

Dromana

A SHORT HISTORY



**Silver Jubilee
1972 - 1997**

James B. Mannix

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish
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By James B. Mannix

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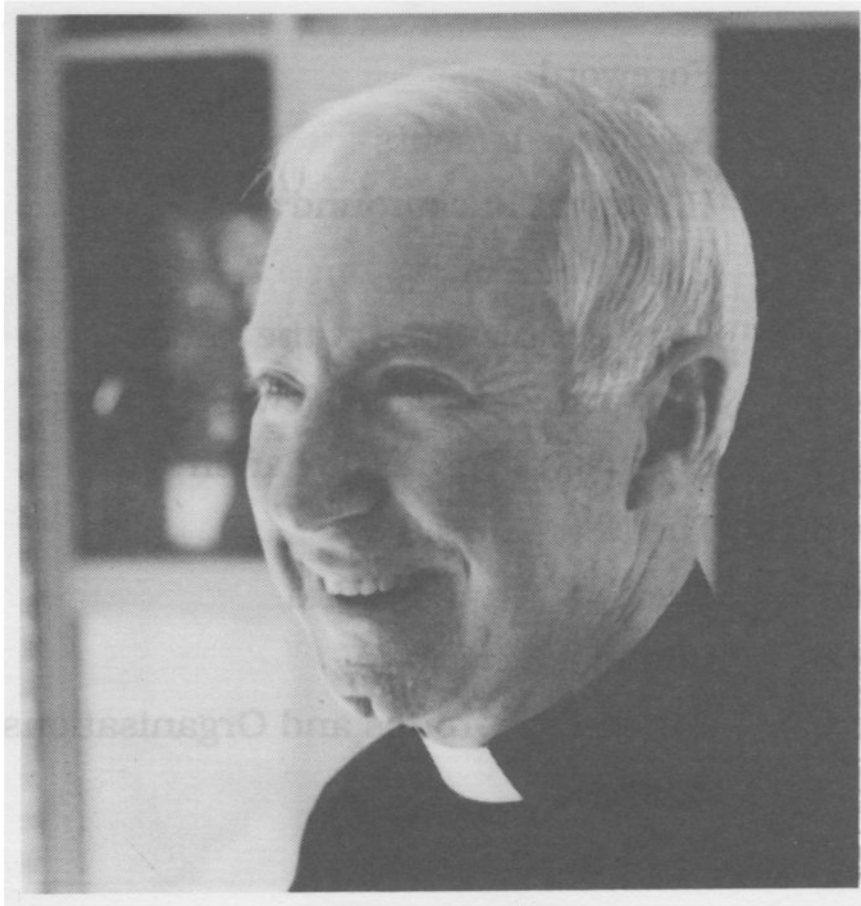
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Front Cover

Plaque of Our Lady of Perpetual Help presented to the Parish Church by Mrs Margaret Murtagh in July 1996 in memory of her late husband, James Murtagh.

FOREWORD



*Fr. Kevin Manning
Parish Priest*

Today, as we admire and use and enjoy our Parish Complex of Church, Hall and Presbytery set in well-maintained grounds we remember not only our efforts and sacrifices in achieving so much in so short a time but the efforts and sacrifices of those who have gone before in providing for us a Parish Site of size and position to be envied by many.

I am indebted to Jim Mannix for his perseverance and competence in researching and compiling our Parish history. The spoken word can be forgotten but the written word remains and becomes history.

May the reading of our Parish history bring you knowledge, enjoyment and appreciation of the endeavours of all who have been and are Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When asked by Fr. Manning, a couple of years ago, if I would consider compiling this history of the parish, I began to explore its past. In so doing I have dramatically increased my knowledge of the history of the Catholic Church in Victoria, especially in relation to the Mornington Peninsula.

I was amazed at the lack of knowledge of my own generation relative to the early history of the Church and became increasingly aware of how little even the Church authorities possessed in the way of archival information.

With this in view, I set out to provide, in an albeit condensed form, some records which may not only enlighten my own generation, but also generations of the future which hopefully may have some appreciation of history. For this reason I have included a chapter devoted to the historical background and believe that it may provide interest to some readers.

I must acknowledge the encouragement and assistance given to me by Fr. Manning, and members of the Dromana Parish generally. Space restraints, unfortunately, preclude their individual naming, but the assistance given by Mr Jim Wells, Mrs Mary Toohey, Mr & Mrs Loader, Mr Jack Sheridan, Miss Wilma Dennis and Mrs Kath Morssinkhof, was particularly helpful.

Similarly assistance from our former parish priest, Fr. John Woodcock, and Miss Ruth Trait, a voluntary worker at the Catholic Historical Museum, should be acknowledged.

To my son, Daniel and his wife Sue, who have together spent many hours proof-reading and translating the written word to computer disc for printing purposes, and to Ashley Trethowan for his welcome advice, I must also record my gratitude.

To my wife Dorothy who also helped with proof-reading and managed to deny herself of my company throughout the very many long days and nights whilst effect was being given to this compilation, I must also give my thanks.

Jim Mannix
Dromana
November 1996.

Historical Background

CHAPTER 1

DROMANA

It has been suggested that Dromana was named by Irish sleeper cutters who worked on Arthurs Seat. Whilst this is possible it seems most unlikely, as the adoption of the name "Dromana" seems to pre-date the railway building boom, as the Township of Dromana was formally gazetted in 1861.

Nevertheless the name has strong Irish associations, being derived from the ancient Gaelic words "Drom" and "Annas" both used to describe a long narrow land surface elevation or ridge.* On a trip to Ireland in 1993, the writer and his wife visited the remains of the 13th Century fortified estate "Dromana" near Cappoquin, County Waterford. Originally this estate encompassed several square miles and belonged to the Fitzgerald family — later the Earl of Desmond. Sadly, only few traces of the original buildings remain, although a fine building known as "Dromana Gate", erected in 1830, overlooking the Finisk river, now leads to Villiers town, built in the 18th Century on land formerly part of the Dromana Estate. We were much surprised by the similarity of the surrounding landscape, though on a smaller scale, with that of our Dromana.

As we have seen, the Township of Dromana was formerly gazetted in 1861. The Township was bounded on the north by the beach front and ran west from McCulloch Street for approximately one mile. The western boundary ran south for approximately one mile where it joined the southern boundary which ran easterly for approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile joining the eastern boundary McCulloch Street. In 1872 the foreshore was permanently reserved for public purposes and in the following year an area of this land was set aside for wharfage purposes to service the jetty. This area now forms the greater part of the car park opposite Pier Street. At that time all trade was centred around the jetty. In consequence most commercial and residential development occurred east of McCulloch Street, largely to the detriment of the Township.

* Power "Place-names of Decies" Cork University Press 1952.

Dromana Parish

Unfortunately there appears to be very little recorded history of early Catholic worship in the Dromana area.

It is interesting, therefore, to review briefly the growth of the Church in what is now known as the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Shortly after his arrival in Melbourne, in September 1836, Captain William Lonsdale noted that the inhabitants numbered 224 of which "210 are Protestant and 14 are Roman Catholic".¹ Just five years later the census of 1841 showed 1257 Catholics in and around Melbourne, whilst that of 1851 showed this number to have swelled to 5631.

Rev. James Francis Alipius Goold was consecrated Bishop of Melbourne, in Sydney, on 6th August 1848. Upon his arrival in Melbourne, some 19 days later, he found only two priests, Fr. Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan and Fr. Nicholas Coffey, who was affiliated with the diocese of Sydney. After a short time Fr. Coffey returned to Sydney, leaving Bishop Gould and Fr. Geoghegan in Melbourne.²

The Bishop found only two churches, both timber buildings, St. Francis in Melbourne (which he noted was not completed) and St. Finbars (known as St. Patricks until 1870) in Brighton. He also noted that in Geelong, a stone church, St. Marys, had been opened in October 1847, replacing the temporary chapel erected there in 1842.

The fact that even these existed was due entirely to the tireless efforts of Fr. Geoghegan who had arrived in Melbourne in May 1839 and who, besides ministering to his widely scattered flock in the whole of the Port Philip District, as Victoria was then known, secured grants of the land from the government (in Sydney) for the purpose of erecting places of worship together with raising funds for their building.

Bishop Goold immediately set about obtaining priests for his diocese and providing churches. He established the Brighton Mission which extended from south of the Yarra to, and including, the Mornington Peninsula and east to the great swamp that divided the Port Phillip area from Gippsland.

In March 1853, Fr. Patrick Niall was appointed pastor of this huge area, and regularly visited outlying districts including Mornington, Cranbourne, Flinders and Rosebud, as did his successors. This is evidenced by the entry in the baptism registers for January 1869, all written by Fr. J.F. Fitzgerald:

"January 1st Schnapper Point (Mornington) : 2nd Balnarring- one child being that of John Buckley and Catherine Dore who gave the church site: 3rd (Sunday) Flinders- 4 children, one of Peter Nolan who gave the church sites at Shoreham and Flinders: 4th Frankston: 9th Brighton: 10th Springvale: 19th Rosebud near Dromana, also Tootgarook: 21st Point Nepean: 22nd Wannanene: 24th (Sunday) Dandenong Creek: 26th Bass: 28th Yallock" ³

Historical Background

Realising the importance of education, Fr. Niall established school-churches at Brighton and St. Kilda and schools at Tomac Creek, Pakenham, Cranbourne, Eumemmering (near Dandenong), Oakleigh, and Berwick in the sixteen years of his pastorship of the Brighton Mission. Rev. Walter Ebsworth observes that "probably all the country schoolhouses mentioned were used for Mass, and at least one week in every month was spent by Fr. Niall making the round trip of the Western Port district" ⁴

At the end of 1864, Fr. Niall started collecting for a church at Dandenong, which was opened by Bishop Goold on Sunday November 25, 1866, and was considered a fine stone building.

In 1883 a new parish of Dandenong was opened comprising both the Western Port district and the Mornington Peninsula, thus ending the Brighton Mission, after thirty years of existence.

Just a few short years later, in 1891, the parish of Mornington was created. Dromana remained a part of the Mornington Parish until its formal creation (as a parish in its own right) on March 4, 1972.

