

St Thomas More church was originally intended to be a side church of Sacred Heart Basilica which later became The Metropolitan Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and His Mother Mary, known as "Sacred Heart Cathedral," to take the overflow of Catholics living in the Wadestown and Northland suburbs. Father (later Monsignor) Bernard Tottman originally promoted the building of a new church. Older parishioners of Sacred Heart and Father Tom O'Brien recalled when they helped raise funds for the new church also involving non-Church community groups with the hope that it would eventually be a "stand alone parish" serving not only Catholics but community groups. Because many young families lived in the area the church was consecrated in the name of St Thomas More who among other attributes was the model of a Christian family man. The foundation stone was blessed by Archbishop Peter McKeefry who on the eve of his becoming Cardinal also consecrated the church on its completion.

In a block of land near St Thomas More was a Marist Brothers primary school that had originally been in Thorndon but closed and relocated in Wilton in 1970 when the original school was acquired and demolished for the construction of the Wellington Urban Motorway. Under the Marist Brothers their relocated school at first remained a Catholic primary, a prep school for boys about to attend Wellington's two St Patrick colleges.

Not originally conceived as such, but remaining a district Catholic primary school, it eventually became the parish school of St Thomas More when in the 1980s as a co-educational primary school re-named Cardinal McKeefry School in honour of Peter McKeefry. Initially the number of girls on the roll was slow to build up. For a while, children at St Thomas More who did not attend Catholic primary schools joined with children from the small church of St Brigid in Wadestown for shared CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) religious instruction classes conducted by adults and parents from the two parishes. The CCD classes continued particularly for parents with daughters not at Catholic primary schools. Noticeably because of giving instruction themselves some parents were receptive for Father Lou Leuthard's adult catechism "Renew" programme,

For a brief period, weekday morning Mass was sometimes celebrated in the school hall of Cardinal McKeefry School so that parishioners could join with teachers and children of the school. The school was sometimes used for Sunday Mass when St Thomas More was closed for extension work and for larger weekend parish meetings. Otherwise for some weekday liturgies such as Ash Wednesday the school children processed the short distance to St Thomas More

St Brigid was also a side church of Sacred Heart Cathedral and when it closed, St Thomas More ceased to be attached to the cathedral and was attached to St Vincent de Paul parish in Northland known as "The Rigi". St Vincent de Paul originally was in conjunction with St Teresa, Karori, parish and served by its priests.

Dr Frank Walsh was to be the parish priest of St Vincent de Paul as well as chaplain to students at Victoria University and Wellington Teachers College but unfortunately, he was killed in a motor accident. In 1958 at the request of the late Cardinal McKeefry, Capuchin Franciscan priests and brothers from their Irish province established their Friary in Northland, provided the university and teachers' college chaplaincy, and served as priests for St Vincent de Paul and St Thomas More. Several Capuchins were parish priests for both churches and the longest serving were Fathers Michael Burgess, Flann Lynch, and the late Cronan Fahey. Memorable were the "Abundance" "Scripture Renewal" and "Mission Renewal" spirituality courses Fathers Lynch and Fahey conducted for parishioners.

In 1982 the small parish school of St Vincent de Paul closed because there were not enough pupils to keep it viable and although parishioners remained, Mass and other liturgical attendance numbers became much fewer. The First Communion at St Thomas More church was with David Dobb's family and parishioners and even before The Rigi closed many families preferred First Communions at St Thomas More. When the church itself eventually

closed and its associated buildings were eventually sold to a private developer, some former parishioners attended St Teresa's, Sacred Heart Cathedral or St Mary of the Angels though most with young families moved to St Thomas More. Many of the physical parts of St Vincent de Paul church such as chalices, crosses, vestments, and the processional cross transferred though the organ had become old and unusable so the St Thomas More's loft ceased to be used for choir and music. This was some consolation to former Rigi parishioners disappointed by the closing.

From when St Thomas More was attached to the Cathedral it brought across talented musician parishioners which formed a pool of performers often in family groups with piano and other instruments who played in the front of the church. St Thomas More became one of the first parishes to regularly have folk style Mass. Parishioner the late Peter Aston with his involvement with the St Vincent de Paul Society recruited Thomas More people to help with its work. St Thomas More early established a Justice Peace and Development group which was not available in nearby parishes. Through the marriage of Michael Chapman, a member of the St Anne's, Northland Anglican congregation and his wife the late Moira Chapman parishioner of St Thomas More was established the tradition of a Good Friday mid-morning Way of the Cross that processes from one church to the other.

The parish was to become the first in other ways. When Wellington archdiocese launched the Lay Pastoral Leader programme, parishioner Mary-Anne Peetz, who also contributed to music, was one of the first people to complete the course and she excelled in her role with boundless energy and cheerful enthusiasm. The Capuchins continued to serve St Thomas More until January 1992 when they farewelled the parish, moved out of Northland and sold the Friary.

Upon their departure the late Father Brian Austin aware of the residual loyalty some parishioners may have felt to the departed Capuchins became parish priest taking a low-key tactful approach. Aware of some reduced numbers he promoted the "Catholics Returning Home" programme. He was succeeded by Father Frank Whitaker.

The Archdiocese approved financial assets from the sale of St Vincent de Paul church as upgrading to the St Thomas More building, which included the extension of the foyer area to become a separate hall, hospitality centre and meeting place.

On Sunday, 13 March 2005 Cardinal Thomas Williams and Fathers Brian Austin and Frank Whittaker concelebrated Mass at St Thomas More and Cardinal Williams blessed the redesigned foyer and hall extension.

In 2007 Father Sefh Pijfers was appointed as parish priest to serve both St Teresa in Karori and St Thomas More in Wilton. There was some debate about the future of St Thomas More, with the possibility that the parish would close, and the church building sold,

In 2014, St Teresa, and St Thomas More were amalgamated as one "Ōtari Catholic Parish".

Details are in "St Vincent de Paul and St Thomas More: A short history of Northland-Wilton Parish, Wellington" by Christopher Reid and published by St Thomas More parish in 2005.