

History

EARLY DAYS (1877-1900)

St James Parish Forest Lodge 125 Years: 1877-2002.

John Fletcher

Although time was when The Glebe seemed a sort of enchanted forest with its lofty gums looking as gloomy as the black feathers on a hearse, the wild duck and profusely growing geebung and hellfire berries were not left for long to enjoy their immunity once the Glebe Municipality was proclaimed on 1 August 1859.

Weatherboard cottages, let at 15/- a week, began to appear on the subdivided glebe lands at Bishopthorpe and St Philip's. Jonathan Howard's four-horse omnibuses, rattling at 6d a trip from Broadway to the Quay, halved the time and expense of Thomas Woolley's more leisurely and more sedate carriages. More significantly, the population, in less than twenty years, mushroomed from 200 in the late 1840s to more than 4,000.

The few stately mansions, initially hidden in the virgin bush, found their expensively bought solitude eroded almost over-night. Roads, shops, small factories, gas lighting from 1860, drains and sewers from 1876, even steam-trams from 1882, transformed in erratic leaps and bounds their once sylvan setting.

It was a time of improving communications, of clearing stands of tall timber and of forcing back the tidal waters that once lapped Broadway opposite St Benedict's Church and covered the present Harold Park and Jubilee Oval. Glebe's swelling Catholic population began to question the need of their regular peregrinations to Broadway or to Father Therry's old church in Balmain.

The growing queries were to produce an unambiguous answer in a block of land on the former Hereford House estate, donated late in 1876 by a local resident, Mr. Shannassy. A building committee, under the chairmanship of St Benedict's Father John Joseph Pollard, originally of County Tipperary, promptly materialized, held meetings in Mr. James McManahan's house and collected £600 before calling tenders.

John Joseph Pollard (1877-82)

By 7 July 1877 the foundation stone was laid and blessed by Archbishop Roger Bede Vaughan in front of a tasteful assembly of 2,000. By 1 September 1878, the church of St James, built in the Venetian Gothic style of Pymont stone and New Zealand kauri pine and glowing with stained glass, marble, majolica painted tiles, was ready and formally opened. Admission was by ticket only. The crowded church throbbed to the music of Weber and Mozart played on a handsome organ presented by Miss FitzStubbs. Archbishop Vaughan warmly congratulated the new pastor, Father Pollard (1844-1884) and his committee on their inspiring energy and zeal.

Music seems in fact to have loomed large in the life of the infant church. The extensive first Christmas celebrations were immediately followed by a presentation to the soloists. Mlle Marie St Clair received a gold chain, and the popular basso Mr. Rainford an inscribed silver coffee service. The gifts were of an extremely chaste nature.

Another early milestone fell on Sunday 27 July 1879, when Archbishop Vaughan administered Confirmation to nearly 100 children. The church was again ablaze with colour and sound. The scent of the gayest and rarest flowers mingled with the soaring voices of a choir fifty strong and the resonant tones of the organ produced a blending of liturgical Haydn and Weber with the full orchestral thunder of Wagner's majestic march from Tannhauser.

A short three months later, on 12 October 1879, the Archbishop again appeared at St James' to lay and bless the foundation stone of an elegant parish school which he declared to be 'an ornament even to this ornamental neighbourhood' and which owed its inception alone to Father Pollard, that zealous and persevering clergyman. The school, equipped with desks that had been shown in the Great International Exhibition, opened on 21 March 1880 under Sr. Mary Austin and Sr. Marie des Anges of the Good Samaritans who walked daily into Glebe from the Pitt Street Convent. The boys were catered for by Professor Anglin and Mr. John Doyle.

Ingenuously, and not a little ingeniously, the move into the new school-buildings was preceded, on 3 November 1879 by the very first Parish Picnic. Mass at 7.00 am sharp was followed by an excited crocodile of boys and girls briskly marching, to the accompaniment of lively tunes by the Imperial Band, down to the steamers waiting near Half-Penny Bridge on the old Lyndhurst estate. The picnic itself, at Chowder Bay, was attended during the long hot day by over 1,000 people.

Other documents of the same year, as parish life began to fall into a more regular rhythm, tell of the £2,000 debt outstanding from a total expenditure since 1877 of £6,000, of night-school classes, of a total of 200 children under the Good Samaritans and of three teachers receiving from their classes some £2.10.0 a week.

More ambitiously, in 1881, a high-school at St James' was launched by M.A. Cleary, Professor of elocution and languages, late lecturer in rhetoric to the teachers in training at Fort Street. Advertisements appeared in the Sydney newspapers stressing the school's latest improved systems of teaching and that its roll of 180 children were 'some of the best families of the neighbourhood'. A few places were still available, the advertisement stated, for boarders with all the comforts of home'.

A half-column notice in the Evening News of 25 June 1881, described Mr. Cleary as 'a gentleman of the very highest attainments' and included no less than eleven testimonials to his sterling qualities. These compliments were submitted amongst others by the headmaster of Sydney Grammar School and the manager of the Haymarket branch of the Australian Joint Stock Bank.

Mr. Cleary's educative innovations apparently failed to impress prospective fee-paying parents, despite Father Pollard's bold purchase in 1882 of land intended for a new school adjacent to the church in Woolley Street. The same year also saw the transfer of Father Pollard to Moruya where he was to die two years later at the altar rails, a demise that was to make great consternation seize the large congregation and induce widespread sorrow on the South Coast.

Glebe Point Rd., 1908

Hugh Bernard Callachor OSB (1882-91)

Forest Lodge's second priest was the Benedictine, Hugh Bernard Callachor (1841-98), a product of and professor at Lyndhurst College. Father Callachor had taught at the College until it closed its doors for the last time in 1877. Curiously, he came to Forest Lodge from Moruya bearing with him both a testimonial to his untiring labours and sleepless solitude and a purse of 60 golden sovereigns from his grateful parishioners. A tall and bustling extrovert, Father Callachor enjoyed the considerable advantage of coming from an equally extrovert and devout family who seldom failed to take part in the never-ending flow of concerts and functions that entertained the parish from 1882 to 1891.

In April 1884, an Olde Englishe Fayre, with pageant and musical items, lasted a full fortnight, open daily from 3.00 pm to 10.00 pm. It made a profit of £1,020. In February 1885, a similar function included more recitations, songs, charades, ventriloquism and a play based on Euripedes. In 1886, the concert was held on St Bernard's Day and included for Father Callachor, from the schoolchildren, almost countless tokens of affection deftly worked by the skilful little fingers as a loving task. The same year also saw, in the presence of Cardinal Moran, a moving production of Albany Christie SJ's

Martyrdom of St Cecily. In 1889, it was the turn of the Grand Australian Fair, another highly profitable fortnight of junketing~ and merriment when such exclamations as having struck oil and simply coming gold were made on all sides!

There was, however, much more than just socializing and sentimental ballads, brass-bands and clog-dances. A spiritual Retreat was held once weekly each year, the one in 1883 having a daily 5.15 am Mass offered up 'specially for the Working Classes'. Other missions were held for the children, whilst in 1884 the visiting Carmelite Fathers who had brought spiritual enrichment to the parish, could depart with a well-filled purse of gold as a gift from the parishioners.

Further riches for the parish arrived in 1885 on the SS Euphrates, out from London. Heavy packing cases from Birmingham contained a miniature Aladdin's Cave replete with altar ornaments both in solid silver and gilt, all frosted to snowy whiteness. One case contained Father Callachor's own gift to the parish, a sanctuary lamp unrivalled in the colony! with an imposing crown of imperial gorgeousness burnished to dazzling brightness. A more subdued innovation by Father Callachor was the setting up in 1888 of a Catholic Total Abstinence Association whose members met monthly in the church to renew The Pledge, hear readings from Ullathorne and Manning, organize sedate recitations and songs whose content, Father Callachor trusted, would confine themselves as much as possible to Temperance subjects. From a parish of some 1,400 practising Catholics, the Association's membership was to steady out at an average of 110-120 paid-up members for each meeting.

Patrick Louis Coonan (1891-1935)

On 1 September 1891 Father Patrick Louis Coonan (1856-1935), ordained in 1879 in County Kilkenny by the then Bishop Moran, was appointed as parish priest. On 3 September 1891, a petition containing 283 names was handed in to Cardinal Moran by a deputation headed by George Chapman, Acting Government Printer, urging Father Callachor's retention which would most certainly lead to the advancement of Holy Religion at Forest Lodge and the speedy liquidation of the local debt. Despite this plea, Father Callachor moved to his new parish, Leichhardt, and his replacement, Father Coonan, began to consolidate what was to become a forty-four- year-long stay at St James'. Father (Monsignor from 1911) Coonan came to Forest Lodge at the age of thirty-five from St Benedict's on Broadway, where he built the barracks-like Marist school that still buttresses the old Benedictine church. A solid committee-man, he was in much demand at St Mary's Cathedral, where he walked daily despite a convenient tram service and despite his increasing reliance on a walking stick.

