

### The Children of Mary, Invercargill

Invercargill is proud of its Children of Mary, and last week (writes our own correspondent) the members gave further evidence of their adherence to the principles of the sodality by the really remarkable attendances at the Retreat conducted by the Very Rev. Father Whelan, C.S.S.R. Great crowds attended the 6 o'clock Mass every morning, the number of communicants being a feature of the Retreat. The evening devotions were also attended with equal regularity, and the devoted missionary expressed his pleasure at being again in the midst of such a large and fervent branch of the Children of Mary—the largest in New Zealand, he thought. The members proved their devotion by their attendances, not merely for a week of Retreat, but regularly throughout the year at their meetings. The sodality was in a flourishing condition, as evidenced by numbers; there was a splendid spirit among the girls, a healthy tone, and he was impressed with the way in which everything was worked. On Sunday at the half-past seven Mass there was a general Communion, when over 200 assembled in their white and blue cloaks, with the Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament in crimson. It was a sight to inspire devotion to God and His holy Mother, while the singing was excellent; a feature being that the hymns were new ones the words of which inspire devotion and love of prayer, and were in very truth prayers themselves. Quite an innovation, as far as Invercargill is concerned, was the general Communion breakfast, after Mass, in St. Joseph's Schoolroom, which had been beautifully decorated for the occasion. The tables had been set by experienced hands, the decoration being not overlooked; tulips, anemones, and asparagus fern helping to provide a fine array. Over 200 girls were present in regalia, and Very Rev. Father Whelan presided over the happy gathering. His entrance was greeted by loud applause which continued for quite a time before he could say grace. The persistent photographer was in evidence as usual, and groups were taken both inside and outside the room. The pleasing function was voted a great success, and was quite a topic of conversation among the girls for days afterwards. The closing ceremonies of the Retreat took place on Sunday evening, when 80 young ladies were consecrated and 10 new members received in the sodality. It was a sight that will live long in the memories of those who were privileged to witness it. Quite a magnificent spectacle was the procession of crimson and white and blue stretching from the new school to the church. It seemed as though there would be no room for the general congregation, but the Very Rev. Dean Burke marshalled his "Little Red People"—the Handmaidens of the Blessed Sacrament—into the sanctuary around the tabernacle, and what better place could have been found for them? Father Whelan took for his text "Behold Thy Mother" and his eloquent discourse must have made the impression on the minds of his hearers that it was a cause of pride to belong to Our Lady. He said it was a source of joy to all concerned to see such a fine body of girls giving honor to Our Lady. After Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament given by Very Rev. Dean Burke, Father Whelan imparted the Apostolic blessing, thus bringing a most successful Retreat to a close. In some concluding remarks he said he hoped they would grow in fervor and in numbers too if that were possible. At the present time there are 198 members of the sodality and 60 Handmaids, or a total of 258.

### Farewell to Father Kelly, Eketahuna

A very pleasant function took place on Thursday night (says the *Eketahuna Express* for October 18), when a large number of residents representative of all denominations assembled to say farewell to the Rev. Father Kelly, who is on transfer to Kilbirnie. After several dances had taken place Mr. Bourke, of Pahiatua, who had specially attended, favored the audience with several appropriate items in his usual fine style. His orchestra also rendered several selections, which proved a treat to those who attended. Mr. France then addressed the assemblage, previous to making a presentation. He said he had been requested by the parishioners to perform a task he did not feel equal to. It was mingled with pleasure and regret; pleasure at being present at such a large assembly of residents representing every denomination, which proved the high esteem in which Father Kelly was held, and regret at his departure from our midst. Eketahuna was not a wealthy parish and on taking charge Father Kelly was faced with many financial

problems. The debt on the car and presbytery had to be cleared, interest, rates, etc., to be met and finances almost extinct. He manly faced these. He called his committee of both sexes together, and his diplomatic manner soon told. After eight months' stewardship he was leaving with the car cleared, and over £200 credit towards the presbytery debt, a very creditable record. The result of the late bazaar, (over £200 of a profit) proved the popularity of the guest both among his parishioners and members of other denominations. In conjunction with his committee he worked hard, and gained his reward. His motto had been "Unity is Strength." In sickness he had been a tower of strength among his flock, never failing to be alongside a sick bed when required, no matter when the call came, or in what weather. His teaching had been sympathy, kindness and united friendship of all, no matter what their religion was. A faithful stewardship had come to an end. On behalf of the ladies Mr. France handed Father Kelly a solid leather portmanteau, solid silver shaving mug, Loewe pipe and tobacco, with the very best wishes for his future progress.

Mr. C. H. Parsons referred to the financial ability of Father Kelly, and his sterling qualities as a priest.

The Mayor, Messrs. Pike and Cowlam also eulogised the rev. gentleman's many good qualities and expressed regret at his departure.

The Rev. Father Kelly on rising to reply was received with great applause. He expressed his regret at having to depart from Eketahuna where his parishioners and other friends had stood so true to him. His first duty was of course to God and His Church, and he had to comply with the wishes of his superiors. He had been transferred to Kilbirnie, for which place he would be leaving immediately. He did not think that anyone could say that he had ever neglected the duties he as a priest had to undertake. He had had the work of the parish at heart, and had done his best. In all his undertakings he not only had the support of his own, but had received solid support from those outside the Church, and he expressed his gratitude and thanks to them all. He thought it was the duty of every citizen in a town to work with all others for the good of the place, burying religious differences, and he was pleased to say that spirit was well established at Eketahuna. He thanked everyone for their kindnesses and wished them good-bye. The audience again rose and cheered their departing friend.

### Ashburton Catholic Club

(From our own correspondent.)

The 25th annual general meeting of the Ashburton Catholic Club was held on last Wednesday evening. There was a good attendance, over which Mr. L. Ryan presided. The secretary presented the annual report, which stated that upon the whole, the year was a very satisfactory one, and in one respect, perhaps the most notable in the history of the club. Unfortunately the balance sheet did not show a credit owing to the fact that such a large number of subscriptions were outstanding. The club celebrated its silver jubilee by holding a banquet in the Masonic Hall. The function was a splendid success, and many congratulations were received upon the completeness of the arrangements. A notable fact was the attendance of Mr. F. K. Cooper, the "Father of the Club," and a great many of the gentlemen who had occupied the presidential chair during the past 25 years. The club participated in a challenge debate with the St. Stephen's Club, the subject being "State Control v. private enterprise," and the club's team, opposing State Control, secured the judge's verdict by a substantial majority of points. Debates were also held between club members, and mock trials proved highly interesting. An elocutionary contest for a trophy was productive of a number of fine speeches. The club conducted a number of monthly socials, which were well patronised, and two smoke concerts were also held. Valedictory socials were tendered two departing members, Rev. Father O'Doherty and Mr. J. McCormick, jun., who had left the district during the year. Both functions were splendidly attended and reflected the degree of esteem in which the guests were held. Thanks were accorded the *N.Z. Tablet* for the publicity accorded the meetings, Mr. A. L. Tressider for adjudicating on the challenge debate, and to Mr. F. M. Brophy for a generous offer to the club.

The report and balance sheet were unanimously adopted and office-bearers elected.