

THE HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH, OLDHAM



FOREWORD BY PATRICK KELLY,

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The forty days of Lent each year speak to us of the forty years spent by God's pilgrim people wandering in obedience to him in the wilderness. Curiously, at least God himself, looked on those days of pilgrimage as the best days, when the people were closest to him. Obedience to his constant call to follow him made them a pilgrim people, God's people. The story of this obedience was gathered together in the listening and obedience of Mary, and she followed her son to the mountain where the glory of the son of God was best revealed: Calvary.

The story of St. Mary's Parish, Oldham, is the story of a pilgrim people. We best give thanks if our prayer is that of Our Lady:

"Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word."

It is fitting that during Lent we gather to dedicate St. Mary's Church as we seek to obey the words of Mary:

"Do whatever he tells you."

Patrick A. Kelly,

Bishop of Salford.

## 1836 - 1852

After the death of Father Fisher on September 12th, 1837, the affairs of the Oldham Mission became very unsettled. It was four months before his successor was appointed. The new priest was Father Fisher's nephew, Father Adam George Fisher. He was one of six brothers, five of whom became priests. Through his gigantic efforts to raise funds to build a chapel of his own, he became the founder of St. Mary's Parish, Shaw Street.

He had found a large and increasing Catholic population and he at once decided to build a church. He grappled with many difficulties, travelling the length and breadth of the country preaching his appeals for the new church and collecting subscriptions. While he was absent, the welfare of his flock was attended to by priests of neighbouring parishes. On July 16th, 1836 the name of Father J. Rylands is to be found in the records, and on September 4th Father Charles Brigham was serving in the Oldham Parish. Father Robert Croskell did duty from March 20th, 1836 to January, 1837. In 1838 there appeared the names of Father Randolph Frith, J. Crook and J. Pemberton.

Father Fisher completed the necessary arrangements for the erection of his church. The following notes extracted from the diary of the architect, Mr. M. E. Hadfield, show the business-like methods of this enterprising young priest:

Copy:

The Rev. George Fisher to M. E. Hadfield, 1837. September 21st at Macclesfield: Received instructions from the Rev. G. Fisher for a design for a chapel and house in the design of the old English style of architecture. Consulting upon the general arrangement and dimensions of the building and giving opinions on various matters.

September 26th, 27th and 29th: Preparing fair sketches to illustrate the design viz. Two plans: two elevations, two sections with explanatory and estimate and forwarding same to Mr. Fisher with letter.

1838, January 8th at Oldham by appointment to Rev. Mr. Fisher: Viewing the proposed site and finally determining the plan of the building.

**10th-18th January: Preparing a complete set of working drawings of the chapel with a specification of the work and forwarding same to Mr. Fisher at Oldham.**

**" January 29th: At Oldham opening the tenders and advising Mr. Fisher thereon.**

**March 5th at Oldham: Setting out the building and giving Wilson directions about the work.**

**April 17th: Do., do., do.**

**May 18th: Do. Whitehead's agreement signed.**

**June 21st: Do. viewing works and directing Wilson and Whitehead.**

**July 16th: Giving directions about the roof estimate, timber etc.**

**August 7th: Delivering plans and specifications of the proposed house and explaining to workmen etc.**

**September 10th at Oldham: Re. works at the chapel and opening tenders for the house and consulting thereon.**

**October 1st: Viewing works and giving directions; and certificates for money. Delivered to Mr. Fisher a plan for the front gate, palasading, completely fencing the site, specifications for same. Preparing a design for window for the sanctuary with detail and delivered same to Mr. Fisher.**

**November 27th: At Oldham viewing the works.**

**December 19th: Do., do., do.**

**1839, January 9th: Do., do. and directing plasterers.**

**March 3rd: Opening of chapel.**

**April 20th: At Oldham viewing works at the house and giving various directions.**

**July 4th: Finally viewing the works, measuring and valuing the extras and deductions and making out the various accounts.**

Commission on chapel	£45
Commission on house	£15
Total charges including travelling expenses	£60

There does not seem to have been any special ceremony at the laying of the foundation stone of St. Mary's. Mr. M. E. Hadfield who designed St. Mary's was one of the foremost ecclesiastical architects of his day. To his credit stands St. John's Cathedral, Salford; St. Mary's, Mulberry Street, Manchester; St. Mary's, Burnley; St. Mary's, Sheffield; St. Peter's, Stalybridge; St. Joseph's, Birkdale, and many others in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire.

"The Catholic Directory" of 1839 noted that: "A new Catholic church has been erected in this town but owing to the poverty of the congregation, a debt has been unavoidably contracted. Subscriptions would be thankfully received ..."

The opening of the new church took place on March 3rd, 1839. Though the day was wet and bitterly cold, large groups of Catholics attended. The church was filled to overflowing. Among the congregation were a number of non-Catholic neighbours attracted by their curiosity to see for themselves what sort of religion this was that had been so much abused and persecuted. The Solemn High Mass was sung by Father Edmund Horgan, assisted by Fathers George Fisher and J. Crook. Father Peter Kaye was the special preacher, the choir being supplied by St. Chad's, Rook Street, Manchester.

Between March, 1839 and February, 1840 various priests did duty: Father Gerald Ward (St. Mary's, Mulberry Street), Father H. McCormick (St. Patrick's, Manchester), Father J. Fielding Whittaker, Father J. Boardman and Father Daniel Hearne. In March, 1840 Father Fisher severed his connections with St. Mary's and moved to Dukinfield. He later moved to Appleton and subsequently to Hornby where he died on May 28th, 1897 aged 87.

The next priest appointed to St. Mary's was Father Edmund Horgan on March 25th, 1840. He applied for a licence under the new Act for Marriages to be conducted in his church. This was granted in January, 1841. The first marriage celebrated on February 23rd, 1841 was between Mr. James Corrigan and Miss Eliza Bentley. Marriages had previously been performed at the old chapel in Lord Street, the first on February 21st, 1831 between George Kenney and Sarah Byrom.

Father Horgan was also concerned with the matter of a Catholic cemetery. Catholics were being buried in neighbouring Protestant burial

grounds. In 1844 the ground around the church was consecrated and opened for internments, the first funeral being that of Thomas Brett aged two years on September 4th. The establishment of the Borough Cemetery at Greenacres on August 1st, 1857 with a portion assigned to the Catholics brought about the closure of the ground in Shaw Street. The registers give details of some 1,214 burials, the last of these on August 1st, 1857 being that of Patrick Bartlett.

The number of baptisms in the new church during the years between 1840 and 1852 came to 1,348.

The manual pipe and pedal organ used at St. Mary's was purchased by Father Horgan. The builder was Mr. G. Wood of Middleton. At the installation of the new organ Father Horgan also erected a small gallery for the use of the choir and this remained in use until the reconstruction of the church in 1870.

