

Walking in Faith: The Village over the Creek

Hawthorn: The Catholic Story

The Hawthorn Catholic Parish strives to be a Christian Community helping all celebrate God's presence and expressing our faith through outreach, service and justice

Introduction

For as long as there has been a church of the Immaculate Conception in Hawthorn, there have been Jesuits on Glenferrie Road. An order of priests, five hundred years old and associated traditionally with education, training of priests, publishing and working in all forms of foreign mission, have asked themselves what are they doing here, in a parish of Hawthorn. All the other ministries associated with Jesuit works are aimed at a particular group, students, priests, those in need, the poor and those treated unjustly. But the traditional parish was a geographic area, a structure which dated from the later Roman Empire and under the direct jurisdiction of the local bishop.

So in the life of the parish of Hawthorn the Jesuits found themselves bound to a geographic community amongst whom and with whom they worked over the past 140 years. The parish built churches, offered masses, organized schools and founded a host of organizations, some of which still exist and others which having done their duty have passed on. What can be used to describe this community, which moved from semi rural Irish to cosmopolitan suburbia, from solemn high Latin masses to community direct liturgies, from an isolated church to an outgoing and welcoming community, what can describe the community which is still a living community after all these and many other changes?

The parish of Hawthorn, I believe, can be best described as “walking together”. It is a community that has “walked together” over a hundred and forty years, prayed together, helped those in need-together, supported the sick and the bereaved, baptised, confirmed and supported the children, married the adults and educated their young. It has mattered little whether the liturgy was good or bad, modern or conservative, whether the parish administration was effective or not, whether the parish priest was popular or not, through all the 140 years the parishioners have been “walking together”.

The community has built churches, has opened and closed schools, has worked hard to fund and support a myriad of activities, all the while it has “walked together”. The parish of Hawthorn is still in some way, doing the same things it was doing a hundred years ago, a little differently, but also the same. This little book is not an account of change in the church, and there have been plenty of those, it is a story of what has brought us together, what has kept us together, it is the story of walking together.

Contents

Catholics in the Bush	4
The Jesuits 1866	6
The Schools	17
Walking in Faith 1904	35
Walking in Faith-Bourke's Front Yard 1935	43
Walking in Faith- Fathers of the Fifties	53
Walking in Faith – Shadow of the Monster 1967-68	58
Walking in Faith-Building Blocks of Vatican II 1975	66
Speaking in Tongues	76
Walking in Faith-Roaring Nineties 1990	79
Walking in Faith – Century 21	87
Epilogue	92
List of Parish Priests	93
Bibliography	94

Catholics in the Bush

A time for building, a time for knocking down,
 A time for tears, a time for laughter,
 A time for mourning, a time for dancing
 There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven.¹

The more things change, the more things stay the same, and such is the story of the Hawthorn parish. The steady increase in the Catholic population east of Melbourne encouraged Bishop Goold to commission Father James Joseph Madden as priest of the Richmond Mission, towards the end of 1852. Father Madden's parish extended from Punt Road to Lilydale but he was the man for such a challenge. His immediate concern was the provision of schools for Catholic children and the church/school building became a mark of the rapidly expanding Catholic Church throughout the diocese. He began with schools in Richmond and by 1856 his building programme had reached as far out as Nunawading. Madden remained in charge until he resigned in June 1864 when he took leave and went home to England. He never returned.²

Father Madden was replaced by Father Patrick Smyth, whose earlier precipitate removal from Ballarat had contributed to the Eureka Stockade incident, and who remained in charge until January 1865. Five other priests worked in the mission, changing in rapid succession until the Richmond area and all its attached stations were handed over to the Jesuits in 1866.

The enthusiastic approach of Fr Madden brought him into contact with some of the wealthiest and most powerful lay Catholics in the colony, who lived in the area then known as Boroondara and was to become Hawthorn. Amongst these men was the enigmatic, Michael Lynch who had made money in a number of ways, principally by running hotels and transporting supplies to the miners in Ballarat during the height of the Gold Rushes. Lynch had a large property known as Grace Park which lay north of Burwood Road and mostly east of Power Street. Here he built a small school that served the needs of Catholic children and in which he persuaded Fr Madden to occasionally say mass. Even when finished it was clearly inadequate³. The school came into existence in December 1853 and by January the following year, 33 children were in attendance and Mr William Kearney had been appointed principal.

It was an era when the Government granted land to individual denominations to build Churches to assist the development of local communities but they had to build on their grant within a few years or it would be revoked. The Anglicans in Hawthorn were

¹ Ecclesiastes 3:1-4

² It is unknown whether illness had anything to do with Madden's departure but he never returned and was later stationed in Kent and died in the early 1900s as chaplain to a large convent in London.

³ This small schoolroom was used for public meetings by the first Hawthorn councils, as the alternative was to hold them in a local pub which could make the meetings more boisterous than necessary. *Area Walk II*. Hawthorn Historical Society.

the first to apply for a grant and laid the foundation stone of Christ Church in 1853, but Dean Fitzpatrick, the Vicar General, ensured the Catholics were not far behind. A grant was taken up in Power Street opposite where Lynch had built his first school and on land next to the Hawthorn railway station. The train did not arrive until April 1861 but Fitzpatrick had a keen eye for land and knew the location where the Melbourne and Suburban Railway Company planned their expansion. (He was nearly too close as there was a question as to whether the church land would be taken over for a station.) On this undeveloped paddock Fr Madden built a small church/school, known as St Joseph's that opened in 1858/59⁴. Fr Madden could only offer irregular masses in the new church as he usually had only one assistant priest to help cover the huge area, but when he did, Michael Lynch sat in the back with his Blackwood stick, poking the young women and clouting the young men he did not think were paying suitably close attention. Some might say there could be something said for this practice.

The opening of St Joseph's meant that Catholic Life as well as Catholic Religion penetrated into Lower Hawthorn. What did the new Catholic community want from their religion? First, the offering of mass and the range of religious services including Holy Hours and Sunday devotions, novenas and all the practices common in the Church up till the Second Vatican Council. Second in importance was education. The Catholic Children had to be protected from Protestant "error" and taught the "truth" as well as creating friendship bonds which would keep the community together. Then came an array of sodalities and confraternities most of which had some public manifestation of the practice of their Faith, but also engaged in many social activities in the parish, including a range of fund-raising events to pay for all the parish buildings and activities. These social activities gave birth to a number of social clubs, tennis clubs, music clubs, picnic associations, dramatic societies and all manner of activities to keep people together. Finally there was a system of aid to help the poor of the parish who were struggling to feed their children and find work. On top of all the religious practice, the community was largely Irish, but not completely the repressed Catholic Irish found in so many other places. Amongst the Catholic Irish were Sir John O'Shanassy, three times premier or chief secretary of the Colony, and Sir Charles Gavan-Duffy, who was once premier,⁵ Michael O'Grady and Patrick O'Brien, all members of the colonial parliament and resident in Hawthorn. Apart from the politically important there was a substantial group of wealthy and middle class families in the Hawthorn area including Patrick Mornane, Daniel Meaney and Michael Gibney⁶, even if the majority of the population were still working class.

⁴ There is dispute over the opening date, C/F later in this essay.

⁵ Ebsworth, Rev Walter. *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*. P 327. O'Shanassy was member for forty years but his seat was around the Irish stronghold of Kilmore not in Hawthorn.

⁶ A descendant, Miss Mary Gibney-Roche, donated a family home to the Society of Jesus which became the Jesuit Provincial Office.

The Jesuits 1866

The first Jesuits came to Melbourne at the invitation of Bishop Goold in 1865 but their superior, Fr Joseph Dalton, did not arrive until early 1866. Fr Dalton moved immediately to take over the promised Richmond mission and his first aim was to build a new parish church, as the first one, St James on Bridge Road, was clearly unsatisfactory. Fr Madden had known this but the rapidly changing sequence of parish priests had prevented any progress. Fr Dalton purchased land and began building what would become the great St Ignatius Church.

As Fr Dalton was supported only by Fr David McKiniry, who was really only part time in the work around Richmond, and because he was so focused on building his new church, there was little he could do for the outstation church/schools in Hawthorn, Kew and Nunawading. In Nunawading in particular, there was a sizeable and thriving school in the hands of a Mrs. and Mr. O'Keefe, at whose large prize-giving events the local MLA, Michael O'Grady, joined Fr Dalton and Fr McKiniry in presiding.⁷ While concentrating on Richmond, Fr Dalton worked hard to raise funds for his new church, only to find his efforts were suddenly derailed by an unexpected alliance which was taking place in the "Village over the Creek", as the Richmond parishioners called the Hawthorn area.

Arriving with Fr Dalton in 1866 was Fr Edward Nolan, who was assigned to teach at St Patrick's College, but on weekends Fr Dalton sent him out to minister to the people of Hawthorn. Here Fr Nolan came into contact with Michael Lynch and the "alliance" which would distort Fr Dalton's fund-raising was born. Lynch was determined to have a proper church in Hawthorn and he had friends with wealth. In Fr Nolan he had someone who could extract it from them.

Michael Lynch immediately confronted Fr Nolan with his plans and added weight to his argument by promptly donating a large block of land on the corner of Burwood and Glenferrie Roads worth at least 700 pounds. Fr Nolan's fund-raising skills swung into action with a success and speed which made it effectively impossible for Fr Dalton to impede its progress even though he knew it would slow up his own fund raising for Richmond.

What type of man was this Fr Edward Nolan? He was Dublin-born and aged forty when he arrived in Melbourne to begin his mission work. His kindness showed through in so many ways. While teaching at St Patrick's, Fr Nolan caught a boy cheating from a copy of Euclid concealed in his desk. Fr Nolan, who rarely used a cane, took the boy to his office and spent a long time selecting a suitable weapon. The boy, who had been carefully watching the proceedings, suddenly dived under a sofa and refused to move. Fr Nolan did not press the pursuit too closely and left his office door open wide, allowing his victim ample room to escape. It was not recorded who was more relieved. In 1867 a young R.J. Dennehy, a boy at St Patrick's College, was walking home along Victoria Parade in pouring rain and met Fr Nolan riding back to the college in the

⁷ - *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, P 130, 20th May 1868.

opposite direction. He got off his horse, wrapped a large Inverness cape around the boy's shoulders and walked him home, with the horse coming behind.⁸

It is possible that Dennehy was relieved that Fr Nolan didn't offer him a ride on the horse, as Fr Nolan's lack of equestrian skills was notorious. In June 1873 he was involved in helping Frs. Dalton and Michael Watson climb into their buggy outside St Patrick's College. The horse bolted, smashed the buggy, and dumped the Fathers on to the roadway, but fortunately both escaped unhurt.⁹ In later years he rode a famous horse called "Tobin" around the parish. This horse had a "peculiar amble" which locals recognized and allowed those who wished to avoid Father's visit, ample time to escape.¹⁰

Fr Nolan had little taste for set sermons in big churches, but had the quiet knack of addressing small groups in any situation. He had considerable knowledge of botany and some ability at medicine but it was his zeal, gentle piety and simplicity which won over the people of Hawthorn.

It is possible that Fr Dalton had the last say anyway. In 1871-72 he used Fr Nolan's undoubted skills and sent him on a begging mission to raise money for the new Xavier College to be built in Kew. He visited the shacks of the shepherds and the mansions of the "squatters" and though he interpreted country Victoria to include all Victoria, parts of South Australia and New South Wales, as well as New Zealand, he raised substantial funds and persuaded many families to commit their sons to the new educational project. When Fr Nolan finally died in January 1893, the bluestone pile of Immaculate Conception Church was as fitting a memorial as anyone could wish.

Building a Church

When Fr Nolan and Michael Lynch and his supporters met in 1867, the directory for the area listed a total of 313 households. With a Catholic average of about one in five in colonial Melbourne, it would indicate that about 60 households of Hawthorn might be Catholic. Fr Nolan's subscription book seems to indicate about forty-eight known Catholics in the region, and on the basis of those figures, he planned a church to seat 1,200.

It is suggested that fourteen architects' designs were submitted and Crouch and Wilson were selected, with the building of the nave alone costing 3000 pounds. The speed with which designs were submitted, the successful one chosen and the foundation stone laid, might suggest that Michael Lynch and his supporters had done some earlier preparation even before Fr Nolan arrived on the scene. Whatever the situation, the superior, Fr Dalton, agreed and whether he had time to obtain approval from his provincial in Dublin or not, which probably would not have worried him greatly, is unknown, but the foundation stone was laid on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8th, 1867. Fr Isaac Moore who was serving as Prefect of Studies at St Patrick's College at the time preached the occasional sermon to a substantial crowd of "spectators". As the fathers, wisely, did not trust the Melbourne weather, a large marquee was erected along the Lynch Street side of the property.

⁸ Head, Fr Michael, SJ. Healy, Fr Gerard, SJ. *More than a School*. P 32

⁹ Watson, Fr Michael, SJ. "The Society of Jesus in Australia." Combined edition, page 51

¹⁰ O'Brien, Fr Morgan, SJ. "History of the Hawthorn Mission". The delightful story of "Tobin" was first related by O'Brien, but has been repeated often in later histories. P 41

Considerable donations continued to pour in and progress was pushed ahead rapidly until on Sunday, October 10th, 1869, the Feast of St Francis Borgia, the church of The Immaculate Conception was consecrated and opened for worship. Bishop Goold was the principal celebrant at the high mass at 11-00 AM with a procession of thurifer, acolytes, altar boys, numerous clergy including Fr. J. Dalton, the Mission Superior, and various other functionaries.

The congregation was led by Councillor Moubray, Lord Mayor of Melbourne, and Mrs. Moubray, and the news report then goes on to list six significant lay women and thirty-four laymen in that order.¹¹ Almost the entire Catholic lay leadership of the Jesuit Mission was present to see the opening of a most significant building for the Irish Catholic community of the city. One of the first permanent churches to be consecrated in the suburbs of Melbourne, Immaculate Conception was a symbol to all that the Irish Catholic community was there to stay and play a significant role in the colony.¹²

After the reading of the gospel, Fr Isaac Moore again rose to preach the sermon in the best triumphal traditions of the day, thanking the supporters for their generosity and the bishop for his presence, and he hoped that the Vatican Council the bishop was about to attend would define the doctrine of infallibility. He went on to discuss the relationship with the other Christian “sects” and compared them to the vitality and progress of the “Faith” in the colony; scarcely an ecumenical presentation. Still it must have been successful as the remaining debit of 1500 pounds on the church was reduced by 230 pounds in the collection and more due to the sale of tickets of admission. Who today can sell tickets for admission to a church service?

The church was far from complete but the nave and side aisles were and the floor area was sixty feet long and fifty feet wide. The tower was a stunted sixty-six feet high, but the roof climbed to a massive fifty-one feet at the apex and dominated the whole interior. Even today in our era of high rise buildings, the roof of the church has a certain awe about it.

Parishioners attending mass Sunday after Sunday might now be forgiven for growing used to the wonder of the massive bluestone walls, the Malmsbury stone in the pillars which is usually so difficult to carve and topped Kangaroo Point sandstone carvings, and in its day, fascinating gas light fittings. These lights apparently hissed a good deal, annoyed some members of the congregation and gave little light, but still were state of the art in 1869, the year that gas supplies first reached Hawthorn.

Against the temporary blank wall at the end of the church stood the magnificent carved oak altar created by the Belgian artist Vermaylen from Louvain. It was ordered, carved, shipped and assembled in Immaculate Conception Church in time for the consecration for a cost of 170 pounds. Again considering the speed of communication in those days, the fact that the altar was delivered in time again raises a few questions as to whether it was ordered before the design of the church was settled. Its beautiful simple lines and smooth wood finish helped the altar to survive both the temptation to build a

¹¹ The *Advocate* of 16 October 1869 covered the opening at considerable length.

¹² It might be the first permanent church in the suburbs, though the church at Heidelberg was older but it could be argued in those days, to be out in the country. Coburg was also an early Church. Cf Ebsworth, Rev Walter. *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*. For the foundation dates of the early Victorian churches. Immaculate Conception was the seventh church in the Melbourne region in which Bishop Goold had been involved with commencement or completion, but most were still building or had been church/schools at the time.

marble high altar when the chancel was built in the 1890s, and then the clean-out which followed the post Vatican II reforms. Today it has been restored to its traditional position and remains a quiet reminder of the work of Fr Nolan, bearing the inscription “Founder of this Church”.

The distance between the Immaculate Conception church and the Richmond presbytery convinced the Jesuits to put the area under a separate team and they created a new parish in early 1882, with Fr Oliver Daly as Parish Priest and Fr Peter O’Flinn as curate.¹³ Unlike Fr Nolan, Fr O’Flinn was a fine horseman and has spent the previous two years as a country missionary, riding around priestless parts of Victoria. Fr Daly immediately started to build a presbytery and its foundation stone was laid on April 23rd, 1882, following a successful appeal launch in February. During the launch Sir John O’Shanassy and Mr Patrick O’Brien gave one hundred pounds each and a further three hundred and seventy-five pounds was collected from others present. Then Fr Oliver Daly made a successful appeal throughout Melbourne for the new Presbytery Building Fund.¹⁴ The presbytery, a fine, gothic style building of Hawthorn bricks, designed by William Ellis and architecturally in sympathy with the bank building next door, was opened a year later for the cost of 2000 pounds.

Furnishing the new building was a different matter: a good deal of material had to be borrowed. Occasionally Fr Daly resorted to cunning. It is said he invited several prominent Catholics to dinner offering them no better seats at table than tin packing cases. The dining-room chairs arrived soon afterwards and apparently are still in use.¹⁵

In 1883 Sir John O’Shanassy died and his large estate, Tara, in the Auburn area was sold and broken up. The big iron gates of his house were donated to the parish and adorn the intersection in front of the church to this day.

The final building programme of the 19th century began in 1891 with the completion of the chancel which created a large sanctuary area that allowed for the full solemn celebration of the liturgy the Church provided in those days and the magnificent high altar was moved back to a new position. The stained-glass windows behind the high altar which are one of the glories of Immaculate Conception began arriving in 1898 and continued to be installed until 1906.¹⁶ At the same time the chancel was built, the final stage was added to the tower and bells installed so that sleepy “Protestants” could have the advantage of the early morning Angelus and on Sundays the bells could be rung for the start of mass.

The total cost of the project was 10,000 pounds and, as the depression of the 1890s just broke out, the parish was in considerable financial difficulty for several years but survived.

The bells were blessed at the end of 1891 and the chancel was consecrated on the Sunday within the octave of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1892. The morning sermon was preached by Prior Butler of the Carmelites and the evening sermon by Fr Hegarty, PP of St Kilda East. A witness to these solemn celebrations was the

¹³ Peter O’Flinn is often spelt O’Flynn and some contemporary records have both spellings. However I have opted for the O’Flinn spelling as that was how he appears in the oldest Jesuit catalogues and on the stained glass window dedicated to him in Immaculate Conception Church.

¹⁴ Ryan, Fr John SJ. *A History of the Richmond Mission*. P 48

¹⁵ O’Neill, Fr George, SJ. *History of the Jesuits in Australia*. Hawthorn section, p 5.

¹⁶ The names of most of the people to be commemorated by the donors on each of the windows in the church.

seriously ill Fr Edward Nolan who died in the presbytery a month later on 11 January 1893, but he had lived long enough to see his dream truly take shape.

An Unnecessary Squabble

When the Jesuits arrived in 1865, Bishop Goold had given them pastoral care of a vast area of eastern Melbourne as he was short of priests and in conflict with some of those he had. His successor, Archbishop Thomas Carr, was not short of priests and saw things differently. He brought extra priests from Ireland and began a prompt and systematic reorganization of the diocese. The Archbishop looked at the rapidly developing eastern regions and saw new missions for the Church; the Jesuits saw new churches run by themselves.

The Jesuits had churches in Hawthorn (2), Kew and Nunawading, and had added further church/schools in Mitcham and Camberwell¹⁷. Carr took the view that the Jesuits could not service all these areas and that he could.¹⁸

In July 1888, Carr wrote to Fr Aloysius Sturzo, the mission superior, asking about changes to the boundaries of St John's, East Melbourne, and Oakleigh. Sturzo fought the changes and the conflict began. The conflict was exacerbated when Fr O'Flinn asked permission to build a new church in Box Hill. This cut across Carr's plans for a new mission in Lilydale which would have needed Mitcham and Box Hill to be viable enough to support two priests. O'Flinn not only did not get his church in Box Hill but he lost Mitcham as well and even managed to alienate the usually avuncular archbishop. In 1889 Camberwell was separated from the Jesuit mission, and a show-down followed over Kew. Here the Jesuits had purchased land to replace the small church; and built a presbytery. At the height of the conflict Carr took over Kew as well and placed Fr Patrick Fallon in the position as P.P. Fallon had the reputation of being a good financial manager and he needed to be, as Carr allowed the money put into buying the property to be repaid to the Jesuits, a situation which placated some of the bitterness felt by the Jesuits in Hawthorn, but delayed the building of a new parish church in Kew for several years.

Archbishop Carr no doubt had the authority to repudiate the agreement between Fr Dalton and Bishop Goold, as indeed he did during the dispute over Mitcham and Box Hill, but he was right from another aspect. The Irish Jesuits in Australia were badly overstretched, and, even as early as 1873, Fr Dalton was begging his provincial in Ireland to send out "missionary" priests to run the distant parishes. A few like Patrick O'Flinn and James Kennedy, who was promptly appointed to North Sydney, were sent, but most of the Irish Jesuits were educationalists and even a number of them were sick men.¹⁹ Simply the Jesuits did not have the priests to provide the services in the outlying missions in a way that Carr believed was necessary.

¹⁷ The substantial Church/School of St John Berchman's was opened in 1887 on the Burke Road property in Camberwell which was going to cause problems later.

¹⁸ Boland, Fr T.P. *Thomas Carr, Archbishop of Melbourne* P 160-162, Much of the correspondence associated with this dispute is in the Australian Jesuit Province Archives but Boland gives an excellent summary of the dispute.

¹⁹ Caraman, Fr Philip, SJ. *The Society of Jesus in Australia*. P 105.

Carr never allowed a conflict in one area or with one person to interfere with his work in another. At the height of the dispute over Mitcham and conflict with Fr O'Flinn, Archbishop Carr came to Hawthorn to open the parish fete as he considered it to be his duty as bishop. Aloysius Sturzo was replaced as mission superior by Fr Patrick Keating in April 1890 and he resided in Sydney. He left relations in Melbourne in the hands of the highly capable Fr John Ryan who not only worked well with Carr, but they became very close friends.

Another dispute arose in 1901 over the boundary between Hawthorn and Camberwell. The Jesuits had built the church/school in Burke Road but many of the locals wanted the centre of the new Camberwell parish to be in Surrey Hills. They had raised money for a presbytery there. But in the end a large presbytery was built next to the church in Burke Road. This meant that the planned parish church would be right on the boundary of the parish. In addition the local school of St John Berchmans drew large numbers of its pupils from the area on the western side of Burke Road which was part of the Hawthorn parish.

In February 1901, the PP, Fr G. A. Robinson wrote to the Jesuit superior of Hawthorn, Dr. Buckeridge, asking for the boundary to be moved from Burke Road to Auburn Road, saying that his parish already worked with the people in this area and if the income followed across to Camberwell then construction of the new church there could begin.²⁰ The timing of the letter was excellent, as in February Fr John Ryan had taken over as superior of the mission. The problem was immediately put on his desk along with a closely argued four-page letter outlining the position from the perspective of Hawthorn.²¹

Fr Ryan placed the investigations in the hands of Fr Joseph Hearn, the parish priest of Richmond, a very practical, down-to-earth, parish man. Hearn realized that Camberwell would be a much more functional parish if it took up the section east of Auburn road, and that it would ultimately lose some of its own more distant eastern areas to new parishes. He also saw the more compact Hawthorn parish would have many advantages for the fathers working there and recommended the new boundaries be Auburn Road and Burwood Road.²² Obviously Carr and Fr Robinson were delighted with the outcome and wrote immediately expressing their appreciation for the work of Fr Hearn and the Hawthorn fathers during the negotiations, and so after two decades of tension, the Jesuits could finally feel secure in their position on Glenferrie Road.²³

Archbishop Carr remained on good terms with the Jesuits for the rest of his episcopate. In 1907 he preached the panegyric at the funeral of Fr Peter O'Flinn recalling his spiritual virtues, good works, wise advice and kindness of heart, all for a priest who had been *persona non grata* at one time.²⁴ When he came to die himself in the middle of

²⁰ Robinson to Dr Buckeridge, 7 February 1901. ASLASJ

²¹ The letter is unsigned and therefore may be incomplete and is undated, but the content is very clear. ASLASJ It does not seem to have been in Fr Buckeridge's handwriting.

²² Fr Hearn's sketch map dated November 1901, ASLASJ The issue was not quite over and in a short time, Fr Robinson was offering the area back to the Jesuits in return for them taking over the chaplaincy of an orphanage in Surrey Hills. Memo of J Ryan, 27 January 1905, Robinson to Ryan, 31 January 1905, Colgan to Ryan, 30 January 1905, Carr to Ryan, 3 March 1905, Colgan to Ryan, 26 June 1905. All ASLASJ, but the discussions came to nothing in the end.

²³ Carr to Ryan, 11 November 1901, Robinson to Ryan, 14 November 1901. ASLASJ

²⁴ Strong, David, SJ. *The Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography 1848-1998* P 279

1917, it was Fr Timothy Kenny, a Jesuit friend, who gave him the sacrament of extreme unction, and a constant visitor during the last illness was his faithful Fr John Ryan.²⁵

Back to Buildings

The sacristies were added to the church in 1913 by Fr George Kelly for a cost of 2000 pounds. The large priest's sacristy included some stained glass windows and a most ornate vesting press, possibly with the intention of being used for "mixed marriages" which in those days could not be performed before the altar in the church. He also oversaw the construction of the two confessionals that were added at the same time.

In 1915 Fr Thomas Claffey became parish priest and immediately began to look at the next stage of the building programme. Claffey was a business man and he realized that there was little chance of doing much with the war in progress and, further, he wanted to avoid plunging the parish into debt like that caused by the 1891 programme. Who knew whether the war would be followed by another depression?

Fr Claffey sought the advice of some key parishioners and a general meeting was held on 19 July 1919 at St John's school. Instead of functions and fetes, it was decided that a direct appeal would be made to each parishioner in the form of brochure and a stamped-addressed envelope so that every part of the parish would have an opportunity to contribute. The donors could either give a lump sum or donate once a month over ten months and to assist, the Church Union Collectors²⁶ would call as usual on the first Sunday of each month. For 1919 this was an uncommon approach to church fundraising, but with parishioners, J.C Westhoven and Joseph Sheedy, driving the executive committee, it was made to work and worked well. The idea was to have money in hand before the building started so that large-scale interest payments would be avoided and therefore savings made.

The professionally printed brochure which launched the appeal was designed to coincide with the jubilee of the opening of the church and asked for about 5,500 pounds. Fr Claffey said that the parish union funds held 2500 pounds, and Mr. Fritsch, the architect, said it would cost about 7000, and so 1000 was added in for extras and the appeal sum was calculated. The brochure also included a history of the parish with emphasis on the generosity of the earlier generations, and then concluded with the actual appeal itself from Mr. Westhoven and his committee.²⁷

For this jubilee appeal the lay directors appealed to the parishioners' pride in their church, the increased congregations needed more room, noted the unsightly brick wall facing Glenferrie road, the desire to complete a noble Catholic building and the need of support for their respected pastor. Nothing to do with Ireland or indeed the Catholic communion in Australia was mentioned and the arguments used could still be used for a church appeal today. The only project mentioned in the appeal was the completion of the eastern transept, but did Fr Claffey have other things in mind? How much money was finally obtained by the appeal is unknown but what is certain, is that when the building work began in 1921, it not only included the eastern transept, it completed the entire spire

²⁵ Boland, Fr T.P. *Thomas Carr, Archbishop of Melbourne*. P 423

²⁶ The work of the Church Union Collectors is explained in the section on Fr Colgan.

