



Parish of Thirroul



golden jubilee

1923 — 1973

(Limited Edition)

Golden Jubilee Celebrations

"Back To Thirroul" Week

PROGRAMME

SUNDAY 4TH NOVEMBER

FOLK MASS 9.0 am. Morning tea will be served (no charge) in the School grounds. The committee anticipates quite a festive atmosphere - Edmund Rice School Band (State winners) will play and the winning choirs from St. Michael's School will sing for guests enjoyment.

MONDAY 5TH NOVEMBER

PRIESTS GOLF DAY - Buck's Night.

TUESDAY 6TH NOVEMBER

MELBOURNE CUP DAY - Ladies - this is YOUR day! What an exciting day - celebrate the Cup and our Golden Jubilee in the relaxing atmosphere of the Thirroul Leagues Club. Starts 11 am.

WEDNESDAY 7TH NOVEMBER

JUVENILE BALL - Police Boys' Club at 6.30 pm. The first fancy dress ball at Thirroul in 15 years! Supper provided for children - tea and bikkies for adults - 50¢ for adults; primary school children free.

THURSDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

CON-CELEBRATED MASS: His Lordship Bishop T. McCabe, D.D. presiding. 7 pm. start. This is the high peak of our celebrations. 8.15 - Then meet former priests and parishioners for supper and dancing at the Thirroul Leagues Club. A gala night! (\$2 per head). Contact June Kingston 67-1095

FRIDAY 9TH NOVEMBER

YOUTH GROUP POP DANCE - R.S.L. Club Annex, Thirroul. Entry by invitation ticket only - obtainable from the Treasurer, Gerard Magee (67-1542).

"Battersea Heroes + Light show." Tickets are \$1.00 - parents are assured this function will be adequately supervised. Age group from 1st. Form upwards.

SUNDAY 11TH NOVEMBER

OPEN AIR MASS (weather permitting) at Stanwell Park 10.0 am. This is a family day - barbecues will be provided; bring your own steaks. The culmination of the week's festivities and your last chance to participate until the next 50 years!!!

foreword . . .

ON TAKING UP my appointment as Parish Priest of Thirroul in 1971, I began to be aware of the 50 years of on-going achievement that was the Thirroul Parish. The Church was opened in 1921, and in 1923 the area from Bulli Pass to Stawell Park was made a Parish, being divided off the Bulli Parish.

The pressure of having to face the future and raise money for the many objectives in the Parish over the fifty years gave parishioners very little time for looking back or taking a "breather" to rejoice in what had been achieved over the years.

A meeting was called for parishioners to consider a suitable way to celebrate and mark the turn of the fifty years of being a Parish. Our present celebrations, and this commemorative booklet, are the result of that meeting.

To mark the Golden Jubilee, it was decided to conduct a new Planned Giving programme with the object of renovating the Church and Presbytery, and better caring for our Parish and Diocesan obligations.

This project has come to a successful conclusion, and now is our time to really celebrate!

I trust that while we celebrate past achievements, we will be spurred on to accept the challenges of the next 50 years in the same generous spirit as the people and priests of the past.

We thank God for His Blessings and pray that His grace will enlighten our minds and strengthen our determination to work always for His honour and glory, and the salvation of souls.

Yours sincerely,



F. Fuhlendorf

F. Fuhlendorf, P.P

OUR JUBILEE CHURCH



ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH and the Presbytery in between the Thirroul Post Office and the old Church of England on Main Road, Thirroul, taken in 1925.



THE CHURCH and Presbytery again. Our picture is a much later snap, taken a few years ago just before the front wall was removed. The church was opened in 1921.

Our Parish is 50 Years Old

CREATION OF THE Thirroul Parish 50 years ago is being celebrated this month.

Organisers of the 1973 celebrations have prepared this publication to recapture some of the exciting history associated with the formation and progress of our Parish through the years.

Perhaps it might not be exciting in the manner of TV goodies and badies or the history of unwanted wars; but it unfolds the story of devotion, generosity and sacrifices of the Parish pioneers.

It was their foresight and efforts that gave us St. Michael's Church, the Presbytery, the Convent and St. Michael's Convent School,

The new Parish born on October 31, 1923, included the districts of Thirroul, Austinmer, Coledale, Clifton, Coalcliff and Stanwell Park.

The first of our nine Parish Priests in our 50 years was Father Patrick James O'Donnell.



ST. BRIGIDS Catholic Church, Coledale. It opened in 1957, replacing the old building now used as a Church Hall behind St. Michael's School.

SEARCH FOR A NAME

IT ALL STARTED with a meeting at Mrs. McGrade's shop in Main Road, Thirroul, on August 28, 1918.

The Parish Priest of Bulli (Father Peter Power) had decided there was a need for a Thirroul Church in his Bulli Parish, which stretched from Corrimal to Clifton.

