

Site insight : Pompallier Diocesan Centre Auckland

I stand before you - a split personality - in my professional life. Being the Librarian for the Auckland Catholic Diocese brings about this duality. I have two Diocesan libraries in my care : two libraries very different - geographically - physically - character-wise - resource-wise - and with a diverse group of users.

Pompallier Diocesan Centre and the Eugene O'Sullivan Theological Library are on opposite sides of Auckland. Pompallier is housed in the Administrative Centre of the Auckland Catholic Diocese, Eugene O'Sullivan is at Marcellin Hall, leasing space to be with the Faculty of the Catholic Institute of Theology. The setting is idyllic among sloping green fields and established trees.

Physically the two libraries are unique. Pompallier is housed at the Administrative Centre in a room far too small. The Project Engineer, without consultation and "to maximise the use of space" - his words - put in 8 foot shelving and a Victorian Issue Desk. I asked if there was to be an advertisement for an 8 foot Librarian - obviously I would not be applying!! Library No.2, on the other hand, (with the help of our friendly neighbourhood Architect) is light and airy with an easy flow of standard height shelving.

The Pompallier Diocesan Centre Library is a diverse amalgamation of several collections : the General Diocesan Collection, the Religious Education Library, the Bishop's House Historical Collection, the Rare Book Collection, two collections from closed Religious Houses. The General collection and the Religious Education collection are "working collections". The Bishop's House Collection gave us a useful New Zealand and Pacific resource. The Rare Book Collection consists not only of pre-1800 books (all reported to the Early Imprint Project) but also Bishop Pompallier's Library - all signed by him. - As a little aside he was the only Catholic Bishop to travel around Colonial New Zealand complete with his folding altar and a bag of books. - We also have at this Library some early Catholic Journals such as the "Freeman's Journal" published between 1879-1885 - the name "pinched" from the Sydney publication of the same name.

The Eugene O'Sullivan Theological Library is an academic-oriented Library resourcing the Catholic Institute of Theology - a collection of materials for tertiary study, i.e. The Bachelor of Theology. However, we are still at the undergraduate level and have a way to go before we have the necessary resources for post-graduate studies.

Both Libraries are open to anyone who wishes to use our resources - however borrowing is limited. The Pompallier Diocesan Library is mainly available on a borrowing basis to members of the Diocesan departments and to students studying with the Auckland Consortium of Theological Education. The Eugene O'Sullivan Theological Library is for the members Catholic Institute of Theology Faculty and students of ACTE.

Lastly, I should say that both Libraries are not on the immense scale of some collections I have heard mentioned at the Conference - with less than 20,000 items in each place - BUT perhaps - **SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL!**

*Margaret Grigg
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