²⁷ The brochure was printed by J. Roy Stevens, a leading Catholic printer for many decades and they donated the brochure as a contribution to the appeal.

as well, all for a total cost of 16,000 pounds. The architect for these additions was Augustus Fritsch who was well known for many other buildings in the Hawthorn area, including the Dixon Building of shops in Glenferrie Road. With the new building a series of gargoyle faces appeared on Glenferrie Road, including the Prime Minister Billy Hughes, while a number of other faces were added to the walls facing Lynch Street. Unfortunately the names of most of these people have now been lost to history.²⁸ In the new transept was, a choir loft reached by a spiral staircase which caused the loss of murals of some of the Old Testament women which had been along that wall of the sanctuary. Underneath the choir loft was a new room which eventually became the Sodality Room and later, after the installation of a large painting of Our Lady of the Way, it became a shrine.²⁹

While the building was being considered and delayed by the war, the large property of the ES&A bank to the west of the presbytery came on the market. It was an obvious addition to the Catholic site on Burwood road, and a good deal of pressure, including letters from the Archbishop, was brought to bear to get the Hawthorn Jesuits to buy it.³⁰ However Fr Claffey was opposed and in the light of subsequent events it was clear that he was husbanding his money for the new building programme, even if he did not explicitly say so.³¹

The archbishop became increasingly ill and Fr Ryan, who was happy to let the matter rest, ceased to be mission superior in 1917, and nothing happened, but the bank remained on the market. However in 1923, Fr Joe Hearn, who had been resting in the parish throughout the previous year, became parish priest of Hawthorn. Almost immediately Mr. Tom Fields, representing a body of parishioners, approached him with plans to buy and use the bank and the land. Hearn needed no convincing and wrote immediately to his superior urging the purchase.³² Again the issue stalled but then support came from an unexpected quarter. Periodically the Jesuit Superior General sends a Visitor to inquire into how things were running in a province or mission. In 1923, Fr William Power arrived in Australia as a Visitor and amongst his changes he ordered the purchase of the bank building.³³ For 7,000 pounds the land holdings of the Hawthorn parish was nearly doubled in size.³⁴

The vacant land was first used for tennis courts but Fr Power had suggested it would make a fine hall. Fr Hearn needed no more encouragement and Mr. J.W. Vanheems was commissioned to build the fine Manresa Hall capable of holding 900 people, for concerts, dances and films. At the end of the project, the parish was 23,000 pounds in debt, which would have frightened Fr Claffey, but Fr Hearn and his parish advisors looked on the gain of the new transept, a spire, a multi-purpose building and a hall and could feel well pleased with the result.

²⁸ It appears a Mr. Castles was one of them and Fr George Kelly was another, but there is no certainty about which particular faces they were. One list includes, Mannix and Carr, Fritsch himself, J.C. Westhoven, and the French president, Clemenceau.

²⁹ This painting was bought to Australia by Fr Buckeridge in 1886

³⁰ Carr to Ryan, 1 December 1916. ASLASJ

³¹ Claffey to Ryan 3 December 1916 ASLASJ

³² Hearn to Lockington 28 April 1923 ASLASJ

³³ O'Neill, Fr George, SJ. *History of the Jesuits in Australia*. P 7

³⁴ Sketch map shows the Burwood Road frontage of the Immaculate Conception and presbytery to be 200 feet, while the bank building and adjacent land was 198 feet. ASLASJ

Fr Power would not have liked Fr Hearn showing modern films in the new hall and indeed he forbade the Richmond Jesuits from doing so in their hall. However his orders were overridden by the Superior general, Fr Ledochowski, following protests from the mission superior, Fr Jeremiah Sullivan and Archbishop Mannix. But Fr Hearn would not allow the women to dance the Charleston in the new hall, though Mrs Jenny Brennan, the violin teacher, taught it to the women anyway.³⁵

Following Fr Hearn³⁶, Fr Jeremiah Sullivan was PP for a brief period to be followed by Fr John Bourke, who was parish priest from 1935 until 1947, the longest time for any Jesuit parish priest in Hawthorn. He did not engage in any major building programmes and though he was tempted to build the final western transept, the Depression and the war prevented progress.

Fr Bourke could be a little impetuous at times and he spent a good deal of money beautifying the church grounds. Then he moved the front steps and built the porch in front of the church. It was designed to reduce the cold winds which blew into the church during winter and to keep the local dogs out of the church.³⁷ The addition was most welcomed by the parishioners but the process of construction destroyed much of the new gardens.³⁸ Inside the church he ordered the polishing of the beautiful wooden floors before cleaning the walls and improving the lighting. The later two actions were also most welcome but they destroyed the polish on the floor. One of the Jesuits writing to the Provincial noted that, the then planned new transept would again destroy the gardens and the floor but the transept was not built.³⁹ Fr Bourke also saved money by not putting the moved front steps on to a solid base, so that eventually the steps started to subside and seventy years later, Fr Dwyer had to find the money to relay them all.

Fr Bourke made one final effort at a building programme when in January 1945 he started an appeal for considerable additions to St Joseph's church. Mr A. Fritsch, the parish architect, and Mr Robert Harper, who had built Loyola Watsonia for the Jesuit Province, advised that it would be cheaper to build a new church and more satisfactory than renovations. A modern Gothic style design was prepared to accommodate over 400 people and some quite reasonable donations were received.⁴⁰ However with shortages of material and labour in the immediate post-war era as well as of money, the idea was finally deferred and then cancelled.

The final stages

With the end of the war, post war shortages meant that little could be done apart from maintenance until in 1958 Fr Tom Bourke, responding to suggestions from some of his parishioners, called a public meeting which decided to run an appeal to finally finish the church. It was the centenary of the definition of the doctrine of the Immaculate

³⁵Vi Feil

³⁶ Fr Hearn became famous for his comment at a celebrity wedding when the bride and maids arrived in low cut frocks. "Attire or retire" he is reported to have said. They attired.

³⁷ Monthly Calendars in the parish regularly asked parishioners to keep the dogs out of the church.

³⁸ Architect was A.A. Fritsch, son of the builder of the sacristies, confessionals and eastern transept.

³⁹ Kirwan to Vice-Provincial 6 April 1936

⁴⁰ Monthly Calendar January 1945. Article includes a sketch of the new church.

Conception and Fr Bourke suggested that it would be fitting to finish the building before the centenary of the Church came round.

The appeal began with a bumper issue of the Monthly Calendar which outlined the fundraising strategy and the financial position of the parish, a strategy very similar to that of Fr Claffey and his team in 1919.⁴¹ Donation pledge cards were to be issued and teams of collectors would visit donors on a monthly basis in the same way as they had in 1919.

The parish was helped enormously by a large bequest from the estate of Miss Moriarty which paid for a classroom at St Joseph's as well as expensive repairs to the roof and spire of the church. There was still a substantial debt for a classroom at St John's School but conditions looked promising for the appeal. Then the elderly Mrs. C Westhoven came forward and offered to pay for the stained glass window in memory of her husband, Mr. Joseph C. Westhoven, who had chaired the appeal of 1919. The valuable gift of 3000 pounds ensured the addition of the stunning stained glass window we enjoy today.

The appeal went ahead and shortly afterwards the western transept started to rise, initially quite slowly but as 1960 wore on it moved quickly and the date of the blessing was easily met. On June 4th Archbishop Justin Simonds officially opened and blessed the Holy Family War Memorial Shrine which is the heart of the western transept. The parish priest, Fr Phil Kurts, gave the welcome to the large body of parishioners as well as to Fr J.J. McMahon SJ, another Jesuit Visitor, Fr Tom Bourke, who had been posted to South Australia and Fr John Bourke, who had come out of hospital to be present at the event. The Archbishop congratulated the parishioners on their efforts and reminded everyone of what they already knew, that after more than 90 years, their church was actually finished.⁴²

Fr McMahon moved Fr Kurts to other works and sent Fr Henry Johnston, a spry 75 year old, to be the next parish priest. It was said the Fr Johnston had "no fear of man and little fear of God" and he closely followed the liturgical changes of the Vatican Council. The problem was that the layout of the beautiful Gothic church did not fit with what he saw would be the "modern" liturgy. Every church faced the same problem and most adopted the solution of putting a small altar in the sanctuary and then over the years making continuing changes which usually ended up destroying the balance and beauty of the church or making a liturgy which satisfied no one. Fr Johnston faced considerable opposition but he decided to make all the changes in one programme, and commissioned architect Mr. Peter Barrowes to plan for the new liturgical space.

He moved the altar to the middle of the church, created a new sanctuary and employed white Hornsby marble for the main features. Fr Kevin Carroll became parish priest at the end of 1966 and the new construction began the following January. What finally appeared was one of the most impressive liturgical spaces in a traditional church in Australia, a design which has been admired by many, but few have had the courage to implement it. Bishop L. Moran consecrated the new altar in a mass of thanksgiving on Sunday, October 12th, and the whole event was followed by a very popular social held in the Hawthorn Town Hall.⁴³

⁴¹ Monthly Calendar February 1959

⁴² Monthly Calendar July 1961

⁴³ Anonymous "Immaculate Conception Church"

To lighten the centre of the church, glass windows were installed in the roof, not a very successful idea, and then a sculpture of the Holy Spirit was hung above the altar, even less successful. Later priests and committees would change the confessionals; instal new gardens and a memorial wall. The old high altar, which had been pushed aside by the changes, was later restored to its proper position providing a visual focus for the chancel and serving as a much used Blessed Sacrament chapel. With the new sanctuary, the new Lady Chapel was built to be a quiet prayer space and house morning mass. Despite the problems at the time, Fr Johnston and his parish advisors have provided the community of Immaculate Conception with a thoroughly modern Church.

The Schools

Apart from building a church, the provision of education for the young was the principal interest and expense in the parish for the first one hundred years. The land grant for the new school was granted in 1855 and a building programme started with a cost of 350 pounds for the church/school and a further 161 pounds for accommodation for two teachers. It seems that building cost estimates were as inaccurate then as they are today, as by 1857 Fr Madden was reporting additional costs of more than 160 pounds. An architect's account reports the work done so far to be 600 pounds and possibly up to 900 pounds would be needed to complete it.⁴⁴ These figures sound outrageously high but it was an era when labour and materials were short. Nevertheless the building was eventually completed. Fr Madden's little school chapel was extended in the 1860s to take on the shape of, St Joseph's church we know today. On the south side of the church was an entrance hallway with a room on either side, each with its own chimney. One room was occupied by the teachers and when the Sisters arrived they used it as a lunch and prayer room. The second room was the front room of the principal of the school, a Mr. Joseph Scott, who was in charge of the school during the 1860s⁴⁵. Later the principals of the boys' school lived there and for a time a caretaker used it.⁴⁶ The rest of the principal's accommodation was in wooden rooms built next to the church/school. The chimney was in the family's front room and has since been removed. The present sacristy was the infants' classroom and in the early days had tiered seats.

The earlier school across the road had taught a full year in 1854, but by 1856 had been closed for unknown reasons, possibly lack of numbers. However by the time the pupils moved into the new building in 1857-58, the school was well established.⁴⁷

Joseph Scott was a good, effective teacher at a time when good teachers were difficult to find, and he followed the standard curriculum of his day. The first class was the A.B.C. class, which taught the letters of the alphabet and as soon as the pupil passed a test in this area, they were promoted to the next class. More exams passed, more promotion. Scott must have been a good teacher as several of his pupils such as the Archer, Duffy, Lynch, Savage, Larkin, and Prevot families graduated to secondary school and walked everyday from Hawthorn or Kew to the Jesuit-run, St Patrick's College in East Melbourne or the newly opened Christian Brothers College on Victoria Parade.⁴⁸ The length of this walk, there and back, might be something of a challenge for some scholars of today's schools. (The Prevot boys were worth knowing, as their father was a local manufacturer of lemonade.)

A major crisis hit the school with the passing of the 1872 Education Act which provided for "free, secular and compulsory" primary education for all and stopped government assistance to religious schools. However the State could not suddenly provide all the schools necessary and some religious schools continued to receive funding until new state schools could be organized. Such was the case at St Joseph's, which was

⁴⁴ Anonymous "History of St Joseph's School"

⁴⁵ Kevin Slattery to Fr Dwyer, 11 December 2004

⁴⁶ Joe O'Kelly to Fr Carroll, 13 June 1971. Mrs. Dammert to Fr Carroll, undated but at the same time.

⁴⁷ Anonymous "History of St Joseph's School"

⁴⁸ Memories of E.M. Koerner

known as “Capitation School 313”, until 1877 when funding was withdrawn. The school was temporarily closed and the Jesuits took advantage of the generally felt outrage of the parishioners to build a new classroom block for boys and girls which was opened in 1879. Miss Burke was the new head teacher and by the end of 1880 it was said that the number of pupils had reached 100.

However as the decade wore on, numbers declined and the standard of the school followed. Fr O’Flinn responded by opening a boys’ school, then located at 100 Glenferrie Road at the start of 1887 or possibly in 1886.⁴⁹ The new school was called St John Berchman’s after the recently canonized Jesuit scholastic, but even his patronage was insufficient. By the start of 1888 parents were writing to Archbishop Carr complaining about the state of the school and withdrawing their sons to nearby Protestant or private schools. Normally Carr treated these letters as sheer snobbery but in this case he passed the complaints on to the Mission Superior, Fr Sturzo, and asked for some action.⁵⁰ Although the Jesuits were at that time engaged in a dispute with the Archbishop over parish boundaries, they acted positively and quickly on these complaints.

The first change was at St Joseph’s where the Jesuits persuaded the FCJ sisters (Faithful Companions of Jesus) to come from Richmond and take over the school. They began work on the 14th January 1889 with six boys and forty girls present. The competence and dedication of the Sisters quickly became apparent to all members of the parish and numbers rose to 70 by June and over 100 in December. “Six rows of desks, a table, four chairs, two small blackboards and silent clock made up the furniture of the school.”⁵¹ During the Easter break, the school received a much-needed coat of paint and the clock was repaired and ceased to be silent. They still had attendance problems, as it appeared quite common to keep girls at home to assist their mothers on washing days.

The second thing the Jesuits did was to appoint Fr George Buckeridge, who was an assistant Prefect of Studies at Xavier College and a fine educationalist, to take responsibility for the operations of the parish schools. He had no criticism of the work done by the Sisters, and his regular visits provided them with much needed support while he both entertained and gave lectures and sermons to the students. In 1891 he became even more closely involved in the school as the new Parish Priest of Hawthorn.

F.C.J. Sisters in Hawthorn

The FCJ sisters had arrived in Hawthorn in 1886 where they conducted a small school for “little boys of respectable families for whose education there was no provision.”⁵² It was conducted in a house known as “Annavilla” and was only closed when the sisters moved to St Joseph’s. This move could indicate that St Joseph’s school was temporarily closed in 1886 which might have contributed to the complaints to the Archbishop mentioned above. In addition to teaching the boys, two Sisters travelled to

⁴⁹ The opening date is usually given as 1888, but the letter from Carr to Sturzo complaining about the school is dated 19 April 1888, which makes the earlier dates much more likely.

⁵⁰ Boland, Fr T.P. *Thomas Carr, Archbishop of Melbourne*. P 160

⁵¹ O’Conner, Sister M. Clare, F.C.J. *The Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus in Australia*. P 120 There are some discrepancies in the numbers of students at the start of the school year, but these figures are certainly indicative of the Sisters’ success.

⁵² O’Conner, Sister M. Clare, F.C.J. *The Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus in Australia*. P 119

Hawthorn each Sunday to teach catechism classes to the girls while Jesuit novices taught the boys. These catechism classes continued for some years, even after the Sisters had taken over St Joseph's.

The arrival of the Sisters at St Joseph's brought with it a demand for higher educational standards coupled with a very active spiritual formation. The academic teaching was built around regular tests held on the first Thursday of each month, for the whole school and in every subject, supported by a routine of regular homework and corrected exercises. These built up to a visit by the school inspector who checked the whole range of school activities, oral and written reports, penmanship, callisthenics, drawing, poetry, history, geography, drill and needlework. The 1893 report even praised Fr. O'Malley's singing class as highly efficient.⁵³

The highlight was the principal set of exams held in October which determined promotions and the winners of the prizes that were awarded with ceremony in December. There was no question of concern that the little children might feel too much pressure or suffer from A.D.D. Neither the teachers nor the pupils knew about such things; both groups just got on with the job and passing or failing was a student's responsibility. The annual reports from the inspectors show that the results achieved were usually excellent. Then from time to time the F.C.J Superior came from Richmond and conducted further tests in one subject or another, and Fr Buckeridge regularly did the same.

Another spur to educational achievement was regular spelling bees and essay competitions with the boys' school. In 1903 all the Jesuits attended and St Joseph's won six of the seven prizes. Fr Colgan, the parish priest, congratulated the girls who had won prizes, but what he said at the boys' school has not been recorded.⁵⁴ Another spur was the award of a book prize by the parish for an essay on an announced topic each month with the winners announced in the "Monthly Calendar". The competition began in August 1903 with topics such as "the New Pope" and "Our Church of the Immaculate Conception", with the first winner being Frank Madden and the second, Aileen Kelly. A list of highly commended was attached. At the same time, parents were asked not to assist their children with this work so some things don't change.

Among highlights of each year were visits from various religious dignitaries, such as in July 1891, when Fr Patrick Keating, the Jesuit Mission Superior arrived. He was greeted with performances of singing by each of the classes, recitation of poetry and prose as well as displays of needlework and map-making. In 1894 the pioneer Fr Joseph Dalton visited the school during a brief trip to Melbourne and was read an address by a senior girl as well as the usual singing and recitations. At the end of the performance he was presented with a photo album of the work of the school.⁵⁵ In 1906 the school helped celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the ordination of the parish priest, Fr Colgan. Celebrations were held on the 21st of August, but the adult Children of Mary made the arrangements so children would not miss class. And then for the same reason, the rehearsals for the singing at the concert were held on Saturdays. After the concert, Fr Colgan received an "illuminated address" and a purse of 25 pounds collected largely from supporters of the school.

⁵³ O'Conner, Sister M. Clare, F.C.J. *The Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus in Australia*. P 123

⁵⁴ O'Conner, Sister M. Clare, F.C.J. *The Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus in Australia*. P 122

⁵⁵ Much of this photo album has survived and is in the care of St Ignatius College Riverview archives.

The Jesuit Fathers in Hawthorn had a close contact with the Sisters running the school, as the Parish Priest was also the Manager of the school and ultimately the parish had to find the money for any improvements which were to be made. By the early 1890s, with enrolments passing 150, the school/church was clearly too small but the parish debt following the building of the tower and the chancel meant nothing could be done about the school. The Sisters' report wrote in 1907, "another year of struggle has passed in this old school: too many children for the limited accommodation: intense heat in summer: cold and damp in winter."⁵⁶ But eventually in 1908 a modern new school complex was built and opened on November 14th. With the new classroom came four flower gardens and one vegetable garden, each tended by a different class.

The school ran a fete called a "Fancy Fair" and raised 80 pounds for the new school, but owing to costs, no prizes were awarded that year.

Sometimes the parish priest made popular interventions. In 1911, Fr George Kelly granted an extra week to the Christmas holidays and though some teachers may have grumbled, nothing was heard from the pupils. That same year money was found for scholarships for the best girls, two to go to Genazzano and two to St Mary's, Hawthorn. When the winners passed their Junior Public Exams, Father Kelly would pay for them to attend Teachers' Training College and become Catholic primary teachers. He had already foreseen a time when large numbers of lay teachers would be needed to staff the burgeoning number of Catholic schools.

St Joseph's school was extraordinarily fortunate in the quality of the Sisters who were sent to run classes. Mother Mary Francis McElroy came in 1889. Always with at least one other Sister she conducted the school through the Depression of the 90s, dealing with fluctuating enrolments and wretched school fees. Mother Francis was replaced in 1903 by the great Mother Borgia McMahan, a truly dynamic headmistress. Mother Borgia drove with Mother Bernard in their own special horse-drawn cab which had been purchased especially by the superior at Richmond. Mother Borgia was succeeded as principal by Mother Gabriel Tevlin in 1916. Mother Gerard and Mother Gabriel were assisted by lay teachers, a Miss Larkin and the redoubtable Miss Frances Commons who taught generations of children in the little school.

Apart from the academic front, the Sisters were particularly concerned with the spiritual formation of their charges, and every year they seemed to introduce new devotions and practices. In the first year the new hymn "Immaculate Mother" was introduced and a large picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel was framed and hung in the school. In 1891, the bell which had been removed at the time of the opening the new church on Burwood Road, was returned to the belfry and the angelus was rung. Fr Buckeridge gave a fascinating sermon on angels surrounding the tabernacle and the Sodality of the Holy Angels was founded. Dedication of the school to the Sacred Heart followed and with it 1st Friday devotions including confession and communion for the older students. By 1897 "Jesus Heart all Burning" was sung at the start of each class and the invocation of the Sacred Heart said when the clock struck the half hour. Later the Brown and Blue scapulars were introduced and the older girls were invited to a junior Children of Mary. First communions were held every year and confirmations about every four years.

⁵⁶ O'Conner, Sister M. Clare, F.C.J. *The Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus in Australia*. P 123

On one occasion in 1898, the Bishop was testing the candidates for Confirmation and asked, "Which should, the young or the old, approach the sacraments most frequently?" One boy answered, "Old because they should give good example" followed by a girl who suggested, "Young as we are more apt to be tempted." The bishop went away delighted.

In 1900 a mission was given for the children. Fr Buckeridge came twice a day, giving instruction at midday and devotions at 3-00pm. After the mission was over, a Mission Cross was erected in the yard and all the pupils said prayers each Friday to obtain the indulgences attached to the mission. In 1922 the sisters introduced a devotion called "the ladder of the Sacred Heart" which presented a whole range of various practices and devotions which a child could do step by step. The upper levels had coloured rungs and the whole process was arranged in the form of a poster. Six senior girls managed to reach the top level during the year.

As always in the era around World War I, death was never far away. In 1916 a fourteen-year-old girl died. Then in 1920, Mother Xavier McAlary died after a long illness. She had been infant mistress at the school when Mother Borgia became principal and left in 1904. The senior girls from St Joseph's attended the funeral in dark dresses and white veils, and later said the rosary at the grave. Death was just one of those things and children were not protected from it.

So the girls who graduated from St Joseph's were steeped in religious practice and devotions which many carried on throughout their lives and into their church. Relatively few went on to much secondary education, but secondary girls' schools began to appear in the Catholic network towards the end of the 19th century and those who did go on were well prepared at St Joseph's for the next level of education.⁵⁷

St Mary's Convent

The F.C.J. sisters wanted to broaden their base of education in the Jesuit Hawthorn parish area and in 1911 purchased a property named "Harlech" in Weinberg Road.⁵⁸ It was a three-acre property with two houses on it, large grounds, gardens and a tennis court. One house became a convent for the sisters, which included those who taught at St Joseph's and at Sacred Heart, Kew, while the other was a school. On July 21st Mother Magdalene Scanlon moved into the convent and the new school of St Mary's opened on the 24th. Mother Stanislaus Smith was the first principal and though she began with only ten pupils, she had three assistants to establish the new enterprise. The school was to be a fee-paying school catering for all classes up to Junior Public, equivalent to the modern year 10. The school was to be modelled on the successful convent of Vacluse in Richmond and the new motto was "Semper Fidelis".⁵⁹

The other F.C.J. convents supported the new venture with gifts. Richmond sent some chapel furnishings, Genazzano added some vestments and chooks while Benalla sent a cow. Fr George Kelly blessed the school on September 10th, First Communions

⁵⁷ Most of the details in this account are from the St Joseph's Annuals, reports written by the principal each year and held in the F.C.J archives in Vacluse.

⁵⁸ Now called the much less romantic, Wattle Road

⁵⁹ One wonders whether the Jesuits had a hand in this selection. Apart from the US Marines it is close to the motto of the Jesuit school in Melbourne, St Patrick's College.

were held on December 8th and the first break-up concert on the 19th. The school was under way.

As the numbers of pupils remained small, and therefore classes were small, St Mary's was remembered as a very happy, very active and very successful school. Though numbers were never more than a hundred, the pupils took part in all the activities which other schools did, including a large range of fund raising events, for the troops during the First World War. However past students remember more than anything the kindness of the teachers and the care they took with each pupil.⁶⁰

The Sisters were engaged in a number of other works besides teaching in the school. Afternoon classes were held in catechetics for Catholic children attending state schools, and the Sisters had care of the Parish Sodality of the Children of Mary. Other Sisters instructed adults in preparation for reception into the Church, sometimes as many as thirty a year. The Jesuits returned this cooperation by coming to St Mary's each Friday afternoon to give some extra religious instruction, especially in respect to Scripture reading. For the last few years of the school, the popular Fr Corish was the welcome guest in the senior classes.

In 1921 the school opened with an enrolment which for the first time passed the 100 mark, and some suggestions were made to get additional property. However in June, Mother Philomena Higgins, the F.C.J. Superior General, arrived on visitation to Australia. The convent at St Mary's was so devoid of furniture that the Sisters borrowed rugs and carpets and furniture from parishioners to give the house a more "lived in" look. She decided the Order was too overstretched and therefore consolidated the Sisters in the larger institutions and closed the convent in Hawthorn.⁶¹ It was a devastating blow to the Sisters who had been so happy and optimistic there, and to the pupils and priests as well who sadly watched them leave. The convent closed in December 1921.⁶²

Mother Higgins also withdrew the Sisters from St Joseph's but they stayed working there for another year to allow other arrangements to be made.

Not Quite an Anomaly

Now quite forgotten was Miss O'Connor's Catholic Preparatory School, which was held in a double fronted, single story house in Urquhart Street. Miss O'Connor with her niece and nephew lived at the back of the house while the front was occupied by the school. There was never any shortage of pupils for this seat of learning and she prepared students well for secondary studies. Amongst her pupils was Fr Walmsley Smith, in later life a Jesuit priest and mathematics master at Xavier College for many years.

The Boys' School

In the 1880s it was believed that boys and girls should be educated separately, and so in late 1886 a new boys' school was opened in Glenferrie Road. In 1888 it had been involved in the conflict with Archbishop Carr but Fr Buckeridge certainly rattled the

⁶⁰ O'Conner, Sister M. Clare, F.C.J. *The Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus in Australia*. P 300

⁶¹ Mother Higgins also closed the convent in Healsville.

⁶² O'Conner, Sister M. Clare, F.C.J. *The Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus in Australia*. P 302

institution. He wanted much better results from St John Berchman's school and he got them.

The boys in Hawthorn were educated at St Joseph's until aged seven and then moved over to the boys' school. To help maintain standards several cooperative competitions were held at St Joseph's such as spelling bees, reading and reciting, and even physical exercises. The annual-prize giving, held in the Hawthorn Town Hall from the 1890s, was a joint affair.

In 1893 Fr Buckeridge introduced junior cadets to the school to improve the boys' marching and general bearing, but he was moved to a new appointment and the next few years saw little change.

Fr Buckeridge returned in 1899 and immediately replaced the principal with Mr. J. Phelan and set about solving the problems created by the small site. The land next to the school was owned by Michael Lynch and Fr Buckeridge wrote to him about the problem. Michael Lynch replied from Oxford that he was willing to lease the property to the school but was not able to give it or sell it to the parish as he was not yet of an age to have total power over the estate.⁶³ The land was transferred almost immediately and a lease was signed in Melbourne on the 10th of October 1901, for one shilling a year for twenty-one years.⁶⁴

Fr Buckeridge hired Mr. Edward O'Kelly to take on the role of principal in 1902, a position he held until 1908 and lived in the house at St Joseph's. He did well as principal and for once the school started to achieve a positive reputation.

The next principal, Mr. Hugh W. Sheridan, a most creative and disciplined man, took over in 1908 and set about solving the problem of too many students on the limited site. In 1911 the land was sold⁶⁵ and the school moved to a temporary site (174-182 Glenferrie Road) and then by the end of the year it moved to its final site, then numbered as 306 Glenferrie Road.⁶⁶ The original site was later used for the Glen Theatre and was sold for twenty-eight pounds a square foot. The new land was purchased for just over seven pound per foot, a considerable profit.⁶⁷ The new site allowed for the construction of new buildings and some space for expansion, and Mr. Sheridan was able to even take a few boarders.

However when the war broke out in 1914 and Sheridan left the position, the numbers of students declined rapidly and soon financial problems set in. The final principal was a Mr. Duffy, who struggled to stem the declining enrolments and falling reputation, but in the end there was little he could do. The parish was engaged in a massive building programme for the eastern transept and the spire and therefore was unable to really help. At the end of 1922, the school was bankrupt and forced to close. It remained closed for two years. The Jesuits in Hawthorn faced the departure of the F.C.J. Sisters and the closure of the boys' school at almost the same time.

Almost as soon as he became parish priest, Fr Joseph Hearn entered negotiations with the Marist Brothers to take over the running of the boys' primary

⁶³ Michael Lynch to Fr Buckeridge 9 February 1900 ASLASJ

⁶⁴ Copy of the lease in ASLASJ

⁶⁵ For a total of 987 pounds

⁶⁶ These numbers were the old numbering system of Glenferrie Road, and it's not always easy to make the transference to the modern numbers.

⁶⁷ Peel, Victoria, Zion Deborah, Yule, Jane. *A History of Hawthorn*. P 75

school and two Brothers, Br Bertrand and Br Matthias, arrived at the start of 1925. The brothers commenced work with a school role of about 90 and the effect was immediate. At the end of 1926 the local paper referred to the excellent education and strong discipline provided by the brothers, which came as a surprise to some parents and a shock to the boys. Uniforms were demanded and interschool competitions in every form possible were introduced. In 1931 Brother Gilbert became principal and introduced some secondary classes. By keeping fees at the primary level stable and low and offering good education, he allowed struggling parents to keep their sons at school as far as Form IV, which was as far as most of them wanted to go. An arrangement was reached with Marcellin College in Canterbury to take the boys who wanted to carry on for the final year or two of secondary education.⁶⁸ Br Gilbert also began taking prep and grade 1 students from the southern end of the parish, little boys who found the distance to travel to St Joseph's difficult.