Where Catholic settlers in this district worshipped in the early days is unknown. As part of the Brighton Mission, we know that "stations" were held throughout the Peninsula, and that in 1878 two wooden churches were erected at Mornington and at Shoreham.

In April 1876 the first stone of the Church of St. Mary Star of the Sea was laid, but the church was not opened until 1880. It appears that Mass was celebrated at somewhat irregular intervals in private homes and later in the Rosebud Mechanics' Institute Hall. On several occasions worshippers travelled great distances. The Advocate report of the laying of the first stone of the new brick church, dedicated to St. Finbar, in Brighton, on August 13, 1871 refers to a large number of people who had travelled twenty or thirty miles to be present. The late Fr. John Ashe, former parish priest of East Brighton, who had a scholarly interest of the history of his parish, often mentioned that in the early days, on occasions, worshippers travelled from Frankston and Mornington and even further, some spending two days on the round trip. It is highly unlikely that such visits were anything other than occasional.

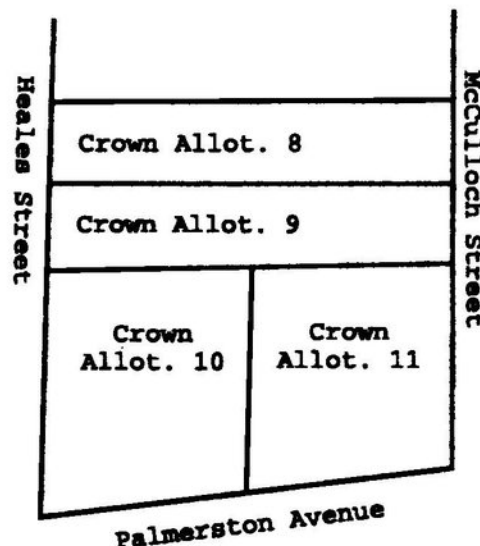
Dromana Parish

FIRST CHURCH

Shortly after the turn of the century it was decided to erect a Catholic Church in Dromana. On investigation it was determined that the land reserved on 5th March 1866 pursuant to Sections 8 & 9 of the Land Act 1862 as a

*"Site for Roman Catholic Church purposes comprising one acre three roods twelve perches, county of Mornington, township of Dromana, being allotments 9, 10, and 11 of section 17: commencing at the north-west angle of allotment 9; bounded thence by allotment 8; bearing east four chains, ninety-nine links; thence by McCulloch street, bearing S.00 15'E. three chains forty links; thence by a line bearing S.840 26'W. five chains two links; and thence by Heales street bearing north three chains ninety links to the point of commencement."*⁵

was unsuitable, having a large drainage channel running through it. This land was bordered on the South by an unnamed road, later known as Palmerston Avenue.

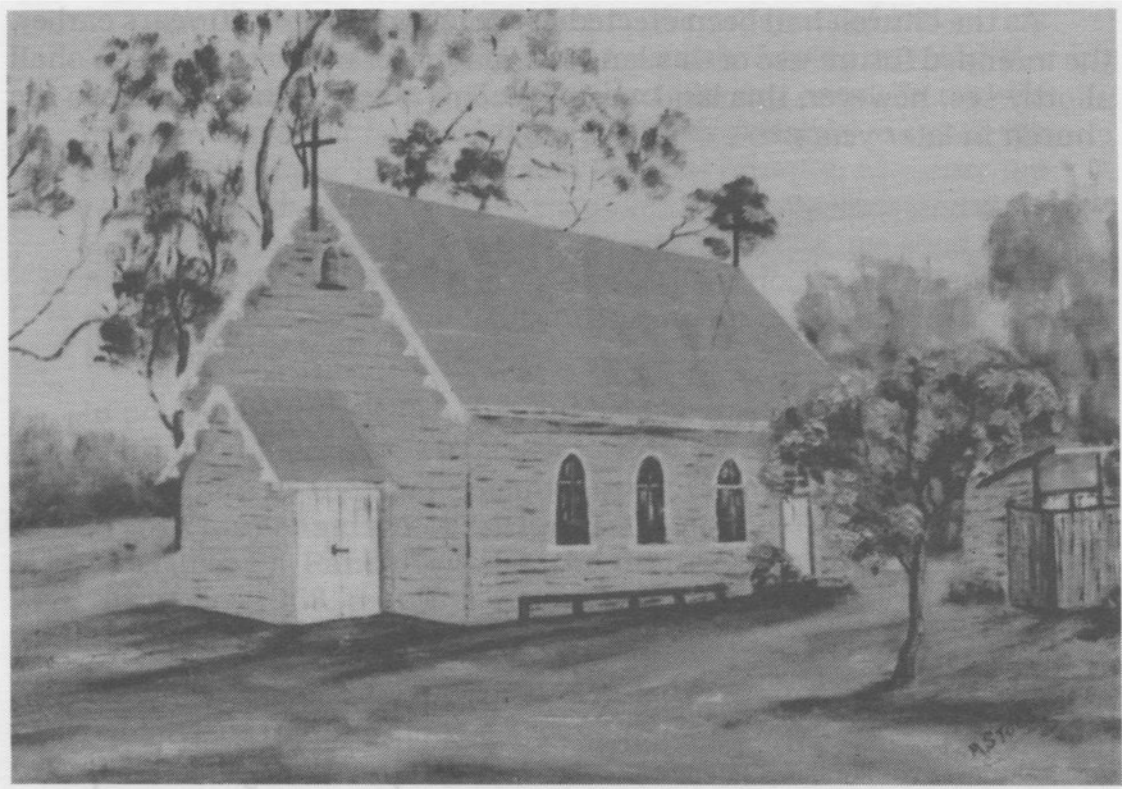


(Scale: 1 inch to 270 ft. approx.)

Mr Lawrence Murphy, a local licensed victualler donated a parcel of his land having a frontage of 132 ft. to Foote Street, commencing 264 ft. from Pt. Nepean Road and having a depth of 165 ft. for the purpose of the church building. The transfer giving effect to this generous gift recited that the said Lawrence Murphy "being desirous of making a gift of the said land to Thomas Joseph Carr of Grey Street East Melbourne Archbishop of Melbourne, William O'Hagan of Mornington Roman Catholic Clergyman and myself the said Lawrence Murphy as joint tenants-" The transfer was dated 4th July 1902.

Historical Background

With suitable land now available, the ladies of the area quickly set to work to raise funds for the building. Concerts, dances and bazaars were held raising approx. £160 in a very short time and the building was commenced. The new church dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, completed at a cost of £343 on which a debt of £100 remained, was opened and blessed by the Very Rev. Dean Phelan on Palm Sunday April 5th 1903. He was assisted by Fr. O'Hagan, then parish priest of Mornington, who gave a brief resume of the efforts of the local residents. He spoke of the generosity of Mr Murphy, who in addition to donating the site, had presented two beautiful statues; and his wife, who had donated the Stations of the Cross. The local ladies expended the sum of £8 to provide the necessary altar requisites, and other members of the church had liberally assisted, each according to his or her means. Fr. O'Hagan also paid tribute to the members of the various other denominations for their valuable assistance. (Obviously the spirit of ecumenism was alive and well in Dromana in 1903.) The Advocate of April 11th 1903, reported fully on the opening of the new church, noting that there were only eight Catholic families in Dromana at the time. The new church was a compact building, was complete and *"would accommodate all for many a day."*



NOTE

Exhaustive enquires of responsible authorities have failed to verify the belief of some parishioners that this church was a former Anglican church, purchased and transported piecemeal from Hinnamingie to Dromana and re-erected. In the interests of factual accuracy the writer has chosen, therefore, to rely upon contemporary accounts as published in the Catholic Press.

Dromana Parish

Lawrence Murphy died on 26th May 1911, leaving no will. In the following year a further parcel of land abutting on the northern boundary of that previously donated by Lawrence Murphy was acquired by The Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Melbourne from the National Trustees Executors and Agency Company of Australia Limited, as administrator of Murphy's estate, for the sum of one hundred and fifteen pounds, ten shillings, on April 6th 1912.

By now the church owned land with a frontage of 264 ft. to Foote Street, with a depth of 165 ft. which seemed adequate for use solely for church purposes.

Some 46 years after its official gazettal as a "site for Roman Catholic Church purposes" the church authorities decided to regularise the ownership of the land bounded by Palmerston Avenue, McCulloch and Heales Streets. For that purpose an application was made to the Governor by the Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for an "allowance" of the said land. This was granted on 13th January 1913 and a Certificate of Title duly issued in the name of the applicant Corporation on 10th February 1913.

As the church had been erected in Foote Street some 10 years earlier, the intended future use of this land is a matter for conjecture. As we shall shortly see, however, this land was to become a very valuable asset to the church in later years.

- Footnotes to Chapter 1

1. Letter of William Lonsdale to H.K.James, Secretary to the Anglican Bishop of Australia, Bishop Broughton, dated 24 Nov. 1836.
2. "Pioneer Catholic Victoria" Rev. Fr. Walter Ebsworth, Polding Press, Melbourne 1973...p.2
3. & 4. Ibid. p.295.
5. Victorian Government Gazette, 1866 p.588.

Changing Times

CHAPTER 2

In October 1963, Fr. Randall, parish priest of Mornington, was advised by the Shire of Flinders that the Country Roads Board had notified its intention to build a freeway taking in most of Allotments 10 & 11 of the Palmerston Avenue land.

On 20 November 1963, Fr. Randall wrote to the Country Roads Board seeking confirmation of this. As an astute businessman Fr. Randall stated in his letter:

"Naturally we are not happy at the prospect of losing this land which we have owned for a long time having in mind the erection of a School and Convent and playing area. To replace such an area will be most difficult. If it is possible to avoid the acquisition of our land we would be most grateful. However we realise that the good of the community has to be considered as well as our own. If the land must be taken from us, we shall then have to look for an alternative site. Before doing this we shall have to be certain of your plans in this matter and have the funds to repurchase."

In pointing out the effect that such an acquisition would have on the local Catholic community, whilst acknowledging the benefit to the general community and at the same time referring (somewhat obliquely) to the matter of compensation, Fr. Randall displayed great acumen. In acknowledging Fr. Randall's letter, the Country Roads Board replied on 27th November 1963, that "the matter was being investigated" and that it would advise as soon as possible.