## 1853 - 1861

On December 29th, 1853 Father Horgan bade farewell to St. Mary's to establish a Parish in Ardwick. In March, 1853 Father Edward O'Neill was appointed curate at St. Mary's until November of the same year.

On September 29th, 1850 Pope Pious IX restored the English and Welsh Hierarchy. Before that date the Catholic Church in England had been ruled by Vicars Apostolic. When the Parish in Oldham had first been founded, it had come under the jurisdiction of the Northern District. In 1840 the number of Vicars Apostolic had been increased to eight and Oldham belonged to the Lancashire District. Vicars Apostolic were bishops but cared for areas where no Catholic diocese existed. When Cardinal Wiseman announced the restoration of the Hierarchy in a Pastoral Letter, it unleashed an unprecedented wave of anti-Catholic feeling throughout the country, led by politicians and others in high rank, and intensified in the national and local press. Anti-Catholic demonstrations were common at this time, but much of the heat generated was dispersed when Cardinal Wiseman wrote his famous "Appeal for Reason" which was published in "The Times" and elsewhere. Anti-Catholic legislation was, however, rushed through Parliament but was later repealed in 1871.



In December, 1853 Father James Conway was appointed to St. Mary's. After the building of the school he enlarged the church by the addition of a Lady Chapel and Baptistry. He completed this work through the voluntary labour of his people. He was fully aware that his congregation was increasing and that another place of worship must be found. Some old school buildings were about to be given up and Father Conway instructed a parishioner, Mr. John Bentley of High Street, to endeavour to purchase one such premises on his behalf. Mr. Bentley was successful and the former school was fitted up as a Chapel of Ease and dedicated to St. Patrick. The first mass was celebrated there on September 10th, 1858.

The Whit Friday Procession of Catholic and other church schools was usually harmonious, but on May 20th, 1861 it was marred by an unfortunate encounter. The Catholics, led by Police Constable Fitton, were walking up George Street. On arriving at the old Market Place, they found a large crowd of spectators watching the Protestant church scholars pass.

Hearing the band accompanying the Catholic procession, many turned to watch them, the crush breaking into the rear portion of the Anglican procession. The police officer, unaware of the procession ahead, made a passage for the Catholics to pass through. The leaders of the Anglican body resented the action of the Catholics in forcing a passage through their ranks. Men shouted, women screamed and the children could not extricate themselves from the frenzied crowd and cried out in fright. In many cases children were badly crushed and some were trampled upon.

The men of both parties claimed their right to parade the town without molestation and added force to their argument with blows. The police on duty were compelled to use their batons. Once order was restored, the Catholic procession proceeded on its way up Henshaw Street, down Maygate Lane and along Rochdale Road to a field belonging to a Mr. Pickup near "The Halfway House". After a time for rest and amusement, a return march was made through Royton to St. Mary's School. About 1,500 Catholics took part in the procession and the following day 500 parishioners made a trip to Southport.

The incident was not ended. A great deal of ill feeling had been created and spread among the townspeople. It was evident that more serious trouble would soon begin. Groups of young men assembled in Tommyfield discussing what they termed "papist aggression". On the evening of June 6th, 1861 a mob numbering some thousands made an attack on the church in Shaw Street.

In less than five minutes the large leaded light over the main entrance was completely demolished by stones. The windows on the Fisher Street side and the sanctuary windows were also broken as well as those of the presbytery. The palisading which made the passage to the church door and intended to close the space allotted to the dead was pulled down ruthlessly, and the small saplings planted among the gravestones were also uprooted by the mob.

So sudden was the attack that Father Standen, who was putting away the vestments and monstrance after benediction, had scarcely time to make all secure before the first shower of stones came pouring through the windows.

The damage was done long before the police arrived and they had difficulty dispersing the crowd. Another demonstration in front of the church the following evening was not so successful. The town authorities had learned a lesson from the previous day and the police on duty in the vicinity of the church prevented further damage being done. It is recorded that no less than 15,000 people were estimated to have been there. The Catholics appear to have behaved most discreetly.

The crowd, having been dispersed from Shaw Street, then attacked St. Patrick's, smashing windows. Mr. Abraham Leach, the mayor, behaved with great courage and the riot was quelled.

At the Salford Sessions in July five persons were tried for their riotous behaviour and All pleaded guilty. As charges were not pressed by the Prosecution, they were dismissed with a stern warning from the magistrates.

After these disturbances, Father Conway resigned. In August, 1861 he wrote a farewell letter to the people of Oldham and in September he left St. Mary's to go to Bolton and later to Manchester. Early in 1863 he went to Sydney, New South Wales, where he died on October 29th, 1868 aged 40.

## 1861 - 1869



Father Thomas Wrennall was appointed as the next Parish Priest. Oldham was by then a large Parish, taking in the outlying townships of Shaw, Royton and Lees as well as the district of Hollinwood and the Chapel of Ease at Bank Top. In January, 1862 the separate Parish of St. Patrick's was formed. At around this time Father Wrenall purchased a new set of the Stations of the Cross and presented those formerly in use at St. Mary's to St. Patrick's.

In September, 1862 a very successful Mission was given at St. Mary's by the Redemptorist Fathers who donated a large "Mission Cross" which hung in the church until the modernisation in 1972. At that date Father Bailey had it removed from above the sanctuary arch as the corpus appeared to be broken and potentially dangerous. This proved to be the case as the left hand side of the corpus crashed to the church floor as the cross was being removed. The diploma enumerating the indulgence attached to the cross bears the date September 28th, 1862.

On February 2nd, 1864 Sister Mary Aloysius and Sister Mary Joseph made their solemn profession as nuns. On June 21st, 1867 the Sisters had their little convent chapel in Cardinal Street formerly opened by Bishop Turner. Sister Mary Baptista (Hart) was professed, the sermon having been preached by Father Robert Hart, C.S.S.R., her brother.

In the years 1866-67 the roof showed signs of giving way. During its reconstruction the church services were held in the boys' schoolroom, Cardinal Street.

Father J. G. Boulaye was assistant priest from 1867 to 1872 when he left for Farnworth, serving later at Rochdale, Osbaldeston, Failsworth and Halliwell. In 1886 he was appointed Dean of St. Peter's Conference, Bolton, a Canon of the Chapter in 1891, Vicar General in 1893 and Provost in 1910. When Father Boulaye left St. Mary's in 1872 the parishioners presented him with a handsome chalice. He died on October 16th, 1912.

## 1869 - 1897

In October, 1869 Father Wrennall, being in ill health, resigned. His successor was Father Charles Louis Grymonprez, a Belgian. He had previously worked in Manchester and then in Mossley. When he arrived he found that the heavy flat roof had forced the sides of the church out, threatening an early collapse. The only practical remedy was to rebuild. Arrangements were made for mass to be said in the Temperance Hall, Horsedge Street.



