethan Galbraith and Rory Kelly.

The 1<sup>st</sup> XI Hockey concluded their season with a fourth placing at the Wolerston Cup held in Ngatea during Tournament week. Earlier in the season the 1<sup>st</sup> XI swept aside all before them to win the Auckland 'B' grade title. In doing so they scored an impressive 37 goals and conceded only 9. In the A/B competition the side performed with distinction and made it through to the semi-final. Captain Bernard Ashman, Tom Cantlon, Alistair Van Der Water and Thomas Masters have been key contributors to the sides excellent season.

The First V Basketball team also enjoyed a highly successful season. They were runners up in the central zone league. The side competed in the Northern Region Tournament for the first time. After a slow start to the week the side finished the week with four straight wins over Kristin (83 – 80), Auckland Grammar B (83 – 70), Takapuna Grammar (83 – 81) and Henderson (116 – 69). The sides leading points scorers were Cameron Proctor and James Glucina. Promising Year 11 students Shaun Tempest and Eastern Mailtoa-Brown will help ensure St Peter's Basketball goes from strength to strength.

An interest side note to St Peter's sporting success is that Old Boys are involved in coaching our premier winter sports teams. Rugby – Steve Griffin, Soccer – Brett Murdoch, Basketball – Jamie Brown, Hockey – Kirk and Christopher Pereira. The St Peter's community looks forward to further success in term four.

**1<sup>st</sup> V Basketball Captain prepares to shoot against Sacred Heart**



**Isaac Fitzgerald evades the Auckland Grammar defender**



**1<sup>st</sup> XV Captain, Francis Saili, in action against Tamaki. Nepia Fox-Matamua in support**

# The Death of Father Bob

by Dan Stollenwerk

For five years, I had been haunted by the 26 hours of suffering and isolation my mentor, Father Robert Schwenker, must have endured as death approached.

On March 17, 2004, Father Bob, missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate and 1958 graduate of Notre Dame, died in Bogotá, Colombia, the result of a hit-and-run.

At the time I was in Papua New Guinea, and could attend neither the funeral in Bogotá nor any of the commemoration services in the various cities in which he had served in the United States. I did what I could. I wrote a tribute to Father Bob, focusing on our shared search for God in the poverty of a men's shelter in the Bronx, New York, in the early 1980s.

Now, five years later, during Holy Week, 2009, I had the means and the time to make a pilgrimage to Colombia to see where Father Bob had lived, worked, died and been buried. I wanted to bring resolution to that part of my life.

In Bogotá, a cordial and talented community of Oblates welcomed me into their fold. Lay associate Orlando Puentes, who credits Father Bob with changing his life by asking him to establish a centre to help children in extreme poverty to eat, study and graduate from high school, took me to the poor, often violent, southernmost settlement of Bogotá: Ciudad Bolivar.

He showed me where Father Bob had lived, the room where, on the morning of March 16, 2004, he had laid his clothes out to begin his day after his strictly kept morning run.

He took me outside to see where Father Bob used to run around a nearby basketball court and up the narrow dusty streets to the Salesian high school where he served as chaplain. We then drove to the highway leading out of the settlement, to the curve where around 6.30 that morning Father Bob had been found, still alive.

OMI Provincial Father Roger Halle later filled me in on a few details. Someone in a passing bus must have cell-phoned the emergency. When they arrived, the police found Father Bob sitting up. As one officer looked under his running shirt to see if he was wounded, Father Bob threw up blood.

Because he was in his running gear, Father Bob carried no identification. He remained alive some 26 hours in the local hospital, but as a result of the massive wounds to his head he could not communicate.

There had been much talk over the last five years as to whether Father Bob had been attacked for his watch (no one seems to know

where it went), or had seen another crime and so had been assaulted (a dead body was found nearby), or whether in fact he had been hit by a large vehicle, picked up and then abandoned just outside the residential area (this last scenario appears to be the most probable).

## Alone

But now as I knelt on the paved side of the road, the cause of death disturbed me little while the 26 hours of lone suffering became even more acute. There were many who loved him; countless more who respected him. But no one was at Father Bob's side at the moment of his greatest need.

Because of busy schedules, Father Bob's community did not notice his absence until parishioners in the nearby mission reported that he did not show up for his regularly scheduled 6 p.m. Mass. As night fell, calls went out to hospitals and, ultimately, morgues, but he was not discovered until the next morning. Mr. Puentes was called upon to identify the body.

