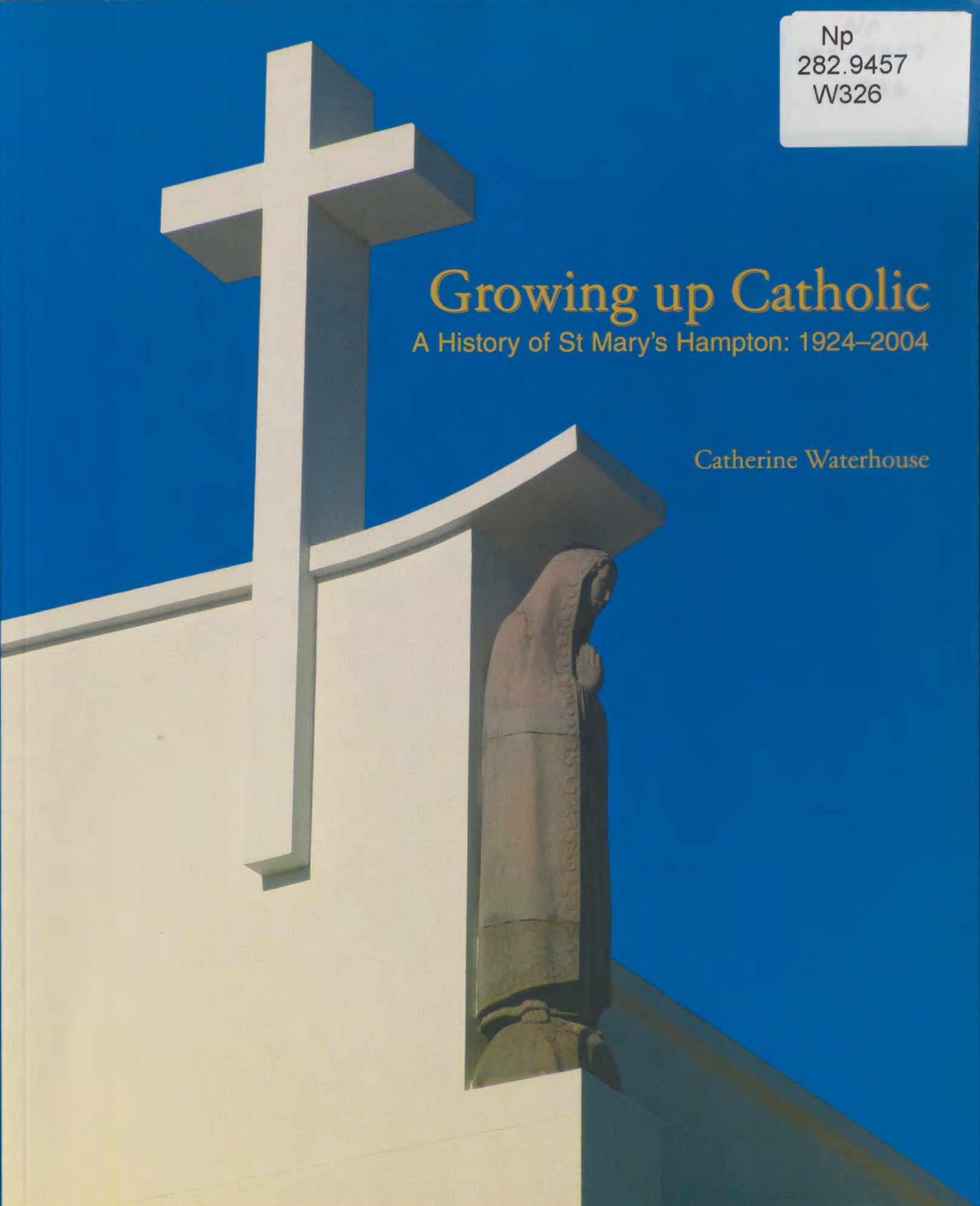


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The background of the cover is a photograph of a white wall. On the left, a large, modern-style white cross is mounted on the wall. To the right of the cross, there is a statue of the Virgin Mary in a niche, wearing a blue mantle and holding the Christ Child. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Growing up Catholic

A History of St Mary's Hampton: 1924–2004

Catherine Waterhouse

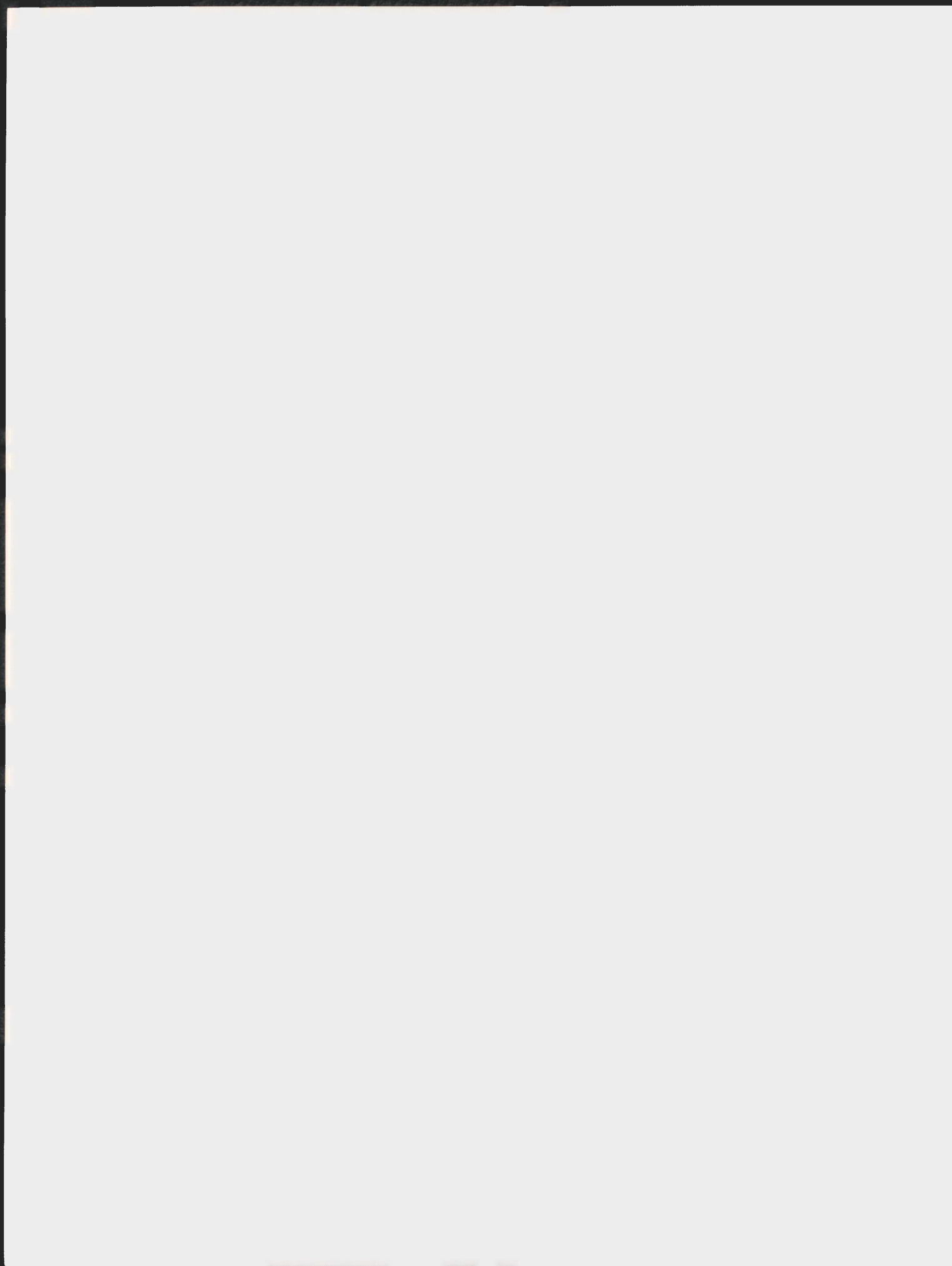


St Mary's church-school 1924. Note the iron fence. (Photo by C.F. Awburn)

Front cover: Cross and Statue of Our Lady, St Mary's Church. (Photo by Peter Riordan)

Back cover: Twilight exterior of St Mary's Church. (Photo by Peter Riordan)

Growing up Catholic



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A History of St Mary's Hampton: 1924–2004

Catherine Waterhouse



ST MARY'S COMMUNITY: HAMPTON

First published in 2004 by
St Mary's Community
59 Holyrood Street
Hampton 3188

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Children, Feast of the Sacred Heart, circa 1980.
(Ray Private Collection)



FOREWORD

Looking back right to the beginnings of the Christian era, we are fortunate that the four Evangelist historians we know today as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, undertook to prepare an independent written record of a living faith experience in the life and times of Jesus Christ and the disciples on whom he founded his Church.

Oral stories, often told, take on a life of their own as myth is mixed with history, reflection enriches understanding, and day by day problems of growing communities are addressed out of the common store of shared memories. The Gospel accounts retell the stories with their own unique flavour of the faith of their communities and the writers themselves.

As long ago as 1998, St Mary's Parish Council began to consider whether it would be possible to tap the source of this same faith experience, as it came to be expressed in the foundational years and successive generations of St Mary's, Hampton. It was hoped to act in time for the 75th anniversary of the Parish. The search for a suitable 'evangelist' to capture and record the lived faith experience of 'growing up Catholic at St Mary's Hampton' was made easy when Peter Riordan introduced us to the historians of HistorySmiths Pty Ltd, however the resources were unfortunately not available to bring the project to fulfillment at that time.

Since then, sadly not a few of those who shared the journey of the years – one thinks of the straight talking Mary Kenny and Vaughan Ryan who made all those little handyman jobs seem so easy – have taken their memories with them to heaven. Recently we became able to commission Catherine Waterhouse of HistorySmiths Pty Ltd to assist us to tell our story. We are proud now to present the history and the 'living gospel' of St Mary's Hampton. It is a story of the people, of the priests who served them, and the sacred space behind the red curtain which permeated week by week and day by day a community of faith we now offer as a sacrifice of praise to God with gratitude and joy.

People are still 'growing up Catholic' at St Mary's Hampton. Today we celebrate their living faith in 80 years of history – and the promise and the challenge of the years to come.

Father Michael Miles, Parish Priest

September 2004

Acknowledgments

This history is a cumulation of the memories of parishioners and members of the school – from recent questionnaires and interviews, and from older documents and photographs. It expresses something of the energy of a Catholic community growing, contracting and growing again over a period of 80 years. A particular effort has been made to capture memories of the community's earliest years. As far as possible, the history is expressed in the words of members of this community, so an attempt has been made to blend them naturally into the flow of the text – hence the convention of indented (longer) quotations has not been used. While a general invitation was issued to any with a connection to or interest in St Mary's to contribute their memories, the tight time constraints of this project inevitably mean that people or incidents from the history of St Mary's may inadvertently have been omitted, for which we apologise.

The History Committee and I would like to express our appreciation to all those members and interested friends of the parish and school community, past and present, who took time to record their memories and insights on questionnaires, to lend or donate photographs and other memorabilia, and in other ways to contribute to the gathering of source material for this history and for the parish archives. Please see the appendices for a list of those who have participated in this way. We would particularly like to thank those who took part in oral history interviews; Graham Disney and the Sandringham Historical Society for provision of primary source material; Sister Diana Gabel pbvm, the Presentation Order's archivist, for assistance with research into the Presentation Order's presence at St Mary's; Maureen Graham for donating her professional skill to the transcribing of the oral history interviews; Kate Riordan for technological assistance and support; and Dr Barbara Pertz of HistorySmiths for research assistance.

I would like to make special acknowledgement of the project's History Committee, all of whom have expended considerable time and energy in assisting with this project: Marjorie Awburn, who contributed her own previous research into the parish's history; Jacqui Barnett, who brought professional expertise and time particularly in relation to the history's layout and printing; Anne Curry, who facilitated contact with former parishioners and the Presentation Order; Peter Riordan who contributed extensive research and liaison, as well as collection and scanning of photographs; and Father Michael Miles, whose wise and sensitive guidance throughout has also enhanced the history.

Catherine Waterhouse
HistorySmiths Pty Ltd
September 2004



CHAPTER ONE

ESTABLISHMENT OF ST MARY'S

In the 1920s Hampton was a changing suburb. Most Bunurong people, the traditional custodians of the land, had long since had to move away. The population of newer residents was beginning to increase, with land for housing being made available to soldiers who had returned from the recent war – these ‘soldier settlements’ were concentrated ‘in the area east of Hampton Street, bounded by South Road to the north, Ludstone Street to the south and Hood Street to the east, with paddocks and a few market gardens making up most of the land between the settlements and Bluff Road’.¹ Many roads throughout Hampton were still unmade. Catholics in the area would travel to Sacred Heart parish in Sandringham for Mass – the Awburn family, for example, would walk there each week from their home in central Hampton. St Mary’s Hampton was, in effect, to be an offshoot of this Sandringham parish.

In response to the growing need for a parish in the Hampton area, in 1924 the Sandringham parish priest, Father Mangan, bought land for this purpose at a cost of £2,000.² Most of the politics of this decision are now lost to us, although long-term parishioner Marjorie Awburn was once told by an elderly Sandringham parishioner that Father Mangan had been ‘very angry’ that the archdiocese had not donated the land for the new church-school, and that instead he had had to pay for it.³ The land Father Mangan had to purchase was part of the Margarita Estate, approximately 20 acres of land stretching from South Road to Holyrood Street. Dr Henry Backhaus, a priest who had moved to the area from Bendigo upon his retirement and had died in 1882, had left the estate, which included a house called Villa La Trobe, to the Melbourne archdiocese for the use of retired priests. Many of the streets located in the original estate have been named in recognition of Dr Backhaus – Margarita Street after his mother, for example, and St Kilian Street after his Bendigo church.⁴ The huge pine trees in Bolton Avenue, perfect for climbing when going to and from school, were understood to mark the original driveway to

the Villa.⁵ The land on which the church-school was to be built had most recently been used for grazing cows; Holyrood Street was unmade and full of potholes.

We have little surviving information about the choice of architect or the reasons for the distinctive design of the church building (which may have been based on a similar design in New York). Archbishop Mannix laid the foundation stone on 2 November 1924 for the project which cost approximately £3,600.⁶ The building was to be used as a school during the week, and could be divided into three classrooms for the classes which ranged from Infants to Grade 8. A floor to ceiling curtain separated the raised Sanctuary from the rest of the building. For church services, this heavy red curtain was drawn back and the doors dividing the classrooms were opened. It appears that the first Mass was held in the building at Christmas in 1924, and that school commenced the following January. Father Mangan continued as parish priest until the appointment of Father Dan Coakley in April 1926, at which time St Mary's became a separate parish in its own right.



CHAPTER TWO

EARLY YEARS (1925–1939):
'IT IS THE MASS THAT MATTERS'

For many local families the life of the school and the life of the parish were inextricably intertwined. Younger children would attend school during the week. Their parents assisted with fundraising, and in moving chairs and desks in and out of the building to transform it from school to dance hall to church and back again on weekends. Although older children would have to leave St Mary's after Grade 8 for their secondary schooling (girls usually at Star of the Sea, Gardenvale and boys usually at Christian Brothers, East St Kilda) before entering the workforce, well into young adulthood they found that St Mary's was their social focus: with dances, fetes and card parties in the building on some Fridays and Saturdays, and regular sporting events in the grounds. On Sundays there was Mass for the whole family, and on weekday mornings there was Mass usually at 7am. The fact that all these activities took place in and around the one building during this period reinforced the centrality of St Mary's in many families' lives.

Father Coakley

Implanting his personality and vision on the parish during these crucial early years was Father Dan Coakley, who is vividly remembered still by parishioners and students of the time. They bring the perspective of small children to their earliest memories of him: 'He was Irish, and he was tall and thin'.⁷ 'He looked very stern. He was the image of Dr Mannix – he could have been his brother. And he walked with an umbrella – a big black umbrella. He walked day and night because he suffered with insomnia, my mother said. So you never knew quite where you'd find Father Coakley.'⁸ 'As children, we were terrified of him! He was a very straight talking fellow: if you liked what he said was another thing.'⁹ 'He was very strict. He was also, I know, a very compassionate man. I

I cannot remember Father Coakley without his biretta – some people say he wore it to bed!

(Geoff Splatt, parishioner since 1930)



Mrs Janet Gill and
Father Coakley, 1939.
(Gill Private Collection)

can remember hearing stories of how by going into a classroom he would find a child whose shoes were worn out and somehow or other that child would receive a new pair of shoes...He certainly didn't spend much money on himself in any way. I think there must not have been very much money for him to have had at all in those days...He made lots of house calls – he was very good that way...He was a very kind old man, I thought. And Mum said he was a very humble priest.¹⁰ 'He was a keen swimmer.'¹¹ 'He had a modest home in the Avenue and a little housekeeper, Miss McNally, who seemed to look after him very well.'¹²

Peter Corcoran, a parishioner from approximately 1925, has written about the profound impact of Father Coakley upon the parish: 'He burst upon the Hampton scene like an angel of light, or so he seemed to we very young altar boys. For although he was Irish to his black boots, several years of pastoral work in the USA had taught him a lot about living in a pluralist society...He had no time for the trivial. He had one thunderous message for the somewhat startled people of Hampton: "It is the Mass that matters". All else was dross. This was almost heresy to some of the older parishioners, who had been brought up without the privilege of a readily available Mass. To these people the peripheral things were important, it was all they had. But to we

Father Coakley always called me David – he said there was no St Geoffrey amongst the saints. Mum said maybe Geoff Splatt may become the first St Geoff! Father Coakley then told Mum that someone wanted to call their daughter Hazel – once again Father objected. He told the woman that there were hundreds of saints' names from which to choose and she wanted to name her daughter after a bloody nut!