The reopening of the church was in 1870. The walls had been strengthened with stonebuttresses and the old gallery replaced by a new one. These alterations and repairs caused a heavy debt on the Parish. The architect responsible for the roof which had caused so much trouble and expense contributed £50 towards the building fund opened by Father Grymonprez who next decided on reseating throughout, the installation of a new heating system and a new pulpit. Father John Curtis of the Holy Family Church, Omagh, U.S.A., an old parishioner of St. Mary's who was on a visit to his native town of Oldham, preached at the solemn blessing of the pulpit on June 18th, 1876.

In May, 1870 a petition was presented to the Surveyors' Committee of the Oldham Town Council concerning the bad state of Shaw Street. It asked that the road be put into proper order so that there might be a decent approach to the church, for the footpath in winter time and wet weather was almost impassable and a danger to the elderly and feeble parishioners of St. Mary's.

The Surveyors' Committee on June 30th decided to pave and drain Shaw Street. This decision, however, was later challenged, for at a meeting on July 27th a resolution was vainly proposed by a councillor, who was also a trustee of the Bluecoat School and warden of the Parish Church, that the resolution be rescinded.

With the rapid development of the town, a large number of people had a great distance to travel to get to Sunday mass. This led to the foundation of parishes at Lees in 1872, Shaw in 1874, Hollinwood in 1878, Greenacres in 1878 and Royton in 1880.

In 1880 the project of a bell was mooted and a fund started. Mrs. Bullman was a major contributor. The estimated cost was £500. The lower portion of the tower was constructed to form an entrance porch, and above, the belfry. The bell, weighing 800 cwt., was made in Dublin at a cost of £60 and was tuned to B flat. The inscription on the bell was:

"James Murphy, Founder, Dublin, 1883  
"Rector, Carolus Grymonprez".

There remained, however, a considerable capital debt of about £1,500, of which £1,000 was due to the diocese, the remainder to a building society. Yet the debt had been greatly reduced during the previous few years, in spite of the heavy expense of recent improvements. The schools were in a satisfactory state and Father Grymonprez was happy to say that the Parish of St. Mary's was certainly in a flourishing condition.

In 1884 a concert was held to make a presentation to Father Grymonprez of a chalice and a purse of gold. Father Grymonprez decided to purchase a statue of St. Joseph as up to then there had only been one statue, that of Our Lady. A niche was cut into the wall of the baptistry to accommodate it. Later two more statues of the Sacred Heart and St. Patrick were bought and placed on each side of the high altar. On his Silver Jubilee as Parish Priest, the congregation presented him with an illuminated address and a cheque for £100. The ceremony took place in the Temperance Hall on Tuesday, December 11th, 1894. Because of growing infirmities, Father Grymonprez resigned in 1897. He died in Southport on April 11th, 1908.

## 1897 - 1921

Father John Bromley Cooke became the successor to Father Grymonprez. A Cheshire man, born in 1859, he had taught at the Diocesan Grammar School and at St. Bede's. After illness and



convalescence, he went to St. Mary's, Burnley, before his transfer to Oldham. He invited Bishop Billsborrow to lay the foundation stone of the new hall and decided to have the wall around the church, which was in a dilapidated condition, rebuilt. This was accomplished by voluntary labour. A member of the parish, Mr. James Haines, gave the mortar free of cost. Father Cooke also had the interior of the church cleaned, painted and decorated. The reopening of the church on August 7th, 1898 was a special day for Father Cornelius Hughes

who was ordained priest, this being the first time in the history of Oldham that a service of this kind had taken place in the locality.

Three beautiful stained glass windows, presented by Mrs. Howard in memory of her husband, Dr. Martin Howard, were placed in the baptistry. They bore the inscription:

"Pray for the soul of Dr. Martin Howard, J.P., who died June 26th, 1898. R.I.P."

In January, 1903 Father Cooke was appointed by the bishop as Administrator to St. John's Cathedral. In 1905 he returned to Burnley and died on August 7th, 1913. Mgr. Cooke was the uncle of Mgr. John Cooke, M.A.

In February, 1888 a branch of the Protection and Rescue Society, recently founded by the bishop, was formed and about 40 men and women offered their services for the important work of Rescue. The first collection reached the useful sum of £2 11s. 2d. The Society took upon themselves the duty of providing clogs for needy children who attended school. An extract from a report of September, 1889 records:

"St. Mary's, Oldham:

"Our average attendance at mass is now, and has been for some time, as high as we can possibly have it. Over 20 of our poorest boys were taken to Greenfield for an outing this summer at the expense of the Society. The poorest of the girls were provided with articles of clothing by the Reverend Mother, the Society bearing this expense also."

Father John Lane succeeded Father Cooke but only remained until May, 1904. An Irishman, he had worked in Manchester and Bacup before he came to St. Mary's, and he left to go to Levenshulme, where he died, a canon of the diocese, on May 1st, 1913.

In June, 1904 Father Michael Buckley took charge of the parish. One of three brother priests, he was born at Ballymountin, Ireland, in 1859 and had served in Burnley and Manchester. In April, 1911 he was transferred to St. Anselms, Whitworth, where he died on September 6th, 1929.

Father Godric Keane from Whitworth then came to St. Mary's. Born in 1866, ordained in 1896, he had served in Darwen, Ardwick and Swinton, and Little Hulton and Openshaw before going to Whitworth. He left St. Mary's during the First World War to become an army chaplain, and in later years he became a bishop in the Middle East and Auxiliary to the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. He died in 1933.



In 1911 a handsome new banner was unveiled and blessed. It was presented to the church by Councillor William Brown of Oldham. Father Keane blessed the banner and preached on the use of banners in ancient and modern times.

The banner, to be used by the C.Y.M.S., was made of pure silk. On the front was embroidered the figure of St. Joseph on a gold panel with the words: "St. Joseph, our patron, pray for us". The lapel, which is of blue silk, is designed to match the stoles, these being in the same rich materials elaborately embroidered with lilies. The centre panel of the back bears the words: "St. Mary's Catholic Young Men's Society", surrounded by a spray of lilies, and underneath is the sacred monogram "i.h.s." in white.

Father Keane had wanted to erect a new altar but finances did not permit it, so he launched an appeal:

To the parishioners:

The clergy earnestly solicit the charity and generosity of the congregation towards increasing the amount of the outdoor collection. With very little effort it might, and ought, to be double what it is at

present. There is a debt on the parish of £3,270. We are faced with the immediate necessity of erecting new schools at an estimated cost of £6,000. Taken in conjunction with the urgent need of beautifying the interior of our church and repairing the external structure, this constitutes an exceptionally heavy burden for the people.

