

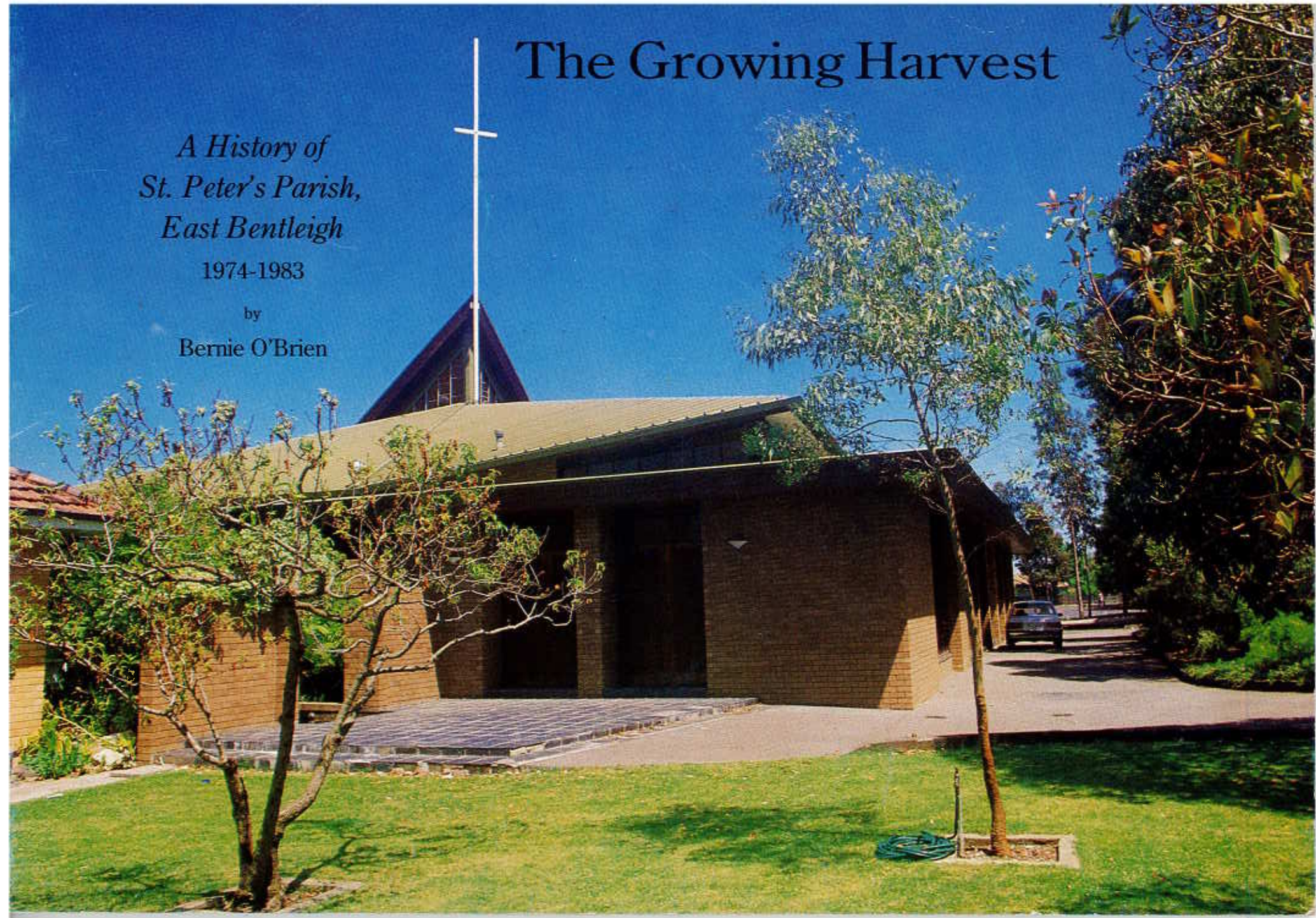
The Growing Harvest

*A History of
St. Peter's Parish,
East Bentleigh*

1974-1983

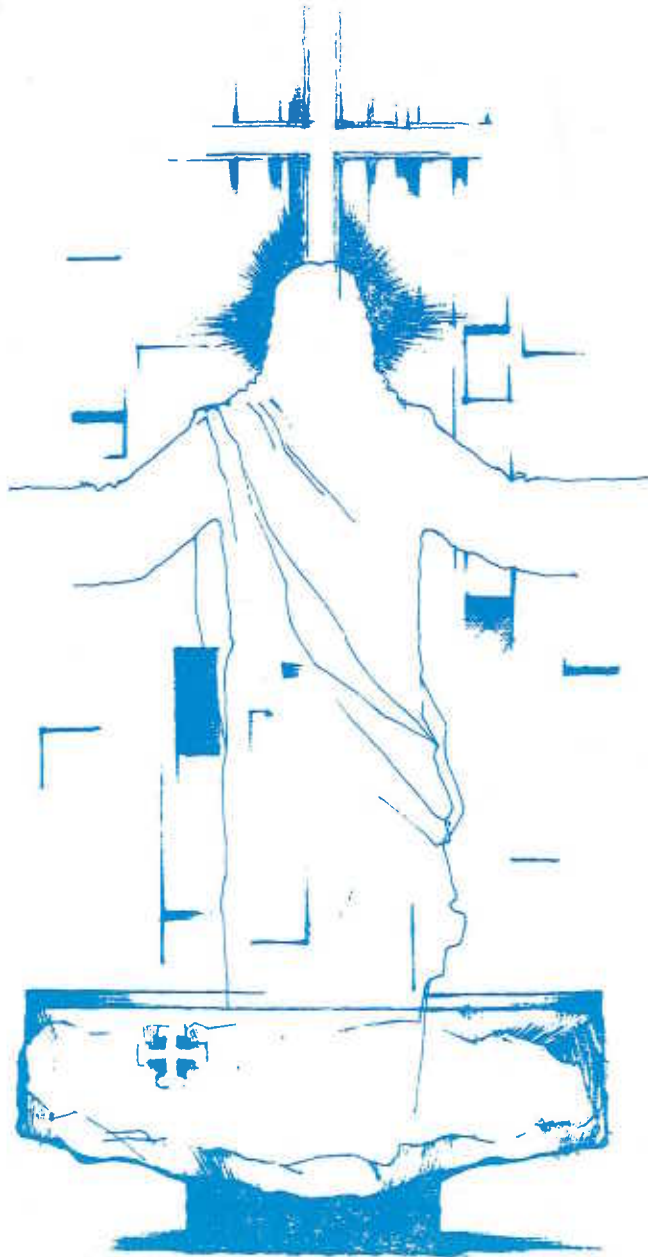
by

Bernie O'Brien





This motif was designed and drawn by a Parishioner, Mr. John Guiney, and was chosen as the emblem to be used during the opening ceremonies of the new Parish Church 1974.



The Growing Harvest

*A History of
St. Peter's Parish,
East Bentleigh*

From Church Opening 1974
to Dedication 1983

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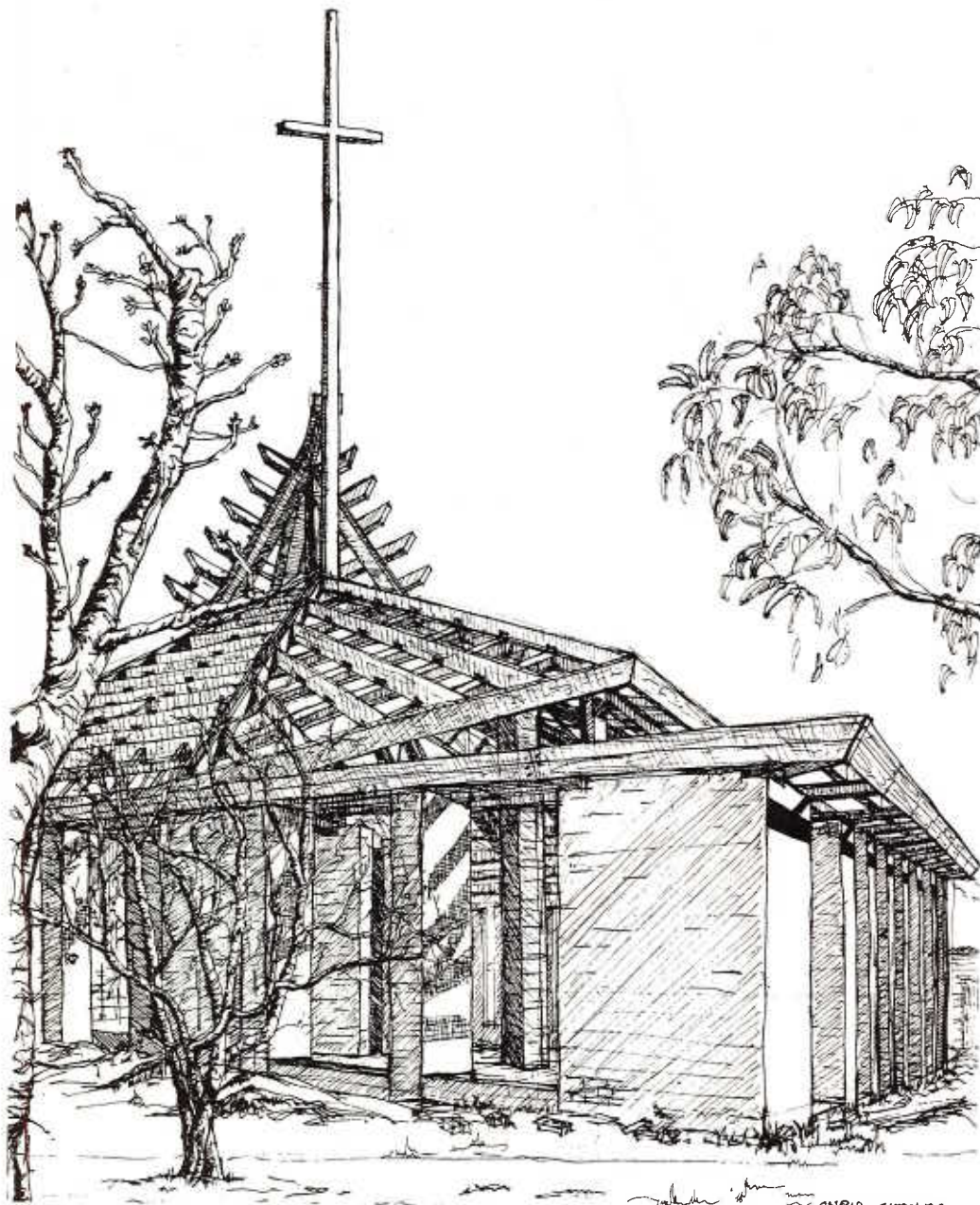
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Back Cover: Archbishop Little concelebrates Mass at St. Peter's.

Acknowledgments

Our thanks to the following who assisted in the production of this book:

Bruce Austin, Reg Emons, Jim Jones and John Mason.



Prayer for a New Church

We have built our homes, our school, and now we build our church where crops once flourished.