This advice came in the form of a letter, dated 9th June 1964 in which it advised that it would be necessary for members of its survey staff to enter Crown Allotments 10 & 11 Palmerston Street (sic) and 8 and 9 McCulloch St. to Heales St. in order to carry out necessary survey work in connection with the proposed Mornington Peninsula By-pass Road.

This was the first intimation that Fr. Randall had that land contained in Crown Allotments 8 and 9 might be required, in addition to that in Crown Allotments 10 & 11, for the proposed road.

Dromana Parish

Realising that the Church was not the registered owner of Crown Allotment 8, given to it by a Mr F. Evans, who had purchased it in June 1866, and upon which the church had paid rates since 1914, Mr Michael Mornane, Solicitor, was instructed to act on behalf of The Roman Catholic Church Trusts Corporation to secure its registration as legal owner. Unable to find any record of probate of Mr Evans, who by this time was obviously deceased, Mr Mornane recommended that the Corporation should claim the land by adverse possession.

Evidence of the payment of rates was provided by the Shire of Flinders and a Statutory Declaration by Mr Laurence Loader satisfied the Registrar of Titles that the applicant had enjoyed exclusive occupation of the land for many years and in due course the sale of this land to the Country Roads Board was finalised, realising the sum of \$7373, exclusive of the compensation paid in respect of the acquisition of Crown Allotments 9, 10, & 11 to which we shall now return.

On 23rd November 1966, Mr Mornane on behalf of the Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation claimed compensation of \$32,000 based on a valuation made by Mr C.D Warner, Sworn Valuer, of Main Street, Mornington.

On 2nd February 1967 the Country Roads Board offered compensation of \$30,628, based on an independent valuation. This was accepted. Final payment including interest for the Country Roads Board's delay in settling, less legal fees of \$71.00, amounted to \$30,720.63 paid to St. Macartan's Parish, and duly credited to the Dromana building fund.

Land Acquisitions of the 1960's

CHAPTER 3

As previously mentioned, by April 1912, the Dromana Church owned land in Foote Street with a frontage of 264 ft. and a depth of 165 ft. With the imminent loss to the Country Roads Board of the Palmerston Avenue/McCulloch Street land, Fr. Randall was anxious to acquire land for future development around the Foote Street site of the existing church and with the Archbishop's consent set out to do so.

On 8th March 1965, he purchased the property of Mrs Ivy Beatrice Dunstone with a frontage of 53 ft. to Foote Street immediately abutting the southern boundary of the existing church land, for the sum of \$3200.00

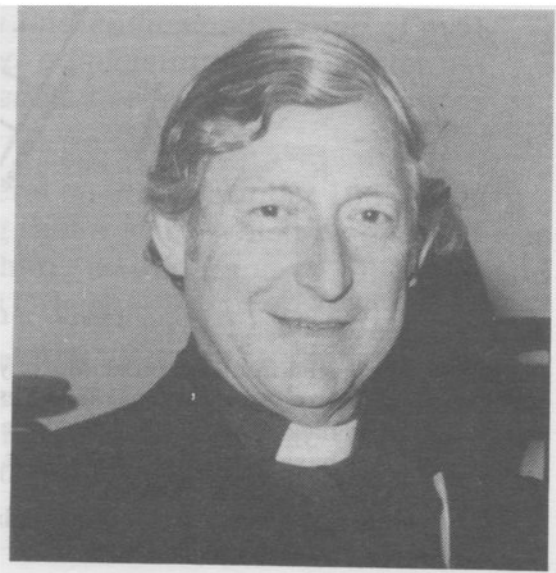
Next, he purchased land comprising four holiday flats, together with a three bedroom house, from Kathleen Mary O'Connor for \$30,000. This land had a frontage of 313 ft. to Clarendon Street with a depth of 159 ft. to Foote Street and a depth of 107 ft. to Permien Street.

On 25 May 1965, he purchased land in Permien Street, abutting that purchased from Mrs O'Connor, from Mr. K. A. Petrie for \$2900.

These purchases were effected through the agency of Mr M.J.Mitchell of Pt. Nepean Road who later acted for the church authorities in the management of these properties.

Fr. Randall was forced to give up his pastorate of the Mornington Parish by poor health. He was succeeded by Fr. Colin Miller, who continued the purchase of more real estate.

Fr Colin Miller



Dromana Parish

On the Foote Street boundary there now existed a gap of 54 ft. between the land acquired from Mrs Dunstone, and that acquired from Mrs O'Connor. Fr. Miller was able to acquire this land from Mrs Edith May Simmonds (formerly Hazeldene) for \$5,000, in December 1966.

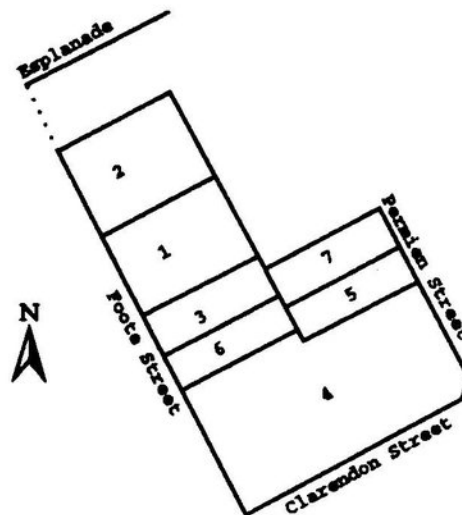
In his letter of November 18 1966 to Monsignor Leo Clarke, then Vicar General of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fr. Miller stated:

"There is still one other block of land immediately behind the church which we must have to give us a holding of approximately 3 acres. The owner wants \$4,000 for it. I believe that we should not delay in acquiring it as Dromana is becoming increasingly attractive to home builders and will become more so once the freeway is put through."

Mgr. Clarke concurred and this land having a frontage to Permien Street of 67 ft. was purchased from Mr H. Laity on 8th August 1967 for the agreed price. Again this transaction was conducted through the agency of Mr M. J. Mitchell.

With this latest acquisition, the total area now held by the church comprised three Acres and 5 and 4/10 Perches.

DIAGRAM OF CHURCH PROPERTIES SHOWING SEQUENTIAL ACQUISITIONS



KEY TO DIAGRAM

(Scale: 1 inch to 235 ft. approx.)

1. Acquired from Lawrence Murphy by donation.
2. Purchase from National Trustees.
3. Purchase from I. B. Dunstone.
4. Purchase from K. M. O'Connor.
5. Purchase from K. A. Petrie.
6. Purchase from E. M. Simmonds (formerly Hazeldene).
7. Purchase from H. Laity.

Forward Vision & New Beginnings

CHAPTER 4

On 25th June, 1969 Fr. Miller wrote to the Vicar General, Mgr. Clarke, noting that on the previous day he had discussed with the Archbishop the prospect of rationalising the Mornington Peninsula boundaries to provide about 10 parishes in the next 20 years. He stated further

"The time is now ripe to consider the establishment of a parish based on Dromana and extending across the Peninsula taking in Red Hill, Main Ridge, Shoreham and Flinders..... and as His Grace pointed out, with the assistance now available to priests who are pioneering parishes, the incumbent would not be in want. In addition we have all the land now we need for church, presbytery, and school at Dromana. We have assets in cash and invested in the Schools Provident Fund.....which I have on call for the building of a church to cater for the multitude of holiday makers who crowd out four Masses each Sunday during the summer months, and May and September holidays. The Dromana section has its own Sacrificial Giving scheme, its own Building Fund, and its own Church Account plus a vigorous and enthusiastic group of men who help me with collection and administration. Please let me know if there are any further details needed before considering the establishment of a parish....."

He again wrote to the Vicar General on 9th December 1969, referring to his previous letter, and requesting that a form, which he believed was available for the purpose, be sent to him "so that it may be filled out and returned for the consideration of His Grace".

Mgr. Clarke replied on 10th December, enclosing a "questionnaire for completion in respect of the proposed parish of Dromana" and requested its early return as a meeting of the Consulters was to take place on 30th December. Fr. Miller duly completed the form and returned it on 23rd December.

Dromana Parish

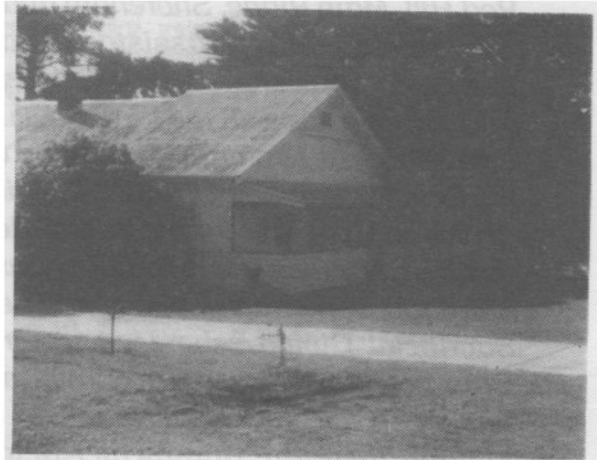
More than twelve months were to elapse before any action by the Archdiocesan Consultors was noted by the Catholic community of Dromana, which had for many years experienced the difficulties caused by its being part of a vast parish and by the rapid development of the area, all of which was in the care of only one Parish Priest, who suffered through limitations of time and the heavy responsibilities of the large section of the Parish of Mornington itself.

The members of the local community were therefore overjoyed to witness the arrival of Rev. Fr. John S. Woodcock who took up residence in Dromana on 23rd January 1971. Fr. Woodcock had just been appointed by Archbishop Knox as Assistant Priest of the Mornington Parish and had been charged with the particular care of the area embraced by the present boundaries of what was to become the Parish of Dromana. Father was further charged with the responsibility of enquiring into, and reporting to the Archbishop on all matters relating to the viability of the establishment of a Parish in Dromana.

On his arrival Father was confronted with a small timber Church in need of some repair which fronted on to Foote Street, four fibro holiday flats in similar condition, and a large three bedroom timber house, which was proposed to be used as a Presbytery, and also in a very poor state of repair. These latter buildings all fronted on to Clarendon Street upon the land purchased in 1965 from Mrs K. M. O'Connor.

In a letter to the writer, Fr. Woodcock recalled that on his first night in Dromana he slept in a sleeping bag on the floor of the completely unfurnished house!

