

Father Antoine Garin : the apostle of Nelson

Waimea College sixth form history assignment

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Introduction

On the Ninth of May 1850, Father Antoine Marie Garin arrived in Nelson. During the next 40 years Father Garin would contribute hugely to the development of education in the area, as well as the establishment of the Nelson parish. From the time that he arrived in Nelson up until just before his death, Father Garin kept a meticulous diary. Although he wrote in French to begin with, by the end of his life he wrote entirely in English.

Early Life and Pre-Nelson Work

Father Garin was born on the twenty third of July 1810, at Saint Rambert-en-Bugey in the Department of Ain, France. He was the son of a notary who instilled strong Catholic beliefs in him from a young age. This was the Age of Reason in France when the anti-clerical movement tried to suppress religion. In this region of France however it only served to strengthen peoples' faith and produced many outstanding priests and nuns. The diocese of Belley - the diocese to which the Garin family belonged was no exception and it was against this background that Father Garin's faith was formed. On the nineteenth of October 1834 Father Garin was ordained and soon began working as a priest in Chalamont. He stayed there for three years until he joined the Society of Mary in 1837.

The Society of Mary or Marists was also part of the outpouring of religious fervour in reaction to persecution. The Marists were founded in 1824 by Father Colin and had as their aim the education of youth and the evangelisation of peoples in the New World of North America and Oceania. The Marists are a religious order which means that the members live as part of a religious community with a superior as head and hold possessions in common. This is in contrast to secular priests who are under the direction of a bishop and retain the right to their own possessions.

In 1840, Father Garin was accepted into the Society of Mary and immediately sent to New Zealand with other Marist priests and catechist Brothers under the leadership of Bishop Pompallier. After his arrival on the fourteenth of June 1841, Father Garin spent the next seven years in Northland doing what he came to New Zealand to do: convert Maoris to Catholicism and 'spread the word' about Christianity. As a Marist priest Garin had taken a vow of poverty, which meant that neither he nor his fellow Marist priests had any spare money to buy Bibles to give to the Maoris. This hardship is illustrated in part of a letter that he wrote to his Superior- General, Father Colin, on the nineteenth of January, 1842:

“..Our hearts bleed when these poor creatures come to cry in our ears, “Give me a book, give me some clothes”, and this is their cry every hour of the day, and every day... Sometimes we evade them, so as not to be obliged to repeat to them this cruel sentence which has now passed into a proverb amongst them: “Taihoa - presently “, “Taihoa people”, they call us.”

After several years of hard work, many adventures (including helping both sides during the Maori War of 1845), and copying out Bibles for the Maoris, Father Garin left the Bay of Islands for Howick; and his time as a Maori missionary came to an

end. In Howick, Father Garin worked with a group of one thousand Irish veterans who were living in a colony assigned to them by the Government. Father Garin had come to New Zealand as a Maori Missionary, and now that he found himself amongst a group of Irishmen was disappointing. To compound matters, the Irish tendency to drink, and the general difference of ways between the two groups made Garin's stay of two years even more unsatisfactory. However their common belief in the Catholic faith bound the two together and brought some unity. So when Father Garin came to leave in 1850, there were some sad farewells.

Father Garin's appointment to Howick was one symptom of the conflict which had been going on for some time between Bishop Pompallier and the Marists, in particular their founder, Father Colin. Bishop Pompallier was not a Marist and his lack of understanding of the Marist way of life coupled with financial problems led to Father Cohn's intention to withdraw all the Marists from New Zealand. This radical intention which would have had an enormous effect on the future history of Nelson was reviewed in Rome and it was decided instead to divide New Zealand into two dioceses, one centred around Auckland and the other around Port Nicholson, later Wellington. The Marist priests were all withdrawn from the northern diocese and sent to the Wellington diocese under Bishop Viard.