In that era St John's dominated the inter-school marching competitions, coming first or second from 1927 until 1933. For weeks before St Patrick's Day, the school marched around the streets of Hawthorn keeping step with a drumbeat. Strangely, when compared to today's world, no one thought to complain about it. The other outstanding reputation enjoyed by the boys of the school was the school choir. Performances were given at the usual school events such as speech day, entertaining concerts and fund-raisers often in association with St Joseph's, social evenings and up to full Latin high masses at Immaculate Conception and in other great churches. In 1927 under the baton of Brother Bertrand, St John's was the winner of "A Catholic Federation Musical Festival", quite an achievement for such a small boys' school.⁶⁹ With increasing numbers the Brothers maintained this musical tradition and began their first "School Entertainment" with concert, displays and operetta in the Hawthorn Town Hall in December 1935 to raise money for the parish building fund. Each class produced a performance and the second half of the programme was the operetta "Donald's Hamper", with all acts supported by musicians from the local "Sunnyside Orchestra". Fr Bourke spoke warmly about the efforts of the school and announced Brian Murphy as the winner of the Kerr scholarship. (Brian took up the scholarship at St Patrick's College, became a Jesuit and eventually parish priest of Hawthorn.)⁷⁰

During 1936 and 1937, Fr John Bourke engaged in some strategic purchasing of land around St John's School and managed to buy enough to create an oval and then to obtain a house in Lisson Grove which would become a new monastery for the Brothers. The monastery added 2000 pound, to the parish debt but was a great help to the Brothers and was opened and blessed by Archbishop Mannix on 16 May.⁷¹

The new monastery for the Brothers had been on the market for some years but the good doctor who owned it, was unwilling to sell it to Catholics. After he died, his family did not share the same scruples.⁷² The two houses adjacent to the new monastery were bought at the same time, not as houses but because of their large backyards which

⁶⁸ This arrangement did not seem to be confirmed until about 1950

⁶⁹ Anonymous. *St John's (Marist Brothers) 1925-1976*. P 12

⁷⁰ Monthly Calendar January 1936

⁷¹ House Consult minutes 19 April 1937. History of the House 1937

⁷² J. Bourke to Provincial, 15 April 1937

added to the size of the new oval. These houses were then put out to rent and made a reasonable return to the parish.

With the difficulties of World War II, numbers in the school dropped dramatically, to almost half, though the polio fears in the early 40s may have contributed to this decline.

Enrolments grew again immediately after the war, but for the first time, State Health Authorities began to intervene in Catholic schools and numbers at St John's were limited to about 300. Many promising youngsters had to be turned away.

1950 saw the Silver Jubilee of the Brothers at the school, celebrated with a large mass, dinner, concert and a special jubilee ball. However problems were on the horizon. In 1950 Brother Geoffrey led a team of six Brothers and one lay teacher and the parish paid a stipend for the Brothers, but the school had to find money for the rest of their running costs.⁷³ Numbers in classes were very large, teachers were too few but still standards remained high and the school enjoyed considerable respect.⁷⁴ From the point of view of the boys, the only positive change which occurred in that decade was the beginning of the tuck shop under the direction of the Parents and Friends Association. Later in the decade, Brother Macarius managed to find funds to build change rooms and a junior school for the youngest boys. It helped a little but for many years the change rooms were used as classrooms.

Brother Flavius (59-60) tried to reduce class sizes to fifty (50!) to support the already strong standard of education, but by 1963, another financial crisis was upon them. A meeting of two hundred parents addressed the problem, and after failing to get large assistance from the Parish and the Catholic Education Office and not really being able to raise fees, a committee began a series of fund-raising activities which produced quite good results. By the end of the 60s they had managed to fund three new classrooms and a science lab, but due to shortage of space, even that had to be used as a classroom. However the increasing numbers of lay teachers meant the financial problems were again pressing. Still further improvements followed with the arrival of a portable classroom for use as an art and craft centre and by 1975 the Science laboratory was properly fitted out and being used for its designed purpose. Space was further created when Prep to Grade 2 classes were withdrawn and one classroom was converted to a much needed staff room.

Like so many other Catholic schools which were snuffed out in the changes of the 60s and 70s, St John's was functioning as an effective and modern Catholic school. The coming of the Federal Government aid under the Karmel Report helped a little, and somehow the school managed to provide those services and experiences which much more expensive schools offered. One group went to Tasmania, while some Form 3 boys went on an eye-opening exchange to the Marist boarding school at Red Bend College near Forbes. Form 4 boys worked at Ozanam House for the homeless and played basketball with the young offenders at Turana. Others ran a "pool-a-thon" to raise money for a Guatemala earthquake and younger students went on excursions to places such as the Botanic Gardens and Parliament House. Even Kelvin Matthews, a champion player

⁷³ At this time it was 180 pound per annum, and they also paid the wages of a woman who cooked for the brothers.

⁷⁴ Prep 1 and 2, totalled 80 boys, 3 and 4 combined a class of 90, classes 5 and 6, had 60 boys in each class. In the senior school, forms 3 and 4 had to be joined, due to lack of classrooms and teachers.

for the Hawthorn V.F.L team, ran football clinics for the boys on Glenferrie Oval.⁷⁵ The inspector's report on St John's in 1975 is positive, generally optimistic and shows a good effective staff at work.⁷⁶ However the report also noted that an enrolment of 244 boys was taught by three Brothers and seven full time lay teachers. The implications were fairly clear.

1975 saw a great celebration at St John's to acknowledge the golden jubilee of the Marist Brothers in control of the school. The main events included a mass and BBQ on the oval at school on the 18th May, and a Jubilee Ball on the 24th.⁷⁷ The ball was very well subscribed and a considerable success.

Threateningly, the clouds had been gathering for many years and initially few people knew how desperate the situation was becoming. As far back as 1969, Brother Bertinus, the Provincial of the Marist Brothers, had written to Fr Peter Kelly, the Jesuit Provincial, noting the shortage of Brothers in the Marist schools, especially in NSW following the introduction of the Wyndham system, and that withdrawal from St John's was being discussed.⁷⁸ Although the Brothers did not want to withdraw, there was a certain inevitability about the correspondence between the two men.

Within the parish a relatively new Parish Education Board was meeting to try and find ways around the increasing financial burden that education was making on the parish. In April 1973, Br Cletus, the Marist Provincial sent a memo saying that the Brothers could not continue to provide principals without extensive support. This was considered to make the new Parish Education Board more a Board of Management which would have had significant consequences as to how the Board itself would be managed.⁷⁹ Discussions continued but the parish priest announced from the pulpit and to the parents of both Hawthorn parish schools, government subsidies were \$80,000 and teachers' salaries alone were \$100,000 and therefore a fairly large increase in fees was to be expected.⁸⁰ By the end of 1975, the fees had reached \$50 a term for primary students and \$75 a term for secondary ones.⁸¹

The parish newsletter of 21st April 1974 carried the information about teachers' salaries again and noted the college was losing \$30,000 in the budget of 1974. The suggestion was to close down the secondary part of the school. The St John's Parents and Friends Association reacted strongly and public meetings were held to reject the proposal. In April 1975 a meeting chaired by Fr Frank Martin, Director of Catholic Education in Melbourne Archdiocese, suggested that if St John's was to survive it would have to become a two stream, Form 1 to IV school and the primary classes phased out.⁸² However it was dependent upon the government providing the capital works required and the Marist Brothers providing staff. These requirements could not be met, there was insufficient money, the future presence of the Marist Brothers was questionable, the changing demographics affected enrolment patterns and the costs of administering a

⁷⁵ These accounts come from Anonymous. *St John's (Marist Brothers) 1925-1976*. This commemoration brochure which was the last college magazine was a remarkable document.

⁷⁶ E. Anderson, Inspector's Report 20/2/1975

⁷⁷ Printed hand out and invitation, 13 April 1975

⁷⁸ Brother Bertinus to Fr F.P. Kelly, 18 June 1969

⁷⁹ Minutes of the PEB 2nd April 1973

⁸⁰ Notice to Parents, 21 February 1974.

⁸¹ Undated circular letter from Fr R. Morgan PP

⁸² St John's School Newsletter, 30 April 1975

small school were rising. After consulting the Archbishop, Fr Frank Martin wrote formally to Fr Morgan with copies to all the interested stakeholders that St John's would be closing at the end of 1976.⁸³

Two years of discussions had not been able to save the school, but the sense of loss amongst the school community was deep. The Catholic Education Office did its best to look after the boys. The school would take a normal entry in Form 1, for 1976 and the Marist Brothers agreed to administer the school for one final difficult year. Eleven boys left the school almost immediately, but for those who remained De La Salle Malvern offered places to all the boys who wanted to come from St John's in 1977.

Brother Ambrose Reilly came to St John's as stand-in principal for the final year and did remarkable work maintaining school morale and standards. The boys remember that final year with the same affection as they remember all the others. Other tragedies had to be coped with. One Form 3 boy, Geoffrey O'Keefe, died tragically in a road accident and the young men had to deal with that loss as well. Brother Ambrose organized the production of a final college magazine, which was not a sad wake or a memorial, but a cheerful commemoration of fifty-one years of service and triumph that had brought so much good to so many boys in the parish of Hawthorn. A Canadian educationalist visiting the school in 1974 wrote, "I visit places on this trip that have lavish surroundings and marvellous buildings, but which, despite all this, are in essence, hollow shells. They lack a heart. St John's, to me, is the epitome of a school which lacks certain things in the way of facilities, but which has a very big heart."⁸⁴

The School Committee

Although the parents and students at the Hawthorn schools were not aware of it at the time, Cardinal Knox had ordered a committee to be established to survey the future of Catholic education in the Hawthorn parish. Fr Pat Tracey, the Jesuit Parish priest, was in the chair but the committee was largely made up of representatives from St. Joseph's, St John's, the Brigidine college of Kilmaire, some parish representatives and two officials from the Catholic Education Office. The terms of reference for the committee were broad but came down to analysing the supply and demand for Catholic education in the Hawthorn parish.

They looked at enrolments and saw that 90% of St Joseph's enrolments came from the parish, including boys up to grade 2⁸⁵. However in St John's 70% of the primary students did, but only 40% of the secondary boys were from the parish. Students passing Form IV had a guaranteed place at Marcellin College, which was then moved to Bulleen, and the majority of the boys took up this option. It was thought the close proximity of Xavier, St Kevin's and De La Salle was the reason for the drop off of Hawthorn students at St John's. At Kilmaire the Hawthorn enrolments amounted to 25% in both primary and secondary and at the time it was thought that the primary school might be phased out.

The primary subcommittee thought it would be advisable for all the primary students to be concentrated in one Catholic school and that those Catholics attending the

⁸³ Fr. F. Martin to Fr R Morgan 18 August 1975

⁸⁴ Anonymous. *St John's (Marist Brothers) 1925-1976*. P 46

⁸⁵ Sometimes a few were carried over into Grade 3.

local state schools be attracted back to the Catholic system. They considered the present system of three Catholic primary schools as wasteful and economies of a merger would be significant. The secondary committee wanted a Catholic “regional style” school with Form V and VI on one campus and 1 to IV on another. All interested parties were consulted. The committee looked at the possible sites and concluded that the combined parish primary school should be at St John’s. The form 1 to IV secondary school at Kilmaire, which left St Joseph’s with only one and half acres of land for form V and VI.

The committee’s report was interesting, wide-ranging and very hopeful, but also a bit of a dream. The Brigidine Provincial Council was not interested in giving up their college of Kilmaire, and it was already known that the future of the Marist Brothers in the parish was under a cloud.⁸⁶ The history of St John’s moved on remorselessly towards its closure and Kilmaire continued with its core business of educating young women.

Kilmaire and the Brigidine Sisters

The sudden departure of the FCJ sisters left Hawthorn parish with a problem of what to do with St Mary’s, and immediately Fr Claffey contacted Mother Xavier Ryan who had taken over as provincial of the Brigidines in 1920. Mother Xavier, who has gone down in history for her pithy sayings: “the hallmarks of a lady are clean shoes and a spare pair of gloves in her bag” - worked with her council, accepted the offer and took charge of the high school in 1922.⁸⁷

Numbers had dropped after the announcement of the departure of the FCJ Sisters, but the school opened with 53 pupils and the Brigidines Sisters quickly built up numbers to around 71 at the end of first term. It is claimed that Mother Mechtilde told the girls that “the Faithful Companions did not seem to have taught them much in the way of knowledge, but they had taught them to be ladies.” The girls were most flattered.⁸⁸

The Sisters travelled each day from Malvern and so Fr Hearn, the new parish priest, pressed them to become established in the parish. The Sisters agreed, partly because they found the site on Wattle Road to be unsatisfactory, and went house hunting. They purchased a large house on 45 Riversdale Road, known as Lyndale, with a bank loan of 7,500 pounds. Although the deed was signed in June, occupation was not until September when the fine, towered mansion came into Brigidine possession. Six Brigidine Sisters moved in on October 6th and the pupils of the school had the job of transferring all the school’s furniture, boxes, books, slates and everything else from Wattle Road.

Three rooms in Lyndale were taken over as classrooms but rising applications meant that a new school had to be built, and three new classrooms were blessed and formally opened by Archbishop Mannix in October 1924. Three more classrooms were added in 1930 and then a science room. The school was known as Lyndale after the new house.

In 1953, the Brigidine Sisters bought the house next door in Riversdale Road, which reputedly had been owned by the famous Melbourne gangster, Squizzy Taylor, and

⁸⁶ Interim Report of a Committee Set Up in 1972 by His Eminence, Cardinal Knox, To Enquire into Education in the Parish of Hawthorn. ASLASJ

⁸⁷ Sturrock, Morna. *Women of Strength, Women of Gentleness*. P 75

⁸⁸ Kelly, Noelene. *Circles of Blessing: Stories of Lyndale/Kilmaire*. P 76

created a wonderful array of ghost stories for the girls. The house was used for sewing, music and new lunch rooms. In 1965 a new property at 40 Lisson Grove was purchased and provided access between Riversdale Road and Lisson Grove. The house provided a little space for primary classes but its principal value was the large area of land at the back to provide space for new classrooms. Number 38 Lisson Grove came on the market in 1977 but the sisters stayed well away from the auction. A group of fathers acted on their behalf and purchased the property for \$115,500 before anyone realized who the new owners might be. New classrooms and buildings were added to the enlarged site, the last being a music complex added in 1993.

The Brigidine Sisters were a most professional organization and kept Lyndale moving with the times. The uniform was altered in 1935 from navy serge to saxe blue cesarine tunic and blue coat with matching accessories, an equipment which was considered very smart at the time. At the same time house sport was introduced with three houses, gold, black and blue, known as Lisieux, Loyola and Lyndale.

Necessary in the 1930s but quaint to our eyes, lunch was eaten formally in the dining room. Sandwiches were cut first into bite-sized pieces and never bitten into. Fruit was peeled and cut up before being eaten with a fork, unless they were grapes and a teaspoon was used. Towards the end of a meal a bell was sounded and some text was read. One past student recalled that a passage from the Book of Revelation so frightened the little ones it was stopped. The next was a scarcely helpful passage on how young ladies should behave on ships.⁸⁹ However the Sisters also provided jubilee parties for anyone who had been in the school for ten years and took the whole school on picnics to the beach in Mentone at the end of the year.

Music was a major subject in the school and during the 1930s the girls put on various productions including the Gilbert and Sullivan “Mikado” in 1935 and after a Choral Society was formed in 1938 they put on, “Gondoliers” in aid of the parish debt. In April 1935 the college put on a Passion Play in the Hawthorn Town Hall which produced many accolades and large audiences. The choral items were supported by the Parish Choir and the boys’ choir from St John’s School in parish-wide praiseworthy collaboration. Singing continued to be important and decades later, school choirs were still taking part in public concerts in the Melbourne Town Hall and at Wilson Hall.⁹⁰ Other highlights included the annual concert and prize giving at Manresa Hall. The concerts must have been very good as it is difficult to see parents willingly paying money to go to a prize giving.

A debating society was also formed and in 1939 it defeated St Kevin’s in a public debate adjudicated by the former Prime Minister, Mr. James Scullin. Catholic Action groups, Young Catholic Students and Children of Mary were started and flourished in their day and most girls joined one or other group.

Specialist education included needlework and careful stitching, while sport was mainly regular callisthenics and tennis, but Mother Basil developed some highly successful basketball teams which defeated many much larger and more powerful schools.

In 1950 the name of the school was changed from Lyndale to the more Brigidine sounding Kilmaire, which meant House of Mary, and the change was a symbol

⁸⁹ Kelly, Noelene. *Circles of Blessing: Stories of Lyndale/Kilmaire*. P 111-112

⁹⁰ At Melbourne University.

that nothing stays the same.⁹¹ A new chapel was opened in 1961 and with the turn of the Vatican Council II, the revolution in new catechetics was embraced and many camps and sharing activities were conducted with other schools. In 1956 the last boy was enrolled on the school register and the presence of boys in the junior classes was phased out during the 1960s. Rising numbers in the school led to the decision taken in 1970 to phase out the primary classes altogether, at the same time as the Archbishop's committee on education in Hawthorn was meeting. The rising number of girls and classes led to the hiring of full-time lay teachers for the first time in the 60s and the first one had a class of 57 year 7 girls. The numbers grew further and year 7 was split into two streams. Teachers and nuns were in so short a supply that an 84 year old Sister had to teach the second class. She did it well for some time and then one afternoon she corrected her work, closed her classroom and went across to the convent and died. Her duty was done.⁹²

In 1982 Ms Margaret Leahy became the first lay principal of Kilmaire which she ran effectively and creatively for eleven years. Sr. Pat Long followed in 1993 and possibly the Brigidines were already looking at the future of Kilmaire. The Future Development Committee had been established by the Brigidine Provincial Council and the CEO to inquire into the past, the strengths and the future of the school. It could have only one decision, dropping numbers due to demographic changes and opposition from other secondary schools, and the decision not to try and turn the small school into an elite niche market school, but to keep the broad social base of its clientele, meant it had no long term future. The closure was announced at the start of June 1994 and in 1995 only years 8, 9, 10 and 12 were taught.

Although an independent school, its relationship to the parish of Hawthorn had been close. For generations Kilmaire's speech days and annual dances were held in Manresa Hall, while the Jesuit Fathers constantly provided liturgical services to the sisters and pupils of the school. The Kilmaire girls were considered part of the fabric of parish life. Just as the Jesuit Fathers had asked the Brigidine Sisters to first come to the parish, so it was on November 26th, 1995 that the last mass of the dying school was said at Immaculate Conception. The Jesuits who had experienced their own loss with the closure of St Patrick's College, then St John's in the parish, now joined with great empathy to the loss felt so deeply by the Kilmaire school community. "Kilmaire has always been faithful in its efforts... focused on preparing young people to be responsible and active citizens in their time."⁹³ Perhaps one day it will be re-discovered that small school communities have a lot to offer and that vast banks of equipment and computers are not the only way to hand on life skills to the younger generation.

Manresa Kindergarten

While school education was steadily being covered well, on May 1st 1929, Fr Joseph Hearn called a meeting of women of the parish to look into forming a free kindergarten to provide for the "poor" of the parish. The new "Manresa Free

⁹¹ Although the school was known as Lyndale the Brigidine sisters advertised themselves as the "Brigidine Convent of the Sacred Heart". E.g. advertisements in Monthly Calendar March 1935 p 3

⁹² Kelly, Noelene. *Circles of Blessing: Stories of Lyndale/Kilmaire*. P 44

⁹³ Kelly, Noelene. *Circles of Blessing: Stories of Lyndale/Kilmaire*. P 9

Kindergarten” was registered with the Charities Board in June 1929 and opened as one of six Catholic kindergartens in Melbourne by the end of the year.

The aims and objectives of the new Kindergarten were specified by the parish before two Brigidine sisters formally took over the operation.

1. “The primary object, to uplift, train and clothe the poor and neglected children of the area”
2. That through this, the children were to carry habits of cleanliness and order into the more neglected homes.
3. To provide at least one meal a day for the children
4. To give the children proper occupation and healthy recreation under proper supervision.⁹⁴

The children attended from 9 am until 12 noon and volunteers often collected them from some families and then returned them after “class”. Sometimes other volunteers helped with washing-up and cleaning and it was noted by the Charities Commission that in 1932 over 6,500 meals were served during that year.

After a few months there were still insufficient children to justify two Brigidine Sisters and according to the rules of the order one could not work alone. As a result a lay directress, the remarkable Mrs Caine, was appointed to run the kindergarten. She had been a boarder at the Mercy Convent in Nicholson Street and at the age of 16 had been taken from the classroom to run a nearby kindergarten in North Fitzroy. Mrs Caine took over in 1930 and ran the Kindergarten during the morning and then travelled to Our Lady of Sion to teach the prep class in the afternoon.

The essence of teaching was routine and began in the morning with a short prayer before the statue of the Infant of Prague, then activities such as drawing, cutting up paper and pasting them on to other pages. (The paste was the old flour and water recipe which older parishioners will remember because of its odour if nothing else.) Then after the meal, the children went out to play but there was no equipment such as swings, sand pit or climbing bars that are taken for granted these days. The children finished at 12 o’clock standing around a white circle painted on the floor and recited the angelus as the church bells sounded.

The “Free” kindergarten was funded by a special committee of the parish which ran numerous functions such as a gala “Annual Bridge Party” at “The Wattle” in the city, as well as numerous badge days and when necessary a leaving collection in the church. Somehow they managed to keep the business going despite numerous problems. From April 1937 the kindergarten was closed for a year due to fear of a polio epidemic, and then during the war shortages made fund-raising difficult and some families were distraught by the death of a loved one. Various dances held by the Manresa Younger Set helped raise more funds but it remained a difficult time.

From 1950 funding came from the Government via the Catholic Education Office which resulted in the removal of Mrs Caine as she was inadequately qualified. Twenty years of outstanding, effective and popular service for the children counted for nothing. Still the kindergarten pushed ahead and soon there was a morning and an afternoon group for the children. Then starting in 1956 discussions began over the

⁹⁴ “The History of Manresa Kindergarten” p 4. Part of a handout distributed to new parents of children attending the kindergarten in the 1980s.

building of a new kindergarten which dragged on for years and the startlingly modern building was not opened until 1968. One after another competent directors followed until during the 1960s financial responsibility shifted from the Catholic Education Office to the Health Commission which steadily took control of salaries, maintenance and insurance. Slowly the kindergarten had shifted away from the vision of Fr Hearn to aid the poor of the parish to a standard kindergarten and from there to a government controlled organisation that functioned as a non-denominational, independent kindergarten. In 1984 Manresa Kindergarten became formally, Manresa Kindergarten Incorporated and its relationship with the parish was further diminished. In a strange arrangement morning classes two days a week were subsidised by the State for four year olds, while afternoon classes for three year olds were not government backed.⁹⁵

There was a major burst of publicity in 1989 when an armed man broke into the kindergarten and took some children and teachers as hostages, but happily no one was seriously injured and the biggest problem was dealing with the unnecessary publicity, which filled the press, and the trauma suffered by the children and staff and their families. Later the teachers, Anne Cantwell and Gael Speirs received an award for bravery from the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, Kel Glare, not only for bravery but also for the single-minded care they directed towards the children during the ordeal.⁹⁶

Although essentially a secular institution the parish of Hawthorn allowed the kindergarten to occupy its traditional building, rent free until rising costs forced the parish to enter a Licence Agreement for a small rental fee, but well below commercial rates. However expenses and needs in the parish continued to rise and now Fr Dwyer and his team have decided to terminate the residence of the kindergarten on church land with effect in 2010. It's come a long way since the dream of Fr Hearn and the work of Mrs Caine, and though it has now drifted out of life of the parish, the great work done by so many people for the Catholic children of Hawthorn should not be forgotten.

Saint Joseph's Success

Mother Stanislaus Ryan and Mother Oliver Doran arrived at the Lyndale Convent in November 1923 and immediately took over St Joseph's School. They followed in the tradition set by the FCJs and still had to deal with limited facilities and the small area of the land. The policy of taking boys up to Grade 2 and girls up to grade 6 continued even though some of the girls of the parish went to the new Lyndale School and some junior boys were taken into Lyndale and St John's.

The Brigidine Sisters ran the school in the model of their predecessors with a heavy emphasis on religious devotions and solid academic performance. Particularly important was the presence of Sister Perpetua Corrigan as principal for seven years up to 1942. The school was struggling, often with three students to a desk which led Fr Conquest who was in charge of the Catholic Education Office, to experiment with half the class in the morning and the other half in the afternoon.⁹⁷ It was not a success. Sister Perpetua thought that their schools were not up to the standard of the State schools of the

⁹⁵ Parish Handbook 1988

⁹⁶ The Australian 2nd September 1989

⁹⁷ Sturrock, Morna. *Women of Strength, Women of Gentleness*. P 109

time, and later she went on to shoulder responsibility for a Brigidine teacher education programme which was to bear significant fruit in future decades.

The struggle to pay for the school and improve conditions continued with regular fetes, concerts and appeals to the parents and friends association, but the site of only 1.4 acres made it the smallest school in the Hawthorn area even with only 127 students⁹⁸. However with the collapse of St John's came much discussion and planning. These brought about nothing substantial and then the Parish Education Board with the support of the parish priest and the Catholic Education Office seized the opportunity. Despite considerable opposition and some unpleasantness that received TV coverage, it was finally decided the parish would have one primary school from prep to 6 with boys and girls and it would be at the St John's site. Sister Geraldine, the principal at St Joseph's, supported the move to the new site which was three times larger than the Power Street one and during 1977 a substantial building programme was conducted on Glenferrie Road. On 4th March 1978, Archbishop Little opened and blessed the new St Joseph's and the future seemed assured. In the end it seems that the major problem was whether the new school would be called St John's or St Joseph's. During a fiery public meeting, one parent offered to climb a ladder and personally chip the old name off the front of the school building.⁹⁹ Some claimed that as many doubtful characters had gone through the school the name should be changed, an accusation which might not be accepted by the current archbishop of Melbourne. In the end St Joseph's name prevailed and the move to the new site was definitely considered to be a continuation of the old school. Sister Geraldine oversaw the transfer and the settling in at the new school site and then resigned at the end of 1979. The Brigidine Sisters had carried the school through the heat of the day and now left it with its future prosperity assured.

By 1990 with the fabric of the school looking a little tired and changes in demographics, the school was again under threat from the administrators of the Education Office as they tried to maximise the return on their resources. With strong support from the parish priest, Fr Richard Shortall, the Parish Education Board and the school community this difficulty was overcome and the full School Review was undertaken by the CEO in 1991. This review, one of the first really modern reviews of the school, looked at School Policy, Religious and General Curriculum areas, Organisation, Administration and Finance, and Physical Facilities. The review concluded its summary with:

“The Parish Priest, Principal and Staff are to be congratulated on the educational opportunities afforded their pupils and parish community.” “Parents indicated great support for their school and can be justly proud of its endeavours.” “In conclusion, St Joseph's ably demonstrates a learning community in a Catholic Parish setting that augers well for Catholic Education in general and St Joseph's in particular”¹⁰⁰.

A building and renovation plan was begun in 1993 to implement the recommendations of the Review, and it has continued since then with longer range plans to maintain the school plant.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ February 1973

⁹⁹ Margaret de Vries 26 November 2006

¹⁰⁰ School Review, Catholic Education Office, October 1991.

¹⁰¹ Minutes of the Parish Education Board 25 February 1993

St Joseph's has become a modern school with modern policies in all areas of education including faith development, technology, life education programmes, music and literacy, anti-bullying policies and a developed entrance policy. For most of this time the school has been in the hands of lay principals, with Ms Lita Hviid currently in charge.

However the contact with the Jesuits at the parish of Hawthorn has remained close. The Parish Priest plays a key role in the life of the parish school. Fr Dwyer and the Parish Team support the staff in the preparation of the children for the sacramental programs – Reconciliation (Year 3), Eucharist (Year 4) and Confirmation (Year 6) – and provision of family liturgies for the children. As manager of the school Fr Dwyer ensures that Archdiocesan directives are carried out.¹⁰² Around the school, in classes and in the playground he is a visible presence in the lives of the children.

The Parish Education Board still supports the school, though its role is largely advisory on policy as the crises it faced in the 70s are now long forgotten. Although small by many primary school standards with only about 220 students, it is a happy and effective school. “The Parish School is central to the life of the Parish. It brings families together; it is a centre for Catholic culture and faith; it is the local compound where the qualities of hope and respect abound.”¹⁰³ What would Mother Francis have thought of the new school, one hundred years after she had left the small and struggling institution?

¹⁰² St Joseph's website

¹⁰³ Fr G. James SJ 26 April 2001

Walking in Faith- 1904

The parish of Hawthorn faced the new century with confidence, still a small community in a city which had just passed a population of 20,000. Electric trams had not yet reached Glenferrie and horses were the principal source of transport in Burwood Road. Bicycles were common, still viewed by the older generation as an ungodly risk to life and limb but enjoyed by the young and the venturesome.