To successfully overcome our difficulties, it is essential that we be prompted by a generous endeavour, harmonious action and united effort. There is nothing insuperable for us. We may be called upon to make sacrifices. These should be willingly made for God and his Church. In proportion, as God has blessed us with temporal means, let us make a suitable return and give it to the collectors cheerfully and generously. May God grant that the spirit of charity which actuated the people of St. Mary's in times past may influence the parishioners of today, and at the end of the current year may witness a handsome balance placed to the credit of the Parish.

Yours faithfully in Christ,

Godric Keane.

1st June, 1911.

On September 28th, 1911 a well attended meeting of the Mothers' Welcome was held in the parochial hall under the presidency of Mrs. Curtis. An address was given by Miss Rothwell (Inspector to the Oldham Corporation) and recitations and songs were rendered by Miss Drury of Manchester, and Mrs. Winterbottom, Mrs. Burns and Mrs. O'Connor. Father Keane spoke of the value of the work of the Mothers' Welcome in teaching the sanctity and dignity of motherhood and the healthiness and cleanliness of the home. The influence and practical value of the visiting ladies were far-reaching: they brought the benefits of experience, knowledge and skill to abodes where these were needed, and the addresses delivered at their meetings gave information to young mothers on the management of their children and efficient running of their homes. The infant mortality rate in Britain was appallingly high and this was exacerbated by the abnormal conditions of industrial life in Lancashire. In such adverse circumstances, the Mothers' Welcome were able to redress some of the deficiency, but their dedicated work required diligence and patience.

The Mothers' Welcome advised mothers on how to look after their babies. They knitted for them and provided bedding and baby clothes. If the need was there, they taught them hygiene and simple medical

skills and how to budget their small amounts of money to help provide the most nourishing meals for their families, as well as checking the weight of infants.

This work continued for a number of years until the premises became inadequate for the numbers attending. New premises were then acquired and the work developed in what might now be viewed as the seeds of the modern welfare state.

On December 24th, 1911 St. Mary's Church was solemnly reopened after decorating. The sermon was preached by Father Keane, the subject being "The King's Dwelling Place".

In 1915, when Father Keane left St. Mary's to be a chaplain in His Majesty's Forces, Father Patrick J. Feeney replaced him and served St. Mary's until 1921 when he moved to St. Joseph's, Longsight. He died there in 1942, having seen his parish school destroyed in the blitz.

## 1922 - 1961

Father Andrew Ivory, formerly a Passionist and previously Parish Priest at St. Edmunds and St. Vincent's, Openshaw, replaced Father Feeney and immediately started improvements to the church and presbytery. On September 25th, 1921 there was a grand opening of the Memorial Organ and on October 7th the erection of new Stations of the



Cross presented by F. Wilkinson in memory of the men of the Parish who had fallen in the 1914-18 war.



At about the same time electric lighting was introduced into the church, presbytery and parochial hall. A new baptistry was built, the church tower was pointed, a new boiler for the church heating was installed, the church was painted and the parochial hall and rooms in the presbytery were also redecorated. An extension was built to form a new sacristy and a new radiator was installed. The stairs to the gallery were also altered. They originally started at the outside door and the congregation could only leave in single file.

In 1923 Father Ivory went to Italy to purchase a new high altar for installation at a cost of £400. The three steps at the entrance to the sanctuary, the two steps across the sanctuary, and those to the side of the altar and the predella were covered in white marble. A white marble base was also installed for Our Lady's statue. The cost of the marble work was £652 10s. 6d. The C.Y.M.S. donated beautiful altar rails of carved oak, the top of which was also marble. The pulpit was moved from the front of the sanctuary to the side of the church.

A Memorial Altar was purchased in 1929 to mark the centenary of the founding of the Parish of St. Mary's. This altar (the pieta) was originally in what is now the vestry but was then known as the Mortuary Chapel. The coffins of deceased parishioners brought into church the evening before the funeral rested there.

Father Ivory retired in 1938 due to ill health and died on July 11th, 1942. Father Jeremiah Cronin was the next Parish Priest of St. Mary's. Born in

1886, he had been ordained in 1912 and had served as a curate at St. Patrick's, Oldham, St. Brigid's, Manchester, and St. Hubert's, Great Harwood, before becoming Parish Priest at the neighbouring Parish of St. Joseph's, Shaw in 1927. He remained at St. Mary's until his death on February 28th, 1950.

The centenary of St. Mary's was not celebrated in 1939 as World War 2 was looming imminently. Father Cronin decided to buy church furniture, together with a cope, vestments (one of each colour), albs and alter linen. The church was cleaned and painted, part of the High Altar was re-gilded, and church seating and flooring were repaired and part renewed. The outside of the church, presbytery and parochial hall were renovated. The church entrance received attention with a new wall and railings. The church grounds and the drains were also made good. The presbytery rooms were papered and painted and some new furniture and carpets were bought. A Mission, which had been booked for October, had to be cancelled due to the "blackout". During the war years the hall was requisitioned as a rest centre for bomb victims and as a control and rest room for the A.R.P.



A youth hall was built and opened at Easter, 1944 to be used by the scouts and cubs, Children of Mary and the Society of the Holy Angels. By 1944 the debt on the church was cleared.

In December, 1945 parishioners were privileged to attend the ordination in St. Mary's of Father John Curran, his parents being parishioners. In 1945 after the war, new members were enrolled in the different confraternities.

After the death of Father Cronin on February 28th, 1950, the people of St. Mary's welcomed back a former curate, Father John Meagher, as Parish Priest. After ordination in Waterford Cathedral on May 17th, 1923, he had served as a curate at St. Mary's, Mulberry Street, Manchester, before his appointment to St. Mary's, Oldham as curate in 1932. In 1937 he had gone to the Sacred Heart, Darwen, before becoming Parish Priest at St. Osmund's, Bolton (1940-43) and St. Joseph's, Mossley (1943-50). He died at St. Mary's on November 26th, 1961.

He had a very special devotion to Our Lady and his sermons about the Mother of God were a joy to listen to. In 1954 Father Meagher had the Lady Chapel refurbished: the step and base of the altar were

encased in pink marble; the floor surrounding the altar was concreted and tiled, this part of the work being carried out by men of the parish; and the cornice above the altar was repaired and the statue of Our Lady, which had been absent for some years, was reinstated.

## 1961 - 69



Father Thomas Corry, another former curate of St. Mary's, Oldham, was appointed as the next Parish Priest in January, 1962. He had also been ordained in Waterford and had served as a curate at St. Anne's, Fairfield, before his first appointment to St. Mary's, Oldham. In 1938 he had gone as curate to St. Joseph's, Shaw, and had been an army chaplain (1943-46) and curate at St. Dunstan's, Moston, and St. Mary's, Haslingden, before returning to the Oldham area as Parish Priest at St. Edward's, Lees (1951-60) and, for a short while, chaplain to Hopwood Teacher Training College.

