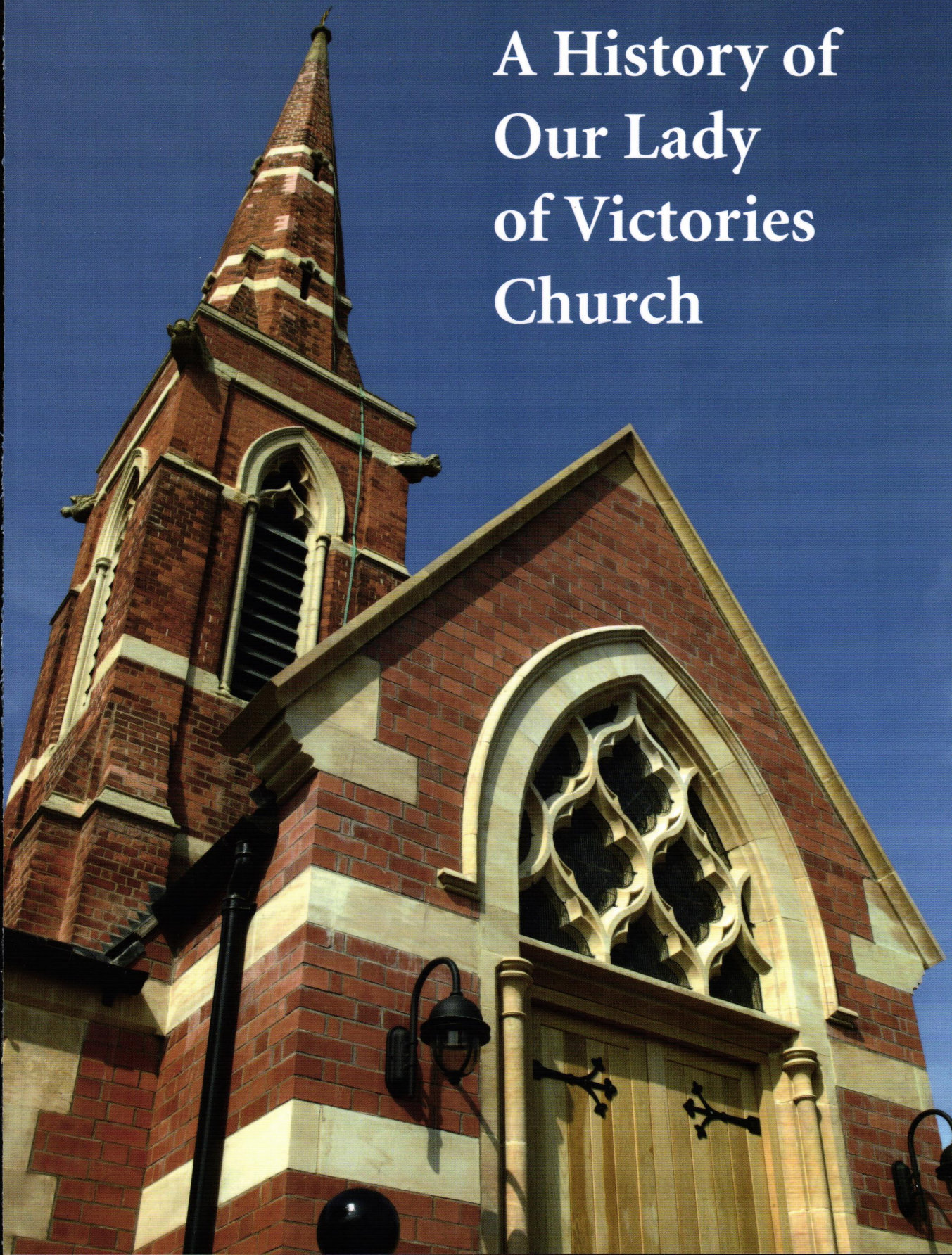


# A History of Our Lady of Victories Church



## Foreword

On the occasion of the new extensions to Our Lady of Victories Church and the modernising of the Presbytery, I have been asked by Canon Owen O'Neill to bring up to date the history of the parish - from Penal Days to the present day (2005). It is hoped that it will serve as a souvenir of the events now happening in the Parish and that it will also provide information for future generations to come. Use has been made of information collected and stored in the parish archives, reminiscences of parishioners and extracts from local newspapers plus extracts from the County archives and the archives of the Market Harborough Museum. As an addendum, notes are appended on the Penal Laws affecting Roman Catholics from the Reformation up to the Relief Acts of 1778 and 1791, the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 as well as a chronological list of Parish Priests and Curates who have served our parish so well over all the years.

It only remains to us, the parishioners of the present day, stimulated by the efforts and example of those who have preceded us, to continue the good work and add more chapters to the history of our parish.

"We shall continue to work under the patronage of Our Lady of Victories to the greater glory of God." (Quoted from the foreword of the booklet commemorating the 75th anniversary of the building of the church.

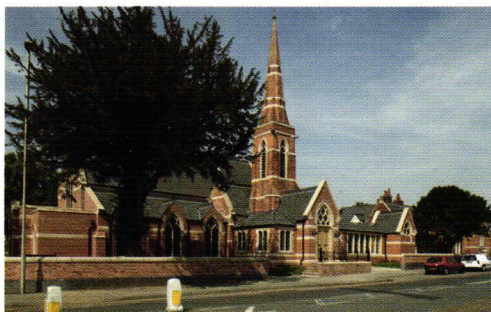
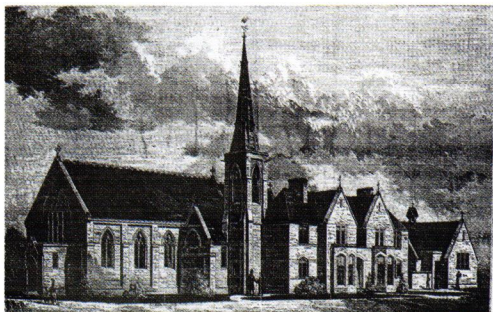
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**Below:** New Roman Catholic Church, Presbytery and School Room, Market Harborough; Mr. C.G. Wray Architect 1876.

The main features of the church are recognisable, but the grand design of the presbytery must have been financially curtailed. The school room, seen here had an addition built at the rear in 1910

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**Bottom Right:** O.L.V. as it is today 2006.

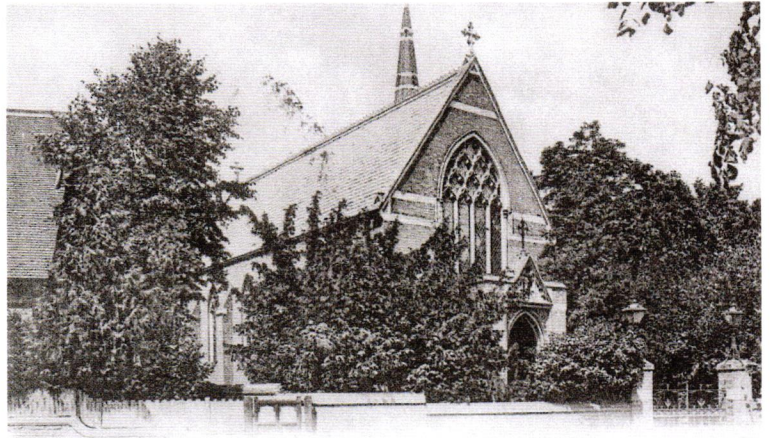


It is widely supposed that during the Reformation under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I our forefathers became members of the Church of England overnight. For many reasons, which are detailed later, that may have been so, but in the East Midlands the Faith was still preserved quietly and secretly during penal times.

In 1734 Father John Clarkson O.P. came to Aston Flamville Hall as a chaplain to Carrington Francis Turville. In 1746 Mr. Turville left England for Brussels and sold up the Hall leaving £5,000 to the Dominican Order on condition that a priest be appointed to the Aston Mission at £30.00 per annum. His benefaction made the return of Catholicism to Leicester possible.

At this time, 1746, Father John as an active missionary priest was charged with the district stretching from Coventry to Leicester. It was in this year that he established a Mass centre in the house of John Beaumont Byerley Junior at Belgrave in the City of Leicester. Before Father John came to Leicester, the few faithful depended, for the sacraments, on the occasional visit of priests passing through Leicester. Sometimes when the opportunity offered, the people came to houses of catholic gentry nearby who might have a chaplain.