Between these buildings and the church there was also a timber house fronting Foote Street, at the time subject to a rental tenancy, later to be demolished having been declared unfit for habitation.



*First Presbytery,
Viewed from Clarendon Street*

Much of the grounds was overgrown with blackberries and weeds in respect of which Father was to be ordered to cause their removal pursuant to the Vermin & Noxious Weeds legislation on more than one occasion.

Fr. Woodcock's permanent presence in the area enabled the regular celebration of two Sunday Masses and daily Mass and Confession times were scheduled, thus effectively removing the difficulties so long encountered in the practice of the faith. On Easter Sunday of 1971, Mass was celebrated at 7.00am, 8.00am, 9.30am, and at 7.30pm. All were well attended by residents and Easter holiday visitors.

Forward Vision & New Beginnings

During the next few months, extensive renovations to the Presbytery were effected, together with the provision of suitable carpeting and furnishing, some interior partitioning, replacement of dangerous steps at the rear, repairs to the roofing, painting and electrical repairs, in an effort to provide accommodation appropriate to the needs of a Parish Priest. Noxious weeds were cleared, and a disused well covered. Attention was given to the rectification of drainage problems associated with the holiday flats and the Presbytery itself and a garage facility erected for Father's car during this time.

Various fund-raising efforts were held for the purpose of financing Presbytery renovations and other general improvements to the property and toward the erection of a new church, the original timber building being no longer sufficiently commodious to cope with the regular Mass attendance and quite inadequate to accommodate the influx of worshippers during holiday periods.

STEERING COMMITTEE

On the evening of Saturday 13 February 1971, approximately ninety persons, including "week-enders" attended a meeting in the church for the purpose of setting up a steering committee to formulate policy for the formation of the proposed parish of Dromana and generally to assist Fr. Woodcock.

Messrs. K. Pearson, T. Cairns, B. Maher, J. Jewitt, J. Wells, J. Bird and Mesdames V. Dennis and Lane were elected to the committee, as were Messrs. D. Brewer and J. Ross who then represented Dromana at the Mornington Parish Council. At a later meeting Dr. K. O'Reilly representing the Red Hill area was also elected.

Office bearers were Mr. J. Jewitt (President) Mr. J. Bird (Vice-President) Mr. K. Pearson (Secretary) Mrs Lane (Asst. Secretary) and Fr. Woodcock (Treasurer). Meetings were regularly held fortnightly.

In the ensuing months many and varied activities were undertaken. These ranged from fund-raising efforts to working-bees. Funds were made available for the renovation of the house and its furnishings to make it suitable as a Presbytery, the erection of a garage, and arrangements made for the demolition and/or removal of the house in Foote Street.

At the September 16th meeting, Fr. Woodcock listed the many achievements of the previous few months as follows:

Renovations to house (Presbytery) and installation of telephone, supply of vestments, introduction of lay-readers, altar facing the congregation, the provision of an organ and singing at Mass, catechists at government schools and material for their use and a number of successful fund-raising events. Additionally, the regular celebration of Sunday Mass at Red Hill

Dromana Parish

Consolidated School had commenced at 8.30 a.m. on the 11th September after permission had been given by the Cathedral authorities and by the advisory committee at the Red Hill School, the latter having been obtained through the efforts of Mr. Sam Iapozzuto; First Communion had been administered on 13th August, the First Communicants having been very well prepared by Mrs M. Cairns; and Mesdames Wells, Gillick, Dillon and Cairns were engaged in catechetics at Dromana Primary School, whilst Mesdames Fitzgerald and Bloink were similarly engaged at Red Hill.

At the December 2nd meeting reference was made to a recent meeting on education, attended by over 300 persons, held at Padua College. It appeared that Padua College would shortly become a regional college, necessitating its move from Tanti Avenue Mornington, and the existing premises used for St. Macartan's primary school. In view of this Fr. Woodcock, and President Jim Jowett felt that any future primary school would likely be opened west of Dromana.

About this time loud-speakers were fitted to the exterior of the church for the benefit of those who, during holiday periods, were unable to be accommodated within the church. How many present parishioners can recall setting fold up chairs outside the church or using other make-shift forms of seating at these times? How many too can remember Fr. Woodcock's pet pea-cocks responding to the dulcet tones of Father's amplified sermons from the security of their aviaries? Young children, especially, were enthralled and eagerly looked forward to attending Mass out-doors and being permitted, within reason, to enjoy a quiet romp in the grass, the pursuit of the occasional butterfly, and the strange call of "Father's funny birds". How many holidaying parents were informed by their children that Mass at Dromana was much better than being confined indoors, unable to move about or speak for an hour or more at Mass at home in Melbourne?

Establishment of the Parish

CHAPTER 5

By letter dated 22nd February 1972 over the signature of then Archbishop (later Cardinal) Knox, Fr. Woodcock was informed as follows:

"Because of the spiritual needs of the people of that part of the Mornington Parish known as Dromana, with the consent of the Diocesan Consultors and with the advice of the Pastor of Mornington, by virtue of this letter I hereby erect the new Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Dromana.

At the same time I established the following boundaries of the Parish of Dromana: Shire Boundary Road to Tubba Rubba Road, along Main Road to Red Hill South, Main Ridge, then to corner of Jetty and Browns Road, along Bay View Road, and Wattle Avenue to the Seafront.

I also appoint you, dear Father Woodcock as Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Dromana with all the rights and duties given to the Pastor by the Code of Cannon Law and by the customs of our Diocese of Melbourne....."

In a further letter of 23rd February 1972, the Archbishop repeated Fr. Woodcock's appointment as Pastor of the new Parish and committed to him *"the full care of souls in that Parish with all the faculties, duties, and privileges, according to the Code, to our Diocesan Statutes and to the approved customs"* and paradoxically directed him to proceed to his new Parish on Saturday, March 4th, at midday.

In response to a letter from Fr. Woodcock, apparently enquiring of the time and place of his formal induction as Pastor, the then Vicar General, Mgr. Leo Clarke advised in his letter of 29th February, that the Archbishop would be away until 20th March and had not delegated either Bishop Cullinane or himself to carry out such a function in his absence. He suggested that Fr. Woodcock drop a line to the Archbishop on his return inviting him to carry out the induction himself or through someone delegated by him.

Dromana Parish

Fr. Woodcock obviously heeded Mgr. Clarke's suggestion, and so was able to report to the 6th April 1972 meeting of the Steering Committee, that his formal induction would take place at Concelebrated Mass, chaired by His Grace Archbishop Knox at 7.30 pm on Friday 14th April. Catering, seating and venue were discussed and necessary arrangements were made.

A report in the Catholic press at the time, noted that on 14th April, the Parish Priest of Dromana Rev. Fr. J. S. Woodcock, *"in the presence of the faithful and in the presence of the Archbishop, made his profession of faith and obedience to His Grace and was solemnly installed in a ceremony that is frequently omitted in these times"*.

For those unfamiliar with these ceremonies, the profession of faith and obedience includes the recital by the inductee of the Apostles' Creed and by the following declaration:

"Also I firmly embrace and hold all and everything concerning doctrines of faith and morals which have been defined by the Church by her solemn judgment or affirmed by her ordinary magisterium, according as she propose them, especially what has reference to the mystery of the Holy Church of Christ, her Sacraments and the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the primacy of the Roman Pontiff."

"So help me God and these His Holy Gospels which I now touch with my hand".



Rev. Fr. J.S. Woodcock with First Communicants. 1973

FORMATION OF PARISH COUNCIL

At the final meetings of the Steering Committee held on the 4th and 25th of May 1972 it was decided that a meeting of all parishioners be called for the evening of Friday 8th June at 7.30 p.m. for the purpose of establishing the Parish Council. The proposed meeting would be chaired by Mr Jim Jewitt, an opening prayer and address of welcome by Fr. Woodcock would be followed by an explanation of the purpose of the proposed Council by Mr Jim Wells.

It was recommended that the Council should comprise nine members elected by the parishioners; ex-officio members (being the Parish Priest, the Curate or Curates or their delegates and the Parish Accountant) with the provision that not more than three members, to be known as nominated members, could be appointed by the elected and ex-officio members should the circumstances requiring such appointment arise.

The ballot was duly held on 2nd July and resulted in the election of Messrs J. Jewitt, D. Brewer, S. Iapozzuto, T. Wilson, J. Wells, J. Ross, M. & J. Morssinkhof, and H. Ireland; ex-officio members being Fr. Woodcock and Mr C. Hyland (Parish Accountant).

At the meeting of 6th July, Messrs D. Brewer and J. Ross were respectively elected President & Vice President and Mr T. Van Wees was nominated by the Council to fill the position of Secretary. A building Sub-Committee comprising Messrs J. Jewitt, D. Brewer, J. Ross and J. Wells was appointed for the ensuing twelve months to over-view the planning of the new church. It was further resolved that the Council would regularly meet on the evening of the first Thursday of each month.

The August meeting adopted the draft interim constitution presented by Mr Brewer. Fr. Woodcock advised his intention to introduce Saturday evening Vigil Mass for a trial period. The Building Sub-Committee advised of a meeting to be held with the architect, Mr A. J. Gilligan, to discuss the total all-up cost of the new church including design and supervision fees.

In addition to assisting Fr. Woodcock in matters relating to the building of the new church, the Council was also responsible for Education, Liturgy, Parish Finance, renovation and maintenance of existing buildings and social and fund-raising efforts.

In the matter of Liturgy, the Sign of Peace was introduced, together with singing at Mass and the formation of a choir led by organist Mrs Sheila Wells. Altar servers were recruited comprising both boys and adults, and the appointment of Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist was effected; the first of these being Mr Dennis Brewer and Miss Wilma Dennis, later followed the appointment of Mrs Betty Andrews.

The Parish Council, as such, ceased operation in the mid 1980s. Since then, Fr. Manning has relied for advice and assistance in liturgical and administrative matters, on specially appointed committees of parishioners with expertise appropriate to the particular matter.

The New Church

CHAPTER 6

At its initial meeting on 6 July 1972, the Parish Council appointed Messrs. J. Jewitt, D. Brewer, J. Ross, and J. Wells to the Building Subcommittee.

At the 7 September meeting, Fr. Woodcock tabled a letter from Rev. Mgr. Penn Jones setting out recommendations of the Diocesan Building Authority relative to the building of the proposed new church. Jim Wells tabled preliminary sketch plans for the building. The basic design was accepted.