As destiny would have it, the morning of Good Friday I toured Ciudad Bolivar and the highway where Father Bob was found. That afternoon I attended services at the mission of Mochuelo Bajo, where Father Bob had also served. During the Gospel drama of Jesus' trial and crucifixion, I could not but think of Father Bob's agony and death.

Unanticipated, however, was the consolation that overcame me in that most rudimentary of ecclesial structures - with the noise of the muffler-less passing trucks and the sight of the lackadaisical dog resting under the bare wooden bench - when the narrator of John's Gospel reported that Jesus gave up his spirit.

So, too, did I imagine the last minute of Father Bob's life. However much he may have felt abandoned, like Jesus on the cross, his suffering was over. It was finished. Father Bob, too, gave up his spirit.

It was, however, a seminarian who had lived with Father Bob for two years, Darwin Barraza Hernández, who gave me further insight into Father Bob's death. Anyone the least bit acquainted with him, Darwin recounted, knew that Father Bob sought God in ever-greater poverty. Several years earlier he had lived in a wooden shack in Posón, another poor, often violent neighbourhood of Cartagena; in many ways he lived even poorer than his neighbours. He possessed but three changes of clothes, which he washed out meticulously. It was he who had set the mission up in Ciudad Bolivar, the poorest area of Bogotá.

It was when Father Bob wanted other Oblates to live the same sort of poverty that he saw as essential to the Oblate mission, Darwin continued, that the same argument would begin: “Yes, Bob. You can preach poverty, even live poverty, but in the end you can never be poor. Not really. Not like the poor of the earth. If you get sick, you'll be cared for in the best of hospitals with money from an established worldwide ecclesial community. You cannot ultimately be poor - and don't try to force it upon us.”



### *Living poverty*

In his death, it occurred to me while speaking to Darwin, Father Bob had indeed lived the poverty of the lonely, the poor, the abandoned of the world. Thus it was that that Good Friday I found consolation in Father Bob's death. Indeed he had achieved the spiritual poverty he quested, but at a certain point the suffering stopped. Like Jesus, abandoned on the cross, he had given up his spirit.

On Saturday Orlando took me to Father Bob's simple grave in a far-northern suburb of Bogotá. We prayed and talked and told stories. When it was time to leave, I asked to have a minute alone. I touched the earth with the palm of my hand and for about the dozenth time in two days allowed the tears to swell. I asked Father Bob to pray for me and my family. Then I left.

That evening, in another OMI mission of Muelle, within the larger parish of Sta Juanade Lestonac in Bogotá, with the Easter Vigil set up on an outdoor basketball court, I was given the honour of preaching. I spoke of Father Bob, his life, his mission, his vision. I mentioned the end of suffering, of Jesus on the cross and Father Bob alone in a clinic - both giving up their spirit. I quoted the consoling words of Isaiah - "For a

brief moment I abandoned you, but with great tenderness I will take you back... For a moment I hid my face from you, but with enduring love I take pity on you" - and mentioned St. Paul's understanding of rebirth in baptism.

But it was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who most spoke to me that evening: terrified but with great joy, they had seen the risen Lord.

Quietly, not with trumpet blast, but gently, on the other side of suffering, Jesus had risen.

For perhaps the first time in my life that evening I felt the hope of the resurrection, that somehow what T.S. Eliot calls in Four Quartets the "primitive terror," the abiding agony of others, "nearly experienced/ Involving ourselves," would somehow come right. Certainly there remained in me no doubt that Father Bob's life, quest, suffering and death

would prevail as truth, and that that truth would, paradoxically, ultimately prevail over suffering and death.

In Father Bob I felt the resurrection of Christ. This is what I told the people of Muelle, many of whom knew Father Bob, at the Easter Vigil, 2009, five years after his death. This is what I feel today.

**This article by Dan Stollenwerk first appeared on June 11, 2009 in Notre Dame Magazine online at <http://magazine.nd.edu/news/11827-his-truth-prevails>. It is the result of a trip to Colombia during Holy Week, 2009, made possible by the St. Peter's College Teacher Scholarship. Dan can be reached at [dstollenwerk@st-peters.school.nz](mailto:dstollenwerk@st-peters.school.nz)**

## An Environmental Story - Weta Box Project

Twelve year 10 -12 students have undertaken an Environmental Science project with great gusto. Sponsored by Bayer Pharmaceuticals and the Auckland Regional Council's Environmental Initiatives Fund St Peter's students have made 150 wooden Weta boxes to be used for Weta monitoring on Motu-Kaikoura Island in the Hauraki Gulf.