Arrival and Pastoral Work in Nelson

Father Garin and his life-long companion, Brother Claude-Marie Bertrand, arrived in the port of Nelson on the seventh of May 1850, and came ashore on the ninth. Father Garin was the first resident priest in Nelson - previously a priest had had to row across Cook Strait to minister to the local Catholics. These parishioners had already built a chapel and were a small but determined bunch; they numbered 230 out of 4587 Europeans and 947 Maoris, 4% of the entire population. Along with these 230 Catholics in Nelson, Father Garin also had Catholics to preach to in Marlborough, Westland, Golden Bay and Buller, making his pending task look all the more daunting, not to mention the anti-Catholic feeling in this strongly Protestant area.

Father Garin's first act upon arrival was to walk up to Sion hill (now Shelbourne Street) and inspect the chapel that had been built in 1847. He said his first Mass on Sunday, May the twelfth, which was advertised in the *Nelson Examiner* on the eleventh of May.

When Father Garin first began travelling around his large parish, to baptise, hear confessions, and teach the faith, he had to do it all on foot and on his own. Fortunately, after a year a young curate, Brother Delphine Moreau, arrived to help and soon after that the Catholics that he served bought him a horse, which eased his task considerably. Father Garin would journey once every two weeks to places relatively nearby, such as Takaka and annually he would make separate journeys to Marlborough, and Westland, and Buller which would sometimes consist of four hundred miles. During one of these journeys in 1853 in the Marlborough Sounds, Father Garin was stranded on top of a mountain and suffered exposure. This caused him to contract rheumatism, which dogged him for the rest of his life. Fortunately, by the early 1860's Westland and Marlborough had been given priests of their own, and by the late sixties, Buller was also removed from the Nelson parish. However Father

Garin's curates had to serve these areas from 1863 until new priests were appointed, as in 1863 Father Garin fell ill and was confined to Nelson.

The incident in 1863, which caused Father Garin's rheumatism to flare up again and inflamed his lungs, brought him close to death, so close in fact that the *Nelson Evening Mail* pre-wrote his obituary, only to put it away again when he got better. Father Garin describes what happened in his diary (which he usually composed in the third person): "As it is a Friday, he lives principally on eggs that day, coming to the foot of the steep mountain he makes a stay to give his horse rest and himself to take some food. Whilst he is eating a native arrives down the hill and begins to talk. He complains about the heat how thirsty he is, but as he will soon arrive at the Takaka river, Father Garin, who has only got a little bottle of water mixed with a little brandy for all the day, for the springs are dry - does not want to satisfy the natives thirst. Yet as he continues to complain about being very thirsty, he gives him half of his drink, and drinks the other half. The native then offers him sixpence. Father Garin says he feels happy to offer him a kindness, he does not want to be paid for it The native then taking out of his pocket two small apples he gives them to Father Garin. They part. As the hill is very steep, Father Garin, lets his horse go before him, following the horse and holding a rope fastened to the saddle, but as the horse is going by starts and too fast Father Garin feels obliged to take rest often, being hardly able to breathe, and this is what he thinks has been the cause of his illness as there was no water to drink except some which was just filling a hole made by a horse foot this side of the hill at the descent. Arrival at the Cooks place, he feels more fatigued than usual and stretches himself onto the sofa for half an hour. After a refreshment to take lodging at the public house near the Moutere hills. The next day Saturday he feels all right but at night he feels pain in his bowels. Suffers all the night and the next day being worse he cannot say mass. He goes from bad to worse, and is detained for four months at Mr Redwoods."('Father Garin's Diary)

Churches

During his 40-year dedication to the Nelson region, Father Garin built, or was responsible for building, five churches. Father Gain's first deed to do with churches was to move the Chapel on Sion Hill to Collingwood Street, next to where he was living, which meant that it could also be used as a school house. In 1853 Father Garin secured a government grant of two acres for a church to be built at Waimea West. At this point in time the Waimea area was populated by a lot of Catholics and they deserved a church of their own. Until the church was built, Father Garin had always said Mass at the Redwood's house (the same Redwoods that owned the Redwood Stables now restored in Richmond and known as 'The Stables'). Construction of the church, named Saint Peter and Paul's, was completed towards the end of 1855 and was opened on the 16th of December, 1855. People would travel on horseback from afar a field as Wakefield and Eves Valley to go to Mass on Sundays at Waimea West.