The cheery Irishman had as members on his formation committee J. S. Kirton, John Coffey, Michael McGrade, Thomas Ford, Bill Cahill, Frank Carey, T. Dwyer, R. Tweedie, Laughlin Buggy, Mr. Lang, Mr. McGowan and Bernie Kirton.

These facts are disclosed in a personal notebook started by Father Power in 1918 and continued by Father O'Donnell and others. Unfortunately it has a lot of gaps and was at one time rescued from a fire!

It was decided to buy land as the site for our present church and the cost - £300. Collectors were to seek money at Austinmer, Thirroul East and Thirroul West.

And Archbishop Kelly in Sydney had approved a name for the proposed Thirroul Church, St. Kevin's. Later he suggested another name, because St. Kevin was already the patron of a church at Eastwood.

Father Power got most enthusiastic with St. Molua, "one of the great early Irish saints" and proposed it as the church name. We find no reference how St. Michael's name reached the scene, but on May 8, 1921, Archbishop Kelly blessed the foundation stone under the joint patronage of St. Michael and St. Molua.

Our friendly priest Father Power seemed to lose a little of his twinkle when he wrote in his notebook, January, 1920:

"We are striving to arrange another bazaar and difficult work it is, as every lady asked to head a stall says - 'let somebody else do it!'

"This spirit has been manifesting itself lately in Thirroul - where I had hoped for so much help and sympathy - but nevertheless we shall proceed."

And proceed they did.

The money did not roll in, but thanks to the efforts of our Parish Foundation committee it did mount up with penny collections, bazaars and concerts.

A big step forward came at a committee meeting held at Mrs. Ryan's Hotel on July 21, 1920, when it was decided to seek a loan of £2500 from the E.S.A. Bank (Now the ANZ) - at 6%.

By this time Mr. Bill Lalor had joined the committee and taken the unenviable job of Secretary. And what a tower of strength Mr. Lalor was to prove in the Thirroul Parish.

You'll see Bill at mass every Sunday in the church he helped to build.

As planning developed for creation of the Parish mass was being held every second Sunday in the local School of Arts (now the RSL Club) - with an annual rental of £6/10/-



AN INTERIOR view of the Coledale Church. St. Brigids has been open for 15 years.

"400 CATHOLICS"

At their February, 1921, meeting in Ryan's Pub members of the committee had eight tenders before them, but four of them above £3000 were passed over.

The lowest from Winley Bros. was accepted. Father Power does not disclose the figures in his notes.

The Blessing of the church's foundation stone came in May of that year and Father Power told the audience that the Austinmer-Thirroul area "comprised a Catholic population of 400 souls."

He also remarked on the generosity of local citizens, including non-Catholics, in supporting the church building fund.

About 500 people turned out for the opening of Thirroul's Catholic church on October 30, 1921. The Right Reverend Dr. Hayden, Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes, blessed and opened the church with the consent of Archbishop Kelly who was unable to attend the ceremony.

Among the clergy at the church opening were Father Power, Father Dunne, Parish Priest of Wollongong, Father Darby of Helensburgh and Father L. Corridon, curate at Bulli.



AN EARLY INTERIOR view of St. Michael's Catholic Church showing the altar. The front rail has come down since this was taken and there's now a front altar provided in the modern style. Fully carpeted too.

PRESBYTERY - 1924

Two years later the Thirroul Parish was created with the arrival of Father O'Donnell from Araluen as P.P. He lived for some time in a rented cottage in George Street.

In 1924 the foundation stone of the Presbytery was laid and blessed. It was to be built on land adjoining the church which had been donated by Miss Fanny Ryan.

Father Power was missing. He had gone home for a holiday to the Ireland he loved so much; on his return he was appointed parish Priest at Surry Hills in Sydney.

A newspaper of the day - the "Bulli Times" - gave the ceremony a good press and Monsignor O'Gorman came from Parramatta to bless and lay the stone.

He congratulated the people of Thirroul upon receiving "ecclesiastical autonomy.!.... and recalled that on his previous visit the Thirroul parishioners "were under the heel of Bulli."

It's worth noting a few remarks from Father O'Donnell reported in the Times. His mention that Monsignor O'Gorman had just returned from a world trip with the latest ideas in raising money brought laughter.

He also said:

"The Illawarra district is progressing rapidly. Estates are being sub-divided and buildings erected in every centre and Thirroul is keeping pace with other centres."

Another great day came on October 10, 1924, with the opening of the Presbytery.

The coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Reverend M. Sheenan, arrived by car at 3.30 pm for the opening ceremony.

Here are some extracts from the press coverage for that day;

"Archbishop Sheenan conducted the religious service on his arrival. Attired in his Episcopal robes, and with all due solemnity, His Grace traversed the building, blessing it both inside and outside."

