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CHURCHMAN

A STUDY OF JAMES MICHAEL LISTON

Bishop of Auckland 1920-70

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the life of James Michael Liston (1881-1976), ordained priest 1904, rector of Holy Cross College, Mosgiel 1910-20, Coadjutor-Bishop of Auckland 1920-29, Bishop of Auckland 1929-70, Archbishop from 1954. While Liston was never metropolitan of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, his longevity and the initiatives he took made him for many years the church's most visible spokesman. As mentor and teacher of most of the hierarchy, he was widely regarded as the country's Catholic "patriarch".

The thesis explores Liston's personal and cultural inheritance as the New Zealand-born son of expatriate Irish parents. His involvement in Irish-related controversies is examined, including his trial for sedition in 1922. However it is a major contention of this thesis that Liston's primary focus was always the welfare of the Catholic Church in New Zealand and in the diocese of Auckland. 'Romanita' and loyalty to the Vatican were more important than residual Irishness. For each phase of Liston's priesthood and episcopate, the thesis examines Liston's relationship with diocesan clergy, religious orders, Catholic laity and the general public.

Some aspects of Liston's behaviour and management style are open to criticism. His rejection by Dunedin clergy (1918-20) and his conflict with Bishop Cleary (1923-29) suggest limitations to his character. His differences with younger clergy in the 1960s suggest that old age affected his judgement. Nevertheless, for most of his career, Liston was an effective and compassionate church leader at a time when the diocese of Auckland became the largest diocese in the country. Necessarily, much detail is given to the administrative processes by which the diocese was developed.

James Michael Liston operated on the hierarchical assumptions that were then the episcopal norm. He was essentially a Churchman.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJHR	Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives
ANZ	Archives New Zealand
ACDA	Auckland Catholic Diocesan Archives
APL	Auckland Public Library
AS	Auckland Star
CCDA	Christchurch Catholic Diocesan Archives
CWL	Catholic Women's League
DAA	Dublin (Catholic) Archdiocesan Archives
DCDA	Dunedin Catholic Diocesan Archives
DNZB	Dictionary of New Zealand Biography
ICR	Irish College, Rome
MAW	Marist Archives, Wellington
MHAL	Mill Hill Archives, London
NZH	New Zealand Herald
NZJH	New Zealand Journal of History
NZLJ	New Zealand Law Journal
ODT	Otago Daily Times
O.P.	Order of Preachers (Dominicans)
PPA	Protestant Political Association
S.M.	Society of Mary (Marists)
WCAA	Wellington Catholic Archdiocesan Archives.