

*Henare Wiremu Taratoa*  
*June 21*  
*of Te Ranga*

The story of Henare Wiremu Taratoa is closely bound up with the story of Heni Te Kiri Karamu (see 29 April). It was Henare who both commended and then wrote down the “Orders of the Day” for the Maori forces that were to inspire the compassionate actions of Heni at the defence of Gate Pa. British troops had arrived in the Tauranga district to prevent the transport of supplies to the Waikato tribes through the region. The local tribe gathered at Te Waoku pa near the Waimapu River, and then at Poteriwhi pa a code of conduct was drawn up. The code was conveyed to the British commander by Taratoa at the request of the chief Rawiri Puhirake:

To the Colonel,

Friend, salutations to you. The end of that, friend, do you heed our laws for (regulating) the fight.

Rule 1           If wounded or (captured) whole, and butt of the musket or hilt of the sword be turned to me (he) will be saved.

Rule 2           If any Pakeha being a soldier by name, shall be travelling unarmed and meet me, he will be captured, and handed over to the direction of the law.

Rule 3           The soldier who flees, being carried away by his fears, and goes to the house of the priest with his gun (even though carrying arms) will be saved; I will not go there.

Rule 4           The unarmed Pakehas, women and children will be spared.

The end. These are binding laws for Tauranga.

Taratoa carried on his person a copy of the “Orders of the Day” for the conduct of the fight. It was prefaced by a prayer, and at the bottom was what may have been the Christian inspiration of the code: “If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink” (Romans 12:20).

Taratoa was a leader of the Ngai Te Rangi in the Tauranga area. He was born, probably about 1830, and lived at Opounui on Matakana Island. Taratoa came under the influence of Henry Williams in the Bay of Islands, was taught by him, and adopted his names, Henare Wiremu (Henry Williams), at his baptism. From about 1845 he attended St John’s College and was married there on 3 April 1850 by Bishop Selwyn to a Maori woman, whose name is not known.

Taratoa accompanied Bishop Selwyn on several of his journeys, including a voyage to Melanesia. Several of the Maori students at St John’s were eager to travel with Selwyn, and in 1852 Taratoa went with Selwyn and spent some months working with William Nihill at Nengone in the Loyalty Islands. Then in 1858 Taratoa became a teacher at the Native School at Otaki and was appointed a Lay Reader. Selwyn was unwilling to offer Taratoa any prospect of ordination, for although he found Taratoa clever and thoughtful he also considered him rather excitable.

Taratoa was among those who expressed dissatisfaction with the governor, Thomas Gore Browne, for the events in Taranaki in 1860. When George Grey returned for his second term as governor, Taratoa was also unhappy at his proposals for the indirect imposition of British law and British officials on Maori districts. Taratoa eventually returned to the Tauranga

district in 1861, where he set up a Christian school and organised a local system of Maori councils.

With the outbreak of war in the Waikato, Taratoa and the Ngai Te Rangi people became more and more involved in events. Henare Taratoa may have gone back to Otaki for a short time, but by 1864 he was once again in the Tauranga area. The pa at Pukehinahina was built just outside mission lands, because Henare and others thought it inappropriate to fight on mission property. The gate marked the boundary; hence the name, Gate Pa. Henare was involved in the Maori victory over the British forces at Pukehinahina (Gate Pa), and indeed, in the version of the events apparently known to Bishop Selwyn, it was Taratoa who performed the compassionate act of giving water to the wounded British officer there.

The Maori defendants regrouped at Te Ranga, and the British forces attacked and defeated them there on 21 June 1864. In that battle Henare Wiremu Taratoa lost his life. On his body were found the “Orders of the Day” and pages from his Bible. The words of Rawara Kerehoma speak of the battle of Gate Pa and its aftermath:

E tangi haere ana  
Nga tai te uru ei  
Ka mai angi nga mahara  
Ano he paoa ahi  
Kua makariri ke  
Te okiokinga puehu kau?

The tide ebbs silently away,  
Memories rise in the still air  
Like smoke from many fires.  
Is this the same place,  
This place of ashes?

When Bishop Selwyn eventually returned to England in 1867, he took with him subscriptions from English soldiers and their families to whom he had ministered during the wars in New Zealand. With these donations he placed some stained glass windows in the private chapel of his palace in Lichfield. On the south side is a window depicting David pouring out the water fetched for him by three soldiers from the well at Bethlehem (1 Chronicles 11:15-19). This window was to commemorate Taratoa’s act at Gate Pa.

Taratoa was initially buried at Te Ranga where he fell, but his remains were later placed in the mission cemetery at Otamataha pa, Tauranga. The monument erected by Maori and pakeha in 1914 to Rawiri Puhirake, who led the Maori forces at Gate Pa, has on it a plaque added later, commemorating the compassion advocated by Taratoa.

### **For Liturgical Use**

Henare Taratoa is remembered for the compassion he advocated towards his opponents who were involved in the attack on Gate Pa on 29 April 1864. It was he who drafted the now famous “Orders of the Day”, confining any conflict to the participants only and in as limited a way as possible, and advocating care for those who were injured. Henare was born about 1830. He was taught and baptised by Henry Williams, and was for a while a student at St John’s College, Auckland. He died on 21 June 1864 when the British troops attacked Te Ranga. He carried on him his “Orders of the Day”.

## **Sentence**

No te mea he tika a Ihowa, e aroha ana ki te tika; ka kite te hunga tika i tona kanohi

*Waiata 11:7*

You are just O Lord, and you love just dealing; the upright shall behold your face.

*Psalm 11:7*

## **Collects**

E te Atua o nga wa katoa,  
i karangatia e koe au pononga  
ki te whakaatu i te tika me te pono ki nga tangata katoa.  
E mau mahara ana matou ki a Henare Wiremu Taratoa i tenei ra.  
Tautokona matou pera i a ia i noho i runga i au whakahau,  
a ki te whakatutuki hoki i aua pono  
i runga i te ingoa o tau tama o Ihu Karaiti, te Taro o te Ora. Amine.

Merciful God,  
you have taught us to love our enemies  
and pray for our oppressors;  
give us grace to follow the example  
of your servant Henare Wiremu Taratoa,  
who held firm to that command,  
that we may proclaim  
your justice, truth and love  
amongst all people;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus, as we remember Henare,  
who sought to be true to the faith he believed  
when he fought to protect the land,  
help us in our decisions about your land  
to be true to the gospel and to you.

**Psalms**                      102:15-28                      103

## **Readings**

Isaiah 58:6-10	A true light
Romans 12:14-21	Overcome evil with good
Luke 6:32-36	Love your enemies

## **Post Communion Sentences**

Ko te whakapono i a koe na, waiho i a koe ano i te aroaro o te Atua. Ka hari te tangata kahore e whakatau i te he ki a ia ano mo te mea i whakapaia e ia mana.

*Roma 14:22*

The faith that you have, have as your own conviction before God. Blessed are those who have no reason to condemn themselves because of what they approve.

*Romans 14:22*