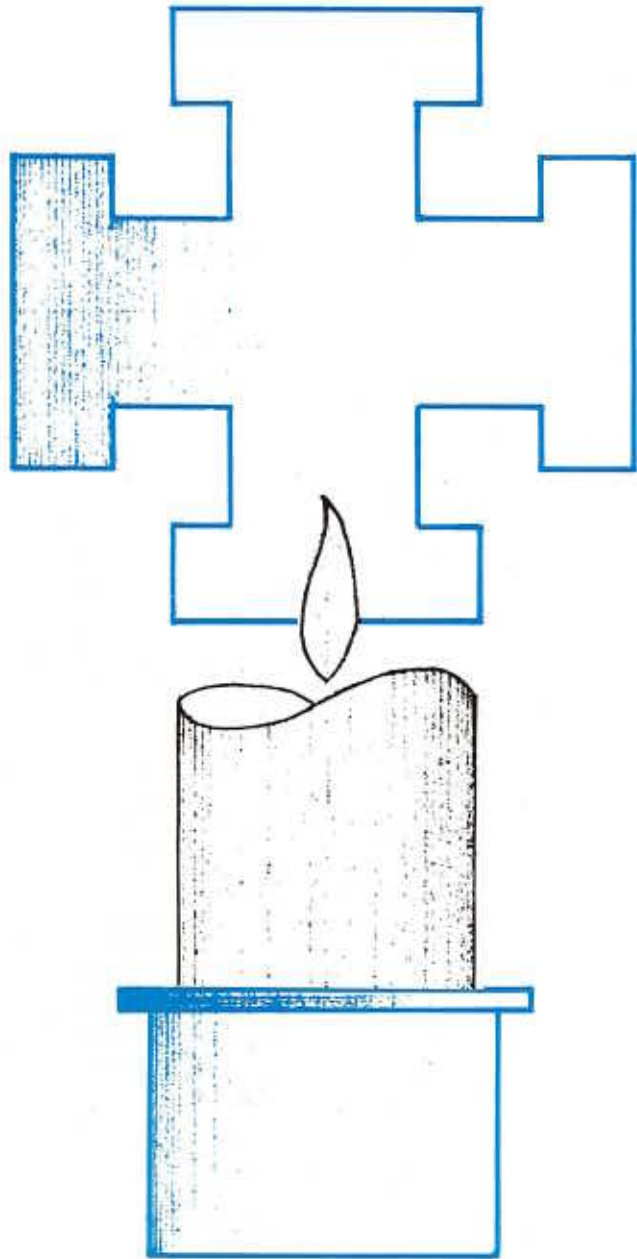
For over one hundred years the earth of our neighbourhood has been made rich and fertile by the pioneer market gardeners who brought to this new land their faith, and their hope for a new and better life. Their crops flourished and their prayers for good seasons and bountiful harvests were heard.

Now, in this community of our parish, the produce of the earth has given way to a new harvest.

The cycle of preparing the good earth, planting, and nourishing has been replaced with a new circle of birth, growth, renewal, re-birth and the ultimate season of eternal life—a living harvest.

We build this church on land cleared from the bush, made rich and fertile by those who have gone before. We fix the bricks and mortar upon the soil and raise the Cross toward heaven, in prayerful hope that the harvest that will come for ourselves, our children, and those who will follow, will be blessed and joyously bountiful.

Reprinted from *The Living Harvest*, by W. T. Dobson.



DEDICATION CROSS AND CANDLE

To signify the dedication of St. Peter's, four new crosses have been placed on the walls inside our Church.

They symbolise three things: the four seasons of the year, the earth's four compass points and four people reading in Church.

And so there may be light for the readers, each Cross has a candle.

Their design is the same as the Cross at the foot of the Altar, the Crusader Cross, which was sewn on the tunics of the Crusaders whose quest was to free the Holy Land from Moslem rule between the 11th and 13th centuries.



St. Patrick's Cathedral,
Melbourne Vic. 3002

11th December, 1983.

Dear Friends,

Congratulations to the priests and parishioners of St. Peter's Parish, East Bentleigh, on the occasion of the Dedication of the Parish Church.

This occasion is another time when your Parish offers great witness that the Liturgy is at the heart of the Parish Community.

May this Church continue to strengthen further and build up the Eucharistic Community at East Bentleigh so that its life will be one which finds its source and summit in the Lord's gift of Himself to us.

As we pray at the beginning of the ceremony:

*May God, the Father of mercies,
dwell in this house of prayer.
May the grace of the Holy Spirit cleanse us,
for we are the temple of His presence.*

With cordial greetings and every good wish,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

T. F. Little

*+T. F. Little,
ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE*



A Message from Father Heriot

History can always be lost if it is not recorded, and so, in sponsoring this book on the years 1974-1983, I am committing to the written word much that has involved the human efforts and goodwill of many parishioners.

Our parish has had its stages of growth. Our first parishioners were mainly market gardeners, and they have been with us over a century now. The influx of population into East Bentleigh came after the war, when the market gardens were divided into household blocks and were settled by a number of ex-servicemen and people from older parishes in Melbourne who wanted to make a fresh start in life for their young families. During the war many people developed organising skills, and they brought their enthusiasm for a better life than warfare into action as they welded together good work forces. And it does not escape my attention that the first two parish priests of St. Peter's were ex-Army chaplains.

Our next phase was the addition of migrant people into the parish. We did a survey of parish



life here at St. Peter's in May of 1979, and we make some comparisons with two other Melbourne parishes, Blackburn and Ormond. At that time we had people from 33 nations as parishioners and it interests me to quote the present statistics of St. Peter's Primary School that this year we have 45 different nationalities in our primary school.

St. Peter's Parish and St. Peter's School have been home to all of them.

And when we dedicate the Church on December 11 with His Grace, Archbishop T. F. Little, D.D., K.B.E., we are celebrating all that growth and all that warmth that has made our parish a happy Family of God.

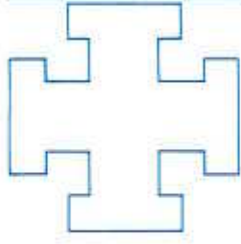
And now we are entering a new phase in our parish life. We are having a lay principal at St. Peter's for the first time. I single out the Sisters from the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for their 50 years of service to the Bentleigh/East Bentleigh area.

As you read this book, you may find yourself

recalling history that you have been involved in personally. The challenge of our time of Catholic life is not how well we have catered for ourselves, but how successfully we move out into the community without losing our identity.

It is with appreciation that I offer my personal congratulations to all who have helped make St. Peter's what it is.

M. B. HERIOT



Foundations of St. Peter's Parish

The present parish of St. Peter's was originally part of Brighton Parish (Est. 1853) and later included in St. Paul's, Bentleigh Parish (Est. 1928).

The first Church building in this area was a small wooden school house and hall erected in February, 1865 on Centre Road, opposite the present Moorabbin Hospital. A brick school building constructed in 1903 replaced the original wooden structure and was the site of the first Mass celebrated in East Bentleigh.

Among the early settlers in the district were many Irish families who cleared the land and developed market gardens. One of these original pioneers, arriving soon after 1855 was James Kennedy, a native of Carrich-on-Suhr, Tipperary, whose grandson, James Joseph Kennedy wrote in 1919 to the then Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Daniel Mannix, urging the establishment of a parish in the region.



JAMES JOSEPH KENNEDY
1883-1968

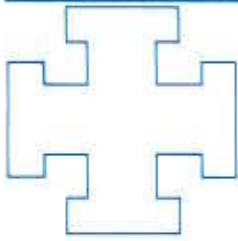


"Rosedale"
Mackie Rd.
Bentleigh
May 27th 19

Your Grace,

It is with great fear that I write this letter knowing my own ignorance and your great knowledge, but as it is for the good of our holy church, I trust you will forgive all mistakes.

My subject deals with the district of Bentleigh, where we are very poorly attended to in the way of church services. As you are aware we are in the parish of Elsternwick and are situated between five or six miles from the presbytery, now it would be of much greater advantage for the Bentleigh people to be connected with either Oakleigh, or Glenhuntly, the priest being then within three miles of us.



Our nearest church is Brighton which is about three miles from us, and it is very awkward for us to go there to confession on a Saturday afternoon. Now we have a Catholic school, right in the

centre of us, where confessions could be heard and Mass said for us, if only the priest had not so far to come.

At present our people are all split, some go to St. Finbar's Brighton, others to St. Anthony's, Glonhantly, others to Okkleigh others to Chentone, thus causing the people never to meet together. A motion was passed by our H.C. B. Society, to form a deputation to you about this matter, more than twelve months ago but nothing has ever come of it.

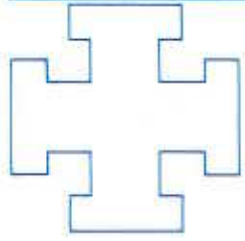


It may also be said that our catholic people in this district comprise about one hundred to one hundred and fifty, they are mostly farmers, and are well able and quite willing to put in to build a new church if necessary, trusting, I have not offended in any way in writing this letter, to you, your Grace. I will now conclude.

*Yours most respectfully
J. Kennedy.*

Three years later in 1922 Mass was celebrated on a regular basis at St. Peter's School. J. J. Kennedy's foresight and determination had a tremendous effect on the development of the area.

The parish of St. Peter's, East Benteigh was subsequently established on January 11, 1955.



By bush track to Bentleigh

A history of the parish entitled *The Living Harvest* was written by a parishioner, Mr. William Dobson, in 1974 for the opening of the new Church. A review of this book, published by *The Age* on 9/11/1974, is reprinted here.



The second school building. Blessed and opened 1903.

The odyssey of Fr. Patrick Niall over a “dusty, rough and narrow bush track” on a day of high summer in 1865 makes a charming rural vignette.

Fr. Niall, first resident parish priest of the “Brighton-St. Kilda” Mission, which originally embraced all districts south of the Yarra from Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne) to Portsea and eastwards into Gippsland as far as Warragul and Korumburra, was on his way to visit “the little village of Oakleigh.” There, five miles from the lean-to hut he called his presbytery at Little Brighton was a growing colony of market gardeners, most of them fled Ireland in the terrible famine years from 1845 to 1849.

The muster of their names has a rich, Hibernian ring — Hanrahan, Carroll, Shanahan, Gould and Howes, to list the five founding Catholic families in what is now Bentleigh. Their story is centrepiece of *The Living Harvest*, a brief, closely researched and entertaining history, published by the parish to celebrate the completion and opening this month of St. Peter’s, first parish church of East Bentleigh.



St. Peter's became a parish on January 11, 1955, hiving off from the parent Bentleigh parish which had itself been part of the large St. James' parish, Elsternwick, until 1928. Parish growth through the century since first settlement had been slow, according to W. T. Dobson, author of *The Living Harvest*.

"From the 40 Irish pioneer families of Bentleigh and East Bentleigh of the early 1850s, the Catholic population had remained in the early 1920s at about a total of 150, with only slight increases until 1950."

Thereafter is a tale of "extraordinary growth . . . almost without precedent." The market gardens gave way to urban sub-division although for some years the pot-holed, unsealed roads of the district resembles the bush tracks Fr. Niall had bounced along in his buggy. Moorabbin, of which East Bentleigh is part, became the most rapidly growing urban area in Australia. Between 1954 and 1971 houses in the East Bentleigh parish alone tripled from 1866 to 6112.

The Church that Mr. Dobson's short parish history celebrates was first suggested in 1919 in a letter to Archbishop Mannix by James Joseph Kennedy, grandson of James Kennedy, who settled the district about 1855 and purchased 10 acres in Bignell Road in 1859.

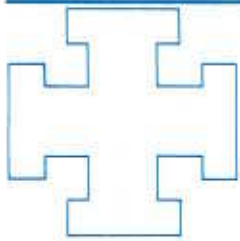
Education's priorities delayed building St. Peter's. A school of rough-hewn timber, erected by the market gardeners on Fred Quinn's land in 1868, gave way to a handsome brick establishment in 1903. In a splendid photograph from that year, the pinafores girls of St. Peter's, their brother pupils in apple catchers and Fr. Gough, parish priest, in top hat, line the platform of Bentleigh station in welcome to Archbishop Carr, who opened and blessed the new school on Tuesday, April 7.

By Mr. Dobson's account, drawn from the *Advocate*, it was a rousing day. Parishioners in their hundreds gathered, from North Road, Orrong Road, Brighton, East Brighton, Mentone. Outside the station were assembled some 60 horse-drawn vehicles crowded with men and women. A large body of officers and men of the Hibernian Society were in attendance in regalia. The Bavarian Brass Band played "some inspiring Irish national airs." At the entrance to the "handsome and commodious" school, some two miles distant from the station, was a "triumphal arch of greenery, on which was inscribed the greeting, 'Welcome' . . ."

In 1953, the site of St. Peter's Church was purchased in Centre Road, not far from the original school, and a new primary school-church was built to accommodate 152 pupils. The enrolment by 1968 was 1026. In July, 1971, St. James' Regional College was opened on the Bignell Road site of the original Kennedy market garden, joining St. Peter's primary school in an educational complex that Fr. Niall could only have dreamed about during those dusty buggy rides through his parish.

In the words of Fr. Heriot, St. Peter's parish priest since October, 1973, the completion and opening of the church that J. J. Kennedy first proposed to Archbishop Mannix more than 50 years ago "culminates the work of over a century."

By courtesy of The Age, 9/11/74.



The New Church

Parish Priest Builders: Fr. Heriot with cross for the new church 1974. Inset: Archbishop Little inspects the site with Fr. Heriot.





