

Father O'Reilly, whom we venerated almost as an angel from Heaven, came up to Waimea West, and an appropriate room in our house became the hallowed place of the Holy Sacrifice. All the family—except those too young—gladly availed themselves of the long-desired opportunity to go to their duty, and to all of us it was a day of real joy. Bishop Pompallier did not visit the Waimea, but remained in Nelson, where he was able to address the numerous Maoris in their own language. So I never saw a Catholic Bishop till I arrived, years after—1855—in France.

When we had no priest, we took the right means to keep our faith lively, and our appreciation of religion keen. Every night we had family prayers in common, preceded by the reading of one of Challoner's Meditations for every day in the year. On Sundays we dressed up just as if we were to attend Mass, and, in the morning, we had what we called "Mass Prayers," that is, suitable prayers recited while we directed our intentions to some Mass actually being said somewhere in the world. In the evening, we had evening Sunday prayers—the Psalter of Jesus, or a Litany, etc., as a substitute for Church evening service. Father O'Reilly—God bless him!—was most faithful and self-sacrificing to visit us once a year; on one occasion he crossed Cook Strait, and came to us in an open whaleboat. Thus we had Mass and the Sacraments seldom but regularly, and that was no small grace.

At last Bishop Viard, my predecessor in the See of Wellington, sent us for our resident priest the venerable and beloved Father Anthony Garin, S.M. He resided at Nelson, in a house of English timber and removed from its first site, on other Catholic ground, to where the present boys' school stands in Manuka Street. From Nelson his administrations radiated all through the whole of Nelson and Marlborough districts. Prior to this, he had been, for seven years, a missionary among the Maoris, in the vicinity of the Bay of Islands and Hokianga, and had endured every kind of hardship, as heroic missionaries in savage lands usually do. He had acquired their language and spoke it well. In English, when he first came, he was not so fluent, but he soon improved, and his sermons, aided by his sanctity, did much to instruct and edify his flock. He was indeed a saint, and attracted universal respect, and in many sincere veneration. He was one of that heroic band of the first Marist Fathers lately founded in France. He knew the glorious apostle and protomartyr, Blessed Chanel, and he emulated his apostolic virtues. To him, under God, I am indebted for my vocation to the priesthood, and all its momentous consequences in time and eternity. My brother Tom had made his First Communion in England.

Finding that my brother Charles and I knew our Catechism perfectly, and seeing our age—Charles thirteen, and I eleven—Father Garin called us to make our First Communion without delay, and, to prepare us well, he took us with some other boys, the Sullivans and Dwyers, to Nelson and boarded us for a week in his own house, where we had a regular spiritual retreat—instructions and prayers every day. We made our First Communion on Christmas Day, at the Midnight Mass, 1851, and I was chosen to read the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, just before Communion. There were some Germans—the Franks—in Nelson—good Catholics—and they could sing. So the Midnight Mass was sung by Father Garin and his little choir. We had spent our recreations during the week in decorating, to the best of our knowledge and power, under Father Garin's directions, the little lowly, unlined wooden chapel (no larger than a good sized room) with ripe cherries and roses, making such sentences as *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, and such like. The little sanctuary was bright with flowers and redolent of their fragrance.

#### VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

From that First Communion sprang my vocation, the first vocation to the priesthood in New Zealand. And it may be that I was chosen by God's inscrutable mercy, because I was the most unworthy and sinful of the group. However that may be, I was chosen, and my parents soon approved of my desire to be a priest. But how was I to be educated to that holy and exalted dignity and state? I could begin my studies in Nelson, and rely on Providence

to supply the future means of completing them in Europe. So I was put as a boarder to begin Father Garin's boarding-school so highly appreciated for many years. That school had, in his mind, a two-fold object and valuable results. It helped him to live with the very meagre support derived from his very small congregation of Catholics in the Nelson district, and as years went on it did an incalculable amount of good by educating in a proper Catholic manner a number of Catholic youths who have kept the faith and spread it through the whole Dominion. The second boarder—not a Catholic, but a very good moral boy—was George Bonnington, slightly younger than I, afterwards well-known as a prosperous chemist in Christchurch, where, after his death, the firm still flourishes. His name is familiar throughout Australasia by his largely advertised "Bonnington's Irish Moss," his vaunted remedy for colds and coughs. In after years I used, as Bishop of Wellington, to pay him a visit unfailingly, whenever I came to Christchurch, which was then included in the diocese of Wellington, and then we had some delightful chats about old times. He kindly, as a boy, taught me to play the violin, at least as a beginner. It happened this way: The Bonningtons, shoemakers by trade, had just arrived from England, and Charles, the eldest son, was a violin artist taught in London. In passing, I am happy to add, in his praise, that, later on, he married a Catholic, and became one himself. He and his family afterwards went to settle in San Francisco, where, I am told, they prospered. Charles had taught his little brother the violin, and, at least in the first position, to play a number of simple tunes of which he had the music. I asked George to teach me, and he instantly promised he would, if I got another violin. So I borrowed one from a neighbor, and soon, under his tuition (he had been taught well) I was able to play as he did.

I had leave to go home to Stafford Place once a month. It was distant fourteen miles. I used to walk the distance at my leisure, and wade the Waimea River. I had no fear of water, being a good swimmer. Arriving on the Saturday evening, I was at hand to serve Father Garin's Mass on Sunday, in our house, which then served as the only available church. On the Monday I walked back to Nelson in my own way, as Father Garin did in his, he visiting the people as he thought fit. I came home, one Saturday, with my fiddle in a green bag. "What have you got there in that bag, Frank?" they said. "A fiddle," said I. "A fiddle; what do you know about a fiddle?" said they. "I will soon show you," I replied. And forthwith I began to play a number of favorite familiar tunes. It was a surprise and a revelation. My father was so pleased that, hearing of the artist, Charles Bonnington, he ordered me to take lessons from him, which I did. Afterwards, in France, I had a good professor trained at the Paris Conservatoire, and I won the first prize at the French College, St. Chamond, Loire, and became first violin in the college orchestra.

In my serious studies for the priesthood, I practised the violin very little and occasionally, and it was only when I became Bishop, and wanted something to fall back upon in loneliness and stress of business, that I took to the violin again, and made it a pleasure and solace, particularly after I was fortunate to get a genuine "Strad." George Bonnington never became a Catholic. He kept up his music, and for years was the leader of the Christchurch Orchestra.

I spent, as a student of Latin and French, three years at Father Garin's, 1852-3 and most of 4. During a part of that time Rev. Father Forest, S.M., came to Nelson to recuperate after a severe illness, and he spent about a month at Stafford Place, in my mother's devoted care. Father Moreau, S.M., was sent by Bishop Viard as an assistant to Father Garin, and he, in regard to teaching me French (while I helped to improve his English) did more than Father Garin, whose time was largely taken up by parish concerns. But the one who assisted me most in acquiring French was the saintly and ever-remembered Brother, Claude Marie Bertrand, who here deserves special mention and my expression of deepest gratitude. When the Marist missionary Fathers first came to evangelise Oceania, the supply of mere lay-brothers in the Society of Mary, at its outset, was insufficient. As far as they were

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