Planned giving was introduced. On 30 June 1892, at the close of Father Coonan's first financial year, a printed statement records the weekly contribution of 243 parishioners towards a total of £234.12.0. In the same year, to cope with the parish's 110 lively schoolboys, the Patrician Brothers were called in and Brother Bernard Ryan travelled daily from Holy Cross College in Ryde to supervise the reorganized classes. To help more effectively with the 360 girls and infants, the Good Samaritan Sisters were encouraged to open a branch Convent, St Gertrude's in Hereford Street in 1896. Similarly, in 1896, Father Coonan recorded his paternal supervision of the three local private schools run by the Catholic ladies, Miss Lonergan in St John's Road, Madame French in Hereford Street and the Misses Hosier in Pymont Bridge Road.

The present, stately, thirteen-room presbytery at St James' was completed in Father Coonan's opening years. In 1897 the last four blocks of the former Benedictine Lyndhurst estate, overlooking the marshy swamps of what is now Wentworth Park, were ceded to the parish by Cardinal Moran for a nominal five shillings. This was to be the site of the school-church, St Ita's, to be opened in 1900. Further educational and spiritual impetus was to come from the establishment in the parish, in 1901, of the Mother House of the Good Samaritan Sisters in Toxteth Park House, formerly the mansion of the Allen family.

With church and presbytery completed, with bulging schools and trained and dedicated teachers, with a shrinking debt and a growing parish of 2,500 souls, the stage was now well set for a vigorous entry by the whole parish of Forest Lodge into the 20th century.

St. James' Presbytery

A NEW CENTURY: (1900-1946)

John Fletcher

Neat in appearance, abstemious in character, spartan in his style of living, Monsignor Coonan nevertheless startled his parishioners by hurling over the presbytery verandah carpets rashly installed by one of his assistants during an absence abroad. He was, however, a generous host, a friend to the needy. At his funeral, on 23 July 1935, the eulogist Father E.G. Parker commented that 'Monsignor Coonan was the last member of a notable Irish family and the wealth that came into his possession he distributed widely throughout the Commonwealth'. Some remembered his personal nobility in the 1919 influenza epidemic and the Sunday processions of the Children of Mary around the church while others were impressed by his omnivorous reading and encyclopaedic knowledge.

More concrete reminders of Monsignor Coonan's presence in the parish are the extensions to the western end of the church; the foundation stone of which was laid and blessed by Archbishop Michael Kelly on 5 May 1912. He is also remembered for the Stations of the Cross erected in 1917 in memory of fourteen families of the parish and in the same year for providing the sanctuary with marble altars, altar rail and flooring which cost £406.15.4.

A strong spiritual feature of Monsignor Coonan's pastorate was the regular visits to the parish of mission priests. Missions were held by the Vincentian Fathers in 1907, 1915 and 1918, by the Redemptorists in 1919 and 1932, and by the Passionists in 1913 and 1934. The report made by the Passionist Fathers Stephen, Bede and James, in November 1934, stresses the 'spirit of faith and prayer evidenced by the earnestness of the people'. It further comments that 'the women overcrowded the church at all the exercises, the men responded to the grace of the Mission in a remarkable manner, their general Communion was an inspiring sight'. Despite the many attractions connected with the Royal Visit to Sydney, over 8,000 Communion were distributed. The daily meditation on the Sacred Passion was so overcrowded that 'many have spoken ...about penitents who had never been seen at Holy Communion until the days of this Mission'. Five years earlier the Redemptorist Fathers Roche, Gallagher and Taylor heard 2,400 confessions, saw 200 women and 100 men enroll for the Sacred Heart Sodality. They preached 'sermons against the evil of mixed marriages' and noted 'many who were careless and some who were long years away came to their duty'.

Lay groups such as the Sacred Heart Sodality or, on a more junior level, the Children of Mary also played an important spiritual role in parish life. Similarly the St James' Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society revealed a protean versatility in catering to the shifting demand and needs of an inner city suburb caught in the flux of time. In the winter of 1903, the Society organized at 'Surreyville' for the 'distressed poor of the parish' a Bread and Butter Dance which was hailed as 'a perfect success'. Thirty-three lady parishioners, ranging from Madame Huenerbein to Madame McSweeney furnished a generous table free ...Rickett's string band discoursed the music and Miss May Stanley played the extras'. G.Smythe provided Arnott biscuits, E. and G.Humphreys the cordials, the chemist Mr. M.H.Limon the programmes, and four local butchers the meat.

This Edwardian vignette is the stark contrast to the activities of the Society in the Depression years. Under William Butler (President 1928-57), Parish Secretary and one of the unsung heroes of Glebe, the Conference coped with 60-70 cases a week. Orders, usually with an upper limit of five shillings, were written as long as funds held out on chemists and doctors as well as meat and food stores. The grim reality of Glebe life in the 1930s seems a far cry from the halcyon days of, say, 1904 when 47 good ladies of

the parish could abundantly stock and elegantly staff, to the general approbation of all, their 'Toxteth Stall' at St Mary's Jubilee Fair.

But, then, the misery that lurked in the lower reaches of the parish was far more elemental. In July 1905, a City Council deputation that visited the Blackwattle Bay area (next to the parish's church-school of St Ita's where daily some two to three hundred boys and girls squeezed themselves between the unyielding brick walls) could note that 'for more than a quarter of a century the same squalor and wretchedness, the same misery of poverty! the same crowd of ill-dad and ill-fed children playing hide and seek in foul nooks and corners'. The incidence of typhoid in the area was, we may note, six times the mean average. Other, more cheering parish statistics come to light in an incomplete series of Monsignor Coonan's parochial returns, now housed in the Catholic Archives at St Mary's Cathedral.

Quite clearly, the parish had taken to heart the Irish proverb: 'A church without a school is like an apple tree without an apple on it'. The Proverb was hoarsely enunciated By Cardinal P.F.Moran on opening St Ita's church-school at the corner of St Johns Road and Bellevue Street on the day after St Patrick's Day in 1900.

The following month, enrolment at St Ita's, forecast at 50, shot up to 160, leaving Sister Mary Charles Hiles and Sister Mary Imelda O'Brien of the Institute of the Good Samaritan to cope as best they could. Their example was perhaps best emulated by Sister Mary Catherine, the head teacher in 1910, who was noted far and wide for her practical skill in teaching the 7-15 year old boys the finer points of football.

The Patrician Brothers had already appeared in the parish in 1892. Brothers Bernard Ryan, Bernard O'Toole and Dominic Bourke walked daily to and from Redfern station to conduct classes for the older boys in the present Parish Hall at the corner of Rosebank Street and Pymont Bridge Road.

On 15 October 1901, the Sisters of the Institute of the Good Samaritan moved from their Mother House at 444 South Pitt Street (opened at Christmas 1871 and now requisitioned for the Central Railway Station) into Toxteth Park House, Glebe Point. At their new home they re-erected the noble sandstone columns and wrought iron gates saved from the demolition of their former house. The new house (variously occupied since the Allen family's departure by Camillo Marina and his private hotel, Dr Garran and his college, and a women's residence of the University) was discovered by the Order's third Superior General, Mother Mary Berchmans McLaughlin (1858-1931) and was opened and blessed by Cardinal Moran. On the same day, their foundress Mother Mary Scholastica Gibbons (professed 1847) died at Marrickville.

Toxteth Park House, St.Scholastica's Convent.

Apart from opening their own St Scholastica's as a 'high class boarding school for young ladies', the sisters organized, as before, the parish schools of St James (infants and girls) and St Ita's (mixed). Similarly, with the Brothers, they conducted the Sunday schools held in the various schools buildings immediately after the Children's Mass. St Scholastica's was described in a newspaper advertisement in 1902 as 'picturesquely situated on the height of Glebe -Point ...occupying one of the healthiest positions in or around -Sydney, combining the advantages of country air with a refined city home ...with all modern sanitary conveniences'.