ST. PETER'S NEW CHURCH

Archbishop Little blessed and opened the new St. Peter's church on December 15, 1974. The day will long be remembered by the hard-working parishioners who did so much to realise the dream of Fr. Coakley who after being appointed Parish Priest in 1969 began re-vitalising the parish. He developed the plan for a new Church in 1972 and worked tirelessly on the project until his death on July 18, 1973.

One year later when a special Mass was celebrated to mark the anniversary of the new church, it was estimated that more than 250,000 persons had passed through St. Peter's in that 12 months. People had entered St. Peter's to pray, think, worship, marry, to be buried or to bury, to understand, to regain peace and to find themselves.

FAMILY PLANNING

One of the highlights in the parish was the establishment of a Family Planning Centre at St. Peter's in May, 1974.

The plan, devised by the Parish Council, began on May 7, 1974 with 42 adults attending the lecture given by parishioner and trained teacher Mary Kelleher from St. Vincent's Hospital. Dr. Red Wright-Smith, also an expert in family planning, gave great assistance at the monthly

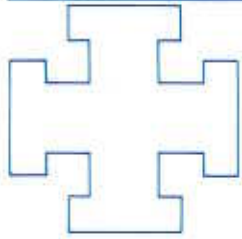
lectures. The subsequent Family Planning Clinic was an outstanding success for young marrieds of the parish.

There were other significant projects commencing in St. Peter's in 1974. One was the World Development Centre Fund where parishioners were donating to help the under-privileged overseas churches. On May 12, \$500 was sent to Sister Ignatia at the O.L.S.H. Mission for medical supplies to the Philippines and to Fr. Lowe at Bema, New Guinea, to help offset the cost of tractor repairs so vital in the harvesting of his crops.

On July 18, 1974 Mass was celebrated for the first anniversary of the death of Fr. Coakley, the inspiration behind the building of the new St. Peter's, East Benteigh.

MASSES

St. Peter's was indeed a busy parish of the Archdiocese at July 28, 1974. Records show that nine Masses were being celebrated each weekend. They started the previous Saturday night at 7.30 p.m. then on the hour from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and another at 5.30 p.m. Sunday. In addition two other Masses, celebrated in the hall, were held each Sunday at 10 and 11 a.m.



Community Aids



The previous church building was used from 1957 to 1974. It was converted to the Lighthouse Neighbourhood Centre after the opening of the new church.

EMERGENCY HOME HELP

Another important and vital project started at St. Peter's on July 8, 1975 was Emergency Home Help. The scheme was organised by Mrs. Sheila McIlroy and parishioners quickly volunteered their services.

The plan was to roster one lady per school day,

between the hours of 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. to assist with child minding and house duties, etc. Men were also used on a roster system to help with emergency transport at night.

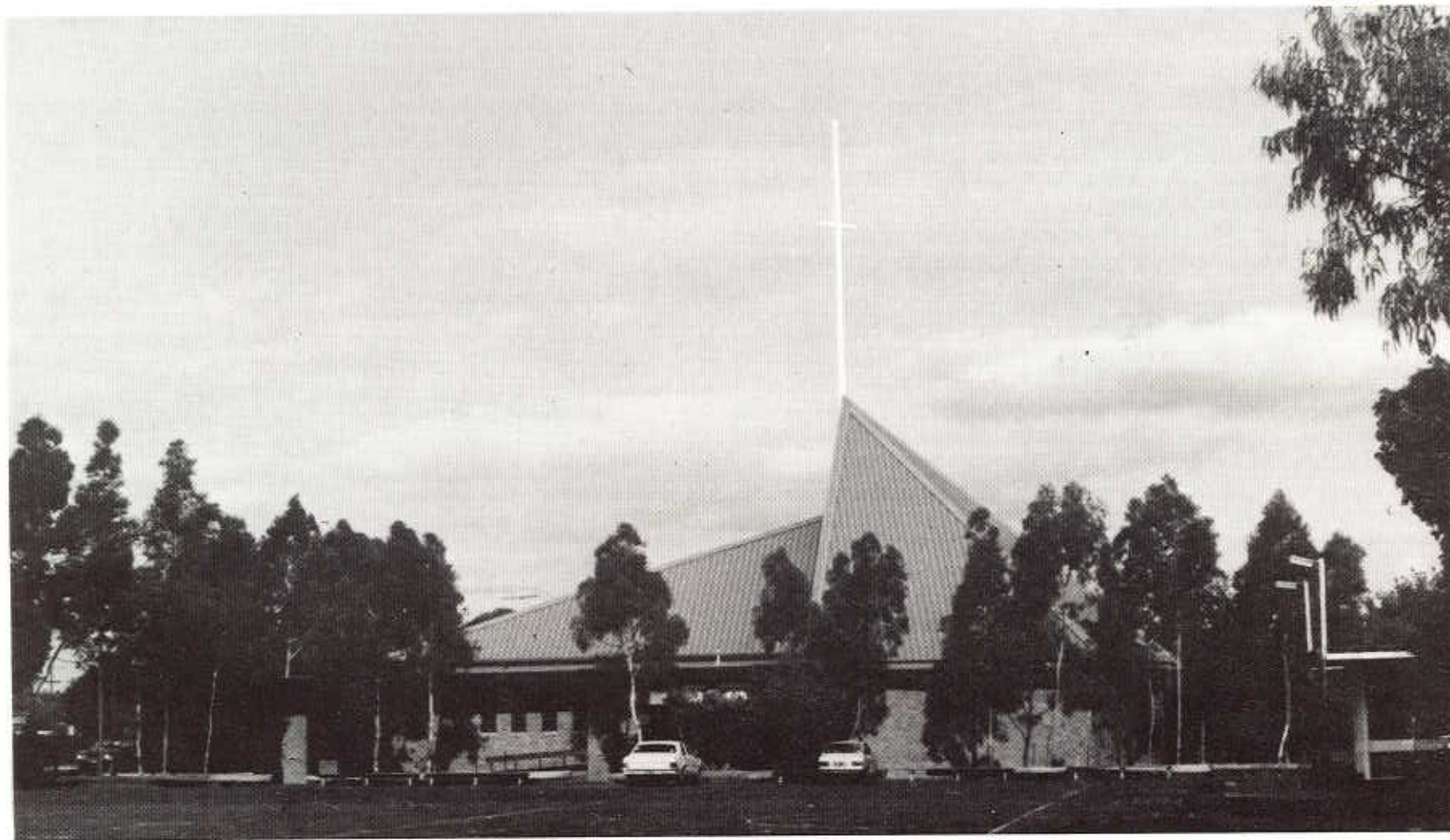
St. Peter's was still a growing parish and many mothers with large families of pre-school children were given great aid and assistance by the cheerful workers who made up the Home Help brigade.

MOORABBIN AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL

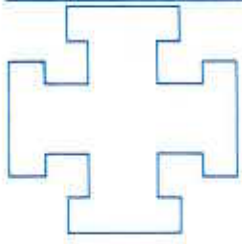
In October, 1975 the Moorabbin and District Hospital was opened which materialised the dreams on many people in the community. St. Peter's parish raised \$1000 and donated two beds to the new hospital.

One of St. Peter's parishioners, Mrs. Crees of Banksia Street, was the new hospital's first patient and she was the first person to receive Holy Communion at the Moorabbin and District Hospital.

Earlier that year parishioners had formed a working bee at St. Peter's to help beautify the new church. In September one of the first chores of the workers was to plant trees on the west side of the church. Their many hard hours of labor can now be viewed and enjoyed each time you enter St. Peter's.



St. Peter's Church from the school grounds on the west side.



Parish Development

In March, 1976 the new forms of Confession were introduced with parishioners excited about the three methods to be used. To quote from the parish bulletin March 7, 1976:

1. Rite for the reconciliation of individual penitents.
2. Rite of reconciliation of several penitents with individual Confession and absolution, and
3. Rite of reconciliation of penitents with general Confession and absolution. All of these varieties will be used at St. Peter's during this Lent. Fr. Heriot then quoted from the official document of the church:

“Individual, integral Confession and absolution remain the ordinary way for the faithful to reconcile themselves with God and the Church . . . Those who receive pardon for grave sins by a common absolution should go to individual Confession before they receive this kind of absolution again, unless they are impeded by just reason.”

There was another reason for celebration the following month in 1976. St. Peter's won their first Under 14 Cricket Premiership. The presen-

tation night was held in the Anchor on April 9, and congratulations went to team manager Mr. John White, captain Michael Harrington and naturally to the members of the victorious Eleven.

The parish picnic was also held at the Morning Star Boys' Home, Mornington on April 25, and Fr. Casey celebrated his 60th birthday on April 23, 1976.

A series of conferences were also held in June that year to discuss ideas on the transformation of St. Peter's Old Church. The most popular ideas were to transform it into a gymnasium, an art and craft centre and an auditorium.

Fr. Heriot celebrated a special Mass in July, 1976 for his Silver Jubilee on July 22. Bishop Kelly attended the Mass along with many of the priests who worked with Fr. Heriot in his nine previous parishes

LAY MINISTERS FOR COMMUNION

One of the major steps for St. Peter's in 1976 was the introduction of Lay Ministers for Communion.

The Parish Council approved in principle the idea of Lay Ministers distributing Holy Communion and left it to the Liturgy Committee to promote the whole order of Lay Ministers.



Fr. Heriot's Silver Jubilee Mass, July 22, 1976.



School bus.

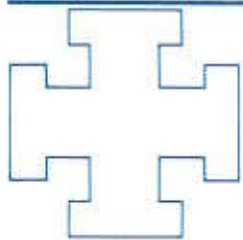
SCHOOL BUS

A school bus run was started for children who lived on the east side of Warrigal Road. The run commenced in August, 1976 and response was excellent from parents who volunteered to drive the bus. Fr. Whitehouse completed details and parents agreed to pay \$1 per week per child.

A course was also started in August, 1976 for Special Ministers of The Eucharist, and in October parishioners agreed to an emergency collection for presbytery security. Fencing was needed along Bignell Road and a wrought-iron protection on windows and doors was suggested. Also external lighting and stronger locks were purchased for the peace of mind of the parish. The security update was made after consultation with local police.

The results of the 1976 Parish Council were: Lucille Forbes, John Beveridge, Neil Hamilton, Audrey Kelly, Mario Caruana and Bernard Hayes.

The annual Christmas Card delivery was made on December 15, with every house in the parish being visited. The area that year, 1976, was from East Boundary Road to Old Dandenong Road. The Christmas Card delivery was assisted by the Special Youth Force set up that year. St. Peter's is still quite proud of its youth and their generosity.



Successful Projects



**Fr. RAY WHITEHOUSE, Assistant Priest,
St. Peter's 1974.**

In 1977 Fr. Ray Whitehouse left St. Peter's and was farewelled with a reception in the hall on February 6 following Mass. He was with us for three years.

Yoga classes began in the Lighthouse, and on February 13 the regular Thursday evening Mass resumed. The Thursday Mass began midway through 1973 and was celebrated to pray for the success of St. Peter's new church.

In March the sewerage was completed and Adult Education classes started in late February. Twelve people attended the first meeting and it was decided to have one section for study per week. The first program included these topics:

1. Treasures of the Bible.
2. Children cannot grow in faith unless they have help.
3. What does freedom mean to you.



The parish donated \$1412 towards sending two trained teachers, Mary Kelleher and Lyn Weston, on an Aid to India Mission in April, 1977.

With the help of Air India, who donated one return fare, the pair were farewelled on April 4 with a special Mass. They left for India on April 12 and returned on May 6.

Fr. Heriot received a letter of thanks from L. D. Didier 'Serre, President of the Diocesan Family Commission from Calcutta thanking him for the marvellous assistance Mary Kelleher and Lyn Weston had been while representing St. Peter's.

Mr. John Egan was elected chairman of the Lighthouse Committee in July, 1977 and the Parish Council election results were: Joan Gow, Ann Morley, Barry McWilliams, David Hughes, Harry Beven and Con Lilley.

Queen's Medal winners from the parish in 1977 were: Ern Danaher, Ted Hower and Bob Holdsworth.

