

SACRED HEART CHURCH ROSALIE 1918-2018

April 2019

Elizabeth Hampson

The First 50 Years

1898 was the year that building commenced on the first wooden church at Rosalie. It was built on land sold to the church by Mary Amelia Mayne in 1897. At this time, it was part of Red Hill parish and was known as the Church of the Holy Rosary. This name appeared not to be widely used but remained in Archdiocesan records until 1915, when it was formally changed to Sacred Heart. While 2018 was the Centenary celebration of Sacred Heart's brick church, there has been a church on the site for 120 years. The first church stood approximately where the current church stands on Given Terrace, but with the entrance to the road. It was in use as a church for less than 10 years because of the sustained growth in the area.

The foundation stone was laid for the second wooden church in March 1907 and it was opened three months later. It was built beside the first church, but closer to the Fernberg Rd corner of Given Tce, with the entrance again

facing Given Tce. The first church was put to work as a school when the Sisters of Mercy arrived at Rosalie in 1906. The sisters commuted on the tram from All Hallows for the next 12 years until the beautiful Convent of Our Lady Help of Christians was opened in 1918.

There were some strong beliefs in the church in this era about money and debt. The *Courier-Mail* of 12/12/1898 states “The laws of the Church forbade the consecration of any building to the service of God so long as there was any debt upon it.” The first church cost 508 pounds to build with 293 already collected before the first Mass. As the organising committee took responsibility for the remainder of the debt, the church was said to be clear of debt. The second church cost 1000 pounds with only 260 remaining to be guaranteed by the parishioners at the time of the church opening. The minimum weekly wage in 1906 was 2 pounds and 2 shillings a week.

In 1908, the year after the second church opened, with the Sisters established in the community, Rosalie-Toowong was separated from Red Hill and became a parish. Fr William Lee arrived that year, an Irishman who had been ordained 15 years earlier in Ireland, and immediately sent to Brisbane. He was Rosalie’s first Parish Priest and as the developments of the next 26 years would show, a man of great energy.

In 1914, the parishioners decided to build a substantial presbytery to house Fr Lee and his then assistant Fr Kevin

Murphy. The building was designed by architects R Coutts and Sons and built by Mr J Garvin. It is an unusual building for the area and the time, being built out of ferro-concrete with a stucco exterior, wide verandas and red tiled roof. It stands as the oldest remaining building in the Rosalie precinct and is currently housing Marist Fathers. Again, costs were scrupulously kept with half the cost of the £1343 building being raised before the work began. The building was opened by Archbishop Duhig, who was still new to Brisbane having arrived in 1912.

With a taste of successful, substantial building behind them, it was all systems go for the next two beautiful brick buildings in the precinct. The way was cleared in 1917 when the first church, in the spirit of thrifty recycling, was moved across to the other side of Fernberg Rd, a site called Herbert's Paddock, to be used as a school. The process was not uneventful as the school became stuck on the top of Fernberg Rd for a period. Eventually it was moved into place and catered for the older children, the infants continuing to be taught in the second church building. A strong memory of the time is of the number of goats that roamed the area, occasionally invading the school to the amusement of most (not all!).

May 1918 saw the opening of the Our Lady Help of Christians Convent and June 1918, the opening of the Sacred Heart Church. The sisters lived in the convent until 1985 and sold the building to a private buyer in 2005.

The convent has been used very little in the last 34 years and was bought by Jubilee Catholic Parish in 2018. Its future use is still under consideration.

The church has remained in active use for 101 years and has seen 7 Parish Priests, the first 5 of whom were ordained in Ireland, a common story in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Sacred Heart Church was designed by GHM Addison and built by FJ Corbett. It cost 8000 pounds at a time when the minimum wage was 3 pounds and 9 shillings a week. Mr Addison also designed the Albert St Uniting Church and the Old Exhibition Building in Bowen Hills. St Columba's Church Wilston and St Benedict's Church East Brisbane are also his designs and certain similarities can be seen to Sacred Heart.