Later came the speeches - and the rain (the big audience had to scamper into the church for shelter).

A WORD ON GENEROSITY

Father O'Donnell outlined the history of the church and parish planning and told the crowd that Thirroul became an independent parish on November 1, 1923.

He said that buildings such as the Presbytery were a credit to the zeal and the generosity of the Catholic people. These could not be erected without expenditure.

The Parish Priest listed some financial figures, stating the church's debt at the start of 1924 was £1785/12/-the contract price for the presbytery was £1998, furnishings and expenses about £363, architect's fee £119, interest to bank and parochials expenses £95/2/-. This was a total of nearly £4462.

Money collected during 1924, to October, was about £758.

Father O'Donnell had praise for the architect, Mr. A. McKay, the builder Mr. J. Hopper and the splendid Clerk of Works Mr. L. Cooney.

Archbishop Sheenan said: "It is a great pleasure for me to come among you and witness the evidence of your faith and generosity."

In a jocular mood His Grace said rain clouds over Thirroul that afternoon would disappear, "just as the cloud of debt that hangs over you people."

Dr. L. Fetherston said nobody felt poorer for their contributions, but had the comfort of knowing that they had contributed towards the erection of the beautiful church and presbytery.

Father O'Donnell read a list of afternoon donations totalling more than £200.

Mr. F. Fagan moved a vote of thanks to the Archbishop for his visit and this was seconded by Mr. W. Lalor.

Archbishop Sheenan said: "I have no doubt you will soon clear off this debt and you will find Father O'Donnell arranging a further debt for you. God bless you all."

The local State Member of Parliament (Mr. W. Davies) said the Catholic movement meant the up-lifting of humanity.

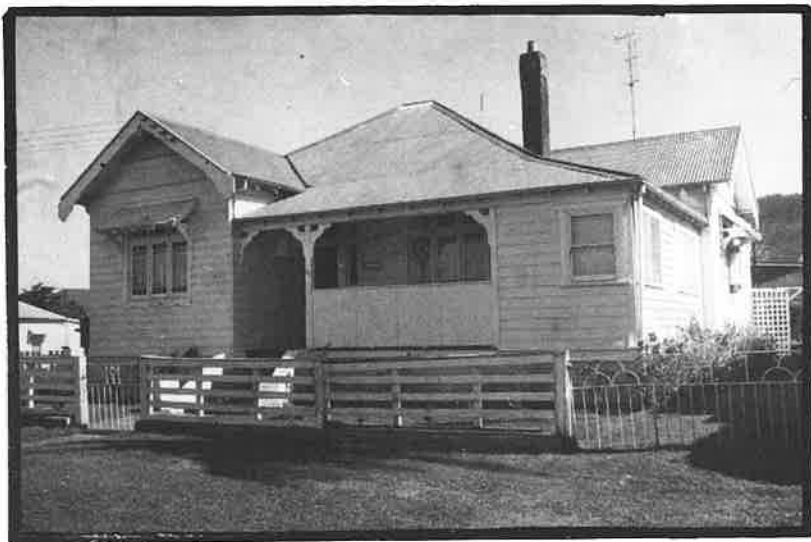
VITAL ROLE FOR ST. JOSEPH NUNS

THE SISTERS of St. Joseph have been on the South Coast since the 1880s, but some 60 years were to pass before they began teaching at Thirroul.

Their main base was Bulli, but early this century they established a convent at Clifton, where they taught school at the Clifton Church from 1912 until 1930, when the population declined to a low point.

Extracts from the Convent Diary show that a Church School opened at Thirroul in 1939, although there is some contradiction in old records. The Diary says Sisters Alphonso and Thecla travelled from Bulli each day to take classes.

However, the Church diary shows that on January 28, 1940, Father J. O'Farrell announced the sisters would start in 1940 and it was agreed to provide £50 a year for the upkeep of the teaching sisters.



THE CATHOLIC CONVENT in Raymond Road which provides accommodation for the Sisters of St. Joseph who teach at the Thirroul Convent School. It was purchased in 1927 and for some years served as a school. The Sisters have used it since 1951.