Father James Colgan ruled his parish and was a familiar sight striding around the streets in his top hat and long frock coat, always accompanied by his pet dog, "Botha". "Botha" was probably named for the famous Boer general in the recent war and unlike the parish, was rarely in order, but still there were few cars to chase in Hawthorn streets of those days.

With Fr Colgan in the presbytery was the elderly Fr Peter O'Flinn, who had been one of the founders of the parish and twice parish priest, and Fr Francis Keogh, one of the first local boys to be educated by the Jesuits in Victoria and was known for his good sense of humour and fine singing voice.¹⁰⁴ It was during his time that he successfully taught singing at St Joseph's School. Completing the team were Fathers, Francis Claffey, who was to be a parish priest a decade later but for the moment was recovering from teaching at Xavier College, and the favourite Fr Robert O'Dempsey. O'Dempsey looked after the West Hawthorn area for a decade and was assiduous in visiting his district, riding a bike with a lack of skill which rivalled Fr Nolan's equestrian adventures. Whenever Fr O'Dempsey appeared on his bicycle all pedestrians and most vehicle drivers took avoiding action well in advance.

The parish community found its life in three areas, the worship of God, the care of the poor and educating the young, and then the raising of funds to support these things. In Immaculate Conception, mass was said at 7, 9, 10 and 11 on Sunday mornings, but a sermon was only given at the last mass. Vespers, sermon and benediction followed in the evening at 7-30pm.

On weekdays, there were three morning masses each day, and one at St Joseph's and evening devotions were every evening except Saturday. Attendance at evening devotions was never as high as the Fathers would have liked, apart from Sunday when the church was fairly full. On Saturday there were confessions in the afternoon and again in the evening for as long as it was necessary and people kept coming. Before major feasts the practice of going to confession before communion could keep the priests busy till a very late hour. Careful regulations and recommended practices were in place to avoid confession just becoming a routine, including in 1904, the custom that men went in one door and women the other of the two-door confessional.¹⁰⁵ The other regular sacrament was Baptism, held at 2-00 pm on Sundays and 10-00 am on Wednesdays, punctually and with no preparation. It was presumed that all Catholic families knew their religion and catechism well enough to know already that baptism was important, but tardiness in punctuality was apparently a problem as the parish notices often contain a

¹⁰⁴ Francis Keogh was a pupil when the Jesuits reopened St Patrick's College in 1865.

¹⁰⁵ M.C. 9 September 1905 Twenty rules from "The Correct Thing for Catholics"

warning that parishioners arriving after the set time may not find a priest in attendance and therefore have to make another day.

However, though worship of God was essentially a private matter, the church understood the importance of community in worship. It did not matter that the liturgy was in Latin, as in the days before a public address system, you could not hear it anyway. Ritual and action conveyed the importance of what was happening at the altar and parishioners followed the service with their missal, used their prayer book or said the rosary. But a great deal more was expected. Substantial numbers belonged to the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, and attended the evening devotions every second Wednesday and had a formal Sodality mass once a month. There were men and women's branches of the Sodality and they attended the evening devotions and meetings in alternate weeks and on different Sundays. Membership of the Sodality was considered to be an aid for one's own sanctification as well as to bring edification to others. All members were expected to spend time each day in some form of private prayer, hopefully some form of "mental prayer".

Unmarried women belonged to the "Children of Mary" who attended evening devotions on Tuesday night, had their monthly Sunday mass and undertook a range of religious devotions during the months of May and October. In addition to church functions, the Children of Mary ran stalls at the annual fetes, helped organize functions at the schools and assisted in all types of parish fundraising. At their Sunday masses, the members wore a blue cape and white veil, and when one of their number was married in the local church, they would sometimes form a guard of honour at the Church door as the bride entered or left.

A number of other organisations and sodalities existed in the parish including the Holy Childhood (which worked to protect children against abuse and human trafficking), the Apostleship of Prayer and the Propagation of the Faith, but most though active attracted relatively small memberships.

Sunday mass was a relatively consistent and regular affair. The monthly masses for the sodalities and occasional special sermons on reparation Sundays, where there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament all day, were the only things which disturbed the pattern. For a few feasts of the year, there was a solemn high mass with deacon and sub-deacon and a great deal of singing and on these days the parish choir came into its own and sang quite sophisticated Latin hymns and mass settings. More normally the choir met for practice on Thursday evenings at St John's school and sang at the 11 o'clock mass at which there was the sermon but, due to the midnight fast, very few communions. The church possessed a beautiful organ opened in 1879 by the first organist, Mr. Michael O'Connor, and cost 380 pounds. It had been altered, enlarged and improved in 1892 and again in 1902 and was in the choir loft at the back of the church. A series of competent conductors directed the professional choir employed by the parish, including Miss Trowbridge who used to stamp her foot to keep time for the singers; very effective for the choir but rather frightening for the worshipers in the pews under the loft.¹⁰⁶ Conductors require good organists and one of the most famous was Miss Frances Commons, the well-known teacher from St Joseph's School who first played the big pipe organ while still a teenager and was said to be "a child full of music, who all her life could make

¹⁰⁶ Amongst the early conductors were St John Kennedy, T.J. Lamble, - Levy, H.V. Williams and H. Gleeson. Anonymous "Church of the Immaculate Conception"

organs and pianos speak”.¹⁰⁷ Later she married Roy White but continued to play the organ for the church from time to time as well as play and sing at parish concerts, dances, Sodality meetings and for the children of the school.¹⁰⁸

The choir came into its own with the singing of the offices and prayers of the Easter Triduum, the Sundays around Christmas and for the Feasts of Saint Ignatius and the Immaculate Conception. The music was not only worship, it was professional, well done and much loved and appreciated.

Prayer was not limited to the church and there was an expectation that prayer was an important part of the family life. Long working hours made it difficult for many families to spend a great deal of time together, grace before meals was a mark of Catholic life and pictures of the Sacred Heart, small statues of Our Lady and often some votive candles were found in all Catholic homes. “The family that prays together, stays together” campaigns were still a long way in the future, but Catholic families were expected to gather together for the rosary or small litanies like the Litany of Loreto. Private prayers included the morning offering, the night time examination of conscience before bed and the practice of saying small aspirations during the day. These aspirations were small acts of the presence of God in the lives of the Catholic laity and to help the parishioners, the Monthly Calendar published a few examples of suggested aspirations each month, which ensured there was plenty of variety for the parishioners’ prayers.

Caring

The parishioners of Hawthorn considered themselves a family and like all families felt obliged to help members who were in need. However they still held the Victorian values of hard work and self help, so the thriftless and indolent could gain no aid.¹⁰⁹ Primarily amongst the aid organisations within the parish was the St Vincent de Paul Society, which had been established in the parish in 1900 and helped Catholic families in difficult circumstances within the parish. The local conference met on Tuesday evenings at 8-45, which allowed all members to attend the evening devotions beforehand. At their meetings they discussed needy cases brought to their attention by the priests, the schools or members and often listened to petitions put to them by those seeking assistance.

Two principal scourges were seen amongst the poor in 1904, unemployment and alcoholism. In times of depression there was little they could do for the unemployed but in 1904 the members of the local conference not only provided temporary assistance to struggling families but worked by a system of references to obtain employment for them.

Much of their work was aimed to assist children, to get them clothing and school books and equipment so that they could attend school. This assistance was also directed so that families could afford to send their children to the local “Catholic” schools and not have to go to the State Schools. In this work they gained great support from and gave much assistance to Mother Borgia at St Joseph’s school.

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous “Francis White, RIP, a Tribute” 1971

¹⁰⁸ Amongst the more famous organists of the early days were Mr. M. O’Connor, Miss Griffiths, Miss B. McGivern, Mr. K. Halliday, Mrs Jenkinson and Miss Queenie Heron.

¹⁰⁹ MC September 1904 p 8

The St Vincent de Paul conference worked closely with state officials and local government, assisting parishioners in the courts, working with the local truant officer and obtaining “pension” benefits and entry to nursing facilities for the elderly who no longer could care for themselves.

When caring for a family afflicted by sickness, they arranged with a Doctor Murphy from High Street Kew to attend poor patients, the Conference brought to his attention and followed up with regular visits to the families, sometimes several times a week. At times they even assisted with the burying of the dead who had no family in the city.¹¹⁰ As with all their works, one of the aims of these visits was to bring Catholics back to the practice of their faith and to attend mass on Sundays.

Unfortunately demands for the needy always outstripped the assets the conference had to meet them. The church poor box rarely attracted reasonable amounts but donations of clothing were most helpful, especially for children. Financial donations were few but a Mrs Celia Hobbs from Barkers Road Kew sent a cheque for a pound every month or two for a period of twenty years, starting in 1902. This extraordinarily generous donor was acknowledged month after month in the Monthly Calendar as “anonymous”. However one of their most important fundraisers was the “Charity Sermon” usually held in June each year at the 11 o’clock mass and heavily publicised in the secular and religious press as well as with handbills. Normally a visiting non-Jesuit priest was asked to preach, but in 1904, Fr James O’Dwyer, recently arrived at Xavier College, was asked and the resulting collection was substantial. Wherever possible the conference organised other fundraisers such as a “mock auction” to top up their resources.

As with so many organisations, the St Vincent de Paul was a men’s organisation at the time, but women who wanted to be involved in such work belonged to “The Ladies Relief Brigade” which was established in the parish and devoted to raising funds for charitable purposes. Usually this money was passed on to some other organisation to be distributed, but sometimes they did undertake charitable assistance directly.¹¹¹

Alcoholism was a big scourge for the men in particular amongst the poorer classes with the availability of cheap spirits. It was an era when women would wait outside the factories on Friday evenings to intercept their husbands before they could spend their weekly wages at the hotel and many wives refused to allow any form of alcohol at all into their home. The St Vincent de Paul Society worked with families afflicted by this problem but it was not easy work and required considerable skill and patience.

Present in the parish was the “League of the Cross” organisation, a Catholics only temperance society founded in 1873 by Cardinal Manning to combat the rising tide of intemperance afflicting the poor of London. It was open to both men and women members and carried out social and spiritual as well as practical activities around the parish, with Fr Colgan as the driving force behind it as well as its spiritual director.

Fr Colgan also arranged for articles to appear from time to time in the Monthly Calendar on the evils of alcohol. One such article outlined the rising cost of alcoholism in Britain, amongst men and even more amongst women. Next to the article in the advertisement column was “For a Good Drink go to Railway Hotel. J. A. Walsh

¹¹⁰ Slattery, Kevin. *A Century of Service*. P 3-5

¹¹¹ Monthly Calendar October 1904

proprietor”. Next to that the local chemist was advertising, “Kruse’s Headache Wafers”.¹¹²

While aid to the destitute was important, self-help was considered even more important and to that end the H.A.C.B.S. or Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society was established at St Joseph’s in 1871. The Hibernians Branch No 40 was established by the Jesuits from Richmond and the first name in the membership book was Morgan Hayes, the local police inspector. (He retired as secretary in 1903.) This friendly society provided sick pay and funeral benefits and later medical and hospital benefits. For a slightly higher rate, life assurance, accident and dental benefits could also be provided for members and dependants.¹¹³

However the Hibernians did more than provide benefits and effectively manage a health fund; they engaged in educational work and formed a social club within the parish. Quarterly meetings were held to give a report on the fund’s operations, and then a public lecture was given. For example in September 1904, Dr J.T. Murphy gave an address on “How to Keep Well.” Also in 1904 a most successful concert was held in the hall at St John’s school and on another occasion Mr Dan Brown gave selections from the plays of the well known (?) Irish dramatist Dion Boucicault. These events were open to non-members as well as members and were partly fundraisers and partly to recruit more members to the society. At a time when there was no public health insurance, these friendly societies played an important role in supporting stability in lives of the local communities. Although there were many such societies operating, including the Irish National Foresters, the Hibernians were considered to be the one for the Catholics of Hawthorn.

Children

Apart from the schools Fr Colgan understood the necessity to keep the children, especially the boys, closely associated the parish life, just as it was to keep the adults attached. Altar boys, or acolytes as they were called, were an important part of the liturgy and needed in substantial numbers for both Sunday and weekday masses as well as benedictions. The Croughan, Lynch, Madden, Cox and Dunn boys all figured amongst them in 1904 and ribbons of blue, grey and yellow were awarded each month for the most reliable servers. These awards were published in the Monthly Calendar and at the end of the year the most reliable server received the gift of a watch, a present beyond the capacity of most families to afford for their children in 1904.

Apart from prizes, Fr Colgan kept the community spirit alive amongst the boys by organising excursions and an annual picnic for the altar boys, and at the end of 1903 a cricket team had been formed. It was called the St Joseph’s cricket club and was created by combining the senior boys from Mr Tobin’s Sunday school class with the altar servers and they played similar teams of altar boys from other parishes. Early in the year the St Joseph’s club could report significant victories over St Ignatius, Richmond, and St Brigid’s North Fitzroy.

¹¹² MC February 1904

¹¹³ Anonymous “H.A.C.B. Society, St Joseph’s Hawthorn, Branch No. 40.”

Fr Colgan not only knew the importance of his acolytes for the liturgy but it was a way of getting boys to understand and respect the rituals of the Church and therefore led on to vocations. Over the decades, Hawthorn altar servers were to contribute a significant number of vocations to the Jesuits and to the diocesan priesthood.

As well as the monthly essay competition in the Monthly Calendar between the girls and boys' schools and the spelling bee mentioned earlier, Fr Colgan organised a catechism competition. This event was awaited with anticipation and one boy wrote in his essay how well they were being prepared after losing the spelling bee apparently had been a "painful" experience for some boys. A large gathering of parents came to watch competition and after two and a half hours of questioning, Fr Colgan and his priests were unable to find a winner, as all the answers were word perfect. The overall prize was given to William Walker of grade VI, but the prizes for the other five classes were decided by lot. The names of the winners duly appeared in the Monthly Calendar and Fr Colgan's report of the event seems to say that catechism was more important than spelling anyway.

Since the 16th Century, Christian doctrine or catechism had maintained a close relationship to "Christian Life", because catechism, no matter how it was presented, preaching, singing, lecturing, questions and answers or any other way, was considered an introduction to the ordinary obligations of being a Catholic. Catholics believed that knowledge of certain basic truths was necessary for salvation.¹¹⁴ Teaching catechism to children was therefore of vital and critical importance.

As most children left school after the completion of primary school or the merit certificate, about year 8 level, there was a need for the parish to maintain contact with the young men who were beginning their working life and before marriage. The Hawthorn Catholic Young Men's Society, C.Y.M.S. for men between about 15 and up into their 30s, met every Thursday evening at the St John's school where they had debates, lectures, essay and magazine nights and singing, as well as competitions in reciting, speaking, spelling, reading and dramatics. So in the main, the C.Y.M.S. was partly educational as well as recreational. On Monday evenings the society met for more physical activity such as gymnastics, quoits, games and ping-pong, and was well attended. In 1904 there were fewer opportunities for girls as it was still expected in some circles that "young ladies" needed a chaperone and their principal recreation was attending balls and dances, of which large numbers were held and continued to be so up till World War II.

Message and Money

Fr Colgan began the Monthly Calendar as a free newspaper in August 1903 and by 1904 it had become a regular feature of parish life. Every few months it listed the mass times, known then as the "Sacred Functions", those who had died, both recently and anniversaries, the feast days of the month and important liturgical events which might be approaching. For children there were the competitions, the acolytes' ribbons and the jokes sections, and it was partly financed by advertisements by local Catholic traders.

¹¹⁴ O'Malley, Fr James, W SJ. "Five Missions of the Jesuit Charism," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*. P 12-13

However Fr Colgan saw the paper as a means of getting catholic information into the homes of the parish, many of whom would not buy the Catholic papers such as The Advocate or The Tribune, or the Jesuit magazines, Messenger and Madonna. He organised regular brief lives of saints, articles about prayer, the sacraments and visiting the Blessed Sacrament, current affairs such as the Church in France, the life of Jules Verne and Edmund Burke and happenings at the Vatican. His articles were borrowed from Catholic papers all over the world and even today some of them make interesting reading.

However the ability of the parish to function, to support priests, offer religious services, take care of the needy and maintain the buildings all required money. Parish collections at Sunday masses were important but gave little beyond the support of the current church operations. Key to the fundraising was the Church Union where members of the parish undertook to donate a given amount each month and certain members of the parish called around to the various houses to collect it. The names of the more than three hundred and fifty donors were published in the Monthly Calendar by street listings and a hundred years later forms a wonderful list of the parish's principal supporters from that era. The efforts of the Church Union accounted for nearly half of the parish's new income each year.

Major social events were organised and held during the year, raising funds to reduce church debt and for the sheer joy of the event. In June the "Rose Ball" was held at the Town Hall with the interesting advertising line, "though you cannot go in without paying, you can pay without going in." Altogether one hundred and seventy-two ticket holders attended and after deducting costs for the hall, cloak room and polishing the floor after the event and then catering, piano and band, and printing programmes and tickets, a total of fifteen pounds, six shillings and sixpence was handed to Fr Colgan. A good night was had by all.

Even more popular was the Euchre Night at the Town Hall where 550 turned up and 444 sat down to play and the event added 45 pounds to the reduction of the Church debt. In November, a "Grand Dramatic Night" was arranged where a team of leading amateur actors and parishioners performed Dion Boucicault's "powerful drama", *The Octoroon*. Set in a southern US plantation with Indian chiefs, African-American slaves, plantation songs, dances and banjo selections, it contains an almost complete selection of modern political incorrectness. Still the locals loved it and after costs, another 28 pounds added to the church income for the year.

However the key fund-raising event for the year was the St. Joseph's Garden Fete and Bazaar which was held over four days and nights during December each year. Almost every conceivable way of attracting prizes and money was used; even the children's monthly essay topic was about the fete. There was a produce stall with all kinds of foods including a pre-ordered Sunday dinner, a refreshment stall, and a sweets' stall which offered a prize of 10 shillings for the best homemade sweets, but kept all the entries for sale. There was a fancy stall which raffled and sold anything and a children's stall with similar raffle prizes, and sixteen children all dressed in white performed a Maypole Dance. The Hawthorn City Brass Band and the St Ignatius Band played each afternoon and evening and there were open-air concerts and vocal items. Numerous sporting events were held, such as jumping, foot racing, walking machines and many others. On Saturday evening the Hibernians and the C.Y.M.S. staged a tug-of-war while

sideshows included a shooting gallery, jaunting car and Punch and Judy shows. Anyone involved in running a fair would know just how hard it must have been to organise such a diverse operation for so many people over four days, but the ladies of the parish under the presidency of Mrs V.E. Henderson¹¹⁵ managed it successfully and did it several more times over many years.

The prize winners of the raffles offered by the various stalls were listed in the Monthly Calendar and the prizes offered seemed to have little to do with the main lines sold at the stall. Miss Laffan won a large framed photo of Fr Colgan at the refreshment stall and the provincial, Fr John Ryan, won a crucifix at the sweets stall. There were several other photos of Fr Colgan in various stalls, so they must have been in demand. Miss Laffan also won a photo of Fr Buckeridge on the same stall; it must have been her lucky day. (Fr O'Dempsey seems to have liked the idea for in the fete of the following year there were six photos of him for prizes. The organisers may have arranged something as Fr O'Dempsey won a wedding cake in a raffle.) Fr Colgan won a case of wine, but Fr Keogh was not as lucky, he won a child's silver set. Generally the prizes of the produce stall were fowls, geese, tongue, bags of flour, turkeys and hams, but Miss Hardimann won a silver watch after a bag of potatoes. On the fancy goods stall, Mrs Callagan won a gentleman's gold pin, and Mr E A. McKenna, a gold brooch. Generally the prizes varied from the valuable and the immediately useable to those items you donated back and hoped someone else would win them next year.¹¹⁶ The function was a great deal of work for those who organised it, great fun for the children and more than three hundred pounds for Fr Colgan and the church funds.

In 1904 the debt over the parish was just over 3,000 pounds and during the year the efforts of the parishioners had raised more than 600. In a couple of years they had wiped out the parish debt, but of course the work never stopped.

Being a Catholic in Immaculate Conception in 1904 could take a lot of your time. It was your home of worship but it provided your family, your friends, and looked after your children, protected you in times of need and above all gave you a place to be. You not only walked together in faith, you walked together in life.

¹¹⁵ Her husband, V.E. Henderson was the founding president of St Vincent de Paul in the parish.

¹¹⁶ M C January 1904

Walking in Faith – Bourke’s Front yard 1935

Father John Stephen Bourke, was a country farm boy from Pakenham, a student and later Rector of St Patrick’s College and then appointed parish priest of Hawthorn in 1934. Known as “Sammy” Bourke amongst friends, he had a remarkable gift for remembering peoples’ names and faces, loved being with people and was warm and gracious to all who met him.¹¹⁷ At the same time as being parish priest he was Socius (assistant) to the provincial and monitored the funds of the Jesuit province. This relationship may have contributed to the Provincial, Fr John Fahy, moving his office and residence from Richmond to the accommodation in the top floor of the “bank building” during 1935. Some later generations remember Fr Bourke calling the building, “The Curia” as a result of the move but locals of that era referred to it as “The Club”.¹¹⁸ Fr Bourke used his very retentive memory, always greeted people with their name, and he knew if you were related in some way to his extended family and that family was huge. In later life he wrote a fine history of the Bourke family.

The church Fr Bourke inherited was in many ways similar to that of 1904 but the Church and the world around it was changing. Each Sunday there were five masses at Immaculate Conception with the solemn or sung mass at 11.00 am with full sermon, but in a more recent innovation, short sermons were often preached at other masses. Three more masses were held at St Joseph’s with extra masses during the week on Holy Days and First Fridays.¹¹⁹ On regular weekdays two early morning masses were held at Immaculate Conception and one at St Joseph’s but the nightly evening devotions had largely disappeared, except on the Sundays and Feast Days.

However one big investment was in the choir, which since the appointment of Mr Hurtle-Wigg as musical director and conductor in 1918 had become a highly professional organisation.¹²⁰ Choir practice was held each Thursday night drawn largely from members of the parish, but the director, organist and some lead singers were paid and special soloists were contracted for major feasts. Each Sunday the choir sang the parts of the mass, had a special piece for the offertory and then a handful of hymns which the congregation could join. Just how sophisticated the presentation had become is gauged by the programme of one month in 1935.

- 1st Sunday. Mass: “Jesu Rex Admirabilis” by Stehle
Offertory: “Adoramus te Christe” by Mozart
- 2nd Sunday Mass: “Missa Brevis” by Palestrina
Offertory: “O Bone Jesu” by Palestrina
- 3rd Sunday Mass: Mass by Orlando de Lasso
Offertory: “Bone Pastor” by Tallis
- 4th Sunday Mass: Mass by Byrd
Offertory: “Panis Angelicus” by Palestrina

¹¹⁷ Strong, David, SJ. *The Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography 1848-1998*. P 26

¹¹⁸ “Building Articles” Parish Website

¹¹⁹ (The Sunday masses at St Joseph’s were increased from three to four in 1935 due to overcrowding in the later masses.)

¹²⁰ Mr Wigg remained director of music until his resignation in 1952

5th Sunday Mass: “Aeterna Christi Munera” by Palestrina
 Offertory: “Adoro Te” by Frey¹²¹

In November a full Latin mass for choir especially composed by Mr Hurtle-Wigg was sung, to considerable enthusiasm by the choir and a reflection of the considerable and diverse abilities of their director.¹²²

The high standard of this music brought people along to the 11.00 am o'clock mass to listen to it, and it reflected strongly a tradition of the ancient liturgy which emphasised the beauty of worship before the heavenly court. Everything used in the worship of God had to be the best which could be afforded and that included the liturgy. Between five and ten percent of the total parish expenditure in those years was devoted to the choir and music.

As much as Fr Bourke supported the choir and continued to do so, he decided to work at improving the singing of the congregation, which had not been very successful since the days of Fr Delaney in the mid-20s. In June 1935 he ordered a thousand hymn cards from a local printer for five guineas¹²³, with five shillings and threepence tax. One hundred were sent to St John's school and forty each to Lyndale and to St Joseph's. He wanted to be sure at least the children had a working repertoire they all knew.

Twenty-five hymns were printed and apart from the three Benediction hymns and the Veni Creator and Adeste Fideles, they were in English. Heading the list were favourite hymns such as “Holy God we praise Thy name!” (If you believe it, all seven verses), “Soul of My Saviour” and “Sweet Sacrament Divine” and the Marian favourites “Hail Queen of Heaven” and “O purest of creatures”.

Fifteen of the hymns were in honour of God, nearly all to Jesus in the Eucharist or as the Sacred Heart, eight to the Blessed Virgin, one to St Joseph and finally the old favourite; “Deep in the panting Heart of Rome..... God Bless our Pope, the great, the good!”¹²⁴

The cards must have worked well as Hawthorn was well known for the standard and volume, if not the tunefulness, of its congregational singing down to the changes after the Vatican Council.

Apart from mass, baptisms continued at 3.00pm on Sundays and 10.00am on Wednesday mornings, and confessions on Saturday afternoons and evenings and on the eve of First Fridays. However the most active devotional life in the parish still revolved around the various sodalities and especially the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The meeting times for their weekly devotions had been moved from 7.30 to 8.00pm, reflecting changing practices in family lives from the 1900s to the 1930s. The Men's Sodality met on Monday nights, the Women on Wednesdays and the Children of Mary on Tuesday. Fr Joseph Healy, who had a remarkable ability to attract young people, had started a Boy's Sodality (officially “Men's Junior Branch) which attracted some of the more serious-minded young men to a more directly spiritual and Catholic Action oriented way of life. This sodality met on Friday nights at 7.30, just in front of the weekly

¹²¹ Monthly Calendar March 1935

¹²² Monthly Calendar November 1935

¹²³ The guinea was one pound one shilling, or twenty-one shillings.

¹²⁴ A copy of the Hymn card is preserved in the Jesuit Archives.

Stations of the Cross which followed at 8.00pm. It was aimed at the 15 to 19 year old boys who had left school and were not yet old enough to enter the Men's Sodality. At the start of the year of 1935, membership totalled about 120 and built up to about 150 by December, which reflects something of the demographics of the parish at the time.

Struggling but still very active was a new grouping of parishioners, the Crusaders of the Blessed Sacrament, which had been started in the parish in 1931 but was given a substantial boost with the arrival of Fr Bourke. Where the Sodalities emphasised personal daily prayer and weekly devotions and St Vincent de Paul emphasised service to those in need first of all, the Crusaders were founded to increase devotion of the Eucharist by regular reception of communion. Members took a pledge to receive weekly communion, or three times a week or daily communion, and to encourage others to do so. It was thirty years since Pius X had encouraged the practice of frequent communion but even in the 1930s there were still many who only went irregularly or felt they had to go to confession each time before communion.

With Fr Bourke there came to Hawthorn Fr Edward Carlile, formerly a country boy from Drouin and a convert to Catholicism at the age of 25. He loved meeting with people, had a wonderful spirit of good humour and was an extremely likeable man. He was particularly devoted to converting non-Catholics to the "true faith" and ran many evening series of lectures for possible converts on various aspects of the Catholic Church. Being a convert himself, Fr Carlile knew what it was like to be alone amongst a crowd and so he began a "Catholic Social Club", where groups of Catholics gathered regularly to make new members feel at home in the Church. This project proved to be outstandingly successful in brightening the lives of new converts and also induced others to follow the new converts' lead into the Catholic community. It should not be thought that these Club meetings were always quiet, intimate affairs. In September the Social Club held a dance at the Hawthorn Town Hall with over 700 present for dancing, singing, recitations and ventriloquism! The dancers had plenty of cakes for supper and gallons and gallons of milk. (Yes Milk! All donated for the event)

Unfortunately for Fr Bourke, Fr Carlile's zeal for the truth was not matched by any degree of tact. "No one from Anglican archbishops to Protestant school children was safe from this confrontation with the truth".¹²⁵ He just loved to wander the streets and confront any passing stranger with a direct manner which verged on the impudent, giving numerous reasons why they should join the Catholic Church. Still the parishioners loved him and were disappointed when he moved to a new assignment a couple of years later.

The Jesuit community was quite large at this time, possibly it was as large as it would ever be, but the numbers included several elderly men. George Kelly had died the year before, but Fr Edward Corish, just turned 73 years old, arrived to take his place. Fr Corish was a practical, loving and concerned parish worker who helped many in need in the parish and was also minister (or manager) of the house. This meant he was in charge of the practical running of the house and the books of the parish, as well as trying to control Fr Bourke whenever he was tempted to try and spend more money than was really available.