Among the recusant families of Leicestershire besides the Turvilles of Aston Flavell were the Carringtons and the Fortesques. Francis Turville's mother was a Fortesque of Husbands Bosworth a family which had given a martyr to the Church in the person of Blessed Adrian Fortesque during the



reign of Henry VIII. In the booklet 'The return to Catholicism 1746-1946 Leicester' by John William Kimberlin it is recorded that from 1746 Aston Flavell and Nevill Holt were never again without a permanent chaplain as was Old Dalby Hall, which the Dominicans served. From the booklet it appears that at Leicester-Belgrave was the resident chaplain and he would, from time to time, serve this recusant families. It goes on to say that at times he could only come to them once a month for Mass, but they would no longer be left without the succour of a priest in serious illness or death, despite the long walk of 12 miles from Leicester to Aston Flavell. Later on, when times became less severe in fines, imprisonment, confiscation of property and even death, these families would have their own chaplain as at Nevill Holt, Husbands Bosworth and Aston Flavell. It is recorded that the Turville Petre chaplain in Husbands Bosworth had Mass said at Mrs. Porter's house in Market Harborough in 1787 and the Dominicans from Leicester supplied from 1825.

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**Above:** Our Lady of Victories Church, before the Narthex was built.

Courtesy of L.C.C.  
Harborough Museum.

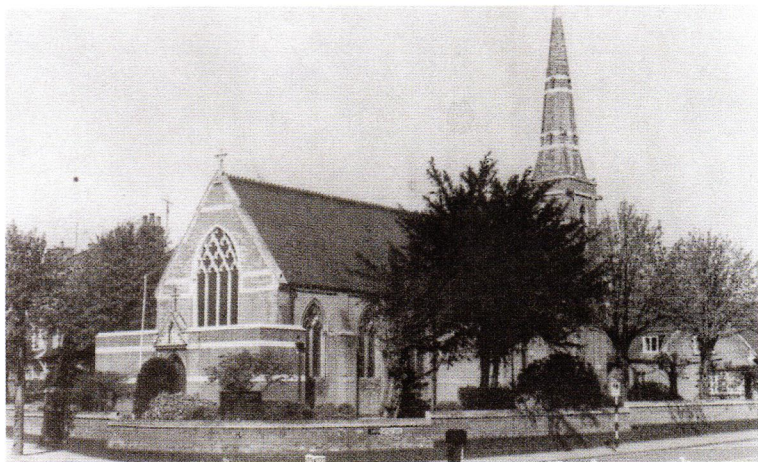


*Above: Anne Molau  
(Nee Howett)  
Mary Finlayson (Nee  
Flint)  
Michael Howett.  
Photograph taken in  
N.S.W Australia in 1996.  
These are the descendents  
of the Flint family, who  
over the generations have  
been great benefactors of  
the parish c.f. history text.*

It is noted that at this time Ann Flint and her sons provided lodgings for a Dominican Priest, Fr. Aloysius Dent who had set up a Mass centre in one of their cottages in Angel Row in 1849. The real founder of the parish was Fr.N. Malvoisin who opened a permanent Mass centre here in 1856. He celebrated Mass in private houses and in the loft in Angel Row. In the fullness of time he was succeeded by Fr. Edmund (1868-1870) and he in turn by Fr. Buckley (1870-1872) from Leicester. (An elderly parishioner recounts in 2004 that her grandfather as a young man with his wife and children used to walk from Fleckney to hear Mass in the chapel in Angel Row, she also recalls that they used to eat their sandwiches on the way home). With the passing of the Catholic Relief Acts of 1778 and 1791 together with the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, Catholic priests could openly build churches and say Mass. From the parish records it is noted, during that time 'between 1772 and 1854 some 95 children were baptised by the Catholic

Priests at Nevill Holt.' ( The old baptismal registers for Nevill Holt are now kept at Holy Cross Priory, Leicester). The records of that family showed that even in the early 19th century families came from as far afield as Stamford, Kettering, Uppingham and Market Harborough to hear Mass and receive the Sacraments. At Nevill Holy Among those listed was William Flint who owned the Angel Hotel in Market Harborough. Mr.John Harwood Hill, in an article on Market Harborough, records in 1875, that Mass was being said in a chapel in a loft in Angel Row every alternate Sunday by a priest from Leicester. "There the good people of the Faith gathered together under Father N.Malvoisin, who came to Market Harborough as parish priest in 1856 and stayed for twelve years enriching his congregation with his knowledge and teaching" In 1872 Fr. Richard Vandepitte was appointed the first resident priest. By that time the parish was sufficiently strong in numbers to support a permanent church. In the Will of Christina Nevill of Nevill Holt, a legacy was given into the care of William Flint for the sole purpose of building a Catholic Church in Market Harborough as soon as there were enough Catholics to warrant it. That became possible in 1876 on the land given generously by James Flint and Family. In parentheses he owned the Angel Hotel on the High Street, and also the feedmill and brewery which stood on the corner of Fairfield Road and has recently (2003) been converted into flats, now named The Maltings.

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*Above: Our Lady of Victories Church after the Narthex was built.*

*Courtesy of L.C.C.  
Harborough Museum.*

With the unfailing encouragement of Fr. Vandepitte using the Nevill legacy and generous funds subscribed for its erection, work commenced on the church in 1876 and completed the following year.

It was designed by C.G.Wray, consisting of a nave and chancel; in red brick with Bath Stone dressings and stripes, reticulated decorated windows and a tall bell tower and steeple.

In 1877 when the building of the chancel and the nave were completed the Bishop of Northampton The Right Reverend Kerril Amherst D.D. was asked to officiate at its opening. On being told that the church was on the north side of the River Welland, he suggested that the Bishop of Nottingham be approached. The river in those days, not only delineated the boundaries between the two dioceses but also the counties of Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. So on the 16th August, 1877 at its solemn opening Mass His Lordship Bishop Bagshawe of Nottingham presided and the great leader of the Catholic Church in those difficult times, His Eminence

Cardinal Manning, preached the sermon. At the luncheon, at which more than 160 persons took part, the Cardinal rose and said it was his duty to announce to them that by a very wise agreement they had come to the determination to conclude their meeting without toasts. But there were one or two duties to be discharged and he would discharge them as briefly as he could. The first was to correct a statement he had made that morning, that the church had cost £4000.00 and that there was £800 wanted to complete the purchase. The fact was, as he now learned from Fr. Vandepitte, that the church had cost £2,600 and the schools £800 making together a total of £3,400. and £800 required to complete the purchase. He was surprised that the church had cost so little, having fortunately or unfortunately had so much to do with the building of churches and the paying of debts. He might say that the Harborough church was exceedingly well and cheaply built. He did not, and he hoped he should not be misunderstood, in saying that it was a cheap church, for they could not build a church too well. But they were obliged to build as they could, and it was better not to wait till they could build it in a more costly way, its use being the greater need. With regard to the debt remaining he thought that by a little management.....

At that time the church was dedicated to St. Mary. It was to house an ancient wooden statue of Our Lady of Moorsele for which Fr. Vandepitte had built a Lady Chapel at the right hand side of the Chancel. This wooden statue of Belgian

origin was bequeathed to Fr. Vandepitte by his mother. It is described as being of oak in two pieces, namely a plinth and a figure. It was marked on the back with the date of 1627.

Its exact provenance is unknown but it was venerated in the 17th Century as "Our Lady of Moorsele" due to it being in a chapel on the Moorsele Road not far from Menin in Belgium, but it may have been a lot older. (There is a very full account of the chequered history of the statue in the parish archives under the title of 'Our Lady of York, Mother of Mercy' by Reverend David Quinlan.) Father Vandepitte intended that the 'Holy Image of Our Mother of Mercy' would become an object of devotion and pilgrimage here in Market Harborough. Unfortunately he realised that the Catholic population in the area of the parish was too small to provide the numbers he had in mind and also Market Harborough, at that time, was considered to have too isolated an access to become a centre of pilgrimage.

He consulted Fr. William Brown, former Vicar General of the Diocese of Nottingham, who had lately become the Parish Priest of St. Wilfrid's Church in York, close to the western façade of the Minster. It was he who suggested that Fr. Vandepitte might find York, with its main railway and road junctions a better centre for pilgrimage. The Bishop of Nottingham The Right Reverend Edward Gilpin Bagshawe (died 1915) gave permission for the removal of the statue to York and allowed Fr. Vandepitte to be attached to the Middlesborough Diocese so that he could promote the devotion to



*Left: Interior of the old church facing south. John Wells and Andrew Douglas.*



*Left: Detail of Spiral Staircase, new pews, a Station of the Cross and one Stained Glass Window.*

Our Lady of Mercy. Fr. Vandepitte left Market Harborough in 1883 (died 1888). The statue was installed in St. Wilfrid's in a special chapel created for its veneration. Unfortunately this statue was removed from St. Wilfrid's in the latter part of the

**Right:** Wooden carving depicting Our Lady of Moorseele dated on the back 1627. It was bequeathed to Fr. Vaudepitte by his mother. He intended that "St. Mary's" in Market Harborough would become its home. But later was transferred to St. Wilfrids in York.  
A full history of the statue is recovered in a booklet in the parish archives "Our Lady of York" by Rev David Quinlan.



