

Vicar says goodbye to Taupō

THE REV RITES



PETER MINSON

How do I say or sing what could sum up 4.5 years as Taupō's vicar? "I have loved Taupō and been loved here"? Yeah...nah. Doesn't cut it.

Better plan: share some pictures that will stay with me as I move on to become Whangamata's priest, images I'll not forget while my memory-banks keep ticking over:

■ The box of t-shirts and promotional caps which tie me to memorable street corners during Taupō's extreme outdoor events...and link me to the thousands of community volunteers, my church people and my fellow Rotarians who make this town extreme.

■ The safe-sex posters on the walls of the rooms where I spent numberless hours asking young people to shape me as a better counsellor.

■ The unvarnished truths spoken at bedsides of the seriously ill who welcomed me into their acute moments — and their confidence in the face of impending death.

■ The polished coffins — more than 100 of them — whose occupants wanted me to accompany them on their last ride on this earth.



The finger-picking vicar Peter Minson busking at the Taupō Market with constant companion Pepe.

■ Watery images. A hush falls as I pray for te moana and athletes in the dawn start of a lake swim: "E te Atua Kaha Rawa, e te Kaihanga tino tapu, haere mai Koe, tirohia ēnei kaikauhoe matatū!" or splashing a holy water blessing on the lake's fishing and tourist fleet at the Blessing of the Boats.

Afternoons spent casting my cares upon the waters, fishing from a vintage launch.

■ Music! Ahh music! Choirs and musos and organists young and old — from Mozart to Clapton to Ellington — and Saturdays busking at the Taupō Market as

"the fingerpicking vicar". The thousands of hymns we Anglicans sing!

■ The warm companionship of my fellow clergy who loved me and accepted me despite my rather radical views on the issue of full inclusion of LGBTI people in church life.

■ The happy-sad new parishioner who summed up what us church people do, written in a card which arrived at my hospital bed after my recent crash: "You've brought church to life for me."

■ And lastly there's you — the largely unchurched public who

know what you believe and what you stand for — good, hard-working people whom I've been writing for and to for these years. John Lennon to sums it up in my personal "best song ever written". *There are places I'll remember All my life, though some have changed Some forever not for better Some have gone, and some remain All these places have their moments With loved ones and friends I still can recall Some are dead and some are living In my life I've loved them all.*