(Geoff Splatt, parishioner since 1930)

impressionable young children, this rock of the centrality of the Mass made us glad to be Catholics, for many of us were the children of mixed marriages and we had confused feelings...Father Coakley welcomed the non-Catholic partners but stressed that they retain their own beliefs if they did not want to become Catholics...He and my seventy-year-old Anglican English grandmother were as thick as thieves. He and the Hampton vicar wore identical lace trimming to their vestments, thanks to the old lady's nimble fingers. Strangely, although there was little overt attempt at conversion, many non-Catholics attended Mass regularly, to hear his sermons. For these homilies



Father Coakley and First Communicants.
(Church Historical Collection)

Father Coakley had a great rapport with his altar boys, although he was a pretty tough disciplinarian. One Sunday Benediction he fired me for accidentally knocking incense off the boat as I swung the thurible...The next morning I was on duty at Mass so my brother went instead. Father asked him, "Where's Bill?" "You fired him, Father." All he said was, "Go home and get him"!

(Bill Sage, parishioner
1926–1951, 1967–present)

were often in dialogue form. Father Coakley's questions and the answers that he encouraged from the children went far beyond the normal catechetical teaching of the time. We took this and his approach to things non-Catholic, for granted. This small boy served Mass on Sunday morning and accompanied his grandmother to Evensong at night. Father Coakley confronted me once. "Boy", he said, "you are going to Evensong at Holy Trinity?" "Yes Father", I replied, somewhat puzzled. "Good", he continued, to my relief, "look after your

Queen and attendants.

Queen: Madge Grange.

Attendants: Rita Ralph, May

Ralph, Molly Duggan.

Front row: Pages Roscoe Scot,

Marjorie Awburn, Flower girl

Lenoar Awburn.

(Awburn Private Collection)



At Mass Father Coakley would ask the children questions...One Sunday morning the answer was "You should love your neighbour". One of the kids got up – funny, bright little fellow...He gave part of the answer. The full answer was, "Christ himself said, you should love your neighbour". And so Father Coakley said, "And who said that?" And, of course, the kid next door had told him what to say. So he said, "Bernie Hubbard, Father". The whole church, of course, was reduced to absolute laughter.

(Marjorie Awburn,
parishioner since 1925)

grandmother for me, and keep your eyes and ears open; it will broaden your mind".¹³

Edna Arthur (later Sister Theophane), who was to become the first religious vocation from the Hampton parish, wrote to Father Coakley on holiday in Ireland to inform him of her plans and to request a character reference from him. The following extract from his swift response to her letter captures something of the strength of conviction he imparted to his flock more broadly: 'I was pleased and not at all surprised to hear that you had practically decided on entering...I was interested in that part of your letter in which you said you thought of various careers but never seriously of being a Nun. I wish that most good and suitable girls would really understand that they are good enough – though of course all might be better. Of course there should be no forcing or over persuading girls to enter, but I honestly think that for the one that enters four more might do so just as well. I must respectfully warn yourself of the need for humble obedience which may not be so easy for you as it might be to a younger girl, also of the need for charity and tact and forbearance with your companions...At the moment you may think no family quite equal to the Arthurs, but you would soon learn to change that opinion. Religious life depends more on commonsense, patience and good humour than on prayers and sentimental piety.'¹⁴



The Tennis Club v Parishioners.
(Church Historical Collection)

'we grew up with the parish'

PARISH BOUNDARIES

West. – The Beach.

South. – Linacre-road to Sargood-street, David-road to Bluff-road.

East. – Bluff-road to South-road.

North. – South-road to Beach.

All Catholics within these boundaries are reminded of their duty to support the parish. The most practical way to begin is to attend Sunday Mass at Holyrood-street, at 7.30 or 10.

Presbytery Address: 11 The Avenue. 'Phone XW 2108. Pastor: Rev. D. Coakley.

(*The Annunciation*, May 1937, p. 2)

During its first years of establishment and growth, St Mary's maintained some connection with the Sandringham parish. Marjorie Awburn's experience was typical: 'I made my First Holy Communion at Hampton but I was confirmed in Sacred Heart, Sandringham. The Archbishop confirmed you when you were about ten or eleven. I think they felt that St Mary's was too small. So we'd all go down to Sandringham for that. But then, of course, as time went by St Mary's had their own confirmation here.'¹⁵

However most activities were focused at St Mary's from early on. Parishioners such as the Arthur family took the opportunity to attend regular weekday Mass, made possible now that a church was within walking distance:

'When my mother went to seven o'clock morning Mass on weekdays, I used to accompany her and we'd pick up families as we went along. We only had the prep room to have Mass in because it was nearest the altar. You'd have to squeeze in somewhere between one of the desks...My mother went for years...Mum seemed to pick up a trail of people, families such as the Taylors and the Makehams, down there. They were all waiting to walk down with you...Sometimes I would beg to go with my eldest sister Edna to Sunday night Benediction at seven o'clock. She would take me, but the walk there and back proved too much for little legs and Edna always had to "piggy back" me home up Villeroy Street hill.'¹⁶ The sanctuary in the church building was kept separate on weekdays behind a floor-to-ceiling red curtain and the altar rails, and raised by several steps. 'During the week, more so than today, the children were encouraged to visit the Blessed Sacrament and say some prayers, that sort of thing. You could always go in behind the curtain and say some prayers if you wanted to in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.'¹⁷

Girls who belonged to the Children of Mary sodality had their own pattern of participation: 'it involved going to a meeting and a Mass, and saying special prayers. We wore a blue cloak and white veil, and a medal on a blue ribbon...Father Coakley was quite advanced in a sense, I think, because we used to serve Mass – girls could – but we were not on the altar itself. We were outside the altar rails. But we could make all the responses. We would kneel outside the altar rail and the responses to the opening prayers – "I will go unto the altar of God..." – would be all in Latin, of course...There may not have been that many altar boys – boys could go on the altar and make the responses.'¹⁸

THE HANDMAIDS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The Promise

I promise, in all faithfulness, to devote my life to the service of our Eucharistic King as a "Handmaid of the Blessed Sacrament", and to assist the Knights in the Great Crusade, faithfully observing all the customs of the Handmaids.

The Handmaid is pledged to be at least a Weekly Communicant, which pledge does not bind under sin. This is the one essential duty. If she has unavoidably missed her weekly duty, she will try to make up for it by an extra Communion. The following practices are recommended: To promote assistance at daily Mass; to attend Benediction; to celebrate all the great Feasts by receiving Holy Communion; when passing a Catholic Church to give a full salute to the Bl. Sacrament; to wear the Badge; often to visit the Blessed Sacrament; and on Communion days to make a short thanksgiving after Mass.

(card belonging to Valerie Awburn, signed in 1935)



Some of the parish's early fundraisers at a Parish Picnic.

Left to right: Mrs Matthiesson, Mrs Dillon, Mr Gleeson, Mr Quinn, Mrs Almond, Mr Matthiesson and Mrs Quinn.

(Awburn Private Collection)



Early memories: Morning Mass, wooden kneelers, folding doors to make three rooms, and those nuns of old coming up from Sandy convent each day by train and foot – hot, cold and wet, wet days...First Communion Day – my seventh birthday – great piety, white dresses, ribbons, veils and sumptuous breakfast.

(Mary Naughton, nee McCarter, student 1927–1932)

Parish Picnic.

Hanging Rock, circa 1938.

(Awburn Private Collection)

Money for running the parish was always hard to come by. The world-wide Depression began only a few years after the establishment of St Mary's, leading to an even greater concern for financial security, week by week, in the minds of parishioners and parish priest. One source of funds was the weekly collection. Parishioners' names were listed street by street in the parish magazine alongside their proposed and actual offerings. By 1937 Father Coakley reported that although the worst effects of the Depression had passed, these offerings

could be improved: 'There has been a considerable return to prosperity and it is safe to say that there are very few unemployed. For that we must all feel deeply grateful. Yet collections for church purposes have certainly not risen. The total for the Weekly Offering during April was only £10/0/3, and the second collections amounted only to £10/1/5...We may have to appoint collectors to look up defaulters in the Weekly Offering list. The services of one for the south-eastern part of the parish are needed immediately, as some parishioners there have asked for a collector to call.'¹⁹ Such collecting was sometimes undertaken by members of the Altar Society or the Catholic Women's Social Guild.

In effect, the parish was only able to survive due to ongoing fundraising activities driven by a core group of parishioners: 'Mr and Mrs Matthiesson, Mr and Mrs Tom Quinn, Mr and Mrs Dillon, Mrs Almond, Jim and Madge Duggan, Lillian and Leo Archer, Mr and Mrs Keary, Miss Molly Tindale – these people were some of the foundation stones of the early years at St Mary's. They worked tirelessly organising euchre parties, dances, fetes that ran for two days.'²⁰ 'The fundraising in the very early days was a big job because the church was made into a school so all the desks had to be taken out at the weekend. Every second week there would be a card party and a dance in the church building. And that would be the Saturday night. Then, of course, Sunday all the seats and kneelers would have to go in and then after Sunday in readiness for school on Monday, all the desks had to be brought back and school rooms set up.'²¹

These fundraising and related social activities were central in the lives of many families. There were groups to belong to and activities to join in. Social activities ranged from parish picnics to participation in the annual Eucharistic Festivals at Rupertswood: 'Social life was centred on the church.'²² 'The girls belonged to Children of Mary – the boys were CYMS (Catholic Young Men's Society) – our fathers belonged to men's group The Holy Name – and our mothers belonged to the CWL (Catholic Women's League).'²³ 'These were community years – we grew up with the parish. When dance days came our fathers changed our multipurpose church with the heavy curtains across the altar from school rooms – to dance floor (Saturday nights) – to Mass church Sunday – and back to school format Monday. Those great "Dads" deserve mention, as do the mothers who made milk coffee in the kitchen for dance suppers and left it all in order.'²⁴ 'Mum was always belting up sponges or something if somebody was collecting them for the dance. If they didn't do that, the mothers worked in the kitchen and watched the dance...Everything had to be moved. If you had a fete – fetes usually ran two days, Friday and Saturday – you had to have it all cleaned up again for Mass on the Sunday.'²⁵

*Parish Societies: CYMS:
Mondays 8pm; Altar
Society: once a month on
Tuesdays; Hibernians
(HACBS), fortnightly on
Wednesdays; Girls' Club,
each Wednesday evening.*

*(The Annunciation,
May 1937)*

Tennis courts behind the church provided another social and recreational focus for teenagers and adults: 'Mr and Mrs Awburn were to the fore there. They seemed to run a lot of the tennis club activities and we all joined up – there was a lot of sport.'²⁶ 'Some of the boys and some of the girls would get together in the summer holidays and we'd play tennis at the tennis club in the morning, go home and have lunch, and then re-gather down the beach and go swimming together: Len Varney, Bernie Hubbard, Rita Phelan, Joan Gullquist and myself. The older people used to play competitive tennis in the VCLTA (Victorian Catholic Lawn Tennis Association).'²⁷ Lifelong friendships were made and marriages eventuated. Aisla Ryan and her husband Vaughan, for example, met at the Catholic Life Exhibition "Credo": 'parishioners from every parish were involved. We had to go to rehearsals at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, and everybody took their parts – we were Babylonians...it was a big thing. I met my husband there – he came from St James, Gardenvale...Looking back we thought it was the best time in our lives...The drama class was run by Mrs Gillan and we put on lots of plays locally. Being young and enthusiastic, it was a lot of fun'.²⁸

School

During the 1920s and 1930s, the parish school gradually strengthened under the guidance of the Presentation Sisters. This teaching order had arrived in Australia some 50 years earlier, and had founded a convent and school in Gardenvale – Star of the Sea – in 1883. By 1923, Star of the Sea alone had 40 Sisters teaching nearly 1200 pupils in seven schools. St Mary's was one of a number of parochial schools commenced by these nuns during the 1920s in response to the growing need in burgeoning suburban populations. For the school's first few years the nuns came to St Mary's by train each day from their convent at Star of the Sea.

St Mary's school commenced in January 1925, with Sister M. Kostka as head teacher, assisted by lay teacher (and former student of Star of the Sea) Miss Hilda Dwyer.²⁹ By the end of January there were 48 names on the roll, with the largest numbers in the lower grades. At a time when 'all Catholic children were expected to attend the parish Catholic school',³⁰ naturally there were many local Catholic families eager to enrol their children in a school near home. The following report by Catholic Schools Inspector Charles O'Driscoll

You could get into trouble very easily...When Sister was called out of the classroom she would leave instructions for the class to sit up with their hands folded behind their backs. This was a good idea because you would not develop round shoulders. After sitting up like soldiers on this particular day for half an hour the novelty wore off. The boys became restless, so they began chewing up blotting paper, putting it on the ends of their rulers and bombarding the freshly painted roof with "soggy missiles". The girls watched this entertainment ...I fail to see how we could have stopped them – so we were involved. Poor Sister handled the situation well. The boys were lined up and told they had to clean the roof. How?? We all went home wondering whether "expulsion" was on her mind.

(Aisla Ryan, student
1927–1934)

After school, in the summer, the children would run down the end of Holyrood Street for a swim. Sister Raymonde remembers rolling in the grass at playtime, the introduction of the new readers and the Merit exam...The students loved St Mary's School, and as a Presentation Sister, Raymonde returned to St Mary's for her first teaching appointment.

(Sister Raymonde Taylor,
student Betty Taylor
1926-1933)

St Mary's was a busy parish. To make it all work there were concerts under the guidance of Sister Attracta, also the yearly bazaar or fete, raffles, and mothers and fathers making and donating goods for sale. All of these activities took place in the church as it was a church school.

(Joan Titulaer, nee
McCarter, student
1930-1938)

in June 1925 is our earliest surviving information about the life of the school: 'The first inspection of the new school in Hampton under the invocation of St Mary's was made on June 30th. The attendance today was 58 and the numbers on the Rolls total 62. Pupils are classified thus:

Infants	19
Grade I	6
Grade II	3
Grade III	6
Grade IV	9
Grade V	8
Grade VI	7
Grades VII & VIII	4
Total.....	62

'I found the pupils working quietly but effectively. They were most interested in their lessons and readily responded to all my tests. Most of the pupils have completed their year at some Catholic school and together with the good work done since the opening of St Mary's in January of this year have secured honors in their respective grades. This will enable all to receive promotion so that the new school year will begin from July 1st. Two class rooms are at present being used to accommodate the pupils. Ample provision is made for this growing suburb. The class rooms are models of comfort and every provision is made for the carrying out under ideal conditions of the prescribed curriculum. St Mary's is in charge of the Presentation Nuns with Sister M. Kostka as head teacher and Miss Dwyer as assistant. The pupils were most orderly and endeavoured during my visit to show the excellent teaching and training that are taken in their welfare. I wish the teachers every success in their new school at Hampton.'³¹ Miss Dwyer entered the Presentation novitiate in 1926. Sister Ignatius Whelan, 'a middle aged, experienced and gifted infant teacher',³² assisted Sister Kostka from 1926.

With a growing Hampton population, numbers at the school increased each of the following few years – to 80 in 1926, 102 in 1927, 115 in 1928 and 132 in 1929 – and the inspector continued to be largely pleased with what he saw. All three classrooms were now needed. The highest academic achievement for a parish school student, the Merit Certificate (a qualification attempted by some students in the Grade 8), was first successfully attained by two students in 1926. The following year there were three Merit Certificates and one Government scholarship. In addition: 'Perfect order, discipline and right attitude to school duties are seen in the three beautiful classrooms'. In 1928 the



only curriculum area to be considered unsatisfactory by Mr O'Driscoll was "writing"; however by the following year the increase in student numbers had strained the effectiveness of the teaching, particularly in the middle group (at this time Grades 2, 3 and 4): 'I suggested that the essential subjects only form the objective. I suggested this on account of the numbers in the room under one teacher. Reading, Spelling, and with some Arithmetic were very weak in these grades'.

Some of these difficulties may have been due to the significant upheaval already experienced by the nuns earlier in the year. Father Mangan, the parish priest of Sandringham who had been instrumental in the establishment of St Mary's, had bought a former guesthouse at the corner of Sandringham and Fernhill Roads for use as a convent – it would be closer both to St Mary's and to the newly opened Presentation school at Black Rock. Some St Mary's students attended the blessing of the building by Archbishop Mannix.³³ Eight Presentation Sisters from Star of the Sea had moved to the new convent in early March 1929. Of this group, Sisters Xavier Brennan and Kevin Trehy would later teach at St Mary's and Sister Alberta Kearney had just started at the school. Tragically, young Irish-born Sister Alberta, 'a wonderful and kind infant teacher',³⁴ was taken ill and died before the end of the month.³⁵

Former students have some clear memories of some early staff: 'Sister Ignatius, who had the early grades, was kind and gentle. Sister Kostka was

1929 Grades Four to Eight.

Back row, left to right: Jim Pyke, Tony Carra, Roscoe Scott, Roy Confay, Charlie Lloyd, Gerald Maree, Cecil Cull, Sid McNiven, Harry Sword, Jack Keary, Vincent Aldridge, Jack McManus.

Third row, left to right: Gwen Lovelock, ..., Betty Taylor, Lily Nathan, Kath Keary, Marj Awburn, Coral Holloway, Winnie Egan, ... Sword, Annie Keith, Rita Phelan, Mary Green.

Seated, left to right: Joyce Green, Tessie Carra, Grace Hubble, Phyllis Lovelock, Margaret Warner, ...Sword, Maureen Pyke, Pam Lovelock, Leslie Phelan.

Front row, left to right: Brian McNiven, Des. Keary, Jack Mahy, Leo Hubbard, Peter Corcoran, Jack Allen, Frank McCarter, Bill Cronin, Bill Duff.