20th Century and has never been recovered. The shrine is still there. Following the translation of the statue to York, the Church in Market Harborough was rededicated to 'Our Lady of Victories'. This title reflects the great sea battle of Lepanto in 1571 when Don John of Austria defeated the fleet of the Ottoman Turks in the Adriatic with the combined Christian fleet, thus ending a great threat to European Christianity. The church then had not only a Chancel and Nave but also a steeple and bells. These two adjuncts were unique as they were prohibited in law for Catholic

Churches until that Law was repealed in 1926. (In 1949 the tower and steeple were partially dismantled, rebuilt and repointed.)

Ten years after the opening in 1887, Fr. Bull began the first of his two appointments to the parish (1887-1888) - he briefly returned as Monsignor (1927-1929) after the Presbytery was built (1888).

In 1898 the sacristies were added along with a 'cloister' to connect the presbytery to the church. (Sir Humphrey de Trafford and his mother Lady Annette financed these additions. They were designed by Peter Paul Pugin, the third son of Augustus Northmore Pugin (1812-1852).

[A.W.N. Pugin was an English architect largely responsible in his short life for the flowering of the Gothic revival in the early 1800s. His output was prodigious. John Rushkin (1819-1900) who had once been accused of cribbing ideas from A.W.N. Pugin declared his work to be 'worthless'. Fortunately history does not agree with him].

P.P. Pugin's work on the church, even though it is a small sample of Victorian Gothic, has some significance and was a major influence and difficulty on the proposed extension of the church in 2004/5.

In the same year as the presbytery was built, the Flint family presented to the church, the beautiful Stations of the Cross in memory of their parents James and Margaret. They were made by the De Beale Brothers of Ghent. In a recent archeological survey of the church (2003) they were classified as being of

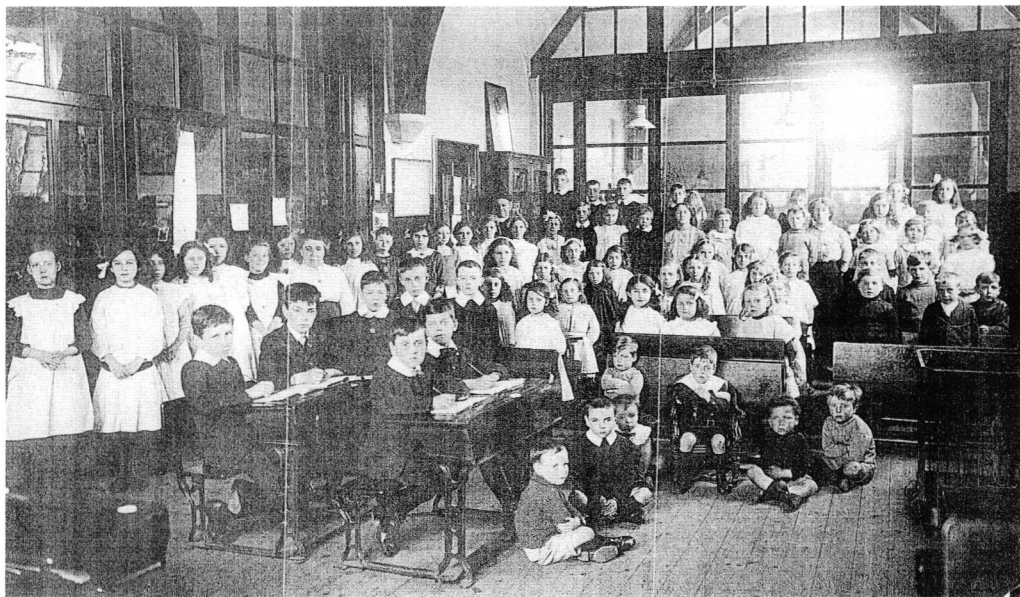


**Left:** Interior of the church post 1921. Note the position of the statue of Our Lady of Victories on the left hand side of the nave; The electric lights - a gift from Mrs Cuthbert Flint pre 1914, and the two large paintings dividing the nave from the Sacred Heart Chapel. The one depicting the Virgin and child is still in the possession of the parish. It is purported to be a copy of a Micrillo's Madonna and child in the Pitti Gallery in Florence. The uppty window on the right hand side was eventually glazed with a stained glass window of St. John Fisher and St. Thomas Mare in 1950; later to be repositioned during the occlusion 2004-5

exceptional quality. [A curious co-incidence as both the Stations of the Cross and the old wooden statue of Our Lady of Moorsele came from Flanders!!]

The next event worthy of record was the appointment of Canon Hugh Kavanagh to the parish in 1894. He has been referred to as the second founder of the parish. When he arrived the church was little more than a shell, and he set about with great energy to decorate and enhance it. It was during his incumbancy that the Stations of the Cross, already referred to, were installed and most of the stained glass windows were erected [see appendix for details] He also moved in 1921 the statue of Our Lady of Victories from the Lady Chapel to the left hand side of the nave. (The crowns that the Infanta and Our Lady were wearing were added in memory of Tony Westley to commemorate his accidental death by drowning aged 7 years.) Unfortunately this statue was terminally damaged in an accident during the refurbishment. In the place of the statue the Canon energetically collected for a war memorial to honour the fallen of the parish in the Great War 1914-1918. This took the form of a side altar dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was built of marble and stone from the Roman Quarries at Seaton in Dorset. The work was executed by Wall and Co. of Cheltenham. June 1921 saw the first Mass for the dead being celebrated there by Dean Kavanagh. Bugles sounded the Last Post at the end of Mass and the Territorial Band provided some background music to a procession from the church to the schoolroom. The tabernacle door was a gift of Sir Humphrey de

**Right:** St. Josephs School photograph taken between 1910 and 1927. Note the Headteacher - Miss Hussey - eight from the left at the back. Parish Priest, Canon Kavanagh, wearing his beretta and clerical collar at the back at the left hand side in front of the bookcase/cupboard. Note on it the gas lights, the coal fire on the right hand front corner, the school uniform!! and the polished footwear. Two pupils have been named, brother and sister. Pat Carrol, fourth from the left in front of the partition, wearing ribbons and Maurice Carrol, the tallest boy at the back next to the cupboard.



Trafford, who also, following the recognition of the Catholic School by the Leicestershire County Education Committee, laid the foundation stone to the extension to the school, suitably inscribed, in 1910.

Some parishioners still remember Canon Kavanagh, Parish Priest and Miss E.Hussey, Headteacher. In March 1927 Miss Hussey had conferred on her, the honour of the cross "Pro Ecclesia and Pontifice" by Pope Pius XI. According to the local newspaper "she had worked with unflagging energy for the betterment of the school and the education of the children. For many years the school was not under government aid, but owing to her efforts she succeeded in placing it on a proper footing- and that at a great sacrifice to herself ". Her pupils, on learning of this award, went to Miss Hussey's house on Coventry Road to give her three cheers, which she acknowledged from the window. Reading through the school log

book there is an entry made by the retiring Headmistress Emily Hussey, in June 30th 1927. She had suffered a severe heart attack and this was her last entry on retiring (1894-1927).

"Before I had recovered the late Corresponding Manager for 33 years, the Very Reverend Canon Kavanagh was taken ill and died R.I.P. 28th May, 1927. His death is a great sorrow and a great loss to all, especially the children. He was devoted to the school in every way. He enlarged the building and made the teachers happy by providing a teachers' room for their comfort. For 33 years there has been the same Corresponding Manager and the same Head Teacher and naturally there has been a great upheaval as a consequence of the death of the late Very Reverend Canon Kavanagh and the retirement of the Head Teacher. Signed Emily Hussey, Late Headmistress 1894-1927"

Five months later Miss Hussey died on 15th November, 1927 the same year as

the Canon.

The photograph of the school shows Miss Hussey and Canon Kavanagh. It must have been taken after 1910 when the room behind them was built and before 1927 when both died.