Head of Science Faculty Mr Kevin Barker and Hard Materials Technology teacher Mr Mike Kelly have led this group in successfully completing the 150 boxes.

Motu-Kaikoura is a 600 hectare Island sanctuary off Great Barrier Island which is

home to a lot of endangered endemic fauna. In 2008/2009 rats and other mammalian pests have been eradicated. The Weta boxes will be used to monitor the recovering population of the Auckland Tree Weta after the rat eradication. It is hoped the boys will be able to travel to the Island later in 2009 and put up the Weta boxes in survey lines.

Students involved include: Athanasius Sante Marie, Sam Wojcik, Michael Wood, Avi Prasad, Tutangata Ama, David John, Scott Armistead, Jed Murzello, Jayanth Miranda, Mark Reddy, Patryk Lazarz and Sean Oddy.

## Edmund Rice Tertiary Scholarship

This Scholarship was funded by donations from Old Boys and from funds raised at the Edmund Rice Dinners.

Many boys have benefited from the help with tertiary education costs. In 2008 eight boys each received \$1000 to assist them.

The current economy indicates that this year there will be a greater demand for support. Donations to the Scholarship Fund may be sent to:

**Edmund Rice Tertiary Scholarship Fund  
St Peter's College  
Mountain Road, Auckland 1023**



# A Year in France

Margaret Ubels

I have been home a year and yet I still sometimes wake up expecting to be alone in my apartment in France getting ready for another day teaching English to French children. It comes as a bit of a shock to be in my New Zealand house with my husband and children around.

In 2007 I received a Languages Study Award to live, work and study in France for a year. I was sent to Besançon, in the east of France, just under 2 hours from the Franco-Swiss border. There I taught English to groups of students from 4 to 22 years old and went to classes at the Centre de Linguistique Appliqué (CLA), one of the renowned centres of languages pedagogy in Europe. Originally the idea was that I should complete a diploma of French Language and Culture but, because of my teaching load, it was impossible to fit the classes into my timetable. However I did manage to complete the C2 French language exam. The European languages now have a standardised foreign language examination system, with the C2 being the highest level. Even native speakers can find it challenging.

The Lycée St Jean where I taught was in fact 4 different establishments over 2 different sites: 2 primary schools (which included the ‘maternels’ – kindergartens), a collège (years 7-10) and the lycee (years 11-13)

I lived in a one bedroom apartment attached to the Collège Notre Dame - It was a 1 minute walk to work on the days I worked there, but then it was a four storey climb to my classrooms. Ouf!! Every day I went into the city to attend classes at the CLA. This was a short bus ride away or a 30 minute walk – which was fine except for the day when the buses went on strike in a snow storm.

Although a small city, Besançon is the capital of the Franche Comté region. The central part is built on the banks of the river Doubs and it is surrounded by defensive ramparts. A huge citadel up on a cliff top dominates the skyline. The site has recently been accorded World Heritage status.

Of course I enjoyed the food and drink – I didn’t know the wines, cheeses and saucissons – so I decided to start at one end of the supermarket shelves and eat and drink my way along. I only allowed myself to buy a pastry on the walk home after church on Sunday – such self discipline!

Even more rewarding were the personal contacts. Everyone was very welcoming (forget the cliché image of the arrogant, unwelcoming French person – it is far from the truth) and I made many lifelong friends. It was a real advantage to be a New Zealander and I really enjoyed hanging out with the local rugby club – the club rooms were just over the road- and I look forward to the

day when I can take a group back to play. I love the French way of conducting end of season BBQs - a three course meal, all washed down with copious amounts of wine.

Would I do it again? Of course I would. I gained so much - on a personal level as much as on a professional and academic level: I learnt to live and travel on my own. I created a new life for myself with new friends and new experiences. Certainly it was difficult to live without my family but time passes quickly – too quickly. And suddenly I had to pack up and leave that life.

But I left a little bit of myself there.

## Close But No Cigar

**Inter-School History Competition by Dwain Quadros (Year 11) and Mr John Stradwick**

On the night of August 13th four Year 11 St Peter’s History quiz teams took their places in a 72 team competition in the huge Diocesan school gymnasium. Our teams had been training for four weeks under last year’s winning Captain Patrick Fitzgibbon (year 12) and Mr. Stradwick. We were gunning for a third consecutive title. The pressure was well and truly on us.