In May, 1962 Father Corry was appointed chaplain to the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs. John Shyne. John Shyne was the first mayor from St. Mary's Parish, and, along with town dignitaries, attended evening service on Mayoral Sunday.

A new leading banner was bought in June, 1962 to be carried in the Whit Sunday Procession. A parishioner, Dr. Edmund Scott, donated a new set of crib figures, and Mr. Thomas Murphy made the stable.

In 1964 St. Mary's again had the honour of having parishioners holding the office of Mayor and Mayoress--Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kenney. Father Corry Again acted as Mayoral Chaplain and he walked in the traditional Mayoral Procession through the town and back to St. Mary's, where a Missa Cantata was offered. Canon Egan preached the sermon. Town dignitaries, councillors and other public figures attended this solemn celebration.

Father Corry replaced the heating boilers in the presbytery and church as the old ones were delivering very little warmth.

Owing to ill health, Father Corry resigned in October, 1970, but he continued to live at St. Mary's until his death in May, 1971

## 1970 - 1989



After Father Corry's resignation, his curate, Father Michael Bailey, was appointed as the next Parish Priest. After ordination on June 6th, 1954, he had served as a curate at St. Wilfred's, Hulme and St. Edmund's, Miles Platting before his arrival at St. Mary's, Oldham, in 1961. On his appointment as Parish Priest, a collection was made while he was away on his annual holiday, and on his return, a social evening was organised at the United Irish League Club, Horsedge Street, at which the proceeds of the collection were presented. Father Bailey thanked everyone for their kindness and announced that he would use the money to purchase a new altar, combined credence table and baptismal font, and a lectern to comply with the New Rite of the Mass.

In 1971 the New Rite of Marriage was introduced. Father Bailey was appointed Registrar and two additional persons, Mr. W. Hart and Mr. J. Durkin, were also authorised to act as Registrars.

On October 15th the Cunningham family presented a ciborium in memory of their parents, Patrick and Mary Cecilia Cunningham. At the Christmas Midnight Mass a memorial to Father Corry was blessed. It consisted of three liturgical chairs. At the same ceremony a brass paschal candle stand donated by Mrs. O'Dea in memory of her husband Denis was also blessed.

Father Bailey undertook major renovations. The roof of the church and presbytery were insulated and re-slatted. The existing timber floor of the church was removed and replaced with concrete, limed and covered with Marley flooring. The confessionals were enlarged and the confessional at the back of the church was removed and replaced with a storage cupboard. Glass screens were erected at the rear of the church to prevent draughts. A new heating system was installed. The windows on either side of the church and the choir were replaced with aluminium frames and with tinted glass to the choir area. The left-hand wall of the sanctuary was removed and rebuilt, replacing the stained glass windows of the archangels with tinted glass. New doors were fitted throughout the church and the entrance from the mortuary chapel to the sanctuary was sealed off. The mortuary chapel was then made into the priest's sacristy with cupboards and a safe incorporated. An audio system was also installed.

The pieta from the mortuary chapel was placed near the second confessional. The old baptistry at the back of the church was knocked down and the wall built up. The church was completely redecorated. New frames were fitted to the Stations of the Cross. The Lady Chapel was converted to a weekday Mass centre and green carpeting was laid in the sanctuary. New benches donated by parishioners past and present were fitted and the church and presbytery were sandblasted and pointed at an overall cost of £38,206. On February 11th, 1974 (the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes), Bishop Beck presided at the official opening. Past priests of St. Mary's, Fathers Brennan and Moriarty, and former parishioners Fathers Ginley, Kirk, Tischler, Coulthard and Curran, with Canons Glynn and Larkin, and Fathers Hourigan, Fitzpatrick, Martin, McGarry, Austin, Laide, McMahan and Father Bailey were all present in the sanctuary. It is thanks to Father Bailey that there is such pride in the beautiful church that is so much admired by both parishioners and visitors.

Also in 1974 the New Rite of Penance was introduced.

After a long battle against ill health, Father Bailey died suddenly on November 16th, 1980.

In February, 1981 Father Humphrey McMahan was appointed as Parish Priest. Ordained twenty years previously, he had served as curate at St. Mary's, Blackburn, and St. Anne's, Greenacres. He introduced the new liturgy, appointing lay readers and Ministers of the Eucharist. The offertory collection was also reorganised with the introduction of the envelope system which resulted in increased revenue. Miss Eileen Hutchinson was appointed Parish organist. A folk group was formed and they performed at the eleven o'clock mass one Sunday every month. A special committee was elected to look after the social side of the parish.



The St. Vincent de Paul Society, which had been in abeyance due to lack of members, was reformed and women were allowed to join. Their main undertakings were to keep in touch with senior citizens, the sick and housebound, and to give financial aid to any needy parishioners.

The popular Novena to Our Lady was introduced and a framed picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour was purchased in memory of Father Bailey.

In 1982 60 people from the parish camped out overnight in Heaton Park to welcome Pope John Paul II to Manchester and members of the choir joined the Diocesan Choir to sing at the mass. Ten young people visited Cardiff to join the youth of England and Wales to greet the Holy Father. He invited the large gathering to visit Rome and in 1983 six young people joined others from the Salford Diocese on a pilgrimage there. Also in 1983 Father McMahon organised a pilgrimage to Lourdes for parishioners.

Christian Unity services were held at St. Mary's and parishioners visited churches of other denominations. In 1984 St. Mary's became a designated church for the special Holy Year Indulgence. A pilgrimage to Knock was organised. In June, 1986 parishioners helped Father McMahon celebrate his Silver Jubilee with a special mass and later in the week with a dance at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. With collections and other social events, parishioners were pleased to present Father McMahon with a cheque and a framed colour photograph of the high altar, together with a Papal Blessing.

The church was redecorated in February, 1988 but Father McMahon left St. Mary's before the redecoration was complete, the bishop having appointed him Parish Priest of St. Herbert's, Chadderton. A presentation of Waterford crystal and a decanter was made by the parishioners, and the children and staff of the school presented him with a dinner service.



At the beginning of 1988 Father Seamus Quigley arrived as Parish Priest of St. Mary's. Ordained in 1970, he had served as curate at Newton Heath, Droylsden, Haslingden and Reddish.

The church was not at its best with the redecoration work still in progress. The parishioners were also awaiting the visitation of Bishop Kelly who came less than two weeks after Father Quigley's appointment. When the last of the scaffolding had been removed, the clean-up operation began--scrubbing the floor, washing the high altar, the statues and Stations of the Cross--until finally the church was ready to receive Bishop Kelly who was greatly pleased by the smartness of the church and the endeavour which had been involved.