## Consecration of the Church

It was the custom that a new church can be dedicated but not consecrated until all outstanding debts are paid - (abolished by the Second Vatican Council) This moment in the history of the parish arrived when Father J.E.Murdoch was Parish Priest (1940-55) The date was Thursday 5th May 1949. The Right Reverend Edward Ellis D.D. Bishop of Nottingham officiated at the consecration.

The ceremony began at 8.00 a.m. with the Very Reverend Canon A.J. Bird as M.C. and the priests and students of St.Joseph's College, Upton, formed the choir. His Lordship was assisted by the Reverend F. Fogden M.S.F.S. as Deacon and the Reverend J. Molloy, C.S.Sp. as subdeacon. The Very Referend Canon M.A. Gilleran, V.F. consecrated the side altar of the Sacred Heart, together with the Reverend J.D. Key as M.C. The relics enclosed in the altars were those of two Roman Martyrs Saints Crescentius and Clemente.

Many clergy were present including the Very Reverend C. Leetham, M.A. President of Ratcliffe College, the Very Reverend C.H. O'Brien, the Reverends C. Grant M.A., L.J. Drury, D. Henry (R.A.F. Chaplain),



**Left:** Consecration of Our Lady of Victories. Thursday 5th May 1949, Fr. Andrew Murdoch, Fr. Douglas Key, Canon M. Gilleran, Bishop Edward Ellis, Father Hugh O'Brien, Fr Joseph Murdoch, Fr. Francis Fogden. MSFS.

Courtesy of Leicestershire County Council Harborough Museum.



**Left:** Consecration of Our Lady of Victories 1949. Canon Gilleran, Bishop Ellis, Fr. Murdoch, Fr. Hugh O'Brien & Fr. Fogden MSFS.

**THE REV. John Douglas Key** parish priest at Market Harborough from August, 1953 until July last year, died in Derby Royal Infirmary early on Sunday morning. Aged 41 he had been ill for some weeks. Father Key moved from Market Harborough to St. Joseph's, Derby, a much larger parish, where he was only about eleven miles from his brother, the Rev. Victor Key, parish priest at Ilkeston. A native of Grimsby, he began his studies at Cotton College, North Staffordshire, and completed them at the English College, Rome, taking his Licentiate of Philosophy in 1938 and Licentiate of Theology in 1942.



**THE REV. J. D. KEY** Ordained in 1942, Father Key served for about two years at St. Peter's, Leicester, after which he went to Nottingham as secretary to the Bishop, staying there for nine years before coming to Market Harborough.

While at Harborough, he served as a co-opted member of the Leicestershire Education Committee. He edited the Nottingham Diocesan Year Book for many years.

**REQUIEM MASS** A Requiem Mass was said in Our Lady of Victories Roman Catholic Church, Market Harborough, on Monday morning and a similar service was held at Husbands Bosworth.

The funeral took place at Derby yesterday (Wednesday), following a Solemn Requiem Mass at St. Joseph's



ANOTHER GENERAL VIEW of the scene outside St. Joseph's as the cortege prepares to leave for Nottingham Road Cemetery.



Waiting to pay their last respects

YOUNG AND OLD wait on the pavement outside St. Joseph's during the Solemn Requiem Mass.

**Left:** Fr. J.D.Key P.P. O.L.V. 1953 - 57

He invited the Presentation Sisters to Market Harborough to stabilise the staffing of the school in 1954.

He left for St.Josephs Parish Derby. He died four years later. Greatly mourned.

D. Ainsworth, A.V. Murdoch, N. Franks M.S.F.S., J.A. Dewar and others. Solemn High Mass was sung by the Parish Priest the Reverend J.E.Murdoch assisted by the Very Reverend C.H.O'Brien as Deacon and the Very Reverend Fodgen as Sub Deacon.

After the consecration of the Church fifty parishioners sat down to lunch with His Lordship the Right Reverend Edward Ellis D.D. Bishop of Nottingham, together with invited guests viz. Mr. C.E. De Trafford, brother of Sir Humphrey, Miss Hilda de Trafford, Lady Bray (Stanford Hall), Mrs. Maxwell (Bosworth Hall), Mr.R.L.Howett from Australia, representing his Mother, the last of the Flint family, Mrs. Andro Roberts, Mr.& Mrs. O. Castell, Mr.& Mrs. B. O'Brien, Mr.L.Hooper and Mr. & Mrs. Gimson.

It was during Fr. Murdoch's time that in 1941 the private chapel at Husbands Bosworth Hall (1873) came to be served as a Chapel of Ease from the parish. A curate was added to Our Lady of Victories parish for this purpose. When Father Murdoch came to the parish in 1940 the second World War had been raging for more than a year. His first task was to make the roof of the church weatherproof. It was found necessary to strip and re-slate it. He had the guttering repaired and exterior of the whole property painted. Mrs.Howett - of the Flint Family - contributed very generously to defray the cost. Three years later he had the spire partially dismantled, rebuilt and repointed.

For some years Mass had been celebrated at Kibworth once a month. With the arrival of the first curate, Father J. McGillcuddy, it was possible to have there a Mass each week. After four years he was succeeded as curate by Father T. Cronin Inst.Ch. who remained for two years. Because of the shortage of priests, the parish managed without a curate with the help of supply priests of the new College of St. Raphael which had been opened by the missionaries of St. Francis de Sales at Oxendon Hall in 1945. Father Francis Fogden will be remembered especially as the priest who regularly filled the place of assistant priest until the college closed in 1951. However, as the War ended in 1945 it was possible for Father Murdoch to prepare for the consecration of the church already alluded to.

It was the Bishop's Secretary Fr. Douglas Key who was appointed to the parish when Fr. Murdoch left. During his regrettably short time in Market Harborough (1953-1957) he invited the Presentation Sisters to help stabilise the staffing of the All Age School due to the sudden influx of new children from the Polish Camps and the post war increase in the birth rate.



*Left: Centenary of the Church 1977. Celebrants: Fr. James Murdoch, Bishop James McGuinness; and Father William O'Dowd.*



*Left: Centenary of the Church 1977. Past and present Priests and Curates.*



*Left: Centenary of the Church 1977. Procession in church, Bishop James McGuinness.*

**Right:** The Octagonal Hall architect Eberlin & Partners.

*Left Background - Old School rooms.*

*Peeping over the roof of the Octagonal Halls left hand side part of the gable end of St. Joseph's School.*

The next event of noteworthy importance following Fr. T. O'Keefe's residence occurred when Canon C.B. Mitchell became Parish Priest (1961-1963) He built the Narthex and moved the Baptismal Font and its beautiful wooden carved cover, from the rear of the Gospel side of the nave into the new extension and built an organ loft in the Sacred Heart Chapel. The loft and the organ were the gifts of an anonymous donor, who at the time had become a Benedictine Monk at Downside Abbey. An inscription records the year of the donation as 1961. That organ loft and Baptistry/Narthex were assumed into the enlarged new church.

With the introduction of the Leicestershire Plan for Education, the parish school of St. Joseph's ceased being an All Age School in 1965 and reverted to being a Primary School. The senior pupils moved to the then only Catholic Comprehensive School - English Martyrs in the City of Leicester. During the period when Canon H. Quinn was the Parish Priest (1963-1969) the house next door to the Church on Coventry Road became vacant. It was then purchased so that the site would become available if ever the church needed extending. In the meanwhile it was altered to become a Parish Social Centre and Club.

Following on from Canon Quinn was Fr. William O'Dowd (1969-1985) who was the Parish Priest when the church and the school celebrated their centenaries. The school had, the year before, moved across the yard into the refurbished adjoining Church of England School, with added extensions. He had plans



drawn up by Eberlin and Partners to erect on the site of the school's, HORSIA buildings (Hutments on the Raising of the School Age), an octagonal hall based on the design of a similar building at the Cathedral in Nottingham. It had a

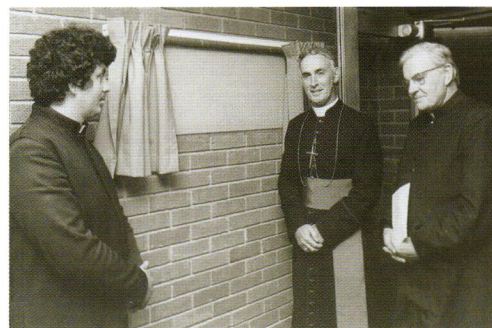
**Right:** Official opening and blessing of the Octagonal Hall. 6th October 1980.

*Fr. Michael More - Curate.*

*Right - Rev James*

*McGuinness - Bishop*

*Fr. William O'Dowd Parish Priest..*



connecting corridor to the old school next to the presbytery.