At the October meeting, Jim Wells reported on his meeting with Mr Anthony Gilligan, architect, and tabled perspective plans for which the architect had estimated a cost of approximately \$70,000. Shire requirements relative to site works and parking spaces were to be obtained. It was proposed that tenders be called in March/April of 1973 with a view to completing construction in October of that year. The appointment of Messrs. O'Connor & Gilligan as official architects was confirmed and agreed that architectural fees, including supervision, amounting to 7% of the total building cost be paid.

Fr. Woodcock reported to the November meeting on an interview between himself, Mr Gilligan, and the Shire Town Planning Officer who seemed favourably impressed with the design and layout of the plans. These together with the proposed financial arrangements were to be submitted to the Diocesan Authorities. Legal requirements relating to the issue of a building permit necessitated the consolidation of the various pieces of land into one parcel. This matter was capably handled by Mr Bernard Gaynor, Solicitor (a non-resident parishioner).

At the meetings of May and June, 1973, Fr. Woodcock reported that tenders for the building construction had been called, and that approvals had been received from the Health Department and the Town and Country Planning Authority.

Council members were dismayed to learn, at the 5 July 1973 meeting, that the lowest tender received was \$130,000, which was quite in excess

Dromana Parish

of what it considered the parish could afford. A further meeting with the architect was hurriedly called at which he suggested modifications to reduce cost involving the deletion of the high roof over the altar, the reduction of the floor area by 200 square feet, the lessening of the main structure beam supporting the roof and a change in the colour of the outer brick work. Council decided to retain the high roof above the altar and Mr Gilligan prepared a further plan, incorporating his other suggestions, upon which new tenders would be called.

Based on the modified design, new tenders were received and that of R. J. Johnston & Co. of Richmond for \$84,990 was accepted by the Council meeting of 4 October, subject to the approval of the Diocesan Building Authority, of which Fr. Woodcock received notification by letter of 12 October, and arrangements were made with the Dromana Branch of the National Bank of Australia for the provision of overdraft facilities.

Father was able to report at the 6 December meeting that site works had been commenced.

At the April 1974 meeting it was noted that a list of furnishings and fittings had been drawn up showing the approximate cost of each item with the intention of attracting donations for the new church, and further noted that the two holiday flats nearest Foote Street had been advertised for removal.

At the meeting it was necessary to determine the colour of the roofing material, this having been deferred from previous meetings. The choice of copper-bronze was made and conveyed to the architect. Father advised that progress payments had been made to the builder.

The June meeting accepted a firm quote for the supply and installation of the pews which had been received from T. M. McCarthy & Co. Pty. Ltd. in the sum of \$7,080, including delivery.

The July 1974 meeting saw the election of new office bearers with Jim Wells being elected President and John Ross as Convenor of the Building Sub-committee. During the following weeks much activity was undertaken, building defects being drawn to the builder's attention for his rectification, suppliers of statuary, carpeting and lighting fixtures were visited and difficulties with requests by the builder for price increases were addressed.

Unsatisfactory progress towards the completion of the building necessitated the use of the old church over the Christmas holiday period. Meanwhile, necessary concrete paving around the new church was carried out by Mr Battaglia, arrangements were made for the carpet laying, stations of the cross and setting up the piety stall and side altar. The purchase and installation of a quality "Conn" electronic organ was made possible largely by the generosity of Mr & Mrs C. Hyland.

Further delays required the use of the old church for Easter devotions, whilst final details of furnishing and fitting were completed.

The New Church

At a Council meeting of 1 May, 1975 Fr Woodcock was able to advise that the new church would be formally opened by Archbishop Little on the evening of Friday 30 May, and that the old church would be closed on Sunday 25, with Mass at 10.00am

Details of the opening were fully reported in the "Advocate" of 5 June 1975, as follows:

"TRUMPET BLAST FOR CHURCH IN THE TREES.

A church surrounded by 150 trees in a parklike setting was blessed and opened by Archbishop Little last Friday evening.

It is Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Church at the popular seaside resort of Dromana. The triangular shaped building will seat 350 people and there's room for another 350 in a walled-in forecourt.

It replaces an old wooden structure which could seat only 120 people.

The new church is a war memorial. An honour guard from Balcombe army camp presented arms when Archbishop Little arrived for the blessing ceremony. A trumpet fanfare was sounded as the church's wide glass doors were opened after they were blessed. Dr. Little concelebrated Mass with Fathers C. Miller, PP Mornington, K. O'Donnell, PP Hastings, J. Woodcock, PP Dromana, and newly ordained Christopher Toms.

The honour guard presented arms and the trumpet was played at the Gospel and Consecration. Seminarians from Corpus Christi College Clayton, directed by Mr Peter Grasby, led the singing by the parish choir and congregation.

After Dr. Little had preached the homily, a plaque dedicating the church as a war memorial was unveiled by Lt-Col. A. McDonald, Commanding Officer at Balcombe.

The new church's Lady chapel is adorned with a handcarved plaque of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The congregation included the Anglican vicars of Dromana and Flinders, Rev. E. Smith and H. Chapman respectively, Methodist Minister Mr C. Trott, Mr Phillip Lynch, MHR, and many priests from neighbouring and other parishes."

The Archbishop was assisted by Fr. Peter Connors (now Bishop Connors) who acted as master of ceremonies. The Special Minister of the Eucharist at the celebration was Miss Wilma Dennis. Among the attending clergy were Rev. Fr. A. Randall, former PP of Mornington and Rev. Fr. Tom Carroll former PP of Holy Cross Church, South Caulfield, where some years earlier, Fr. Woodcock had served as Assistant Priest.

Dromana Parish

clergy were Rev. Fr. A. Randall, former PP of Mornington and Rev. Fr. Tom Carroll former PP of Holy Cross Church, South Caulfield, where some years earlier, Fr. Woodcock had served as Assistant Priest.

During Fr. Woodcock's nine year pastorship, the parish steadily grew, as predicted by Fr. Miller. In January 1980, he was appointed Parish Priest of Aspendale. A fare-well evening attended by parishioners, visiting clergy and relatives from Melbourne packed the Parish Hall. Fr. was presented with four beautiful crepe vestments by the Altar Society and many individual gifts. His successor, Fr. Kevin Manning also attended and met many of his new parishioners.

The 1980's and Beyond

CHAPTER 7

FR. KEVIN MANNING

Fr. Kevin Manning was appointed Parish Priest on 26 January 1980 and came to us from Camberwell. A former assistant priest at Moonee Ponds and East Kew, Secretary to the Dean of Geelong, Monsignor Greenan, Administrator at Drysdale, Portarlington, St Leonards, Ocean Grove and Leopold on the Bellarine Peninsula, administrator of the Parish of St Joan of Arc, Brighton, Parish Priest of Mooroolbark and Macleod, Father brought a wealth of experience in Parish administration.

His dapper appearance and genial personality assured his ready acceptance by the community. Father quickly settled into his new parish where he displayed the energetic approach for which he had been noted in his previous appointments.

Being firmly committed to the spirit of ecumenism, he quickly established a rapport with the clergy of other churches in the area and joined with them in the formation of the Dromana Red Hill Church Council. His regular attendance at ecumenical services, some of which being held in his own church, caused him to become well known and highly respected by members of the various faiths on the Peninsula.

Father has striven to welcome newcomers to the parish and to satisfy the spiritual needs of the many holiday makers who visit during Christmas and Easter holidays and school vacations. Having spotted an unfamiliar face in the congregation, Father makes a great effort to meet the visitor and to extend his personal welcome after Mass.

Father has also encouraged lay participation in parish administration, as well as in the liturgy. He has effected the appointment of a sufficiently large number of Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and Lectors to allow their participation at well spaced intervals.

Dromana Parish

He has actively encouraged the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference and the Legion of Mary Praesidium.

Father has also re-introduced the First Friday Holy Hour devotions held in the evening comprising the recital of the Rosary with appropriate meditative reflections and Benediction, the celebration of which is regrettably overlooked in recent times.

Father has been blessed with a great artistic talent. This is evidenced by his designing and physically assisting in setting up the many beautiful and much admired Christmas decorations, which for many years have delighted parishioners and visitors alike. The beautiful Nativity scenes and the multi-lit Christmas tree have filled the eyes of younger children with wonder and have inspired many adults with the true meaning of the feast of Christmas.

Similarly his attention to detail with the Easter rites has provided a great spiritual uplift to parishioners, whilst his participation in the Inter Church Council sponsored Way of the Cross procession along the foreshore on Good Friday morning has assisted in drawing the attention of the general public, including non-church goers, to the solemnity of the Easter celebrations.

Father leads a very busy life with his chaplaincy to both the Mornington and Rosebud Campuses of Padua College and other commitments to convents, nursing homes and hospitals on the Peninsula, as well as the Deanery.

During the sixteen years of his pastorship, Father has witnessed the continued growth of the parish, and with his forward vision, and that of his predecessor, has created the splendid parish complex of which all parishioners are very proud.

THE REV. FATHERS CREED AND POULSEN

Fr. Manning has been fortunate in having two retired priests living privately at Rosebud in the persons of Rev. Fr. J. V. Creed, former parish priest of St. Aloysius, Caulfield, and Rev. Fr. R. Poulsen, former parish priest of Glenroy. Fr. Creed provides assistance in the celebration of Mass during the Christmas holiday period and in the Easter rites. Fr. Poulsen celebrates the weekly daily Mass, at 11 am., and assists in visits to the sick when required and provides great support to Fr. Manning enabling him to provide Convent and School weekday Masses and to attend duties away from Dromana, as these occasions sometimes occur, and to allow him to enjoy a well-earned holiday, when Fr. Poulsen capably attends to the spiritual needs of the parish community.

Much has been said relative to fact being stranger than fiction and of co-incidence. Strangely, in recent times, the association of the Dromana

The 1980's and Beyond

parish with the suburb of Caulfield has been quite remarkable - Our first parish priest, Fr. Woodcock, having been assistant priest at Holy Cross parish, South Caulfield; Fr. Manning having been born and reared and attended primary school in that parish; Fr. Creed, as noted, parish priest for many years in Caulfield, and Fr. Poulsen having spent his early years in Glenhuntly Road, South Caulfield, where his father managed the local State Savings Bank, situated directly opposite Holy Cross Church!