Shortly after this date a loop system was installed, together with security locks and beams. A statue of Our Lady was purchased and erected in the niche on the outside of the bell tower. This was in memory of the late Jonathan Patrick and Elizabeth Anne Dowd, former parishioners of St. Mary's. A bell was acquired to be hung in the belfry so that once again the faithful could be called to Mass.

St. Mary's parishioners had waited a long time for their church to be consecrated, and 1989, the 150th anniversary, marked fulfilment of this wish.

Father Quigley purchased a new sandstone altar in place of the temporary altar which had been erected at the time when mass was first said with the celebrant facing the congregation. The consecration took place on March 9th, 1989 when a mass of thanksgiving was concelebrated by Bishop Kelly, past priests of St. Mary's and priests of the deanery.

As the Mother Church of Oldham, St. Mary's has a notable and proud history from which all other parishes of the area have stemmed. From its founder, Father Adam George Fisher, through its 16 Parish Priests and very many curates, the story can be traced and chronicled, and interest in the details of such an enduring narrative will ensure the validity of future research and periodic updating.

# ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

St. Mary's Parish has been associated with educating its children since the first Sunday school was opened in 1831 when 20 pupils attended on the first day. On August 7th, 1833 Sunday School became located permanently in Bow Street when the staff and pupils numbered 222 under the supervision of Father Horgan. In 1841 it became a day school. When numbers became too large for the Bow Street premises, a second school was opened in Whitehead's Yard for the older children.

In December, 1853 Father Conway was appointed to take charge of St. Mary's, but he soon found that the school was too small for its purpose. As there was no state endowment, he appealed to his congregation to give at least one week's wages towards the provision of better accommodation. He also travelled for a while seeking funds: he crossed to Ireland where his appeals met with a generous response. He looked for land on which to build a new school. A gift of 100 guineas from Mr. and Mrs. Bullman enabled him to start building operations, the contract being given to Messrs. Seer Brothers of Liverpool. On April 6th, 1858 the foundation stone was laid by Mrs. Bullman and the school in Cardinal Street was opened on April 26th, 1859. It had accommodation for 250 pupils and cost £4,000 to build and was ranked amongst the finest in Lancashire and was considered a model school. Committees about to build schools came from all parts of the country to inspect it.

Father Conway was seemingly unfortunate in his choice of the first headmistress as Miss Johanna Mullahy never apparently gained the affections of her pupils, with the result that numbers diminished. Father Conway gave her notice to leave but she ignored this termination of employment. On January 24th, 1861 he was fined 20s. and costs for an alleged assault on the schoolmistress. This aroused the indignation of the congregation. A public meeting was held in the Town Hall on February 11th, the object being to sympathise with their Parish Priest over the magistrate's decision. The chair was occupied by Father James Standen who explained the object of the meeting and called on Canon Carter to propose a vote of confidence in Father Conway who had protested that he was absolutely innocent of the charges brought against him. Having asked the headmistress to leave as gently and reasonably as he could, a person present could testify that Miss Mullahy had confessed that Father Conway had accidentally trodden on her dress, causing her to fall, for which alleged assault he had been convicted. Eventually, with the kind assistance of Mrs. Bullman, Miss Mullahy was persuaded to leave.

On June 25th, 1863 Rev. Mother Angela Berini and four nuns arrived from Nottingham. This was the start of the association with the Sisters of Mercy in the education of the children of St. Mary's and, indeed, of Oldham. The nuns also started a night school for the benefit of the girls who, due to their poverty, had to start work at an early age and therefore missed the advantages of attending the day school. The nuns at first used rooms next to the Cardinal Street school as a convent prior to moving to Werneth Grange in 1907.

On January 19th, 1871 Father Grymonprez became vice-chairman of the first school board in Oldham. In 1891 school fees were abolished and education became free, all grants being paid directly to schools by education authorities. In the first decade of the 20th century, plans were made to build a new school for St. Mary's. In 1913 classes were moved to Gower Street and the church hall while the new school was being built on the Cardinal Street site. On November 9th, 1914 the new building was opened by the Lord Mayor of Manchester and dedicated and blessed by the Bishop of Salford in the presence of the Mayor and Councillors of Oldham, the Parish Priest a large number of parishioners and friends. The cost of this new building being £6,500, a large debt was outstanding against the parish which took many years to clear.

On November 5th, 1947 the character of the school was changed when it became the temporary senior school for all the Catholic children of Oldham and its junior pupils were dispersed to the other Catholic schools of the town. Just over ten years later St. Mary's reverted to being junior and infant schools, with all senior pupils going to a new purpose built secondary school.

In the 1970s two teachers received the Bene Merenti Medal in recognition of their long service to Catholic education. When the school closed in July, 1983 due to lack of numbers, most of the pupils transferred to the Sacred Heart School, Derker, with Sister Mary Clare, the last headmistress of St. Mary's. A chalice was presented to St. Mary's Church in recognition of 142 years' close connection between the convent and the church.

For many years a May Sunday Ceremony was held at St. Mary's when the children walked in procession carrying a statue of Our Lady which was crowned by a May Queen, usually chosen with her attendants from the First Holy Communion class. This ceremony and the Whit Friday Processions of Witness ceased in recent years.

Throughout the years St. Mary's has brought education to Catholic children of Oldham in faith, scholarship and good citizenship and is of cherished memory to a loyal teaching staff and thousands of pupils who received their formative education there.

# PARISH ORGANISATIONS

*Some of the organisations known to have operated in the parish over the years are outlined briefly but the listing may not be complete.*

## C.Y.M.S.

On Sunday, June 18th, 1854 a meeting was held in the schoolroom in Whitehead Square, addressed by the Very Rev. Dean O'Brien, the founder of the Catholic Young Men's Society. The purpose of his visit was to establish a branch in Oldham. Explaining its aims and objectives, he said:

"The main objects of the Society are to put down sin and falsehood, to extend virtue, intelligence, truth and a brotherly love, and to implant a love for the Holy Catholic Church."

A committee was elected and Mr. J. McCallan was appointed President and Father Conway was to act as Spiritual Director. The Society prospered and numbers grew to several hundreds in a short space of time.

After the opening of the Cardinal Street school, the Society held their meetings in the infants' school, and it came to be recognised among the institutions of the borough. In 1868, however, membership dwindled and the few remaining members decided to share its property which consisted of a small library.

A meeting was held in the boys' school on January 5th, 1895 to re-establish a branch of the C.Y.M.S. in the parish. The following representatives were elected:

- President: James Doran, J.P.;
- Vice-Presidents: Fathers C. Grymonprez, J. Nugent, P. J. Brennan;
- Treasurer: J. Kilcoyne;
- Committee: J. C. McIntyre, J. Brown, S. Sanderson, W. Kirk, W. Canning, M. Kelly, T. Mulvey, C. Brimelow, T. Curley, T. Doran, J. Patterson, J. Whitehead, R. Edwards, E. Fleming (Father Bernard), E. Haines, P. Hennessey.

