

## ***Some Extracts of Statements From the Catholic Bishops' Conference***

### **Statements from a Commemoration Year For Aotearoa-New Zealand 1990**

**In the Old Testament** and in Church history we know of the existence of Jubilee years. The origins of the Jubilee lie in the book of Leviticus and involve a:

"new ordering of all things that were recognized as belonging to God: the land, which was allowed to lie fallow and was given back to its former owners, economic goods, in so far as debts were remitted, and, above all, people whose dignity and freedom were reaffirmed in a special way by the manumission (emancipation) of slaves. The Year of God, then, was also the Year of the People, the Year of the Earth, the Year of the Poor."<sup>1</sup>

**The first Catholic bishop in New Zealand**, Jean Baptiste Pompallier, recorded in his diary (19 January 1845) that he was told by Catholic Maori leaders:

"that New Zealand is like a ship, the ownership of which should remain with the New Zealanders (Maori) and the helm in the hands of the Colonial authorities"<sup>2</sup>

**Pope Paul VI** reminds us:

"This renewal and reconciliation pertain in the first place to the interior life, above all because it is in the depths of the heart that there exists the root of all good, and unfortunately of all evil. It is in the depths of the heart, therefore, that there must take place conversion of metanoia, that is, a change of direction of attitude, or option, of one's way of life.....This call to renewal and reconciliation is in harmony with the most sincere aspirations to liberty, justice, unity and peace."<sup>3</sup>

### **Statement from The Treaty of Waitangi in Today's Perspective**

**To New Zealanders generally:**

We all need to know our history and the different legacies it has left to Maori and Tau Iwi. In many parts of the world, indigenous peoples face the loss of language, of culture and identity. In the Treaty of Waitangi, we find the moral basis for our presence in Aotearoa New Zealand and a vision that sets this country apart. We hold in our hands a great treasure the opportunity to create a society that truly honours the rights of its indigenous people.

We have an opportunity to heal wounds that have been present for too long. The Treaty of Waitangi was built on respect for persons and respect for their diversity. There is a way forward. It lies in continued goodwill and open recognition that there are many paths that we as a nation can embark on as we strive to realise the bicultural foundation of our society. Together, we must find the way which meets the demands of justice and of solidarity among peoples.

<sup>1</sup> Pope Paul VI, Bull of Indication of the Holy Year 1975, 23 May 1974, n.34

<sup>2</sup> P.T.B. Mc Keefry, *The Fishers of Me*, ed. 1938, p.115

<sup>3</sup> Pope Paul VI, op. cit., n.7.