THE NEW PRESBYTERY

In 1983, it was obvious that the continuing maintenance of the ageing timber house, used as a presbytery, was becoming increasingly difficult and costly. It was decided that further expenditure was not warranted.

With a view to providing more suitable accommodation for the parish priest and visiting clergy, it was decided that a new presbytery should be built.

Investigations of the viability of such an undertaking revealed that the Shire Council was pressing for the installation of proper sewerage in respect of the church and the ancillary buildings, including the existing presbytery, together with improved drainage.

Mr Jim Wells undertook the responsibility for the major planning and preliminary plans were drawn up by Mr Charles Charalambous, at that time a professional associate of Mr Wells. These plans were drawn after full consultation with Fr. Manning, the Diocesan Building Authority and the Planning Officer of the Shire. It was proposed construction be undertaken on a sub-contract basis.

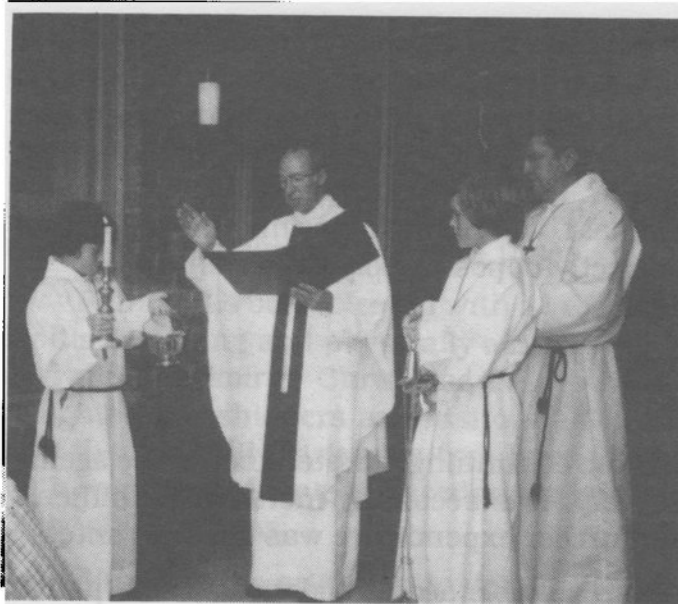
Approvals from the relevant authorities were received and Jim Wells undertook the overall supervision of the project, in an advisory capacity. Mr Dennis Brewer supervised the work of the sub-contractors acting as "site-supervisor" and undertaking much of the construction activities personally.

As well as satisfying local authorities' requirements in relation to sewerage and drainage, it was decided to have all electrical power placed underground.



*View of the Presbytery from
Clarendon Street*

Dromana Parish



*Fr. Manning Blesses the
New Presbytery.
1983*

Under the supervision of Messrs Wells and Brewer, the construction proceeded well enabling its completion for Fr. Manning to open the building for inspection by parishioners just prior to Christmas before he took up residence in the early New Year.

The former presbytery was acquired by Mr Roy Fleiter, and was re-erected on a farm property north west of Melbourne.

The total cost of the presbytery building, together with, drainage and sewerage installations previously mentioned amounted to just over \$120,000.

THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF St JOSEPH OF CLUNY

The criteria of proximity to the Church, transport and shopping facilities were satisfied by the residence situated on the corner of Pt. Nepean Road and Foote Street, in which the Community of four Sisters took up residence on 28 January, 1993.

Sisters Barbara Burke, Anne Cooley, Ita Francis and Eileen Sheehy were warmly welcomed by Fr. Manning, parishioners and Dromana residents generally. Three of the Sisters had previously cared for students at the Diocesan Seminary, Corpus Christi College, now at Clayton, but formally at Glen Waverley and Werribee. The other was formerly Nursing Supervisor at the Cluny Aged Care Hostel at Kew.

Great assistance to Fr. Manning is provided by the Sisters' active ministry to the sick and housebound. The Eucharist is administered to residents of the Retirement Village in Bayview Road and the Dromana Nursing Home, where comfort is provided to the dying. Visits to hospitals and the bereaved and lonely are regular features of their ministry.

The 1980's and Beyond

Chaplaincy of the Dromana Group of the Legion of Mary is vested in one of the Sisters. This has been extended to the Peninsula Curia at the request of the Melbourne Senatus. The former meets weekly and the latter monthly in the Dromana Parish Centre.

The C.C.R. Prayer Group first met in May 1993, and now meets weekly, also in the Parish Centre.

The Sisters greatly enjoy parish activities, especially those of a social nature, and their interests extend to the other local Churches where many lasting friendships have been established, due largely to the wonderful spirit of ecumenism which exists in the Dromana area.

THE NEW PARISH HALL

Shortly after the disastrous fire which, on the morning of 28 October 1991 destroyed the timber former church used as the parish hall since 1975, Fr. Manning sought ways and means to effect its replacement.

He appointed a committee comprising Messrs Tony Beazleigh, Tom Laffan, John Odgers and Bill Perazzo to investigate the feasibility of constructing a new building.

Messrs Hoban & Hynes Pty. Ltd. Architects of Mornington were given a brief to design a building to complement the existing church, to accommodate 190 persons with ancillary facilities including kitchen, male, female and disabled toilets and a separate office. Additionally a timber decking between the new building and the church, with a covered way between these buildings, a new church entrance and a canopy over part of the new drive-way were to be included.

At a meeting of parishioners on 6 August 1992 it was explained that building costs generally and labour costs in particular had risen dramatically since the new church was built in 1975. These factors, together with newer more stringent building regulations, environmental controls and stricter Council regulations meant that the cost of such a building would be just over \$300,000.

Many doubted the ability of the parish to service the financial debt that such expenditure would inevitably incur. It was explained however that the Archbishop had approved the plan and that the Schools' Provident Fund would provide finance on very favourable terms. CCI Insurance had advised that \$110,000 would be paid in respect of the claim for destruction of the former church building.

A further meeting generally approved the plan and the proposed expenditure. Council's approval was given and tenders called, the successful tenderer being Wilson Constructions Pty. Ltd. of Flinders. Various highly successful fund-raising functions arranged by Mrs Tamaris

BLAZE UPSETS PARISHIONERS

A FIRE which burnt out the Dromana Roman Catholic Church hall on Monday has had a bad effect on parishioners.

Some have been visibly affected at the shock loss of the historic, quaint Foote St hall, which for many years served as a place of worship after it was built 88 years ago.

None was more upset than parish priest, Father Kevin Manning, who declined to be photographed among the ruins.

"I am too upset," he said.

Father Manning had to be helped away from the scene as he watched the hall burn to the ground.

The fire started in the roof while about half a dozen church members were having a coffee morning. They dashed outside as the old timber building burst into a ball of flame.

The church was opened in April, 1903, after parishioners from all denominations had raised 343 pounds to meet the building costs. At the time there were only eight Catholic families in the area.

The Advocate newspaper of the time wrote: "It is a compact building and will accommodate all for many a day."

Mr Murphy presented the beautiful

statues which enhanced the appearance and were necessary adjuncts. There was a great deal of Murphy about the building."

It was the original Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church and was used by many community groups as meeting rooms. It was also the venue for the annual autumn art and craft show.

An electrical fault in the roof is believed to have been the cause. Twenty Country Fire Authority firefighters had no chance of saving the building, despite the fact that two Dromana units were backed up by two from Rosebud, and a water tanker from Flinders Shire.

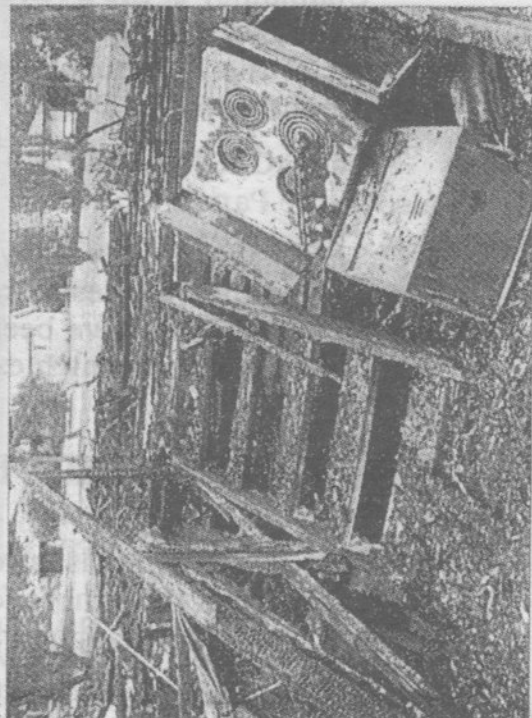
Insurance assessors inspected the site on Tuesday, but it's not yet known whether the hall will be rebuilt. There is a feeling among parishioners that if it was replaced, it would just not be the same.

Despite the tragedy, the church's annual trash and treasure sale will go ahead on Sunday. Some of the goods given for sale were destroyed or damaged in the blaze.

Tents will be erected in the grounds to house the stalls and tables are being supplied by the Rosebud Catholic Church.



THE blaze at its peak as photographed by John Pinkerton, of Dromana.



• NOTHING is left of a piece of history.

Catholic Education

Lourensz and Mrs Roma Walton, the Altar Society and ladies of the parish were held. The sale of "bricks" resulted in many substantial and generous donations.

Construction was completed in time for the official opening and blessing by Archbishop Little on Sunday 23 May 1993, just eighteen months following the tragic loss of the historic timber building.

A fund-raising committee comprising Mrs Tamaris Lourensz, Miss Carol Weissenfeld, the late Mrs Joyce Sheridan, together with Mesdames Margaret Murtagh and Gwyn Loader representing the Altar Society, and Bill Perazzo conducted special efforts to finance the provision of necessary kitchen appliances and suitable furnishings; and a management committee comprising Mrs Roma Walton and Messrs Tony Beazleigh and Tom Laffan was set up.

Since its opening this building has provided a focus for many parish activities, and is a much sought after and popular venue for private functions unconnected with the parish.

Of the total building cost of \$328,015, inclusive of all architectural and statutory fees, there remains, at the time of writing, a debt of approximately \$125,000. A remarkable achievement for a parish of the size and nature of Dromana.