A second elderly priest was Fr Johannes Peifer, a spritely 75 when Fr Bourke arrived and had been serving in the parish since 1923 and would stay until he died in

¹²⁵ Strong, David, SJ. *The Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography 1848-1998*. P 45

1948, the last of the great Austrian missionaries to Australia.¹²⁶ Fr Peifer was director of the Children of Mary and gave the sermon and benediction at their weekly devotions. He was noted as an excellent director and one who would object to any shabby clothing at any church function. It was said that it even became an excuse for some young women to go out and buy new clothes. Fr Peifer also ran the Apostleship of Prayer and the Mission Society, both of which produced leaflets which, it was said, Fr Peifer rained down on the people of Hawthorn, on good and bad alike.

One distinctive change in worship at Immaculate Conception from 1904 to 1935 was the extent of the parish mission outside of the geographic boundaries of Hawthorn. For major devotions, special feasts, novenas and inspiring lectures, people came from miles around, helped by the location of the church on the intersection of two major roads and the proximity of the tram line and railway station. Fr George Kelly had a widely known reputation as a confessor and people in trouble sought him out. After his death Fr Corish and Fr Peifer spent long days in the confessional and the numbers of penitents continued to increase.

It was an era of statistics and during 1935, 53,000 confessions were heard and 83,000 communions given, though these communions would only be a fraction of the numbers who attended mass. (Numbers at the preached parish mission were not included in these figures but that year were 4,151 confessions and 10,717 communions.) The priests looked with some pride on the presence of some seven sodalities and pious unions with an aggregate of 600 members and the fact they had 35 marriages, and baptised 79 infants and 24 adults.¹²⁷ These liturgical functions were only a small part of their ministry but were considered to be the most important part. Then thousands of calls were made to the sick in their homes and in hospitals and the Bona Mors Society provided a devotional basis for those who were seriously ill. (Society for a Good Death) The Sacrament of the Sick, then called Extreme Unction, was for people on the point of death and resulted in many late night calls to the presbytery and priests willingly went off in the darkness to bring comfort and support to those dying and to their families.

Fr Bourke's adventures into church building were mentioned earlier, but in 1935 the spire was struck by lightning, an incident which gave rise to the story of a parishioner engaged in prayer in the side aisle when a piece of masonry came through the roof. The parishioner was not injured, though prayer was somewhat distracted. Three firms were contracted to do a survey of the spire, Fritsch, Lodge Brothers and Hanrahan and Zirkler and reported that the damage was significant and repairs were urgent.¹²⁸ Fr Bourke made up his mind to inspect the damage for himself and the community were unable to persuade him otherwise. One of the workers, who told him to send his prayers to heaven and keep his feet on the ground, was more successful and gave the quote of 300 pounds. Advantage was taken of the presence of the workmen, ladders, boatswain's chairs and scaffolding to tuck-point the joints of the masonry on the whole steeple which apparently needed doing urgently, as well as the installation of a new lightning conductor after the previous one was so ineffective. Fr Bourke's second attempt to climb the scaffolding was again rebuffed and the work was completed for 326 pounds. Fritsch was

¹²⁶ When Fr Peifer died there was a story that his nephew living in Germany had a vision of him saying that he had died, days before the news first reached Europe.

¹²⁷ O'Neill, Fr George, SJ. *History of the Jesuits in Australia* P 11, Hawthorn section

¹²⁸ Monthly Calendar March 1935

then given the contract for the metal fence along Glenferrie Road and Lynch Street, although there was no money available and no doubt Fr Corish would have willingly pushed Fr Bourke off the scaffolding when he found out the cost of the project.

Caring

The greatest influence on the lives of parishioners in 1935 was simply the Great Depression. Many Australians who lived through the first five decades of the 20th century were often more marked by the Depression than the world wars. At one time a third of the workforce was without a job and many of those with jobs had their wages reduced. Extremist parties of the Left and Right gained support and the Federal Government appeared to be more concerned with placating British bankers than helping the Australian workers, but everywhere there was a lack of confidence and a sense of uncertainty. People were being told to save, save, save, apart from Archbishop Mannix who wanted people to spend. Fr Bourke might have liked that idea, but even in this relatively wealthy parish his parishioners included more and more people in need.

Most of the assistance given in the parish was performed by two organisations, St Vincent de Paul and the Catholic Women's Social Guild, and the latter had been founded in the parish in 1921. St Vincent de Paul was still all male but there had been a "Ladies Charitable Society of Hawthorn" founded in the parish about 1885. This merged with a Protestant organisation in a rare example of ecumenism in 1893. "The Ladies Relief Brigade" existed for a time in the early 20th century, but it was not until the founding of Catholic Women's Social Guild that substantial numbers of women became involved in some form of charitable work. The Social Guild met in the clubrooms every Friday afternoon where they accepted gifts of clothing and money to distribute to families of the parish. Many of the older clothes needed repairs which the women undertook and they also created new garments by cutting out material patterns and assembling them with sewing machines which were kept at the club. Membership totalled 356 in 1935 but the executive did most of the direct contact with those in need, while the members turned up regularly on Fridays and helped with fund raising and social events. During 1935 over 100 families were assisted, receiving over 1000 used and 380 new garments and more than 60 pairs of boots for children. Blankets, quilts, bay trips and Easter eggs were also organised around the parish, while special clothing and communion breakfasts were organised for twenty first-communicants at St John's and a donation paid to St Joseph's for those families who could not afford to be part of it. At the end of the year the Guild organised Christmas dinners for eleven families and some small presents for children who might miss out.

The principal source of funds for all this work was from Church poor boxes, but the Guild organised jumble sales, lectures, concerts, dances and Easter egg sales. However the real income was the work done by the members when they turned dozens of items into usable things which families needed.

The men of the parish worked through the St Vincent de Paul Society which had an active membership of 17 but did phenomenal work to help people and families in need in the parish. The men visited people in their own homes, distributed food, clothing, boots, and fuel and occasionally found accommodation. At other times medical assistance was obtained and admittance to homes for care arranged. Sometimes funerals were

attended and rosary said when families were too far away to be present and other families were brought back to the practice of their faith, always an important part of the work of aid amongst the parishioners. John Connell was president and Rupert Harrison secretary for the best part of thirty years, reflecting the commitment that men made to the work of the conference in the parish. It was a mark of the times that by the end of the decade some members of the Hawthorn conference had become Catholic Probation Officers to help when young men had been discharged from the courts as the result of representations of a Christian Brother, Brother Doyle. It is sometimes forgotten that children were amongst the victims of the poverty and uncertainty of the Depression and the lack of family discipline as youngsters, allowed too many of them to get into trouble with the law later on. The Hawthorn conference also adopted a ward at the Morning Star Home for Boys at Mornington, a practice they had begun in 1932 at the height of the Depression.

Like the Women's Guild, the St Vincent de Paul was committed to the practice of their faith, with four particular Sundays a year set aside as special feast days in which they participated. The relationship between faith and service remained vital for the men of St Vincent de Paul, and it was to affect both the men of the conference and families they helped. It is unknown today how many grandparents of current parishioners owe their survival to the careful, cheerful and faith-filled work of these men.

Self-help was still considered important in 1935 and the H.A.C.B.S. continued to meet every second Thursday at the Club Rooms. The Society had struggled during the early days of the Depression but by 1935 was more than surviving. It was beginning to grow again. Mr Joseph Locke ran the branch as president and worked from his home in Oak Street Hawthorn. Another long-term worker in the parish he held the position for close on fifty years, administered the sick and hospital benefits and provided assistance with funerals. The meetings were partly about fund management and assessing difficult cases and partly social with all types of club-like activities being undertaken.

Parallel but possibly not in opposition, the Irish National Foresters' Benefit Society was also active in the parish and it met at the Club Rooms on the alternate Thursdays to the Hibernians. In the 1930s the Foresters seem to have been a more businesslike operation offering smaller benefits and cheaper rates but did not appear to have the social life attached to it, though still providing a valuable service to the Catholic parish of Hawthorn.

Fr Bourke and Fr Kirwan, who was chaplain to them all, spent a lot of effort encouraging the work of these bodies, and frequently turned to St Vincent de Paul when confronted by a family in need. Sadly in 1935 there were many of them.

Children and Young Adults

In Fr Colgan's day, great attention was paid to looking after the children and involving them in the life of the parish. By Fr Bourke's time things had changed. Altar boys continued to play a significant role in the parish and supply a steady stream of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, but the parish-based competitions had gone. The children were the responsibility of the Brothers and the Sisters in the schools and the parish turned its attention to the young people who had left school and started to work.

The majority of young people, especially boys, still left school at about 14 years of age or when they finished their merit certificate. The C.Y.M.S. continued to meet every Wednesday evening at 8.00 for the same type of activities they had carried on since its inception and still provided popular lectures, debates, singing and dancing as well as gymnastics and table tennis and similar interests.

The Catholic Girls Club also continued to meet regularly with much less chaperoning that there had been in 1905, catering for girls from 16 upwards. How far upward was never defined. The two organisations provided good fields for recruits for the Manresa Dramatic Society and for organisers of the numerous dances held in the parish. From the point of view of the priests, they continued to support these bodies, as they kept young Catholic people meeting together which reduced the likelihood of “mixed” marriages.

However Fr Bourke and his team really supported the Men’s Sodality, Junior Section, known as the Boy’s Sodality and provided it with ever improving facilities. Membership was easy to obtain, just turn up on Friday night for devotions. However the Sodality had some very gifted organisers and early in 1935 had so many members wanting to go on retreat at the new Loyola College, Watsonia, that they had to book out three weekends.

To help maintain the unity of the group, the Boy’s Sodality ran dances each Thursday night under the direction of the dreaded Miss Turmeare. These dances became even more popular when Fr Bourke arranged for the purchase of the building across the road in Lynch Street to become a hall for the young men’s groups in the parish. As the numbers increased a second dance night was added on Saturday evenings though these had to finish at midnight as there was a State law forbidding dances on Sundays. The Boy’s Sodality then added community singing on Sunday nights after devotions and the numbers became so large that the event had to move to the Apollo Theatre (Manresa Hall) to accommodate them.

Besides spiritual and social events, the Boys’ Sodality also entered sporting teams in a range of sports like athletics, cricket and tennis competitions. This could have created a conflict with the C.Y.M.S. which organised similar events but it never did. In fact there was such a cross- over of membership between the two bodies, there were times it was difficult to know which body was the primary organiser of a particular event.

The Manresa Girls’ Club took the lead in trying to organise a massive gala ball for the parish and invited the C.Y.M.S. and the Boys’ Sodality to take part. As a result of a meeting of the joint executives of the three bodies, a Manresa Younger Set was created as a governing body and the first annual ball was held at “The Palms”, Henley Lawns in October. The subscription was five shillings, a lot of money for young workers, but it was a huge success with ball gowns and dinner jackets the order of the night. The Younger Set remained the executive of their joint functions into the Second World War. The idea of the joint Manresa Younger Set was a good one as occasionally there was friction between the various groups. One famous occasion the Children of Mary and C.Y.M.S. organised a picnic. Then the boys decided to invite their own girls and so the Children of Mary boycotted the event.¹²⁹ Human nature is what it is.

Slightly older men had formed the Manresa Tennis Club some years before, but in 1935 they purchased land and built three large courts and clubrooms on the corner of

¹²⁹ Diary of Nell Clements, 29 November 1931, but it was not an isolated case.

Burwood Road and Auburn Road. Women and young men could also play with the club and, like all the other organisations in the parish, ran a dance in the Hawthorn Town Hall on August 3rd to help raise money for the new courts. It was not known exactly how the land and courts were financed and the small debt was still causing confusion as late as Fr Kurts' time as parish priest. Also memorable for those courts was the old dairy nearby which is said to have served as an illicit bar. Apparently some of the tennis players were known to have patronised this establishment but no names have survived. Tennis was not the only type of match played out on the courts. It is claimed fifty-two marriages came out of the members of the club, more than enough to justify the Jesuits' original support for the project.¹³⁰

However the move from the old courts behind the Presbytery to the new site allowed Fr Bourke to offer the old courts to the Children of Mary who fielded tennis and basketball teams on the site. Again there was an overlap of membership with the Girls' Club who also formed a basketball team at the same time and entered into a district competition.

It was clear that Catholic parish life for young people revolved around social and sporting lives and it was possible to go to a Catholic function several times a week and to play sport on Saturday afternoons as well. However this was the normal life-style of the younger men and women before marriage in those decades and two or three dances a week for some was a quite common practice. From Fr Bourke's point of view, it was important to have plenty of Catholic alternatives for the young people.

Money and Message

Public teaching in the parish of Immaculate Conception was less obvious in 1935 than it had been thirty years before. Articles of interest still appeared in the Monthly Calendar but they were irregular and principally aimed at increasing the membership of various parish organisations. However the parish organised a series of lectures by Fr R. B. McCarthy SJ from Xavier College during Lent on the "Image of Christ" and the "Unfading Immutability of the Church".

Fr Carlisle also ran Instruction Class for non-Catholics two nights a week for most of the year, a reflection of genuine interest in the Church felt by the wider community. Many of the attendees came from other parishes as a certain amount of confidentiality allowed them to explore the faith without it being known in their local area.

However the big input into education in the parish was the creation of new Manresa library by Fr Kirwan in 1935. A room to the right of the front door in the Bank building was taken over as space had been freed up by the purchase of the hall in Lynch Street, shelves and partitions were installed, a large table and some chairs were purchased and books sought. A parish library had always existed but little work was done to maintain it or keep order. Fr Kirwan not only kept the books in order but by a combination of appeals and penny raffles managed to raise regular funds and every month or so he went to town to buy books by his favourite authors. Chesterton, Belloc, Evelyn Waugh and Martindale figured on his list but it was more diverse than that. Each

¹³⁰ Mr F Dennis

evening after devotions, Fr Kirwan went down to the library and chatted to anyone who dropped in and he also opened it after the 11.00 o'clock mass on Sundays. After the men's devotions on Monday nights, special book discussion evenings and reviews of a particular book were held in the library, given by men such as E.W Tipping of the Herald, Mr Lachal, (Lou Lachal's father) and Dr. Luxford Meagher. These evenings proved very popular, especially amongst the older men of the parish. The success of the library made more expansion necessary and it took over the room on the left hand side of the front door as well. It was a case of more raffles and more books.¹³¹ At the same time parishioners were invited to donate both books and money to the library as well as to provide labour as librarians, bookbinders and general staff.¹³² When Fr Kirwan was moved to South Australia, the library passed after a while to Fr Magan who ran it in the same manner as he most enjoyed the evening chats with people who dropped by. When he died in 1959, the library more or less died with him. A parishioner, Mr Terrence O'Brien maintained it for a few more years, but he too died in 1965.

Fr Bourke, like every parish priest before him, faced problems with money. Just under two thirds of parish income was spent on repaying loans and meeting interest on debts, which at the end of 1934 stood at 12,349 pounds. In good years, the debt was reduced by over a thousand pounds a year, but they were not always good years. Other principal costs were church repairs, teachers' salaries and the choir. It was not known how much the priests had to live on, but it was not very great and they lived quite simply.

In 1903, the principal source of income had been the Church Union, but by 1935 it accounted for slightly more than 10% of the total. Still the collectors continued to collect and though the names of contributors were rarely published in the Monthly Calendar, the total contribution by a particular street often was.

Rents from various properties the parish owned, including that paid by the Provincial, were an important contribution, while the members of the altar society added a hundred pounds more. However the main source of income was the first collection at each mass on Sunday and a part of the second collection as well which amounted to two thirds of the regular income. These moneys were topped up by donations and loans from various parishioners and others which in some years totalled a considerable sum and could even exceed the value of the Sunday collections.¹³³ For Fr Bourke balancing the books was a concern which never left him, while lack of income frustrated his plans to finish the church. There was insufficient money in the years after the depression to complete the western transept, but he did manage to add the baptistery to the front of the church and iron fences on Glenferrie Road and undertake many repairs. Like everyone else in the parish, Fr Bourke in the thirties and then later during the War found he had enough money to function, but not enough for the projects he dreamed about.

Life for the majority of the Catholic community, and other communities of Hawthorn, by 1935 was comfortable, secure and somewhat inward looking. Worship, school and much of the younger peoples' social life took place within the same

¹³¹ Anonymous "Notes on the parish library".

¹³² Monthly Calendar April 1935

¹³³ Monthly Calendar March 1935

community and only at work did Catholics, and largely men,¹³⁴ come into regular contact with people of other religions. Travel was difficult and cars were relatively few, so life was generally local, filled with neighbours and usually unchallenged. It was generally expected that men would escort women home after a dance, and so there was a considerable demand for ball partners within walking distance of a venue. However it was a life-style which could not last. More and more Catholics were finding their way into the elite university and professional world and over the horizon was looming the next World War, though in 1935 only few were saying it was coming. Fr Bourke could look out over the municipality and with a degree of satisfaction call it his parish.

¹³⁴ It was an age where married women were not expected to work, but unmarried women did conduct many styles of business and younger women prior to marriage occupied an array of occupations including secretarial and shop jobs.

Walking in Faith-Fathers of the Fifties

The middle decades of the 20th century at Immaculate Conception were remarkable for the presence of two men, Frs. Patrick Harper and Joseph Fitzgerald. Fr Harper was a Dublin boy who joined the Jesuits at the age of 20 and during his training taught at Xavier College. He was particularly successful as a teacher and it was with some disappointment amongst his contemporaries that he was posted to parish work, four years at Richmond and then the rest of his life at Hawthorn.

Fr Harper had a very strong constitution and as a young man represented University College Dublin in athletics and later played soccer and eventually took up golf. He blamed soccer for his back problems later in life which interfered with his golf. However his strong constitution enabled him to spend hours walking the streets of Hawthorn visiting the homes of parishioners and there was never a place he was not welcome. Particularly the children loved him. His delightful sense of humour and infectious laugh were contagious, sharp and incisive but never hurtful.

He radiated a love of God and influenced all he met, Catholic or Protestant. Those who lived with him knew him as a man of God with a deep attachment to the Sacred Heart and to Our Lady who spent long times in prayer. His daily mass, exams, visits to the Blessed Sacrament and breviary and rosary, all influenced his life.

Fr Harper's preaching style in the pulpit was simple but sincere and persuasive and belied the hours of preparation he put into his sermons. According to Fr Magan, on one occasion when preaching to the Women's Sodality he became so carried away with the intensity of the occasion, he addressed the congregation as "we women!"¹³⁵ In his free time, Fr Harper was chaplain to the Scouts, which he enjoyed and president of the Manresa Tennis Club that meant he had to explain to the parish priest why the association was usually in debt.

Apart from being a very practical parish worker, Fr Harper was known for two things in the parish. First was his devotion to his work as director of Women's Sodality which he directed carefully at their evening devotions on Tuesday nights. During the month of May the parish held a crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary and then for the entire month a "May Book" was left before the statue in the church, in which members of the Sodality would write their names, when they made a visit during the week.¹³⁶ It was said that some of the women attended these devotions less for the love of God and much more for the love of Fr Harper.

The second thing Fr Harper was famous for was his parish visitation. Scarcely a family of the fifties in Hawthorn does not have stories about Fr Harper's regular visitation, and even if he turned up at the most inconvenient times, he would be seated down at the kitchen table while the mother of the family rushed about preparing dinner or the young children were doing homework. However unlike some people who are enthusiastic, Fr Harper was very methodical and efficient in his methods. Visitations were to sustain the faith and sense of belonging of families in the parish and then to call back to the Faith, those who had drifted away. No one ever turned him away. "One

¹³⁵ Fitzgerald, Fr Joseph SJ. "Obituary of Fr Patrick Harper".

¹³⁶ Vi. Feil

family returned after summer vacation to find the house burgled and just underneath the door of the ransacked kitchen a note; ‘Fr Harper called.’”¹³⁷

With the coming of the changes after the Vatican Council Fr Harper felt depressed by the new liturgy, the different styles of personal devotion and the modifications in Jesuit house customs. He was a busy man who now sometimes overworked, which brought on fits of depression. In 1970 Fr Harper took a trip “home” to Ireland but it was not a success. The changes in the church meant that the great houses of his memory, Rathfarnham Castle and Tullabeg, were now completely changed. He collapsed and was hospitalised for some time in Dublin. Later he recovered while staying at Clongowes Wood College where the great boarding school was still much more like he remembered it and there was a golf course. He returned to Hawthorn and work, but things were no longer the same. Fr Harper continued as chaplain to the Sodality and various organisations including the Scouts, and even became involved in the earliest of the home masses. He was particularly attached to the Scouts and on one occasion the scout leaders complained about the instability and general decay of the floor. Fr Harper arranged for the parish priest, Fr Phil Kurts, to attend a scout meeting and after a brief talk and some refreshments, the boys began their usual vigorous games. Then the scouters arranged for Fr Kurts to stand on one of the more unstable parts of the floor and he finished the evening with the comment, “they do seem to need a new floor”. On another occasion some Scout leaders and volunteers were doing some repairs to the hall on a Sunday afternoon when one of the visiting priests complained about them working on the Sabbath. Fr Harper promptly arrived on the scene and told the visitor to “leave them alone, they are doing good work”.

Most importantly, Fr Harper’s devoted service to the parishioners in their homes continued. Though he did not lose his personal faith or zeal, nor his power to win the hearts of the people of Hawthorn, the kindly priest collapsed again. He died in August 1972, aged only 65, but he left behind a legacy of faith which still lives on today. Fr Joseph Fitzgerald preached a sermon at his funeral on the death of his friend and even today the sadness and loss shows through. Fr Fitzgerald was not an emotional man, but on this occasion he certainly allowed a poignant side to show through and he spoke for the people of Hawthorn.

Fr Joseph Fitzgerald was the second well-known priest of the 50s, a born and bred Richmond boy, educated by the Christian Brothers and entered the Society in 1918. Most of his priestly training was overseas and after ordination he was posted to Xavier College. Although effective in the school Fr Fitzgerald was moved to Hawthorn at the end of 1939 and was to spend a total of thirty years in the parish. During his time, he did regular parish work, was in charge of finances as minister, did catechist work and directed various sodalities.

However Fr Fitzgerald is remembered principally for his work with the Men’s Sacred Heart Confraternity which he introduced into the parish in 1940. It had only one serious obligation on members, to attend the Confraternity mass at 8.00 o’clock on the first Sunday of the month. The large red banner of the confraternity hung at the back of the pulpit and one of the prefects read the epistle and gospel readings in English while the priest said it at the altar in Latin. The same prefect led the Latin responses normally only said by the altar boys and the entire congregation responded with volume. Known as a

¹³⁷ Barden, Fr Tom, SJ. “Obituary of Fr Patrick Harper”, p 11

“dialogue mass” this style of liturgy began to appear quite frequently in churches during the 40s and 50s. Each first Sunday about eight hundred men and boys attended mass and it was one of the significant church movements in the diocese of the era.¹³⁸

The Confraternity functioned well because of its efficient organisation and structure. The parish was divided into forty sections with each section supervised by a prefect and a sub-prefect. Each prefect had a list of all the Catholics in his section and it was his job to try and have a full list of attendees and then try to reduce his non-members list to virtually nothing. Prefects welcomed new parishioners to the parish, kept the parish census list up to date, and tried to bring non-practising Catholics back to their faith.

The week before the Confraternity mass, the prefect dropped a reminder card in the mailbox of each member of his section and then kept a roll of those who actually attended. These roll cards were passed on to a Confraternity councillor who was responsible for a number of sections and was a member of the Confraternity council. Nine councillors met regularly with the President, secretary and spiritual director of the Confraternity to examine reports and see if anyone needed some extra encouragement. These reports were often passed on to the priests of the parish to help with their ministry and to ensure newcomers were warmly welcomed into the parish.

It was claimed that some of the men of the parish were so disturbed at the thought of a visit from Fr Fitzgerald that though they had effectively left the church they still kept turning up to the confraternity mass each month, even though they went to no others.

Although the monthly mass was the only formal obligation two other liturgical events were important for members. One was on Holy Thursday evening when the Confraternity provided teams of men to watch all night before the altar of repose and the other was the annual communion breakfast and meeting which filled Manresa Hall to the edges.

However the Confraternity took over the Block Collection system for parish fund raising but Fr Fitzgerald wisely isolated it from the work of the section prefects. A separate group of members became block collectors and reported to a different group of district collectors, a process which invigorated the old collection system that had been declining a little since the start of the Depression.

Despite the mass obligation, members were encouraged to take part in a wider range of Catholic Action activities. Many joined the Apostleship of Prayer groups, possibly attracted by the similarity of the spirituality of devotion to the Sacred Heart. The Confraternity also ran a Loyola burse, to raise funds for the training of a Jesuit at Watsonia. The burse was heavily oversubscribed and contributed a good deal to the funding of the Jesuit seminary over some difficult years in the 40's.

One of the factors which kept the Confraternity together was the presence of the sons with their fathers at the mass. What later observers would call “bonding”, the younger boys particularly seem to have felt closer to their fathers as a result of the experience and were keen about it. This in turn made it valuable to the fathers who felt proud of their young men. The second factor which made the Confraternity such a success was Fr Fitzgerald himself. In the 1940s, 1950s and well into the 1960s, it was

¹³⁸ The confraternity had many similarities to the Holy Name Society which was also strong in many parishes of that era.

rare to find him in the presbytery before 9-00pm as he knocked on doors and wandered the streets of Hawthorn. No case was too difficult; no call was too minor, no one ever wanted of support but that Fr Fitzgerald was knocking at the door. No wonder he knew virtually every Catholic in Hawthorn. The success of the Confraternity was in part built around his prayer, his zeal and his organisation.¹³⁹ Fr Fitzgerald often complained to his congregation when a number of men missed the confraternity mass and on one occasion he announced that forty-seven were missing from mass the previous month and he had visited each of them during the past two weeks. Some had valid excuses but one said he was walking his dog. It is unknown whether Fr Fitzgerald required artificial resuscitation after that excuse. On another occasion he was going out on a Saturday afternoon and found the Manresa driveway blocked by a car. Collingwood was playing Hawthorn and Father immediately began to look for ways of dealing with this obvious Collingwood supporter. Before he could decide on letting down the offender's tyres, a leading parishioner and doctor came out of the presbytery and said, "sorry to hold you up Father, I just dropped in for confession."¹⁴⁰

Women were not invited as Fr Fitzgerald thought other people were to look after them, and at Hawthorn, Fr Harper gladly obliged. However there were always a few women who heard mass from the Lady Chapel as distance or transport made it difficult for them to get to another mass. In a famous story, Fr Fitzgerald was called to give the last rites to a dying woman. When it was over, the woman said, "Father, I know I have a short time to live and coming to this hour of my life, it there is one thing which gives me more consolation than anything else, it is this; I have never missed a Dialogue Mass on the First Sunday!" And for once, Fr Fitzgerald was lost for words.¹⁴¹

After two decades of outstanding success, the 1960s ushered in the changes after the Vatican Council and enormous were the changes in more than just the church. Fr Fitzgerald was affected by the whole process. At a mass at St Joseph's he said the "prayers after mass" for the conversion of Russia and then turned to the congregation. "That is the last time we will ever say it, and may God forgive us."¹⁴²

Despite the changes in theology of the idea of reparation for the Sacred Heart and the increased emphasis on having whole families come to mass together, the Confraternity continued on, albeit much smaller, even after Fr Fitzgerald died in 1973.¹⁴³ Forty years later a few men still keep the devotion alive, proving that for its time, the Confraternity was a genuine way of Walking in Faith.

While Fr Harper and Fr Fitzgerald tower about all the other priests of the 50s, Fr William O'Collins and Tom Bourke did their years as parish priests and most of their curates stayed only briefly. Fr John Carpenter stayed four years and was known for taking communion to the sick by taxi. He went into the home of the ill person,

¹³⁹ Anonymous. "Fr Joe Fitzgerald as a parishioner saw him" *Monthly Calendar*, December 1973, January 1974. P 4

¹⁴⁰ Fr Tom Lees and Fr Laurie Drake

¹⁴¹ "Men's Sacred Heart Confraternity" *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, April 1, 1950. Republished on the parish website.

¹⁴² Vi Feil

¹⁴³ Tributes to Fr Fitzgerald came from everywhere in the district of Hawthorn, including the mayor and city council. J.R. Johnson to Provincial 7 January 1974.

administered the sacrament and returned to the cab for the next one, which somewhat limited one's opportunities for pastoral contact.

The elderly Fr James Magan continued to work in the parish, running the library and talking to anyone who came to the parlour. On Saturday evenings he sat in the confessional reading the Sporting Globe between penitents. In 1959, Fr Magan was giving a retreat to the priests of the Sale Diocese at Watsonia when he was suddenly taken ill and died. Definitely a "man's man", his death left a hollow feeling amongst the people of Hawthorn; perhaps more had died than just Fr Magan.

Walking in Faith – Shadow of the Monster 1967-68

Fr Henry Johnston left Immaculate Conception at the end of 1966 and Fr Kevin Carroll and the builders moved in shortly afterwards. But more than the church had changed. Two innovations were changing the life of the average parishioner, the presence of television and the motor car. The presence of television invaded the families' evenings and the widely available motor car expanded their social frontiers, especially that of the young. It was the era when the Beatles came to Melbourne and the start of moratorium movements against the Vietnam War. Conscription was in force and its inconsistency made it difficult for some young men to plan their future or enter relationships they might hope could be permanent. It was an era when some Catholic schools temporarily lost their way in the teaching of the Faith, and some parents lost their confidence in handing on their patrimony.