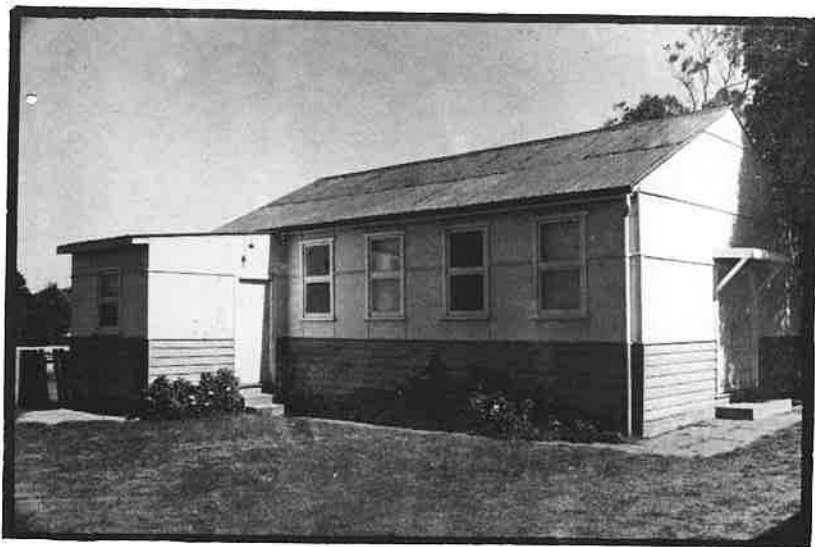
SCHOOL OPENS 1951

Nevertheless, the early war years found the Sisters of St. Joseph in business at Thirroul in Church classes.

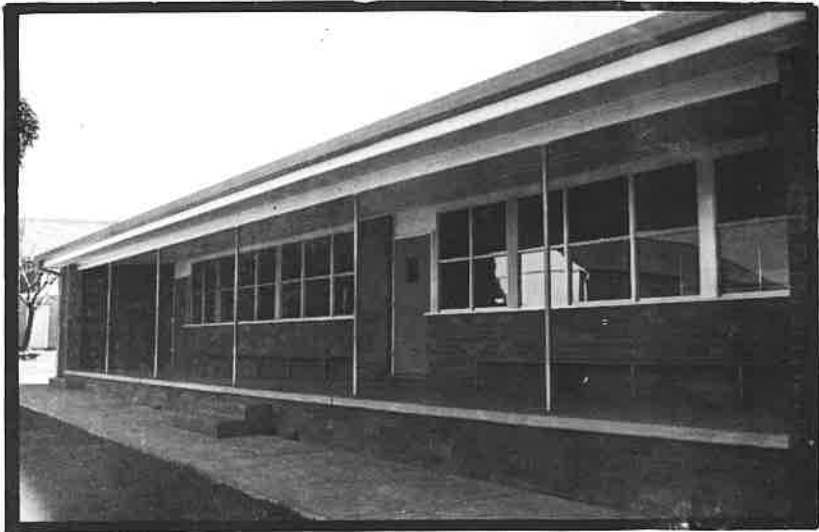
Mrs. J. Ryan donated the land for a school site, but war restrictions and post-war problems slowed planning and it was not until 1951 that the sisters had the full time job of teaching at the new school.

The previous year (Bishop O'Brien) had blessed and opened the Convent. Some of the early sisters were Sister Pius, the Superior, Sister Guiseppi and Sister Judith.

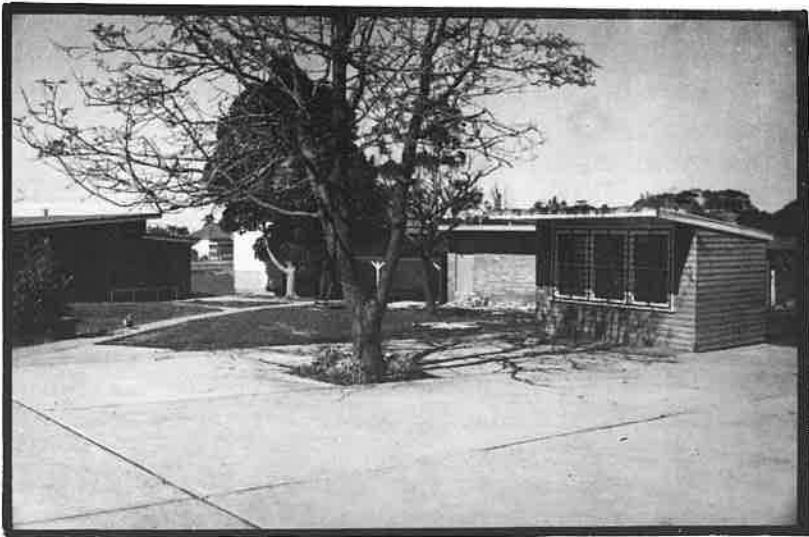
The year Thirroul Catholic school opened was also the formation year of Wollongong Diocese and its first Bishop (Bishop McCabe) visited the convent to meet the Sisters in 1952.



A MUCH TRAVELLED building the Parish Hall, at the rear of St. Michael's School. Bill Lalor says it started off at Wilton and eventually became the Coledale Catholic Church. About 14 years ago members of the local C.Y.O. dismantled it and rebuilt it on its present site. It has served many purposes in its lifetime at Thirroul.