*Fr. Manning welcomes
His Grace Archbishop Little
to the opening of the
New Parish Centre
23 May 1993*



*The Parish Centre,
Opened on
May 23 1993*

Catholic Education

CHAPTER 8

Catholic Education was for many years a cause of much concern to the parents of children in the area. Although the Mercy Sisters had established a school for girls, St Mary's Star of the Sea, at Mornington in 1898 and later another in Sorrento, St Joseph's Primary School, these were far from Dromana and Rosebud. Moreover the Mercy School in Mornington first catered exclusively for girls, until a boys' school opened in 1901.

For many years prior to the introduction of motorised transport, children in the area attended the local State primary schools. At this time, religious instruction was provided by Mrs. Hassell, the wife of the local post-master, in her home in Heales Street.

Following Mrs Hassell leaving Dromana, "Sunday School" was conducted by the Mercy Sisters in the Rosebud Memorial Hall.

Preparation for First Communion required the aspirants to attend special classes of a week's duration at the Sisters' convent in Mornington where the children boarded during that week. Kath Morssinkhof, then Kath Ross, distinctly remembers being driven to Mornington by Fr. Stapleton to undergo this period of preparation. Later, arrangements were made for this instruction to be conducted at day school for a week at St Joseph's, Sorrento. Children were taken by their parents to Truemans Road, West Rosebud, from where they were transported by bus to St Joseph's, and returned at the conclusion of the day. Jenny Vujcich (formerly Loader) fondly recalls this "big adventure".

With the post-war period came the advent of fairly reliable motor transport provided by the Portsea Passenger Service buses. Parents desirous of having their children educated in the Catholic System faced the necessity and expense of travel to either St. Macartan's in Mornington, or to St Joseph's in Sorrento.

Secondary education was a similar cause of concern, for although Padua College had been established in Tanti Avenue its capacity was limited and with the rapidly increasing population of Mornington it appeared likely

Catholic Education

that future enrolments would be restricted to students resident in Mornington.

This problem, however, was finally resolved with the opening of the Padua Regional College in Oakbank Road Mornington in 1975, the original Padua College premises becoming St. Macartan's primary school, moving from its former site adjacent to St. Macartan's church. Padua College now has a campus for students in Years 7 through to 10, at Inglewood Crescent Rosebud, from which those students move to Oakbank Road to complete Years 11 and 12.

Primary schooling still continued to cause concern to parents and the Parish Council became very involved in seeking a possible solution, particularly in 1976 when it was announced that new enrolments for St. Macartan's primary school for students, other than those resident in Mornington would be limited to siblings of children already attending the school.

In July 1976, Mr John Ross reported to the Parish Council that St Joseph's Sorrento was prepared to accept Dromana students, but these must be able to arrange their own transport. Later that year, in November, it was announced that a government sponsored bus would run between Jetty Road Rosebud and St Joseph's, and that Dromana parents had appeared to accept the burden of transporting their children to Jetty Road and collecting them after school.

Approaches to Fr. Frank Martin of the Catholic Education Office were received sympathetically and Fr. Martin duly recommended to the Archbishop the resolution of the problem be urgently sought.

This resulted in the opening of Our Lady of Fatima School, in two portable classrooms together with relocatable toilets on 1 February 1984, with sixty students in Years Prep. to 4, growing to Year 6 in 1986. The administration block, art room and canteen were located in two existing houses on the property surrounding the parish church. The founding principal was Mr Martin Dixon (now M. L. A.)

The then parish priest, Fr. Lewy Keelty O. M. I., decided to construct permanent school buildings on the present site. Comprising six classrooms and associated facilities, the new building was officially opened and blessed by Archbishop Sir Frank Little in October 1987.

In May 1992 the Oblates relinquished their charge of the Rosebud parish, which returned to the care of the diocesan clergy, Fr. William Walsh, being appointed parish priest.

In 1994 new library and administration buildings were completed.

Over the years enrolments have increased, reaching 245 in 1996 and expected to reach 255 in 1997. Due to size restraints of the property the Catholic Education Office has been asked to consider future options for continued growth.

Dromana Parish

Fr. Manning as parish priest of Dromana has been involved with the school, which serves the Catholic communities of both Rosebud and Dromana, since its inception. The present Principal, Mr Trevor Garby succeeded Mr Dixon in 1991, and has graciously supplied this information.

It should be noted that the Dromana parish is responsible for financially contributing to the up-keep and maintenance of both Fatima and the Rosebud campus of Padua.

Parish Lay Groups and Organisations

CHAPTER 9

LAY INVOLVEMENT IN PARISH LITURGY

Almost from the time of his arrival Fr. Woodcock encouraged lay involvement in Liturgical matters. Minutes of the Steering Committee and the Parish Council evidence heavy involvement of Messrs J. Jewitt, D. Brewer, J. Ross, and Mrs J. Vujcich as sometime Convenors for Liturgy.

Lectors were introduced, and in March 1974, Miss Wilma Dennis and Mr Dennis Brewer were appointed as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist.

Fr. Manning has continued to encourage participation by the laity, and the number of Lectors and Extraordinary Ministers has grown with the parish.

Present Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

Mr F. Andrews
Mrs H. Booth
Mr D. Brewer
Mrs R. Cheers
Miss W Dennis
Mr E. Ferran
Mrs J. Ferran
Mr D. Ferrigan
Mrs M. Ferrigan
Mr R. Fleiter
Mrs D. Fleiter
Mrs R. French
Mrs G. Hehir
Miss L. Kelly

Mrs R. Kerrigan
Mr B. Lynch
Mr J. Mannix
Mrs D. Mannix
Mr W. Perazzo
Mrs S Perazzo
Mrs C. Scandar
Mr J. Sheridan
Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny
Mrs V. Stacey
Mr J. Thomas
Mrs M. Toohey
Mrs J. Zagorski
Miss P. Kelly

Dromana Parish

Lectors

Mr D. Brewer
Mrs R. Cheers
Mr M. Hogbin
Mrs J. Hogbin
Mr K. Kelly
Miss L. Kelly
Mrs M. Toohey

Mr J. Kerrigan
Miss J. Lourenz
Mr B. Lynch
Mrs S. Perazzo
Mr J. Sheridan
Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny

Altar Servers

Mr F. Andrews
Master S. Bellomia
Master M. Bellomia

Master D. Johnson
Master G. Staines

Parish Deanery Representatives

Mr W. Perazzo and Mesdames J. Ferran and M. Toohey

Youth Ministry

Mesdames J. Hogbin and A. Trethowan

Organist

Mrs J. Vujcich

Sacristan

Mr F. Sheppard

Parish Accountant

Mr D. Ferrigan

Sacrificial Offerings & Collections Co-Ordinator

Mr J. Thomas

Garden & Grounds Maintenance

Mr & Mrs R. Cheers and Mr B. Robertson

Padua College Council Representative

Mrs B. Robertson and Mr W. Perazzo

CATECHETICS

For some years following the formation of the parish, religious instruction has been provided at the local State schools. Originally classes of half an hour duration were held at Red Hill Consolidated school each Tuesday and at Dromana Primary School on each Wednesday by Mrs V. Dennis, and Mrs Banks.

With the introduction of State Approved Courses, classes at Red Hill were discontinued after eight years, but continue at Dromana Primary where classes are held by Mesdames Gwyn Loader, Henrietta Booth, and Joan Ferran.

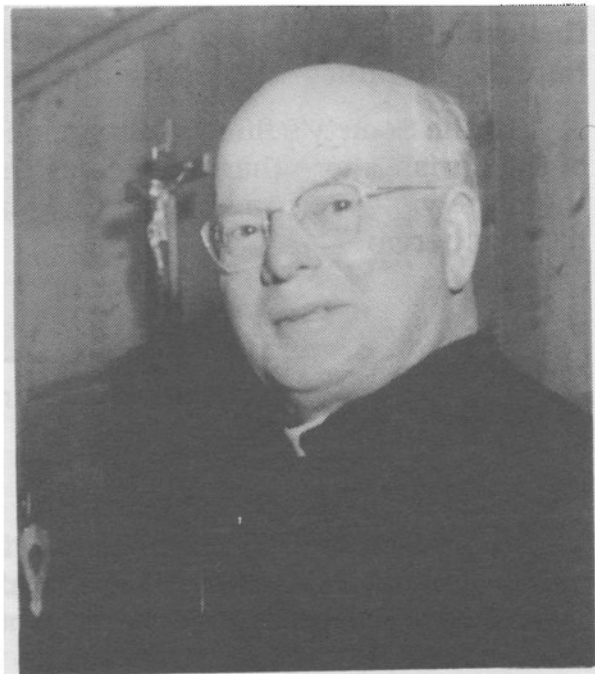
Preparation of First Communicants has been capably undertaken by Mrs Gwyn Loader, whilst candidates for Confirmation are instructed by Mrs Bernice Robertson.

THE ALTAR SOCIETY

The oldest established longest continuous running and unquestionably the most successful fund-raising organisation within the parish, the Altar Society, originally named the Catholic Ladies Auxiliary, was formed at a well attended meeting in the Church on Tuesday 22 July 1957. Its object was the raising of funds for the provision of altar requirements. Fr. Stapleton, parish priest of Mornington, presided and the following office-bearers were elected:

President	Mrs M. Currie
Secretary	Mrs V. Dennis
Treasurer	Mrs K. Greer

The committee comprised Mesdames Sinclair, Booth, Walker, Richards, O'Leary, and Misses M. Arter and B. Ross.



Fr. Stapleton

Dromana Parish

Earliest members included Mesdames Maunsell, Scanlon, Loader, Walker, Forster, Ross Snr., Bohnholtzer, and Miss Carroll, all of whom subsequently made significant contributions to the success of the Society by undertaking roles as President, Secretary and other executive positions as well as the more physical activities of Church cleaning, setting up and conducting street stalls, and other forms of fund-raising.

At the first meeting it was agreed that an annual membership fee of two shillings would be payable and that a further meeting would be held on Thursday 1 August (1957) at the R.S.L. hall, and thereafter, on each alternate month. Subsequent meetings were occasionally held in the R.S.L. hall and more generally in the homes of the lady members. In the first year over £109 was raised and in the second year £110. Street stalls, a white elephant fair, musical afternoons, concerts, and raffles were held.