At the laying of the Foundation Stone in 1917, Archbishop Duhig gave a rousing speech praising Fr Lee for providing work to returned soldiers and encouraging the people to put their trust in God as they passed through precarious times. A year later when the church was opened by the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Cattaneo, and Archbishop Duhig, over half the cost of the building had been raised.

The hardworking Fr Lee and his parishioners prepared for the next round of building approximately 10 years later. January 1929 saw the opening of the Senior Girls School on Given Tce. It is now used as the Jubilee Parish Office. On the same day the Marist Monastery on Fernberg Rd

was opened, both buildings by Archbishop Cattaneo. The Monastery is still the home of the Marist Brothers. The Marist Brothers began teaching boys from year 4 in the old wooden building which had been the first church. This continued for nearly 20 years until the building was declared unsafe, demolished, and replaced with the substantial brick building which still stands on the site of the Lavalla Centre. The school closed in 2008.

After 1929, there was a quiet period at Rosalie. Substantial debt was managed and the now Monsignor Lee retired to Ireland in 1934, only to die a year later at the age of 66. Fr Arthur O'Keefe was appointed Parish Priest in 1935. He was 54 years old and had overseen a similar period of intense building at St Peter and Pauls Bulimba from 1915 to 1929. His health had been a problem before he arrived at Rosalie and would force his retirement 8 years later, although he died the most senior priest in the Archdiocese in 1966. The biggest challenge of Fr O'Keefe's tenure was the fire of 1942.

On Sunday 11 January 1942 at 6.14pm, only 45 minutes after the priest had left the Church, the alarm was raised, and the fire brigade arrived from Paddington to find smoke billowing from the roof of Sacred Heart Church. Many of the contents of the church were saved by willing helpers from all quarters. Fr O'Keefe rushed to save the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. The key was in the blazing sacristy. Miraculously the decorative key which

he wore on his watch chain, and which had never previously worked, opened the tabernacle that day and the Blessed Sacrament was removed to the Presbytery. Masses were transferred to the old second church (Infants School at that time) and the brick church was altered and Masses recommenced on 20 Dec 1942. New sacristies were added, a marble High Altar and side altars installed, and new confessional boxes were set into the walls.

Sacred Heart's shortest serving Parish Priest arrived next in 1943. Fr Pat McGinley was 57 and had spent most of his life serving in the bush including Aboriginal communities. He must have been quite a character as he kept his horses in the paddocks of Bardon. Many parishioners thought it undignified that he rode a horse around the parish but as Bishop John Gerry recounted, his reply to that was "I'll have you know the boss of the whole bloody show rode an ass!" Fr McGinley died in 1945 following a fall from a roof when a surplus army hut was being removed from Stuartholme to serve as the Parish Hall. This brings to mind our more recent roof climbing Parish Priest Fr Peter Brannelly who was equally fearless but thankfully luckier.

This brings us to the end of WW2 and the arrival of the camera-shy Fr (later Monsignor) John McCarthy. His was a tenure of consolidation and growth with the development of Marist College Rosalie and Sacred Heart School with new building works at each establishment.

The 1960s

Let me jump forward now to 1961, a year which some of you will remember. The PM is Robert Menzies and the Premier Frank Nicklin. Sir Henry Abel Smith is Queensland Governor. 4 Corners screens for the first time in August, Australia retains the Ashes, Norths beats Valleys in the BRL Premiership and Lord Fury wins the Melbourne Cup. Interestingly it is also the year that the oral contraceptive pill goes on sale in Australia. At this time the Sacred Heart precinct is well established with most of the current buildings *in situ*. The Presbytery, Church, Convent, Monastery, Primary School and Marist Brothers School were all as they are now. Mons McCarthy is the Parish Priest. He is 68 years old. His curate is 25-year-old Fr Denis Long. We are indebted to Fr Denis for these recollections gathered during an oral history session in 2017.