In the parish return of 23 March 1903, Father Coonan comments that some of the children may not have books of their own' and notes the presence in Glebe of private educational establishments variously run by Miss Lonergan (35 St Johns Road; from 1906 at No 113), Madame French (242 Hereford Street) and the Misses Hosier (132 Pyrmont Bridge Road). Miss Lonergan's school, where 'Catechism is taught and where the Catholic curriculum is followed' is particularly commented. In 1910, St James' School for Girls, now registered as a Practising School for the Junior Sisters, was visited and examined by the Victorian inspector, Mr. Hanson. He found the teaching' of uniformly high standard, the tone and discipline excellent' , and was 'particularly struck with the cleanliness, politeness, and brightness of the pupils' .His conclusion, on completing his survey of the seven teachers (five sisters, two lay teachers) and 200 children was that 'schools such as these constitute a national asset whose value it is difficult to overestimate'.

Of the thousands of children who received their entire formal education in the parish, few records are preserved. Distinguished Old Boys are known to include R.Gorman MLA, R.Coady MLA and, in a different corridor of power, K. Hilferty, sometime editor of the Catholic Weekly. Eight boys became priests, three became Patrician Brothers and one, John Toohey, whose parents kept the 'Currency Lass' at the corner of Mitchell Street and Glebe Point Road until its licence failed to obtain renewal from the Anglican Church, made it to Bishop. Not much more is known about the teachers.

In March 1923, the Brothers were able, through the energetic initiative of Monsignor Coonan and Father J .H.Muirhead to move into their newly purchased spacious monastery at 'Woodlands' (now 'Butler Lodge'), 165 Pyrmont Bridge Road. The first Superior of the monastery became brother Cyril Boland and the community was formed by Brothers Finian Byrne and Joseph Tiemey. Brother Cyril was to remain Superior and School Principal until 1935 and 'became almost a legend in the Glebe area'. Another local legend was Brother Macarten Keegan (1931-37) who distinguished himself by establishing the Glebe Hockey Club. He was helped oddly enough by the

Depression which had produced a local surfeit of idling rather than idle men. Brother Keegan had perfected his command of the sport in India, to which he returned in 1937. Late in 1923 Monsignor Coonan granted the Patrician Brothers permission to hold a yearly appeal for funds. The annual dances, concerts and fetes which followed became the monastery's principal means of support. Such functions were held at first in 'Surreyville' or in the school hall but later mainly at St Benedict's Hall.

In April 1934 the Sisters involved in teaching at St James' and St Ita's imitated the earlier Patrician move into the centre of the parish. Their new convent, 'Glen Isla', at 163 Pymont Bridge Road, boasted 12 rooms and cost £1,500. The new community of eight, somewhat loath no doubt to exchange the serenity of Toxteth Park House for the bustling traffic noises of Pymont Bridge Road, was placed in the charge of Mother Mary Genevieve Cook.

On Monday 22 July 1935, Monsignor Patrick Louis Coonan died in Lewisham Hospital, where Archbishops Kelly (then aged 85) and Sheehan had been constant visitors. The Sydney Sun of 22 July 1935 apostrophised him as 'one of the most distinguished prelates in the Catholic Church in Australia'. At the Solemn Office in Forest Lodge on the Tuesday, preceded at 7 am by a special Children's Requiem Mass (attended by over 800), an ecclesiastical choir of 120 priests assisted the Rev. Sister Gabriel of the Good Samaritans who rendered the Dead March in Saul.

Patrick Alphonsus Doherty (1935-1946)

Unlike his predecessors in the parish, Father P.A.Doherty (he became Monsignor in the 'Purple Dawn' of 1940) came, at the age of 57, as a mature and experienced priest. An old boy of St Joseph's at Hunters Hill, he had already headed the parishes of Lithgow (1923-26) and Wollongong (1926-35) where extensive new buildings bore witness to his drive and energy. Another token of his assiduity was his frequent membership of various Archdiocesan committees. His new parishioners, however, first noted his use of the 6 cwt. bell (erected in 1890 by Father H.B.Callachor in memory of Carroll Denis Daly) in the presbytery garden for the morning, noon and evening Angelus. Previously, Monsignor Coonan had reserved its use for Missions alone. Ten days after his installation, Father Doherty, promising to be, 'economical', requested permission from the Archbishop to buy furnishings and floor coverings for the presbytery. This was an indication not of new extravagance in the parish but rather a measure of Monsignor Coonan's abstemious and humble life-style.

Father Doherty's opening months also saw the installation of a new Whitehouse-Paling organ in the church, duly celebrated at a crowded Sacred Concert, reminiscent of Father Callachor's whirlwind heyday. The organ was the result of a £100 bequest by the

former organist Miss Hogan. The old organ was shipped off to the Anglican church in needy Bellevue Hill before parishioners realized that Miss Hogan's thoughtful gift fell far short of paying for the new musical monster.

The building habit learned perforce in Lithgow and Wollongong was soon to reassert itself in Father Doherty. In the inauspicious month of December 1939, he applied to the Commonwealth Bank for a £4,000 loan at 4 1/2% interest for completing a new Boys' School and enlarging the Girls' School. The local manager of the Bank, Mr. D.O'Sullivan, was conveniently reported to be an excellent Catholic and a member of the Church Committee. The size of the loan precipitated some gloomy foreboding in Archbishop N. Gilroy and the diocesan solicitor Mr. A. W. M. d' Apice, but nevertheless on 10 December 1939 we find the pacified Archbishop setting the foundation-stone of 'a magnificent new school building' on a site purchased for £341. The future building was to be seen as, a memorial to the Right Rev. P.L. Coonan. Eight months later on August 1940, the new school, built at a cost of £2,563 was opened. During the war years enrolments fell, large due to the evacuation of children to country areas. The day of the opening ceremony, again conducted by Archbishop N. Gilroy, was 'wet and miserable' and, in Father Doherty's words, 'donations on the occasion were not very great but we hope to receive more shortly'.

St. James' Hall, Boy's School (1892-1940)

Father Doherty's sanguine mood of expectation is all the more commendable, because on 5 July 1940 the parish (with a loan of £4,000 from the Catholic Church Investment Trust) had purchased the island block of land, 165 feet by 231 feet, immediately opposite the church in Woolley Street. The site, now St James' Park and public tennis courts, had belonged to the late Mrs. Mary Ann McKeon. On it stood two mansion-like houses 'Moira' and 'Thorpe', with extensive outhouses, which were then let for an annual total of £388.8s.0d. Although the parish was never to use the land Archbishop N. Gilroy's perspicacious comment was prophetic when he said 'future generations will be grateful to you for obtaining much needed additional ground'

. The spiritual life of the parish was, as before, reinforced by outside Mission priests. In a three-week Mission in April 1937, the Redemptorist Father heard a total of 2,370 confessions. A two-week Mission held exactly years later by the Passionists found a similarly fervent response. In March 1937, the parish received from the custodian Dominican Fathers in East Camberwell, Victoria, its Diploma of Erection for the Holy Name Society. By April, some 401 members were recorded, and oversubscribed four-day Retreats for members were held in the parish in March 1940, and May 1940.

The Children of Mary (160 members in 1937) similarly underwent a five day Retreat offered by the Redemptorist Fathers at Pennant Hills in May 1944, while Margaret Prendergast (1942-1944) and Molly Alleyne (1944-1953) headed effective and efficient Praesidia for Our Lady of the Maternal Heart (Legion of Mary). Valuable aspects of their pastoral coverage included visiting the sick, carrying out catechetical work and keeping in touch with the homes of Catholic children attending public school.

Catechism for state school children was similarly tackled by the men in the Forest Lodge Catholic Action group, a lay movement particularly dear to Father Doherty's heart. Impelled by the popular feeling of the boys involved and strongly encouraged by Father Doherty, the Catholic Action president Ed Ryan became the moving force, from 1935 to 1944, of the : James' Scouts, the Sixth Glebe group.

An initial grouping of some 40 boys had as their chaplains Fathers Gerard Wallington (1938-40) and Justin McGlynn (1940-42). Uniforms were not first insisted on, and were in fact often acquired piecemeal. Meeting on Friday nights, the Group during the war provided heavily attended Christmas Dinners at the Matthew Talbot Hostel and produced popular annual concerts such as the Pirates of Penzance and Macbeth. They made frequent use of local carrier Steve McCormack's fleet of lorries and attended, in addition to their own Forest Lodge camps, the Papal Banner camps in Casula and the Western Suburbs camp at Waterfall. For two years the Scouts won the Marching Cup, were presented with the Papal Banner, and Clifford Purcell became a King's Scout. In 1942 Margaret McNair of Hereford Street formed and organised a Cubs' Group.