At the 4 February 1960 meeting, the Auxiliary's name was changed to the Dromana Altar Society at the suggestion of Fr. Randall, who had succeeded Fr. Stapleton, and at the Annual General Meeting of July 1960 it was unanimously agreed that the subscription be increased to two shillings per month.

In addition to the provision of altar breads and wines and the maintenance of altar linens, the ladies organised church cleaning rosters and hospital visits. They were able to provide funds for the purchase of flowers, altar rail cloths, vestments including an alb and cope, surplices for altar servers, a vestment cupboard, sanctuary lamp bracket, a chair for the use of the priest during Mass and a ciborium.

During this period the ecumenical spirit was particularly strong and regular interaction with the ladies of other church guilds took place, including attendance at the annual Womens' World Day of Prayer. This regular contact with ladies of the other local denominations resulted in the formation of very friendly relations and great mutual respect, which, happily, continues to the present time.

In the Society's fifteen years of operation, before the official creation of the Parish, more than fifty ladies were actively engaged in the work of the society. Unfortunately space limitations preclude their individual naming herein.

Parish Lay Groups and Organisations

Mention must be made, however, of Mrs Veronica Mary Dennis. Having taken up residence in McCulloch Street in the mid 1950's, Mrs Dennis quickly responded to Fr. Stapleton's desire to set up a Ladies Auxiliary and became its first Secretary. Among the various executive positions she held was that of President from 1967 until October 1975, but remained an active member until her death in September 1977. Throughout her long association she was noted for her commitment to her Church, and her untiring efforts to promote the parish community. Her generosity was boundless, as was her organisational ability. She continues to be remembered with affection and gratitude by those who knew her.



Mrs Veronica Mary Dennis

The Society continued its growth through extensive fund-raising efforts and was able to make substantial contributions to parish funds throughout the 1970's, as well as assisting the parish priest in matters of catechetics, and liturgy.

Dromana Parish

At its Annual General Meeting in October 1993, it was reported that the Society had contributed in excess of \$42,500 to parish funds since 1980, when records were kept by the parish accountant, Mr Des Ferrigan. Further contributions of \$8,000, \$9,600 and \$12,500 were made in 1994, 1995 and 1996 respectively. Not included in these totals was the presentation to Fr. Manning of \$600 towards the cost of a Shrine to honour Blessed Mary McKillop in Our Lady's Chapel, in memory of deceased Society members. A further sum of nearly \$2,400 was expended in the purchase of a large refrigerator for the Parish Centre in March 1996. A further sum of \$10,000 is invested for future Parish development.

The present membership comprises the following:

President	Mrs Gwyn Loader (Founding Member)
Vice Presidents	Mesdames Margaret McCrohan and Janet Arandall
Secretary	Mrs Joan Ferran
Treasurer	Rev. Fr. K. Manning
Asst. Secretary	Mrs Gaye Marks
and Mesdames Margaret Murtagh, Pat Grasso, Eileen Harper, Coral McGough, Pat McMaster, Vi Shoppee, Brenda Hutson, Henrietta Booth, Agnes Olney and Dorothy Fleiter.	

These ladies are ably assisted from time to time by former committee member Mrs Joan Bloink and others.

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

The following groups have operated at various times or are still operating in the parish.

- The Altar Society
- The Autumn Arts & Crafts Committee
- The Bangladesh Relief Group
- The Baptism Group
- The Bingo Committee
- Choir
- CCR Prayer Group
- Catechist Group
- Fete Planning Committee
- Knights of the Southern Cross
- Majellan Group
- Legion of Mary
- Pastoral Care Group
- Pax Group
- St. Vincent de Paul Conference
- Youth Interest Group

In addition ministering help was afforded by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd (from Rosebud) especially Sr. Miriam.

Parish Lay Groups and Organisations

Visitations to the ill and infirm at home and in hospitals and Nursing Homes are regularly undertaken by the Sisters of Cluny, now resident in the parish, and members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and the Legion of Mary.

During their period of residence in the parish, the late Sisters Gertrude and Pauline of the Sisters of St. Joseph (Josephites) took an active role in parish activities.

PARISH PASTORAL GROUP

(Formerly the Pastoral Care Group)

Encouraged by the participation of many parishioners in the spiritual and social activities during the two and a half years of the "Renew Programme" in 1987-89, Fr. Manning formed the Pastoral Group in February 1990, comprising the six core leaders of "Renew", Bernard Lynch, Bill Perazzo, Bernice Robertson, Veronica Stacy, Mary Toohey and Jim Thomas, the latter as Co-ordinator and Secretary respectively. Meetings are held monthly or at the direction of the Parish Priest.

Following the resignations of Veronica Stacy and Jim Thomas, Joan Ferran and Jim Mannix (appointed Secretary) joined the original members, with Felix Russo as a new member in 1992.

Responsibility for many parish activities include, the continuation of prayer and scripture meetings, family Rosary devotions, Lenten discussions, preparation for Easter Liturgy including collaboration with other churches in the Good Friday Way of the Cross, membership of the Dromana-Red Hill Inter Church Council and attendance at Ecumenical Services.

Promotion of the First Friday Holy Hour Rosary and Benediction, transport to Mass, visitation to the sick and bereaved, the Welcoming Group to greet newcomers and visitors, Youth Masses, emergency help, and assistance with the parish census are other areas of involvement.

Responding to the request by the Archdiocese for co-operation with its plan for "Tomorrow's Church" parish meetings were held and reports forwarded to the Pastoral Leadership Board. Members of the Group regularly represent the parish at Deanery Meetings and report back to other Group members.

During 1995 Jillian Hogbin and Andre Trethowan representing the Youth Ministry (Dromana and Rosebud Parishes) joined the Group. Following the resignation of Felix Russo and Jim Mannix, Jillian Hogbin was appointed Secretary. Mary Toohey remains Co-ordinator.

Dromana Parish

CONFERENCE OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

The Dromana Conference was formed at a meeting called by Fr. Woodcock on 11 April 1973 attended by six members from whom Mr Dennis Brewer was elected President, Mr L. Loader Vice-President, Mr V. Burdon Secretary, and Mr R. Williams Treasurer.

There are at present seven active members and auxiliaries who can be called on to assist if required. Some fifteen parishioners regularly assist at the Mornington store.

Calls for assistance vary from 20 to 30 per fortnight, and total daily expenditure on the Peninsula exceeds \$1,000.

Present membership comprises Mr F. Andrews President, Mr L. Loader Vice-President, Mr J. Sheridan Secretary, and Mrs G. Loader Treasurer, together with Mrs H. Booth, Mrs M. Murtagh, and Mrs J. Beattie.

Since its inception the Conference has co-operated with other Churches in the area from which references come to visit those known to be in need. The fact that there is a need wholly motivates the Society which never discriminates on any grounds.

THE LEGION OF MARY PRAESIDIUM OF OUR LADY OF THE HOLY ROSARY DROMANA

The first meeting attended by Fr. Manning and fourteen others was held on 17 June 1992. Officers were appointed as follows: Fr. Manning Spiritual Director, D. Brewer President, M. Toohey Vice-President, F. Sheppard Secretary, and E. Johnston Treasurer. Fr. Manning has appointed Sr. Barbara Burke of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny to act on his behalf as Spiritual Director. There are presently twelve members and thirty auxiliary members, meetings being held each Wednesday at 9.15 am in the Parish Centre.

The work of the Praesidium includes visitations to the Nursing Home, elderly and infirm parishioners in their homes and to the Retirement Village and to those suffering bereavements. Assistance is also provided to Fr. Manning at the Nursing Home Mass, where a barbecue is held each Friday for the benefit of the patients.

THE ANNUAL PARISH FETE

In recent years this single most successful fund-raising event has regularly been held on the Saturday immediately preceding Melbourne Cup Day.

At the conclusion of each Fete, preliminary planning for the next year is commenced.

Parish Lay Groups and Organisations

During the ensuing months, knitters, preserve makers, sewers, and those with arts & crafts abilities work enthusiastically to produce goods for the various stalls. Donations of material suitable for the Trash & Treasure and Plant stalls are collected, sorted and securely stored.

Activities intensify as Fete day approaches, planning is "fine-tuned" and necessary purchases made.

Fete day itself, and the preceding activities are regarded as important not merely as a source of finance, but equally as providing a vehicle for social interaction of all parishioners.

Since 1983 this important event has raised in excess of \$77,000 for parish funds.

AUTUMN ART & CRAFT SHOW

For some years parishioners of both Rosebud and Dromana Parishes had cherished the idea of holding an art show where local artists could exhibit their works. A small group gathered in November 1989 to discuss the possibility of a joint venture.

The concept of bringing the two communities together was unique although the two parishes shared common bonds through their involvement with Fatima Primary School and Padua College.

Autumn Art & Craft became a reality in 1990 in the charming old church which was unfortunately burnt down in October 1991. 1995 saw the resumption of Autumn Art & Craft in the new Dromana Parish Centre as one of the activities of the Banksia Festival and is supported by the Mornington Peninsula Shire, many local business houses and private sponsors.

Bill Perazzo chairs the organizing committee, with Mary Toohey as Vice-Chairperson, Bill and Jean Connell Secretary and Assistant Secretary respectively and Des Ferrigan as Treasurer.

Pioneer Parishioners

EPILOGUE

Without the selfless commitment of the few pioneer families at the turn of the century, and those who followed them later, in the 1940s and 1950s, it is extremely doubtful whether the parish as we know it, would exist in its present form.

In the 1930s the Ross, Hazeldene, Runyard, Farrell, Nolan, Carrigg, Burch, Skillen and Greer families largely made up the Catholic community. Of these, sadly only few remain. The Ross family is still represented by John Ross and his family, and by Kath. Morssinkhof, and Betty Venturin and their families, all of whom remain firmly committed to the parish.

The late 1940s saw the arrival of Gwyn and Laurie Loader, then newly married. This couple, who recently celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary, have been heavily involved in both pre-parish and post parish activities, and even after more than 50 years remain very heavily involved, there scarcely being an activity in which one or the other, or both of these remarkable people have not participated.

To these parish pioneers, and the many others whose names have faded with the passing of time, present parishioners and those of the future will always be deeply indebted.