(Keary Private Collection)

rather strict'.³⁶ 'Sister Patrick was a lovely nun. Physical culture lessons each week were given by Mr Ambler. Miss Allen gave us art of speech – elocution – weekly. Miss Norris, from Semco, took needlework – she introduced us to fancy work and crochet. I think we had a Miss Papworth for Infants – a very young teacher with corn coloured plaits over her ears. They intrigued me. I used to wonder how she kept them there. She was very pale and frail.'³⁷ Mary Papworth had been a Star Parlor Boarder and later became a Good Shepherd Sister.³⁸ Other teachers included Mrs Leitch, Miss Wilson, Sister Albius and Sister Casimir.

Student numbers increased steadily to a peak of 180 in 1932, but until the end of the war were always somewhere between approximately 125 and 155. This relative stability of numbers was usually matched by high standards in teaching. In 1934 there were curriculum changes, and Mr O'Driscoll reported on their successful implementation at the school: 'A very good beginning has been made in all the required work of the New Syllabus. The pupils' work books show many of the lessons given in some subjects. These are mainly in the social studies, pastel, drawing, writing, poetry and in science and nature study...I am asking all schools to stress the teaching of the essential subjects. These remain always in the syllabus when other changes are introduced.' Two years later the Inspector was particularly enthusiastic about the standards and atmosphere of the school: 'The little ones were most attentive, anxious and very much interested in their lessons. Rarely have I found more attractive little ones who seem to love school and their teacher...Ten pupils gained their Merit Certificate by examination from the Education Department. This is an excellent result from a small school. It is strong evidence of the high standard of efficiency maintained in the Top Grades of St Mary's School.'

The polio epidemic of 1937 affected St Mary's much as it did other schools. When the Inspector visited at the end of October, the Infant School was still closed: 'The senior room was closed for six weeks and the middle room for eleven. Teachers and children are working hard to make up for lost time.' Iris Ashton recalled the effect of the school closure in her case: 'It wasn't very long after I started school at St Mary's that we had the polio epidemic. There were quite a few who developed polio with the result that the school was closed. I was in Grade 4, I think. The school was closed and we were sent correspondence classes. I can remember starting off with receiving papers for Grade 4 and then while we were still away, I started receiving papers for Grade 5. So when I came back to school I went into Grade 6.'³⁹

Sister Paul taught music at the school for a short time, followed by Sister Attracta, one of whose star pupils was Valerie Awburn: 'Sister Attracta taught me piano, theory and cello – a career I eventually followed, playing in the

There was a very interesting person who used to come into the school and take elocution – Maud Redding. But she taught under her professional name of Maud Allen...She was a character a little bit reminiscent of Dan Daly, a big, strong imposing woman...She also took care of the nuns...In those days nuns had their hair shorn. Maud Allen used to go and shave their hair and when they passed on, she used to lay them out.

(Janet Davis (nee Smith), student late 1940s – early 1950s)

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra for just on fifty years. Sister Attracta had the special gift of teaching, including violin amongst her subjects. She always stood at the piano directing rehearsals.⁴⁰ 'She ran an orchestra, too, up in Sandringham in the Convent, and we used to of course participate in that, especially for St Patrick's Day concerts.'⁴¹ 'Sister Attracta taught singing to all the classes. We all seemed to like that, but you'd stand up there for hours practising for concerts. You'd sing "The Pale Moon Was Rising Above the Green Mountain" and all the old songs from way back... We seemed to practise for weeks and weeks beforehand. I didn't mind it because we weren't doing school work. I suppose nobody did. But we put on quite a performance, dancing and singing, little plays, and the musical ones played their instruments.'⁴²

Concerts and other performances were an important part of school life: 'I enjoyed the yearly concerts organised by the nuns. In the mid 1930s the following lollies were popular – Minties, QTs and of course Wrigley's PK. We all sang the following ditty whilst dancing on the stage: "Mademoiselle Minty and Madam QT – Fascinating fancy I am sure you will agree – If you don't know what to do, come to us and have a chew – Wrigley's PK". The parents and the nuns enjoyed it no end.'⁴³ Dressing the part involved assistance, usually from the mothers: 'I can recall being a skating girl in a costume – a red costume with cotton wool which Mum had to put in the oven to puff up and that was sewn all around the base of the skirt. You had a red hat with cotton wool and muffs made out of cotton wool too. And we had some sort of boots, I don't know what they were, but we glided around the floor – we didn't even have a stage... They must have had just part of the seats for their parents around the side and we had the centre of the floor.'⁴⁴ While some concerts took place in the school building, on other occasions the RSL Memorial Hall in Hampton Street was used.

The nuns came to Hampton on the train and then they walked in all weathers to Holyrood Street to teach. In later years I think they got a bit of help and parishioners who had cars took them.

(Aisla Ryan, student 1927–1934)

We used to be taunted by the state school kids when they walked past St Mary's: "Catholic dogs, sit on logs, eating maggots out of frogs". Mother Xavier composed the following ditty as an answer to such a taunt: "The state school is a very good school made of brick and plaster, the only thing wrong with it is it has a baldy headmaster!"

(Geoff Splatt, student 1935–1940)



Interior of the church-school in the early days. Note the classroom divider. (Church Historical Collection)



CHAPTER THREE

WAR YEARS

War cast its shadow over St Mary's from September 1939. 'There was a shortage of everything...We were all on ration coupons for clothing and some foods.'⁴⁵ Parish groups added the war effort to their already extensive work raising desperately-needed funds for the parish. Dances were a popular activity, and in 1942 the local newspaper reported on a particularly successful example organised by prominent parishioners: 'Visitors to the Merrymakers' dance in the Hampton Memorial Hall last Saturday night were loud in their praises of the excellent way in which the organisation work had been carried out...the sum of 29 pounds six shillings was raised and a cheque for that amount was handed to the Mayor (Cr Innes) during the supper interval...[The Mayor] expressed his gratitude at the fact that the gross takings were donated to the Patriotic Fund, the Merrymakers themselves bearing all the expenses and providing the supper. The Returned Soldiers' Association gave the hall rent-free for the occasion. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the Merrymakers comprise about one hundred members of St Mary's Church, Hampton. The organisation is divided into six distinct committees, each of which undertakes full responsibility for one of the dances held fortnightly to help defray expenses in connection with the church schools. The chief workers on the committee responsible for last Saturday's dance were Mr C. Corcoran (secretary) and his parents Mr & Mrs G. Corcoran.'⁴⁶

As the war continued, the school did its best to prepare for the worst: 'We had air raid practice regularly. Sometimes the whole suburb was involved and when the siren sounded we knew what to do. We assembled in the playground and very calmly marched ourselves home, some via buses that were waiting for us at the station, without any sign of panic.'⁴⁷ Some families, of course, faced direct loss, and the parish grieved: 'One of the boys in my grade had a 19-year-old brother who went to England to train with RAF as a pilot and was shot down and killed. This hit us children very badly – it brought the reality of war very close.'⁴⁸ Similarly, pupils Leon and Sam Makeham's older brother Alick



Composite Group, circa 1942.

Back row, left to right:
Harry Sutton, ... Sutton,
Terry Shore, Des King, ...,
Maurice Kelly, Bob Maguire.

Third row, left to right:
..., ..., Pat Kinsella, ...,
Fleur Morcom, ..., ...,
(Houlihan Triplets),
Sam Makeham,
Bob Kennedy, ..., .../.

Second row, left to right:
..., ..., Maree McMahon, Joan
Millard, ..., ..., Marg Miller,
Barbara Johnston, Bev. Ryan.

Front row, left to right:
Neil Gleeson, Terry Daly, Brian
Wood, Tom Makepeace, Pat
Lanigan, John Roseman, John
Heffernan, Leon Makeham.
(Pat Kinsella Private Archives)

died when shot down in action.⁴⁹ The Chalice still used was donated in his memory.

Amidst the suffering and hard work, a lighter side could always be found: "The decision was made to dig zig-zag slit trenches in St Mary's school grounds. These were situated between the existing tennis courts and the school building.⁵⁰ The theory was that if children sheltered below ground level they would be safe from ground level shrapnel. In short, they would be safe from all but a direct hit by a bomb. The fathers toiled away and dug the trenches suitably deep. To prevent earth slippage, the sides were timbered. Alas, the trenches were dug below the existing water table. Within a short time the trenches were half-filled with foul, green scummy water. Thankfully the Japanese did not bomb St Mary's. Otherwise we young children would have been on the horns of a frightening yet comical dilemma. When the air raid sirens wailed would we court the perils of Japanese shrapnel above ground or challenge our swimming survival skills in the oozy, slimy "sanctuary" below ground level? We survived!!"⁵¹

Other aspects of school life went on amidst the broader disruption caused by the war. The church building maintained its dual use: 'Thick burgundy curtains were pulled across to close the sanctuary off from the rest of the building Monday–Friday. The building was the width of the sanctuary and the length was as it currently is. School was conducted in the church that was now a school. Three rooms operated, with as best I recall folding doors providing separation. My memory is that these folding doors were often as recalcitrant as the pupils. Friday was transformation day. The Monday–Friday desks (long enough to seat 5–6 pupils) were removed, the folding doors folded back, the church pews installed and until Sunday evening we had a church. On Sunday evening the process was reversed to host school on Monday.'⁵² While the fathers often did much of the work in weekly furniture moving, the students had their own tasks: 'The older children in the school on Friday afternoon when classes were finished removed all the desks and swept the whole school. Then they were packed up outside in the sheltered lunch area and the pews were brought in. The big boys in Grades 7 and 8 did this. Then the girls and small children set about dusting and polishing with Marveer polish and the altar society came in on Saturday to put in flowers. The nuns supervised all the children's work and woe betide anyone who did not do their job properly.'⁵³

Similarly, students assisted with other tasks to keep the school running smoothly: 'Every day the playground was kept tidy by children nominated grade by grade to be on yard duty, even the toilets were kept clean by the bigger grades.'⁵⁴ Outdoors provided a range of possibilities for play, both on the school grounds and nearby: 'For years we had only one playground: boys one end, girls the other. Softball, basketball, skipping and hopscotch were popular. The block next to the church school could have provided another play space.'⁵⁵ 'Pat Hubbard had the local dairy – the milk was bottled by him and then delivered by horse and cart to homes in Hampton. He kept his horses in a paddock on the right hand side of the church – the presbytery and the basketball court are now on that site. During Mass one Sunday one of the horses ran the length of the paddock breaking wind in rather a loud manner. Being all good Catholics, the whole church broke into uncontrollable laughter!'⁵⁶ The Clydesdale that grazed in this paddock offered a particular temptation for school children: 'The challenge for little boys was to lure the horse to the fence with a handful of grass while a friend would balance on the fence, then when the patient, gentle giant came within reach to plonk on its back.'⁵⁷

The school rooms were divided by class according to the number of pupils at each level. Barbara Waterman recalled that in about 1940, for example: 'The sanctuary was curtained off at the altar rails in the first class room which

Those were the days when a Catholic mightn't get a job...So you had your different organisations plugging for those of their own people. And Father Daly had to deal with the Council many times – and he got knocked back on stupid things...It was a shame, there was no ecumenism like there is now.

(Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937)

Sister Xavier Brennan and
Sister Casimir Cregan.
(Presentation Sisters Archive)



Seven of the nine Kelly children were at St Mary's in 1939. Somehow my mother found time to make the nuns' bathing costumes as well as the white headdresses the nuns wore when they went to bed...Buses brought children from Highett before St Agnes school was established. We walked everywhere, such as to St Finbar's to play basketball.

(Elaine Coates, nee Kelly)

became Babies, Grades 1 and 2 and were taught by a young nun Sister Dolores...The middle room of our school, Grades 3, 4 and 5, was under the kindly eye of Sister Kevin, an Irish nun whom the children loved. She had a long

pointer stick which she carried all the time in class which she used to point to the board with and would also prod us children with to make us alert, although she never hurt us. She had a great sense of humour and we seemed to laugh a lot in her grades. The third room at St Mary's, Grades 6, 7 and 8 was in the capable hands of Mother Xavier, the head nun who had grown up in Gardenvale as Bernadette Brennan. She was middle aged I think, a great teacher but extremely strict. She was also not well most of the time. She, on a cold winter's day or a windy day, wrapped her veiled head and mouth in a long black knitted scarf. I was told years later that she suffered with the severest form of neuralgia,...an agonising complaint.⁵⁸

The Presentation Sisters often had a profound influence on their charges: 'Mother Xavier, particularly, was such a dedicated woman that she used to take a group of us for Saturday morning classes and we used to travel to the convent in Sandringham on Saturday morning to get extra tuition. We had a lot to owe to her really.'⁵⁹ 'The nuns were so dedicated and they were so convicted in their faith it rubbed off onto the children. They convinced us all that we were worth their efforts and we responded to their enthusiasm. They were so good at this that most of us I think believed Catholics were just a cut above the rest...The nuns travelled to and from school each day by train and they walked the length of Hampton shopping centre from the station to Holyrood Street. They were well known by the shop keepers...When one of the nuns had to go home early for one reason or another which was never explained to us, the nuns had to be accompanied by one of the older students; in those days nuns never travelled alone. I remember being chosen to go with Mother Xavier one day and walking along Hampton Street and listening to her express her disgust and dismay at some of the women wearing slacks (they were called trousers) which had just come into vogue and saying, "Of course, your mother wouldn't wear those would she? She's a lady". But of course my mother did, but never when she came to school.'⁶⁰



Father Daly

Father Daly and First Communicants.
(Awburn Private Collection)

Father Daniel Coakley, whom I recall as a thin, austere figure, was replaced by a contrasting figure in Father Daniel Daly. He was a short plump figure with a shock of white hair and a ruddy complexion. Think of Spencer Tracy.

(Laurie McMahon, student 1939–1943)

Coincidental with the year war began had been the arrival of Father Dan Daly, 'a great people's priest'⁶¹ and 'a great personality'.⁶² Both children and adults were shaped by his strong pastoral leadership. Many parishioners from his time would concur with Janet Davis's perspective: 'I remember him mainly as being one of the strongest forces of my childhood, Dan Daly, and of my faith...He was a leader who was liked very much. He was like an Archbishop. He was really strong. ...I think our faith – our strong faith and beliefs – came from Dan Daly...We were a bit in awe of him as well – terrified.'⁶³

Father Daly had novel techniques for catching the attention of the school children: 'We children loved Father Daly. He came to the school once or twice a week to quiz us on our catechism; but also to entertain us with his tricks. He



Confirmation Day, 1950.

Left to right:

Bill Gill, Maurice Kenny,
Michael McMahon and
Peter Makeham.

(Gill Private Collection)

I remember one child coming up in her First Communion morning with her mother. She had put her finger in the orange juice that was being prepared for a younger member of the family – and had broken her fast! I took her round to the Parish Priest Father Dan Daly. He just said, "What would Jesus do? It's OK. Let her make her First Communion and tell her to be careful next time!" I bet he's got a good place in heaven!

(Sister Gabrielle Jackman,
formerly Sister Catherine,
teacher 1951–1958)

was a great juggler and performed great feats with Sister Kevin's pointer, like balancing it on his nose. He loved an audience and told us he had worked in a circus before he entered the priesthood. I don't know how true this was but we children believed him.⁶⁴ 'Father Daly would come into the classroom. He would get the pole which used to open the windows of the church...and he would get a book, and he would put the book on top of the pole and then he would lift the pole up vertical and get his chin underneath the pole, and he would balance it and he would walk down the aisle; of course, it

could go either one foot that way or one foot this way...He was actually very clever circus-wise as far as balancing things – amazing.⁶⁵ 'Carlton was the top VFL team in those years and Father Daly was a one-eyed follower as were the boys in my class, one reason being Father bought all the boys in Grade 8 who followed Carlton a season's ticket. We three girls felt this favouritism and let him know how we felt, and lo and behold he shouted us a ticket to an afternoon (Wednesday) matinee to see "The Great Mr Handel". What a treat! – an afternoon off from school and a free movie.⁶⁶

We used to be up at half past six around the church for Mass on a weekday when we were on the altar. Altar boys would serve Mass and we used to say it in Latin. Of course, none of us knew what we were saying but we said it in Latin. And this particular morning I was half asleep and I was snuffing the candles, and I got to the very last one and I knocked the vase and it fell down on the altar cloth on the part of the altar where Father Daly said Mass. And it was the first time I'd ever experienced a priest say cross words, bad words.

(Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937)

Father Daly's preaching was particularly memorable and he drew large numbers of all ages to the church: 'He had great devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. And these devotions he held – every Tuesday night I think – the church would have been full.'⁶⁷ 'He'd give these novenas on a Tuesday night. And the CYMS⁶⁸ and the girls from the NCGM⁶⁹ would be there. They wouldn't be asked to go. We'd all just meet and then go down the milk bar. Just to hear Father Daly speak – he was a magnificent preacher with a terrific devotion to Our Lady...I think it is significant that the young people...would

actually go to a novena and most of us had left school at that time...Father Daly would also preach about money because in those days we had no state aid and the parish was struggling.⁷⁰ 'Dan Daly...[was] a wonderful person speaking about English and language. He'd use beautiful words in his sermons and then he'd make the explanation of them, like – it stuck in my mind for ever – "dichotomy"...He used to say it over and over again until we all had it: "dichotomy is a contradiction in terms"...He was absolutely wonderful.'⁷¹

The Children of Mary sodality continued in Father Daly's era: 'We used to wear blue cloaks and a white veil...We'd come to Mass and go to Communion, and then later on in the afternoon we used to have a little meeting.'⁷² 'And all around the neighbourhood you'd see girls, some on bikes – cloaks flowing – each going on their way to Mass.'⁷³ Father Daly put great value on the Children of Mary and had high standards for its members, as Iris Ashton was to discover one Sunday: 'I recall one time it was Children of Mary Sunday and I had a girlfriend from Star of the Sea staying with me. And because we had a school function on at that time, she had to wear her school uniform. So Aileen, my sister, and myself didn't go to the Children of Mary that time. We went with this friend of mine to Mass all in our school uniform, and of course Father got up on the pulpit and denounced the girls who weren't in the Children of Mary and he said, "Especially those three down there in school uniform". Well, it was bad enough for Aileen and I but my friend Una, oh, she was so embarrassed...And normally Aileen and I were very regular attendants at Children of Mary.'⁷⁴



Children of Mary procession.
(Church Historical Collection)

Father Daly was extremely kind when people were sick. I used to like working on old cars. I had a couple of old cars at home, 1928 models, and I'd be working on those and Father would visit our house to see my father, and then on his way home he'd come and have a look at the cars I was working on. And I remember his words. He distinctly said, "Always working on these old bag o' bones". And he turned around and he said, "Well, perhaps you're better off doing that than chasing girls". Little did he know I was doing the cars up to take girls out!

(Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937)



First classrooms attached to church-school.
(Shaw Private Collection)



CHAPTER FOUR THE TREMENDOUS INFLUX

A new school building

We had a lovely music teacher at St Mary's in my day called Sister Denise. Piano lessons were at St Mary's. On Saturday mornings we'd go down to that beautiful Sandringham convent to do the theory lessons and to sit for the piano and theory exams. We'd buy fish and chips on the way back. (Janet Davis (nee Smith), student late 1940s – early 1950s)

The end of the war brought only a brief time of 'normal' activity at St Mary's before the effects of post-war migration and the 'baby boom' began to be felt in dramatically increased numbers, particularly at the school. Sister Francis Cullinan, who had recently been teaching at other Presentation schools (including nearby East Brighton, Black Rock and Sandringham), was appointed as head teacher in 1946 with no expectations of substantial change at the school: 'When I arrived there was no talk even of a new school building. The parish priest wanted to build a boys' school. I said, "Where would you find the boys?"' Numbers were still stable at around 150 students, and the classrooms had been renovated the previous year with a view to their continued use for this purpose. 'We were still in the church building. The end nearest Holyrood Street was the senior room – I think we had Grades 6, 7 and 8 in there. Mrs Heffernan would come some days (she had also come in Mother Xavier's time). Before my time another teacher taught the Grade 6s in that room. Grades 4, 5 and 6 were in the next room, then Prep, 1, 2 and 3. There were four of us and a music teacher who came two days a week.'⁷⁵

By October 1946, however, student numbers had already begun to rise and plans to meet this new challenge were being discussed, as the Inspector noted favourably in his report: 'I am glad to hear that a new school is to be erected. If possible provision will be made for the teaching of cooking. A new school will make possible a better division of grades which are at present taught in



Sister Francis Cullinan.
(Presentation Sisters Archive)

We used to have the maypole every year...it would have been for a fete in May...it was a very lovely old-world idea that became a tradition. We used to weave in and out around the maypole.

(Janet Davis (nee Smith),
student late 1940s –
early 1950s)

excessively large groups. Housing developments in the district have caused a large influx of new pupils.' Many of these housing developments were undertaken by the Housing Commission, in part to assist in settling post-war immigrants in the area. Sister Francis recalled that for the next few years the trend continued: 'People were moving to East Hampton and surrounding districts. I would be enrolling children quite frequently throughout the year.'⁷⁶

Despite the increasingly urgent need for them, the new school buildings were to be several years in the making. This may in part have been due to the difficulty in accessing building materials at a time of shortage after the war, even had money been easy to come by. In the meantime, the inspectors reported each year on the struggle to maintain standards in an overcrowded and under-resourced school. In June 1947, with an enrolment of about 220 students, St Mary's stood out as having the largest classes encountered by the inspector – 82 pupils in prep, 1 and 2 with Sister Perpetua, 86 pupils in Grades 3, 4 and 5 with Sister Julian, and 54 with Sister Francis in Grades 6, 7 and 8: 'It is surprising that a remarkable standard of efficiency is maintained in spite of the most congested state of the classrooms and of the limited staff of teachers. In no school that I visit do I find such large numbers of pupils allotted to teachers. At least two extra Sisters are urgently needed to cope with the increasing attendance and at least three extra classrooms to provide accommodation for the very promising pupils of St Mary's school. The results of the pupils' efforts during the inspection were all the more remarkable considering the large numbers assigned to teachers and the great inconveniences caused by the congestion in desks overtaxed.' The following month the Inspector in Christian Doctrine noted the 'alarming state' of overcrowding and the 'considerable number of small children' awaiting enrolment the following term. He wondered whether 'some temporary structure' could be used while awaiting the proposed new school building. While it appears that the school had to persevere in the original building a little longer, by 1948 there were, at least, more staff – joining Sister Francis, Sister Julian and Mrs Heffernan were now Sister Columban (replacing Sister Perpetua) and two more lay staff: Miss Keating and Miss Newbold.

In August 1948, with student enrolment at 315, the inspector was pleased to note that building of the new school had finally begun: 'Six new classrooms are at present being built. Heating will be installed in each of them.' Staff and students were to endure about a year of the disruption of trying to teach and learn in the middle of a building site. In May 1949 the inspector expressed his concerns about the conditions: 'The inevitable noise and inconvenience make good teaching conditions impossible. Some grades are housed in a shed away from the school. This shed, although waterproof, would be very cold in the

middle of winter.' Sister Francis recalled that it helped to be young: 'St Mary's was my first experience of being a head teacher. I was so young – one day a lady came to enrol and she said, "Oh, but you're young; I've only ever seen an old head teacher!" We needed to be young – we just had to cope with the building going on exactly alongside the school – the noise was unbelievable!'⁷⁷

It was a relief finally to move into 'the new magnificent school...already a noticeable landmark in Hampton'.⁷⁸ For Head Teacher Sister Francis, however, some aspects of the building's design and fit-out were not as good as they could have been: 'The two rooms upstairs had Grades 7 and 8, and 5 and 6. There were still folding doors downstairs. I had had very little say in the design of the school. I asked for lots of things from the Parish Priest of the time, Father Daly, but it was hard work getting them. For example, the architect, Arbon, who had designed other schools, couldn't see why I wanted pin-up boards – so there were lots of compromises. That was a different time then.' The day-to-day experience of teaching was also very different: 'It was more relaxed than today. You had big classes, so your time was spent teaching all day. You couldn't afford the external things, but we had sport. It was a great time to be teaching. You didn't have today's frustrations, although the business part of it got wearying. We didn't have secretaries and all that sort of thing, but we weren't dealing with big amounts of money. We would collect the "school money" on Monday mornings – two shillings each (or it might have been two shillings per family). Six pence would come out for music and so on.'⁷⁹

An experience of adequate space in the new building was not to last long. By July 1950 total enrolment had shot up to 472 students, with some having to be turned away: 'That year I enrolled 96 children for prep; the rest had to go to the state school.'⁸⁰ This surge in numbers reflected the desperate shortage of Catholic parish schooling in the rapidly expanding suburbs around Hampton, and the inspector was worried: 'The new school has attracted pupils from outside the parish in such numbers that congestion is being threatened. I suggest that enrolment of pupils other than that of those inside the parish be discontinued.' His advice may have been heeded, at least briefly, as a year later there were fewer than 400 students in the school. However, while there was some talk of establishing 'new schools in adjoining parishes' which should 'relieve the pressure',⁸¹ these were not to be available for some years yet, and so numbers at St Mary's increased again. In 1953 there were 82 students in Grade 4 and 128 in the Infant Grade, with a total of 475 students. The following year the inspector commented again on the overcrowding: 'Every square foot of space is fully occupied of this beautiful and well-furnished school.' Numbers hovered around the high 400s for the next few years, peaking at 488 in the middle of 1955 and 485 in 1956.

Music – the nun would hit me with her rosary beads. The music room was at the back of the church, so I'd get Mum to clean the church when my lesson was under way.

(Julie Ann Morgan, nee Ryan, student 1953–1960)

We loved being in Grade 6 as we got to go upstairs and eat on the roof of our school.

(Julie Ann Morgan, nee Ryan, student 1953–1960)

I remember doing pastel drawings in a pastel book but everything was done by rote, we didn't have the chance to "do our own thing" – express ourselves!

(Julie Ann Morgan, nee Ryan, student 1953–1960)

I remember Jerome Dunn was always waiting before school for the nuns to arrive by taxi from Sandringham so he could take their bags up the stairs.

(Nola Bren, student early 1950s)

Sister Gabrielle Jackman (then known as Sister Catherine) recalled what it was like to manage such huge classes at this time: 'In 1956 I was teaching 140 children, Grade 1 and 2, in the Hall at St Mary's Hampton. The hall is attached to the church on one side and to the classroom on the other side – a front door and a back door is all I can remember! I was young and didn't think it any problem!! Eventually I was given one of the school rooms – other younger nuns had to take the hallway! I can remember the school room – two rows of long desks – about six pupils in each – numbers of desks to fit two children. We put in three! I, the teacher, stood on a couple of bricks at the front so that I could see everyone! I can remember some of the "carry on": "Hold up your pencil!" That was to make sure everyone had one! After some minutes of "fix-upping" we proceeded to do spelling or sums. I'll never forget having Mr O'Driscoll [the Inspector] in the room – God knows what he wrote in the report! To add spice to the general scene, we were blessed by the advent of "teachers in training"...They were helpful in that we could break up into groups for reading! To the lunch shed on the playground – Emphasis on SHED!'⁸²

Teachers need not have been concerned about the inspectors' reports of their classes, as there was usually high praise for both them and their students. In 1955, for example, Mr O'Driscoll concentrated on the high-achievers in his report: 'The pupils are unusually bright and seem most anxious to do their very best...In no grade nor in any subject of the prescribed syllabus was any weakness discovered; on the contrary, I felt I could go beyond what is prescribed and still find answers from the very bright pupils. I make one suggestion, it is that pupils who have reached seven years of age in Grade I be given the Grade II reader and taught to get through that book and be ready for promotion to Grade III at the beginning of 1956. This will prevent retardation of these promising pupils...For some years now St Mary's School has been noted for its many successes at the Diocesan Examinations and last year's results were no exception. Thirteen pupils were successful in gaining Free Places to Central Schools. This is no mean achievement and is the strongest evidence of the very efficient teaching that is given.'⁸³

Alongside the school building was the old shed where students ate lunch: We would sit on the seats which ran the full length of the shed. Concreted, it was. I say shed because it was a studded wall – weatherboards and open about six foot from the top – it was open.

(Bob Maguire, student 1938–1943)

'a complete way of life'

The Hampton people were absolutely fantastic people as a community. Even when we had that big influx there was a feeling of care. We had our ups and downs, but although it was a lot of hard work, it still kept that tone of concern for one another. They were terribly good to the nuns. The priest would let them have a do to raise money that they would give to the convent.

(Sister Frances (formerly Francis) Cullinan, Head Teacher 1946–1950; 1960–1961)

The life of the parish more broadly reflected that of the school, with a parallel increase in numbers, particularly during the 1950s. There was new energy within the parish and a further expansion of its activities. For the first time there were curates to assist Father Daly, and the young people became their focus: 'Once this parish took on curates, they became involved with the youth. I think that was what held the young people together. It wasn't so much the parish priest – it was Father Burke and Father Barker who actually had the youth working very well and the sodalities... Those young priests... had a lot of the girls thinking at one stage "We'll be nuns". They had us thinking "vocation, vocation"... They had us going to morning Mass, had us attending things and they had vocation very much on their mind. A lot of girls entertained the thought. Aileen Lanagan was one of our group and she went on to become a fabulous nun. But a lot of us also entertained the thought and it would be, I would have to say, because of those wonderful young priests. They made us quite devout, actually, at that time.'⁸⁴

St Mary's wasn't just the school or the parish, it became... a complete way of life during that period – very protected but very lovely. Beautiful families made up this wonderful parish, beautiful, hard-working, solid families; very happy people. I always thought of it as a very happy niche here. The Smith family was part of the parish for 30 years, with my sister Lorette going through the school nine years ahead of me... It pulled our lives together, this parish, because there were a lot of social activities.

(Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s)

St Mary's parishioners or students who have become priests or nuns have included: Edna Arthur, Bill Gill, Brian James, Peter James, Adrian Lyons, Aileen Maguire, Michael McMahon, Jack Phelan and Barbara Stapleton.

Father Brian Burke's skills in youth work led to national and then international appointments for the National Catholic Girls' Movement (NCGM). He was replaced as curate at St Mary's by Father John Barker: 'He was fabulous. He used to get us out at morning Mass. We used to be very devout in the early days and go to Mass as often as we could during the week. John Barker used to get us out of church in 20 minutes or 25 minutes for those who were going to work. He was so fast.'⁸⁵

Father Daly got this beautiful statue which stands above the highest point of the St Mary's building and he said that as the ships went out to sea they could see that statue.

(Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937)

From a subcommittee formed in April/May 1950 the Mother's Club was born – first President Mrs O'Sullivan; first Secretary, Mrs Gallagher

(Bulletin Oct 1978)

The young people seemed to be involved in everything, including encouraging the involvement of new arrivals in the parish: 'We used to door knock on those new parishioners,...when new people came into the area, to introduce ourselves. I think we did it with the NCGM...It was all broken up into zones and we'd take zones and knock on doors at night. Our parents used to worry because we were girls out knocking on doors at night. We'd welcome them to St Mary's parish...Probably we were their early personal contacts – people from the parish knocking on their doors...It was a very strong NCGM group here because it was led by Brian Burke who was the national leader.'⁸⁶ Many of the new parishioners contributed substantially to parish life: 'They were wonderful people who worked hard for the parish.'⁸⁷ 'It brought a great element into this parish...Fantastic people. Of course two of them ended up priests...One of them was Brian James...Those people were the basis of the CYMS (Catholic Young Men's Society). They showed us what to do.'⁸⁸

It must have been about 1959 that we had the altar boys' picnic. It consisted of a bus trip to a monastery near Warburton. There were about 20 of us who were carted up on a bus to spend a day of reflection amongst the cloisters...We drove into the monastery and parked opposite a large and rather dilapidated haystack. This was the very thing to entertain some city lads, and we shot out of the bus straight into the haystack. The yard and the haystack, until we invaded it, were littered with chickens...The haystack was full of nests, many of them with dozens of eggs – of various vintages. It wasn't too long before somebody threw an egg, and within seconds there was a hail of eggs across and beyond the haystack. My abiding memory was standing on top of this haystack, an egg in each hand in the midst of this mayhem, and thinking "Now this is living!"...The whole event would not have been more than 20 minutes. We were quickly rounded up, loaded into the bus and sent back to Hampton in disgrace. I don't remember any real repercussions, however. I suspect that market principles were at work: the demand for altar boys was greater than the supply. So there were no dishonorable discharges, and I suspect there was an adult consensus that the less said the better.

(Jack Keating, student in the late 1950s)

Numbers were swelling mainly from the East Hampton area: 'East Hampton became a Commission area so we had an influx of hundreds, perhaps thousands of people...It got too big...so we had to have another church.'⁸⁹ Before the opening of this new church in East Hampton in 1957, for some years St Mary's continued to provide support to residents from that area: 'Everyone came down from East Hampton to St Mary's on buses for Mass on a Sunday.'⁹⁰ Father Daly was closely involved in the development of the East Hampton parish, apparently in everything from obtaining the land to naming the church: 'We started that parish...Father was given a paddock. He had to build the church on it...I think Father Daly's devotion to Mary is how the new parish in

East Hampton happened to become The Immaculate Heart of Mary.⁹¹ 'He named the church.'⁹²

With the opening of the parish and school in East Hampton, numbers decreased dramatically again at St Mary's. Young people began moving away from the parish upon marriage or entering the workforce. However there was reliable and ongoing support from the core group of parishioners, some of whom had belonged to St Mary's for many years already. Pat Dillon, for example, was 'a pillar of the church',⁹³ responsible for counting the collection each week and the accounts more broadly. His wife (as Mrs Manuel in a previous marriage) had been first president of the CWL branch established at St Mary's in 1938. Together they made other contributions as well: 'At confirmation time, the top classes all were confirmed at the same time by the Archbishop, Daniel Mannix...Our only sponsors were Mr and Mrs Dillon, parishioners who lived on the corner of The Avenue. They were always at the

We had a big concert here in the school – the new school also had folding doors and wasn't divided into three or four classrooms as it is now, and it had a big stage at one end. With the help of Father Burke, the curate, they had this big concert which I so enjoyed and so did everyone else. We just used all the classrooms – folded the doors back. It was an enormous success. The male singer was Albert Argenti who was a fantastic tenor. There was another chap on the program by the name of Hughes. A young bloke was dressed up as a Scottish male performer. I'm not sure of this but I think the woman who sang was June Bronhill...That was the greatest thing I enjoyed at St Mary's, that concert.

(Bob Maguire, student 1938–1943)

In 1954 or 1955 I hand-lettered a complete set of cards for "Sundays of the Year" in Old English style letters. These were slotted into a board adjacent to the altar and I believe that they were still in use for some years after we left the parish.

(John Tucker, parishioner 1952–1956)

In Father Daly's time we ran house parties, Sunday night events, fetes. Everyone worked: morning coffees, Silver Circle (a form of gambling). We were forever cake making for tuck shop and later manning school tuck shops.

(Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925)

church. He sponsored all the boys and she sponsored all the girls for confirmation...They lived for the parish, really. They did do a lot to help the priests. They were here all the time.'⁹⁴ 'At the Debutante Ball, Mr and Mrs Dillon were the ones who received the debts...They took all those official duties.'⁹⁵

Other tasks included cleaning the church each week and undertaking Sacristan duties. Some parishioners undertook these for many years and sometimes with little recognition. Eileen Morton, for example, gave time and money to improve the furnishings of the altar and sacristy. Aisla Ryan recalled just how onerous the cleaning duties could become without support: 'Miss Molly Tindale was involved as Sacristan at St Mary's for many years. As Children of Mary we helped her clean the church brass on Saturday afternoons...Molly was becoming very tired when I said I would be happy to help her with altar work. Weeks later Molly retired for that well deserved rest.



St Mary's Catholic Young Men's
Society Debating Team, circa 1950.

Back row, left to right:

Frank Davis, Bob Corcoran,
Donn O'Connor, Ted King,
Pat Hubbard, Brian Miller,
Jim Duggan, Peter Skerret,
Frank McMahon, Charlie Mahy,
Bill Lyons, Chris Corcoran.

Front row, left to right:

Charlie Davis, John Morcom,
Duncan Conroy, Maurie Cooney,
Brendan Dooley.

(Davis Private Collection)

I took over from Molly in 1956 and loved the work...There was also the cleaning of the church...Father Daly said he could not get anyone to sweep the church out weekly. I said I could fit it in at 2.30 on the Friday afternoon and then pick up my children from school. No cars in those days – the bike took me everywhere. At the church we had one of those heavy industrial cleaners. It was hard to handle and gave me many a fright. Statues on pedestals were not safe! I lasted nearly eighteen months and then spoke to one of our parishioners. He arranged for some of the women to help out. I was extremely grateful to them: Sheila Jolley, Ann Wise, Lillian Archer. Beth Corrodin gave her time to cleaning the brass...I continued with Sacristan duties until Father Bob Nink's time.⁹⁶ In later years, other parishioners, including members of the CWL, also assisted with cleaning, flowers and altar duties.

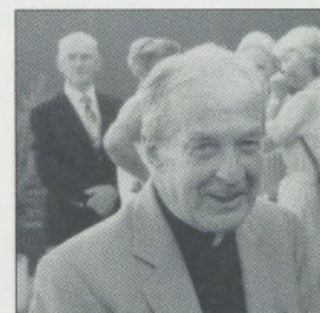


CHAPTER FIVE

THE 1960s: 'ALL THESE CHANGES'

The 1960s were a time of adjustment and consolidation for the parish, with much lower numbers after the opening of East Hampton, an ongoing financial struggle and the far-reaching changes engendered by the Second Vatican Council. The parish entered the decade with a new priest, Father Teddy Nowlan, who provided something of a contrast to his predecessor Father Daly: 'Father Nowlan had a great sense of humour and in the early '60s when priests were on pedestals he always seemed to be "a normal person" to us kids. We called him Father Teddy as we had a Father Nolan in East Hampton at that time.'⁹⁷ Father Nowlan brought a much-needed injection of energy to his role, as with the recent decline in numbers he faced a substantial financial deficit in the parish and school. A Sacrificial Giving Plan was started, but by the end of its first year in 1961, there was still £16,400 of debt, a huge sum at the time, and a deficiency of £1,201 in pledges from parishioners.⁹⁸ Much effort went towards trying to consolidate finances and numbers, and some social and other activities faded away or were suspended for a while.

Father Nowlan was followed by Father Bernard Payne, a different sort of priest again: 'Father Payne was a very holy man. He was very good to the altar boys and trained them very well.'⁹⁹ 'Father Payne was a very clever man. He read all the news media, anything of importance that was happening in society. The main thing he did was try to teach the congregation about the protection of the unborn and what circumstances are likely to arise. And I can say this without a doubt, anything that that man said in relation to those subjects, including Australia's birthrate, all came true. He was about ten years before his time. And I've seen him conduct meetings about the same subject and he would thrive on any questions, no matter what you asked him. A great man, perhaps he was not as relaxed with people as he might have been and he was perhaps a little shy in some ways. But his ability and knowledge and wisdom all proved to be spot on.'¹⁰⁰ 'Father Payne was an intellectual man, and he was also very keen on the youth and started up a youth group.'¹⁰¹



Father Nowlan.
(Photo by Grahamm Disney)

This youth group became very active in the mid 1960s. Its magazine, *Hayset* (a play on the words Hampton Youth Set), outlined its activities as it encouraged new membership: 'Why should I join the Younger Set?: What has the Younger Set got for me? Well, firstly it has friendship. You can meet people who want to meet you. There are regular socials – parties, barbecues, record nights or slide nights at the home of generous and unsuspecting parents, film nights, car trials...the occasional and tremendously enjoyable square dance, a long-weekend trip to Walhalla or Kennett River or you-name-it, or a day trip to the snow. Any Friday night you can go to St Mary's church hall and take part in our organised rituals or spontaneous pottering. There may be a film scheduled, or a card night (no gambling, except matches), a discussion, or an ice-skating expedition to St Moritz. Maybe there's "nothing special" doing, so you just set up the table-tennis set or the shuttlecock, or just sit around and talk if you're not in the mood for exertion...Last year we helped in door knocks for the Red Cross and for the Alfred Hospital, chopped wood for an invalid, painted the presbytery kitchen, and walked from Melbourne to Dandenong to raise money for Community Aid Abroad. We are about to embark on a project for Indianaid next month.'¹⁰²

New energy was found for some other activities as well. When Ines Arnold came to the parish in 1965, for example, she found that 'a small group of ladies' were playing tennis during the week. She joined the group and soon found enough interested people to restart the Tennis Club: 'Through membership fees and functions enough money was raised to resurface the two courts and to purchase necessary equipment. The courts were blessed by Father Payne in November 1967 and an exhibition match was played by Neale Fraser, Brian Tobin and two male members.' Two teams entered the Victorian Catholic Lawn Tennis Association (VCLTA) Saturday Mixed Doubles Pennant. 'It was during one of these matches that the current president Pat Diamond died on court. The P.J. Diamond Tournament became the main social event of the year in his honour. The club thrived over the next years with Frank Cahill and Julian O'Connell, each one a dedicated and outstanding leader, and ably assisted by the Committee of the time. Eventually we had teams in Caulfield-Carrum, Southern Districts and Junior VCLTA, and won many pennants.'¹⁰³ 'The Tennis Club was a dynamic group, and as a primary social activity in the parish played a critical role in helping to bind people together.'¹⁰⁴

Probably the most challenging changes faced by priest and parishioners during the 1960s were those consequent to the Second Vatican Council, particularly those pertaining to the Mass with the new focus on inclusiveness: 'Mass was said in English and with a priest not facing the altar away from the people but facing the congregation.'¹⁰⁵ 'And an altar was taken from the back

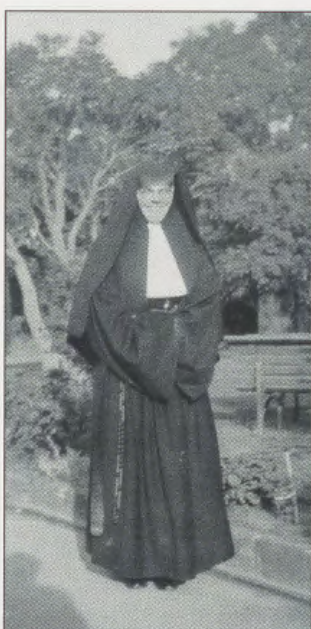


Father Payne and First Communicants.
(O'Connor Private Collection)

to make it as a separate table closer to the congregation.¹⁰⁶ Some of the changes seemed to happen very quickly, and it could be painful to have old ways and gifts no longer appropriate: 'No sooner had we donated some new altar rails than they were all abandoned. And we'd just given a Missal and that disappeared as well...They took away the altar rails altogether.'¹⁰⁷ It took time and patience to adjust to all the changes: 'Some parishioners, of course, didn't like it...There are still things that people don't accept particularly today...Sometimes we have communion in the hand and you will dip or consume the Precious Blood. A lot of people don't like to do that...There's always somebody who doesn't like doing something...They stick to the old things that they've been brought up with all their life.'¹⁰⁸ Others, such as parish stalwart Eleanor Awburn, accepted change more positively: 'She was very pleased about the Mass being in English...she was a forward thinking kind of person. She thought all these changes were better. As did some other people.'¹⁰⁹

Another change that began to take place within the Mass at about this time was in the place and nature of liturgical music. 'From earliest times at St Mary's

the traditional Benedictine hymns were sung by the congregation in Latin accompanied on the harmonium by Kath Keary and Marj Awburn and others on a roster system. Organist Lenoar Flynn (nee Awburn) gave long and voluntary service until the late 1990s when prevented by ill health. The gift by an anonymous donor of an electric organ to replace the harmonium had been welcome. The choir used to sit together at the organ and hope the group would lead the congregation into singing. We were a very small group – Ines Arnold, Sheila Eichorn, Lorna and Don Young, Steve Gill and Marj Awburn under the leadership of Val Awburn. The choir would also sing the parts of the Mass.¹¹⁰ Vatican II brought goals of a 'more modern sound' and the involvement of more parishioners directly in liturgical music. The Awburn sisters attended diocesan music seminars and, with others from the choir, participated in ecumenical music groups. They could therefore bring back new music repertoire to the parish, such as the compositions of Christopher Willcock and Sister Boscetti, and the Mass settings by Dr Percy Jones, Roger Heaney and Father Waters. 'Young groups formed in the late 1960s – Melanie Sinclair and Yvonne Thalmann as guitarists leading current hymns. Later still the enthusiastic and talented Marita Curry gave of her talents in singing, composing and playing.'¹¹¹



Pre Vatican II Habit,
Sister Theophane (nee Arthur).
(Arthur Private Collection)

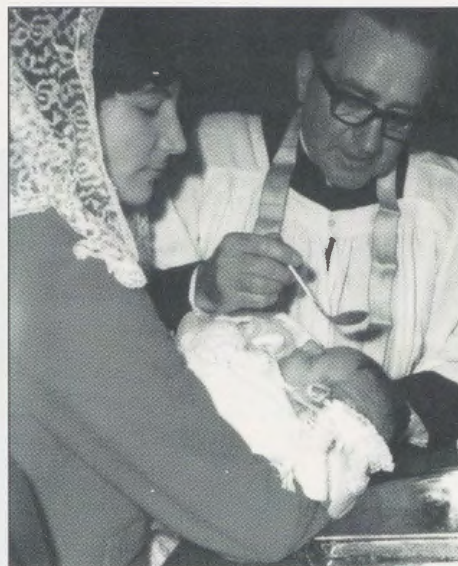
'good working habits'

The school undertook renewal programs instituted by Vatican II as well, of course. Some of the most obvious changes were seen in the relaxing of rules governing the nuns' dress and behaviour. From late 1964, the old religious habit of the Presentation Sisters was replaced by the new religious dress, a much lighter affair. Soon some aspects of enclosure were also relaxed – Sisters were now allowed occasionally to visit their families' homes and to attend family weddings and requiems; they were also allowed to eat and drink publicly in certain situations (such as family visits or attendance at seminars) and to travel alone (in daylight, at least). Many reverted to using their baptismal names.¹¹²

During the 1960s the school also had to adjust to dramatically decreased numbers. As soon as the new school at East Hampton had opened in 1957, the number of pupils at St Mary's had begun to drop. There were 312 in mid 1959 and only 216 by the end of 1961. Sister Francis was again teaching at the school,

and was struck by the contrast: 'When I moved back to Hampton in 1960 I only enrolled 17 in prep. It seems incredible, the difference in only nine years. But in the meantime East Hampton had opened, as well as Highett, Moorabbin and Cheltenham. And you have to remember that St Mary's Hampton was at a dead end geographically – not much further down Holyrood Street and you reached the beach so there was a limited area to draw children from.'¹¹³ By 1962, two of the classrooms in the still relatively new school were empty, and from a peak of five nuns and two to three lay teachers on staff during 1954 to 1956, there were now only two nuns and two lay teachers. The lay teachers, Miss Gallagher and Miss Kingwell, were responsible for the junior classes. Student numbers continued to decrease, with 149 in 1965. The inspector (no longer Mr O'Driscoll) was not quite as enthusiastic in his praise as in former years: 'Teachers are working along sound lines and achieving quite good results. The pupils are quite uninhibited in school; but by and large have acquired good working habits.'

In 1968 numbers had dropped a little further, to 136 students. The school had coped with a drama the year before when part of the school had 'caught fire the night after First Communion Day'.¹¹⁴ After the fire the Preparatory Room had to be completely renovated and the inspector noted the addition also of 'much excellent furniture and equipment': 'Outside blinds, TV sets, words in colour charts and supplementary maths material are among these recent additions.' Despite a concern that 'the boys' playing area' would become 'very dusty in the summer months', the inspector was able to make a positive summary of what he had seen at the school: 'A spirit of work prevails throughout the school. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic.'



Father Curran baptising John Zuccala (held by his Godmother, Anna Gullace) in 1969. (Photo by Michael Zuccala)

My longest and fondest memory of St Mary's was the day I arrived in Hampton looking for a house to rent. ... The day I arrived was a typical cold August day (the year was 1962) and I was to inspect a house in Exon Street. It was lunch time and even now I can hear the happy sound of the children playing and the school bell summoning the children to their classrooms. When I told my wife Anne about my experience and the description of the church it gave us comfort about the rather big step of moving to Melbourne [from Sydney]. In September we arrived with our then three children (Anne was expecting our fourth) and we immediately fell in love with the church and school, especially when our eldest Maryanne started the next year. Subsequently all nine of our children attended St Mary's and we and I suspect all the children will always be grateful to the priests and teachers throughout those years for their dedication and caring attitude.

(Kevin Curry, parishioner since 1962)



Old Sanctuary on the Feast of the Annunciation. (Church Historical Collection)



CHAPTER SIX

1970s: 'RATIONALISATION
OF RESOURCES'

The 1970s saw lay leadership of the school, followed soon after by the withdrawal of the Presentation Order from teaching at St Mary's. Numbers at both church and school remained relatively low, and again the efforts of a core group of parishioners, parents and staff were essential in helping to maintain the parish.

Father James Griffin was parish priest throughout this period. A 'gentle, holy, old-fashioned' man who was nearing retirement,¹¹⁵ he had been a Columban missionary in China until ill-health and a repressive political climate there had recently forced a return to Australia. 'Father Griffin was, I think, liked by all...He used to say "God is a gentleman, he'd understand".'¹¹⁶ 'He was just a saintly, beautiful man...He was extremely humble. The parish council were always wanting to do the presbytery up, and it was a beautiful old home there in Holyrood Street, but he never wanted for anything...He was just gorgeous. If you went to him with any trouble he never became emotionally involved or embroiled in it – he'd just listen, and his final words to you were – no matter what the situation was – "Keep the faith", always "Keep the faith"...The thing about Father Griffin too was that he really allowed the people to run the parish. He was just lovely to everybody, but he wasn't on about power as parish priest, and in a sense I think that helped create the sense of community that did exist in the parish.'¹¹⁷



Father Griffin.

'a very personal, gentle environment'

I remember Father Griffin's Trinity Sunday sermon each year – all the things that came in three: triangle; height, breadth and depth; sight, hearing and smell etc.

(Pat Wise, parishioner since 1973)

Since the late 1950s there had been gradually increased lay involvement in administration of Presentation schools. The Sisters were finding that their own numbers were diminishing, to the point that their ability to provide staff for many of their schools was becoming compromised.¹¹⁸ As a very small school, St Mary's inevitably therefore faced the loss of the direct involvement of the Sisters. It was not entirely a surprise when in the middle of 1973 the Archbishop informed the parish that the Presentation Sisters would no longer be able to staff St Mary's from the following year, due to 'the need for some rationalisation of their resources', but that the Catholic Education Office would continue to coordinate the appointment of lay principals.¹¹⁹ For many parents this meant a disappointing loss of contact with religious for their children: 'As a parent I was naturally concerned when the sisters were withdrawn, even though Sister Evangelist made frequent visits and helped prepare the children for the receiving of the sacraments. However the lay staff filled the "gap" admirably and carried on the traditions and ethos of the Presentation Order.'¹²⁰

The first lay principal, Joan Ryder, had previously been a nun, helping to ease the sense of the extent of this change. She and her two successors, Marcia Atkins and Margaret Hughes, each held the position relatively briefly. They were followed by May Ray who had been teaching at St Mary's part time for some years, and was to be principal until the mid 1980s.

The size of the school was key to its identity at this time: 'We always found it a very personal, gentle environment for the children to be in. It was small...Every child knew every other child...On a really stinking hot day you'd say, "Come on, let's lock the windows and the doors – we'll go for a walk down to the beach", and play in the sand, build sandcastles, back to school...I think what characterised the school was the gentleness and the caring and the spirit of community. It was like a little country school – it was so small and intimate and because of that you were able to bring the children together as a total school community to share in lots of things that happened. I remember one day, the children went in to wash some dishes in the staffroom – one was up on a chair and another one was drying the dishes – and one of the teachers said, "This is a place where real learning happens". It wasn't just confined to the academic, if you like. It was a real nurturing of the whole person.'¹²¹

In approximately 1982, each child planted a sapling along the edge of what we referred to as "the oval" – along the western side of the school building. The Sandringham Council donated bluestone pitchers to build a border and this was constructed by Don Kennedy, who was extremely generous in offering time on his days off from work to contribute to the betterment of school facilities, such as mobile shelving for reading material in what was referred to as the hall downstairs, and painting of games on the lunchroom wall. He was an expert tradesman.