In Immaculate Conception the parish community had to deal with the changes to the older liturgy and the renovated church. It was an era when the Confraternities and Sodalities, the pillars of religious practice in the parish for more than sixty years now had to battle to adjust their practice to the new spirituality and new ways of doing things. It was a battle they would largely, ultimately lose. Into this mixture of vital enthusiasm and stultifying uncertainty came Fr Kevin Carroll, one of the last men to be sent to Australia from Ireland. In a way he was perfect for the role. Fr Carroll was very able and intelligent as well as bright, merry and kind, with a great interest in people. Parishioners of all sorts found him a good companion.¹⁴⁴ As well as being parish priest, he was involved with the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association and served on many church and state boards trying to combat the effects of alcoholism. This work gained him the "nickname" "Coca Cola Carroll", and despite this title, he either never tried or never succeeded in reducing the consumption of alcohol at many parish dinners.

The new sanctuary and altar consecrated on December 8th, one hundred years after the opening of the church and the parish held a major celebratory dinner at the Hawthorn Town Hall, though it had been in use for many months before the consecration. Most of the parishioners were quite pleased with the new altar though some, perhaps many, were sad at the loss of the old sanctuary and chancel. What stunned most of the parish was the sculpture of the Holy Spirit which hung high in the roof above the altar. Conceptually it made good sense as it was designed to raise the eye level upwards, in the same way as the stained glass windows did for the old altar. It had been conceived by Fr Michael Scott, the rector of Newman College, who was an internationally known artistic adviser on church architecture, but in the minds of many in the parish, the conception was not carried through to the piece. With due respect to the sculptor, Rein Stigmolen, the symbolic dove of the Holy Spirit was then the largest piece of suspended sculpture ever commissioned in Australia. It was to be the crowning piece of Peter Burrowes design, but unfortunately, people just did not like it. Fr Johnston was apparently very disappointed when he first saw it.¹⁴⁵ The red eye in the sculpture worked well, but not often and it was

¹⁴⁴ Strong, David, SJ. *The Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography 1848-1998*. P 48

¹⁴⁵ Ms Vi Feil

claimed it gave young children nightmares. When the sculpture was removed some years later for safety reasons, apparently few protested it.

The sanctuary was bathed in natural light from heat absorbent glass placed in the roof which though green to look at, admitted 90% of natural white light. The glass was set in two layers, six inches apart, to allow them to carry the heat away and give added ventilation during the summer.¹⁴⁶ The concept was quite brilliant but unfortunately wind driven rain also found its way through the gaps and caused problems when falling on the priests and acolytes during mass. It has taken years to rectify the situation which is still not completely fixed forty years later.

Fr Johnston had worked assiduously through the early 1960s, preparing his congregation for the changing liturgy, and wrote regular articles in the Monthly Calendar as each new change was announced. He published the first stage of the new responses in English and immediately made certain that all the parishioners received a booklet so they could respond to the priest's prayers. Petitions and admonitions urging full and loud responses at mass appeared regularly in the Monthly Calendar.¹⁴⁷ Jesuit scholastics came from Watsonia to lead the congregational parts of and explain the changes. The choir took over the enlarged role of leading the congregation in singing and less of performing major pieces, and the organist, Mr W Box embraced the changes with vigour.

Also in 1960, Mr Paul Fountain had founded the Lourdes Boys Choir based in Hawthorn which performed at a very high level, sang in some important masses and were available to sing at marriages and funerals. The boys provided an alternative source of music in the parish when the main parish choir was not available and solemn music was required.

It was left to Fr Carroll to introduce lay readers which he did first at the confraternity masses and then extended it. Despite preparation the new lectors were extremely nervous and Fr Carroll often stood behind them, giving advice and encouragement, and fairly quickly this change proved to be the most popular of them all. Communion in the hand took longer to be accepted, and special ministers of the Eucharist followed after that. Without the compassion of Fr Carroll the rapid changes in the radically new liturgical space might have been very divisive as it was in some other places, but in Hawthorn it was slowly accepted, welcomed by some, with resignation by others. Another popular change was the introduction of the midday mass at which reception of communion was helped by changes to the fast laws of the church. Saturday night mass at 8.00 pm was a failure but Sunday at 5.00 pm proved viable if judged by attendances. Some claimed that it was too late in the day to dedicate the Sabbath to the Lord's service but Fr Carroll was happy to have his people at mass, regardless of time.

Even so it was not all plain sailing. The Catholic population of the parish peaked in the early 60s and then slowly declined, and with it fell the numbers of marriages and baptisms. However the numbers of children in non-catholic schools and non-baptised children also fell away. It is unknown what impact the renovations had on church attendance as for a year or so, the liturgy was carried on amongst scaffolding and cement dust. In confraternities, Fr Fitzgerald was moved to Richmond at the end of 1966 and Fr Carroll took over the men's confraternity. The effect was immediate. Numbers dropped and there were regular appeals for fidelity in the Monthly Bulletin. By the end

¹⁴⁶ Burrowes, Peter. "Your new sanctuary".

¹⁴⁷ Monthly Calendar, January 1965 p 7.

of 1967 it appears that the decline had been arrested, but it never again obtained the numbers or percentage of men and boys that it had enjoyed in earlier times. In 1967 of the 753 known members, about 521 attended the Confraternity mass in March. During the following year known members dropped to 660 and average monthly attendances fell to 445.¹⁴⁸ However the President, Mr Brian Murphy, worked constantly to keep the ideals of the Confraternity before the parish community, and probably contributed a good deal to its continued survival. The numbers involved in the Women's Confraternity on the 2nd Sunday of the month are harder to gauge but there was a lesser decline in numbers.

The Men's and Women's Sodalities were composed of the more active and dedicated parishioners and therefore numbers held up for slightly longer. In the women's Sodality, the long-serving Fr Harper resigned as director in February 1967 and was replaced by the genial Fr Jim McNamara. Membership was stable at between 50 and 60 with evening devotions on Wednesday, the Sodality mass on the 4th Sunday of the month and mass and rosary on the 1st Saturday. Even so members were asking where were all the former members of the Children of Mary. Though the men's and women's sodalities remained separate bodies, they began to share the same evening devotions on Wednesday nights and the same sodality mass on the Sunday and though smaller, both organisations remained vibrant.

Message and Money

Just as Fr Bourke before him, Fr Carroll faced the problem of getting the message of the Catholic Faith across to his people. Fr Johnston had written extensive articles in the Monthly Calendar, but Fr Carroll was more reticent in print. He relied more heavily on his weekly Sunday sermons where he not only preached on the scriptures, he talked about liturgy and prayer life in the Church. It is not known how effective this strategy was in introducing change, but as well as working on educating the parish on the way forward, he and his priests also worked hard at supporting the old structures. In this work he was helped particularly by his priests, Frs. Jim McNamara, Pat Harper and Ambrose Byrne.

However the more formal progress of education, Fr Carroll looked to the wider church. Where Fr Carlisle, had given talks to potential Catholics, Fr Carroll used the Catholic Enquiry Centre which had been begun in New South Wales, to provide a series of correspondence lectures on the Church and its teachings. Instead of lectures being given in the parish, Fr Carroll was urging parishioners to become students at the Grail Adult Education Centre which had been set up in Kew but with a centre in Hawthorn and was offering a wide range of courses. These included courses on Council Documents, Biblical Studies, Art, Painting and Drawing, New Mathematics, Philosophy through 20th Century Literature, Spiritual Education of Children and many others. The numbers attending these courses remained fairly small but those who went found them extremely valuable and provided the basis for an educated catholic laity in the parish.

To fund all the activity in the parish a new system had been adopted in 1964 known to the Catholics of Melbourne as the Sacrificial Offering or the Sacrificial Giving

¹⁴⁸ Monthly Calendar February 1968, p 1.

Programme. The old block collections disappeared and dependence upon fluctuating weekly collections went with it and a new system was created by a professional organisation. Members of the parish were asked to commit themselves to a set amount each week in a special envelope which was then placed in the second collection. The system allowed both the parish and the donors to plan their expenses and made bookkeeping much easier. The days of large church fetes and regular dances as fundraisers were over as well and the new system was well supported. By 1967 three quarters of the regular parish income came from this source and the Sunday collections.

The pattern of expenditure within the parish had not changed greatly for many years, but by 1967 wages had become the largest single item in the church accounts. Costing more than the regular church and club expenditures was the cost of the schools in the parish. There, school fees covered about half the ordinary cost of running the schools and government aid to primary school students another quarter, but the rest had to be found from normal parish income, which reflected the parish commitment to the schools. 1967 was also a year which saw some substantial extraordinary expenses as nearly \$40,000 was put aside for the rebuilding of the church and then a new science laboratory was added to St John's. This later item was partly funded by the work of the parents' association and from substantial government capital grants. At the end of the year, the parish showed a substantial deficit, but as this was largely due to the rebuilding programme in the church, the financial situation was manageable.

One unexpected result of the planned sacrificial giving campaign was that Fr Carroll had to hire secretarial assistance to administer the applications and Mrs Margaret de Vries and Miss Lois Harmon were hired. After the appeal was completed, Miss Harmon stayed on as parish secretary for many years, a reflection of how bureaucracy was starting to grow in Australia and the importance of the telephone for parishioners trying to gain contact with their parish priests. Mrs de Vries also continued to serve the parish in more of a part-time capacity.

Some parishioners had found the presbytery to be a dark and forbidding place and children especially tried to avoid it. In earlier days the door was answered by Gabriel, a man from central Europe who served the fathers well over many years. There was a story that as a young man he had saved Fr George Kelly from a drowning accident and though his loyalty and devotion to the Jesuits was never in doubt some youngsters found his presence at the door ghostly.¹⁴⁹

The abolition of the annual church fetes and fundraisers did not actually mean the end of all fetes. St John's school ran an annual fete where its parents' and friends' association raised money for improvements for the school and the Hawthorn Mission auxiliary ran numerous events to assist the Jesuit Missions in India and to support the Maytime Fair held at Xavier College, one of the largest and longest running fetes in the diocese.¹⁵⁰ Various clubs and societies still ran fund raising events, but for the parish itself, for the moment, things were simpler.

Caring

¹⁴⁹ Miss Vi Feil

¹⁵⁰ Interview Maisie Slattery

Hawthorn was a different suburb from the 1930s. There were fewer families suffering the impact of husbands lost in the war and the unemployment of the Great Depression. As a result the two principal aid organisations in the parish, The Catholic Women's Social Guild and St Vincent de Paul, turned some of their interest to wider areas.

The Catholic Women's Social Guild had voted itself out of existence following its 39th AGM in 1960, but the following year Mrs E. Willis began to work towards its re-establishment which was successfully achieved in 1962.

By 1968 the Guild had become involved in fund raising for overseas appeals, such as the "Milk for India" campaign and the ecumenical "Freedom from Hunger" appeal centred on the West Hawthorn Presbyterian Church. The Jesuit Missions benefited by the Guild's involvement in the Maytime Fair and the Blue Door Auxiliary and others helped the Pallotine and Capuchin fathers with their work. On the local level some members drove cars for the "Meals on Wheels" programme, taught catechetics in the local state school, accompanied children to mass on Sundays and helped some parishioners with language translations of difficult documents. One ministry the Guild did carry on from older days was the providing a first communion breakfast in Manresa Hall for the children, along with tea or coffee for their parents.

The guild met on the second Thursday of each month to plan activities with about 15 women on the local committee. Membership totalled about 250 which meant a consistent and satisfactory turn out could be guaranteed at nearly all fund raisers. The highly competent Mrs Phillips, the president, worked hard to keep organisation running smoothly and was supported by Mrs Cherry Eckersley as secretary. Like all such organisations, they needed capable and willing people at the head of their committees.¹⁵¹

The St Vincent de Paul Society had always been a much smaller body and in 1962 John Connell, who had been president from 1929, resigned. Although the conference suffered from the loss of his experience, Mr Rupert Harrison stepped into the role and the committee was revitalised and committed. One of the major fundraisers was the "waste" drive; an appeal for clothing, rags and saleable goods which were collected from homes in the parish at the start of winter. Money raised supported a number of the works of the Society, including Ozanam House (a shelter for homeless men), prison visitation, Hospital Committee and Migrant Special Work. During 1967 and 1968 the conference was involved in Bush Fire Relief and some overseas assistance. Despite the widely spread ministries and the more settled nature of the Hawthorn community, the St Vincent de Paul was still involved in its core business, helping those in need in the parish. During the year more than seventy families received some form of aid and a total of one hundred and sixty home visits were made by members of the conference, a very positive contribution to the life of the parish.

Apart from the two larger organisations the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society run for many years by Mr Jack Locke, and the Irish National Foresters' Catholic Benefit Society under P. Crellin were still functioning, the parish. Both these organisations now served as agents for Government medical and hospital funds which was the first stage of government involvement in the medical and health insurance field. Both organisations were still down to meet once a fortnight, but the days of the public lectures and big gatherings seem to have past.

¹⁵¹ Various reports from the Monthly Calendar

Youth and Adults

Care of children by the parish was still in the 1960s left in the hands of the Brothers and Sisters teaching in the parish schools. However there was a substantial increase of interest and activity in working with late teenagers and those who had recently left school. The C.Y.M.S. had been more or less replaced by a broader-based Y.C.W. and social and sporting activities dominated.

However in the middle 60s, a new body, the Immaculate Conception Parish Youth Advisory Committee was begun, to coordinate all the “youth” activities in the parish and to suggest other options. The committee was generally dominated by older people but they made no effort to control the actual events organised by the younger people. Mr Bill Box was the elected president and he understood how best his organisation could work for the good of the parish and the younger people.

Throughout the year, the girls’ basketball team and softball teams were successful and part of the Y.C.W. girls association. They were supported by the Advisory Committee which provided assistance in running the coffee lounge as well as helping organise a very popular Thursday evening course for six weeks, “Learning to Love” with Fr Don Burnard as the principal speaker. The girls’ group also organised a very well attended Christmas party for the Sunday school children as well as Christmas presents for “orphan” homes in the district. The key person in all these activities was Maureen Lynch, the girls’ president, illustrating again the need for strong and capable personalities to keep voluntary groups working together. The men’s Y.C.W organised football teams with Leo Slattery and Jim Fuller in leadership roles and Tom Lacey as coach. Cricket teams and basketball teams were arranged at this time. Y.C.W. balls and local social events with quite competent bands and groups were also run on a regular basis.

Special groups were organised for secondary school students, tertiary students and students from overseas, all with varying degrees of success and all with a mixture of reflection times and social activities. From time to time, these groups went away on usually successful weekends of retreat and socialising, often held at the Jesuit house in Anglesea. The tertiary group attempted to organise a tutoring programme for struggling secondary students as well as to recruit a few matriculating students to join the organisation in the coming year. A small group of tertiary students met on a fortnightly basis in a “review of life” group to discuss gospel stories and to try to develop a more responsive Christian style in the tertiary environment.¹⁵² This movement showed that despite changes in the Church, a significant level of spirituality was still present amongst the young people.

One of the key activities was the 3-4-5 coffee lounge on Friday evenings where younger people from 16 to 22 were welcome to spend time, listen to a band in the small hall or avail themselves of coffee, billiards or table tennis. The idea was that the Y.C.W. leadership thought there were many people in Hawthorn who did not know many others in the district and here was an opportunity to overcome this problem.

¹⁵² Monthly Calendar October 1968

In the sixties Fr Ambrose Byrne supported the work of the executives of the Y.C.W. and surrounded by good administrators, such as Tony Meagher and Maureen Lynch, the organisations thrived.

However there were two organisations in the parish which were often overlooked but did definitely work for the younger people. The Manresa Scout group had its origin back in 1925 when the 1st Glenferrie Troop was established as the only Catholic scouting organisation in Victoria. (In fact it had begun in 1921 with the enrolment of C. Duffus and A. Drohau and met in St John's school.) It was only in 1925 that it received full recognition as a Catholic Scout Group and started to meet at Manresa Hall.¹⁵³ Sadly lack of leaders forced it to close two years later. However in 1938 Mr W Timlin organised a new troop as 12th Hawthorn (Manresa Scout Group) with Noel O'Sullivan as Scout Master and Patricia Timlin as Cub Master. It was an immediate success and though there were some problems in getting good leadership during World War II, it thrived. In the early 60s, Mr Vin Thompson was Group Scout Master, Mr Graham Langton as Scout Master until 1965 and followed by Mr Cor de Vries while Margaret de Vries was cubmaster from 1958.¹⁵⁴ A very competent leader, Peter Fasoli had started the Senior Scout group in 1950 and continued to lead it until 1971.

Scouting was quite popular in the 1950s and early 60s, but for a group to survive it required top class leadership. 12th Hawthorn had that leadership in every level and during the early 60s there was a waiting list of boys trying to enter the cub pack. The training was kept at a high level with regular awards of the more difficult badges and success in inter-troop competitions. In the twenty years up to 1970, 42 boys were presented to the Governor to receive their Queen's Scout award, an outstanding record of leadership and achievement.

Regular reports of scouting activities appeared in the Monthly Calendar with names of new boys joining, cubs being promoted and successes in competition all listed. In addition there was a regular "church parade" which again put the idea of scouting before families of the parish and at times the scouts and cubs formed honour guards at various church functions. It was considered in many families an important thing for their sons to be. The work of the Scout troop was supported and sustained by an active parent committee which organised various social events and raised funds. Some quite insightful ways of raising money were tried. One evening lecture was given by the author, Mrs Parker, entitled; "Two eyes and a passport: How to make a husband out of a man."¹⁵⁵ It is not known whether any scouts attended.

The second parish organisation which attracted some younger participation was the Manresa Tennis Club which attempted to increase membership by offering junior competition teams and Saturday morning tennis classes. This programme was relatively successful and boys' and girls' under 13 and under 15 teams were entered into the Catholic Lawn Tennis competition.

Finally in a way, one organisation that survived though in a more limited way was the boys' altar servers group. In the new liturgy there was less concern to have servers for each weekday mass but they added to the solemnity of the major Sunday masses and important events. However through the 1960s a substantial number of boys

¹⁵³ Isaacs, Albert P. *Scouting in Hawthorn 1909-1993* P 37

¹⁵⁴ These obviously male terms were changed to gender neutral ones in the 70s.

¹⁵⁵ Monthly Calendar September 1965 p 7

turned out fairly regularly for the acolyte duty and contributed to the acceptance of the new liturgy by many families in the parish.

During 1968 Pope Paul VI launched the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae* which contained a great deal of information, including a restatement of the Church's ban on artificial contraception. Around the world there was outrage from the liberal side of the Church and a strong condemnation of the papal teaching. Amongst the claims made was that people now made up their own minds and did not automatically accept the Church's teaching anymore. In Hawthorn the reaction was quite muted. Young women had already moved beyond Fr Carpenter's sanction that un-chaperoned young women risked going to Hell and went on long trips alone.¹⁵⁶ They took their own precautions and fear of pregnancy was more immediate than fear of Hell, if they were that way inclined. They were already making up their own minds about how they would lead their lives and the long time Marian spirituality of Mary as the homemaker was weakening quickly. Television had already undermined the work of the family rosary crusades of the fifties and the saying "the family that prays together, stays together", was no longer heard from the pulpits. For reasons mostly quite outside the control of the Church the culture of Catholicism was changing and with it, religious practice, doctrine and faith. Few in the Church of Immaculate Conception had stopped to think that for the last century and a half young people had absorbed their Catholicism through their devotions and culture before they learnt their doctrines. The implications of the cultural change were already knocking at the door.¹⁵⁷

In Hawthorn by the end of 1968, despite the implementation of the new altar and the new liturgy, the old customs and practices of the faith existed side by side with the new. A lot more needed to be done to implement the practices flowing from the Council, but enough of the older traditions remained in the parish and the schools for people to still believe the changes were part of the Catholic Church they had always known.

¹⁵⁶ Harris, Alana. *Women of Prayer and Catholic Everywhere. An examination of the Spirituality and Social Identity of the Children of Mary 1940-1965.* P 24

¹⁵⁷ Campion, Edmund. *Australian Catholics.* P 146. This landmark study of Catholicism in Australia is extensively quoted in most studies on the Church, including Alana Harris, above.

Walking in Faith- 1975- The Building Blocks of Vatican II

1975, the year of the Dismissal, changed the way of life in Australia and set in motion political and social processes that would take decades to be absorbed. Visitors returning to Immaculate Conception and St Joseph's that year would have noticed enormous differences even from ten years before. In the late 1960s Fr Carroll noted that the number of people attending mass from outside the parish was increasing and put it down to mass beginning punctually on time and being completed in forty-five minutes. He also noted the numbers of confessions and Sunday communions were falling, but the number of weekday communions was rising. His successor, Fr Pat Tracey, changed and spread out the mass times so that parishioners had time to clear the parking areas before the next mass congregation arrived. However he then preached at great length, often beyond forty-five minutes and took up all the newly created time. This time numbers on Sundays dropped alarmingly but little was apparently done to correct the trend.¹⁵⁸ The numbers stayed down until well into Fr Morgan's period as parish priest. However the liturgy was very good and modern with quite a reasonable level of congregational participation. The Confraternity and the Sodalities continued to exist but the commencement of the Family mass at 9.30 AM changed some families' habits. Families with younger children went to mass together and listened to the "modern" music often played by young people with guitars, drums or piano which meant that many families were lost to their traditional Confraternity or Sodality mass. Initially the music and the hymns were of a fairly mixed standard, some good, others less so, but composers had been writing Latin hymns for hundreds of years and vernacular folk style hymns were a new category. Hymns such as "Break bread together on our knees," and "Dropkick me Jesus through the goal posts of life", are mostly unforgettable for the wrong reasons. As a result, for the moment, the older organisations survived.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same", it was said by some grandmothers and it was true in Hawthorn by 1975. The men's Confraternity of the Sacred Heart was still having significant attendances but was not attracting any young people whose social life on Saturday evenings might make attending the 8.00 AM Sunday mass an insurmountable challenge. By 1976 a meeting of the office bearers was only attended by half the men and no President or Secretary was elected, something which would never have happened earlier, if not due to the fear of God, certainly due to the fear of Fr Fitzgerald. However the women's Confraternity continued to function as did the Sodality of Our Lady, which thrived up to a point and eventually worked closely with the men. The men's Sodality therefore disappeared, as did the initial attempt to re-name the old Sodality as a Christian Life Community, which was the modern term. The CLC became quite a different organisation.

The local branch of the Catholic Women's League, which had a large but non-functioning membership in the parish, went out of existence in early 1972 and its total funds of \$91 were transferred to the parish.¹⁵⁹ Also "in recess" from 1971 onwards was the Catholic Women's Social Guild, and members were encouraged to take advantage of

¹⁵⁸ Fr J. McNamara to Fr P. O'Sullivan 26 August 1972

¹⁵⁹ Monthly Calendar October 1972 p 3

other opportunities for service. One of those opportunities was the St Vincent de Paul Society that for years had been a male- only conference, now in 1975 opened the way for women to join. Mrs Margaret Murphy became the first to join in Hawthorn in 1977.¹⁶⁰ The highly active conference, under the Presidency of Mr Leo Blood, in the middle seventies, purchased a shop in Auburn Road to provide clothing to those in need and raise money for the organization. It was a cooperative venture with other nearby conferences and quickly became a helpful base and a significant fundraiser. The St Vincent de Paul also took over the parish's campaign to run pamphlet racks and Catholic book sales in the church porches after mass on Sundays. Sales of *The Advocate* improved dramatically and the Jesuits publicised their periodicals *Messenger*, *Madonna* and *Social Survey*, which was only to be expected.

After several years of Medibank and government medical assistance, the days of the local branches, friendly societies like the Hibernians were over, though they continued to function on the State level. Symbolically the Hawthorn HACBS gave their set of carpet bowls to the Scouts, who for the moment did not have any carpet. The friendly societies had done a great service in the parish for nearly eighty years.

Although the Sacrificial Giving Programme had ended the days of the Parish Fetes, and with them, sales of framed portraits of parish priests, fund raising still continued. The Hawthorn Auxiliary of the Jesuit Mission in India was very active, especially around the time of the Maytime Fair, and both St Joseph's and Manresa Kindergarten had fund raising committees of their own. Sadly by 1975 the St John's Parents and Friends had ceased to have a point. However the St Joseph's Tennis Club, the St Vincent de Paul and even the Scouts engaged in a little finance raising¹⁶¹ of their own in keeping with a century- old tradition of local church bodies.

One new organisation, which appeared first in 1971, was the Manresa Community Club which began first in 1971 with Mrs Molly Fanning in the driving seat but supported by some well-known women of the parish such as Verna Stroud, Patricia Smith and Maisie Slattery. This largely social organization was aimed at the more "mature" members of the parish and held monthly gatherings and occasional social events for the elderly of the parish. These functions proved very popular and attendances of more than sixty were common and though they met in the Small Hall of the Manresa Centre, they remained quite separate from the structure which was to grow up around the Manresa Peoples' Centre at the time. This Community Club proved to be one of the most successful small organizations started and run in the parish during the 70s.

Possibly the most significant change had been the appointment of a Parish Council; the formation had been directed by Fr Peter Kelly, the Jesuit Provincial, during his visitation to Hawthorn in early 1970.¹⁶² Fr Carroll moved quickly and a Parish Committee was appointed followed by a steering committee headed by the capable Mr Brian Murphy, which was in place by August. However despite the enthusiastic support of Fr Ambrose Byrne, the committee had considerable difficulty in raising much enthusiasm amongst the parishioners. To overcome this difficulty a series of home meetings was held around the parish where small groups could meet and feel more

¹⁶⁰ Slattery, Kevin. *A Century of Service*. (A History of the Immaculate Conception Conference of St Vincent de Paul, 1900-2000) page 20 (Actual date is a little uncertain.)

¹⁶¹ Also known as Manresa Women's Club in some of Fr Murphy's correspondence

¹⁶² Fr F.P. Kelly, *Memoriale* 20 March 1970

comfortable about answering and asking questions. The meetings were organised by a "Bulletin Sub-Committee" which was formed by the Parish Steering Committee and the results of the house meetings were published over three months in the Monthly Calendar. A number of full parish meetings led up to a parish assembly and then elections, originally timed for March but were somewhat delayed which resulted in more delays in the election of the first Parish Council.¹⁶³ The first full "Parish Assembly" was held in Hawthorn Town Hall on Sunday May 30th 1971 with representation of all the most active members of the parish. Thirty-nine candidates stood for election, some for a zone and others as parish-wide candidates in a system that seemed as complicated as the Victorian Upper House. Eventually twelve members were elected and Fr Carroll added two priests, a Sister and a Brother from the schools and the president of the Parish Education Board. Mr Brian Murphy was elected president, Dr Michael Jarvis, Vice President and Mrs Margaret de Vries as secretary,¹⁶⁴ and it was inaugurated on August 15th, 1971. It was from the beginning intended to be an "advisory" council and in contested cases the final decision remained with the parish priest. In addition they had nothing to do with the parish finances as Fr Carroll had appointed a Parish Financial Advisory Committee in early 1970 to deal with financial concerns, now that the sacrificial giving campaign and changing government legislation were making financial management ever more complicated. As the parish accountant was also on the Pastoral Council there was no problem with communication, but for a while the parish council felt a little isolated from a key part of parish administration.¹⁶⁵

All these meetings and assemblies produced a Charter for the Hawthorn Parish Assembly and Hawthorn Parish Council, supported by a Commentary on the Charter and then some operational Guidelines on which the initial Council and Assemblies were based. In the end the whole process worked remarkably well, mainly because the leaders involved were determined to make it work.

Fr Carroll retired after his six years as parish priest at the end of 1971 and was appointed to St Ignatius Toowong in Queensland. Unfortunately he was taken ill suddenly and died, so one of the first duties of the Parish Council was to change the farewell social for Fr Carroll into a commemoration and funeral service.

By 1975 the Parish Council had settled down into the routine and there was a new parish priest in office, Fr Richard Morgan. Fr Morgan, a former lecturer in theology at Corpus Christi Seminary, brought to the office a highly intellectual approach to pastoral work as well as a keen understanding of the Jesuit retreat ministry and the Spiritual Exercises. The council itself had gained valuable experience in organising the parish participation in the 1973 Eucharistic Congress and had streamlined a lot of its work through subcommittees. The liturgy committee worked with the parish priest on helping to maintain meaningful liturgies and train lay leaders such as lectors in their work. Lay special ministers were introduced in 1975-76 and another area of training was needed. The committee also had to face problems which had been covered by older and declining organizations. The Altar Society had looked after the brass and flowers for generations but in the changes had more or less ceased to exist in its original format. The famous Misses Craig continued to do wonderful work in this area, but the Council committee

¹⁶³ The title Parish Pastoral Council came into existence at a much later date.