The Presbytery is managed by Miss Jean Pavey. Miss Pavey had worked for Fr McCarthy in Wynnum and transferred to Rosalie with him in 1946. She always called him Fr Mac. The housekeeper's quarters are substandard, and she must share the bathroom with the priests (she has been there for fifteen years by now!). Miss Pavey's job involves running the household, preparing three meals plus teas, including a hot meal in the middle of the day, each day, and acting as the Parish Secretary, answering phone calls etc. Mons McCarthy takes her shopping and

takes her to the Gold Coast for two weeks each year to keep house for him on holidays. His scruples demand that she sits in the back seat of the car while he drives!

Each morning Fr Denis is up by 5.30 for a half hour of prayer in the church prior to saying morning Mass in the Convent chapel at 6.15. Mons McCarthy says Mass in the Church at 6.30am. After breakfast, there may be home visits to the poor and the sick, Divine Office or school visits. The week around the First Friday of the month was one of the busiest with up to fifty homes to visit for Communion and Anointing if needed. The children of both schools had Confessions heard in the Church with up to 6 visiting priests assisting one morning in the week around First Friday. Each Friday at noon the schoolchildren attended the church for Rosary, Benediction and a homily from the Curate.

These were the days of prolonged fasting prior to receiving Communion so the early morning Masses were the only weekday Masses. The concept of school Masses as we know them now was too difficult. If a funeral was to be held the family members were encouraged to attend early Confession and Mass with the funeral liturgy to take place later in the day. Nuptial Masses were also held early in the day.

The devotion to Confession was different to now. The priests heard confessions from 4-6 and 7-8.30 each Saturday. Prior to Christmas the demand increased. Fr

Denis gives this example from his first Christmas Eve at Rosalie: “There were two funerals booked for that day. I officiated at the first funeral at 9 am. On returning from the burial, I went straight into the confessional. In those years large numbers of people wished to celebrate the sacrament before Christmas. I would have spent nearly two hours in the confessional that morning. After the midday meal I had another funeral at 2 pm, with burial at Hemmant cemetery. I was back in time to go into the confessional at 4 pm and remained there till 6 pm when I had the evening meal. I was back in the confessional at 7.00pm and continued until after 11.00pm. This gave a breather before I celebrated the Midnight Mass.”

What about the people of Rosalie at this time? We know they were mainly of Irish heritage and not terribly well off. The Young Christian Workers (YCW) had men’s and women’s groups that young people joined when they left school. They met weekly under the supervision of the Curate and discussed the Gospel among other things. Once a month or twice (when there was 5th Sunday), there were dances in the hall run by the YCW. The hall was the old wooden second church which also served as the infant school during the week. Setting up a dance required logistical effort to move all the school furniture, decorate the Hall and then replace everything correctly afterwards or fear the wrath of Sr Mary de Ricci and Fr Mac. Current parishioners remember meeting their life partners at these dances and current parishioner and Marist Rosalie Old

Boy Jim Hooper aka Jimmy Diamond was at times part of the entertainment.

The young people who came to the dances were mostly well behaved even though some, known as Paddo Boys, could be quite rough in their behaviour elsewhere. One such young man, formerly resident at Boystown, was tragically killed in a car accident on Baroona Rd that year. The lads were racing downhill and the young man's car blew a tyre after it was pierced by a steel spike on the tram track. The young ones ran up to the Presbytery on this Sunday afternoon and Mons responded, anointing the dead driver and the badly injured passenger and consoling their friends. The young people were very grateful and turned out in numbers for the morning Mass, funeral liturgy and to formally visit the Presbytery and thank Mons McCarthy. It left a deep impression on him.

There were 3 Masses on a Sunday, 6.30, 8 and 10.30. The 10.30 Mass at this time was frequented by some of Brisbane's leading racing identities including Tom Foley the race caller (Bishop Foley's father) and Peter Gumbelton who was a leading jockey at the time. They gathered a crowd after Mass for a post-mortem of the previous day's race meeting often joined by Fr Denis. Beyond these formal and informal events there was little organised social life around the Parish. Even the convent, presbytery and monastery remained silos with minimal social contact. The sisters were not allowed to eat and

drink with others. Mons McCarthy and Br Cyprian the Principal of the Marist Brothers school had a difficult relationship and they used to communicate by mail.

The Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries

Fr Denis Power, born in Waterford (the home of Edmund Rice) in 1921, arrived from Carina as Rosalie's fifth parish priest in July 1970. He was 49 years old and had been a priest for 23 years. He brought with him the breath and energy of Vatican II and proceeded to lead the community into the life of the new Church. This was done not just in prayer and words but in hard, structural and physical action. For much of this time he was assisted by Pastoral Associate Elizabeth Harrington. An enduring sign of this work is in the interior of Sacred Heart which has evolved over 100 years. I am indebted to Elizabeth Harrington for this insight.

Few liturgical changes of the 1960s were more noticeable than the 'turning around' of altars and reorientation of priests to face the people while presiding at Mass. How and why did this happen? Early Christians celebrated the Eucharist around a table as Jesus had done at the Last Supper. As the number of followers grew, celebrations of the Eucharist moved from private homes to Roman public buildings (basilicas). In the earliest Christian basilicas, the altar was positioned at the west end and the priest stood at

the western side of the altar facing east - symbolic of the dawn of the resurrection - and facing the people and the doors of the church (the same as at Sacred Heart today!).

This arrangement changed for two reasons. The altar was gradually moved from the nave (main part of the church building) into the apse (semicircular recess covered with a dome). Simultaneously, the practice began of constructing churches on an east-west axis with the apse at the east end of the building. This meant that the priest had his back to the people when he prayed facing east, which was for most of the Mass. The altar was eventually placed up against the back wall and decorated with an altarpiece. Over time the altar changed from being an altar-table to a 'high altar'. The photographs of Sacred Heart church taken in 1918, the year of its dedication, show this arrangement, which had remained unchanged for many centuries.

The Second Vatican Council 1963-1965 aimed to recover and encourage the full, conscious, and active participation of all the faithful and to restore the communal aspect of the liturgy. After the Council, altars were generally moved away from the apse wall or, where this was unsuitable, a new freestanding altar was built closer to the people. A photograph of Mass being celebrated in 1968, just a few years after the close of Vatican II, shows that this had already been put into effect at Sacred Heart. The celebrants are facing the people and using a temporary

altar which has been placed in the sanctuary behind the altar rails. The six tall candles and the tabernacle are on the high altar, and the clergy are wearing the older style of vestments. There is no ambo for the reading of scripture as is current practice. There is only a temporary lectern at the right of the altar. The official document on the celebration of the Mass says this about the altar:

The altar should be built separate from the wall, in such a way that it is possible to walk around it easily and that Mass can be celebrated at it facing the people, which is desirable wherever possible. Moreover, the altar should occupy a place where it is truly the centre toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns.

In the early 1970s, the sanctuary at Sacred Heart was extended into the nave of the church, a new marble altar erected on it and the altar rails removed. A substantial ambo with a marble base was placed to the left of the altar. In the 1980s, the marble from the old high altar was used to construct a font suitable for the baptism of infants and adults on the upper level of the sanctuary. These changes were implemented under the leadership of parish priest Fr Denis Power with advice from Fr Tom Elich who served as curate at Sacred Heart in the early 1970s and was later appointed director of the liturgy office in Brisbane, a position he still holds.

The other concrete example of Fr Power's legacy is the stained-glass windows in the church, all made in the parish by Denis Power himself and a willing band of volunteer glass artists, two of whom were Arthur Kean, a lifelong parishioner, and Jack McCourt, Milne Bay veteran and long-time parishioner.