In a short space of time the membership became so numerous that the Society decided to approach Father Grymonprez with a view to building a club room with a parochial hall attached. A building fund was started and Mr. Charles T. Taylor of Clegg Street was instructed to prepare drawings and plans. The plans were approved and the work was given to Messrs. S. & J. Smethers.

In the football seasons of 1908-9, 1909-10 and 1910-11, St. Mary's rugby team won the Oldham Junior Rugby Football Shield on each occasion, thus winning the Silver Shield outright. This shield remained on the wall in the club room until demolition in the 1970s. After the appointment of Mr. Coulthard as headmaster to the school, he being a former player for Wigan Rugby Club, it was natural that he should want to promote rugby football as a sporting activity within the school. He did this very successfully and they gained honours regularly. When the First World War ended and Oldham Rugby Club wanted to re-create the playing of amateur rugby, they organised a Medal Competition. The C.Y.M.S. entered a team and won the Competition. In 1924 they again won through to the finals but this time they lost. The club survived until 1928 when, due to lack of interest, they resigned from the League.

During 1919 the C.Y.M.S. entered a local Sunday School Billiard League and competed until 1962, having numerous successes during 43 years of membership.

Also during the summer of 1919, great interest was taken in the formation of a cricket team, and in 1920 they entered a local league. They did not achieve any honours but enjoyed the sport and remained in the league for several years.

1920 also saw the C.Y.M.S. entering a local Association Football League. Again, they only distinguished themselves by their presence and eventually faded away.

During the difficult years between the wars, work was very hard to come by and so members of the C.Y.M.S. often gathered in a club room to while away the hours. It was during such times that many members educated themselves to such a standard that they gained debating skills, and Mr. Francis Kelly, himself a great debater, founded the C.Y.M.S. Debating Society. So successful were they that they met and defeated Liverpool City Council on the question of "Dominion Status for India" in 1934. They were awarded victory by a lawyer, K.C. A Debating Society was reorganised in the 1950s by Mr. F. Taylor and Mr. J. Brown. It never attained the success of its predecessor, debates being between the C.Y.M.S.' members only, but it gave a good foundation for later life to the younger members who took part.

In 1954 the C.Y.M.S. celebrated its centenary. To mark the occasion, all the members purchased light blue sashes with the C.Y.M.S. logo emblazoned on them. They were worn for the first time at the Whitsuntide Procession of 1954. A Centenary Ball was organised at the Hill Stores and it was such a success that for several years afterwards, an Annual Parish Ball was held on the same lines.

In the 1950s and 1960s a Junior and Senior Cricket XI existed, the Senior XI meeting with some success. They once won the League Trophy at the Pollard Ground .

In the season 1960-1 a football team was formed, but they fared little better than their predecessors and lasted only one year.

In the early 1960s there was much demolition in the Parish. The number of parishioners dwindled and many moved to other areas of the town. The C.Y.M.S. membership was thus greatly reduced, and finally it was decided to disband the Society.

## **THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY**

Thomas Curley's "Catholic History of Oldham" records that:

"At about 1884 a Conference of the useful Society of St. Vincent de Paul was established at St. Mary's. This Society, under the direction of the clergy, enrolls among its members those men who make it their devoted work of visiting the poor and sick, administering relief to the former and securing the help and consolations of their holy religion for the latter, assisting the priests of the Mission in what is called 'patronage' work--in fact, rendering the clergy of the Mission every service in their power. This Society continues to do its self-sacrificing work down to our times."

St. Mary's Conference was one of the first in the diocese to admit women members. At times in the past there were as many as 50 brothers in the Society, some with as many as 20 to 50 years' membership. One of the most well-known members of the Society at local level was Mr. Patrick Cunningham (R.I.P.) who died in 1963 aged 85. He had been President of the S.V.P. from the age of 19. For his services to the Society and his church, he was awarded the Bene Merenti Medal.

The St. Mary's Conference of the S.V.P. is still strong and active. Typically, they played a part in the S.V.P.'s distribution of the E.E.C.'s butter and cheese surplus.

## **PAROCHIAL HALL**

The Parochial Hall was the centre of all activities in the Parish from its being built in 1897 to its demolition in 1972. Every social event in the Parish was held there: Sunday night concerts in the early 1930s were particularly popular, with people coming from other parishes, and of other denominations, to enjoy the entertainment. The Hall was always

filled to capacity, and these events continued for many years and only came to an end when World War 2 was imminent. There were many kinds of entertainments--singing, sketches and comedians--always well received. There was an excellent Black and White Minstrel Troup lead by Mr. Louis Graydon and his sons Albert and John. Mr. Freddie Ryan was another popular artist with songs, jokes and sketches.

During the post-war years the youth of the Parish organised Sunday night dances under the watchful eye of Father Ailbie Ryan who helped them to purchase a gramophone and records. The young people also decided to put on a few concerts themselves. Under the direction of Mr. Tony Cunningham, they formed a choir and also produced one or two plays. This led to the formation of St. Mary's Amateur Dramatic Society. Their performances of Gilbert & Sullivan were first class and played to very appreciative audiences.

All the Parish dances, whist drives, bring and buy sales and other fund-raising activities were held in the Parish Hall. The Children of Mary and Sodality meetings, as well as the Women's Confraternity meetings and the children's First Communion Breakfast all took place there. Wedding receptions were also frequent Hall bookings.

## THE GUIDES

The 42nd Oldham Guide Company was founded at St. Mary's in 1925 by Miss Hurley and Miss Lavin. Miss Lavin then took charge of the Rangers for girls of 16 years plus and Miss Hurley instructed the Guides. She was the captain and Miss Hilda Brierley and Miss Bessie Byrne were the lieutenants. Miss Lavin subsequently returned to her native Ireland and Miss McCauley took charge of the Rangers.

The Guides met every Wednesday evening. There were five patrols named the Shamrock, the Forget-me-not, the Heather, the Bluebell and the Robin with eight girls in each patrol, and there was always a waiting list to join.

Once a year, the Guides went on a weekend Retreat to the Cenacle Convent. They also put on a yearly Sunday night concert at which Mrs. Coulthard was always the pianist, and they often went to other churches to repeat the concert. The Guides thought themselves very lucky when they were taken to Heaton Park or Greenfield for an afternoon trip. The days spent as Guides were very enjoyable and a lot was learnt as they worked for their badges.

The Guides were disbanded in 1933 and each Guide was given a Sunday Missal from the funds.