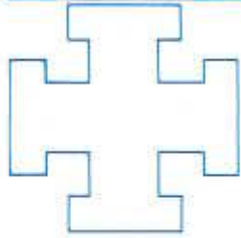
SPORT

Sport was again to the forefront for St Peter's in August that year with no less than FIVE premierships being won. Two football sides and three basketball teams were successful. As Fr. Heriot wrote in the August 21 bulletin: "I believe in the Olympics idea that it is better to participate than to win. Nevertheless, success is always sweet (all golfers agree)."

BINGO

St. Peter's applied for a Bingo licence on August 27, 1977. Kevin and Jean Logan and Maurie and Dawn Turner headed the committee to oversee the project. The proceeds of the first month totalled \$1880 and the distribution was as follows: Scholarship Fund, Boys' Club, Cricket Club, Mothers' Club, Garden Committee, Netball Club, Little Athletics and Kindergarten.

Two Vietnamese families were introduced to the parish in October, 1977 and to welcome them a family barbecue was held at the school. The first family moved into a flat in Derry Street in November and the new parish members were extremely grateful to the support and help given them in the way of furniture and bicycles.



Family Welfare

In 1978 Sunday Mass was introduced for children attending Government schools in the parish, and the annual Men's Dinner was held on April 20. The function is for fathers with boys in Form 5.

The Catholic Family Welfare Bureau conducted fortnightly counselling classes starting on May 1. The sessions were available to couples with marriage problems and also parents concerned about their children. Fr. Brasier conducted the courses in the Lighthouse.

An added feature of parish life in St. Peter's in 1978 was the establishment of the First Friday Prayer Night — Vigil of Prayer.

Every first Friday there was continuous prayer from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Subjects as The Sacred Heart, Religious Vocations, Family Life and Unemployment were the themes prayed for in half-hour sessions.

St. Peter's organised its own Liturgy team in June, 1978 and the following month preliminary work began on the important establishment of units for the elderly people of the parish.

By October that year \$20,000, profit from Bingo, had been invested with the School's Provident Fund for units for the elderly people. More than \$40,950 was distributed to various church bodies — all from Bingo proceeds — by October, 1978.

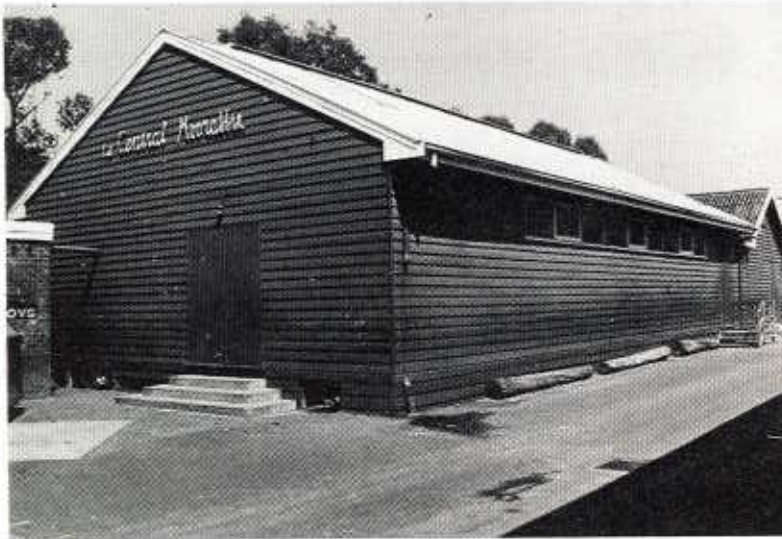
The first 12 months of Bingo operations realised the parish \$43,000. In November, St. Peter's distributed \$1000 to the World Development Committee in both 1977 and 1978.

Ann-Maree Little created an amazing record when she left St. Peter's on December 19, 1978. She ended 25 years of unbroken attendance by the *Little Daughters* of the parish. Glenyse, sister of the *Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, principal of Darwin Primary School, started school at St. Peter's in 1953 — even before the parish did.

Parish Council elections for 1978 were: Joan Casey, Jacqui Davison, Bill Dobson, John Ellingworth, Lyn Grace, Norman Taylor.



Fund Raising



St. Peter's Scout Hall.

BOTTLE DRIVE

By February, 1979, the proceeds of the bottle drives, started in 1973, had reached \$8703. The money was used in the form of St. Peter's Scholarships. A total of 57 scholarships had been given to pupils at both primary and secondary levels.

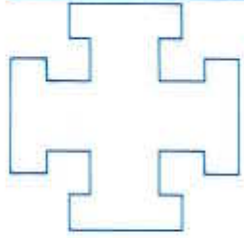
The Bingo distribution continued to rise and in 1979 \$27,375 was allocated to the units for the elderly, which took the total invested in the Schools Provident Fund for the units to \$59,850 — *all from Bingo!*

In September, 1979 the parish started the Mass for the Sick and Elderly. It was celebrated on the first Friday of each month and was tremendously successful, giving the ill and elderly the opportunity to receive Confession, Communion and also made them feel they were still active members of the parish scene.

In November that year St. Peter's started an appeal for the starving people of war-torn and drought-stricken Kampuchea.

By early December \$6774.74 had been raised and after consultation with an adviser from the Chief Relief Section of the International Committee for the Red Cross in Bangkok, it was decided to spend the money on a high-protein vitamin-enriched biscuit which had been manufactured by Arnotts, with the assistance of the C.S.I.R.O. Two tonnes of the biscuit was baked on December 10 and flown by Qantas to Bangkok on December 17.

Parish Council election results for 1979 were: Alan Ashton, Joan Barnewall, Ann Caprackus, Sister Kathleen, Brian Lawler and Bill Morley.



Moongala

In February, 1980, St. Peter's bought the house next door to the school and named it *Moongala*, an Aborigine word for "laughing water." The home was set up as a day-care centre to support the young wives and mothers of the area.

Moongala began operations in early March. It was furnished by parishioners and quickly flourished with people from the Bentleigh district using it for such purposes as child-minding, support for mothers, family planning, Scripture courses and Right to Life Association meetings.

Moongala became a favorite of mothers with pre-schoolers who were able to drop children off while they shopped. It also gave new parish members a chance to introduce themselves into St. Peter's.

In 1980 St. Peter's celebrated its Silver Jubilee with a series of celebrations. The first of these was a Mass for the Renewal of Marriage Vows. A Debutante Silver Jubilee Ball was held and

another successful function was *Ye Olde Tyme Music Hall*, held in the school hall on October 19.

The parish bulletin recalls: "You had to be there to realise just how superb it really was. We had heard that it would be very professional. Certainly it was, and more. Congratulations to Val Thynne and all the artists."

Once again the parish showed their generosity when they rallied to support victims of the Italian earthquake in November, 1980. A special collection was taken after Mass on December 14 and sent to Monsignor Aldo Rebeschini, who was in Rome as Cardinal Knox's secretary. Some of the parishioners had relatives in the disaster areas.

December 1 in 1980 was also a day that will stay with Fr. Heriot forever. It was the Parish Priest's first hole-in-one. The "miracle" happened at Metropolitan Golf Club.

Parish Council elections results for 1980 were: Alan Dwyer, David Walls, Jacqui Davison. Three positions were not filled.

Church Activity



The first All-Night Prayer Vigil was held in the parish in April, 1981. The vigil commenced at 10 p.m. on a Friday evening with Mass and ended with a second Mass at 5 a.m. the following Saturday.

The decision to raise St. Peter's altar was made in April, 1981. It was suggested after a parishioner claimed he had trouble seeing the priest during the Eucharistic Prayer. Parishioners were asked their views on the subject and after lengthy discussion it was agreed that the altar be raised.

The architect advised that another step be added to the present two steps and the two circu-

lar discs be removed from under the lectern and chair. The cost of the project was \$2500.

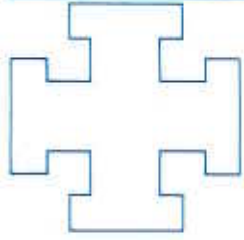
A feature of 1981 Lent was the Eight Posters of Lent produced by Helen Scarfe.

The idea came from a member of the Liturgy Committee and involved several hours' work by Helen. She spent more than three hours on each poster. Her work was also an inspiration to all the young, talented people of St. Peter's.

In November, 1981 the Lighthouse celebrated its fifth birthday with more than 300 people, other than St. Peter's pupils, availing themselves weekly of activities as: The Lighthouse Players, H.S.C. English Literature studies, legal studies, jazz ballet, play groups (for mothers and pre-school children), migrant education classes, guitar lessons, East Bentleigh Community Services of Socialisation, marriage education, Greek dancing and an after-school program for 40 children.

The five people responsible for the success of the Lighthouse were John Egan, Lucille Forbes, Barbara Seeley, Moira Dwyer and Robyn Hamilton.

Parish Council elections results for 1981: Andrew Madigan, Peter Lockman, Alan Ashton, Bruce Grandison, Gwen Kelly and John Mason.



Reinforcing Our Parish

In early 1982 St. Peter's conducted a complete census of the parish. The last had been in 1976 and during those five years 400 families had shifted from St. Peter's. A wide age group of people from senior secondary schools and young working people assisted greatly with the census.

The results of the census showed that we had 2587 families or units in St. Peter's at March 28, 1982. There were also 667 children attending St. Peter's school.

In April, 1982 we received a new helper. Sister Rosemary, a Brigidine Sister, offered to assist with parish duties four days a week. She also began visiting Moorabbin Hospital on Mondays and her continued work has been greatly appreciated by everyone at St. Peter's.

SACRIFICIAL OFFERING

Father Casey was responsible for organising finances for St. Peter's in 1961. A special meeting was called on June 6, 1982 to reinforce the Sacrificial Offering Campaign. The slogan being "Let's Finish the Work of St. Peter's."

A Choice Weekend — a scheme designed for young people to spend a serious weekend away together — began in May that year and was hosted by Fr. Bourke. The first weekend had 24 young people, between the ages of 18 and 25, thinking about and wanting to know themselves better. The program was about love and decision making in real life.

The Ecumenical Pentecost Rally in June that year was attended by 135 people. Figures released at the meeting later showed that there were 830 million Catholics among the world's population of 3300 million.

In June, following the efforts of the Sacrificial Offering Campaign, 1003 pledges were received weekly. That figure was higher than the 931 in the previous campaign. The weekly amount promised rose to \$3160. Campaign Director Mr. Matt Spackman, the workers and contributors received the appreciation and sincere thanks from the Finance Committee.

The 1982 Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council discussed a variety of subjects including: The changes in the Church today; Marriage encounter; Scripture lessons in the parish; Choice; a program for youth; an H.S.C. boy's appreciation of the plight of the pensioners;

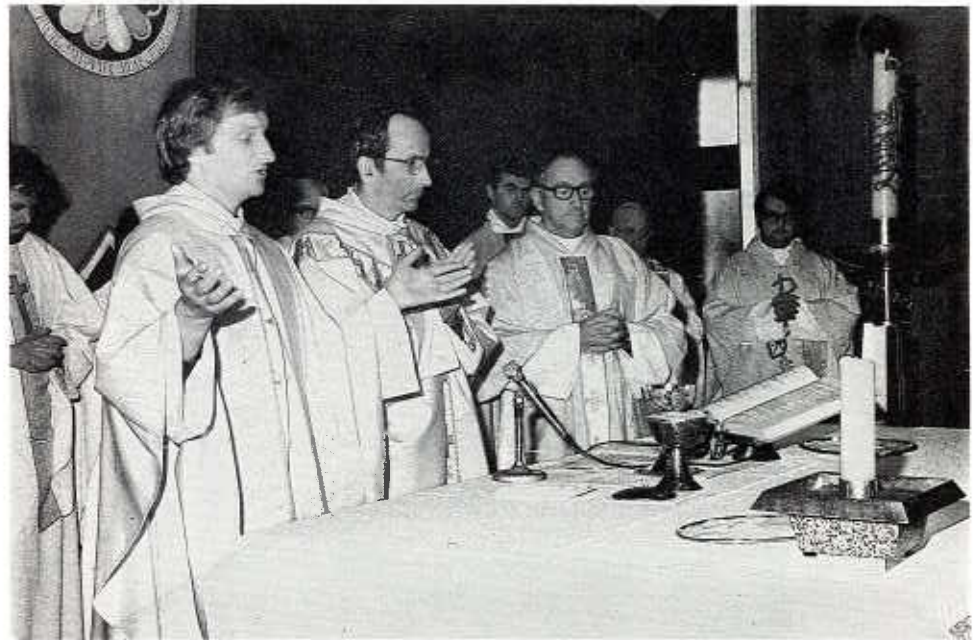


social issues; the role of women in the Church; the plight of the homeless in our City of Moorabbin; Finances of the parish; and the instruction of those interested in the Faith.

