

**YEAR OF JUBILEE**

# *Diocesan Art Trail*

## **ST MARY'S CHURCH 1 CAMPBELL STREET, WHANGANUI**

Stained glass windows have long been known as the "Poor Man's Bible" because, in medieval times, many people were illiterate and could not afford Bibles. These windows depicted Biblical events, allowing people to understand religious stories and teachings through imagery.

St Mary's Church houses 25 stained glass windows, likely the most in any small city church in New Zealand. These windows are noted for their exceptional craftsmanship and historical significance.

The stained glass windows were first installed in St Mary's Church on The Avenue in 1877. After the construction of the new church, they were carefully transferred in 1986—12 years after the new building was commissioned. Local craftsman Mr. O'Shea, a retired panel beater, dedicated 550 hours over 12 years to restoring the windows to their original splendour.







The four oldest windows in the church depict St Patrick, St Joseph, St Clare, and Mary with the child Jesus. These were second-hand stations originally from Lyon, France. Dating back to 1875 and 1877, these windows stand out due to their stylized figures and ornate borders, which follow a 12th-century design aesthetic. They imitate 13th-century French grisailles stained glass, a technique using clear glass enriched with painted patterns.

Most of the remaining stained glass windows were created by Atkinson Brothers of Newcastle upon Tyne, England.

The windows depicting Christ and Mary were crafted by the Bavarian Glass Company in Munich, Germany, and signed by artist Franz Xaver Zettler (1841–1916). It was uncommon for stained glass artists to sign their work, as many believed they were creating for the glory of God rather than personal recognition.



The largest stained glass window in the church portrays the Virgin Mary as depicted in the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse). This magnificent window consists of 360 individual pieces of glass.





# YEAR OF JUBILEE

## Dioceesan Art Trail

### ST MARY'S CHURCH 1 CAMPBELL STREET, WHANGANUI

St Mary's Church houses 14 unique Stations of the Cross, created by local artists using wood and clay. These stations collectively depict the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ.

While each image tells its own independent story, these stations are intended to be seen as a whole.

The final station, a majestic figure of the Risen Christ, highlights his universal nature. The background tukutuku panels, based on the koru design, symbolise growth and spiritual ascent. The red represents suffering, the yellow symbolises new life, and the triangular carvings depict Christ's life shared with humanity.