After seven rounds of 20th Century history questions and a bonus ponderous puzzle question we had one team placed 1st equal! Amazing. We thought we had won the competition once again. But the quizmaster had a tiebreaker question. We were quite sure of our team delivering on any history question thrown at them. So, the question was read out, “How many piglets were used in the filming of the movie ‘Babe?’” What? Both teams were stumped. The actual answer is 48, and with Takapuna Grammar going with only 8 piglets, surely St Peter’s must have written down a higher number? Once again the quizmaster spoke out across the silent hall, “St Peter’s answer is.....7 piglets. The winners therefore are Takapuna Grammar.” The St Peter’s team sat slumped in their chairs in disbelief. Sunimal Fernando asked, “There’s no prize for second place, is there sir?”

### Personal Identity - Joseph Gasparini Year 9



### My Faith - Trevor Steffany Year 9



# India

## Brendon Abley

It is hard to describe exactly what drew twenty-three young men and women from their comfortable lives in New Zealand to spend five really quite uncomfortable and challenging weeks travelling around India. We are told that we would all come back “changed”, that this five weeks abroad would give us some sort of “perspective” that sixteen plus years in New Zealand could not. To be honest, I was unsure of this, but five weeks abroad sounded like a bit of fun and a challenge.

And while we spent over a year preparing and fundraising, it really wasn't until we stepped out of the airport in Delhi and into the polluted Indian night that we realised what we were in for. We made our way through crowds of hawkers and taxi drivers, all shouting at us in languages we could not understand, through dark narrow alleyways, through piles of human shit and rubbish and finally to our hotel. I walked with my roommate into what appeared to be a cell, painted sickly pink with a leaking roof and mouldy walls, no windows and a toilet that looked like it could have been taken from the set of a particularly gruesome horror movie. I sank down onto my damp mattress and felt like crying, wanting more than anything to go home.

However, despite the initial shock, the trip was truly incredible. Every day brought a new challenge. Our perception of the world and our place in it was rocked to its core. Acclimatising to India was not an easy process. It was hard to every day see whole families sleeping on streets, the children often filthy and in tears. It was hard to see children, deformed and disfigured, begging for money and being beaten by adults and police. For a middle class white boy from Mt Albert, it was like stepping onto another planet and heartbreaking to know that nothing we alone could do could change their lives. We were tested every day, pushed to our mental and physical limits. Naturally, for immune systems used to New Zealand food



and water standards, sickness for us was a fact of life for those five weeks. The inevitable diarrhoea and vomiting followed us everywhere. Whilst the group became progressively more tight-knit as the trip proceeded, pressure and culture shock affected everyone: meltdowns and tantrums were unavoidable.

We went through a lot. Two of those weeks were spent working for Mother Theresa's Missionaries of Charity, serving some of the poorest people in the world. I spent the time working with disabled adults, who had been taken in off the streets pretty much unable to survive on their own. Our jobs included feeding, shaving and washing these people, and hopefully ensuring that some of them could return to a normal life outside. This was not always the case. Two men died while we were working there. However, despite this, there was something beautiful in seeing volunteers coming from around the world to live the vision of Mother Theresa, of seeing so many people of such varied backgrounds connecting with each other. There was a real sense of seeing beyond race and colour, language and disabilities, and seeing people simply as human beings.

I consider the trip one of the most important events of my life. Since returning to New Zealand, it is astounding just how blessed we are to live in a country with so many opportunities and privileges. I've come to regret also perhaps the sense of entitlement that we in New Zealand seem to have, in taking our opportunities for granted, the sense that luxuries such as education, good housing, food and clean water should be considered rights rather than privileges. Twenty-three people set out from New Zealand at the end of last year and I believe twenty-three different people returned. I don't know if what we did in India made a difference to the people we initially set out to “help”. Even the word “help”, on reflection, seems patronising, as though a group of pampered Kiwis could solve the problems of people for whom simple survival consumes every aspect of existence. What could we, who have never known hunger, poverty, homelessness, have to offer to people for whom this is a grinding, daily reality, to whom our lives must seem like fragments of a halcyon dream? However, the difference to us was phenomenal. We were challenged. Our views of the world were turned upside down. And we were changed. India presented to us both adversity and an enormous opportunity, truly the experience of a lifetime.



# Mr Patrick Drumm appointed Principal



On the last day of Term 2 Mr Patrick Drumm was inaugurated in a colourful ceremony as Principal of Aorere College. His departure marked a break in his long connection with St Peter's College – he is an Old Boy (and former Head Prefect), his father is an Old Boy, his brothers are Old Boys.