NEW CLASSROOMS WERE built for the School in 1970 as enrolments increased. Third and Fourth classes were the early settlers in the expansion project.



FURTHER DEVELOPMENT, the new concrete strip at the rear of the school and that's the tuckshop on the right. Left, the new extensions and hiding behind the tree is the Parish Hall.

A YEAR OF REMISSION

MONSIGNOR DOWNEY of Corrimal provided a special address on the 50 anniversary of St. Michael's Church and we thought it was fitting to bring parishioners some parts of that address.

"You shall sanctify the 50th year and shall proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of your land; for it is the year of jubilee.

"Every man shall return to his possessions and everyone shall go back to his former family; because it is the jubilee and the 50th year (levit 8-11).

"Just before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God spoke to Moses and told him to set aside every 50th year as a year of Jubilee.

"It was to be a year of grace and pardon. Everyone was to be reconciled with his fellow man and all enmities blotted out ... a year of peace and happiness and goodwill towards all."

Monsignor Downey recalled the planning days of the church and its eventual opening.

He went on:

"The Church is the very centre and heart of the parish. True, God may be honoured everywhere, but it is especially in the Church that the faithful come together to honour Him publicly and especially through the great sacrifice of the Mass."

The monsignor said it was the foresight of the Wollongong parish priest (Father Dunne) that placed our Thirroul church where it is today.

In a time when choice blocks were being grabbed up, Father Dunne showed some skill in the real estate business to snap up a block in Main Road, Thirroul, for the Church.

Later he transferred the property to the Bulli parish.

While post-war planning was underway for the Thirroul church, mass was celebrated every second Sunday in the Schol of Arts (now the R.S.L. Club). Monsignor Downey provided an interesting piece of

A YEAR TO REJOICE

history - the names of the two altar servers at the School of Arts services, Luke Dwyer and Earnest Tweedy.

Mr. Luke Dwyer now lives at Corrimal and the late Ernest Tweedy later became the Archbishop of Hobart.

The Monsignor said the church was the very centre and heart of the Parish. While it was true that God might be honoured everywhere, it was especially in the church that the faithful people came together to give honour to God publicly - and through the great sacrifices of the Mass.

He recalled that hundreds and hundreds of infant Thirroul Catholics had been brought to the baptismal font at St. Michael's Church.

Monsignor Downey spoke of the thousands of masses celebrated in the Thirroul Church and the thousands and thousands of communions received over the past 50 years.

He said: "In those 50 years hundreds of young men and women have walked up this aisle to the altar. Here before Our Divine Lord they have clasped hands and pronounced their life-long marriage vows.

"They have given to each other the wedding ring symbolising their lifelong union with each other, and Our Lady has blessed their marriage.

The monsignor said the occasion of Jubilee for Thirroul was one of great rejoicing and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the favours and graces of 50 years.

"Let us not forget the pioneers of this parish of Thirroul," he said, "who have lived and struggled and made great sacrifices over the years to make this Jubilee possible.

"You are now enjoying the fruits of their labours, prayers and sacrifices."

Some of our Parish P



Father H. Slattery, had the good fortune to be with us for the opening of the Parish School, and he is seen on our right greeting Cardinal Gilroy on a visit to Thirrourl

Father Slattery was P.P. from January 1948, to September 1951.



LEFT: Another popular Parish Priest at Thirrourl, Father W. Neilson, who held office for 20-years from 1951 to 1971. In his time new churches were built at Stanwell Park, Coledale and Wombarra. Father Neilson instigated the "Every Catholic Canvass" in 1960 asking for financial pledges to help finance the development of the Parish of St. Michael.

Thirrourl has been most fortunate during the past 50 years to have had a long list of outstanding Parish Priests.

We have had nine in that period. That's Father J. Mullin on the left (P.P. 1940 to 1947). We have had three relieving Parish Priests and more than 50 visiting priests celebrating mass.

In later pages we will list the names of the priests, including one surprise.



Priests Over 50 Years

Another one of our pre-war Parish Priests was Father J. O'Farrell who guided Thirroul parishioners from 1934 until 1940.

Father O'Farrell was instrumental in organising important additions to St. Michael's church in 1939.



The building project was estimated to cost £800 as outlined to the committee of the day, but it eventually cost about twice that much. It included the Sanctuary, sacristy and confessional boxes.

Father O'Farrell is seen here with his 1936 model Vauxhall sedan.

He was appointed in May, 1940, to the newly formed parish of Harris Park and was succeeded as priest in charge by Father Mullin.



A CHARMING GROUP indeed. Sixth Class, 1959.... Well, the cheery group were in 6th Class room discussing the Parish's first planned giving campaign. Organisers described the ladies as a driving influence in the family pledge to assist the Church. Another picture on page 27.

BILL LALOR RECALLS HISTORY ...