(May Ray, Principal 1978–1984)

The staff tried to work around the financial constraints that came with low enrolments. May Ray taught most days in order to free up funds for other activities: 'I had teachers team teaching, I had a male teacher come in to do phys ed on a Thursday morning, we had a teacher come in to take private piano and singing lessons. Mrs Marie Holmes, who had a wonderful artistic talent, was the specialist art teacher. Someone said once, "It's like a private school". The children had the opportunities that weren't usual in a primary school at that time... We were able to stretch the money out and to have more creative opportunities for the children because of that.' At times numbers were low enough to threaten the viability of the school: 'There was always that struggle and hope – if you went below 80 students on the August census then you lost a teacher:...it's a struggle to construct the classes and to have the school looking as though it can still be effective from the point of view of curriculum delivery.'¹²²

The situation was exacerbated by a trend that had always existed at St Mary's – the departure of many of the boys at Grade 4 or Grade 5 level for nearby schools such as Kostka and CBS in St Kilda, leaving 'only a handful' in Grades 5 and 6 at St Mary's.¹²³ In the late 1960s, for example, the Curry family had begun following this pattern on the advice of the principal of St Mary's: 'Sister Ursula recommended that our eldest boy should leave St Mary's and attend St Mary's Boys' School East St Kilda, as there were few boys at St Mary's Hampton and he needed stimulation. All of our sons (seven) subsequently did the same.'¹²⁴ Frank Ray recalled the difficulties of fielding boys' sporting teams as a result of this trend: 'To help out, I used to be the football coach at the school, and to build a side there may have been two boys in Grade 6 and four in Grade 5 and we used to get down to Grade 2 to get a team...so anytime we played the adjoining schools, St Mary's used to get thrashed, because you had Grade 6 boys playing against Grade 2 boys. That was a problem.'¹²⁵ Sometimes

girls would be asked to make up numbers in the boys' teams. At one time the situation was so desperate that, as Chairman of the Education Board (before his wife May became principal), Frank Ray approached the other schools: 'There were very few young people moving into the area, so we didn't have a big intake of children, and our numbers stayed static between 65 and 70. I was very concerned and I went to CBS one day to see if I could convince them to stop taking the boys from Grade 4. I met with Brother Parson, Principal at the time – he was very sympathetic towards my request, but he said, "We have a problem with numbers too; if they want to come, we're going to take them".'¹²⁶

The Education Board (also chaired by Kevin Curry for some years in this era), faced ongoing financial difficulties: 'Your expenses are exactly the same, irrespective of whether there are 60 in the school or 150 in the school. You've still got your rates the same, your insurance the same. So it was always short of money and it really was terribly under-resourced...the school was really quite run down.'¹²⁷ Through the Education Board and the Mothers' and Fathers' Clubs, parents worked very hard to raise funds for the school: 'We used to have fundraising functions, and any extra money which was spent on the school came from these functions.'¹²⁸ 'People were generous in offering their homes. For example, Rupert and Ines Arnold ran the "gambling" nights. They were illegal, of course! People used to have a ball. Ines would clear all the furniture out of these lovely big rooms in the house and you'd put all the gambling tables in – they were great nights.'¹²⁹ Parents also undertook many tasks at the school, such as 'the joint effort in painting and cleaning the school rooms'.¹³⁰ 'Working bees used to be absolutely fabulous, the nine or ten of us. The fathers had a beaut relationship...A lot of things wouldn't have happened in the school without the Fathers' and Mothers' Clubs. Former St Mary's student Teresa Kennedy worked extremely hard as president of the Mothers' Club. They were great people.'¹³¹

The cricket coach at this time was parishioner, Hampton resident and former Australian test cricketer Leo O'Brien, who was later to give a generous bequest to the parish. Frank Ray coached football and local businessman Michael de Vola coached some of the other teams.



1975 School Staff.

Left to right: Joan Ryder (first lay principal), Marcia Atkins, Barbara Moloney, Mary Hulimann. (Ray Private Collection)

'a real sense of belonging'

Because St Mary's is not a big parish in numbers it is so much easier to form friendships and feel a real sense of belonging.

(Mick and Lena Zuccala, parishioners 50 and 47 years respectively)

The school's financial difficulties reflected those of the parish, and some of the same people were actively involved in addressing them: 'The parish income was minimal, really, and the parish had a small debt...The money received in the offerings just covered the church expenses and presbytery expenses. There was never a lot of money left over.'¹³² Core families had continued the essential fundraising, with activities such as fetes typically making several hundred dollars at a time.

Frank Ray's Lion's Club fundraising experience was harnessed for the 1975 parish fete: 'They were desperately short of money and the sacrificial offering was down...I ended up running the fete and got a lot of help from people down at St Mary's, and that really built up the spirit enormously – it really was a very exciting time...We formed a committee and...we all worked extremely

hard – I virtually gave work away for a couple of months. It really took over our lives...I probably demanded too much, thinking “well if you demand too much and you get half, at least you’re doing ok”. There were a couple of instances, like with the cake stall, which is a beaut way of making money...I asked Anne Curry “How many nut loaves can you do?” and she said, “Oh, a dozen maybe, how many would you like?” and I said, “Well, they sell extremely well Anne, I’d like fifty” thinking that she would collapse, and she said “Fifty?” and I said, “Yes”; she said, “Ok, you want fifty, I’ll do fifty”. In actual fact she did 72 which all sold! It was same thing with Cath Marshall’s sponges...and with Marie Westcott’s hanging baskets.’¹³³

At Friday Mass Father Griffin would always ask whose feast day it was...and he would start by asking the children “Is anybody here called Rita?” if it was her day, or “Is anybody here called Catherine?” for her day. One day he asked, “Is anybody here called Tarsisius?” Well, for goodness sake! We all got the giggles, it was so funny. He was just gorgeous.

(May Ray, principal
1978–1984)

Catholic Women's League (CWL) meetings typically had Gospel discussions...also a talk by the Parish Priest...Members raised money at Morning and Afternoon Teas, Lunches, Films, Raffles, etc for charities...Members read to residents at Elanora (a local home for the blind), visited the sick, rostered to help at St Vincent de Paul shop, etc. On a wider scale we attended Southern Regional Conferences involving other groups from surrounding parishes...We were also involved in a social way with other local churches. Some names of longstanding members: Lilian Archer, Tess Heffernan, Mary Kenny, Frances Neagle, Mary Minogue, Joan O'Connell, Eileen Morton, Madge Keating, Mary Kennedy and Pat Kelly (all deceased); Aisla Ryan, Mary Naughton, Eileen Shepherd, Joan Hubbard, Vera Barry and Lydia McMichan.

(Jackie Smith, parishioner since 1981)

People from all facets of the parish became involved in the fete: ‘Different groups in the parish had a stall, so it wasn’t just the families of the children in the school, it wasn’t just the young members of the parish... There were regular meetings that pulled all these groups together, and people got to know one another through it.’¹³⁴ The festive air of the day itself was enhanced by the presence of the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage Band, which processed, playing, down Hampton and Holyrood Streets for the opening of the fete. When the total profit of \$5,000 was announced to the parish after Mass the day following the fete, ‘people were in a state of disbelief almost, because that was a lot of money in 1975’.¹³⁵ Some of the money was used towards carpeting the church, as well as buying tables and chairs to replace the school desks.

In addition to activities such as the fete, other opportunities were sought to bring the parish community closer together. There would be a Children’s Mass one Sunday a month, for example: ‘The children used to do the readings and

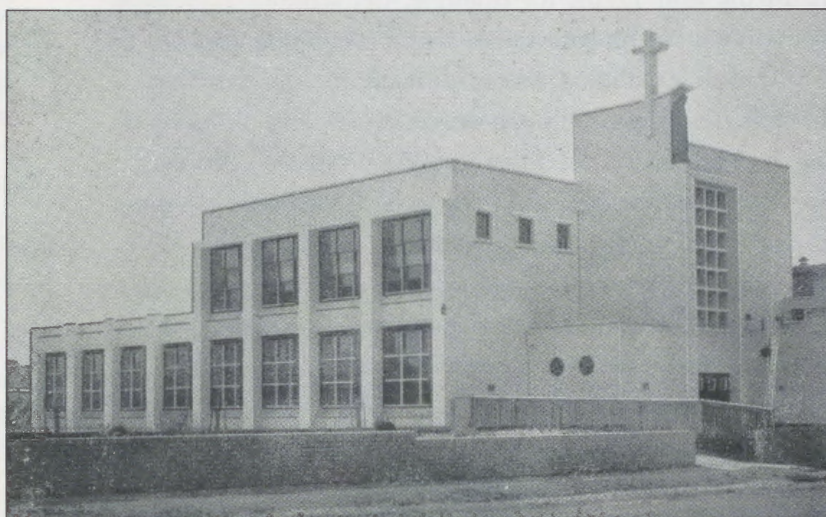
we'd have a little choir and they'd sing the Mass, and then after Mass we'd have a morning tea to which all parishioners were invited...Children from the school were represented at Mass every Friday, and once a month all students in the school attended Mass on the Friday.¹³⁶

The process of bringing the facets of the parish community together was not always smooth. In the mid 1970s, for example, the school's Education Board 'was able to obtain a grant for new toilets and the building adjacent to the tennis courts'.¹³⁷ This new building was to provide, for the first time, a good lunchroom for staff. The Tennis Club, however, which also raised funds for the new building, had previously used the building on its site, and would now have to share the new facility with the school, leading to some inconvenience and disruption to the Club's activities. Similarly, the CWL, which had been meeting in the parish building for many years, decided in 1978 to meet elsewhere due to the difficulty of using church facilities.¹³⁸

In an extension of the changes arising from Vatican II, parishioners were provided with more opportunities to participate in and guide the weekly liturgy through innovations such as the Liturgy Committee established in 1976. Topics discussed at its first meeting included: 'Teenage lectors, a meeting on duties and responsibilities of lectors, Folk Masses, Reading of the Prayers of the Faithful by the Faithful, A master of ceremonies at Mass, and Discussion and Speakers on increasing and deepening appreciation of the Mass and the relevance and meaning of the Mass to Today etc.'¹³⁹ Shortly before he left St Mary's in early 1982, Father Griffin oversaw some minor changes within the church 'to facilitate easier access and encourage personal devotion': 'seating near the tabernacle to create a chapel of the Blessed Sacrament for visits, and celebration of Mass for a small number; similar arrangements at the shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour...; for a more meaningful celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism and Reconciliation (Confession) the font [sic] has been placed in view: and "temporary" arrangements to give a choice for traditional or "face to face" celebration of God's forgiveness.'¹⁴⁰

Records show that a Hampton branch of St Vincent de Paul (whose members visit people in need in their own homes and assist them financially and in other ways) was founded on 13 May 1937 and was Aggregated, i.e. approved, by the head office in Paris, France on 13 January 1947. The conference (branch) ceased functioning at a date unknown, and recommenced on 15 January 1969. Some of the members at that time were Frank McCarter, Leo Archer, Bernie Millard, Laurie Doyle, Alan Tresize, Rupert Arnold and Kevin Curry. Later Mary Naughton (nee McCarter), Phil O'Donohue and Joe Andreello became members. Sadly the conference again ceased about 1995, although a number of St Mary's parishioners are now active in the conference at East Hampton.

(Kevin Curry, parishioner since 1962)



The school before 1986.



CHAPTER SEVEN

MID 1980s TO MID 1990s:
'A VERY DIVIDED TIME'

Upon Father Griffin's retirement in early 1982, Father Robert Nink was appointed parish priest. Father Nink's decade or so with the parish was an often difficult time, in part due to health problems he suffered. These in turn could affect the manner in which he related to people and carried out his duties: 'Father Nink, towards the end of his pastorship at St Mary's, was battling against his demons.'¹⁴¹ The Parish Council struggled to gain Father Nink's support for 'change or innovation' in some areas;¹⁴² by the mid 1980s it had become unworkable and was dissolved for several years. Many parishioners were torn between wishing to support and remain loyal to the church and their priest, and distress at some of his actions. As might be expected, there are various perspectives on this time, including the concern that Father Nink himself was inadequately assisted, particularly at the archdiocesan level. Inevitably such problems affected most aspects of parish life: 'Even though Father Nink was difficult at times, he did not receive a lot of support. On one particular occasion, for example, due to no volunteers he did all the Mass readings and was almost forced to take up the collection himself.'¹⁴³ Parishioners who arrived in the late 1980s sensed that 'there was not that feeling of being part of a community', partly as a result of Father Nink's difficulties.¹⁴⁴ 'Overall, it was a very divided time. It was a sad time, really...A lot of people did stop being involved in the parish. A lot of people didn't have a confident feeling with him.'¹⁴⁵ Sadness and anger in relation to the manner of his departure as parish priest continue to this day for some parishioners and students of the time.

Of course, there were many positive aspects to Father Nink's care of his parish. 'Father Nink's knowledge of church history and theology was first rate, and enabled him to give outstanding instructional homilies. He was a good

I remember Father Nink's floodlit Christmas crib on the front lawn of the old presbytery; also a magnificent one in the church had running water and live fish.

(Pat Wise, parishioner since 1973)

St Mary's
60th anniversary celebrations,
*Left to right: Father Nowlan,
Archbishop Little and
Father Nink.*
(Photo by Graeme Disney)



One Easter Father Nink set up the Easter fire just inside the old side door. It consisted of a plastic of some sort – methylated spirits and it was very spectacular at the start, then some of the decoration caught fire and there was a mad scramble to get it outside.

(Pat Wise, parishioner
since 1973)

priest'.¹⁴⁶ Father Nink attempted to improve relations with other groups, such as the breakaway group following Pius X: 'On one occasion Father Nink seemed perplexed. It transpired that his personal dinner invitation had been declined by the Pius X clergy. He was disheartened since contentious issues were to be "strictly off the table".¹⁴⁷ Many of the school children and older parishioners related warmly with Father Nink: 'My son was an altar boy for three years. Father Nink refused to have girls assisting so my daughter missed out. The kids had a good relationship with him.'¹⁴⁸ 'Father Nink was a good man in many ways. He was very good with the sick.'¹⁴⁹ Particularly those who had good relationships with Father Nink were distressed at others' dissatisfaction. This may in part have reflected a generational change, from those who had been brought up to 'put priests on pedestals' and make more allowance for human fallibility,¹⁵⁰ to some younger parishioners who found it easier to challenge what may have seemed unsatisfactory. One lasting legacy from Father Nink is the stained glass windows he designed – 'to honour Mary as patroness of our parish' – and which were funded by donations from parishioners. The last window was installed in July 1988.

This era saw an increased direct involvement of lay parishioners in the liturgy, along with changes to a range of church laws. Inevitably, these changes

No record of the seventies and eighties would be complete without recording the extraordinary amount of time and energy Bill Marshall gave to the Church and the wider community. He played the piano for dances at the school, sometimes with Bernard Doolan sitting on his knee. He took up collections and meticulously kept the books for many years. Kath, for her part, held fashion shows in the multipurpose hall and they both were among the first in the parish to become lectors and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Bill's faith and devotion were intensely personal and loyal. He had two lists of names by his bed – one for the sick and one for the dying – and each night before going to bed, Bill would pray for their welfare and work his way through every name on the list. If you got transferred from one list to the other you knew you were in really big trouble!

(Dr John Wright-Smith, Eulogy for Bill Marshall, St Mary's, 1993)

went too far for the comfort of some parishioners, but most people continued to adapt to changes as they always had. From 1982, a 'Liturgy Group' was established, and 'Special Ministers of the Eucharist' assisted in distributing Holy Communion at Mass.¹⁵¹ The following year there were changes in the law for receiving Holy Communion: 'A person who has received the blessed Eucharist may receive It again on the same day only within a Eucharist celebration in which that person participates. The elderly or sick do not have to fast before Communion and the same applies to those who are looking after them and who wish to receive with them.'¹⁵² This was followed by changes to laws relating to fasting and abstinence, and to holy days of obligation. With a rapid decline in vocations and fewer priests available to act as locums, in late 1985, at Father Nink's invitation, parishioner Marjorie Awburn undertook the new training for conducting Communion Services in the absence of a priest (such as during holiday periods). Since then, several other parishioners have also completed this training. 'The Catholic Church decided to allow Communion Services conducted by lay people, which wasn't saying the Mass, but there'd be biblical readings and prayers and they could then distribute Holy Communion...There are still some people who don't want to go to Communion Services. They think that Mass is the most important thing. Well, Mass *is* the most important thing, I quite agree with that. But if there's no priest and no Mass going on, it's the next best thing.'¹⁵³

Parishioners continued to donate time, energy and skill to the running of the parish as well. The Devola family, for example, donated flowers each week to the altar. For many years Sheila Jolley prepared the newsletter each week, a laborious and messy process using an ancient typewriter and gestetner housed

in a small room on the verandah of the presbytery. Tess Heffernan was 'a great leader...who was a force in parish life'.¹⁵⁴ Jim Sinclair's professional skills were evident in his Christmas and Easter liturgical decorations. The church kneelers began to be padded from 1983. The tiled roof of the church was replaced with colourbond in 1986, and the ceiling was restored. The Parish Council was restored in 1991 under the chairmanship of Bill Curry. By 1994 it was guessed that there were approximately 450 parish families. Times were changing, and organisations such as the CWL, which had been part of parish life for more than 50 years, were facing closure due to rapid decline of membership.

The Shady Tree

The Shady Tree and
the eastern wall of the Church.