The Nelson area and Nelson in particular were growing and Father Garin decided that a church needed to be built. He built the first part of the church in 1856 (facing east west), and then enlarged it in 1864. During this eight-year period, the church was combined with the presbytery to enable the whole congregation to attend Mass inside the church. Interestingly, Father Garin originally named the church Saint Michel's, but it became known to the public as Saint Mary's and about ten years after its construction, the church officially became known as St Mary's. Father Garin proceeded to erect churches in Takaka (1867), Wakefield (1870), and Motueka (1878). By 1876 St Mary's had again become too small owing to the influx of miners

who stayed in Nelson after the goldrush in the sixties. It was decided that another church was to be built and the existing one be used as a school house. This choice was made because the current church was constructed using white pine, which was now rotting, and also because it was thought that the church could not be added to any further.

Father Garin appealed for financial help from all over New Zealand and eventually accumulated enough money to build the new church, although it would probably not be built for another decade. However proceedings were hurried along in 1881 when on the night of the 17th of April, Easter Sunday, part of the church was burnt down. It was thought that some coals falling out of the thurible in the vestry started the fire. The coals smouldered for a while until they burst into flames and the fire started raging. Although Father Garin was very sick at the time, he heard the explosion and raised the alarm. Without his quick reaction, the whole church would have burnt down; in fact only the vestry and chancel were destroyed. It was decided to build a new church as soon as possible and £300 was collected in the Nelson region while the West Coasters, still wealthy from the gold rush days, donated £544 for a church that was hundreds of kilometres away. These two sums, plus the money already in the new church fund, meant construction could begin immediately.

Until the new church was built, the chapel in the convent was used to celebrate Mass, with many thanks being given to the French sisters. Construction began on the 1st of January, 1882, and the new St Mary's, now facing north-south (as it does today), was opened on the first of January, 1883. Coincidentally, the bishop who blessed and then opened the church was Francis Redwood, the first Bishop of New Zealand whom Father Garin had known from a young age. Francis had gone to Father Garin's school and eventually became Father Garin's most famous pupil.

In 1867, "Reverend Father Royer of Grey had donated a bell to the Catholic Church of Nelson." When the bell was tested, it rang an awful tone which was heard all over Nelson. The fire brigade also heard the bell and promptly turned up, fire engines and all. Father Garin, possibly feeling slightly embarrassed, records in his diary that "he took the opportunity to send to the 'Evening Mail' a little article to state that as he was expecting to receive a larger bell, he would willingly discontinue to ring the other." This article would be to Father Garin's benefit as the fire brigade read it and offered to buy the bell. Father Garin then gladly sold it for £20.

Education

Father Colin, who was the founder of the Society of Mary or Marists in France put a great emphasis on education as well as evangelisation. His biographer devotes a whole chapter to this in his book, 'Le Tres Reverend Père Colin'. He quotes Father Colin as saying "*Je vais de plus en plus in nécessité ou nous sonnies de devenir savants...Si la science n'est pas en honneur parmi nous, in Société marche vers sa ruine.*" [I see more and more our need of becoming scholars.. if the Society doesn't respect scientific learning, we are heading towards ruin. (Le Très Révérend Père Cohn, *Quatrième Partie*. p. 101, 106)]

Father Colin not only insisted on his priests being educated in the rapidly expanding areas of philosophy, mathematics and science but also encouraged high standards in

the speaking and writing of French and believed that libraries were almost more important than food: “*la pauvreté ne doit pas nous empêcher d’acheter des livres*” - Poverty shouldn’t prevent us buying books. He called books: “*le pain d’intelligence*.” - The bread of intelligence. (Le Très Révérend Père Cohn, *Quatrième Partie* 118.)