We have tried to put down in print some facts and figures of our Parish history for this momentous occasion and we have covered most highlights.

Our source of information has been the Church book started by Father Power and entries by Bill Lalor, who was Church Secretary for 30 years, from 1920 till 1950.

Now let Bill himself relate some facts and if we cover the same ground it is to our benefit.

"The committee which decided in December, 1920, to call for tenders to build the church comprised Father Power, L. Buggy, M. Cahill, F. Carey, J. Coffeey, L. Cooney, T. Dwyer, M. Fagan, T. Ford, P. Hanratty, J.S. Kirton, B. Kirton and W. Lalor."

The next major activity after the opening of the church and presbytery was the purchase of land for the future Convent.

"On October 14, 1927, Father O'Donnell purchased a cottage and adjoining block of ground in Raymond



BILL LALOR

Road for \$1000. It was to be converted into a residence for Sisters at a future date - but that did not happen for another 21 or 22 years.

"In 1939 moves were made by Father O'Farrell to extend the church by the provision of a sanctuary, confessionals, sacristy, baptismal font and pulpit.

"This work was completed and blessed on 15th. October, 1939.

MORE MEMORIES

"As early as 1940 plans were underway for the Sisters of St. Joseph to undertake classes in our own school, but plans were shelved because of the restrictive legislation in force during the war period and afterwards.

"The cottage in Raymond Road was converted in 1948 for use by the sisters and by 1950 work had started on the School. A fine brick building comprising four class rooms.

"Early in 1970 new classrooms had been erected at the school to provide accommodation for the extra number of pupils.

Bill Lalor has also listed for us the names of three young men from the Parish who have entered the priesthood.

"Fred Sullivan joined the Redemptorist Order; Anthony Bolt became a member of the Sacred Heart Order and Anthony Sahade is a secular priest at Villawood.

"Another boy, William Sullivan, Fred's brother joined the Christian Brothers Order."

BELOW: Happy days at another Golden Jubilee. This was the 50th wedding anniversary of the late George (Whacko) Coulton and his wife Maude. Left to right: Bill Lalor, Father Neilson, Maude and George Coulton and Miss Olive Molloy. The celebration was held in the Parish Hall.



EXTENSIONS IN 1939

EXTENSIONS to Saints Michael's and Molua's Church, Thirroul, were completed and blessed at a special ceremony in October, 1939 - a bright note in a grim period of war clouds.

Monsignor T. Phelan from Lewisham conducted the service.

The improvements cost about £1700 and included a sanctuary, sacristy and confessionals. Outstanding features of the sanctuary were three beautifully stained-glass windows. Provisions for the extensions had been made in the original planning by Father Power nearly 20-years earlier.

The large audience was told that the additions were necessary to keep pace with rapid progress being made on the South Coast.

Monsignor Phelan said the Church to Catholics was not merely a meeting assembly hall or meeting place. It was far nobler and higher. It might truly be called the powerhouse of spiritual light in the parish.

Father O'Farrell told the parishioners that Mrs. J. Ryan had donated a Calvary Group costing £50 - also a Baptismal Font costing £40; and Mrs. Fagan had donated a stained memorial window costing £50 while a similar window had been presented by Mr. and Mrs. Gwyther; Mr. B. Kirton had donated a steel tabernacle and there was also a pulpit from Mr. J. Cahill.

The crowd was told the church debt stood at nearly £1300 and an appeal was made for clearing this.

The South Coast district had been making very rapid progress and Thirroul "set as it is in such delightful scenic surroundings, could not escape sharing in that achievements"

Father O'Farrell said: "Consequently our people required a bigger and better church. We have almost doubled the seating accommodation and provided a more beautiful and devotional church for worship.

Local politicians at the opening were Mr. H. P. Lazzarini (Federal) and Mr. J. T. Sweeney (State). Both men supported the appeal for donations to clear the church debt.

LIST OF PARISH PRIESTS AND VISITORS.

THE SUPRISE we mentioned on Page 14? Well, Father Fuhlendorf is no newcomer to Thirroul. He celebrated mass as a visiting priest in January, 1949.

The list the good Father has given us of priests in the Parish since 1923 is a hefty one.

The Parish Priests have been - Father O'Donnell 1923-30; Fr. W. Geer 1930-31; Fr. Kissane 1932-34; Fr. O'Farrell 1934-40; Fr. J. Mullen 1940-47; Fr. Aylward 1947; Fr. Slattery 1948-51; Father Neilson 1951-71 and Fr. Fuhlendorf has been P.P. since December 1971.

Up till 1934 mass was celebrated at Thirroul each Sunday and at Coledale and Clifton on alternate Sundays. Father Slattery asked the Bishop for an assistant to increase services and his request was granted.