Left to right:

Ian D'Souza and
David Wu on yard duty.
(Ray Private Collection)



One issue that led to division both within the parish and among the broader local community was the fate of the Moreton Bay fig tree in the grounds beside the church. It was much loved, particularly by many of the school children: 'The children had an amazing affection for that tree – it had a sort of fantasy element about it. In any drawings the children did, they always had this tree

which they referred to as the shady tree.¹⁵⁵ 'The areas between the gnarled roots created an opportunity for the imagination to run riot. The roots made the basketball court quite hazardous and the figs from the tree had to be swept off the court before a game, but there was never any hint of the tree being interfered with.'¹⁵⁶ However, roots from the tree had been causing damage to church property for some time. At the parish council meeting of May 1977, for example, Father Griffin had raised concerns about the 'danger of the roots of the Moreton Bay fig tree' which the previous year had damaged the nearby wall and path leading to repairs costing \$700.¹⁵⁷

By 1986, Father Nink and the Parish Council were deciding that the damage and potential damage to the church building was too extensive and that the tree would have to be removed. Almost immediately, they faced opposition from the local community for whom the tree was a landmark – in November the 'Holyrood Moreton Bay Preservation Group' was formed. This group negotiated a short moratorium on the removal of the tree, paying the tree-feller not to continue with the removal and commissioning reports in support of retaining the tree. There were meetings, protests and fundraising, with claims and counter claims about the age of the tree, its likely future growth pattern, and what affordable measures could both preserve the tree and protect buildings and people walking nearby. 'They said it was a hundred years old. I recall it being a sapling in my childhood...I can remember the top of it being shiny and red. It was merely a little thing...So it couldn't have been a hundred years old.'¹⁵⁸

The story was front-page news for local newspapers, which summarised the situation with terms such as 'the battle of Holyrood Street'.¹⁵⁹ Endless hours were spent in correspondence and discussion, and passionate exchanges took place. Senior local Council as well as Archdiocesan figures became involved. For Father Nink and the church authorities, there was no realistic alternative to removing the tree: 'The responsible action needed to meet and counter even the hazards already posed...by a tree which had reached little more than a third of its full size could not be satisfied with bland promises of possible remedies whose effectiveness no one was prepared to guarantee in writing, even while they were prepared to demand that the parishioners of St Mary's meet the cost of such remedies over the next hundred years or more'.¹⁶⁰ Early in October 1988 the tree was poisoned and it was felled the following month. Several days later, Father Nink's presbytery garden was vandalised, in what was reported as a response to the removal of the tree.¹⁶¹

'like a country town school'

We looked at other schools in the area. St Mary's was by far the poorest looking school, the entrance hall was partially carpeted and worn, and the classrooms were old and dingy. But the place had a feel about it and I knew we would choose it. It was tidy and clean and orderly, and the atmosphere within the classrooms with students and teachers was happy and calm.

(Jacqui Barnett, parent 1986,
1988–1995)

Apart from the disruption caused by the shady tree issue, school life continued much the same. For most of Father Nink's tenure, his cousin Terri Green was principal of the still small school: 'Because the school was small when I was there, everyone knew one another well, parishioners, teachers, parents and children. This was a positive for the school. Education Department personnel visiting the school always commented on the friendly relaxed atmosphere and how welcomed they felt. Bad behaviour was never an issue at St Mary's, the children were well mannered and well behaved, even though quite a few were very spoilt...Initially (1985–1986) there were not enough boys in Year 5 and 6 as parents sent them off to Kostka, but this changed as the staff provided a more all gender curriculum. Low numbers inhibited some curriculum areas and there was constant pressure on the small staff as there was nowhere to hide when many positions had to be filled and many jobs had to be done. Between 1985 and 1994 both state and federal educational benchmarks were changed – this meant staff attended endless meetings/discussions and curriculum days.'¹⁶² The low numbers continued to threaten the school's viability. Mick Zuccala, a member of the Parish Council in this era, recalled that this was an ongoing issue: 'Because of the small number of children attending St Mary's school our biggest task was to keep our school from closing.'¹⁶³ Students themselves were sometimes struck by the impact of such small enrolments: 'I remember every Monday morning, all the year levels had to line up on the netball court and swear allegiance to the flag. One morning I arrived late and I was shocked by how small and somewhat sad this gathering looked.'¹⁶⁴

Some curriculum highlights from this era include: 'School Sports Day on the oval; our annual Italian Days with their cooking and bocce games and singing and dancing; having a specialist phys ed. teacher, as well as singing and drama teacher; one year a successful Year 2/Year 5 and Year 6 composite class.'¹⁶⁵ Terri Green recalled that physical improvements to the school were also possible, if sometimes difficult to achieve: 'We moved the school library from an upstairs room to downstairs, making the library the focal point of the school and converting the old upstairs library into the Art Room. We also introduced computers to the school and replaced the school heating system – this was a safety factor. Bill Jowett and Ann Salmon gave me excellent support as the Parish Priest was against most changes.'¹⁶⁶ Support from parents through

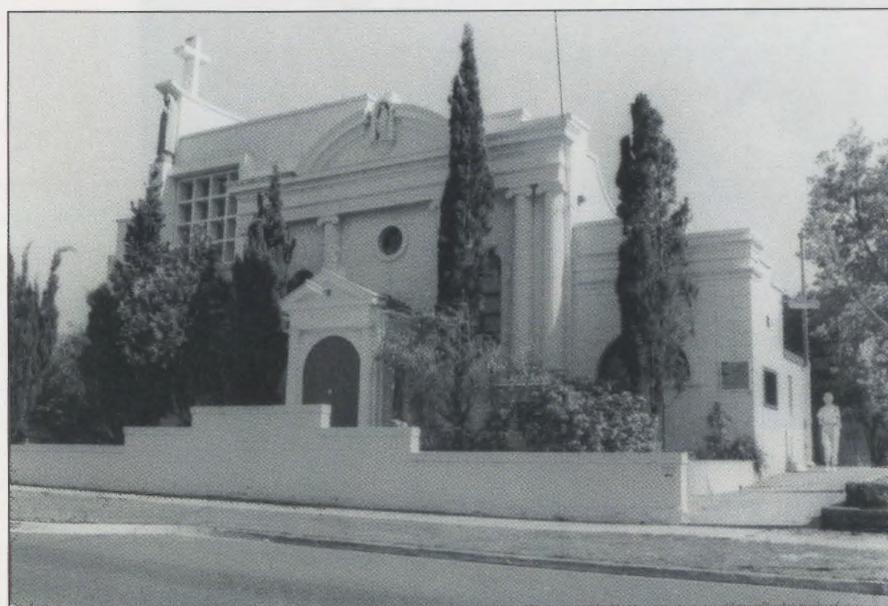


School Sports, circa 1991.
(Photo by Liam Dunne)

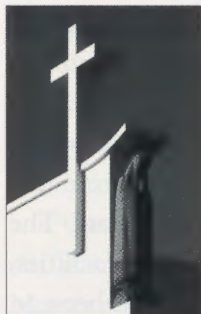
the parent committees such as St Mary's Parents and Friends was also essential: 'They worked so hard to provide for the school all the necessities that were required. I can still picture Maria Green standing aloft the high scaffolding painting class room ceilings, Ann Salmon organising and running the gaming nights (complete with permits), while Yvonne Malcolmson seemed to be a fixture whether working on a parent committee, being a teacher aide or providing morning tea for the staff.'¹⁶⁷ In about 1989, Paula Westhead, Mary Armstrong and Paula Lane instigated and developed the Education Board to provide a formal voice for parents, particularly in the areas of policy and planning. 'The Education Board became an effective forum for raising and discussing new ideas for the school.'¹⁶⁸

It was like a country town school in the city, and was very friendly with a great atmosphere. I got involved with other parents in working bees etc. Sports days for the kids were just great. It was as much fun for the parents as it was for the kids. Terri Green was the principal at the time and was very approachable and friendly. The teachers were the same. Father Nink was the same.

(Liam Dunne, parent 1982-1993)



Church façade, circa 1980. (Doolan Private Collection)



CHAPTER EIGHT

'IT'S WHAT'S WITHIN'

Near the end of Father Nink's incumbency, Father Kevin Burke, Father Tim Tolan and then Father Michael Miles oversaw the parish as Administrators before Father Miles was formally appointed parish priest in September 1996. This was a time of uncertainty for many members of the St Mary's community. A survey conducted before the formal appointment of Father Miles included this comment: 'Rumours are abundant regarding the future of St Mary's. Perhaps if Father Miles is appointed Parish Priest it would be appropriate to "spell out" what exactly is happening to St Mary's Community. One of the rumours [is] that St Mary's is amalgamating with Immaculate Heart and St Mary's presumably [will] be sold. This sort of rumour is affecting the numbers of preps starting next year. St Mary's School needs to have "positive" information, this means correct communication – teachers really "selling" St Mary's at various venues, local newspapers, publicity through local newspapers for our terrific school.'¹⁶⁹

In the midst of this uncertainty, Margaret Doolan commenced as Principal in 1995. The school's situation was still tenuous, with fewer than 80 students enrolled. An early priority for the new principal was the sense of welcome and community within the school. With Father Miles, she harnessed the commitment and energies of staff and parents, and the school community came up with a new motto to reflect the renewed sense of community: 'Friends Family Community Together We Grow'. A further important strategy for strengthening the school was the development of improved educational programs, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy. National Achievement Awards – two in literacy and two in numeracy in the past four years – are the latest testimony to the quality of teaching at the school. Such developments within the school have contributed significantly to the steady increase in enrolments since 1995. The current total enrolment is 310 students.

An enduring recognition of St Mary's colorful history is found in the recent creation of four 'houses' within the school community for competition in cultural and sporting activities. 'Awburn' acknowledges foundation student Marjorie Awburn; 'Nagle' remembers Nano Nagle, the Irish founder of the Presentation Sisters who provided St Mary's with its principals and its other religious teachers for nearly 50 years; 'O'Brien' recognizes former parishioner, test cricketer and benefactor Leo O'Brien; and 'Coakley' honours the dedicated service of foundation Parish Priest Father Dan Coakley.

The increase in number of young families in the area, and the closure of Immaculate Heart Primary School in East Hampton, are part of the external context for this quadrupling in the size of the school. With such a substantial rise in enrolments, greater space has been increasingly needed. A building levy on families was established to help meet repayments on loans from the Catholic Development Fund amounting to nearly one million dollars. The loans funded a series of renovations and extensions to the school's facilities, including a new library/resource area and four new classrooms. It has been an ongoing problem to fund such rapid expansion – the Parish Thanksgiving Program, occasional grants from the Catholic Education Office and the Diocesan Capital Supplementary Fund have greatly assisted with necessary funds. Through all these changes, a core strength of the school has been maintained, illustrated in the response to several tragic deaths affecting members of the school community: 'That really showed the spirit within the community – how the community came together and how we were supported through that process...It was the most devastating and distressing experience, but it also was very empowering, spiritually and pastorally...Every person said it, over and over again.'¹⁷⁰

Some current parents have recently expressed what they particularly like about St Mary's school: 'What struck us about St Mary's was the obvious caring environment and rich pastoral life illustrated in the children's artwork.'¹⁷¹ 'The parents are very involved and welcomed into the classroom.'¹⁷² 'There is a very strong sense of community...with great opportunities for children, always doing something new.'¹⁷³ 'There is a great sense of community – really rallies to support each other if a crisis...The Parents and Friends Association play a huge role – fundraising and organising school functions.'¹⁷⁴

Father Miles has encouraged the further integration of aspects of the St Mary's community: 'Father Michael had a mission to help us rebuild our community...He initiated the Parish General Assembly with the Parish Council. The first brought everyone out of the woodwork. It was just marvellous. Lots of enthusiasm and suggestions came out of that meeting as well as an opportunity to air any grievances. While recognising and listening to people's concerns of the past and present, Father Michael showed us a way forward.'¹⁷⁵ 'His strengths lie in his close relationship with the school and particularly the way he encourages the children to participate with him during Mass. He encourages parishioners to have a sense of belonging with monthly morning teas after Mass and other social events throughout the year.

Liturgically, Father Michael has a great sense of being able to pass on the teaching of the gospels in a way that very much relates to today's world.¹⁷⁶ 'The current parish priest has brought us all together and we all feel as if we belong and are cared about – it is a happy, loving and caring parish now.'¹⁷⁷ Some parishioners feel that there is still room for closer ties between the school and the church: 'Apart from baptisms, first holy communions, confirmations, etc, the school and its parents have little regular connection with the parish Masses etc, despite the massive growth in student population.'¹⁷⁸

While the parish is growing in size again, for many parishioners it retains the benefits of a fairly small community: 'It is caring – caters for all parishioners.'¹⁷⁹ 'There is a sense of community – small is good.'¹⁸⁰ Father Miles' pastoral style has contributed to this sense: 'He is a gentle man, a shepherd who has applied himself continuously to the growth and development of the community of St Mary's. His pastoral care is ongoing and sincere.'¹⁸¹ 'He's a very caring, inclusive sort of priest. He genuinely cares about his parishioners and is very patient. He preaches hope and understanding and his sermons are usually relevant to modern lives.'¹⁸² 'We are very fortunate to have Father Michael as our Parish Priest, and the added bonus of his mother Mrs Nora Miles.'¹⁸³

St Mary's has always been defined by the committed support given by core parishioners. At the risk of overlooking many others, the following parishioners were identified by questionnaire respondents as having been most influential in the parish in more recent years: Long-serving parishioners such as Bill Sage particularly for his contribution to the parish's business direction, Peter Smith (Finance Committee), Mick Zuccala (recording of weekly Thanksgiving offerings, collections, counting of cash), Ines Arnold and Jackie Smith (Altar Society, church flowers, etc); and other behind the scenes workers like Jacqui Barnett (who typed the parish Newsletter for something like 15 years before handing over to Joan Grant, and currently chairs the Parish Council), Peter Riordan (particularly church renovations) and Pat Wise (honorary 'Deacon', as well as parish rosters). The unique flavour of St Mary's has been enhanced by characters like Ray Connell, who is a contender for the crown of oldest parishioner, and by parishioners such as Bill and Beryl Mackay (both deceased), Lenoar and Frank Flynn (both deceased), Sheila Jolley, Aisla Ryan, Vaughan Ryan (deceased), Mary Minogue senior (deceased), Heather and Eileen Bell, Mick Hawe and Margaret Hawe (deceased). 'Without these types of people and their regular long-standing financial contributions, it is

On our arrival in the parish seven years ago we immediately felt a sense of warmth and friendship. In the first two years it seemed quite an ageing population. However in recent years there has been an influx of young families. It has been interesting to watch the various forms of liturgy changing to accommodate the younger generation, yet doing so in a fairly sensitive way to include the older members of the parish.

(Maureen and Neil Graham, parishioners since 1997)

Father Miles and First
Communicants.
(photo by Wendy Dodd)

The first thing that struck me was how the parish has obviously tried to change and develop with the times. ...One of my favourite aspects of St Mary's is the lovely hymns and music that is played so well,...and the warm welcoming feeling I seem to enjoy as soon as I walk through the door.

(David Henderson,
parishioner since 2004)



very likely that the church and the school may have been forced into an amalgamation with a neighbouring community.¹⁸⁴

Others include: Bill and Cath Marshall, the Awburns, Kevin and Anne Curry, Bill and Annette Curry, Helen and Michael Shelley, Michelle Connell, Ted and Sue Doolan, Mary Kenny, Sacristan Eileen Morton and Joan McCurry. During Father Nink's incumbency, May Beer left her home in Holyrood Street as a legacy to the church, providing a pool of funds for later renovations to be carried out without any debt on the parish being incurred. 'All those people kept everything running smoothly...Bill Sanderson was a quiet man who always wore a suit and hat. A gentleman. As well as the treasurer's duties he was responsible for the clocks. When he died no one else knew how to operate them.'¹⁸⁵ 'Louisa Rolfe also rates a mention for her general ability to "revitalise" things like children's liturgy, morning teas on the first Sunday and the music. She's also very good at introducing people and making them feel welcome.'¹⁸⁶ 'Louisa and Richard Rolfe very much impart a sense of community in the parish.'¹⁸⁷

Liturgical music has continued to evolve to embrace the interests and talents of parishioners. 'For Christmas and Easter celebrations a group of parishioners collect together and rehearse under Val Awburn for the special ceremonies. We are fortunate to have playing at times parishioner musicians such as Francesca Anderl (flute), Anthea Feakes (harp), Richard Rolfe (guitar), Val Awburn (cello), Doug Clark (flute) and pianists Fran Cole and Bev Martin. At the 10am Sunday Mass we have a roster of young parishioners, begun by Louisa Rolfe, who select hymns on CDs with overhead projections of the words for all to sing.'¹⁸⁸ Currently, pianist Ross Calea ably accompanies and leads the singing of hymns and parts of the Mass at the 6pm Vigil Mass.

In recent years the parish has found a range of ways of reaching out to those in particular need within the St Mary's and wider communities. 'The St Mary's "Care" group was established in 1996 at the request of Father Michael. It was to be a link between the parish and those in need of a visit, to be picked up and taken to Mass on Sunday, perhaps an appointment with a doctor or hairdresser. A luncheon and Mass was organised each Easter and Christmas for the sick and elderly, with about 50 people attending and many of those came from surrounding nursing homes. A New Year's Eve party has been held along these lines for the past four years, and has proved to be very popular with about 23 or 24 people attending.'¹⁸⁹ More recent developments have included the establishment of the St Mary's Counselling Service initiated by (now former) parishioner Bob Connelly, and the St Mary's Volunteer Program. The establishment of the St Mary's Foundation will provide a community trust fund for the administration of bequests, notably a substantial sum from the estate of former parishioner Leo O'Brien, who lived for many years in Holyrood Street near the church and achieved fame as a test cricketer for Australia.