## THE SCOUTS GROUP

A Boy Scout Troup was formed at St. Mary's by Father Waters in 1923. The first Scout Master was Mr. Albert Faulkner assisted by Mr. Albert Cartwright and Mr. John Keavney. By 1938 it was registered as the 2/59th Oldham and survived until well into the 1940s.

In 1937 members of St. Mary's Troup went to the World Scout Jamboree in Holland, led by the Scout Master, Mr. John Shyne. The Jamboree at Vogelenzang brought together 24,000 Scouts from 31 countries and was opened by the Queen of Holland. The closing address was given by Baden Powell himself, the Chief Scout and founder of the movement, who was then 81 years old.

Mr. Shyne recalled that they used to march 30 miles from Oldham to Greenfield through Chew Valley to Crowden and back.

## THE CATHOLIC BOYS' BRIGADE

The Catholic Boys' Brigade was founded in Deptford in 1896 by Father Felix Segesser. The object of the C.B.B. was to keep Catholic lads attached to their religion "and to promote habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness." The Brigade's uniform, military discipline, drills, gymnastics, signalling classes and annual seven days of camping attracted the lads strongly. It was not in any way a military cadet corps, though its training was of great physical benefit. By 1910 there were over 80 companies in the United Kingdom. St. Mary's was the 45th to be registered and formed the 'F' Company of the 5th Battalion (Salford Diocese). Several times it hosted visits from St. Patrick's, Rochdale C.B.B., who processed in the Oldham Charity Parade.

Under Father Seed's fostering care the St. Mary's lads were kept faithful to their church and regular in their spiritual duties. Mr. Joseph Brown (known as Captain Brown) was in charge of them. In 1911 King George V and Queen Mary came to Alexandra Park for their "Coronation Celebration" visit. All the schoolchildren were assembled on the playing field and the Church Boys Brigade from Oldham Parish Church were to blow the Royal Salute. They missed their cue, however, and Captain Brown called on the Catholic Boys Brigade who played and saved the day.

In 1914 the lads won a prize in Ashton on Easter Monday and also the Black Knights May Cycle Parade. "C.B.B." was their shoulder flash--  
"Catholic Boys' Brigade can't be beaten".

## **MEN OF ST. MARY'S ORDAINED TO THE PRIESTHOOD**

- **Father John Curtis--June 29th, 1865**
- **Father Cornelius Hughes--August 7th, 1898**
- **Father Bernard, O.S.F.C. (Ernest Fleming)--May 24th, 1902**
- **Father Thomas O'Neill Elliott--July 19th, 1925**
- **Father Thomas Ginley--June 23rd, 1929**
- **Father William Kirk--July 22nd, 1934**
- **Father Vincent Tischler--July 22nd, 1934**
- **Father Joseph Coulthard--July 25th, 1937**
- **Father John Curran--December 22nd, 1945**
- **Father Denis Leyden (the Verona Fathers)--May 17th, 1980**
- **Father Stephen Patteron SJ -- November 1st 2008**

## **PRIESTS WHO SERVED AT ST. MARY'S AS CURATES**

- **Fathers G. Ward, H. McCormick, J. Fielding Whittaker, J. Boardman and D. Hearne with Father Fisher**
- **Fathers J. Horgan, P. Coop, H. Ryan and J. O'Neill with Father Horgan**
- **Fathers M. D. O'Hara, P. J. Cardinael, P. Birch, J. Tracey and J. Standen with Father Conway**
- **Fathers P. J. Cardinael, J. Beesley and J. G. Boulaye with Father Wrennal**
- **Fathers M. J. O'Callaghan, P. O'Keeffe, J. H. White, T. Steele, J. Brady, D. Sheahan, M. Sheahan, J. Madden, J. Burke, J. Henebery, T. Gorton, J. Nugent, P. Brennan, L. Scott and J. G. Boulaye with Father Grymonprez**
- **Fathers C. Hughes, G. Taylor, W. Isaac, A. Smith, J. Kiely, J. Higgins, M. Kirkham, J. Nugent and A. McGrath with Father Cooke**
- **Fathers B. Walmsley, E. F. X. de Pauw, P. Ramsbottom, F. Lynch and D. Evershed with Father Lane**
- **Fathers D. Evershed, T. J. Carroll, F. G. Seed, J. Kiely and C. Dunleavy with Father Buckley**
- **Fathers J. Kiely and C. Dunleavy with Father Kean**
- **Fathers T. Kelly, P. O'Callaghan, R. Halligan with Father Feeney**
- **Fathers R. Halligan, T. Kelly, G. H. Waters, R. Manning, M. O'Sullivan, D. P. Brennan, R. de Grood, J. Meagher, T. Davies, J. Henry, T. Corry and J. Powers with Father Ivory**
- **Fathers A. Ryan, J. Ashworth, P. Lister, J. Sloane, T. Foudy and J. L. Brennan with Father Cronin**
- **Fathers J. L. Brennan, J. Corridan, A. Moriarty, J. Harrington, F. Cummings and M. Bailey with Father Meagher**
- **Father M. Bailey with Father Corry, Fathers A. O'Reilly, J. Harrison and M. Watson with Father Bailey**

## **ST. MARY'S PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED PAPAL HONOURS**

- **Mr. Patrick Cunningham - Bene Merenti**
- **Mrs. Edith Cross - Bene Merenti**
- **Sister M. Malachy (School Head) - Bene Merenti**
- **Miss Ellen Brierley - Bene Merenti**
- **Mr. Edward Kenney - Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice**
- **Miss A. McCauley - Bene Merenti**
- **Mrs. Nora McGrath (nee McCauley) - Bene Merenti**
- **Mrs. Nora Derby (nee Brennan) - Bene Merenti**
- **Miss Irene Howell (a teacher at St. Mary's School but not a parishioner) - Bene Merenti**

## **PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN PUBLIC SERVICE**

- **Mr. William Brown - Councillor**
- **Mr. J. Doran - J.P.**
- **Mr. A. Bonney - Councillor**
- **Mr. L. Wilkinson - Councillor**
- **Mr. T. Sterling Marron - Councillor, Alderman and Mayor**
- **Mr. J. Brown - Councillor**
- **Mr. F. McCauley - Councillor and J.P.**
- **Miss E. Brierley - Councillor, Alderman, J.P. and Mayoress**
- **Miss H. Brierley - Councillor and Mayoress**
- **Mr. J. Shyne - Councillor, Alderman, J.P. and Mayor**
- **Mr. E. Kenny - Councillor, Alderman, J.P. and Mayor**
- **Mr. K. Leyden - Councillor, J.P. and Mayor**
- **Mr. P. Dean - Councillor**
- **Mrs. E. Dean (nee Hunt) - Councillor**
- **Mrs. S. Casson (nee Hurley) - J.P.**
- **Mrs. M. Bradbury (nee Weldon) - J.P.**
- **Mr. F. Burns - J.P.**