It is hardly surprising that with this background Father Garin saw education as a priority and that Catholic education was seen from the very beginning as being of a very high standard and for this reason patronised by both Protestants and Catholics.

Setting up of the Schools

When Father Garin arrived in Nelson, there was already a Catholic school established that had been operating since 1848. The local Catholics had to run their own school as the public school, which was set up in 1843, was secular and therefore didn’t allow religious instruction. This was because the early settlers decided that they would make their new colony as egalitarian as possible, and wouldn’t favour teaching either religion. The teacher at the Catholic school was Miss Elizabeth O’Dowd, who was living in the schoolhouse that she taught in, which was bought for her by the local Catholics for £20. Miss O’Dowd taught 39 children, 20 of them girls. The majority of the children that she taught were Protestant and without their parents’ financial support the school could not have existed.

Almost as soon as Father Garin arrived, he started taking boarders for the school at £24 a year. The boys would stay in his presbytery, up in the loft. In 1851 Father Garin employed Mr. John McQuade to take a separate boys school in the chapel, while Miss O’Dowd stayed in her house which had been moved onto the Catholic station. At the same time the school was segregated, the recently arrived Brother Moreau set up a secondary school for boys, which offered French, Latin, and Mathematics - known as a liberal education - and was the first to do so in New Zealand at a time when secondary schools were unheard of.

Father Garin’s integrity was reflected in his schools, which along with the higher standard of education offered at the secondary school, led to his schools being highly respected and very popular. Although Father Garin was well liked by all, a feeling grew in the heavily Protestant community that they should have their own school. This came to a head in an editorial in the *Nelson Examiner* on the 8th of May, 1852. This is part of that editorial:

But ten years have passed over, and although £9,000 was subscribed for a college and the church has a fund of £10,000, half of which was also subscribed by the purchasers of land, there is not a school in the settlement where a liberal education can be obtained, unless Protestant parents think it proper to send their sons to the school of the Catholic Mission. We have a Protestant Government, and an endowed Protestant church, a population nineteenth-twentieths of which are Protestant and yet our only teacher of more than the ordinary branches of education is a Catholic priest We mean no disrespect to the Reverend Gentleman, and at his school, he tells us, no sectarian doctrines are taught but we think it disgraceful that the poor, unendowed Church of Rome, weak in numbers also, should be able to set up an institution for imparting education to our youths, while the Protestant clergy, backed by such overwhelming leave the field wholly unoccupied. There is something radically wrong.”

This editorial successfully aroused public opinion and led to Nelson College being built in 1856. Consequently, Father Garin’s secondary school dropped in

numbers, but it still maintained some popularity and its hard earned reputation.

1856 Education Act

In the same year, the *1856 Education Act* was passed and was preceded by a great debate over whether it should be passed or not. The act meant that Father Garin's schools would not receive any funding unless they became wholly secular, which he would not do, as it seems that he felt that taking religion out of education was like taking the rugby ball out of rugby. Father Garin writes in his diary that "If he could give religious instruction only after school hours, he did not know how he could call such a school his own, or a Roman Catholic school where religious instruction is given. Consequently the Catholic school remained as it was before, without government support."

