

Barbier

Euphrasie Barbier 1829-1893

Adele Euphrasie Barbier was born in Normandy, France, on the 4th January 1829. At the age of 14, she started work in a laundry, but she always wanted to be a missionary. When she was 19 she joined the Sisters of Calvary, and was sent to London. But she still wanted to become a missionary in foreign lands. She decided to help the Marist Fathers with their work in the South Pacific, and so on the 15th August 1861, the Feast of Assumption, she founded a new congregation of The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM). Euphrasie Barbier's religious name was "Mother Mary of the Heart of Jesus". In 1864 Euphrasie sent four of her Sisters from France to New Zealand to help teach the growing number of settler children. Some of her Sisters began the first Catholic school here in Pukekohe in 1885, and later started St Joseph's School for younger pupils in 1923. Euphrasie visited New Zealand twice, although she always suffered terrible seasickness on her journeys, and spent some time in Pukekohe, where she planted the oak tree that is seen in Notre Dame Ct today.