Many older parishioners still recollect with affection their scouting days at Forest Lodge. Other figures from the 1930s still locally remembered include Bill Monkman of the St Vincent de Paul Society who used to distribute left-over bread from Purves' Bakery to poor families, and Tom Brady the sacristan who used daily to cross swords with Mary, the old Irish cleaning-lady. Mary was paid 12/- a week for cleaning the church but the work was actually done by the St Vincent de Paul men. She had an invariable retinue of cats and birds fed with scraps from the presbytery table.

Apart from the actual new school of 1930-40, which came with 'a model Kindergarten fully equipped', and the apparent exodus from the parish of tiny evacuees, there is little known of the parish schools under Monsignor Doherty's pastoral care. The successive principals of the Boys' School in this period were Brothers Baptist McGrath (1936-38), Norbert Phelan (1938-43) and Rodan Bergin (1944-50). We can only conclude, as Monsignor Coonan used to declare in his parochial returns, that 'there is no case of public scandal'. That the documentation here is so sparse is no doubt due to the traditionally vigorous new broom wielded by Monsignor Doherty's successor in 1946,

who cleared out with Herculean determination the Augean mass of parish papers, archives and books which he discovered stored in the present Choir Room.

In the winter of 1942, Monsignor Doherty was obliged to take sick leave which he spent in the presbytery at Ballinger, complaining of being 'very tired of doing nothing' .At first Monsignor Doherty improved wonderfully in health' but the Archbishop's trust in the benign climate of the North Coast' proved illusory. After another bout of illness in 1945, Monsignor Doherty died in Lewisham Hospital on 3 June 1946.

Patrician Brothers' School New Building (1940-1967)

The Solemn Requiem Mass for Monsignor Doherty, ' not only admired and respected but loved generally by the priests of the Archdiocese' was attended by more than 200 priests. Archbishop N. Gilroy was there, and the celebrant was the Most Rev T .B.McGuire, Bishop of Goulburn. On Patrick's Day 1949, the parishioners saw the blessing of a new pulpit Queensland silky oak installed as their memorial to Monsignor Patrick Alphonsus Doherty .

Assistant Priests, 1900-1946

Matt Hogan (1892-1901), formerly of Lithgow and Queanbeyan.

Joseph Bunbury (1901-02) Born in Ireland, ordained (1892) in Rome. Bright jovial, eccentric, he confessed on one occasion 'I have to admit that I have none of this world's wisdom'. He is remembered for his leaping from run-away buggy in Moruya, on which occasion he broke his leg. An habitual user of strychnine (then freely available and prescribed as a mild tonic), he died of an overdose in Adelaide on the day he was to return home to Ireland

James Joseph Whyte (1902-09) Born in County Kilkenny in 1868, he was ordained in Ireland in 1892. He taught at St Patrick s College, Man (1892-94) and before becoming a school inspector in 1899, assisted at Benedict's and St Mary's. Parishioners remember him as a tall, sedate man.

Michael O'Kelly (1903-13) Of County Kerry and ordained at All Hallows in 1903. 'A born comedian', he went on to become parish priest in Penshurst.

James (jimmy) Smith (1911-18) He was born in County Meath, ordained in All Hallows, and became parish priest in Tempe. Once in the Burrena Valley, he found himself in an out-of-control car with Archbishop Michael Kelly. Abandoning; his hapless passenger to

his fate, Father Smith leaped from the accelerating vehicle, severely injuring his head. The Archbishop was unharmed.

Patrick Walsh (1913-14) Ordained in Ireland, Father Walsh assisted at Kogarah (1905-13). Later he became parish priest at Mascot (1917-35) and Haberfield (1935-47).

John Troy (1915-19 & 1922-25) Before coming to Forest Lodge, he was inspector of schools. He was on sick leave from 1934 until his death, became pastor emeritus in 1938. His funeral was attended by 120 priests. When his sister married a Protestant who offered to convert, Father Troy is said to have replied he would rather his sister stay married to a good Protestant than to an indifferent Catholic. He is still remembered in the parish for his expertise on the Harley-Davidson motor cycle.

Michael Gregory O'Dea (1918-22) Born in Chippendale, Father O'Dea eventually became parish priest at Camden (1929) and Neutral Bay (1954).

John Hyland Muirhead (1920-26) Born in 1866 near Goulburn, Father Muirhead subsequently became parish priest at Clovelly. He left Forest Lodge to become inspector of schools.

Lawrence Comdon (1925-29) Educated in Tralee, Killarney and Dublin, ordained at All Hallows (1920), he assisted at Waterloo's Mt Carmel (1922-25) and became parish priest in Bankstown (1939) and Concord (1959).

John O'Flaherty (1926-31) Father O'Flaherty was known for his public saying of the Rosary in Gaelic. Eugene Glynn Parker (1928-35) Born in Bathurst, Father Parker was later active in Dee Why, Baulkham Hills and Richmond. His father was wont to say of him that 'he can't see a pair of boots on the floor but he has to give them to the poor'. At one time he complained about the pickle-jars used as floor vases on the altars, and the congregation responded by buying tasteful brass holders. He also had the curious informal habit of calling Archbishop N. Gilroy 'Norman', no doubt much to the secret joy of his fellow committee-members.

Dominic Richard Furlong (1929-35) A Forest Lodge boy whose parents kept Furlong's Hotel ('The Ancient Briton'), Father Furlong was ordained by Archbishop Sheehan in 1925. He was related to another local publican's son, Bishop John Toohey, whose brother married his sister. He moved on from Forest Lodge as administrator in Balmain and died as one of the best loved and most popular priests.

Joseph John Purcell (1931-32) A professor at Springwood, Father Purcell became parish priest successively in Redfern and Lindfield.

Walter Clarke (1932-35) Father Clarke left Forest Lodge when he was appointed 'pastor of the new district of Punchbowl'.

James Delaney (1935-38) Became parish priest of Rose Bay.

Thomas Kerr (1935-40) In 1940 Father Kerr joined the armed forces. Later he became parish priest at Blakehurst.

Gerald Wallington (1938-41) Later became parish priest in Belfield.

Justin McGlynn (1940-42) From Nowra, rather McGlynn later became parish priest at Campsie.

Sid Thorne (1941-42) He became parish priest at Flemington after war service as a chaplain in the RAAF.

Patrick Landers (1942-45) Previously assistant in Lewisham, Father Landers later became parish priest at Panania.

John Jordan Joseph Ross (1942-45) Born near Goulburn in 1906, Father Ross came to Forest Lodge from Redfern where he was assistant priest. He later moved on to Elizabeth Bay.

Thomas Fennell (1945-47) Later he became parish priest in Bexley.

Alan C. Robinson (1946-48) Father Robinson became parish priest in Kiama.

THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE (1946-2002)

Michael Hogan

The second half of the twentieth century saw enormous changes both in Australian society and in the Catholic Church. The suburbs of Glebe and Forest Lodge, and the parish of St James, have lived through these changes and been profoundly altered themselves. In 1950, Glebe and Forest Lodge were regarded as depressed areas ripe for urban development or, in the language of the day, slum clearance. Almost no development had taken place in the district since the 1920s, when it was already regarded as part of Sydney's rough inner-city fringe. Throughout the years of Depression, wartime, and postwar shortages, the housing stock had deteriorated badly, giving below-standard accommodation to thousands of renters and lodgers with

many of the larger homes divided up into self-contained flats with dangerous gas-rings on verandahs and stairwells.

After the war, the first development was the construction of Housing Commission walk-up blocks of flats scattered across the suburb in the 1950s on sites where earlier houses or workshops had been destroyed by fire or neglect. By the 1960s Glebe was being discovered as a convenient location close to the city for professional and university folk- the process often referred to as gentrification. Meanwhile, many families with children moved out of Glebe to newer areas of suburban Sydney to find a more congenial lifestyle. Private developers set their eyes on slabs of the suburb for large-scale redevelopment. By the 1970s the Whitlam Commonwealth government acquired the Glebe Estate from the Anglican Church, reviving the terrace housing of the Estate which was eventually handed over to the NSW Housing Commission. By the end of the twentieth century a new wave of medium density, town-house-style development was well under way.

Now, once again like Glebe in the nineteenth century , the suburb has a mixed social composition, yet still retains a village-like character. There : is also a change in the age profile of the district. Whereas in the 1950s the basic family unit was typically a married couple with three, four or five children, at the beginning of the new century there is an obvious ageing of one part of the population, alongside a large population of young, single or childless, highly mobile people. The few couples who are having children tend to have only one or two, so that the school-age population of the district has nosedived. All the schools in the district (not just Catholic parish schools) are hovering at the edge of viability with declining numbers.