Even though the Catholic schools didn't receive any funding (except an initial grant that the government paid relative to the amount of students at the school) the local Catholics still had to pay a tax of £1 per year for the public schools while at the same time having to pay the fees for the Catholic school. Some Protestants argued that Father Garin would be doing exactly the same thing under the 1852 act as he had been doing previously. This was because from very the beginnings of his school, Father Garin had always had Protestant children and in the interests of keeping them in attendance and possibly in respect to them, he would keep the Catholic students for an extra half hour after school to educate them on Catholic matters. Father Garin reasoned that the crucial difference now was that if he agreed to the act he would have no control over teachers or books. He said that he was only enduring the old system and he was just biding his time until a better system was offered to him. "That I kept my school according to a system that I disapproved was one of those unavoidable mistakes - the case, if you like - of a man who must sleep in a tent until he will be able to build a house. It is hard indeed to sleep under a tent but it is a lesser evil than to have no kind of shelter at all - how disappointed did I feel, when instead of finding a reality, I find only a shadow." (Letter of Father Garin's to the *Nelson Examiner*, 21st of June 1856)

Since Father Garin had been running his schools, he had been ardently campaigning for their equality; and in 1867 he finally got his way when Oswald Curtis, the Nelson provincial superintendent modified the 1856 Education Act in the *1867 Amendment Act*. Curtis made it possible for Bibles to be read in class 'as the last part of the ordinary school course of instruction' (1867 Amendment Act' quoted in 'The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Volume One, p.145), and for schoolrooms to be used for religious instruction outside school hours. This was exactly what Father Garin was doing, so he gladly agreed to the bill, and government financial assistance commenced. This eased a great strain on the Catholics of Nelson as they no longer had to pay for their children to go to school. The amendment also meant that Father Garin's schools patronage was stabilised as the Protestant families could now make a decision on what school to attend based on its standards, not what financial burden it would cause.

Further Developments in the 1870's

When the Sisters of the Order of Our Lady of the Missions were established in Napier

and Christchurch in the sixties, Father Garin saw the opportunity to set up a girls' secondary school in Nelson. He wrote to the Mission asking for three English-speaking nuns and on the 9th of February 1871, six nuns arrived, only one of them speaking English. Father Garin was somewhat annoyed, and the sisters who were expecting a warm welcome (Father Garin's reputation had spread), received a slightly cold reception. However Father Garin's well-known kindness soon returned and two of the nuns left for other duties. When the nuns started teaching at their recently established convent school, there was an outcry from the public. This was basically a case of bigotry, which Father Garin eventually sorted out and the sisters were left to develop their school into a respected establishment. In fact the convent gained such a high reputation that some members of the community suggested that the government grant to the Catholic station should be stopped or reduced.

In 1872 Father Garin opened an orphanage and its numbers steadily increased through the seventies. Father Garin's love of children proved to be a hindrance in this case, as although the extra children he was looking after benefited him financially, their presence at the school affected the other children's manners. They took these manners home and many of their parents withdrew their children from Father Garin's schools, leading to a rapid drop in the roll. To make matters worse, an Education Act was passed in 1877 which made education 'Free, compulsory, and secular'. There was no amendment to allow for Father Garin's schools despite the best efforts of, the now ex-superintendent, Mr Curtis. The law came into operation in January 1878, and the government grant ceased, along with the attendance of most of the Protestant boys. "As many of the Protestant boys were to leave, Father Garin gave a farewell picnic on 23rd July 1878, at Foxhill, where the boys were regaled with tea and buns." (Father Garin's Diary) To make up for the lost revenue Father Garin returned to school fees to pay his teachers, and the school carried on, however it was never as successful again during his lifetime.

Tea-Parties

It is important when looking at Father Garin's life in Nelson to make a special mention of the famous tea parties. The first was held at Christmas in 1850 and it became an annual event from then on. The tea parties were a great opportunity to smooth over Protestant-Catholic relations as well as gain a little extra money for the church. However one can assume that it was Father Garin's love of children that was the main factor in his organising the tea parties. Adults and school children were invited to the parties which often started by the children walking through the streets with brightly coloured flags which Father Garin says "were the cause of great admiration to the inhabitants of the town" (Father Garin's Diary).