The most obvious reflection of the growing and energised community at St Mary's has been the major renovations undertaken at both the school and the



Special minister of the Eucharist, Mrs Stephanie Mebberson, administers to Georgie Dodd at a First Communion Eucharist. (Photo by Wendy Dodd)

Father Miles, Parish Council
Chairperson Jacqui Barnett and
Archbishop Denis Hart
at the ceremony to bless the
extended church and school in
October 2004.
(Photo by Peter Riordan)



church – almost doubling the space available. The parish decided at its Parish General Assembly in 2000 to expand the liturgical space to ‘to make the concept of the Faithful gathering around the Table of the Lord a reality’.¹⁹⁰ This alteration was timed to take place at the same time as the extensions to the school, each project designed by the same architect. Peter Riordan, Chairman of the Church Renovation Group, recalled some of the difficulties encountered during the project: ‘Early in the planning stage the Bayside City council heritage listed the façade of the original building despite strong objections from the Archdiocese and parish priest. The project was delayed for some months and additional costs were incurred.’ However, once these difficulties had been overcome, the substantial developments could begin. ‘The eastern wall of the church was removed, the roof above it to be supported by a steel girder. The stained glass windows were incorporated in the design of the new eastern glass wall, with the door in that wall becoming the main entrance. The existing sanctuary was retained as the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament for small liturgical ceremonies and private devotions.’¹⁹¹ The church’s statues were beautifully restored by Ruza Rukavina. The enlarged and refurbished church



Children after Mass with
Father Miles, 2004.

(Photo by Peter Riordan)

was blessed by Archbishop Hart at a Mass of Thanksgiving, celebrated with Father Miles and the people of St Mary's on 14 September 2002.

In some ways the life of the St Mary's community is turning full circle again. More and more young families are once again joining the parish and school, offering their own forms of generous support to the community. The RCIA team, led by Ken and Colette Foxworthy, which initiates adults into the Catholic community, has helped to integrate many such new members. The newly enlarged church building is, in effect, returning to its roots as a multifunction area for the life of the parish and the school. With renewed confidence, the St Mary's community is finding new ways and old to continue 'growing up Catholic' into the future.

The church was not adequate to hold our school and parish community so we needed to renovate it. The new space is wonderful. But it's not the space, it's what's within – the Presence of God and the sense of belonging with the parishioners under the care and guidance of Father Michael.

(Jacqui Barnett, parishioner since 1988)



St Marys School 1986. (Photo by Graeme Disney)



APPENDICES

- Parish Priests
- Head Teachers/Principals
- Other Presentation Sisters who were staff
- Contributors
 - Interviewees
 - Questionnaire respondents
- Endnotes

The following lists are as accurate and complete as sources allowed. We apologise for any inadvertent inaccuracies or omissions. Unfortunately, information relating to lay teaching and other staff at the school, particularly for earlier years, was too incomplete to warrant an appendix.

We are grateful to Sister Diana Gabel, the Presentation Order Archivist, for information regarding Presentation staff at the school.

Parish Priests

Father Dan Coakley, April 1926–1939	Father James Griffin, approx. 1972–1982
Father Dan Daly, 1939–1959	Father Robert Nink, 1982–1996
Father E. (Teddy) Nowlan, 1959–1965	Father Kevin Burke, Administrator
Father Bernard Payne, 1965–1969	October 1993–February 1994
Father Jeffries, approx. 1969–1970	Father Tim Tolan, Administrator 1994–1995
Father Vincent Curran, Assistant Priest	Father Michael Miles, Acting Administrator
approx. 1970–1972	1995–1996; Parish Priest 1996–present

Head Teachers/Principals

Sister Kostka O'Keefe, 1925	Sister Evangelist (Patricia) Stone,
Sister Ignatius Whelan, 1926	1966–1969
Sister Regis Farrelly, 1929	Sister Alice Gleeson, 1970–1972
Sister Xavier Brennan, 1930	Sister Ursula (Josephine) Mahon, 1973
Sister Casimir Cregan, 1931–1936	Joan Ryder, 1974–1975
Sister Xavier Brennan, 1938–1945	Marcia Atkins, 1975
Sister Francis Cullinan, 1946–1950	Margaret Hughes, 1976–1977
Sister Albeus Cooney, 1952–1958	May Ray, 1978–1984
Sister Macnise Dowling, 1959	Terri Green, 1985–1994
Sister Francis Cullinan, 1960–1961	Margaret Doolan, 1995–present
Sister Imelda (Frances) Dunlop, 1962–1965	

Other Presentation Sisters who were staff

Sister Austin Barratt, 1961–1962	Sister Margaret Mary (Clare) Mahon,
Sister Lua Candy, 1960–1961	1953–1959
Sister Eymard Carroll, 1946	Sister Ursula (Josephine) Mahon,
Sister Perpetua (Nuala Mary) Carroll, 1947	1963–1968
Sister Attracta Caulfield, 1942	Sister Patrick Murphy, 1930
Sister de Sales Clark, 1959	Sister Marie Therese Musgrove, approx.
Sister Columban Coleman, 1948–1950	mid 1930s
Sister Claude Dunne, approx. 1928	Sister Rita McKinty, 1931
Sister Julian (Eileen) Fahey, 1944–1951	Sister William (Kathleen) O'Neill, 1954
Sister Bride (Catherine) Fennell, 1958	Sister Martin (Martina) Ryan, 1959–1960
Sister Madeleine (Joan) Goonan,	Sister Denise Sawyer, 1945–1951
1943–1946	Sister Michael Shannon, 1949–1950
Sister Mildred Hodgkinson, 1931	Sister Raymonde Taylor, 1942
Sister Catherine (Gabrielle) Jackman,	Sister Kevin Trehy, 1931, 1940–1942, 1960
1951–1958	Sister Jerome Watson, 1943
Sister Alberta Kearney, 1929	

Contributors

Interviewees

Iris Ashton	Frank Ray
Marjorie Awburn	May Ray
Valerie Awburn	Aisla Ryan
Sister Frances Cullinan	Bill Sage
Janet Davis	Carmen Sage
Margaret Doolan	Carmel Stutterd
Bob Maguire	

Questionnaire respondents

Michelle Adair	Des and Mary Minogue
Ines Arnold	Julie Ann Morgan (nee Ryan)
Catherine Baker	Mary Naughton (nee McCarter)
Christine Barca	Olga Nowakowski
Barbara Barnett	Sean O'Connor
Jacqui Barnett	Aisla Ryan
Lygia Barnett	Marcelle 'Wendy' Shanahan
Catherine Berry	Michael Sheeran
Melina Bleeker	Peter Smith
Marjorie Browne	Geoffrey Splatt
Mary Camm	Nicole Steffenson
Clark family	Carmel Stutterd
Jennifer Curcio	Joan Titulaer (nee McCarter)
Anne Curry	Helen Tucker
Bill and Annette Curry	John Tucker
Kevin Curry	Nanette Vassallo (nee Johnston)
Thomas Edmund Doolan	Barbara Waterman (nee Johnston)
Liam Dunne	Judith Wegner
Julia Gowan	Catherine Wells
Maureen and Neil Graham	Paula Westhead
Terri Green	Pat Wise
David Henderson	Lena Zuccala
Kerry Jolly	Mick Zuccala
Paul and Susie Lohan	

Endnotes

- 1 Bill Sage, parishioner 1926–1951, 1967–present.
- 2 Gay Monahan, *75 Years: Sacred Heart Parish, Sandringham*, 1989.
- 3 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 4 John Hetherington, *Pillars of the Faith: Churchmen and their Churches in Early Victoria*, Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, p. 79.
- 5 Bill Sage, parishioner 1926–1951, 1967–present.
- 6 Gay Monahan, *75 Years: Sacred Heart Parish, Sandringham*, 1989.
- 7 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 8 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 9 Valerie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 10 Iris Ashton, parishioner 1937–1951; 1954–1957.
- 11 Sean O'Connor, parishioner 1938–1972; 2000–present.
- 12 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 13 Peter Corcoran, parishioner 1925–1950; from an unpublished portion of an article written in 1985, reproduced with permission.
- 14 Correspondence from Father Dan Coakley to Edna Arthur, 6 October 1931.
- 15 Marjorie Awburn, student 1925–1931.
- 16 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 17 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 18 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 19 *The Annunciation*, May 1937, p. 4.
- 20 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 21 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 22 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 23 Joan Titulaer, nee McCarter, student 1930–1938; parishioner since 1926.
- 24 Mary Naughton, nee McCarter, student 1927–1932; parishioner since 1926.
- 25 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 26 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 27 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 28 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 29 Kathleen Dunlop Kane (1974), *Adventure in Faith: The Presentation Sisters in Victoria*, Melbourne: The Congregation of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Victoria, p. 173.
- 30 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 31 The Inspectors' reports are contained in the school's archives.
- 32 Sister Raymonde Taylor, student 1926–1933.
- 33 Bill Sage, parishioner 1926–1951, 1967–present.
- 34 Sister Raymonde Taylor, student 1926–1933.
- 35 Kane, pp. 173–174.
- 36 Marjorie Awburn, student 1925–1931.
- 37 Aisla Ryan, student 1927–1934.
- 38 Sister Raymonde Taylor, student 1926–1933.
- 39 Iris Ashton, student 1937–1939.
- 40 Valerie Awburn, student 1929–1936.
- 41 Marjorie Awburn, student 1925–1931.
- 42 Aisla Ryan, student 1927–1934.
- 43 Geoff Splatt, student 1935–1940.
- 44 Iris Ashton, student 1937–1939.
- 45 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 46 *Sandringham News*, 4 September 1942, p. 2.
- 47 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 48 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 49 Maurice O'Connor, student 1940–1947.
- 50 Maurice O'Connor (student 1940–1947), recalls trenches "dug along the western boundary fence of the playground, up near Bendigo Street".
- 51 Laurie McMahon, student 1939–1943.
- 52 Laurie McMahon, student 1939–1943.
- 53 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 54 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 55 Aisla Ryan, student 1927–1934.
- 56 Geoff Splatt, student 1935–1940.
- 57 Laurie McMahon, student 1939–1943.
- 58 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 59 Iris Ashton, student 1937–1939.
- 60 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 61 Sean O'Connor, parishioner 1938–1972, 2000–present.
- 62 Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937.
- 63 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.

- 64 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 65 Bob Maguire, student 1938–1943.
- 66 Barbara Waterman, nee Johnston, student 1940–1946.
- 67 Iris Ashton, parishioner 1937–1951; 1954–1957.
- 68 Catholic Young Men's Society.
- 69 National Catholic Girls' Movement.
- 70 Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937.
- 71 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.
- 72 Iris Ashton, parishioner 1937–1951; 1954–1957.
- 73 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.
- 74 Iris Ashton (nee Maguire), parishioner 1937–1951; 1954–1957. Aileen Maguire was later to become Provincial of the Daughters of Charity.
- 75 Sister Frances (formerly Francis) Cullinan, Head Teacher 1946–1950; 1960–1961.
- 76 Sister Frances (formerly Francis) Cullinan, Head Teacher 1946–1950; 1960–1961.
- 77 Sister Frances (formerly Francis) Cullinan, Head Teacher 1946–1950; 1960–1961.
- 78 Inspector Charles O'Driscoll, report, 12 July 1949.
- 79 Sister Frances (formerly Francis) Cullinan, Head Teacher 1946–1950; 1960–1961.
- 80 Sister Frances (formerly Francis) Cullinan, Head Teacher 1946–1950; 1960–1961.
- 81 Inspection in Christian Doctrine, 3 November 1950.
- 82 Sister Gabrielle Jackman, teacher 1951–1958.
- 83 The Melbourne Archdiocese ran scholarships at Grade 6 level to offer the opportunity for selected parochial school students to enter one of the 'Central' schools which prepared students for the competitive junior secondary scholarships (see Kane, p. 202).
- 84 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.
- 85 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.
- 86 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.
- 87 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.
- 88 Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937.
- 89 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.
- 90 Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937.
- 91 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.
- 92 Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937.
- 93 Maurice O'Connor, student 1940–1947.
- 94 Iris Ashton, parishioner 1937–1951; 1954–1957.
- 95 Janet Davis (nee Smith), parishioner early 1950s – mid 1960s.
- 96 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 97 Julie Ann Morgan, nee Ryan, student 1953–1960.
- 98 See letter to parishioners from J.P. Drake, Chairman of the Committee, St Mary's School Building and Maintenance Fund, 28 June 1961.
- 99 Aisla Ryan, parishioner since 1925.
- 100 Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937.
- 101 Valerie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 102 *Hayset*, Feb–March 1968, p. 3.
- 103 Ines Arnold, parishioner since 1965.
- 104 Bill Sage, parishioner 1926–1951, 1967–present.
- 105 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 106 Valerie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 107 Valerie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 108 Valerie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 109 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 110 Marjorie and Valerie Awburn, parishioners since 1924.
- 111 Marjorie and Valerie Awburn, parishioners since 1924.
- 112 Kane, pp. 245, 247, 256.
- 113 Sister Frances (formerly Francis) Cullinan, Head Teacher 1946–1950; 1960–1961.
- 114 Sean O'Connor, parent 1965–1972.
- 115 Ines Arnold, parishioner since 1965.
- 116 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 117 May Ray, parishioner since 1968.
- 118 Kane, pp. 226, 278.
- 119 Letter from the Archbishop, published in Parish Bulletin, 15 July 1973.
- 120 Anne Curry, parent 1963–1980.
- 121 May Ray, Principal 1978–1984.

- 122 May Ray, Principal 1978–1984.
- 123 Frank Ray, parent 1974–1983.
- 124 Kevin Curry, parent 1963–1980.
- 125 Frank Ray, parent 1974–1983.
- 126 Frank Ray, parent 1974–1983.
- 127 Frank Ray, parent 1974–1983.
- 128 Frank Ray, parent 1974–1983.
- 129 May Ray, Principal 1978–1984.
- 130 Thos Edmund Doolan, parent and parishioner.
- 131 Frank Ray, parent 1974–1983.
- 132 Frank Ray, parent 1974–1983.
- 133 Frank Ray, parent 1974–1983.
- 134 May Ray, Principal 1978–1984.
- 135 May Ray, Principal 1978–1984.
- 136 May Ray, Principal 1978–1984.
- 137 Kevin Curry, parishioner since 1962.
- 138 Correspondence from Lillian M. Archer, Hon. Sec. Hampton CWL to Mrs Jolley, Hon. Sec. St Mary's Parish Council, 15 August 1978.
- 139 Report to St Mary's Parish Council re Formation of Liturgy Committee, c. May 1976.
- 140 Parish Bulletin, 31 January 1982.
- 141 Marcelle (Wendy) Shanahan, parishioner since 1983.
- 142 Terri Green, school principal (and Parish Council member) 1985–1994.
- 143 Des and Mary Minogue, parishioners 26 and 17 years respectively.
- 144 Barbara Barnett, parishioner since 1988.
- ~~145 May Ray, parishioner since 1968.~~
- 146 Bill Sage, parishioner 1926–1951, 1967–present.
- 147 Peter Riordan, parishioner since 1964.
- 148 Jacqui Barnett, parishioner since 1985.
- 149 Bob Maguire, parishioner since 1937.
- 150 May Ray, parishioner since 1968.
- 151 Parish Bulletin, 7 March 1982.
- 152 Parish Bulletin, 18 December 1983.
- 153 Marjorie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 154 Peter Smith, parishioner since 1981.
- 155 May Ray, Principal 1978–1984.
- 156 Celeste Ray, student 1976–1982.
- 157 Parish Council minutes. May and June 1976; 26 May 1977.
- 158 Valerie Awburn, parishioner since 1924.
- 159 *The Bugle*, Christmas 1986, p. 1.
- 160 Correspondence from Dr Frank Little, Archbishop of Melbourne, to John Purdey, CEO, City of Sandringham, 29 March 1989.
- 161 *The Bayside Times*, 30 November 1988, p. 6.
- 162 Terri Green, principal 1985–1994.
- 163 Mick Zuccala, parishioner 50 years, member of Parish Council 1980–1994.
- 164 Lygia Barnett, student 1985, 1988–1992
- 165 Terri Green, principal 1985–1994.
- 166 Terri Green, principal 1985–1994.
- 167 Terri Green, principal 1985–1994.
- 168 Paula Westhead, parent 1982 – early 1990s; parishioner since 1982.
- 169 Anonymous response to 51 surveys about the school conducted in approximately 1996.
- 170 Margaret Doolan, Principal since 1995.
- 171 Helen Tucker, parent since 2004.
- 172 Paul and Susie Lohan, parishioners since 1997, parents since 2003.
- 173 Christine Barca, parent since 2003.
- 174 Kerry Jolly, parent since 2001.
- 175 Jacqui Barnett, parishioner since 1985.
- 176 Maureen and Neil Graham, parishioners since 1997.
- 177 Barbara Barnett, parishioner since 1988.
- 178 Des and Mary Minogue, parishioners 26 and 17 years respectively.
- 179 Judith Wegner, parishioner since 1994.
- 180 Marcelle (Wendy) Shanahan, parishioner since 1983.
- 181 Marcelle (Wendy) Shanahan, parishioner since 1983.
- 182 Kate and Doug Clark, parishioners since 1999.
- 183 Jacqui Barnett, parishioner since 1985.
- 184 Des and Mary Minogue, parishioners 26 and 17 years respectively.
- 185 Jacqui Barnett, parishioner since 1985.
- 186 Kate and Doug Clark, parishioners since 1999.
- 187 Maureen and Neil Graham, parishioners since 1997.
- 188 Valerie and Marjorie Awburn, parishioners since 1924.
- 189 Anne Curry, parishioner since 1962.
- 190 Peter Riordan, parishioner since 1964, Chairman, Church Renovation Group.
- 191 Peter Riordan, parishioner since 1964, Chairman, Church Renovation Group.



View of St Mary's Church, 2004. (Photo by Newmark Aerial Photography)

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Hampton's Catholics have witnessed many changes since their 'church-school' was established 80 years ago. The experience of 'growing up Catholic' has changed much over these years. Nevertheless, faith, sacrament and community have remained central. This engaging history traces the story of St Mary's Hampton through the memories of past and present parishioners, students and teachers.

Catherine Waterhouse from HistorySmiths Pty Ltd is a professional historian and writer who specialises in local community histories.