In many ways, the changes in the Catholic Church have been more dramatic than those in society. The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was a fundamental event that had repercussions throughout the world, but many changes were already under way before that, and would have come even without the intervention of Pope John XXIII. Certainly, the changes in St James' parish have been extreme. For inner-city districts like Glebe, demographic changes have intensified a perception of decline in religious participation.

At the time of the triennial episcopal visitation of the parish in 1952, (half a century before this 125th anniversary) the presbytery housed the parish priest, two curates, and a visiting American priest. The parish school of St James, with 11 Sisters of the Good Samaritan, taught 380 students from Kinder to Sixth class. The smaller school at St Ita's, staffed by nuns from St James', catered for another 70 children from Kinder to Second Class. Next door to the parish church, six Patrician Brothers taught 220 boys from Fourth Class to Intermediate (the third year of secondary school). At St

Scholastica's there were 163 girls, many of whom were boarders. It seemed a golden age of a vibrant parish community.

Monsignor Bartlett reported to the Archbishop just months before his death that there were 5,080 parishioners, of whom about a quarter were habitually absent from Mass. Then allowing for some inflation of numbers, the normal Sunday attendance at Mass in the parish would have been in the order of two or three thousand. On Sunday mornings there were Masses at 6,7,8,9,10 and 11, plus the 8.30 Mass at St Ita's in the Lyndhurst section of the parish. The statistical returns for the visitation gave membership details of a large range of parish sodalities and associations: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (140), Propagation of the Faith (200), Holy Name Sodality for men (250), Sacred Heart Sodality for women (420), Children of Mary (115), St Vincent de Paul (43), Catholic Youth Organisation (115), Legion of Mary (12), Hibernians (84), and the Legion of Catholic Women (32). There was also a Catholic Boy Scouts' troop active around this time. The previous statistical returns had noted 20 members of 'Dr Ryan's Movement', the secret organisation aimed at winning back control of Communist-dominated trade unions. At St Scholastica's Convent in Glebe Point there were 52 nuns in the community, teaching in the College, training new religious and lay teachers, and administering the mother house of the Congregation.

Fifty years later, the seven Sunday Masses have contracted to just two – 5.00 on Saturday evening and 9.30 on Sunday morning, not counting one Mass at St Bede's, Pymont. The total attendance at the two Forest Lodge Masses averages about 200 each weekend. The parish has no assistant priests, although a tradition of hospitality for visiting priests continues. Most of the sodalities have gone, with the St Vincent de Paul Society surviving only with assistance from the parish of Pymble. The Patrician Brothers school has long gone, as has the church and school at St Ita's. The parish school is taught entirely by lay teachers, and its student numbers have declined to 118. St Scholastica's is still a thriving educational establishment, but is staffed almost entirely by lay teachers.

Few Catholics from an older generation would deny that a real parish was built around the nuns and brothers, with whom there was often daily contact, more than with the priests, whom most parishioners saw only on Sundays. In Forest Lodge, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan and the Patrician Brothers had exercised an enormous influence on the sacramental and social life of the parish for the best part of a century. However, by the beginning of a new century the rich religious ferment provided by the sisters and brothers living around the parish church has seemingly gone forever, although there are three small communities of Good' Samaritan Sisters scattered throughout the parish, as well as a house with two Sisters of the Sacred Heart, while two Josephite Sisters live and minister in Ultimo, part of the associated Pymont parish.

Other than changes in the church associated with the Second Vatican Council, the other main area of change affecting the parish has been in education policy. Immediately after the war, the normal pattern in suburbs like Glebe was for many boys and girls to finish school after the Intermediate Certificate, if not at the school leaving age of 15. Many girls completed their last years of school at a business college, learning typing, shorthand, and business principles. From Glebe, many girls graduated from the parish primary school to St Patrick's at Harrington Street in the city or to the business college at St Benedict's, Broadway. Others, perhaps hoping to go on to the Leaving Certificate, went to ladies' colleges such as St Scholastica's or Rosebank. More boys than girls completed high school, but in Glebe most boys were happy to finish the Intermediate and then find employment. The Patrician Brothers' school in Glebe, terminating at the Intermediate, was ideal for this purpose.

In the late 1950s the State government commissioned the Wyndham Report that recommended a complete overhaul of secondary education in NSW. Then, during the 1960s, state aid was restored to Catholic schools after nearly a century of absence. As a direct result of these developments the Archdiocese of Sydney reorganised its own system of secondary schooling, amalgamating smaller schools and closing many intermediate secondary schools to promote larger, regional, high schools. The expectation was that most children would now complete six years of secondary schooling. Some of these matters were already being foreshadowed in the demographic changes of the 1950s, when the school-age population in inner-city regions was already noticeably in decline. St Scholastica's stopped teaching its primary school classes in 1944, while the small parish school at St Ita's closed in 1955 because of a decline in enrolments. These developments helped to mask the drop in student demand at St James', which would otherwise have become obvious much earlier.

Gerald Bartlett (1946-1952)

The parish of St James' emerged from the Depression and Second World War with virtually no debt, a parish school rebuilt during the 1930s, a new building for the Patrician Brothers' school completed at the beginning of the war, and a healthy income based on parish housie-bingo. The 1950s began a period of spectacular building and expansion in the Sydney Catholic community, yet in Glebe there was little scope for new building. When Monsignor Gerald Bartlett took over from Monsignor Doherty in July 1946 he was very concerned to carry out repairs to the fabric of the church and schools, but there was still an extreme shortage of materials and labour. Within a year he was asking the Cardinal to borrow £12,000 to build new confessionals, fix up the sacristy, renew the front steps of the church, provide extensions to the convent and modernise the plumbing in the presbytery. There is no mention of housie in his parish accounts, so apparently that parish stand-by disappeared with his arrival. The Catholic

Church Trust would guarantee the loan, and parish income (£65 a week) would need to grow in order to payoff such a loan.

Reputedly, Mons. Bartlett renovated the old school hall in 1948 -dance hall on the bottom, and rooms for a sports centre for the youth club on the upper storey -with his own personal money. The block of land opposite the church, which was used by a run-down private nursing home, had been given to the Salesian Fathers who had plans for their own nursing home. Eventually, however, the Salesians did not proceed with their plans, the private nursing home was pulled down, and the land was sold on to the Council. (Eventually, in the 1970s, Leichhardt Council built the tennis courts on part of the land and dedicated the rest as a park.) Forest Lodge and Glebe were still very poor districts, and the parish was financially healthy only as long as spending was kept at a modest level.

St Ita's Church-School (1900-1984)

John Fletcher describes Monsignor Bartlett as 'bluff, burly, gentle' and as 'a sound committee man'. He was certainly a new broom in the parish after the final years of an absent or ailing Monsignor Doherty, but any historian will share Fletcher's dismay, noted above, at the new PP cleaning out and destroying many of the parish records stored in the Choir Room. Although still in middle age, Mons. Bartlett was already a senior priest in the Archdiocese. Glebe was regarded as a well-established parish, convenient to the city, with few financial problems and a guaranteed supply of assistant priests to share the workload. Young priests need not apply. Mons. Bartlett had already been Parish Priest in Rozelle for eleven years before moving up, at the age of 54, to the more desirable Forest Lodge parish. His status was enhanced by appointment as a Diocesan Consultor to Cardinal Gilroy in 1946, and as Vicar Forane (a kind of supervisor for the Archdiocese of other parishes in the inner-west suburban region). Much of the hands-on parish work was left to his assistant priests.

Through all this period there were usually two assistant priests, or curates, helping out in the parish. During the short reign of Monsignor Bartlett, Glebe was the training ground for senior curates who would graduate from Forest Lodge to administer the new parishes being developed in the Archdiocese. Tom Fennell (1945-47) provided some continuity, since he had undertaken extra responsibility in the last years of Monsignor Doherty. Alan Robinson (1946-48) was later PP in Kiama. James Byrne (1948-50) went on to the new parish of Riverwood. Bill Clements (1948-1953) later administered the parish of Mosman for Bishop Muldoon. Steve Hogan (1951-53) is remembered for his motor bike and later became PP of Central Bankstown. When Mons. Bartlett died in November 1952 the parish was administered for a couple of

months by Father Clements (who had virtually run the parish for the last two years of Mons. Bartlett's life) until the new pastor arrived.