The parade would return to the Catholic station and the party would commence. Usually there were a variety of games played, including an unknown game called "chicken in the jug", which Father Garin had brought from France and taught to the children. Whether it be the letting off of fireworks, a magic lantern exhibition, the singing of glees, or an assortment of musical items, Father Garin always made sure that there was something different at his tea-parties. The Tea Parties subsided in numbers toward the end of his years in Nelson as the roll at his schools decreased, but they were still attended by a sizable number of people.

Final Years

On the 19th of October 1884, Father Garin celebrated his golden Jubilee. Attending were Archbishop Francis Redwood and three other priests and despite the number of priests, Father Garin writes in his diary that he celebrated the High Mass himself. The next day a banquet was held for one hundred and eighty people, at which it was announced that Father Garin was the new Arch-priest of the Diocese of Wellington. The 1863 incident mentioned in the "*Pastoral Work*" section, had caused Father Garin's health to deteriorate and he never fully recovered.

During the seventies and early eighties he was dogged by serious illness and was at times confined to his bedroom for weeks on end. Despite his failing health, Father Garin refused an offer to go back to France, saying that he wanted to show a good example to the young priests by dying on the battlefield. In the late seventies he wrote "here I am - not knowing where I shall die, hoping to die in the battlefield." (Father Garin's diaries). Father Garin got his wish when he died in Nelson on the 14th of April 1889. An account of his death was published the next day:

"It is with deep regret that we record the death of the Venerable Archpriest Garin, which happened at half past ten yesterday morning. His death, though not quite unexpected came quite suddenly. He had been ailing for some time and suffered from attacks of bronchitis. On Saturday he seemed very unwell, although no immediate danger was apprehended. Dr Leggatt saw him on Saturday morning, and his faithful old friend, Brother Claude Marie, who had been with him for nearly forty years, sat up with him that night. On Sunday morning about eight o'clock, the difficulty of breathing was so marked that Dr. Leggatt was sent for, and was speedily in attendance. Towards ten o'clock the Venerable priest grew rapidly worse, and passed quietly to his rest in the presence of the Sisters and Reverend Father Mahoney who, at the time, was reading the prayers for the sick, and who gave his venerable confrere the last absolution. Father Garin, though unable to speak, was evidently in full possession of his mental faculties, following with his eyes the good priest who had been his friend and companion for fifteen years, as he performed the solemn ceremonies of the dying.

"His purity and simplicity of life and character, his untiring labour and his wide charity have won him the affection and respect not only of the members of his own church, but of the entire community. The Roman Catholics of Nelson have never been very numerous or wealthy, and it is marvellous what they have done with small means. For this, much of the credit is due to Father Garin, and the fine group of buildings, with the handsome and flourishing schools may be regarded as the best of all monuments to his memory. The famous epitaph to Sir Christopher Wren may be applied with the utmost justice to Father Garin. It was no slight advantage in the early days of the settlement to have a man of Father Garin's breeding and acquirements who was willing to undertake the duties of teacher, and in this, as in other things, his labour has borne good fruit" (The Life and Work of Reverend Antoine Marie Garin, S.M.. Elizabeth Gill *Nelson Evening Mail*, 15th of April, 1889).

Funeral and Burial

The funeral was held on the 16th of April and was attended by the leading men of the city, including the Anglican Bishop of Nelson. It was a tearful occasion and it goes without saying that St Mary's was completely full. It was the custom in France for priests to be buried either inside their church or in the churchyard, and Father Garin had asked for this in his will. However this wasn't possible because St Mary's was a temporary structure, and also because it was against the law. Hence Father Garin was laid to rest in the cemetery at Wakapuaka. But following his wishes, a

chapel was built at Wakapuaka in his name, and his remains were exhumed and placed in a crypt underneath the chapel. This happened one and a half years after Father Garin was buried. This is the account of the exhumation written by the people who were involved in the process:

“Father Garin died on the 14th of April 1889. His body was placed in a shell of wood, and this was put into a leaden sheath, which was sealed, then placed into a Kauri pine coffin. The burial was on the 16th of April, in an ordinary grave.