¹⁶⁴ Monthly Calendar August 1971

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Mrs Margaret de Vries

acknowledged that they could not go on much further. Eventually the work passed to members of the Women's Sodality who did it well.¹⁶⁶

The Parish Council also had a Community Committee to welcome new parishioners to the Church, Publicity Committee, Social Committee, a Mission Committee and a Youth Committee and received reports from the Finance Committee and the Parish Schools' Board. Mr Chris Hesse was president at the start of 1975 with Brian Coyne as VP. The parish council had shown itself to be a competent supporter of the Parish Priests over its first five years of existence, but in 1975, it faced three serious problems, the closure of St John's school, relationship between the Parish Council and the Manresa Peoples' Centre and a general apathy towards membership of the Council amongst a majority of the parish.

The Parish Council was responsible to the Parish Priest but reported to the Parish Assembly which was a gathering of parishioners held once a year. The initial meeting was very large and held in the Hawthorn Town Hall, but later ones fitted comfortably into Manresa Hall. However in 1972 a special assembly to streamline the election process had failed to get half the number of members for a quorum, so the Council went ahead and published the changes anyway and waited for a reaction. No one objected and no one commented so the changes remained.¹⁶⁷ The same thing would happen again in 1976. However the Council continued to thrive as enough capable and enthusiastic members kept putting their names forward to ensure smooth functioning. Frequently however the fewness of the parishioners seeking to be candidates meant that there was often no election and a new member joined the Council unopposed.

One possible contributing factor for this decline in parishioner commitment was the ending in March 1974 of the Monthly Calendar and its absence as the key instrument in conveying information to the parish was immediately felt. The demise was largely triggered on the grounds of cost and an argument that "no one reads it anyway", the same fate which had met so many similar parish papers in other parishes of the diocese in those days. In a short time it was realised the second argument was false and the first one well it was worth the cost.

Throughout 1975 the Council discussed ways of replacing it but it was not until April 1977 that the first Manresa Report was issued. Some supporters wanted to retain the name, Monthly Calendar, but this was a problem for a paper that came out quarterly. It continued in production until December 1980 when new printing equipment in the parish allowed for the production of a larger paper, "in house". This did not last long and was quickly replaced by the "Hawthorn Parish Bulletin" from 1982 which was a weekly single sheet produced by the new photocopier.

Concerns in 75

Rev Peter Norden¹⁶⁸, a Jesuit scholastic at time but highly qualified in counselling and sociology, prepared and conducted a survey of the parish under thirteen headings and produced twenty-five recommendations.¹⁶⁹ A questionnaire was handed to

¹⁶⁶ Later the Altar Society would be reborn.

¹⁶⁷ Annual Report for the year 22 April 1972 to 13 May 1973

¹⁶⁸ Currently the PP of St Ignatius Richmond and formerly director of Jesuit Social Services

¹⁶⁹ The survey was not actually conducted until 25 April 1976 after several months of planning.

all parishioners at all masses one Sunday to which about half the congregation responded. Children were not encouraged to respond and many married couples put in a combined response. Generally, parishioners said, they expected spiritual leadership and guidance from their priests, friendship and support from their fellow parishioners and a parish which was a Christian worshipping community. Next they wanted more personal contact with their priests and hoped for regular visits to their homes, good standard of liturgical celebrations and practical guidance for the problems of daily life. A new strain in the thinking of the parishioners was a public concern for those in need and unjustly treated as well as a demand for on-going theological formation. Finally there was a systematic demand for greater participation by the laity in the life of the parish.

However what parishioners wrote did not always translate into real commitment and action. Parishioners might want priests to call but with both parents working, they were rarely home or available to receive them. Fr Tom Lake-Smith complained that even after regular visits and leaving cards, contact could still not be made with some families. The relatively poor attendance at Parish Assemblies did not suggest that the commitment to greater laity involvement was widely held but it was an era with a relatively large transient population in Hawthorn who did not put down roots in the parish area. Some of the younger parishioners felt the Parish Council was too involved in arguments and discussions and they could give better of their time in other organisations, while others thought it was too willing to do “what Father wanted”, where there should have been open discussion. Then finally, and rather critically, there was a substantial group who wanted “no more changes please”, sought occasional prayer services and benediction and wanted some silent times while mass is going on.

The Parish Council had already noted the need to find ways to bring the elderly back to the church in the same way as contacting the young was a challenge. The Confraternities seemed to be stagnant, and though the women’s Sodality was much better, the arrival in the parish of new style Christian Life Communities, Teams of Our Lady and Marriage Encounter gave some direction for the younger marrieds and middle-aged groups. Despite the certainty of some of the priests that the Confraternities were dying, they did maintain quite a core of membership for many years and did much good work in the parish. There were more problems with children and young people in State schools not being taught their faith and then families struggling with only one parent, deserted wives and alcoholics. None of these problems were new, but everyone knew the earlier solutions now did not work and new ones had to be found or the church would be sidelined as having nothing to say to the day-to-day problems of living. These problems were the same in every parish, but Hawthorn was different in that a larger parish team of priests and the members of an active Parish Council were determined to do something about them.

The survey figures also showed a change in the pattern of mass attendance. Apart from the Confraternity Sunday, which boosted numbers at the 8.00AM mass, the 6-30 A.M. mass was nearly dead and the 7.30 A.M. mass at St Joseph’s only marginally better. The Saturday night mass at 8.00 PM appeared to be too late in the evening for many parishioners while 9.30 AM was the most popular mass of the twelve offered

between the two churches.¹⁷⁰ Reflecting a change in practice was the fact that the second most popular mass time was the 5.00 PM mass on Sunday evening. As a result of anecdotal observation and now with figures of the survey as information, the parish council began discussing the most effective time to hold masses, but decisions were hard to reach. Apart from Fr Tracey's changes in the early 70s, real changes of mass times would have to wait until the shortage of priests forced a reduction in the number of Masses.

Another change coming slowly into the parish life by 1974 was the role of women in the liturgy and the life of the parish. Fr Carroll had introduced lay lectors into Sunday masses with women reading at the Sodality mass and then quickly in other masses. Then women appeared on the Parish Council with Mrs Margaret de Vries, Cherry Eckersley and Kath Cannon¹⁷¹ being amongst the early members. Then special ministers of the Eucharist were introduced in the middle 70s and there was some diffidence amongst parishioners about handling the sacrament. Fr Tom Fleming, the oldest Jesuit on the parish staff, encouraged several women to take up this ministry. Many felt that if such an old man after a lifetime of service could change his ways with enthusiasm, they could do it too. Fairly quickly men and women special ministers appeared at the larger Sunday masses, freeing up priests for other duties.¹⁷²

While the members of the parish of Hawthorn, priests, leaders of various parish organizations or just after-Sunday-mass critics, tried to find the best possible way to run their Church in the 1970s, the Jesuits too were asking difficult questions about what it meant to be a Jesuit in the parish ministry. The question was whether the parish structure would survive at all as the basis for Church structure in Australia and if not what would take its place. Fr Ambrose Byrne who served on the parish staff for several years in the 70s was writing in an internal Jesuit newsletter, *Province News*, articles such as "What does "Pastoral" Mean", and "Do Jesuits and Parishes really mix?"¹⁷³ Fr Byrne's articles raised a number of problems facing the Church and the parishes of the post-Vatican II era, but he had few solutions. He did come up with twenty-five possible directions which were strikingly similar to the ones from Peter Norden's survey. Fr Byrne talking to Jesuits called on them to be radical and experimental in their approach to the new world. "What means are there to get started on such experiments and carry them through except the means used by St Ignatius: personal prayer, Eucharistic celebration, Christian fellowships, study, discussion, consultation, reflection – action?"¹⁷⁴ These means were equally applicable to the Parish Council or the educated and reflecting lay leadership in the parish.

If the local parish of Hawthorn and the Australian Jesuits were having difficulties meeting their own problems, more challenges were being enunciated from

¹⁷⁰ Immaculate Conception, Mass Times, Saturday at 8-00 PM, Sunday 6-30 AM. 8-00 AM, 9-30 AM, 11-00 AM, 12-30 PM, 5-00 PM. St Joseph's Saturday 7-30 PM, Sunday, 7-30 AM, 9-00 AM, 10-30 AM, 12-00 noon.

¹⁷¹ Mrs Cannon was also heavily involved with parent groups of the Scout troop as five of hers sons were members.

¹⁷² Mrs Margaret de Vries

¹⁷³ Byrne, Fr Ambrose. SJ. "Do Jesuits and Parishes Really Mix", *Province News* August 1970 Byrne, Fr Ambrose. SJ. "What Does "Pastoral Mean?" *Province News*

¹⁷⁴ Byrne, Fr Ambrose. SJ. "What Does "Pastoral Mean?" *Province News* P 25

overseas. Fr Arrupe wrote at this time to the Australian pastoral Jesuit meeting: “At the risk of startling you, let me tell you quite honestly: it is not this new world (of religious change) that I fear. After all God is there, however difficult it may be at times to discover Him. I am rather afraid that we Jesuits have little nor nothing to offer this world, little or nothing to say or do that would justify our existence as Jesuits. I am afraid that we may repeat yesterday’s answers to tomorrow’s problems, talk in a way men no longer understand, speak a language that does not speak to the heart of living man. If we do this, we shall more and more be talking to ourselves; no one would listen, because no one will understand what we are trying to say!”¹⁷⁵ The Jesuits, Australia wide, met this challenge with some very dynamic and driving parish priests, such as Fr Paul Coleman and Fr George Belfrage, but none of these men became parish priests at Hawthorn. On Glenferrie Road some competent rather than charismatic men led the Church into the new era. After all, according to one Fr Joseph Ratzinger, “the priest is the one who is there for the person who has no one.”¹⁷⁶

For the Youth

In a way, Hawthorn was unique amongst the Jesuit parishes where the more radical part of the parish renewal revolved around the liturgy or even social ministry. In Hawthorn, it revolved around youth ministry.

The parish youth ministry ran down very suddenly in 1970-71 and at the end of 1970 the Parish Youth Advisory Council effectively voted itself out of existence. They expected the new Parish Council to take over their work and so decided not to hold elections and to just continue through the early part of 1971 on an informal basis.¹⁷⁷ By the end of 1971, an exhausted Fr Carroll was writing to his provincial that “We have no youth organizations at all functioning in the parish”.¹⁷⁸ This informal note might have more been a reflection of the difficulties Fr Carroll was unable to overcome as he prepared to hand over to his successor. The Scouts were functioning well, as was the Tennis club, and several organizations such as the Y.C.W. football went into recess over the summer. At the same time the Pastoral Council was keen to restart the Friday coffee shop in the bank building as soon as possible and hoped that a trained social worker might be better able to work with the unruly elements who had been attracted there so far.¹⁷⁹

Fr Tracey took over the youth ministry as soon as he became parish priest and with support of several younger members such as Chris Branagan and Elizabeth McInerney, things began to revive. Even the Friday night coffee shop began to revive and though there was no organisation for the altar boys they thrived. However by 1973 much of the parish youth ministry was again showing enough signs of serious stress that

¹⁷⁵ Denning, Greg and Mungoven, Barney. *Wallumetta-The Other Side*. P 24

¹⁷⁶ Quoted by, Byrne, Fr Ambrose. SJ. “What Does “Pastoral Mean?” *Province News* P 25

¹⁷⁷ Monthly Calendar Dec1970-Jan 1971 p 7

¹⁷⁸ Fr Carroll to Fr O’Sullivan November 1971

¹⁷⁹ Monthly Calendar October 1971 p 3

Fr Tracey was thinking of closing it down for the second time in two years. Still the organisation survived.¹⁸⁰

What changed the position in Hawthorn was the arrival of a very extraordinary young Jesuit, Br Alex McDonald, highly trained and highly gifted in working with young people, especially the desperate young, who began some part-time work in the parish in 1973 and became a full member of the parish team the following year. Br Alex took control of the youth ministry work in the parish and very quickly revamped the struggling body. The first body to feel his ability was the altar server group which quickly became part of the diocesan Guild of St Stephen and about twenty boys met each Thursday at 7-30 PM for training. Br Alex realised the importance of social interaction to keep the boys together and ran outings to places such as St Moritz and Luna Park at the rate of about one a month.

However Br Alex became the key person behind the creation of the Manresa People's Centre, which quickly grew from being a parish youth club to a full-blown youth centre for anyone who was in need and wanted to come. It was seen, both as being within the parish but open to the community at large.¹⁸¹ Here was the opportunity for young people to develop a sense of "church" as a wider "meaning-giving" community. Then he wanted to draw the attention of the wider community to the heavy commitment already being made by individuals and groups to this type of work so that it would foster stronger youth-centred processes within the parish and the Manresa Centre. Br Alex then commented that "the Centre enabled many to relate within the church, particularly those who may feel divorced from the structured church."¹⁸²

On the entertainment side the Centre offered a regular coffee shop, games such as table tennis, volleyball and badminton, and then chess and cards. On the weekly cycle there was basketball training most nights, arts and crafts, chess club, karate, pottery and guitar workshops, and a centre rock band. There was also a monthly dance and regular camps and outings.

The Manresa People's Centre then moved on rapidly from just a youth outreach centre to a full-blown social ministry. The Centre created a "Contact Group" as a centre for its social ministry. It provided personalised service of advice and emergency assistance to the people of Hawthorn. It met requests for emergency home help, accommodation, babysitting, provision of transport and visiting new residents of Hawthorn. They worked closely with the Kew/Hawthorn Citizen's Advice Bureau and quickly passed need-filled cases on to professional assistance. The Centre ran a Neighbourhood Drop-in Centre during the day and regular counselling services. All this was co-ordinated by the secretary, Mrs Kath Rumsey, at the Centre itself with a team of over thirty volunteers. The directorship of the Centre passed to Peter Norden, a trained Jesuit social worker, in 1976 who arranged for the employment of full time "outreach youth worker" Miss Jenny Merrick whose salary was paid for by the Department of Youth Sport and Recreation, which reflected Peter Norden's ability to work with government departments and he gained both State and Hawthorn Council support. He

¹⁸⁰ Fr Zoltan Varga to Fr O'Sullivan, 21 December 1972 and June 1973

¹⁸¹ The 1971 census showed that there were 3,303 young people between 12 and 18 years of age in Hawthorn, but the Catholic population was still only about one in five.

¹⁸² McDonald Br Alex, "Relationship of the Parish Council and the Manresa People's Centre"

managed to negotiate an agreement with the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation for \$10,000 on a dollar for dollar basis. This in turn brought the issue to the Parish Council as it became concerned whether by accepting Government assistance the parish was losing overall control of the property itself.¹⁸³ The Centre also received assistance from the Hawthorn City Council, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Social Welfare and other bodies.

The Centre's Contact Group visited new arrivals in the parish, work originally done by the Confraternities, and visited those in need, work done by St Vincent de Paul. This duplication of services could have led to friction but for the moment the presence of Mr Kevin Slattery in both main bodies helped all parties to work together.

The Centre also encouraged younger members to take part in the "Walk Against Want" Maytime Fair, Christian Living Camps and then managed to find emergency accommodation for sixteen children considered at risk.¹⁸⁴ Professional and referral services for family and marriage counselling and working with schools on children's problems were added to the services provided.

A second organization which came to Manresa at the time was the Swinburne Community School which had been established in 1972 as an annexe to Swinburne Secondary Technical College. It was an alternative style of education which had a philosophy that emphasised community involvement and practical experience.¹⁸⁵ Its more radical agenda was welcomed into the 1970s as a genuine way to help students who had clashed with the more formal and traditional education system. The well-known educationalist, Rob Lewers, was involved in running the school and its later alumnae eventually included Gina Riley from the TV show, Kath and Kim. The Community School rented and used property all around Hawthorn and found the facilities of the People's Centre particularly pleasing. Increasing demands by the parish to use the Manresa facilities led to the termination of the arrangement in 1980.

The Manresa Centre was in part responsible for the creation of the 9.30 AM family folk mass which was the only directly church commitment the centre maintained, though eventually the mass soon developed a momentum of its own. In 1977 Fr Paul Cleary took over as director, a more hands-on and helpful style of person and less involved in the larger scale work with governments and other bodies. He taught a significant number of young people the secrets of pottery and was very gifted at running camps and youth retreats.

Strangely the very success of the Manresa People's Centre in contacting a wide group of young people in need contained the seeds of its own demise. The local Hawthorn Catholic parents with children attending Catholic secondary schools did not really want their sons and daughters spending their nights at the Centre. It was not that they were opposed to the work done; it was more that they would not go out of their way to support it. Therefore after Fr Paul Cleary left the parish team in the 1980s, the Centre slowly ran down.

The changes of the Church following in the wake of the Vatican Council still had a long way to go, but in the parish of Hawthorn the building blocks were in place by 1975. Even then, people were asking what was the key thing that had changed. It was

¹⁸³ Minutes of the Parish Council, 13 September 75. Also 14 April 1975

¹⁸⁴ Minutes of the Parish Council 12 May 1975

¹⁸⁵ Peel, Victoria, Zion Deborah, Yule, Jane. *A History of Hawthorn*. P 247

more than just liturgy changes, priest roles and parish councils. The older church looked for ways of doing something for Christ, saying prayers, attending devotions, following life routines of prayer and abstinence; “suffering” for Christ. It was a life of offering up to Christ. The Council switched the emphasis to the love of Christ, both in terms of Christ’s love for us and our love for Christ. It asked, if Christ is the most loved being in our life, how should we behave towards this loved figure. It asked adult Christians to live their Christian lives in a way dominated by love. Consequently the precise types of rules disappeared to be replaced by principles which were to guide the Christian life. However by 1975 the new problem was starting to appear. The questions raised in the church survey could sometimes be interpreted as “what do I get out of going to church”. The rapid social changes of the 60 and 70s could feed this attitude which crept into the church and an emphasis on things which served the individual, drove the pre-eminence of the love of God down the list of human priorities. The Jesuits of Hawthorn who had grown up on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius which concludes with the question, “What have I done for Christ, what am I doing for Christ, what will I do for Christ,” could find themselves slightly wrong-footed by the sudden drift and for the next thirty years they looked for a solution.

Speaking in Tongues

Most older parishioners remember some priests, known collectively as migrant chaplains and living at Hawthorn, but not having a great deal to do with the regular running of the parish. These men, deeply devoted to their people, strongly anti-communist, were principally seen in their black coats and hats, returning to Manresa late at night. However there were relatively few migrant groups from non-English speaking backgrounds living within the parish, so the chaplain's "parish" was spread widely over Melbourne.

The first one was Fr Eduardo De La Peza, a Mexican Jesuit, lent to the seminary at Werribee to lecture there while the new faculty was being prepared. He visited Immaculate Conception quite regularly but is mainly remembered for his marvellous singing voice and the way he did the 5-30 AM mass on Holy Saturday morning for several years.¹⁸⁶

Fr J Stanislaus Kelly stayed in the presbytery for a couple of years from 1946, working amongst the Italian families, but most of his work was in the Richmond area. Even so there remained a small but active Italian community in Hawthorn, though many were now second or third generation.

In December 1951 Fr Paul Becs arrived in Hawthorn to care for the Catholic Latvian population in Melbourne. He had been born in 1913, just before the Great War, joined the Jesuits in 1933 and was sent to the Gregorian University in Rome for theological studies. The Second World War prevented his return home, and then the Soviet occupation of his country made the situation permanent. From Rome he volunteered for chaplaincy work and was sent to Australia. Fr Becs had a real gift for fostering community life, and supported his people's Christian traditions and Latvian culture. He organised the Latvian Catholic Association, the Catholic Ladies Association and Latvian Catholic Youth Group. A central council was established in Melbourne and published the Latvian Catholic Bulletin as well as a number of books. Masses were said at St Augustine's in Burke Street and the community founded a choir to support the liturgy. Catholic Latvians were only a minority of the total settlers from the Baltic but Fr Becs used his charm to cultivate good relations with all Latvian groups and worked well with their Lutheran pastors.

In 1968 Fr Becs was moved to Sydney, and his place in Melbourne was taken by Fr Stan Gaidelis who continued the work amongst the community and lived at Hawthorn. "Lithuanian by birth, Latvian by heart" (he was born in Latvia) working in Australia and with a good knowledge of Polish and German, Fr Gaidelis was a man who reached out to the needs of many migrant peoples. He escaped to Germany after ordination in 1944 and was therefore barred from returning home by the Communist regime. Fr Gaidelis came to Australia in 1951 and to Hawthorn in 1969 to spend the rest of his long life among the Latvian communities of Victoria and South Australia. His work was similar to Fr Becs but when the communist government began to crack, Fr Gaidelis organised the printing of large numbers of bibles and Catholic books in the Latvian language to be sent free of charge to Riga via Vienna and Poland. He knew that

¹⁸⁶ Miss Vi Feil

forty years of systematic destruction of all forms of Christian literature would have meant a desperate shortage of such books and his people in Australia knew it too. In 1990 Fr Gaidelis achieved a dream he thought would never be possible, he had a trip home. He had a reunion with family members he had not seen for half a century and with tears in his eyes celebrated mass in the great cathedral of Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital city. The continued presence of Fr Gaidelis over so many years in the Hawthorn parish was a reminder to the people of Immaculate Conception that though they might be free to celebrate their faith, not everyone in the world was so fortunate.

Also arriving in 1951 was Fr Zoltan Varga, a Hungarian chaplain whose sudden arrival led to him being placed in the Bonegilla migrant camp. There he contracted bronchial-pneumonia which went undetected and led to the loss of half a lung, two years later.

Born in Transylvania, the traditional home of Count Dracula, he was forced to be a refugee by the changes to the Hungarian borders after the Treaty of Versailles. The family spent a year in a railway carriage before settling in Hungary. Fr Varga joined the Society of Jesus in 1936 and was ordained in 1947 to become part of the dispersed Hungarian Jesuit province. His first attempt to escape led to him being arrested as an illegal refugee in Austria and returned to the Iron Curtain. He was successful at the second attempt and then worked in Austria in Hungarian refugee camps. Some of the young people he helped later as grandparents were still sending assistance from Austria to support his work in Australia up till the time he died. Like the Latvian chaplains, he organised a young men's society, a young women's society and a scout troop. He was instrumental in setting up an adult education programme for young and middle aged migrants to continue the study of their cultural traditions and he said at least two Hungarian masses each Sunday, usually at St Augustine's and at St Thomas' in South Yarra. He even arranged for a special Hungarian branch of the Hibernian society as so many of the new immigrants had little English. After the 1955 uprising in Hungary there was an even larger flood of refugees, but Fr Varga took the challenge in his stride and ran a special college hostel of young people who found it so difficult to settle down. In 1974 he organised the visit of the famous Cardinal Mindszenty to Melbourne which brought great publicity to the Hungarian community and serious threats to the life of Fr Varga.¹⁸⁷

Fr Varga was attached to the Hawthorn community for thirty-seven years and though for a while he lived in other houses, most of his time was spent in the Jesuit community. He was popular with his fellow Jesuits and though very busy would help out with parish masses when he had time. Fr Varga said many of the 7-15 AM morning masses in the Lady Chapel, usually beginning with a brief life of the saint who was being commemorated that day. For nearly twenty years he used his excellent singing voice to lead the Easter ceremonies. He died quite suddenly in 1988. This unexpected death shocked the parishioners and on the night of his vigil mass there was not even standing room left in the church. It was said that girls in native costume were glad to find space to sit on the floor. It was claimed that he celebrated 2,000 baptisms, 800 weddings and 600 funerals for his Hungarian community and the results of this work are still apparent.¹⁸⁸ Fr Varga was a humorist, a man of deep compassion and a sincere priest. His memory is

¹⁸⁷ Anonymous. "Fr Andrew Zoltan Varga", *Jesuit Life*. May 1989

¹⁸⁸ Strong, David, SJ. *The Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography 1848-1998*. P 347

still honoured by many parishioners.¹⁸⁹ As recently as 2006 young Hungarian couples have approached Fr Dwyer and asked to be married in Immaculate Conception, because that was where their parents were married and in a way it was their spiritual home.

Other chaplains lived in the parish briefly, the famous Fr Joseph Janus did for a year or two in the early 50s until his Polish ministry moved to Richmond, and Fr John Hollis worked with the Spanish community in the 1970s. Most of the work amongst the few resident Italian families was carried on by the Capuchin friars after they opened St Anthony's shrine. The ministry of migrant chaplaincy to European settlers had largely disappeared by the 1990s and with it the presence of the chaplains in Hawthorn. In recent years this ministry has largely involved working with communities which have come to Australia from parts of Asia.

¹⁸⁹ Anonymous and untitled page describing the residents of the Bank Building

Walking in Faith -The Roaring Nineties – 1990

1990 saw Fr Bob Walsh in his third and final year as parish priest in Hawthorn, the last PP who had done all his training in the pre-Vatican council days, though the council had closed twenty-five years before. A medical doctor, before he joined and a manipulator of puppets, he was enormously popular with all age groups in the parish. Also working in the parish was the avuncular Fr Joe O'Mara whose vibrant sense of the ironic also made him popular in the parish. Attached to the community but not working in the parish were men such as Fr Pedro Kenny and Charles Mayne, the migrant chaplain, Fr Stan Gaidelis and a former parish priest, Fr Des Walker. These men said masses in the parish churches when available but were generally fully engaged in other ministries and spent long periods of time away from Hawthorn.

Fr Walsh succeeded Fr Brian Murphy as parish priest who had been the first Hawthorn boy to hold the office. Supporting Fr Murphy for some years was Fr Joseph Dooley who was the youngest Jesuit priest ever to serve in the parish and proved popular with the people who were disappointed to see him leave when he was suddenly taken ill after four years in the parish.

Not all that well known to some parishioners was a system that for much of the previous decade, the parish priest was not always the superior of the community which had been the case for the previous century. The basis behind the idea was to separate the day to day living of a varied body of religious from the functioning of the institute of the parish. However in this case the superior was to be the person who looked after the "Jesuit" mission and commissioned the members of the community to undertake their works including the commissioning of the parish priest. Although tried several times, the system broke down as a division grew between the community and the parish operations which led the community being more inward looking and less involved in the ministry of the parish. By 1990 Fr Walsh was again both superior and parish priest, a situation which seemed to please all the community at the time.

Fr Walsh and his Parish Council looked out over a parish which was very different from that of twenty-five years before and the period of compromise seemed gone. The Confraternities and the Sodalities were no longer discussed though some parishioners remained loyal to their practices. This was particularly true of Our Lady's Sodality with a group of about twenty-five members, which continued to meet at 11-20 on each Wednesday for prayers, talk and benediction and at the early mass on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament continued each First Friday and the Stations of the Cross during Lent. But Vespers on Wednesday afternoon and evening took the place of the evening devotions of earlier days.

However the need for money for maintenance of the churches remained a constant as always.

Message and Money

Fr Walsh in 1990 wanted to build on the various visions of parish which had been formulated over the previous couple of years. He particularly wanted a campaign to teach families to pray, to run days of prayer and contemplation and to run parish renewal

programmes similar to the “Renew” programme which had been organised in the diocese in the middle 80s.¹⁹⁰ Finally he wanted to develop “fellowship” groups to fit the needs of various demographic clusters in the parish.

The parish council moved these objectives into four action lines of its own.

1. Ministry activity, - youth, participatory liturgy, needs of single people
2. Prayer: - time for sharing and reflection, develop prayer sessions, extension of prayer/discussion groups, home masses
3. Maintenance: Landscaping, flaky walls in both churches
4. Social: Bringing people together socially.¹⁹¹

How these objectives would work out in practice was quite another matter, but there was a plan for the year and a starting point for their meetings. Attached to the parish team in the late 1990s was a parish Sister, Sr Regina Naisbitt, who added to the Council’s objectives three of her own; emphases on liturgy, parish outreach and special ministers. To send out the message to the members of the parish, the methods were similar to those of the past, but the packaging was different. The monthly calendar and Manresa Reports of earlier times had been replaced by the weekly “Parish Bulletin” which contained the responses to the prayers of the mass and a summary of the readings on one page and regular parish notices on the other. This was more effective than reading the parish notices out from the pulpit and gave the congregation something to read if the sermon was less than gripping. From time to time, the Bulletin was supported by the “Hawthorn Parish News” which was supposed to be monthly and contained reports from the Parish Council, the main organizations of the parish and long-range warning of events to be held in the parish. By 1990 the News was becoming irregular and the Council were putting updates of their activities into the Weekly Bulletin.

Although Sr Regina, from Our Lady of the Mission Sisters, was part of the parish team, other orders of Sisters worked in the parish too. The Loreto Sisters ran the Confirmation programme and worked with Renew, RCIA and CLC,¹⁹² while the Brigidines were looking into adult education programmes.