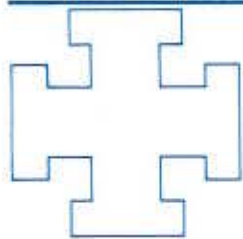
Her Worship the Mayor of Moorabbin, Cr. Julie Cooper, organised an Ecumenical Civil Service at St. Peter's in October, 1982. The service was arranged with the assistance of the East Bentleigh Ministers' Fraternal and the Mayors of Sandringham and Mordialloc attended. Canon Peter Hollingsworth, from the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, was the guest speaker. The offering was also shared by St. Vincent de Paul and the Brotherhood of St. Laurence.

American priests, Mike and Carson Champlin, were the preachers at St. Peter's 1982 Parish Mission. The mission was conducted from December 4 to 12 and their theme was "Spirituality for the 80s and Beyond." Our visitors gave two sessions daily at 9.30 a.m. and 7.30 p.m. The mission was another outstanding success, mainly due to Frs. Mike and Carson Champlin for their insights and communicating abilities.

Results of 1982 Parish Council meeting: Mary Kelleher, Joan Barnewall, Peter Richards, John Egan, Sam Loschiavo and Theresa Adamsons.



Archbishop Little concelebrates with Fr. Heriot and Fr. Greg. Kennedy.



Parish Achievers



A special meeting of the parish on February 14, 1983 was called to change sections 9 and 12 of the Parish Council constitution.

The amendment was necessary to extend membership of the Council to include parish assistants, Sister Noreen and Sister Rosemary and also Brother John, principal of St. James' College.

The generosity of St. Peter's parish was again evidenced after the tragic Ash Wednesday bushfires. One month after the fires Fr. Jim Scannell of Sacred Heart Church, Warburton, wrote:

"Dear Fr. Heriot — on behalf of my congregation and in particular the fire victims of our area, I wish to convey our sincere thanks for your generosity."

A similar letter followed from Fr. Barry Tobin, of St. Brigid's, Gisborne on March 2:

"Dear Fr. Heriot — May I thank you and your parishioners most sincerely for your very welcome and generous donation. Although the response for food and clothing was more than adequate, it was found that those who lost everything in the disastrous fires needed cash urgently to buy personal items. You may be assured that the money went to those most in need and was greatly appreciated by them."



A course on the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults commenced on March 13 last year with the first subject being *The Search for God*. The course was open for all Catholics who wanted to learn more about their faith. It was also available to non-Catholics and to possible converts.

Another project of St. Peter's last year was the Big Brother-Little Brother theme: The idea was for parish men, married or single, to devote time with many lonely and unhappy, fatherless boys who needed adult guidance and friendship on their way to manhood.

This year's Stawell Gift winner, Dallas O'Brien, continued the success rate, both sporting and academically, of the many young people who have passed through St. Peter's parish.

Dallas was a pupil at St. Peter's school and St. James' before going to De La Salle, Malvern. The entire parish was delighted for Dallas and his family.

Still on sport, last year St. Peter's Primary School football team won the lightning premiership against all schools in the area. The premiership was in April.

SAFETY HOUSE PROGRAM

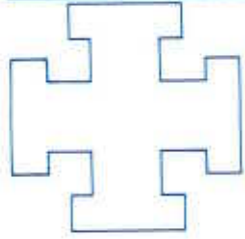
St. Peter's set about establishing a Safety House program in May last year to reduce the danger of children being approached to and from school. Margaret Wilks and St. Peter's school secretary Mrs. Keogh, along with Julie Buckley and her committee of willing workers, are still vitally involved in the project — one that every parishioner wholly supports.

The Bingo committee reported in June that in five and a half years operating, the incredible sum of \$252,000 had been accumulated for the care of the parish elderly people.

The parish owes a heartfelt thanks to the original Bingo organisers and the present committee who have worked so hard for St. Peter's parish.

It was also pleasing that the numbers continued to increase for the Rite of Christian Initiation courses held at *Moongala*.

Another new program introduced in August was the *Building of a Christian Household* which was designed to support family life through all stages. There were 25 families involved in the pilot scheme. The program was based on a document written by the Pope called "Familiaris Consortio."



St. Peter's School

In September next year a 50-year-old tradition will be broken with the appointment of a Lay Principal for St. Peter's school.

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had taught our children since 1934 when the school was located opposite the present Moorabbin Hospital. But in July this year, Fr. Heriot was notified by Sister Maria, the Provincial, that she regrettably wouldn't be able to provide a Sister to take charge of St. Peter's. She would, however, be able to supply one Sister for the school.

St. Peter's has selected a new Principal, Mr. Des. Dalton. The selection committee comprised Fr. Heriot, Dr. Kevin Burke (parent and member of the Education Board), Margaret Wilks (parent and President of the Parents and Friends and member of the Education Board), Mr. Peter Caulfield (the Regional Consultant for the area), and a representative of the Sisters.

St. Peter's has grown steadily in the past 10 years. Currently there are 667 pupils and work will soon start on the refurbishment of the school. An application has been made to the Schools Commission for capital funds as the estimate of work costs will be \$300,000. The major updates will be new toilets and a new administration building.

The Schools Provident Fund will make \$150,000 available to us and the terms of repayment are \$20,000 a year for 15 years, with the interest from the loan being met by the Government for the first 10 years. The Parish Council, with the approval of the Finance Committee, has sanctioned this work.

St. Peter's has had three principals since 1974. They were Sister Mary Batchelor who left us in 1977 and was replaced by Sister Kathleen Moore. Our present principal is Sister Patricia Smith who joined us in 1978.

The parish extends to Sister Patricia every best wish in her future appointment and also thanks her for the wonderful five years' service she has given St. Peter's.

Her leadership and example have been greatly appreciated not only by the many staff members who have worked with her but the families and pupils of St. Peter's. She has continued the aims and goals of our school which are Life, Faith and the Integration of Faith and Life.

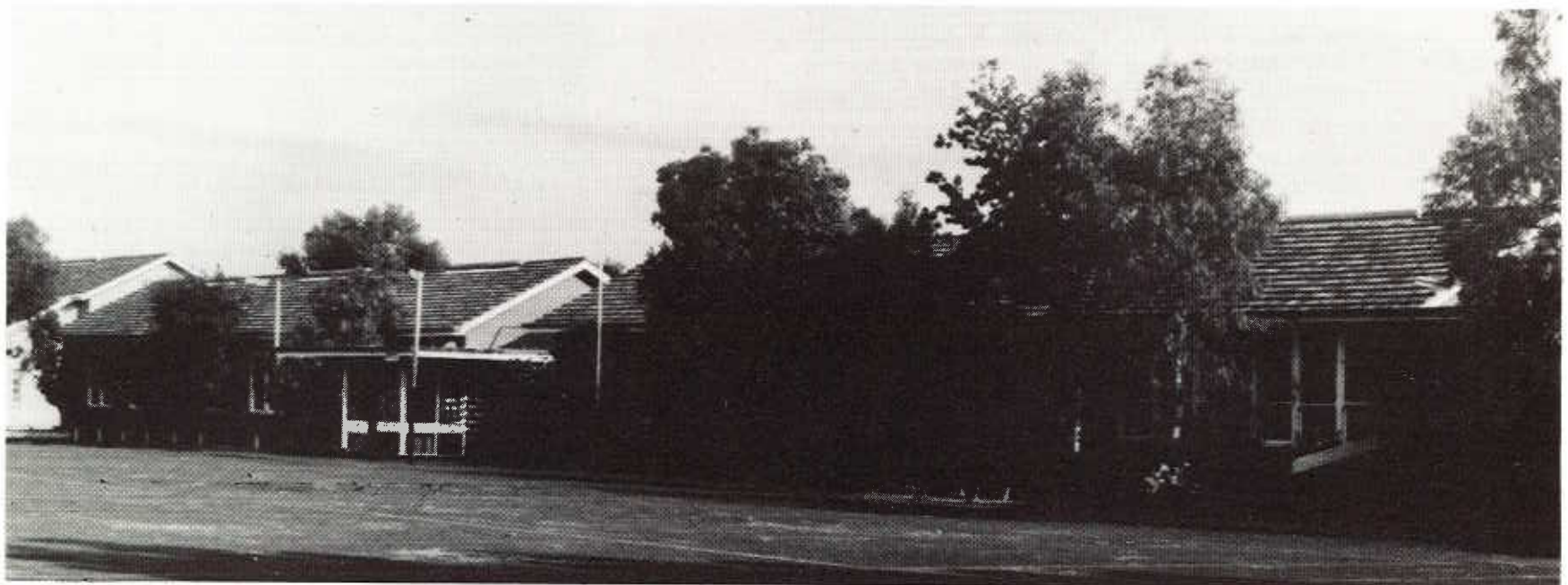
St. Peter's motto is In Faith and Love. Within our parish our school is a Catholic educational community of children, teachers, clergy and parents who regard their religion, not as a part of life, but as a way of life.



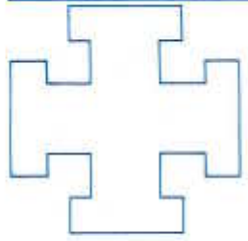
Sunday mornings 1953-1957. Mass in the first built section of the school complex.



Sister PATRICIA,
Principal 1978-1983.



St. Peter's School today.



Religious Life at St. Peter's 1974-1983

In February, 1974, St. Peter's congratulated Martin Leech who entered Corpus Christi College, Clayton, and also sent best wishes from all parishioners to Denis Kelly who went to Western Australia as a Lay missionary at the Aboriginal Missions.

Sister Elizabeth Little wrote to Fr. Heriot that month from Bathurst Island where she was working at a mission, thanking the parish for the \$206 contribution which went towards the purchase of a motor-bike, essential for transport on the island.

Fr. Doolan returned to St. Peter's in July, 1974 after illness, and in September Rev. Leo De Marzi was assigned to our parish as a Deacon.

In early 1975 Fr. Doolan was appointed assistant Parish Priest at Bentleigh after a year's study at the Pastoral Institute. His study in that 12 months was the value of Home Masses.

Fr. Doolan was replaced by Fr. M. Nolan, the former assistant at Murrumbreena.

In February, 1975 Dennis Handley made his final profession with the Salesian Society and later that month the parish had three more boys entering religious life; Peter Boyer to the Cappuchin Fathers, Chris Hogan to the Jesuits and Greg Reynolds to the Diocesan Seminary.

Fr. Leo De Marzi celebrated his first Mass at St. Peter's on June 7, 1975 and later that month Fr. Dillon left for America and Rome as part of his work as Vocation Director.

Rev. Brendan Hayes was assigned as a Deacon to St. Peter's parish in August, 1975 and began his duties in early September. Sister Margaret Kennedy returned to the parish in November, 1975 on holidays from the Gilbert Islands. She was one of three Kennedy sisters who were members of the Order of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

On January 11, 1976 Sister Sue Shannon made her final vows with the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Later that month Archbishop Little assigned a third full-time priest to St. Peter's. He was Fr. Terry Laidler, and started duties on February 1. Fr. Laidler came from Coburg and was ordained with Fr. Leo De Marzi.

In February, Sister Noreen arrived to assist in the parish and James Cochrane entered Corpus Christi college to join other parish students Martin Leach and Greg Reynolds.

Fr. Van Kooy celebrated his first Mass on January 30, 1977. Early the following month St. Peter's farewelled Fr. Whitehouse with a Mass



The wooden Crucifix at St. Peter's.

and reception. He spent three years in the parish.

Sister Maria Lazzaro made her final Profession on April 17, 1977 with His Grace Archbishop Little the Principal Celebrant.

On August 7, 1977 Fr. Wayne Stanhope celebrated his first Mass in St. Peter's and in early October that year Maureen Bennett, who joined the Cabrini Sisters, went to Philadelphia to do her religious training.

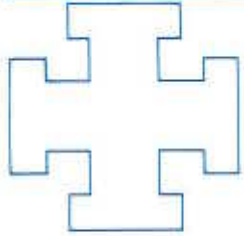
In December that year the parish welcomed Tony Cox, a Columban Deacon, who stayed with St. Peter's over the Christmas period.