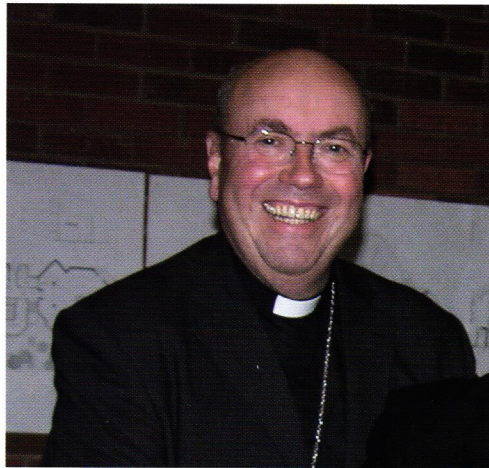
The whole complex was called The Catholic Community Centre. As well as the main octagonal hall there are two large rooms in what was the old school: the Kavanagh Room commemorating Canon Hugh Kavanagh the longest serving parish priest and the De Trafford Room.

The latter honours a great benefactor to the parish and through his name the other benefactors who have contributed so magnificently over the years to the needs of the Church.

The Hall was officially opened by the Bishop of Nottingham, the Right Reverend J.J. McGuinness on the eve of the Parish's Patronal Feast Day, 6th October, 1980. With Fr. W. O'Dowd was his curate Father Michael Moore. Also present was Canon Quinn, former Parish Priest and a past curate Fr. Carvill. Accompanying the Bishop was Fr. O'Dowd's brother Monsignor Peter O'Dowd, then Vicar General. The opening was witnessed by a packed hall of about 250 people. Work had begun on the hall on the preceeding Ascension Day and was virtually completed on the following Ascension Day 1980. The contract was for £118,000.

Father James Cahill P.P. 1985 - 2001, during his incumbency quietly and with great financial acumen, managed to increase the parish finance to the extent that the renovation and extension to the church became a possibility.

Canon Owen O'Neill followed Fr. James Cahill as parish priest with a mandate from the Bishop the Right Reverend Malcolm McMahon O.P., to extend the church and refurbish the presbytery. Work commenced on the project in 2004 with a proposed completion date of Easter 2005. Whilst funding for the Church will be an ongoing commitment from the Parish, the burden of the cost of the refurbishment of the presbytery to bring it into the 21st Century has been alleviated by an extremely generous gift from an anonymous donor. The Parish Priest hoped to move into the Presbytery by Christmas and the Church by Easter 2005.



**Left:** Bishop Malcolm McMahon O.P.

**Below:** Main Aisle looking towards the old entrance with new organ loft and choir, access by Spiral Stairs on right.



**Bottom:** New Sanctuary and Tabernacle.

Meanwhile he lived in temporary accommodation. The actual move into the presbytery took place at Christmas 2004.

As the church is a Grade II listed building, classified as Victorian Gothic, great care has been necessary to preserve original features especially with regard to the Stations of the Cross, Stained Glass Windows, stonework, Pugin cloisters, Sacristies etc. The major alteration, apart from the additional side aisles and the relocation of the choir loft, will be the new entrance under the tower, the added Narthex and the cloister connecting church, presbytery and parish rooms. The contract for the extension was awarded to Sapcote of Birmingham. John Holton of Lincoln was the architect. Whilst the building and renovation had been progressing, the windows were removed and sent away for professional repair, re-leading and cleaning. All will not be placed in their original positions. Previously five of the windows were on the Gospel side of the Nave. Because of the proximity of the new aisle to the adjoining parish property, which would have curtailed the amount of light to show off their lambent beauty, the windows for that side were resited. The great window in the chancel remained where it is at the liturgical east end of the church.

The other six are repositioned as will be found at the end of this monogram.

### **Benefactors**

1. Miss Christina Nevill of Nevill Holt - the legacy to build the church

2. William Flint. Chapel in Angel Row. Administered legacy of Christina Nevill.

3. Turvill Petres. For the chaplain 1787

4. James Flint. Land for building the church. Flint children. Stations of the Cross. James and Margaret Flint 1898

5. Sir Humphrey de Trafford and his Mother, Lady Annette. Built the sacristy And small cloister

6. Mrs. Cuthbert Flint. Installation of electricity in presbytery and church.

7. Until the outbreak of war in 1914 many visitors from the continent who came to the district for the hunting season, also gave generously to the parish: viz. Prince Kinsley, Count Laviche, Captain Whitmore: Mr. Eyre among others.

8. Edmund J.Bell. Tabernacle on the Sacred Heart Altar.

9. Mr.Hedley Roberts presented a new organ to replace the harmonium in memory of his wife Beatrice.

10. Mrs. Howett defrayed the cost of repairs to roof (Flint Family in Australia).

And also

11. Refurbishing of the church for its consecration.

12. Miss de Trafford (daughter of C.E. de Trafford) Authenticated relics of various saints plus Relic of the True Cross gilt

metal reliquary 1955 from the chapel in Hothorpe Hall.

13. Bernard and Elizabeth O'Brien. Main altar tabernacle

14. Brass Altar Candlesticks and Vases:

Mr. & Mrs. Owen Castell: Mrs.

Farquerson:

Mr. Joe Smith: Mrs. M. Newton: Mr. &

Mrs. T. Collins: Mrs. H. Brown: Mr. &

Mrs. Fincham: Mrs. Stanyon: Mr. &

Mrs. F. Wilson.

15. The Westley Family : The Altar Missal

16. Mr. & Mrs. Bowers:

17. Anonymous donors:

18. Organ and Organ Loft. m1965

19. Refurbishing and total modernisation of the Presbytery. 2004

A glimpse of some of the names of the benefactors that have been found on reports of events in the Parish can be seen as for example, at:

Canon Kavanagh's Golden Jubilee -

Committee Honorary members of the working committee to raise funds: The Earl of Denbigh, Sir Humphrey de Trafford, Lieut-Col. Turville Petre: C.E.

de Trafford, Esq.: W. Flint, Esq.: A.E. Eyre Esq. Extract from the parish archives. Presentation to Mr. & Mrs. Flint.

There is a yellowing newspaper cutting in the archives which records a presentation to Mr. & Mrs. Flint on their imminent departure to Australia in 1929(?) Mr.

Flint in reply to the gifts from the



parishioners, said he remembered the day when there was no church in Harborough and at a later period when Mass was said from time to time in an upper room and loft in Angel Row.

Again more recently, the days when there was Mass said by one of the Dominican Fathers from Leicester once a fortnight on alternate Sundays. On the other Sunday they journeyed to Husbands Bosworth to fulfil their obligation of hearing Mass. This was a red letter day for him as his grandparents journeyed by Carriage and Pair, but he was allowed to ride his pony. He also remembered the erection of the present beautiful church in 1876(?)

### **Our Lady's Canopy.**

When the stained glass was placed in the windows over the high altar, it was found that part of the wooden canopies of the old altar blocked part of it, so it was taken down. The throne canopy was utilised for a similar purpose for the original statue of Our Lady of Victories.

*Above: Christmas Crib, in front of the old altar decorated for Christmas showing Reredos Tapestry (Leonard Hayter R.I.P.) and Christmas Crib.*

### **The Marian Year December 8th 1953 - December 8th 1954.**

This year deserves a special mention. It was opened with sung Mass on 8th December 1953 and on all feasts of Our Blessed Lady throughout the year observed with greater devotion. Also on the days allowed by the Bishop, Evening Mass was celebrated.

Marian Year was a year of happenings at Market Harborough. Fr. Key obtained Nuns for the school, a house for their use as a convent and many other favours. The year ended with sung Mass on 8th December at 8.00 p.m.

30th May Marian Rally at Tollerton. Twelve coaches were hired for parents and children.

4th July. A coach party went to Walsingham - a pilgrimage most attractive in its simplicity. The Bishop (Very Revend Edward Ellis) said Mass and Fr. Dwyer preached.

In October the Parish went to the Marian Year Rally in Leicester on the 'Tigers' football ground. After Mass and Benediction, the Memorare was recited, by order of the Bishop.

A Triduum preached by a Franciscan was started and a perpetual novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour commenced.

### **Bazaar**

The annual Christmas Bazaar has been a great feature in this Parish for many years. An elderly member could remember even when quite young, collecting items for the bazaar at the beginning of the last century.

Traditionally it is held on the last Saturday of November.

The first written record of the Parish Annual Christmas Bazaar was held on 20th November 1955 and raised £520 for general church and school repairs.

