

FATHER HOWARD'S SILVER JUBILEE

CELEBRATION AT MILTON.

Father M. Howard, the popular pastor of Milton during the past 11 years, attained last Thursday the silver jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood (says the *Bruce Herald* of June 23). At a social tendered to him in the evening, St. Joseph's Schoolroom proved totally inadequate to accommodate the large crowd, of all shades of religious opinion, who assembled to honor a beloved priest and an estimable citizen. Extra seating accommodation had been provided, but scores had to be turned away, unable to gain admittance. The Mayor presided. Proceedings commenced with a chorus by the church choir.

The Mayor expressed his pleasure at having the opportunity of honoring Father Howard—a man whom they all loved and esteemed and to whom honor was due. This was the first opportunity which had presented itself to the parishioners of the Milton Catholic Church and other citizens of publicly recognising the beloved pastor and extending their appreciation of his labors in their midst. The silver jubilee marked an epoch in Father Howard's priesthood. He was ordained in the city of Paris on June 19, 1894—a city to which public thought wandered daily when reading cable news of the Peace Conference. He was educated in Paris, and studied at the Irish College. Shortly after Father Howard's ordination to the priesthood he came to this Dominion, at the request of the late Dr. Moran, and there was large scope for young and energetic priests at that period. Father Howard had been stationed at Oamaru, Gore, South Dunedin, also assisting at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Dunedin, as Administrator. Eleven years had elapsed since he came to Milton parish, which extended almost from Mosgiel to the "back o' beyond" in Catlins district. This covered a large area, and it was marvellous how the revered parish priest managed to get over the district on his usual duties or errands of mercy. Father Howard was noted for quick travelling with his motor cycle or car, and the speaker opined that he sometimes exceeded the speed limits. (Laughter.) He was a busy man, but found time to devote to hobbies, the principal of which was a love of horticulture, and the displays from his garden had been universally admired at the local Horticultural Society's shows. Father Howard had a soft spot in his heart for human nature, and the children admired him for his kindly, cheerful spirit and friendly manner toward them. During his ministry in Milton great improvements had been effected to the church property—at a cost of about £1400—and it had been a pleasure to note the harmonious relations which existed between the congregation and their beloved pastor. Although not having taken a prominent part in public affairs, Father Howard maintained a keen interest in matters affecting the welfare of the borough. The parishioners did well to honor their priest, who rejoiced with them in their gladness and prosperity, or expressed a ready sympathy and lent a helping hand in times of sorrow or trouble. Words were too inadequate to fully express their appreciation of Father Howard. On behalf of the parishioners and well-wishers, the Mayor then presented the guest with a bag containing 140 sovereigns as a slight token of their appreciation, and hoped he would be long spared to minister the comforts of the Church to his parishioners in this district.

Mr. W. Kirby, speaking on behalf of the parishioners, congratulated Father Howard on the attainment of his silver jubilee, and extended their kindly feelings and best wishes for his future health, peace, and happiness. They felt they could not allow the auspicious occasion to pass without outward manifestation of the love and loyalty they bore towards their pastor. The Mayor had referred to his qualities from the civilian's view, but it remained for his flock to speak of his work amongst them in teaching and expounding the fundamental principles of Holy Church. The bond of unity between pastor and flock in Milton was as great as in the days when martyrs in Ireland laid down their

lives for the faith. It was difficult to express their appreciation of his kindly sympathy towards them. Father Howard had performed many kindly actions in secret, and his parishioners did not forget these unostentatious deeds. No personal sacrifice had been too great in ministering to their needs in this large parish—even to those in the most remote corners thereof.

Mr. P. Curran said he had been a member of the parish for 45 years, and during that period had not monopolised 45 minutes of their time in speechmaking. Duty called him to express his sentiments, but it was difficult to find words sufficiently expressive of his kindly feelings towards their loved priest, whom they were all proud to honor. There was no self-sacrifice which Father Howard would not undertake on their behalf.

Complimentary speeches were also made by Mr. M. Cowan (representing the Kaitangata parishioners), Mr. J. J. Marlow (who paid high tribute to the guest's services whilst at South Dunedin), Mr. Alex. Rennie, Mr. John Paul, Mr. W. B. Graham, and Very Rev. Father Coffey (Diocesan Administrator), who spoke of the close bond of brotherhood existing between Father Howard and his brother-priests in the Dunedin diocese.

Father Howard, on rising to respond, was greeted with loud cheering. He expressed his gratitude for the presence of such a large audience, thus proving their encouragement and goodwill towards him. He was grateful for the privilege which had been accorded him of teaching and administering to them the truths of the Church, and for the people's support and prayers in his ministry amongst them. They had treated his shortcomings with the greatest indulgence, and always accorded him respect for his office. They had also given him the most comfortable means of travelling round the large parish, thus dispensing with the long and wearisome journeys of the past. From their earthly treasures they had now contributed to the handsome gift of that evening, for which he expressed deepest gratitude. No man with any human feelings could receive such gifts and devoted service without willingly performing any task which might be requested of him. He was grateful to God for having placed him amongst a people with such generous hearts and such devoted service. (Loud applause.)

A lengthy musical and elocutionary programme was rendered at intervals. Songs were contributed by Misses Hand, Healy, and Curran, Messrs. Dawson and Holmes; violin solo by Miss Vennig; part song by Messrs. Hubble, Littlejohn, Grealish, and Kirby; duet by Miss Martin and Mr. F. Hubble; and recitations by Mr. M. Cowan. The accompaniments were played by Mrs. McMurtrie, Misses Curran and Coleman. Miss Wall also contributed a dance. Supper was provided and served by ladies of the congregation. The duties of secretary and musical director were capably discharged by Messrs. R. Grealish and Wm. Kirby respectively.

Father Howard was also entertained in the afternoon by the pupils of St. Joseph's School, and presented with a framed handsomely-designed illuminated address and a brief bag. The text of the address, which was printed at the *Tablet* office, was as follows:—

Very Rev. and Dear Father:—It is with feelings of pleasure and pride that we greet you on this memorable day—the silver jubilee of your ordination to the priesthood, the twenty-fifth anniversary of that great day when it was your privilege to be made *Sacerdos in Aeternum*. During many of those years the sphere of your labors has been this parish, where young and old, sick and well, bear high testimony to your zeal, earnestness, and loving care. We hope you will accept our little gift as a small token of our grateful love towards you, our father and friend. May God grant you length of days, and may you still be laboring in our midst when the glad bells ring out your golden jubilee.—With respectful love, we are, Rev. and dear Father, your grateful children of St. Joseph's School.

For Chronic Chest Complaints,
Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.

After Influenza your system needs bracing up. Get a bottle of Dr. Claude's Vigor Tonic, 3/6 and 4/6 per bottle. Hundreds have tried this Medicine with Excellent Results.

H. LOUIS GALLIEN, DISPENSING CHEMIST, N.E. VALLEY, DUNEDIN.

Phone 3020.