Mr Drumm returned to teach science at St Peter's College and further developed his educational skills in accepting senior positions at St Mary's College and Onehunga High School before coming back to St Peter's College in a range of positions culminating in his most recent work as Associate Principal.

A keen sportsman, coaching rugby and cricket teams, he also became a top level rugby referee. In a rather dramatic ironic twist he found, on the first Saturday in his new position, his Aorere First XV playing against St Peter's College First XV – a game won by St Peter's College.

Mr Drumm takes with him to Aorere College the deep appreciation of his work at St Peter's College and the good wishes of all for him in his promotion.

## Jerusalem

by Brendan Abley

The SPC Special Character group was set up in 1998 as a means for young men of St Peter's to step up and grow in faith and the values of the school, and show leadership through living these values. The highlight of the year for the group is, always, the annual trip, held alternately at Mitimiti in the far north and at Jerusalem on the Wanganui River. This year, an intrepid group of 48 set out from Auckland to brave a week at the settlement at Jerusalem, staying on a marae. Originally a convent set up by Mother Aubert as a base for her religious order, the Sisters of Compassion, the settlement was later made famous by the poet James K Baxter, who lived for four years in the area and set up a refuge for young people, disillusioned with the pressures of city life. While this has led people to decry Jerusalem as a hippy commune, in fact, it was a spiritual retreat from which I think, in the end, we all benefitted.

So after a hair-raising 5-hour trip, improved not at all by Mr Fricker's driving, through swathes of unspoiled countryside, untroubled by such menaces as sealed roads, we finally arrived at Jerusalem. Several words came to mind on surveying the place that was to be our home for the next week. "Rustic" is probably the kindest, off the top of my head. Once we got over the fact that we needed to keep a fire burning all day in order to get hot water, the various gas explosions in the kitchen, and the realities of cooking and cleaning up after 48 people, we began to settle in and appreciate the repose which Jerusalem offered from our daily lives. Then the water to half the complex cut out, leaving us with one cold shower and two toilets.

Despite this, we all gained something from

the trip. Reflection and prayer were central to our days in Jerusalem, with morning and evening prayers held in the beautiful chapel above the marae. These were supplemented with "active prayer" sessions, which allowed us to express our prayers in more than just words and thoughts. Team building was an important part of the trip, with exercises such as a massive hike through the hills, within sight of Mt Ruapehu, and an "amazing race" challenge all serving to create a stronger bond amongst the people in the group. Whilst competition was fierce, from the human pyramid competition, to the mighty Singstar battle on the final night, I think we all returned having seen a different side of everyone, and came back with much more respect for each other. Especially for the year 12s, the trip I think is the catalyst for bringing everyone together and setting the group up for the next year.

We were also given the opportunity to learn more about the work of Mother Aubert and James K Baxter respectively, from the Sisters of Compassion who live in Jerusalem to this day. Mother Aubert became famous for her work with local Maori and for her expertise in using traditional remedies to improve medicine. Baxter too was concerned with creating a fusion of Catholic and Maori ideals. His poetry, which we listened to each night, gave us all an insight into his views of the shallow and materialistic culture supported by western society. While I don't think we were inspired to "go bush", in some way Baxter spoke to us all, encouraging us to take a step back from our hectic lives and just reflect.

The benefits of the trip were enormous. We have all gained a newfound respect for

and appreciation of everyone in the group, which will in turn impact on the wider school community. Many thanks must go to the people who made this all possible: first and foremost, Mr Kingdon, the champ, for organising the trip and running the special character trip from year to year. Many thanks too to Damaris Kingdon for all her work on the trip. Mention must also be made of the mighty Mr Fricker, the trip stalwart, who has attended all but two of the trips since the first in 1998, and whose Gordon Ramsay-esque domination of the kitchen ensured that we all got three squares a day and that the three second rule was duly obeyed. Thanks also to Father Frank Bird, and our campus ministers Joe Tupou-Vea and Tom Borger, for their spiritual support- and Tom's tasteless jokes. Finally, a big congratulations to all the special character leaders- Dom, Woody, Jason, Zach and Brendan- for their work, and financial genius in nearly stretching \$1300 to cover enough food for everybody for the entire trip. Without you it would not have been possible.

## My Mom

by Daniel Jang 7w

**I have a wonderful pigeon  
She speaks to me gently and peacefully  
And she takes care of me  
But she has a very busy job  
So I can't play with my mom sometimes.**

**When I was young I remember I was very lonely  
But my mom came when work finished  
And she hugged me  
And she said "sorry"  
I call her my lovely mom.**