It was decided to erect the present Mortuary Chapel and donations were made by Catholics and non-Catholics. The Chapel was completed early in October 1890, and Father Garin’s coffin was disinterred on the sixth of November 1890. This was a time period of almost eighteen months since his death.

Present at this disinterment were Father Mahoney, Lowther Broad the resident Nelson Judge, Robert Stewart; a carpenter, Timothy O’Connell, a labourer, William Miller a builder, George Miller, J Berry, a gravedigger and John Linkhorn, a labourer. These last four people were Protestant. The coffin was found to be lying in water, which had thoroughly saturated the outer case. At the burial the coffin had been extremely heavy, but it was now found to be far heavier and was brought to the surface with great difficulty.

The outer shell seemed sound. The intention was to remove this and redose the leaden coffin in a new case of heart totara. But now some doubt arose among the men as to whether water had penetrated the inner coffins, If this were so, it would mean that the decomposition would be greatly advanced and it would not be advisable to leave the remains with only the outer protection of a wooden coffin.

Some discussion then took place on whether the coffins should be open to ascertain the degree of corruption. No decision was made at that moment and the very heavy coffin was placed in the crypt and locked up for the night

The following morning, the seventh of November 1890 the following people returned to the site:

Father Mahoney; Judge Lowther Broad; Father Landouar; Sister Marie St Cermaine; Sister Marie St Benoit; Sister Marie St Sacrement; William and George Miller Timothy O’Connell ;John McCartney.

The outer shell was removed. It was found that owing to the great pressure of the earth on the lid of the outer coffin, the leaden one (which had been sealed with solder) had given way. Water must have penetrated the inner shell, and this would account for the extraordinary weight.

It was decided to bore an auger hole through the coffin at the foot A strong stream of water immediately poured out and continued for half an hour.

It was now obvious that Father Garin’s Body must be in an advanced state of corruption. Normal corruption takes place quickly, but a body lying in water will accelerate its rate of corruption.

Now began a discussion over opening the coffins. Some were strongly opposed on the grounds that it would be repulsive work. Some one pointed out that the water, which had left the coffin, should have been discoloured and highly offensive. It was not. This would mean that decomposition would be complete.

At last it was decided to saw through the two coffins and reveal the upper half of the body.

Father Cam had been buried in his priestly robes and biretta. The shell halves were lifted. There lay the venerable Priest absolutely unchanged. The biretta had fallen slightly forward, and was resting on the bridge of his nose. Someone lifted this to expose the brow which had some bits of silk from the biretta on it

There was neither sign nor smell of corruption. The only change at all noticeable was in the vestments. They were stained pink as red dye had run in the water.

It was decided - to place the coffins on the stand prepared, but to cover them with a concrete casing - perhaps to be seen and acknowledged as the relics of a saint - on the future.”

The document was secretly signed by all the people present. It was signed secretly as Archbishop Redwood felt that a cult following might develop outside the chapel if the word got around about the state of Father Garin's body.

Conclusion

Father Garin was born in the civilised world of France and journeyed to an undeveloped land on the other side of the world, to teach his values and beliefs. Despite some hardships he managed to fulfil his aims and was moved to Nelson to carry on his missionary work there. Father Garin was catholic in the wider sense of the word, and his charming, caring manner enabled him to make great leeway in Nelson. His work in education was of particular value to the Nelson region and possibly New Zealand in general, and it will be that part of his life that he will be remembered most strongly in years to come.

Father Garin's legacy lives on today through the churches that he built. His legacy lives on in the education sector through St Joseph's primary school in Nelson and soon to be built Garin College in Richmond. It is fitting that Father Garin was involved in establishing education in Nelson area in the eighteen hundreds, and now there is a school named after him. Garin College is the first secondary school of the twenty first century, his was the first secondary school of the nineteenth century.

For bibliography, see Further Sources on the Prow site