The first Assistant priest was Fr. M. Kennedy, followed by Fr. Pierce on loan from Goulburn Diocese, Fr. W. Higgins, Fr. Downer and Father Higgins for a second term.

Next was Fr. Bramley, then popular Father P. McCarthy, who died tragically a few years ago in a road smash at the top of Bulli Pass while serving at Helensburgh; Fr. Rosa and finally Fr. Rheinberger, now at Picton.

Father Reinberger was acting P.P. until Father Fuhlendorf arrived from Moruya.

Also on our list are Father Murphy a relief for some months early in the war years, Father Cullen a relief in 1947 and Fr. V. Folkes here briefly in 1951.

We hope to see some of our previous priests at our celebrations during the Jubilee week.

Some of our early visiting priests were Father E. Gleeson, P. Maloney, R. Macken, F. Rowan and F. King.

In 1958 we had a local lad back home to say mass, Father A. Bolt, who we hope joins the celebrations. He is now at Chevalier College, Bowral.

FIRST MISSION IN OUR PARISH - 1925

THIRROUL had its first mission in 1925, from February 22 to March 1.

During the mission, outlined in the Church diary, 267 persons went to confession, 530 received Holy Communion, 130 joined the Sacred Heart Sodality, 85 children attended the children's mission.

At the conclusion of the mission a branch of the Hibernian Catholic Benefit society was established in Thirroul parish and the following officers were elected:

Messrs Kelly, Fagan, Cooney, Hines, English and L. Buggy (jun.).

A statue of the Sacred Heart and one of the Blessed Virgin were donated at a cost of £25 each by Dr. and Mrs. Larkin and Mr. A. Starr.

A three-day mission was given at Coledale and 81 went to confession, 142 to Communion; 42 joined the Sacred Heart Sodality and 38 children attended the mission.

Clifton also had a three-day mission - 76 persons went to confession and 85 to communion. Thirty children attended the mission.



ANOTHER FIRST for the Parish. The First Holy Communion group at the Thirroul Convent School pictured just after taking the sacrament with Father Mullins. It was 1940, in case the girls can't remember!



A MOST joyful occasion. The first wedding at the brand new Thirroul church. The groom was Michael James Hennessy, who married Mary Bridget Cahill. The celebrant was Father O'Donnell. An historic first for St. Michael's, Thirroul.

ALTAR GIFT

THERE HAS BEEN a little alteration to the altar over the past 50 years, but mainly it is still the memorial donated by Mr. Bernie Kirton of Thirroul to the church.

At the time the Parish Priest of Bulli (Father Power) wrote in 1921:

"I wish to place on record that Bernie Kirton gave the beautiful altar in memory of his lately deceased wife.

"The altar cost \$50.

"May this small notice keep green his memory and that of his beloved wife, poor Polly, as she was universally called.

"She was an Irish girl - God Rest her Soul."

more nostalgia—CLIFTON CHURCH



THIS is the old St. Patrick's Catholic Church at Clifton built in the 19th Century - about the 1880s to serve the mining community in Wollongong's northern district.

It had a lifespan of some 70 years before being replaced by a modern church building at Wombarra.

St. Patrick's was used by sisters of St. Joseph for teaching classes from 1912 to about 1930, when then ceased because of the dwindling population.

Below: The interior of the old church. Beauty in its simplicity.





MOST modern Church in the Thirroul Parish is Our Lady Of Lourdes at Wombarra. It opened in 1964 at the corner of Main Road and Morrison Avenue to cater for the Catholic community of regions from Scarborough to Coalcliff. Previously the Clifton church (St. Patrick's) had been the local church for our northern region.



OUR MEN OF **the Parish** at the 1959 campaign meeting. They followed the **footsteps** of the Parish pioneers in helping to develop the Church with pledges of financial aid. You might even recognise some faces here - it's only 14 years ago!

a long time ago



Reflections from an old camera. Left is a scene in Main Road, Thirroul, looking up towards Kennedy Hill - and a rough old road it was too. In the foreground is Smiths Bakery.

Right: Cochrane Road, Thirroul. Infact from our picture above you go only 20-yards and turn left into Cochrane Road. This snap was taken in 1934 - the year Father O'Farrell joined the Thirroul Parish. Dr. Bunn now lives on one corner of Main Road and Cochrane Street; Dr. Hickson on the other.



This picture on the left is Thirroul Railway Station taken in 1934 also. An old steam train has just arrived from faraway Sydney. Except for that fence in the foreground there seems little change at the station.



Right: The Breakers looking up towards the escarpment and little wonder it was called breakers. It has a surface like the Burma Road. Just another little nostalgic reminder of our 50 years Parish history. This was taken in 1930.





