

# YEAR OF JUBILEE

## Diocegan Art Trail

### ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH

### 106 POWDERHAM STREET, NEW PLYMOUTH

St Joseph's Church is blessed to have as part of the church building three major art works by noted artist Michael Smither. Michael Smither attended St Joseph's Church as a child, and as a young adult was involved in church life, especially music. His early career in art was dominated by a concern for and knowledge of the Church and its teachings.

The Stations of the Cross, pictured below, were commissioned in 1968, as the building of this church was nearing completion. The 14 stations, cast in cement fondu, take us from the Commendation to Die to the Entombment. Concrete makes detail difficult, and these stations speak to us with their composition and form. They sit well within the concrete pillars of the church.

In the First Station, *Jesus is Commend to Die*, the artist used a photo from the Vietnam War of a prisoner on his knees, hands tied behind his back - a powerful image.



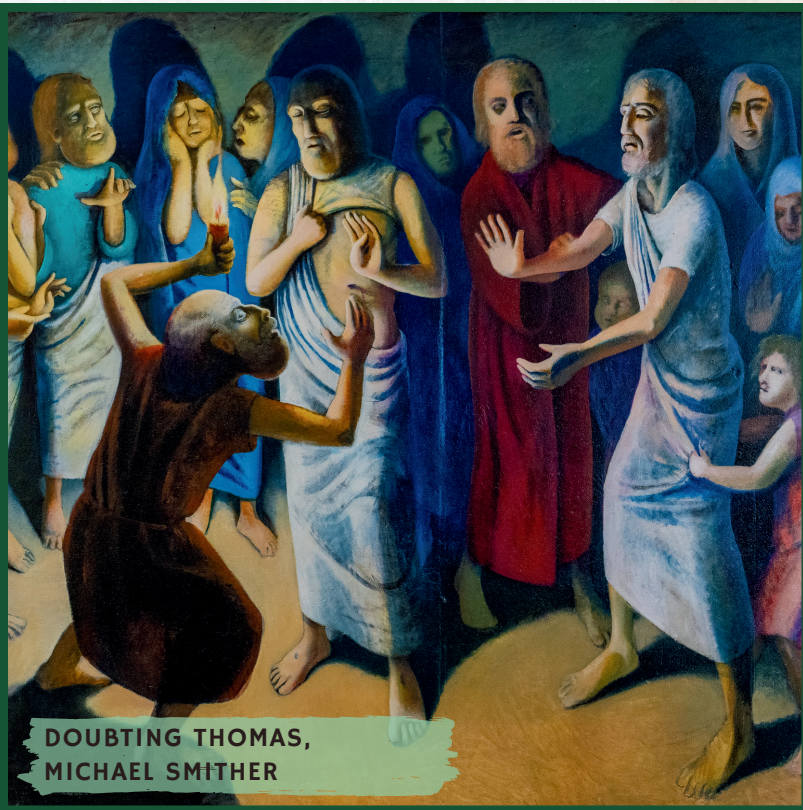
THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS,  
MICHAEL SMITHER



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Two murals by Michael Smither stand as a pair either side of the glass entrance way, although they were not painted as a pair. Approximately 7mt by 4 mt, they are acrylics painted directly on to the church wall.

*Doubting Thomas*, painted first, shows the reactions of people to the scene with the Lord and Thomas.



DOUBTING THOMAS,  
MICHAEL SMITHER

The second artwork, *Baptism of Christ*, reflects a strong local influence. The artist believed that Christ could have lived in Taranaki just as easily as anywhere else. This scene is distinctly local—the river, the rocks shaped by its flow (symbolising our connection to the mountain), and the presence of the tūi. It is unmistakably Taranaki.



BAPTISM OF CHRIST,  
MICHAEL SMITHER



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On an outside wall, facing the pathway from the hall, stands the image of St Paul. This artwork was originally placed at St Paul's Church in Spotswood. When that church closed, the figure was relocated to St Joseph's.

Everyone is welcome to visit and reflect on these images. To avoid Mass times, please check the latest newsletter on the parish website: [www.catholicparishnp.nz](http://www.catholicparishnp.nz). The website also provides detailed information about the artwork—simply visit the Artwork tab to learn more.

The church closes at approximately 5:00 p.m., but if you visit during office hours, we can provide a photocopied resource to assist you.

### MORE INFORMATION

Visit [catholicparishnp.nz/artwork](http://catholicparishnp.nz/artwork)  
or scan the QR code