Tony Cox was the eighth Deacon assigned to St. Peter's and in a short time with the parish impressed us with his vision, strength and application. He offered his services in the Columban Order to Japan or Taiwan.

On February 19, 1978 we farewelled Fr. Laidler and welcomed Fr. O'Connor and Sister Kathleen to St. Peter's.

Fr. Tony Cox was ordained on June 4, 1978 and the following week Fr. Dennis Handley and fellow Salesians, Fr. Greg Chambers and Brendan Murphy were ordained by Bishop John Kelly. Fr. Handley said his first Mass on June 11.

On December 1, 1978 Greg Reynolds was ordained a Deacon at St. Monica's, Moonee



Ponds, and later that month we said goodbye to Fr. O'Connor who was appointed to St. Monica's, Cairns.

On June 24, 1979 Fr. Tony Cox left St. Peter's after spending five months with us. He celebrated his last Mass on the feast of St. John The Baptist.

Later in August that year Mark and Greg Reynolds were ordained to the priesthood at St. Patrick's Cathedral and Fr. Greg. Reynolds said his first Mass on August 19.

The congregation at the 11 a.m. Mass on January 20, 1980 gave a spontaneous ovation to Fr. Van Kooy who announced he was leaving our parish for Our Lady of Victories, Camberwell. Fr. Colin Bourke arrived on February 29 as his replacement.

Fr. Van Kooy celebrated his last Mass on March 9, 1980 and as a tribute to his work in the parish he received a presentation from Councillor Julie Cooper.

In April, 1980 Fr. Bourke received his Bachelor of Theology at Monash University and on August 17 that year Fr. Martin Leach celebrated his first Mass.

Sister Kathleen received her Mission Cross in December, 1980 to go to Nauru. She had been



First Communion Day 1981.

the superior of St. Peter's convent for three years.

In July, 1981 St. Peter's welcomed Fr. Esteban Tardon from Spain. He spent six weeks with us.

In early January, 1982 Fr. Terry Laidler was nominated for presentation to the competent authority at Melbourne University.



In February, 1982 Fr. Tim O'Sullivan retired and as a gesture for the wonderful work he contributed to the parish, a project was launched to purchase him a house in the area.

St. Peter's had another overseas visitor in July, 1982 when Fr. Luis from Portugal arrived to spend some time with us. During his stay he conducted a Mission for the Italian people from the parish.

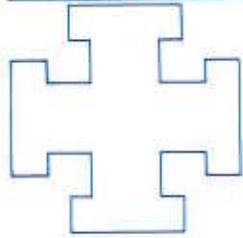
We welcomed back American Frs. Mike and Carson Champlin in December, 1982 for another Mission. Later that month we also welcomed Fr. Joseph Meilak, from Malta, to our parish. Archbishop Little assigned Fr. Meilak to us until the end of January, 1983.

In early January this year Fr. Bourke was transferred to St. Martin's at Macleod. Fr. Bourke was replaced by Fr. Des Moloney. But Fr. Bourke celebrated a farewell Mass at St. Peter's on March 27.

On July 18 this year Frs. Dillon and Crawford concelebrated a Mass for Fr. Coakley on the 10th anniversary of his death. Fr. Dillon and Fr. Crawford were both assistant priests during Fr. Coakley's time at St. Peter's.



Fr. Des Moloney offering Mass each Sunday with the State School children in the School Library.

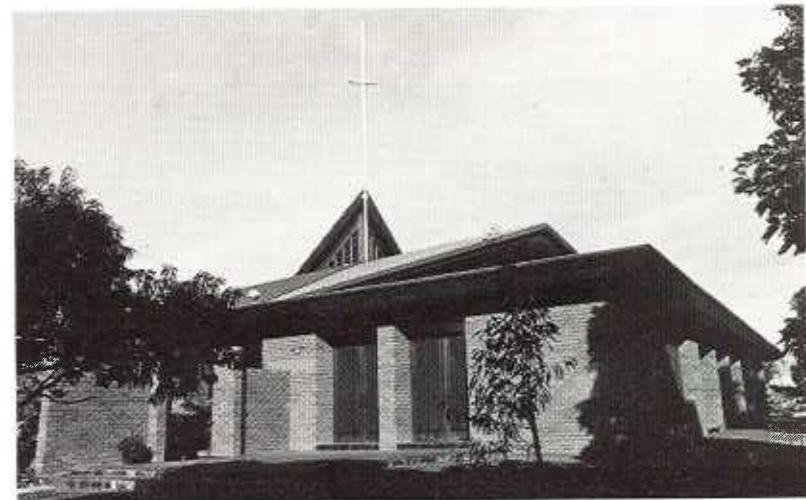


The Dedication of a Church

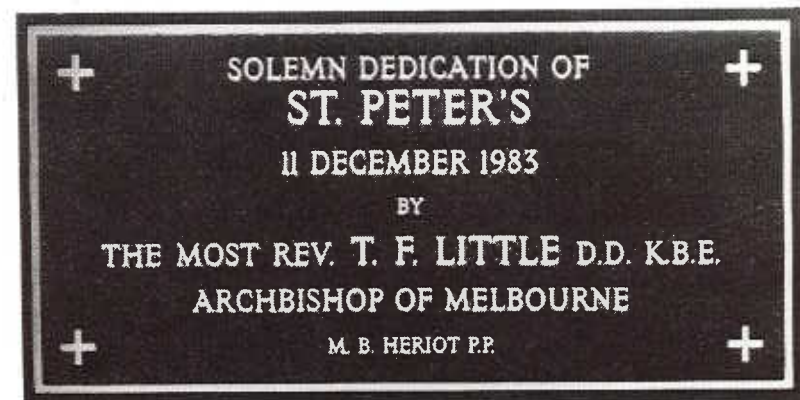
A Church's dedication is an important event in the life of a Christian community. It involves more than merely setting aside a building for the celebration of sacred things, since the people who plan and build and dedicate a sacred place are themselves the Church.

The dedication ceremony is split into four parts:

1. The celebration of the introductory rites, which are not merely a preparation but are themselves meaningful ritual moments and, like every good introduction, contain what is to be thematically developed;
2. The proclamation and the reception of the work of God, a significant part of every Christian celebration, particularly relevant in this instance;
3. A discussion of some typical rites for the dedication of a Church common to the liturgical traditions of both East and West.
4. The culminating point of the rite: the celebration of the memorial of the Lord, the central moment in the dedication of the house of worship.



St. Peter's north east corner.



Dedication plaque.



INTRODUCTORY RITES

A Church gathers to Dedicate a Church.

1. Entrance into the Church.
 - a. Convocation of the People of God.
 - b. People on a Journey.
 - c. A Statio at the Threshold of the Church.
 - d. The Opening of the Door.
2. The Blessing and Sprinkling of Water.
 - a. Some Historical Data.
 - b. The General Orientation of the New Rite.
3. The Church Glorifies the Father and the Lamb in the Spirit.



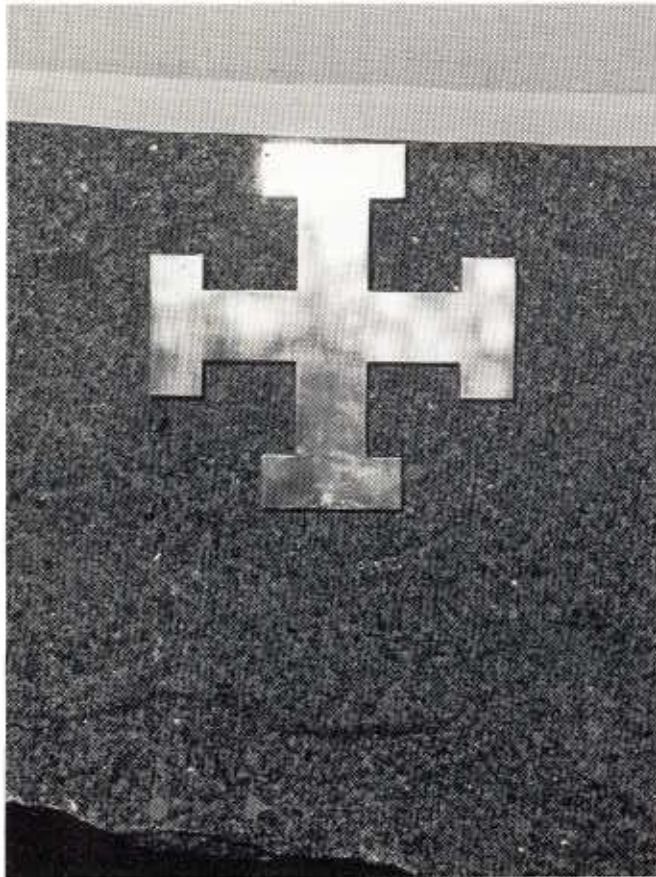
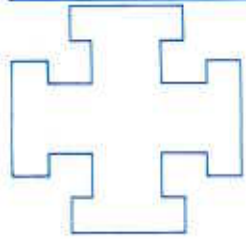
The Rite of Dedication of a Church is a biblical, liturgical pageant of many temples; the cosmic temple that tells the glory of God; the tent-temple of the days of Exodus; the temple of Jerusalem; the temple that is Christ, the only necessary one, the only absolute one in which is achieved the perfect oblation, and in which the Spirit dwells in its plenitude; the temple that is His Church built with

living stones; the temple that is each faithful soul, a primordial templum Dei; the temple of the consummation, the ultimate temple of the last and final City. And this great pageant is brought together and evoked in the temple of stone, the smallest of them all, whose glory is to be a sign of a reverberation of the glory of the others.

The Rite of Dedication of a Church is also an admonition to experience and live above all else the sacredness of the Church assembly. Pope Paul VI states: "If a Church is the place of the divine presence, this place is the assembly of the faithful, is the soul of each believer."

All the rites performed in the Church, according to their original ends, culminate in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, to the glory of the Father and the service of humanity. All summon forth the Presence.

Above all the rite attempts to manifest, and by manifesting, unveil the mystery of Christ and Church. "May God in his power make this altar and building holy, visible signs of the mystery of Christ and his Church."



The Crusader Cross in St. Peter's Altar.

As part of the Consecration celebrations, St. Peter's East Benteigh has received a relic of St. Oliver Plunkett.

Oliver Plunkett, the Resolute Shepherd, was martyred on July 1, 1681 but became almost the forgotten man of the Church. It took two and a half centuries after his gruesome execution at Newgate Prison, London, before the gifted scholar, devout priest, bishop, primate and reformer was declared a martyr. He was then canonised in 1975.

St. Oliver Plunkett died as Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of Ireland, at the age of 56. He was hung, drawn and quartered after years of persecution, exile and then jail. One of the final charges levelled against him was treason in that he was guilty of trying to establish a false religion.

Oliver Plunkett was born in County Meath in 1625, the second son of a wealthy Anglo-Norman family. At 16 Oliver decided to become a priest but because there were no active seminaries in Ireland he had to take the perilous sea journey to Rome to study.

Oliver and a friend John Brennan arrived in Rome in 1647 and Oliver remained there for 22 years. During that time he gained doctorates in both canon and civil law.



Oliver returned to Ireland in 1669 to witness his beloved country in a battered state with no Catholic schools, all had been seized or destroyed, and most of the Irish landowners being robbed of their land. He set about righting the wrongs and courteously reforming problems within the clergy.

He established *The Drogheda Schools* in 1670 which gave Catholic educations to local boys. He later altered them into seminaries. They flourished for three and a half years with over 50 young men being ordained.

Then disaster. *The Drogheda Schools* were destroyed and a year later Oliver found himself on the run when Charles II signed an edict ordering all bishops to leave the Kingdom of Ireland.

Oliver and his friend John Brennan went into hiding in the mountain districts. They were forced to continually flee their pursuers, but Oliver, nearly always in disguise, continued to serve his people.

In 1675 Oliver was suffering ill-health, poverty and political pressures. Catholic education had again slipped back to the state Oliver witnessed in 1669. By 1679 his number of bishops had dwindled to a handful.

In 1679 Oliver was arrested and taken to Dublin Castle. He had been living in disguise as a "Mr. Meleady." He was charged with treason and kept in solitary confinement for six months.

