

# Bi-culturalism

From the shady grotto along the drive a pou representing Joseph welcomes residents, staff and visitors alike to the Mount St Joseph property. Joseph stands proudly as kaitiaki guardian not only of the people that come and go but to all the living plants and creatures of the 'hearthplace' of the Sisters of St Joseph. The pou, carved by local Maori from a tree on the property, is alive with symbolic expressions of their relationship with the land, tangata whenua and a holistic spirituality.



In Australia at a time when Aborigines were considered inferior and poorly treated, St Mary Mackillop made no distinction with regards to race and there were many Aboriginal children in her schools. Her brother Donald did some wonderful work in support of Aboriginal children which enhanced the dignity of the native Australians. Fr Julian Tenison Woods too included Aborigines in his ministry and the Australian Josephites are now at the forefront of practical work assisting indigenous people restore their lives.

Here in Aotearoa New Zealand Europeans settled on the basis of a treaty which acknowledged the rights of the people who were already here. Not to have done so would have been a violation of human rights. All of us live here either on the terms of the Treaty or we are here as invaders. As a means of keeping the adherence to Te Tiriti o Waitangi Treaty of Waitangi, a Treaty clause was included in the Sisters' new Constitutions and there has been an

emphasis on having policies headed in both English and Te Reo Maori as well as for signage throughout the properties.

Sisters were often in localities with high Maori populations and have always taken a special interest in Maori children encouraging cultural clubs and stories from Maori history and mythology. Historically the Sisters of St Joseph were the first Sisters at Hiruharama Jerusalem going there with Suzanne Aubert who later founded the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion. Since the mid 1960's there has been a relationship centred around music with the Ngā Paerangi people at Kaiwhaiki for Hui Aranga and cultural clubs in the Whanganui/Manawatu area. In 2005 the Sisters re-established Tamareheroto hapu as owners of their beach property at Mowhanau as a way of making concrete their commitment to the Treaty with the property being leased back to the Sisters' for a number of years by mutual agreement. Through the many and varied connections with tangata whenua strong and lasting bonds of friendship have been forged.



- ⊙ What are some of the barriers to developing relationships with tangata whenua?
- ⊙ To what extent do you share resources and build relationships with Maori people?

*Waiho i te toipoto, kawa i te toiroa.*

*Let us keep close together, not wide apart.*