A GROUP OF Austinmer lifesavers and friends on the beach some 50 years ago - about the time our Parish was formed. Third from the right is Frank Carey; second from the right is John Coffey. Both men were members of the Committee which organised the establishment of our first church. Recognise anybody here?



OUR THIRROUL PARISH pioneers went to mass every second Sunday. It was the School of Arts, skating ring, a hall for many causes. It was on the site of the present day R.S.L. Club. This hall was used up till the time St. Michael's Church was opened in 1921.

FR. FUHLENDORF:

"A few coincidences and memories of a personal nature came to my mind as I listed the names of priests associated with the Thirroul Parish:

"Father P.J. O'Donnell, the first Parish Priest, was later Parish Priest of Parramatta - in 1936 your present P.P. was given his first appointment to Parramatta.

"Father Kissane was an assistant priest of Leichardt when Father Fuhlendorf was a boy at school at St. Columba's.

"Father Bill Geer was Parish Priest at North Leichardt at the time of Fr. Fuhlendorf's ordination and assisted at his ordination in St. Mary's Cathedral and at St. Columba's.

IT WAS A LONG WALK

Our story is about the Golden Jubilee, so we have not traced back into the history of the Catholic pioneers of the Thirroul Area, then known as Robinville.

But we cannot pass them by without reflecting on their faith and endurance.

How easy we accept motor transport today. Just in the car and a five minute drive to church.

The pre-Parish pioneers - few as they may have been - walked to Wollongong for mass. The distance was reduced later with the opening of the Bulli Church in the late 19th Century.

DONATIONS £.S.D.

The Catholic Record of October, 1924, included the following collectors' lists:

Thirroul-Austinmer: Bill Lalor, who brought in £6/15/6; Reg Fagan £4; George Coulton £3/15/- and Miss Carey £2/16/-.

Coledale: Master P. McDonnell £4/16/6; Mr. P.T. Murphy £9/6/6.

Those were the days of Bazaars and penny collections.

The start of our next 50 years is off to a bright start with the Planned Giving Guidance campaign providing some assurance for future planning.

Our Parish Priest (Father F. Fuhlendorf) has informed parishioners that after 50 years continuous service it's time for the renewal of St. Michael's Church and Thirroul Presbytery.

He says exterior repairs and reconditioning; interior modifications in keeping with present and future requirements for you and your children now and in the years ahead are due.

The Campaign chairman (Mr. E. Curtis) joins with Father Fuhlendorf in listing some of the parish needs:

Repairs and alterations to our church; Primary school extensions; Secondary School subsidy; Presbytery renovations; improvements to Convent; extension and consolidation of area; debt reduction; parish maintenance costs and Diocesan contributions. They say what the campaign seeks is MORE givers giving MORE.

Members of the Finance Committee are: E. Curtis, M. Arrighi, L. Brooke, I. Clark, J. Coffey, B. Cooney, G. Doyle, D. Grace, K. Grew, J. Griffin, J. Howarth, W. Lalor, D. McKinnon, T. Mortimer, J. McMahon and P. Tuckerman.

The Social Committee: Juen Kingston (chairman) Molly Brown, Patsy Grew, Conn Lawless, Isabel O'Connor, Grace Parslow, Pat Sweeny and Olive Molloy.

WOLLONGONG'S two northern parishes - Bulli and Thirroul which took in all areas from Corrimal to Clifton - had a weekly paper in the 1920's.

It was called the Bulli and Thirroul Catholic Record.

It carried a stack of ads too ... and after 50 years some chucklers are amongst them.

B. Marks, (Main Road, Thirroul) was giving away a free pair of silk stockings with every pair of shoes purchased from 19/11 upwards; H. Moore was selling afternoon tea opposite the Arcadia Pictures, Thirroul, and T. J. Cooney was "looking for a fair share of patronage by strict attention" at his grocery shop in McCauley street.

thanks . . .

THOUGH TIME WAS very short, the birth of this Golden Jubilee Commemorative booklet is due in thought, word and deed to June Kingston, Connie Lawless,

Without the many photographs supplied the stories could not have been told so clearly, many thanks to....

Miss. Olive Molloy, Isabel O'Connor, Pat Sweeny.

The valuable information given by both Bill Lalor and Olive Molloy regarding early dates and advice.

Many hurried hours of work, research and writing these stories our gratitude to John Kelly-editor and Ron Corelli-layout and arrangement and last but not least, Wollongong Quick Print (76b Kembla Street, Wollongong) for production of this historical account of 50 years of our Church.



BISHOP'S HOUSE,
HARBOUR STREET,
WOLLONGONG.

To the Parish Priest and People of Thirroul-

I wish to congratulate you all on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of your Parish. It is good to look back on the achievements of Priests, Nuns, and People in the past and to take up from them the challenges that confront the Church today.

With every good wish and blessing,

H. J. Maloney

Bishop of Wollongong.