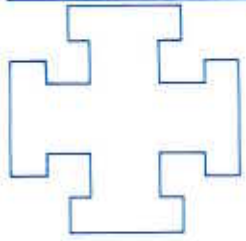
Meanwhile, two of his priests, Murphy and MacMoyer, had turned against him after Oliver had suspended them for stealing. Both priests accused him of plotting to murder the Protestants in Ireland and establish the Romish religion.

Oliver was acquitted of the charge but not freed. He remained in Dublin Castle while more slanderous letters arrived in Rome accusing Oliver of treason.

Oliver stood trial in June, 1861 and was found guilty. "Thanks be to God" was his only reply to the judge.

After 16 days of prayer and fasting he was tied to a sledge and dragged to Tyburn. "I long for the end, knowing what a troublesome world I leave and what a quiet and happy state by my Saviour's grace I hope to enjoy. Please tell my benefactors that for all eternity I will be mindful of them and I will pray for them till they come where I hope to come soon, and then I will thank them in the presence of our supreme Lord," he said.

Oliver forgave his enemies and perjured witnesses as he stood on the scaffold.



Symbolism of St. Peter's



STATUE OF ST. PETER

A statue of our own patron saint, St. Peter, stands over the main entrance looking down on all who come to worship in our Church.

Our first parish priest, Fr. Fred McKenna, wanted a statue to be in a prominent position in or near the Church. He had it made of Italian terracotta so it could be situated inside or out.

The statue was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Bowd of Connie Street.



THE TREE OF LIFE

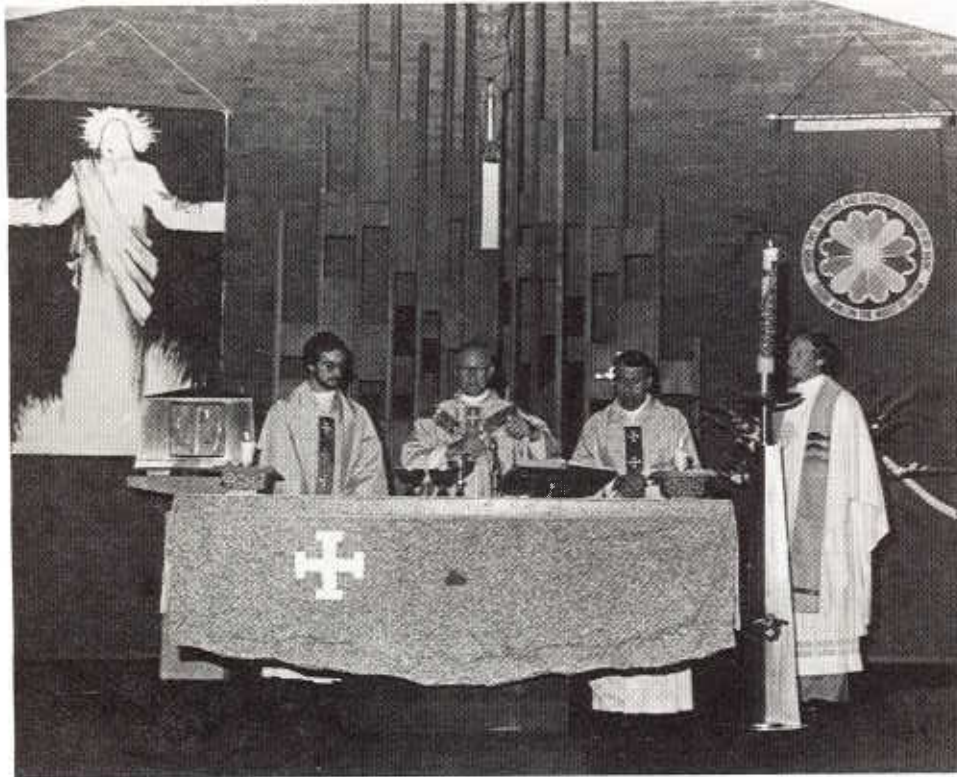
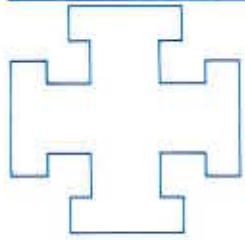
The Tree of Life was one of the very ancient symbols used by the teachers of the Church. It had three messages: Mankind sinned by taking fruit from the tree; man burned wood from the tree to cook, keep warm and to fashion utensils for survival; and finally Christ died for us on a Cross made of wood from a tree.

So the Tree of Life, at the beginning, was a symbol of failure, yet mankind survived. When Christ was on earth mankind failed again by turning against Him and crucifying Him — yet that failure by man brought about the beginning of the Church and the start of the Christian concept of sacrifice for life.

Note how the struts of the Tree of Life are uneven to illustrate life's highs and lows.

The realistic figure of Christ on the Cross was specifically chosen to depict His immense suffering as well as His death. Too often we gloss over this demanding point of our faith.

Notice how the Crucifix forms part of the Tree of Life and that the figure is carved from the wood of the tree.



Fr. Colin Bourke, Fr. Heriot, Fr. Mal. Crawford and Fr. Greg. Kennedy
concelebrate Mass at St. Peter's Altar.

THE ALTAR

The stone which forms the imposing granite Altar comes from near Castlemaine.

Fr. Heriot designed it so that its uneven base resembles a huge mechanical arm pushing the granite up out of the ground.

The earth produces life and the Altar is something the earth has given and human hands have made.

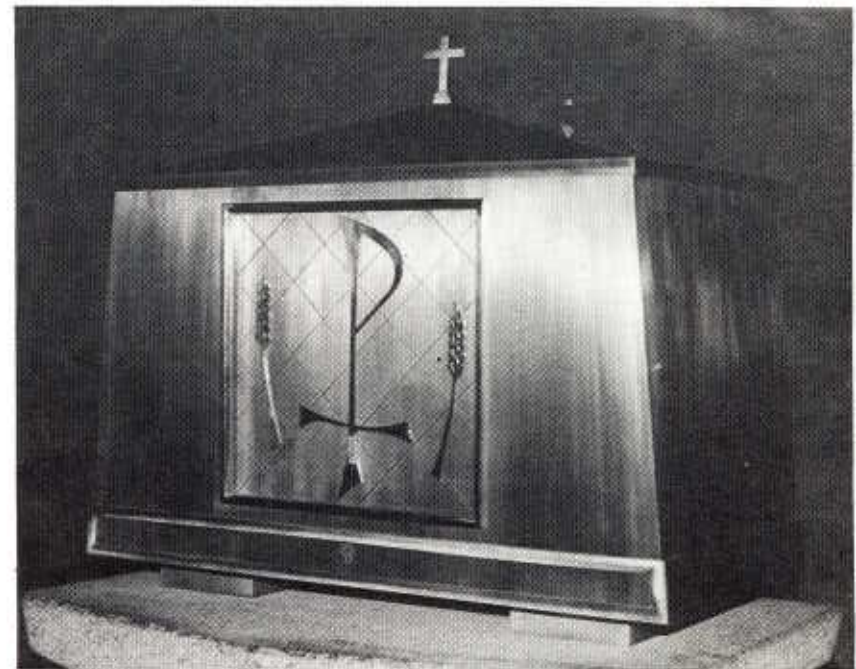
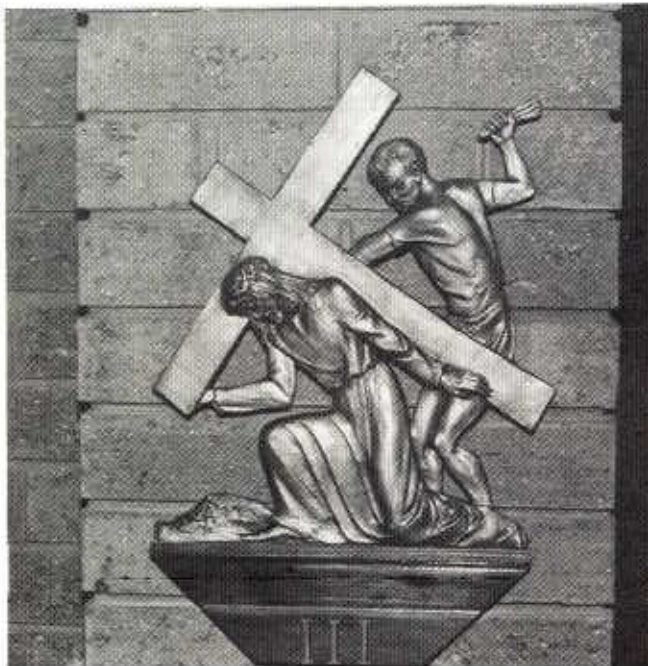
The Relic of St. Oliver Plunkett, recently made available, will be sealed in the Altar for the Dedication of the Church.

Details of the construction, Consecration and Dedication of St. Peter's Church will also be sealed within the structure of the building.

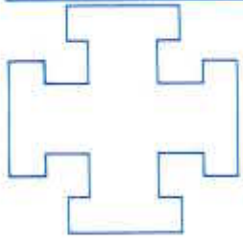
It will be a memento for future parishioners that they will know what this generation of clergy and parishioners have done in order that they may have a Church in which to worship God.



The Stations of the Cross were designed in northern Italy. They fit somewhere near the midpoint between the traditional and modern designs available and they convey the warmth of the Church.

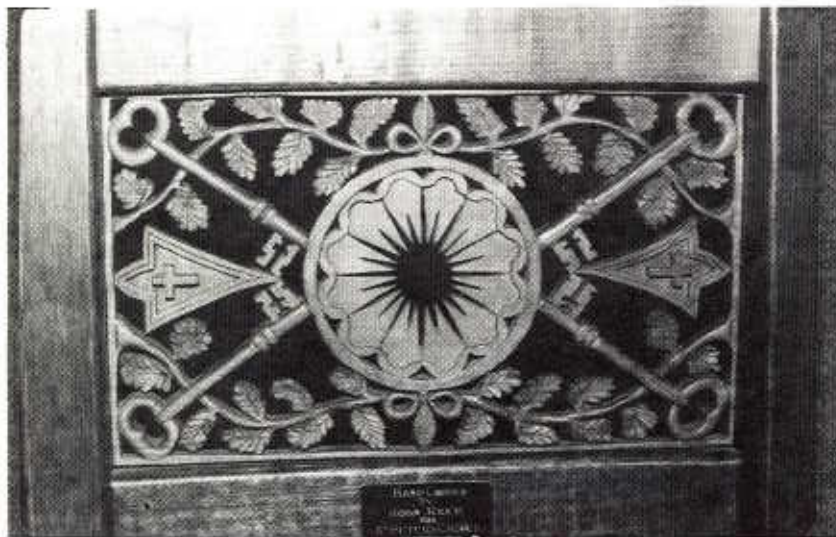


The Tabernacle, the Easter candle stand, the Cross carried in the Church on Good Friday, and the offertory table were all designed by parishioner Stan Livingstone.



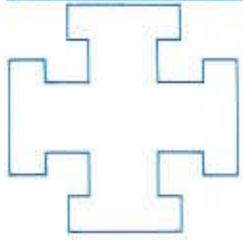
In a small Church in Bordeaux, south-eastern France, there is a statue of Our Lady and the Child Jesus.

Fr. Heriot gave a photograph of that statue to a wood carver and the beautiful statue in our Church is the product of that carver's artistry.

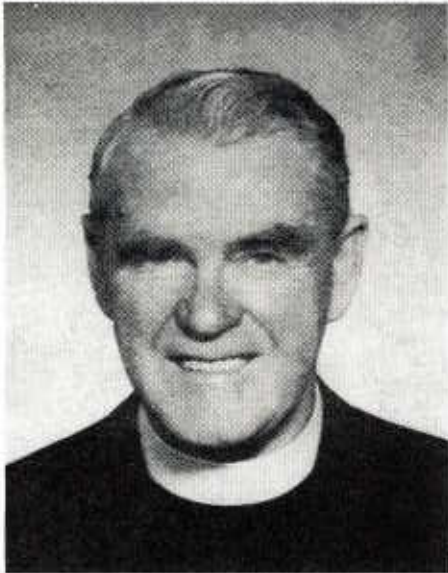


The wood carving in the back of the chair was done by John Reed, a former parishioner.

The centrepiece of the carving is the parish Motif surrounded by the mythical Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. These are the symbols of St. Peter's.