Next year Ted Kavanagh, the script writer and television personality opened the bazaar on November 1st and raised £917.74 1/2.

The year after that the bazaar was opened by the former parish priest Fr.D.J. Key from Derby late of Market Harborough. In his opening speech he told a crowded Assembly Rooms "Any excuse is good enough to bring me back to wonderful Market Harborough". The bazaar raised £950.00. He was held in great affection by the parish. A year later on 3rd August 1958 he died. Deeply mourned.

### **Consecration and opening of the New Extended church 2005**

It is appropriate at this stage in the history of Our Lady of Victories that it should conclude with a brief account of the rebuilt Church's official opening and consecration which took place on Thursday 9th June 2005 by the Bishop of Nottingham, the Right Revered Malcolm McMahon O.P. The full details of the order of service and consecration is recorded in a special Mass booklet printed at the De Montfort Press in Leicester, and is entitled 'Official Opening and Consecration of the Re-ordered and Enlarged Church. Copies can be found in the Parish Archives.

Present among the official guests were: Chairman of the Harborough District

Council, Councillor John Pearce accompanied by his wife. Thirty five clergy from the Nottingham Diocese, one of whom was Father J Cahill, the predecessor in office of Canon O'Neill, and several priests who had been curates in Our Lady of Victories, especially Father Robert Thacker and Father Stephen Dye, who played the organ at the service.

Twenty five members of Canon O'Neill's immediate family.

Canon Christopher Moody (C. of E.)  
Reverend Nick Cook (Baptist)

\* Susanne Nockels (Congregational)

Reverend John Harris (Methodist)

John Holton (Architect) accompanied by his wife and two children

Chairperson of Our Lady of Victories Parish Council, Mary Mihovilovic  
Richard Burdon, George and Mark Stamp and James Jacobs, representing Market Harborough and Bowden Charities.

Howard Walters, Diocesan representative on the Building Committee

Chris. Palmer and Andy Paige, C.P. Associates

Presentation Sisters

Paul Dockerill, William Sappcote and Sons Ltd., Building Contractors (Director)

### **Highlights of the Consecration and Presentation to Canon Owen O'Neill**

Before the service began and after the Bishop had welcomed everybody in his introduction, John Holton ceremoniously presented him with the drawings and plans of the new church,

followed by Paul Dockerill, who on behalf of the builders, handed over the key of the church. These two items were then blessed by the Bishop.

In his homily the Bishop centered on the theme that no church can contain God, but it is a place where we meet Him. He also spoke of the place that our parish Patroness, Our Lady of Victories, would take, through whose intercession the parish could look forward to the future. After the homily the Litany of the Saints was sung by Father Robert Thacker (ex curate) and Father Chris Thomas. This was then followed by the procession to the Altar of the Relics of Saint Clement - Pope and Martyr who died circa 100 and Saint Crescentia, believed to have been an early fourth century Martyr from Sicily. These relics were the same that had been in the old altar and were now inserted in the stone of the new.

Bishop McMahon then anointed the altar and the twelve consecration crosses on the walls of the church with the Holy Oil of Chrism, symbolizing that the church was now a holy and special place for the worship of God

The incensing of the altar and the consecration of the crosses by the Bishop together with the burning of incense on the altar itself, showed by smoke and perfume, the offering of our prayers to our Father in Heaven and the sanctity of the altar and crosses. While he was doing this a choir of children from St. Joseph's School, sang the hymn 'On this Church your Blessing Lord'. The altar was then covered for the celebration of the first Mass.

At the Offertory a procession approached the altar made up of:

Three of the oldest parishioners carrying a chalice and ciborium, which had been used throughout the lifetime of the old church

Two parishioners who had lived all their life in Market Harborough and had received the Sacraments pertinent to their age.

They presented copies of their Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage Certificates. Two younger parishioners representing their age group brought 'Offertory Envelopes' signifying the parish's financial commitment to their church. Youth of the parish were represented by two recently confirmed candidates. Two children who had only recently made their First Holy Communion. Together they exemplified our hopes of a tomorrow.

At the end of the Mass Mary Mihovilovic gave a speech of thanks to all involved in making this a memorable occasion, she stated that not only were we celebrating the enlargement and consecration of the church but also the 40th Anniversary of Canon O'Neill's Ordination. He was then presented with a large cheque and several Spiritual Bouquets from the parish. The Bishop, not to be outdone, handed the Canon a Papal Scroll signed by the late Pope John Paul II, commemorating this Anniversary.

Canon O'Neill responded with a particular and general vote of thanks to all who had participated in making this a unique event, not forgetting the twenty

five members of his family who had made the journey from Tipperary especially for this occasion.

It was announced that there would be a reception and refreshments for the invited guests in the Octagonal Hall and a barbeque and refreshments, accompanied by music would be available in the car park behind the church.



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**Above:** New Lady Chapel and restored Baptismal Font

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**Top Left:** The Bishop saying Mass. Bishop McMahon is anointing with chrism, the new altar. Canon O'Neil P.P. Second from the right.



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**Left:** Centre Aisle looking towards the main altar.

**Right:** Consecration 2005  
Bishop Malcolm and  
Canon O'Neil, cutting the  
Canon's anniversary cake,  
celebrating on the same  
day as his 40th year of .....  
From left to right;  
Margaret Kenny, Betty  
Buswell, Bishop Malcolm,  
Canon O'Neil, Celia  
Wilson, Francis Wilson &  
Sr. Rosaria (Photographs)



**Right:** Consecration 2005  
Canon O'Neil Receiving a  
presentation on his 40th  
anniversary of his  
priesthood from Mary  
Mihovilovic. Chairperson  
of the parish council



**Right:** Presentation Sisters.  
Ex members of St. Joseph's  
school staff; Mary, Rosaria,  
Perpetua, Assumpta &  
Philomena.  
Consecration 2005

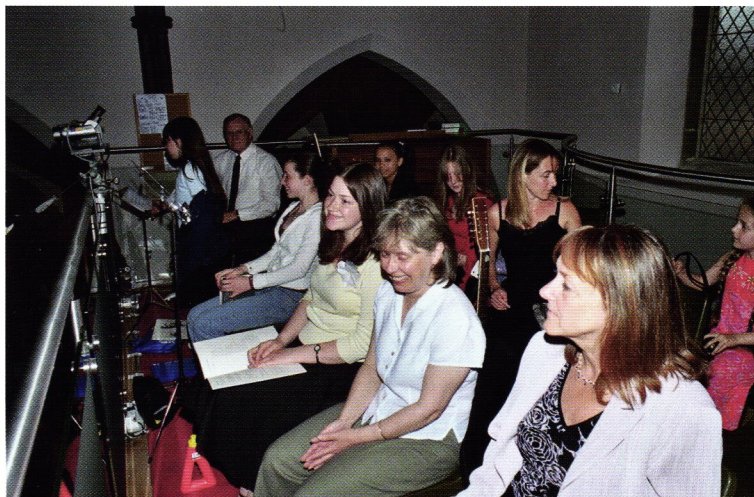




**Left:** The Perry Family being welcomed by the official 'welcomers' Mary Robinson and Patricia Pelos.



**Left:** Mrs.E.Wade, mother of Father Peter Wade, together with Sr. Margaret of the Presentation Order of nuns & her two daughters Angela and Palty. In the background is Bogus Nowakowski being welcomed by the parish Priest Father(Canon) Owen O'Neill.