One of the interesting visitors living in the presbytery at this time (1949-50) was Walter Higgins CSC, a member of the community from Notre Dame University in the USA, who was in Australia to advise the bishops on the formation of a Catholic University in Australia. Nothing came of this at the time, because of the huge expense that would be involved, and partly because of a reluctance to provoke sectarian tensions. (Sectarianism was alive and well in Glebe at this time. The editorial offices of *The Rock*, magazine, a notorious anti-Catholic publication, were in Glebe Point Road, where the Cornstalk Bookshop now stands.) Another guest in the presbytery (1952), who occasionally helped out in the parish, was a Lismore priest, Bill Murphy, who was attending courses nearby at the University of Sydney. In later years Forest Lodge was used a number of times as a residence for priests studying at the University.

In the parish school, which taught girls throughout primary school, and boys till Second Class, the Principal for most of this period (1947-51) was Sister Cleophas Rhoddy. In the Patrician Brothers' school, Brother Aloysius Delaney was in charge from 1950 until 1955, taking over from Brother Rodan Bergin (1944-1950).

Cyril Bertrand Callaghan (1953-66)

When Monsignor Bartlett died after a protracted illness at the age of 59, many parishioners hoped for a young and more vigorous parish priest to replace him. When Father Cyril Callaghan (he became Monsignor in 1958) was appointed to Forest Lodge in February 1953 he was scarcely younger than his predecessor, but he was clearly more vigorous. He had been PP of Wollongong for 17 years, taking the opportunity to return to the Archdiocese of Sydney after the new Diocese of Wollongong was created in 1951 to become pastor briefly in Balgowlah before Forest Lodge became vacant. He was set in his ways, of an authoritarian disposition, and as John Fletcher describes him, 'a man of inflexible principles'. Still, this was not an unusual description for a senior parish priest in Sydney during the 1950s, and the religious, junior clergy, and laity of the parish were well trained in obedience. Father Callaghan made the decisions.

Among his early decisions was Father Callaghan's offer to take over the care of souls in the Children's Hospital from the neighbouring parish of Camperdown. This added an appreciable workload to the priests of St James', but had the advantage of making it more certain that Forest Lodge would retain its customary two assistant priests. In line with an Archdiocesan prohibition on holding dances in Catholic halls on Sunday evenings, he stopped the regular dances run by the Catholic Club in St James' Hall, but, when parishioners complained that their children were simply going off to other

venues (notably the Surreyville dance hall), he renovated the hall with a new dance floor and audio system and reinstalled the Sunday dance in 1956. It was seemingly unable to attract a regular clientele, because at the end of 1957 the bottom floor of the hall was leased temporarily to the Commonwealth Bank. In 1964, the hall was rented out to the TAB, since it was used only occasionally by the parish (mainly by the CYO twice a month).

Other building expenditure undertaken in this period included: renewing the plumbing, painting, and refurnishing the presbytery; painting the interior of the church and repairing the sanctuary windows; asphaltting the playground and providing new lavatories for the convent school; and (in Mons. Callaghan's last year) planning the reconstruction of the sanctuary to remove part of the altar rails to install a new altar for the priest to say Mass facing the people.

During this period the financial situation of the parish underwent a complete overhaul in line with decisions made by Cardinal Gilroy to face up to the financial crisis in Catholic education by sharing the load among all Sydney parishes for the expansion necessary in the new parishes on the fringe of the metropolitan area. Forest Lodge, with an established parish plant and a controllable debt, was expected to contribute a quota to the Schools Building Fund. In 1964, Monsignor Callaghan instituted a Planned Giving Program to increase income, but still had to apologise to the Cardinal that the parish was unable to meet its quota. Since that time the parish has rarely been able to meet its diocesan quotas without digging into reserves. Within the parish school, an extra expense -paying salaries for increasing numbers of lay teachers -was already starting to bite into funds.

These were the years when the Wyndham Scheme of secondary education was being implemented in NSW. Throughout Sydney, parish schools that had taken students only up to Intermediate either had to expand to take in the extra years up to the HSC, or lose their secondary classes to a regional high school. St Scholastica's became effectively the regional Catholic high school for girls in the inner-west district.

In 1961 the parish boys' school began to lose its top. By 1963 it taught only primary school boys, and, when that made the school unviable, the school closed at the end of 1967. The convent school received boys back into Fifth and Sixth Grade, which helped to cover a decline in numbers that was already becoming obvious. For a year or so, a few brothers remained in the Monastery, attending courses at the University of NSW, but this also proved unworkable for the Patrician Brothers, so that the Brothers' Monastery in Pymont Bridge Road became empty. Boys were encouraged to go on to Holy Cross College at Ryde to complete high school. The Brothers were re-allocated to

their newer schools that were undergoing spectacular expansion on the outer edges of Sydney in Fairfield, Campbelltown, Blacktown and Liverpool.

The roll call of assistant priests at St James during Mons. Callaghan's term continued the tradition of Forest Lodge serving as an apprenticeship for the new parish priests needed by a still-expanding Archdiocese. Looking back, the parish was well served by its curates; there were very few duds. Australian or Irish, shy or assertive, almost all were sincere, hardworking and honest priests: Brendan Shiel (1953-57), Eugene Harley (1954-57), Theo Arrivoli (1957-60), Ken Prunty (1960-63), Denis Daly (1961-62), John Rivett (1962-65), Paul Foley (1963-65), Carmelo Sciberras (1965-67) and Maurice McNamara (1966-68). An earlier curate, Lawrence Corridon, returned briefly (1957-59) for health reasons (he was 63 at the time) before again becoming pastor in Concord. No doubt there were occasional clashes between assistant priests and the Monsignor in the presbytery, but it seems that mutual respect and distance was generally observed. Bishop Muldoon commented in 1964 at the time of the episcopal visitation, as if it were something that he had not expected, that: 'There is harmony in the presbytery, all the priests quite happy'.

The tradition of providing accommodation for priests with special missions was not a high priority for Monsignor Callaghan. The only resident visitor was for five months in 1962, when Bill Brennan, attending the University of Sydney from the Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese, spent a rather difficult time in the parish. Fr Brennan later went on to become Bishop of Wagga Wagga, but he moved out of Forest Lodge when the Monsignor expected him to contribute more of his time to the parish than he was willing, and without adequate financial reimbursement.

During his final years in the parish, Monsignor Callaghan, now an old man, became increasingly concerned about the financial burdens on the parish. He had come to Forest Lodge when financial problems were trivial, but everything had changed so quickly in the 1960s. Within the parish, he belatedly accepted some changes required by the liturgical movement sweeping the Catholic Church in the early 1960s (for example, the use of English in the Mass, and dialogue Masses) but the further reforms that seemed to be demanded by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) were beyond him. He was also almost crippled with arthritis. In December 1966 he announced his retirement, leaving Father McNamara to administer the parish until a new parish priest could be appointed. He died in March 1969.

St James' Parish School

Francis Xavier Roberts (1967-88)

The status of the parish of Forest Lodge in the Archdiocese had clearly changed when the new parish priest was appointed in February 1967. Whereas his two predecessors had come to St James' already as senior parish priests accepting the prize of an established and worry-free parish for their old age, the new man was young, energetic and inexperienced as a pastor. For Father Roberts, after a brief period as Administrator at Greenacre, Forest Lodge was his first appointment as parish priest. He accepted it with gusto, eager to make up for the opportunities for change neglected in the last years of his predecessor, and impatient to bring Catholic Glebe into the new worlds it was facing.

When Father Roberts arrived, much of the ecclesiastical pattern of religious services and parish associations noted above for the 1950s was still observed, although the signs of decay were obvious. In his first year there were eight Masses in the parish, although there had been some change of times, and there was now an evening Mass on Sunday: 6.30, 7.30, 9, 10, 11, 12, 6pm, and 8.30 at St Ita's. Within a year or two this had been reduced to five: 7, 9, 10.30, 6 pm as well as the Mass at St Ita's. Not only was this more appropriate for the declining numbers of parishioners attending, but it also forestalled the need for extra clergy beyond the three in the parish. The new altar was eventually installed beyond the old altar rails, and the new PP insisted that the congregation should 'participate'. One of the first folk masses was held in Forest Lodge in July 1967.

Father Roberts had his own ideas on what parish associations were appropriate for the new order. He was proud that Forest Lodge was one of the first parishes to have a Parish Council to advise him. He was an enthusiastic promoter of youth organisations (before coming to Forest Lodge, 'FX', as he was known to his associates, was notorious in the various CYO sporting competitions for his loud partisanship in supporting his teams!). He built up the CYO once again into a healthy local club for young people, with facilities in the St James' youth Centre in the parish hall. For younger teenagers he was one of the few Sydney priests who took the YCS (Young Christian Students) movement seriously. The 'Teen Encounter with Christ' retreats for senior school students became annual events. For even younger children -well, younger boys, at least -he promoted the Guild of St Stephen as an instrument for recruiting, and disciplining, a large contingent of trained altar servers. For slightly older parishioners there was the Family Apostolate, the Paulian Association, and the Cursillo Movement (to encourage vocations), as well as the traditional Legion of Mary, St Vincent de Paul Society and the Altar Society. One innovation, remembered fondly by older parishioners, was the parish choir. Starting as a small group of young men in 1967, they were later joined by a girls group to form a full liturgical choir, with expert musical direction. At the episcopal visitation in 1967, Bishop Muldoon was all praise, and obviously impressed with the new regime: 'The Pastor has settled in completely and the Parish is vibrating'.