Parish Priests



FATHER TIM O'SULLIVAN

J. J. Kennedy was the prime-mover in the establishment of St. Peter's Parish, but Fr. Tim O'Sullivan can rightly be called the architect of the development of the project some 36 years later. Fr. O'Sullivan, the parish priest of St. Paul's

Bentleigh in 1950, quickly saw the need for expansion on the eastern side of his parish.

East Bentleigh was changing rapidly from a market garden area. Houses were springing up almost immediately — the vast number of market gardens were being auctioned and sub-divided. In 1953 East Bentleigh had become one of Australia's fastest growing areas. A few months earlier Fr. O'Sullivan had purchased the present school and church site and erected a school-church.

The following year Fr. O'Sullivan recommended to Archbishop Mannix that a new parish, St. Peter's East Bentleigh, be created. Just over 12 months later on January 11, 1955, St. Peter's East Bentleigh officially became a parish — 36 years after J. J. Kennedy's impassioned plea to Dr. Mannix for the need of the people of Bentleigh to have a church of its own.

J. J. Kennedy would have been an extremely proud man that day — the day St. Peter's East Bentleigh officially came into existence. Mr. Kennedy was truly one of the most dominant identities in the history of St. Peter's. He passed away 13 years later in 1968.



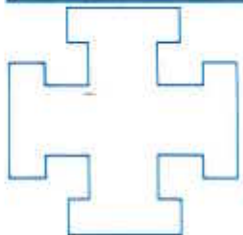
FATHER FRED McKENNA

Fr. Fred McKenna was appointed the first parish priest of St. Peter's East Benteigh. His effort was supreme in co-ordinating and guiding the still amazing growth of population in the district. In 1956 St. Peter's school was catering for 300 students, almost doubling the 1954 figure. Fr. McKenna realised the need for the expansion of the school and devoted all his energies to that project. In the same year work began on the church hall and presbytery.

Bishop Fox blessed and opened the new church hall on March 3, 1957. Fr. McKenna's initiative and drive had also been responsible for the establishment and the flourishing success of the Holy Name Society, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Children of Mary and the Legion of Mary.

By 1958 three extra classrooms and a shelter shed had been added to St. Peter's School. Sadly the enormous workload of caring for the still rapidly growing parish took its toll on Fr. McKenna's health. He died on May 23, 1958, after serving only two years as our first parish priest, but his efforts in establishing St. Peter's will never be forgotten.





FATHER WILLIAM CASEY

Fr. William Casey took over as parish priest of St. Peter's East Bentleigh in October, 1958. He remained for 11 years and during that time was responsible for the development of the sound financial future of the parish. Fr. Casey was adamant that no Catholic child would be turned away from a Catholic education at St. Peter's. The school numbers continued to rise. In 1960 there were 670 pupils, an increase of 160 on the previous year. But four more classrooms had been built to accommodate the extra students.

The Parish Finance Committee organised the first Sacrificial Giving campaign in April, 1961 and a total of \$165,000 was pledged for the next three years. By 1964 950 children were at St. Peter's and the highlight of the year was the building and opening of our own convent on July 26.

The convent, which then housed seven sisters from the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, was opened by Archbishop Justin Simmonds. "We have tried to provide for them a home which will be practical. It will, in addition, be a house of prayer and we feel that untold blessings will come to our parish from the sisters living here as part of the parish family," said Fr. Casey after the convent was completed.

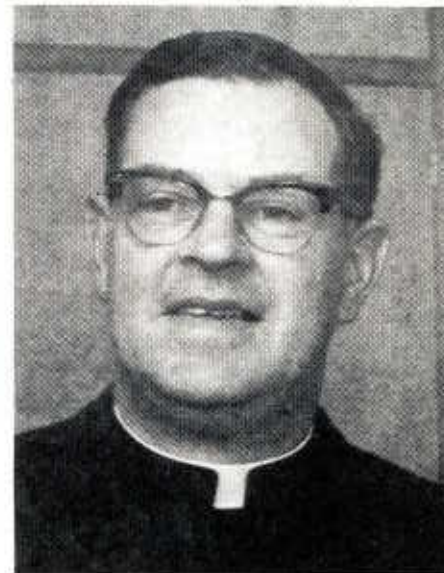


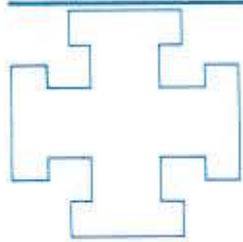
FATHER DANIEL COAKLEY

Fr. Daniel Coakley was appointed Parish Priest in February, 1969 and was immediately instrumental in establishing a Parish Council. The former Parish Priest of Beaumaris three years later commenced operations to have a new church built for St. Peter's parish.

Our parishioners were delighted at the announcement and in September, 1972 at a general meeting voted on the design of the present church.

Fr. Coakley was chairman of the committee involved in the designing of the new building. Sadly he wasn't able to see his hopes, aspirations and dreams come to fruition as he passed away on July 18, 1973.





FATHER KEVIN DILLON

Fr. Kevin Dillon gave wonderful assistance to Fr. Coakley and St. Peter's parish during the early 1970s.

Fr. Dillon began as assistant Parish Priest in February, 1970 and devoted most of his time to the youth of the parish. He was responsible for the opening of the Anchor Club in April, 1972.

The Anchor Club was a meeting place for young parishioners between the ages of 14 and 18 and was an instant success.

The club was destroyed by fire in March, 1973, four months before the death of Fr. Coakley, but Fr. Dillon's energy, drive and determination saw the old Anchor Club rebuilt, enlarged and modernised four months later in July.

Fr. Dillon later that year was appointed Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Melbourne.





FATHER MAURICE HERIOT

Fr. Maurice Heriot, our Parish Priest, joined St. Peter's in October, 1973 after distinguished service at South Melbourne. The daunting task of starting building operations for the new St. Peter's church fell squarely on the broad shoulders of Fr. Heriot.

The success and continued strength of St. Peter's as a parish of the Archdiocese of Melbourne is a tribute to the hard-working efforts of Fr. Heriot and the Parish Council. Fr. Heriot has skilfully guided and led St. Peter's for 10 years culminating in today's celebration of St. Peter's being Consecrated.

Fr. Heriot's efforts and the work of the Council deserve the heartfelt congratulations of all St. Peter's parishioners.

St. Peter's East Bentleigh has now reached another milestone in a relatively short life span beginning in January, 1955.

ASSISTANT PRIESTS

1960-1964	Fr. Joseph Browne
1965-1966	„ Edward Fitzpatrick
1967-1969	„ Malcolm Crawford
1970-1973	„ Kevin Dillon
1974-1976	„ Ray Whitehouse
1976-1977	„ Terry Laidler
1977	„ Gerald O'Connor
1977-1979	„ William Van Kooy
1979-1980	„ Gregory Kennedy
1980-1982	„ Colin Bourke
1983-	„ Desmond Moloney



A Hymn in Honor of Saint Peter— Our Patron

By Con Lilley

St. Peter — be our strength today.

1. St. Peter is our Patron, his power is with us still.
He guides us with a loving hand, to do God's Holy Will.
Through all the darkening ages, his steadfast virtues shine
Inspiring weak and doubting hearts — to gather strength from thine.

St. Peter — Help us grow in Faith.

2. St. Peter, Christ's Apostle, First Bishop and First Pope,
The Rock on whom the Church was built, on which we build our Hope.
Through all his human failings, his love for Christ won through.
He shows us that when we repent — we are forgiven too.

St. Peter — Help us to repent.

3. There were some hours of doubting, and statements of denial
Outside the gates of Herod's Court, when Jesus was on trial.
But came the dawn's first beaming, the cock three times did call
And Peter's tears came streaming down — as he remembered all.

St. Peter — Help us to forgive.

4. St. Peter spoke with Jesus, at supper with all there
And Jesus said that He would leave His Peace for all to share.
That peace we share with others, and then the world will know
The message that we try to live — and help each other grow.

St. Peter — Help us live in peace.

5. St. Peter we have chosen, as Patron of our School.
He followed Christ through Gallilee, and learned the Christian Rule.
“We must love one another, as Christ showed He loves us,”
And bring true peace and happiness — to all the Universe.

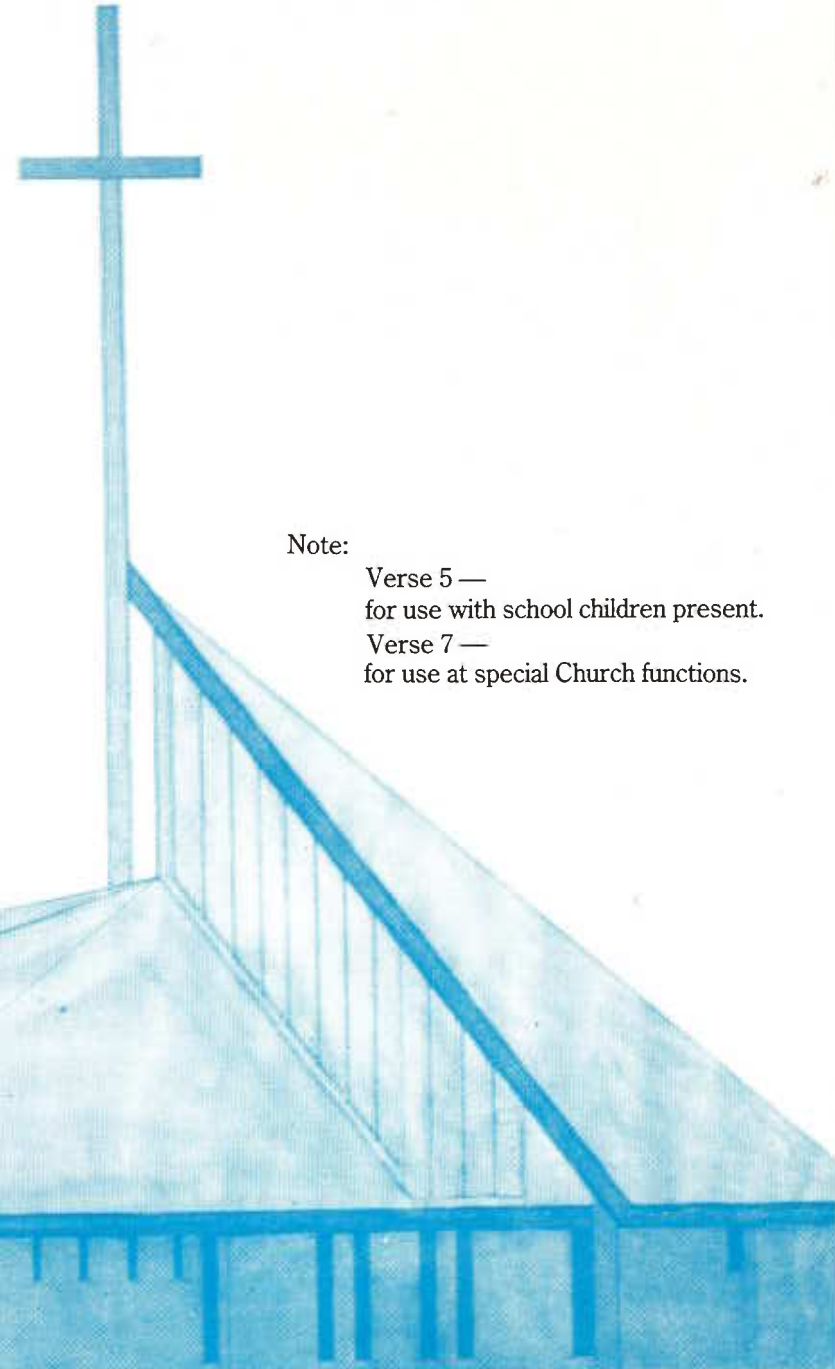
St. Peter — Help us grow in love.

6. “Where two or more are gathered, in My Name” says the Lord
“There will I be, in the midst of them,” and so He gave His word.
He calmed the storm and saved them, St. Peter and his crew
And if we put our trust in Him — we are rewarded too.

St. Peter — Help us grow in trust.

7. Our new Church has been finished, and all can proudly share
In thanking those whose sacrifice has made the dream appear.
We thank all benefactors, and pledge to keep in mind
The Faith that brings us here today — that grows when love we find.

St. Peter — Be our strength today.



Note:

Verse 5 —
for use with school children present.
Verse 7 —
for use at special Church functions.