**Left:** Choir and instrumentalist. Consecration 2005

**Right:** Chouncillor John Pearce, Chairman of the Harborough District Council, accompanied by his wife and escorted by Mary Mihovilovic - Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council.  
Consecration 2005



**Right:** The Choir of St. Joseph's Primary School who sang the hymn 'On this Church your Blessing Lord'.  
Consecration 2005



Head Teachers	Parish Clergy	Dates	Curates
	Fr.N. Malvoisin Fr. Edmund Fr. J. Buckley Fr. R. Vandepitte	1856-68 1868-70 1870-72 1872-83	Fr. Richard Joseph Vandepitte d. 1888
Miss E. Hussey	Fr. W. Ottey Fr. Gallagher Fr. Bull Fr. Helle Fr.H. Kavanagh Fr. F.Brown	1883-85 1885-87 1887-88 1888-94 1894-1927 1927-28	
Miss Driscoll	Fr. V. Bull Fr. L.R. Bermingham Fr.C Cossins	1928-29 1929-33	
Mr. Davidson	Fr.J.P. Goodwin Fr. J.E. Murdoch	1935-40 1940-53	Fr.J. McGillicuddy 41-45 Fr. T. Cronin 45-47
Sister Joan	Fr. J.D. Key Fr. T. O'Keefe Canon C.B. Mitchell	1953-57 1957-61 1961-63	Fr. A. O'Dowd Fr. M. Eastwood Fr. F. Lang
Mr. J.T.McEvoy	Canon F. Quinn	1963-69	Fr.A.Franey Fr. M.D. Lynch Fr. B. Brownbill Fr. P. Wilson Fr. D. Hancock (laisiesed)
	Fr. W. O'Dowd	1969-85	Fr. Godley Fr. Cieseilski Fr. M. Moore Fr. F. Carvil
Mr. S. McGlone	Fr. J. Cahill	1985-2001	Fr. J. Lynch Fr. K. Frisby Fr. Tavaras Fr. S. Dye Fr. T.Clarke Fr. R. Thacker
Mrs. D. Yates Mr.P.Harkin Mr. M Fitzwilliam	Canon O. O'Neill  Fr. A. Parissotti. Ex army Chaplain at Hallaton said Mass also at Kibworth	2001-  1950's	

**Right:** St.Joseph's School,  
Seniors photo June 1950  
Headmaster G.Davidson,  
on the left.



**Right:** Approx 1961  
The staff of St.Joseph's All  
Age School following the  
arrival of the presentation  
sisters in 1954.

**Front Row:** Miss J.Mason  
Sr.Joan(Headmistress)  
Mrs.G.Schmidt(Deputy)

**Backrow:** Sr.Brigid  
Mrs C.Downey,  
Sr.Perpetua,  
Mr J.T.McEvoy,  
Sr.Elizabeth,  
Mrs.Porro,  
Mrs L.B.McEvoy.

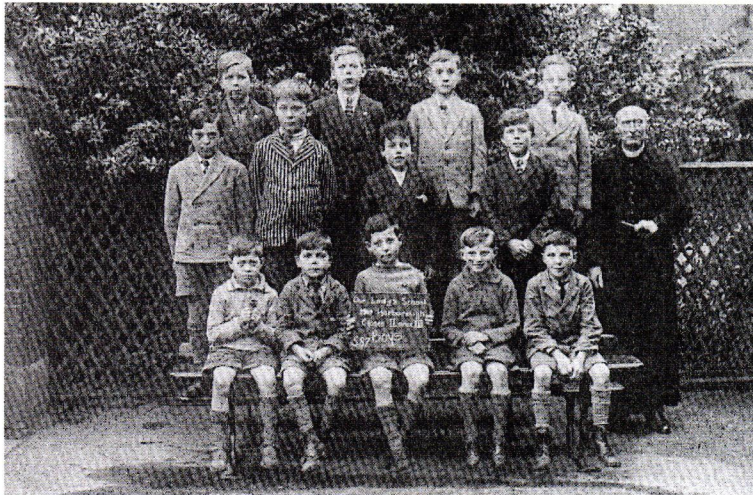


**Right:** St.Joseph's School,  
Sister Michael's Class  
1976/77.





**Left:** St.Joseph's School,  
Instrumentalists 1976/77.



**Left:** Fr.C.Cossins (note the  
title on the board being  
held by the boy in the  
centre of the front row!).  
Which reads 'Our Lady's  
School 1883'



**Left:** First Holy  
Communions 1962. Taken  
in front of the old entrance.

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**Right:** Father Peter Wade  
and his Mother - Day of  
Ordination 28th May  
1984.



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**Right:** Monica and Father  
William O'Dowd. Prayer  
Group garden party 1984.



## **The Windows**

The church is affluent in respect of its stained glass windows; five lancets in the main window in the chancel and six double lancets in the nave of the church.

Before the extension of the church in 2004/05 the stained glass windows were arranged five on the gospel side, the main window over the altar in the sanctuary and one on the epistle side. They were in order starting from the old Baptistry at the rear of the nave on the gospel side.

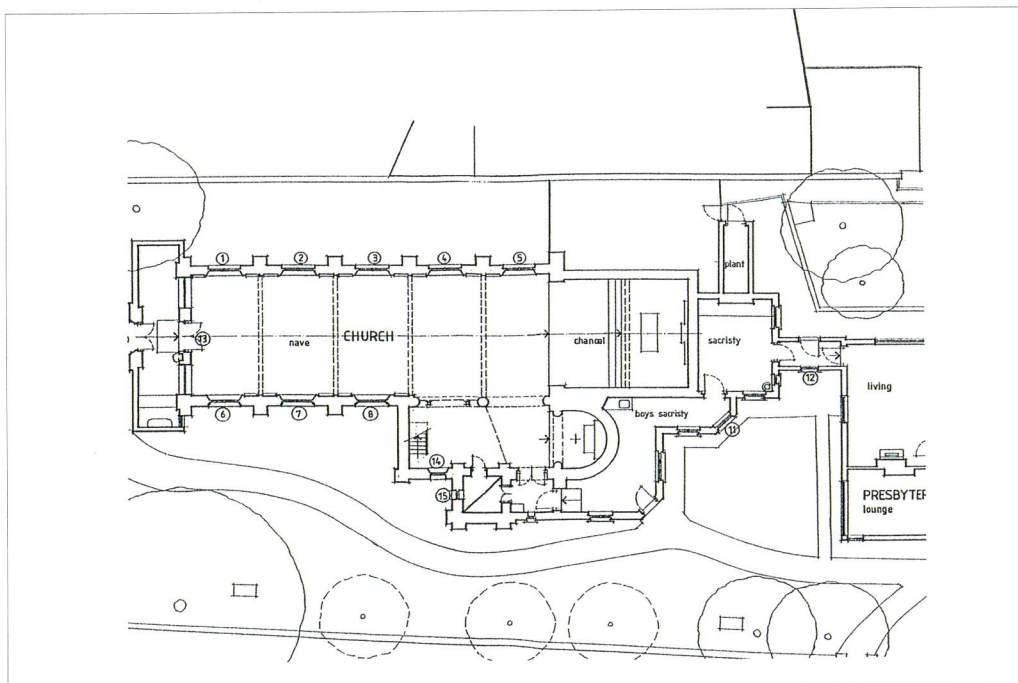
1. The Baptism of Our Lord
2. St. Edward and St. Peter
3. The Adoration of the Shepherds
4. St. Teresa and St. Elizabeth
5. St. Dominic receiving the Rosary
6. The Main Window - The Crucifixion
7. The singleton on the epistle side: St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher

After the extensions and improvements they have been arranged in the following order from the rear of the nave on the gospel side.

1. The Baptism of Our Lord
2. St. Edward and St. Peter
3. The Adoration of the Shepherds
4. The Main window over the Sanctuary remaining in situ  
On the epistle side starting from the chancel:
5. St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher
6. St. Teresa and St. Elizabeth
7. St. Dominic receiving the Rosary from the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Right:** Position of the Stained Glass Windows before 2005.

1. The Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan.
  2. St. Edward and St. Peter.
  3. The Adoration of the Shepherds.
  4. St. Teresa and St. Elizabeth
  5. St. Dominic receiving the Rosary from the Blessed Virgin.
- The Main Window. From the left:- The Annunciation, The Crucifixion of Jesus, The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin.
6. Plain glass
  7. Plain glass
  8. St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher.



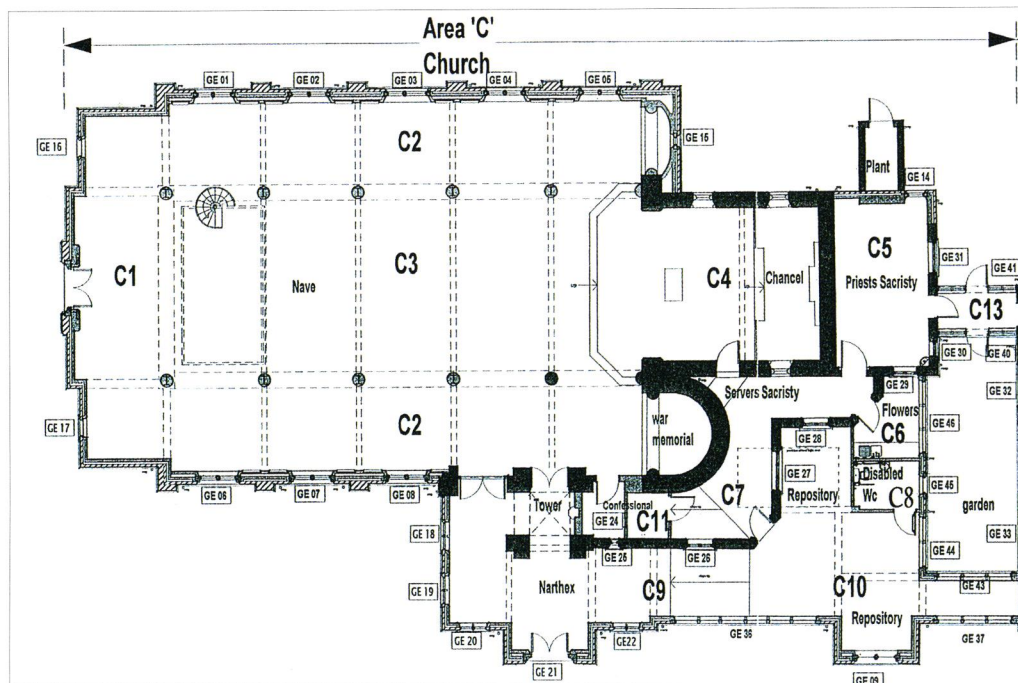
**Right:** The Extended Church of Our Lady of Victories 2005