1977 saw another fire in the Parish with the old infant school/hall burning down one Saturday night after Bingo. The parish had instituted wildly popular Bingo games on Wednesday and Saturday nights which generated much money for the Parish, allowing many projects including the purchase of Rosalie Waters, the establishment of Kolbe College and contributions to St Paul's Villa. Within a week of the fire, the school library (in what is now the Parish Office) had been moved to the newest school building and the library space turned into a Bingo hall. In turn this was replaced with a new brick hall, currently leased to Centacare, a year later. The site of the old wooden building now houses pensioner units. One example of the amount of money raised is the \$210,000 that Bingo paid towards replacing termite-ridden timber in the church and renovating the school.

Fr Power provided space for the Yelangi kindergarten for Aboriginal children and established the first ecumenical group in Rosalie in 1971. During his tenure, the Sisters of Mercy left in 1985 and the primary school with only 7 remaining pupils closed in 1995. In 1998, Fr Denis

celebrated his Golden Jubilee, retired to Caloundra and was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for his commitment. He died in 2007.

The next 8 years was a time of change with various administrators including Fr Stephen Hinkler and Fr Vince Hobbs leading the Parish into a variety of mergers with Red Hill and Bardon. 2006 saw the canonical creation of Jubilee Parish and the appointment of its foundation Parish Priest Fr Peter Brannelly. This mega-Parish swallowed up the six inner city parishes of Red Hill, Rosalie, Ashgrove, Bardon, Herston and Newmarket. Marist College Rosalie closed at the end of 2008 leaving the Parish with 7 churches and 3 schools.

The next 11 years were busy ones with new systems and structures emerging in the new parish. Fr Peter decided to renovate each church starting with Newmarket and ending with Rosalie in 2016/17. Our representatives on the Parish Council and community leaders during this time were Anne Hampson and Deborah Gilroy. Many others contributed to the smooth running of Church life at Rosalie where we have had 2 Sunday Masses, 4.30 pm Saturday and 5.30pm Sunday and a 6.30am Mass on Wednesday. The church has also been used by the Korean Catholic Community since 2000 with Mass celebrated on Sunday and Wednesday mornings.

The renovation of Sacred Heart Church began in 2016. My personal favorite project was the restoration of our

1885 Walker organ, built in England to order for St Marks Anglican Church Warwick Qld where it was installed in 1886. Sacred Heart Church purchased the organ from Whitehouse Brothers in 1925 and it was installed in the gallery. About 1976 it was moved to the body of the church and restored in 1982. After Easter in 2016, the organ was removed from the church by Pierce Pipe Organs and completely restored piece by piece from tiny bits of leather to renewed wood paneling and new show pipes. It was installed in late 2017 and was first played at the installation of our current Parish Priest, Fr Gerry Kalinowski, in September 2017. There was a recital to launch the organ in February 2018 with Christopher Wrench providing the music and outstanding trumpet playing from John Coulton. I learned a lot from the organ makers and visits to the workshop during this process and am indebted to Roland Bartkowiak from St Brigid's for his wise guidance. Playing the beautifully restored instrument is one of my great pleasures.

With the organ removed from the building a big renovation project began with new floor covering, painting, painstaking pew restoration and air conditioning! We were glad Rosalie had been left to last for renovation as we reaped the benefits of the other churches' experiences.

Centenary Year

Several events marked the brick church centenary, starting with a concert in June 2017 to mark the centenary of the laying of the foundation stone. This featured the Korean Catholic Community Gloria choir, the St Brigid's choir, the choir of the Latin American Catholic Community and solo singers Sione Mohenoa and Jimmy Diamond! 2018 began with the organ recital and included our Centenary Mass and Concert in June and a special concert in the church by Canticum Choir in November. We were lucky enough to be invited to morning tea by the Governor Paul De Jersey in October to mark the Centenary. The year ended with the publication of our Centenary book which was a profound learning curve for those of us involved in its production. The church's first historian was Mrs Nell Ries, and much of the book and this talk is based on her groundwork.

Fr Gerry Kalinowski was appointed the second Parish Priest of Jubilee in August 2017 and now has the task of leading our community in growth and love in the 21st Century.