The new pastor had an appreciation for the social justice dimension of church responsibility, and tried to find appropriate uses for some of the under-used parish property. When the Brothers Monastery became vacant, he offered it as a youth hostel, to be administered by the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Welfare Bureau. In 1970 it was opened as Butler Lodge, a halfway house for girls from the country or leaving Catholic orphanages to find work. In 1975, at much the same time that secular centres were being established for the same purpose ('Elsie', in Westmoreland St, Glebe, was the best known), Butler Lodge became an emergency shelter for women and children avoiding violent relationships. In 1974, the Elizabeth Talbot Centre was opened in the parish hall to provide a midday meal for women every Wednesday.

There was considerable insecurity about the future of the suburb during the 1970s. Besides the demographic changes that were becoming obvious in the declining numbers of schoolchildren, the State government was planning to carve huge gaps through Glebe with the Western and South Western Distributors, which would have left the peninsula as a series of islands. The Commonwealth government was considering what to do with the Glebe Estate, which it wanted to sell off to developers. Many of Father Robert's letters to the Cathedral pointed out the need for the Archdiocese to anticipate such problems of the inner-city that could not be solved by any individual parish. In the event, the expressways avoided Glebe (partly because they would now have to pass through Commonwealth land in the old Anglican Estate), while eventually the State government took control of the Estate so that it remained public housing.

Despite the efforts of previous parish priests, and the lack of need for any new buildings, the problems of upkeep in the ageing parish plant were proving insistent and expensive. Prior to the 1970 episcopal visitation, Fr Roberts had pointed out to the Cardinal the severe problems of rising damp, leaking roof and insecure windows in the church. Bishop Muldoon agreed that the situation needed attention, and advised: 'The Pastor's attention has urgently been drawn to the need for constant maintenance of the old plant'. However, with the crisis of education funding during the 1960s and early 1970s, there was little money that could be spared for any maintenance that could be postponed for another year or two. The parish hall, especially the upstairs section, was falling into disrepair. The convent school, although large sums had been spent over the previous decade in modernisation, remained a haphazard collection of more-or-less useable spaces rather than a modern school building. Once state aid began to flow into the system towards the end of the 1960s, some work could be done on the school. The schoolyard was remodelled with the help of a federal grant in 1974, but serious problems still remained. Many of them would have to wait for the next parish priest.

The parish continued to have two assistant priests for the first part of this period, but Fr Roberts often had to be satisfied with priests appointed to Forest Lodge who had

other responsibilities outside the parish or who were waiting for a further appointment. Maurice McNamara (1966-68) continued on as assistant to the new PP, but soon left to spend a number of years as a missionary in New Guinea. Michael O'Byrne filled in for a couple of months in 1968 before becoming pastor of Austral. A future PP of St James' , Les Cashen (1968-69) gained an early look at his future parish. Tony Newman (1968-70) had been one of the creative forces in the Living Parish organisation and edited a wonderful song book that is now a collectors' item. John Hill, theologian and future Rector of St John's College at the University of Sydney, was in Forest Lodge for six months in 1969. Noel Short, true to his name, was in the parish for only eleven months in 1970-71. Kevin McCarthy (1971-72) helped out while also studying three days a week at the University. A Mill Hill Father returned from the Borneo mission, Anthony Mulders, (1971-76) found refuge for a longer period. Milton Lonard (1973-75) adopted a low profile in keeping with his shy and retiring personality. Not so retiring was Jim Grainger (1976-79) who began a period when there was only one assistant priest. Val Rogers (1980-82) was effectively the last curate in the parish, as the Children's Hospital was handed back to Camperdown parish. The shortage of local clergy hastened the closure of the small church at St Ita's in 1984.

A number of priests lived in the presbytery and occasionally gave some help in the parish. Victor Rajanayogam was in Sydney from his native Sri Lanka during 1969. A guest for a longer time (1968-70) was Paul Martuzas, chaplain to the Lithuanian community in Sydney. Eamon Leonard was studying, and working in the Archdiocesan Marriage Tribunal, during his stay in 1974. The director of the diocesan CYO, Michael Mahony, found a home in St James' during 1975. Chris Dixon (1980-82) was the director of marriage preparation for Centrecare.

In December 1970, Pope Paul VI landed from a launch at Glebe Point, visiting the parish to meet the young patients at the Children's Hospital. In October 1976, Cardinal Freeman helped dedicate the Pope Paul VI Reserve at the end of Glebe Point Road to commemorate the event and mark the spot.

The centenary of St James' parish was celebrated in 1977 with a variety of parish functions. One of the projects to celebrate the event was the publication of John Fletcher's account of the first hundred years, St James Church, Forest Lodge. A Chronicle 1877-1977. As part of the celebration, the land opposite the church, which at one time had been owned by the parish, was dedicated by Leichhardt Council as St James' Park.

Father Roberts died in October 1988. His term of office had been full of paradoxes. He was a man of extraordinary vigour and warmth, yet a straight talker with rough edges who left no one in doubt about his preferences. He gave great support to his helpers in

the parish, and received cooperation and loyalty in return. Yet his brusque manner could also alienate people who were not accustomed to him. He was insistent that St James' would adapt to the new church of participation and consultation, yet he was at heart a priest of the old church. He liked things to be done his way, and for everything to revolve around the pastor. The greatest paradox was that while he wanted to bring his parish into the modern world, his personal energy and drive postponed many of the adjustments that had become necessary by the end of the twentieth century. He had carried an ailing parish on his back, and when he let go there was a risk that it might not survive. Not only were there no more priests like Father Roberts, but with a severe decline in clergy numbers throughout Australia there might be no priests at all for the parish.

John Doherty and Ron Hickman (1988-1990)

During the final year of Frank Roberts' life, when he was dying in Polding Villa at Glebe Point, John Doherty was appointed as Administrator to keep things running. When Father Roberts died, Father Doherty continued in that role for two more years. It was a part time job, since Father Doherty worked in the city with the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal. Another visitor who also worked at the Tribunal and helped out in the parish was a senior New Zealand priest, Hugh Doogan. In February 1990 Father Doherty moved on to live in a less demanding parish, leaving Forest Lodge to the care of Ron Hickman, a priest who had hoped to work in Glebe in semi-retirement. A mission priest, Alex Dias, spent a couple of years in the parish recovering from 30 years in East Timor, before he returned home to retirement in his native Portugal.

Essentially, this was a period of administration when the future of the parish was under review by the Archdiocese. No significant innovations were possible, and most dynamism that had survived Father Roberts' final years of illness had now disappeared. There was considerable disquiet among parishioners about the evident decline in parish services and the pessimistic prospects.

One historical marker occurred when the last religious principal of St James' School, Sr Mary Conkey (1986-89) gave way to the first lay principal, Donna Craigie (1990-95). The Sisters of the Good Samaritan had staffed the parish school for 110 years, since 1880, and had helped shape parish life in profound and beneficial ways. Lay teachers had taken an increasing role in the school since the 1960s, so that the transition to lay direction was almost seamless. Kate Howard (1996-99) and Peter Holmes (2000-) have provided leadership to take the school into the present century with its new challenges.

Another matter that had become clear was that the parish had severe financial problems. The parish collections, week by week, were barely capable of supporting a

priest, let alone keeping up with the enormous costs of upkeep on an ageing set of parish buildings. The one redeeming factor was that some of the parish buildings were no longer needed and could perhaps be sold. Cardinal Clancy appointed Father Neville Gawler for six months in 1990 to administer the parish properties and report to the Cathedral about their future uses.

Lex Johnson (1990-1999)

St James' was fortunate that Monsignor Lex Johnson, a relatively young and vigorous priest who had been Administrator of the Cathedral parish for a number of years, was willing to come to St James' and to try out his own vision of how the church could provide a relevant ministry in the inner-city. He had a mandate from the archbishop to investigate what new structures could make such a ministry possible. In July 1991, Cardinal Clancy sent a letter to the parishioners of Forest Lodge, Annandale and Pymont, explaining that a rationalization of city-fringe parishes had long been indicated, and announcing the consolidation of those three parishes under one parish priest. This was implemented in January 1992. Father Lex, urbane and welcoming, had the difficult task of convincing parishioners in those three districts that the old ways would no longer work, and that new ways of thinking and acting, including a greater reliance on laity accepting responsibility, were needed.