During 1990 approximately 1250 parishioners attended mass each Sunday and much of the effort of the priests and the council was directed towards enriching and developing the faith life of these parishioners rather than attracting new ones. A special Lenten campaign resulted in twenty-two well-attended home masses and ten groups of parishioners taking on the renewal programme, “Wellsprings”. Later in the year Fr Richard Morgan gave some spiritual reflections on the Gospel of Mark and then the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau sponsored some family programmes. These included a presentation by long time parishioner, Kath Cannon, who gave a paper entitled, “God in family living; Holiness in family life.” The thought of a lay person giving a talk on anything but money in the parish would have been inconceivable fifty years before and showed the ways the church changes were working themselves out. Kath Cannon also

¹⁹⁰ Viewed by the parish as the replacement for the old week-long parish mission and held in parish homes and aimed at the growth and formation of a vibrant faith community.

¹⁹¹ Minutes of the Parish Pastoral Steering Committee 6 February 1990

¹⁹² Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and Christian Life Communities. CLC was an adult lay movement based on the spirit and principles of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius

coordinated the programme for the special ministers of the Eucharist training course, including special ministers to the sick, which was run regularly at the Diocesan centre in East Melbourne. In 1990 there were about fifty readers and special ministers available at the Immaculate Conception Church and about another thirty at St Joseph's.

Just as in earlier times, the use of social gatherings as a way of bonding the parishioners as well as for sheer enjoyment, continued. The huge dances and socials of the 1930s were no longer possible, but during 1990 an International Luncheon, St Patrick's Day social, Mothers' Day Chicken and Champaign Luncheon, Trivia Night, and a Wine Tasting followed by a Wine and Cheese Christmas Party were held. Most of these events were organised by the Social Committee of the Parish Council and only the Trivia Night was intended to be a fundraiser. It was a substantial success and cleared the committee's debts for the year. The Parish Council was strongly represented and proved very skilled at trivia.

A recent innovation was the popular "Dinners for Eight", an organisation of small dinner parties held around the parish. During 1990 Maria McGrath took over the running of the programme and more than one hundred people were involved. Sr Regina resigned her position in the parish towards the end of the year and an "At Home" was held for her farewell. The title "At Home" was used extensively in those years but few actually knew what it meant, and the function could vary from a quite filling cocktail party to extensive after-dinner drinks and virtually no food at all. However Sr Regina's farewell was a considerable success and she was sadly missed.

The parish finance advisory committee continued to function and report directly to the parish priest, though regular balance sheets and discussions were held with the Parish Council. As usual money was less than was needed and the committee noted that church envelope planned-giving programme was fairly static though weekly collections in mass had continued to rise. Another useful source of income had been the rent from the Hawthorn City Council Library which leased Manresa Hall. In the middle of the year, the library moved out to new premises and this source ceased.

The parish council had wanted to do something about the flaking paint in the churches but investigations by Mr John Dohrmann said that the pointing on the brick needed to be done very soon and the flaking paint was mainly due to water seepage from decaying roof gutters. Fr Joe Holland, a member of the community with a very practical engineering-type mind, urged that the programme be started immediately and carefully staged. No one wanted to repeat Fr Bourke's mistake in the 1930s and there were insufficient funds for the whole project. Eventually a "cherry-picker" was hired and the guttering was repaired and some stone work done. The 1990 drought helped dry out the walls but painting would have to wait for a few years. After that the council restricted itself to painting the front steps and putting up new notice boards in the porch of Immaculate Conception.

The other parish buildings were in similar difficulties. If Manresa Hall was to be used in any way or leased out, repairs were urgent. Over \$12,000 was spent on the stage and curtains as well as repairs to the electrical system and most important, the toilets. A survey of the bank building showed the need for \$75,000 of repairs, but immediately only \$10,000 was available and though staged repairs were planned, there was as yet not a clear vision of how the building could be best used. The funeral parlour building had rotting window frames on the Burwood Road frontage and though they

might eventually become a danger to municipal pedestrian traffic, little could be done immediately. This did not concern the parish council a great deal; there had been complaints about the poor standard of the funeral parlour maintenance for more than twenty years.

The Parish Council and Finance Committee both worked hard to try and have these assets available for the use of the parish and St Joseph's School while at the same time to try to find a suitable leasing arrangement which would create an income stream for the church. Manresa Hall was initially leased out as a function centre and the first wedding celebration for many years was held there in December 1990.

Fr Bob Walsh worked through and with his Parish Council in a strongly cooperative manner and though he had the final responsibility for the parish, he largely followed their advice. He was blessed that at the start of 1990 the competent Mr Stephen Maule was in the chair and Mr Joe Pezzimenti was secretary.

Youth Ministry

The Manresa People's Centre which had become the cover-all name for the youth centre was finally closed by Fr Joe Dooley in the middle 80s after numbers of regular patrons from other suburbs subjected the property to sustained vandalism. It had been a problem for some time and the final closure led to some ugly articles in the local press, but eventually the issue died away.

However the council was still keen to develop a youth ministry in the parish and a meeting of interested younger people was held in November 1989 to re-establish a youth structure. Regular discos, camps, group dynamics meetings, video nights, pool facilities and the coffee shop were amongst the suggestions and though some events were held the structure was never really successful. Even so a successful disco for around sixty teenagers was held just before Christmas and council member Tim Connellan was one of the adult "presence" at the function. The council was very keen to hire a youth worker through the diocese and looked to the Diocesan Youth Apostolate for guidance. It seemed that some on the council wanted a Youth worker to take over the running of the whole organisation but considering the heavy costs involved that was never likely to happen.

However with the support of Fr Joe O'Mara an Antioch youth group had been founded in the parish and began to function well. Modelled on Marriage Encounter it was essentially a spiritual organisation with good social and sacramental input though the initial problem was to find good host parents for the meetings. It was a ministry for 16 to 20 year olds and required about twelve members, an officiating priest and a supporting married couple.¹⁹³ Antioch began with a three-day retreat with members meeting at St Joseph's and then retiring to host families to sleep. The format included prayer, discussions, Reconciliation and a Eucharist. Eventually the necessary organisation was arranged and a spiritual movement of young people flourished in the parish in a manner not regularly seen since the days of the young sodalities and confraternities.

The other organisation in the parish which involved some of the younger members was the 5-00 PM mass where more popular and modern music was used to

¹⁹³ The project was first raised in the Parish Council 9 July 1985 but took some time to get moving.

accompany the liturgy. A good nucleus of committed organisers and musicians gave some stability to the programme and both the liturgy and the time of the service assisted in gaining a strong attendance from the young people of the parish.

The parish's service to the younger children evolved principally around St Joseph's School which continued to thrive and be popular with the parents of the parish. The school also ran an After Care programme and the Parish Education Board continued to support activities that helped the funding of the kindergarten. In addition the 9-30 mass with a special children's liturgy attracted considerable numbers and lay catechists taught there and took Catholic children in the local state schools as well. In the early 80s, the Children's Liturgy had been begun by Barbara Papworth and a very high standard had been set and maintained. A special Christmas party for the kindergarten to grade 6 children of the parish was very well attended, even more so than the regular Sunday mass. This work was supported by a "mainly for kids" page in the Hawthorn Parish News which contained activities such as "word finds" for the youngsters to do while the parents were telling them to pay attention at mass. The work extended to catechetics in the local State schools, Glenferrie Primary School and Hawthorn West Primary School and the preparation for sacraments for those children not attending St Joseph's.

The Parish Education Board monitored the operation of the school from the point of view of the parish and reported to the Parish Council. The parish priest, the principal and the parish accountant were ex-officio members while the remainder were elected representatives of the P and F, the staff and the Parish Council. It did not interfere with the internal running of the school but looked into external relations with outside bodies including the CEO, the levels of fees and raising money for special projects. The board also monitored the school budget and supported the principal in her special ministry to the young of the parish.¹⁹⁴

Fr Walsh was a great supporter of the altar boys whose attendance at Sunday masses was encouraged by regular excursions to McDonalds and other venues of cultural importance. Mr Malcolm Gale had run altar boys for some years and brought their training to a high pitch; so that they were always ready for major functions such the Holy Week ceremonies and the visits from the Archbishop. Then Fr Walsh continued the work and the servers added solemnity to the main Sunday masses.

Sadly after more than sixty years, 12th Hawthorn Scout troop was in trouble. The troop had thrived under the leadership of Vin Thompson, William and Patricia Timlin, Cor and Margaret de Vries, Peter Fasoli and others but by 1990 such leadership was failing and changing society customs was putting pressure on the movement everywhere. For all youth ministries, leadership and direction are vital for their success and survival. In addition a large number of the younger Hawthorn families sent their children to independent schools whose co-curricular programmes made great demands on their pupils and left little time for other activities such as scouts. Kevin McVeigh kept the cubs going but the scouts had moved elsewhere and he was finding it very difficult to get qualified assistants. The cubs would last only a few more years.

Caring

¹⁹⁴ Minutes of the Parish Education Board, 11 December 1990 Also Hawthorn Catholic Parish Education Board Guidelines

In every parish in every age, there are people in need. However over the decades those needs have changed and more so in Hawthorn where demographic changes had increased land values and reduced the numbers of destitute poor but not those in need. The homeless and disadvantaged groups were still there.¹⁹⁵ In 1990 the St Vincent de Paul conference ran a two-bedroom flat to support the P.R.A.M.B.S. (Pregnancy and mother/baby support) programme. The flat was made available in 1988 and twenty women and nineteen children were assisted over a four-year period. At the same time Fr Bob Walsh allowed the conference to use a parish house in College Street to assist migrants and refugees to settle and have enough time to find suitable independent accommodation. Another area of work in 1990 was for homeless youth and the conference cooperated in North Richmond Youth Accommodation Programme. No need was too small or too large to be accepted. Several trades people also helped out giving time and expertise for emergency domestic repairs when St Vincent de Paul found a struggling family or person alone. The Hawthorn conference also worked in other parts of Melbourne such as Fitzroy and East Melbourne with regular visits to the isolated and those in need.

A special ministry under Kevin Slattery, their President from 1989, was to welcome new parishioners to the parish. This ministry had been done by the men's Confraternity of the Sacred Heart for decades but then had been passed to others and at the start of 1990 was in Kevin's care. However other pressures forced him and St Vincent de Paul to give up this ministry and it was passed to the Social Committee of the parish council. Kath Cannon and John Longayroux¹⁹⁶ undertook a parish census and also ran another questionnaire at a Sunday mass. A programme to welcome newcomers was established and included a dinner for new parishioners in June which more than a hundred attended. The work expanded to include visitation to families at the time of a baptism and to those who had suffered bereavement. Organising these ministries in association with the work of the priests and other bodies in the parish was quite a challenge but it was done and became effective ministry.

While St Vincent de Paul met some specialised needs a larger more general body had been active in the parish since 1980, known as the Manresa Care Group, and worked largely with the more elderly, but also the poor, the lonely and the "shut-ins". In the middle of the 80s they had started a Manresa Care Casserole Bank where parishioners were asked to cook some form of casserole or pasta/curry type meal, place it in suitable container and deliver it to the deep freezer at the presbytery. It meant a good store of wholesome emergency food was always available for those in need. The group met more or less monthly and ran very popular excursions for the elderly of the parish to places such as Healesville and Warburton. In October they went to a lunchtime concert at the Watsonia Army School of Music and stopped for lunch at the local hotel.¹⁹⁷ The place did not really matter; it was the trip and the company which the elderly appreciated so much. Christmas parties and quarterly luncheons were also on the list of special days for the elderly of Hawthorn. The Care group also provided transport for some of the elderly to and from church, to some appointments, shopping trips and social events.

¹⁹⁵ A branch of Alcoholics Anonymous functioned in the parish at this time. Shades of the ghost of Fr Carroll.

¹⁹⁶ John Longayroux was parish accountant and chair of the Parish Education Board in 1990

¹⁹⁷ Parish Bulletin 7 October 1990

A new initiative for the parish in the care of the elderly parishioners occurred in December when Archbishop Little blessed and formally opened St Joseph's Hostel on part of the site of the old school yard, tennis courts and in the grounds of St Joseph's church.¹⁹⁸ Amidst bouquets of flowers and bouquets of praise, the initiative was an excellent use for the parish property and a deal with Catholic Health looked after St Joseph's church as well. Many of the residents have found having their own church in the back garden one of the principal attractions of retirement at this complex and they provide a substantial congregation at each of the weekday masses.¹⁹⁹ The school building was used as a day centre for Mount Royal, an Alzheimer's Centre and a Senior Citizens' Hall run by the Uniting Church. These two facilities did not continue for long but they were good concepts helping to meet real needs in the Hawthorn community.

Fr Bob Walsh was a very caring parish priest and many parishioners tell stories of benefiting from his ministry. One of the first duties he had as PP was to help to bury Fr Tom Fleming who had worked in Hawthorn from 1959 to 1985. He then justly retired to NSW but actually died during a brief visit to Hawthorn. Parishioners remembered Fr Fleming's interest in football and his regular trips to Carlton with sandwiches and thermos. He used to leave five minutes before the end of the game to catch an early tram and avoid the rush.²⁰⁰ Fr Fleming was remembered too for how he helped so many parishioners cope with the changes in the liturgy and church following the Vatican Council. Also in 1990 Fr Walsh buried Fr Tom Johnston, who had been a long-term member of the Hawthorn community though he worked in the Sale diocese for many years. Fr Johnston was determined to live to a hundred, and he didn't fall far short of that achievement.

The unwanted and most publicised event in the parish in 1989 had been the siege of the Manresa Kindergarten and the subsequent arrest of the "kidnapper". The case came to court in 1990 and again Fr Walsh and the parish team were involved in helping those touched by the crisis manage their grief and stress and all the problems which were reawakened by the trial. Everyone wanted to move on from this tragedy but possibly even today there may be some who carry the scars of that afternoon.²⁰¹

Ecumenism became a feature of life in the post-Vatican II church though in Hawthorn ecumenical activity was limited. There were interfaith services from time to time, but attendances from the Catholic parish were not often high. The use of parish facilities was offered to other traditions when a need arose but the churches themselves were rarely used. Social Justice campaigns such as the Freedom from Hunger campaign did bring the churches together as did appeals for particular events or disasters such as the Guatemala Earthquake. The priests themselves took part in regular clergy sharing and discussion known as the Ministers' Fraternal. The clergy from the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and Uniting Churches met monthly to discuss common problems and plan joint civic events such as Christmas Carols. Fr Des Walker was a keen supporter of the fraternal and Fr Brian Murphy had been its chair for a number of years. Fr Bob Walsh

¹⁹⁸ Although the blessing took place in December 1990, the facility had begun business back in October 1989.

¹⁹⁹ Jesuit History of the House, 1990

²⁰⁰ Mrs M Slattery

²⁰¹ The Sun News Pictorial, 10 May 1989. Trial The Sun News Pictorial 2nd and 14th February 1990

thought this was the best way possible to make a gesture of ecumenism at the grass roots level.

The Jesuit Ignatian Year began on the feast of St Francis Xavier, December 3rd 1990 and Anglican Bishop Robert Butters preached on “What the Ignatian Year meant to me.” The local Catholic bishop, Eric Perkins, was unable to attend and apologised, though it is not thought that the two events are related. Fr Walsh also led the annual Civic Mass attended by the mayor, the local ward representative and several other councillors, and helped orchestrate the funeral of Fr J.J. Scullion SJ which was held at Immaculate Conception and attended by the governor, Dr Davis McCaughey, a long-time colleague and personal friend of Fr Scullion.

The end of 1990 saw the departure of Fr Walsh for a new ministry at Campion House in Kew and a low-key farewell celebration was held in the small hall between 10.30 and 1.00 PM on Sunday, 16th December. It was typical of Fr Walsh that he wanted such a low-key function and typical of the affection of the Hawthorn parishioners that the small hall nearly exploded under weight of people trying to get in.

Fr Joe O’Mara also left for an appointment in Papua New Guinea, and Fr Richard Shortall arrived to start 1991. A new priest, a new style, but at the Immaculate Conception the problems remained the same.

Walking in Faith: Century 21

Fr Des Dwyer became parish priest of Hawthorn in tragic circumstances at the beginning of 2004. Fr Geoffrey James, the previous parish priest, had died in hospital the previous August and many parishioners had wept openly at his funeral. “His death occurred suddenly from heart failure following a few days of pneumonia. He was greatly mourned as a pastor and confidant, friend and supporter of many, a great lover of life with an outstanding capacity to understand the complexity of human lives and circumstances.”²⁰² In his place Fr Dwyer, an experienced and occasionally acting parish priest from North Sydney, knew it would be a difficult role. The personal contacts built up by Fr James were lost and there was some reduction in numbers at Sunday mass. However he was supported ably by Fr Gaetan Pereira, who had been assistant priest since 1996 and had directed the funeral of Fr James in a capable and moving manner.

Supporting Fr Dwyer in this new posting was Fr Brendan Byrne, a professor of New Testament who became superior of the community, thus resurrecting an older form of organisation but in completely changed circumstances. This appointment gave Fr Dwyer a close confidant and adviser who also knew the scene in Hawthorn and had large experience in Jesuit mission and as a Jesuit superior. With him were Fr Paul Duffy, a former provincial, semi retired but very active, and Fr Justin King, a school chaplain. All three priests helped out with saying masses and other duties in the parish as much as their main pastoral commitments allowed.

Money and Message

Fr James had a dream that running a parish was major modern business which needed to be efficient if it was to be effective as well as pastoral. He wanted to shift the parish administration from the presbytery to a rebuilt section of the bank building but the work of actually achieving this fell largely to his successor. Contract Management Systems were appointed to do the renovations of the Bank Building on 27th August 2003 and the first on-site meeting took place on September 3rd not quite two weeks after Fr James had died. Eventually it grew into a parish priest’s office, parish administration office and parish centre. Full occupancy occurred in August 2004 and the impact of the new asset to the parish was quickly felt. Not only did the parish staff now have adequate space for their office work, the facility allowed for an array of social functions to be held in a pleasant surroundings unknown in the parish since the days of Fr Carpenter’s Bamboo Room of the 1960s. Apart from the Parish Council, Finance/Building Committee, Parish School Board and Staff meetings held in the new centre, classes, workshops, sacramental programmes, a new mothers’ group, the Healing Liturgy gathering and numerous other groups make use of the facility which in turn has become an expression of the modern church.

²⁰² Unpublished life of Geoffrey James by Fr David Strong

Fr Dwyer looked upon the front steps, which had been hurriedly built by Fr Bourke, and urgently needed to be rebuilt, and he faced and continues to face the problems of decaying brick and stonework, leaking gutters and peeling paint. His administration, finance committee and Parish Council have a lot to do just as generations before have looked over the same problem.

One outstanding construction which Fr Dwyer has overseen was the construction of a memorial wall, known as the "Resurrection Wall". Early commemorations in the parish were on statues, stained glass windows and brass plaques displayed on church walls or engraved on various liturgical items such as chalices, books or missals. Even a large church such as Immaculate Conception can become cluttered unless such plaques are tastefully done and well organised. In addition a few parishioners have been commemorated as faces or gargoyles on the stonework and a small number have their ashes buried in the parish gardens. However, with the Resurrection Wall a sacred space of commemoration has been created where past parishioners and family members can be prayed for and prayed with, in a scene that not only remembers the past but also gives a vision of future.

Financing these new initiatives and the on-going problems was still largely met by the Sacrificial Giving Campaign, the weekly collection and some generous donors. Some rationalisation of the parish's real estate resulted in the sale of the Funeral Parlour and its decaying window frames and the old Scout Hall and its collapsing floor, leaking roof and inadequate facilities. These maintenance problems were passed on to others and the money raised from the sales of these and other property assisted in the refurbishing of the Bank Building, which seems to have been one of the most successful parish building projects for many years.

Significantly, hanging in the new office space is a photo of the parish team, so different from Fr Buckeridge in 1901 and Fr Bourke's community of 1935. Here the two priests are surrounded by a dozen lay people, mostly women, some employed and some volunteers. The professional business manager of the parish, Liz Frazer, does the work and more of Fr Corish and the Jesuit ministers of the 1930s while Marg O'Loughlin is secretary, a job which did not exist in the parish up till the 1960s as the parish priests answered their own mail, if they answered it at all. Nothing reflects the changing role of laity in the church more than the photos of the parish team, an evolutionary process which began tentatively with the first Parish Council and parish secretary.

Putting the word out to people is still via the printed sheet of the weekly bulletin and regular Sunday sermons, a process that would have been familiar to Fr Colgan and his parishioners. Utterly unknown to him was the same bulletin going out on the Internet, supported by explanatory articles on various aspects of the church's liturgical calendar and Christian topics. Equally mystifying to him would be the appeal from the parish team for an operator of a data projector and Power Point programme, the 21st century's version of Fr Bourke's hymn cards. Very familiar to the past would be the presence of the Catholic papers, now the Catholic Leader and Kairos, but old parishioners would find strange the Deanery newsletter as parishes were independent and Deans were more commonly associated with Anglicanism. The availability of the journal of Victorian Council of Christians and Jews would never have been considered, but Jesuit productions such as Companions and Madonna certainly would have been.

Supporting the parish team, the Parish Council remains a significant presence in the decision making process of parish life, under the presidency of Tony Stolarek. The Finance and Building Committee and the Parish Education Board continue to meet and advise the parish priest. At every level of the parish, parishioners are being called forth to exercise a ministry. The Liturgy Committee supports and organises Sunday liturgies and special events and works with teams of Eucharistic, special ministers and readers, and Christine Walsh on the Children's liturgy. These Eucharistic ministers also visit and take communion to the sick and elderly around the parish and therefore help maintain a close contact between the parish community and those unable to travel. In a different way there is a search for additional collectors and counters, surely the oldest lay ministry in the church, for suppliers of coffee and tea after the Sunday family masses and from Shirley Wright who organises a resurgent altar society. With them are singers and musicians who perform Sunday after Sunday at the various masses and bring the touch of music magic to the hearts of worshippers. For special events such as Easter, calls go out for special volunteers for the choir. An ability to read music is not required, but apparently an ability to sing, is. The liturgies of Immaculate Conception and St Joseph would not happen without the support of so many willing volunteers.

Younger Parishioners

The care of and faith formation of the children of the parish is still a vital ministry. Fr Shortall and Fr James put a great deal of effort into their ministry at St Joseph's school and Fr Dwyer has continued it. The current principal, Gilbert Keisler sees the importance of maintaining strong ties with the local parish and works closely with the parish priest and the Parish School section of the Parish Education Board. The other section of the board looks to the wider educational roles of the parish, including the teaching of catechetics in West Hawthorn Primary School and supports the children's sacramental programmes. It expands every year and organises first communion and reconciliation services for young people not attending St Joseph's. These events are significant in the life of a parish and photos are sent out to parishioners via the Internet.

Care

Just as in the past but now finding expression in the Parish mission statement through "outreach, service and justice" the care of those in need remains part of parish life. The Manresa Care group continues to function and its large casserole bank provides emergency food for families in sudden need. The St Vincent de Paul Society, now in its 107th year of continuous existence, under president Martin Hennessy-Smith have three teams visiting the lonely and the needy in the inner suburbs and also work in the Society shop in Auburn Road. Part of the largest charity organisation in the country, they are always in search of more volunteers as the needs they face continue to expand. The Maytime Fair auxiliary continues to function, in its 57th year, raising money by luncheons and raffles, finding used stamps, cooking jams and other items and running an effective stall at the fair. Their regular appeals for all types of assistance in the Parish Bulletin is usually followed by "I am in desperate need of lemons" from Marg O'Loughlin, though for what purpose is not mentioned.

Just as the Maytime Fair and St Vincent de Paul now often go outside the boundaries of the parish to work for those in need, so a broader based assistance is available for those in need. The Catholic Solo Support group works with women and men who feel alone in the world, Rachel's Vineyard works with people suffering negative consequences of having an abortion, Tabor Journey tries to make sense of the grief which follows when a marriage ends and Youth for Christ search for people to help with homeless youth. Although not based in the parish these organisations and others are advertised heavily in the Parish Bulletin as it reaches out to those in need.

So in some ways 2007 is just like the past hundred and forty years; the building needs to be repaired, the liturgy prepared and offered, the children educated and formed in faith and those in need given aid. However, it is obvious to all that nationally mass attendance as a regular Sunday practice continues to decline and the influence of the church in the wider community declined with it. Numerous surveys have been carried out amongst Catholics and former Catholics to determine why they have stopped attending mass, but sometimes it is difficult to determine whether they stopped going to mass and then looked for explanations why after the event.²⁰³ There is substantial alienation amongst the liberal side of the church and especially amongst some women, with plenty of reason, but then some Catholics take their theological understandings from the pages of the daily press; scarcely a vital source of papal teaching.

However, despite the often-publicised anecdotal evidence that spirituality is dying, new studies and reports seem to indicate it is not. It seems spirituality is on the rise but people, especially the younger generation, are seeking the answers through the web and on television. There seems to be a divide between formal religion and spirituality, but the spirituality is there.²⁰⁴ The formal practice of religion is changing away from regular Sunday masses in the lives of many. Some years ago Fr James saw the rise in the popularity of the Australian commemoration of Anzac Day as being indicative of a resurgent spirituality, while this year the public media gave a very positive report of the large numbers of people attending Easter services.

How is the parish team at Hawthorn confronting this trend in the modern world? Fr Dwyer and his new assistant priest, Fr Celso Romanin are highly trained and professional clergymen whose well prepared and challenging sermons seem to be increasingly bringing people back to Immaculate Conception. The aim of the well-prepared liturgy is to keep those parishioners, who do attend, enlivened and enriched by the experience of the worship. The second aim of the parish team is to give those parishioners who attend irregularly, Christmas, Easter, marriages, funerals, first communions, confirmations and baptisms a most positive experience of liturgy and church life so that they will be wanting to return sometime in the future.

Also a link in the Hawthorn parish to the wider church is found as Catholics are now willing to travel to have their needs met. Church magazines, such as the Jesuit Publications' *Eureka Street*, and Church Resources' *Catholic News Headlines* appear only on the Internet, as do *Ozspirit* and *Terra Spiritus* advertised in the Parish Bulletin. Parishes are no longer an isolated island but part of a diocesan-wide or nation-wide Catholic ministry. Hawthorn parish through its own Parish Bulletin is constantly putting

²⁰³ "Slim sample Reveals Massive Answers Why Catholics Stopped Going to Church." *The Swag*, Summer 2006 pp 16-17

²⁰⁴ Michael Mullins, James Massola, *Eureka Street* 10 April 2007

before those who might be in need where assistance can be found and where the loving Christian community can celebrate Christ's presence.

Beyond maintaining contact with the regular parishioners and giving the occasional worshipper a positive experience the parish has been looking at ways of engaging the youth in the life of the church. It is engaged in a study programme with Genazzano and Xavier College, the Boroondara Deanery and with input from Monash University and ACU to try to understand why young people drift away from the church and the best ways to maintain the challenge of Christian belief and practice in their lives. There is a goodness and a belief amongst young people which has to be admitted and understood before it can be tapped.

In nearly one hundred and forty years twenty-three Jesuits have served as parish priests on Glenferrie Road, two of them twice. Eighty-eight priests have served as assistant priest, some briefly and some for decades, nine served as migrant chaplains and thirty-six lived in the community and largely did other works. With these Jesuits were a large number of women and men who served in an array of ministries around the parish and kept the vision of faith alive and flourishing. At any year in any decade the challenges remained the same, the circumstances and strategies varied. The message of Christ still has to be preached, the young educated and those in need, cared for. Week in and week out the parish leadership publicises their needs from new buildings and technology to assistance with liturgy and collections down to lemons. Through it all the parishioners of St Joseph's and Immaculate Conception have continued to walk together in faith.

Epilogue

Here is one of the great truths of Christian life. The only real argument for Christianity is a Christian experience. We may have to argue with people until intellectual barriers are dislodged, but in the vast majority of cases the only persuasion which works is to say: "I know what Jesus is like and I know what Jesus can do". True Christian ministry begins when we can say: "I know what Christ has done for me," and follow it with, "Try him and see what Christ can do for you".²⁰⁵ For nearly a century and a half the priests and people of Hawthorn have been ministering to each other and to the people of the city in just this way, in life they have walked together in faith and in Jesus' name.

²⁰⁵ William Barclay Sermons

Parish Priests

1882	Fr Oliver Daly
1886	Fr Peter O'Flinn
1891	Fr George Buckeridge
1894	Fr Thomas Cahill
1895	Fr Peter O'Flinn
1899	Fr George Buckeridge
1902	Fr James Colgan
1910	Fr George Kelly
1915	Fr Thomas Claffey
1923	Fr Joseph Hearn
1931	Fr Jeremiah Sullivan
1934	Fr John Burke
1947	Fr J. William O'Collins
1953	Fr Thomas Bourke
1959	Fr Philip Kurts
1961	Fr Henry Johnston
1967	Fr Kevin Carroll
1972	Fr Patrick Tracey
1975	Fr Richard Morgan
1978	Fr Desmond Walker
1981	Fr Brian Murphy
1988	Fr Robert Walsh
1991	Fr Richard Shortall
1997	Fr Geoffrey James
2004	Fr Desmond Dwyer

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 Mr Bill Dixon
 Mrs Margaret de Vries
 Mr. Frank Dennis
 Fr Robert Walsh SJ
 Fr Joseph Dooley SJ
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