St Bede's at Pymont (founded in 1870) has a history even longer than St James', but had shrunk to a tiny population before the massive high density development programmes of the 1990s started to reverse the population decline. The parish had long been the residence for the chaplain to the port of Sydney, and this continued with Father Jim Fowler in residence. Later, the parish house was the residence for diocesan chaplain to the deaf, Father Peter Fitzpatrick, and then prison chaplain, Father Michael Walsh. Some of the pastoral duties in Pymont were exercised by two Josephite Sisters, Sr Margaret and Sr Teresa, from St Joseph's House in Bulwarra Street, Ultimo. St Brendan's at Annandale (1896) was still a viable parish with its own school, and within a year or two it had its own pastor again, so should not be considered in this account.

One important innovation was the appointment of part-time Pastoral Associates or liturgical Coordinators to help, especially in planning and coordinating liturgical matters as well as assisting preparation of candidates for Baptism, Confirmation or Marriage. Sr Judith Foster SGS (1989-1991) had already begun this task under Father Doherty, and continued with Father Lex. She was followed by Sr Margaret Carmody SGS (1992-4), Ms Janette Davidson (1992-3) and Mrs Cheng (1995-8), each of whom brought a distinct personal vision of theology to the religious services in the parish. Another experiment, especially in the earlier part of Father Lex's period in Glebe, was to use the services of visiting seminarians to help out with parish activities while they got hands-on

experience of a modern parish. This number included Richard Gates, who served as a Deacon and briefly as Assistant Priest in 1992-3, before receiving his first full-time appointment to Bankstown parish. In connection with the liturgy, one of the very popular developments was the rich harmony, once a month, from the Tongan Choir of the Politoni extended family.

As with so many church buildings in Sydney, there is a problem of security. Items of furniture have disappeared, and the collection boxes broken open, so that a long tradition of a wide-open church has sadly had to be abandoned. In 1992 thieves even stole the statue of St James, the parish patron saint. Fortunately, it was recovered almost unharmed a few months later.

One of the fundamental institutions of the traditional Australian Catholic parish has always been the parish housekeeper -usually equally adept at disciplining both the clergy and the parishioners. This tradition came to end in Forest Lodge when Colleen Harris, after more than 16 years in the job, retired and was not replaced.

There was still a problem of finances. The church of St Ita's was sold in 1991. The parish hall was rented out to the Aboriginal and Islander Dance Group until the need for expensive renovations to conform to fire regulations eventually forced the sale of that building. The old Brothers' school building next to the church was leased to Centacare in 1992. These sales and leases provided much needed income. On the other hand, there were some very insistent demands on funds. The parish school was in urgent need of renovation, and there was considerable discussion with the Catholic Education Office about whether it could survive at all. The church building was deteriorating from water damage, so that one of the first tasks was to begin a \$100,000 repair of the church fabric at the end of 1992.

An awareness of social responsibility and justice was a strong concern. The former Good Samaritan Convent in Pyrmont Bridge Road was rented out to the Blessed Sacrament Fathers as a support home for those affected by HIV/AIDS. The parish became part-owner of a community bus that was used for parish excursions, especially appreciated by some of the older parishioners. Christmas dinner at St James' was open house for members of the parish without their own families. Indeed, the parish house was always open to those in need. It was also rarely without visiting priests who could count on Father Lex to provide a holiday or a refuge for his friends.

When a reshuffle of priests and parishes was conducted in 1999, Father Lex was appointed to the larger and more prosperous district of Earlwood, before being asked by Archbishop Pell to rescue another dying parish in Mascot. He had barely taken up his position there in April 2002 when he died suddenly at the age of 61. His former

parishioners in Forest Lodge were shocked and saddened at the loss of such a good priest.

Les Cashen (1999 -)

In the reshuffle that saw Lex Johnson move to a busier parish, Father Cashen -well past a normal retiring age -arrived in Forest Lodge hoping for a quieter life after a number of years in Lane Cove. A former rector of St John's College at the University of Sydney, he is well known throughout Australia as one of the founders of the National Council of Priests. Despite apparent frailties in his body, Father Les has brought wisdom, and undimmed passion, to his role. He has been assisted in the provision of religious services by Sr Marian McClelland as Liturgy Coordinator, by Father Michael Walsh CM from Pymont, and by priests who have been accommodated in the parish house. From Bangalore in India, Father Victor D'Mello spent two years (1999 and 2000) studying social work in Sydney and providing a different cultural vision of the church for Glebe Catholics. More recently (2002), Father Dennis Rochford MSC has been living in the parish house, and helping out generously while teaching at the Australian Catholic University. A longer account of contemporary events at St James' can wait for a later assessment.

After years of consideration, the Catholic Education Office decided that the parish school would remain open, at least for the medium term. This necessitated a thorough renewal of the physical plant of the school, completed in 2001. The parish contributed the huge sum of \$730,000 to this project. The problem of parish finances still remains insistent.

Reflections

There is considerable uncertainty about whether the parish of St James' can survive in its present form much longer into the twenty-first century. Monsignor Lex Johnson warned parishioners ten years ago that as priests died or retired in inner-city suburbs there would need to be further rationalisations and amalgamations to provide a local presence of the church. This still appears likely. The associate parish of St Bede's, with its tiny colonial church in Pymont, is experiencing a revival of membership with the growth of residential accommodation in that district, but there is little sign that Glebe and Forest Lodge will experience the kind of demographic renewal necessary to revive St James'.

Fundamentally, a parish has always been a community of laypeople, and clearly St James' could not have survived without the volunteer work of thousands of active parishioners -serving in the Parish Council, counting the collections, caring for the altar,

visiting the poor and the sick, or taking an active part in the sacramental ministry .Unlike the clergy and religious, most work anonymously; all have names, but it would be unfair to single out anyone and neglect the others. Father Lex was also right when he suggested that the future of the parish would depend upon increased lay involvement and leadership, rather than a revival of vocations to the priesthood. Yet the clerical culture of the Catholic Church in Sydney, not to mention the ageing parishioner profile in St James' , makes any radical change in that direction fairly unlikely.

Preface to 2002 Chronicle.

For the centenary of St James' Parish in 1977 John Fletcher wrote a record of events in the parish, which was published at that time as: St James' Church Forest Lodge. A Chronicle. 1877-1977. John was a well-known and admired parishioner, as well as a lecturer in German at the University of Sydney. He also used his research to publish two articles in the Leichhardt Historical Journal that gave a more discursive treatment to the story. The first was 'St. James' Church Forest Lodge: Early Days 1877 -1900' (LHJ, No.7, 1978), while the second came a few years later, 'St James' Church Forest Lodge: 1900-1946' (LHJ, No.13, 1984). It can be assumed that there would have been a third article to bring the story closer to contemporary times, but sadly John did not survive to write it. He died of cancer in 1992.

Since many older parishioners will still have a copy of the Chronicle, I decided to reprint the two articles, and add a further section to bring the story up to the time of the 125 anniversary of the parish. Perhaps for the sesquicentenary someone can update the Chronicle. I have edited some of John's material to make it make it flow as a single narrative rather than as two separate articles, and to make some minor adjustments, for example, to the way that dates have been used throughout. Footnotes can be found in the original articles. Otherwise, I have tried to make my own commentary fit with the spirit of John's, although I could not possibly reproduce his delightfully characteristic turn of phrase.

Acknowledgments are due to Elizabeth Fletcher and to the editors of the Leichhardt Historical Journal for permission to reproduce the two articles. Brother Hall, at the Sydney Archdiocesan Archives, was very helpful, as was Father Les Cashen, the present Parish Priest. A number of parishioners have read and corrected me in what I have written. Finally, tribute is due to all the women, men and children who have been the parish of St James' over 125 years.

Michael Hogan July 2002

ST JAMES THE GREAT

James was one of the sons of Zebedee and brother of St John. He was called from his fishing to follow Christ in the year 27. He was beheaded by Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great in 44 and was the first of the twelve to be martyred. His Feast Day is 25 July. He is depicted with a pilgrim's staff, hat, wallet and cockleshell; is patron Saint of Spain and Chile, and of pilgrims, hatters, furriers, druggists and labourers; is invoked against rheumatism and in time of war, and his relics are enshrined in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, Spain.