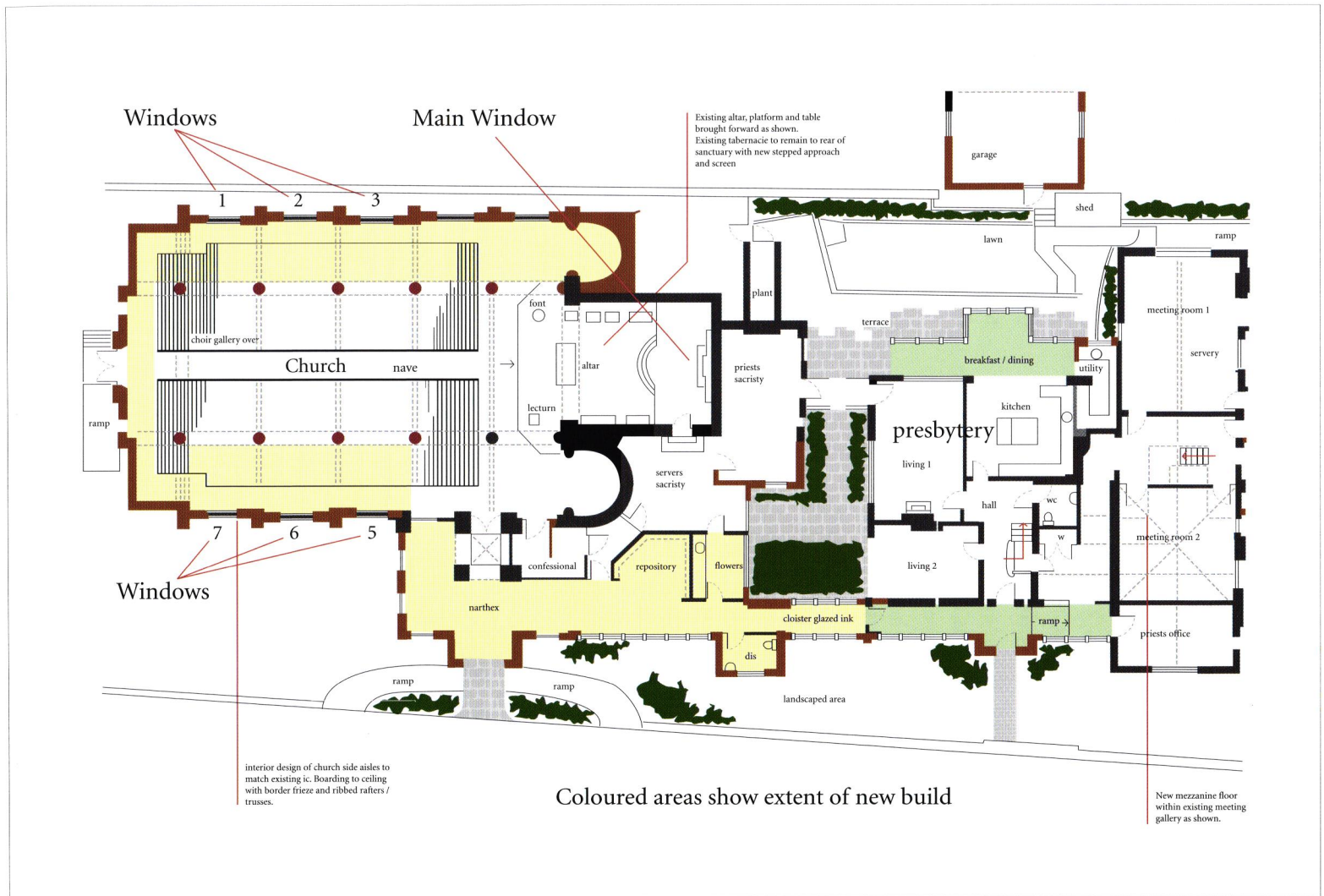
Re-sited Stained Glass Windows.

01. Baptism of Jesus.
02. St. Edward and St. Peter.
03. Adoration of the Shepherds.

Main window in the Chancel from the left to right:- The Annunciation, The Crucifixion, The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

06. St. Dominic receiving the Rosary from the Blessed Virgin Mary.
07. St. Teresa and St. Elizabeth.
08. St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher.





*Above: Ground Floor Layout Plan.*

*In detail they are as follows:*

**1. The Baptism of Our Lord.**

**Legend.** Pray for the soul of Ellen Hunt who died on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus 12th June 1896. Erected by her loving husband T.B.Hunt in the Holy Year of Our Lord 1900

Detail. Jesus and John the Baptist "Ecce Agnus Dei" (Behold the Lamb of God) on scroll on top of St. John's staff cross. Jesus is illuminated from above by the Dove. I.H.S. As recounted in the Gospels he is here shown with a shell of water in his right hand held aloft baptising Jesus standing in the River Jordan. The Dove symbolises the Holy Spirit.

**History.** John the Baptist, Prophet and Martyr was related to Jesus, and was martyred by Herod Antipas for denouncing his incestuous marriage with his niece who was his brother's wife Herodias. Salome, her daughter, demanded the Head of John the Baptist as a gift. His Feast Day. Beheading: 29th August. Birth: 24th June

**Biography.** Mr. Hunt was a fishmonger in the town. His son Monsignor Henry Hunt was Parish Priest of Whitwick in Leicester until his death in 1956. On his death he wished to be buried within the sound of boys' voices. He was interred at Radcliffe College.

Below this window used to be the baptismal font and carved wooden cover. The font is now situated on the left side of chancel/nave.

**2. St. Edward and St. Peter over Westminster Abbey and St. Peter's Rome respectively.**

**Legend.** Pray for the soul of Canon Douglas D.D. born at Market

Harborough 9th February 1841: received into the Church 24th June 1868. Died at the Cathedral Nottingham 14th April, Holy Year 1900 R.I.P.

St. Edward is depicted as holding a sceptre in his right hand and holding aloft in his left hand a ring and wearing a chain of office complete with a medallion. His full title is St. Edward the Confessor 1003-1066. In 1050-1065 he replaced a nearby 8th Century Church dedicated to St. Peter, with Westminster Abbey. He strengthened the close links between the old English Church and the Papacy. The ring legend is that he gave this ring to a beggar. Two years later some English pilgrims in the Holy Land met an old man who said he was John the Apostle. He gave them the ring and told them to take it back to Edward saying that the King would die within six months.

St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles is shown holding the Keys of Heaven in his right hand and the bible in the other. He was originally called Simon but Christ renamed him Peter meaning rock, on which He would found His Church. He instigated the Papacy and admitted Gentiles into the new church. He was martyred at Rome in A.D. 64 being crucified like his Lord and Saviour, but upside down.

Canon Douglas was a convert Anglican Priest whose Catholic ancestry is recorded as stretching back to the mid Eighteenth Century including a Bishop of London and a Sub Prioress of the Carmelite Order of Nuns. Two of his sisters converted to Catholicism and ran a children's home on Coventry Road.

They both became nuns and were known as Sister Ambrose and Sister Cecilia.

**3.** The Adoration by the Shepherds of the Infant Jesus.

**Legend.** Pray for the Reverend Hugh Kavanagh, priest of this mission, who erected this window in honour of the Immaculate Virgin Mary Mother of God. A.D. 1900 signed Mayer & Co. Munich. This window is virtually a perpetual Christmas Crib. Here we have the shepherds being shown the Infant Jesus sitting on His Mother's knee. In the background is St. Joseph and above is the choir of Angels signing 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo'.

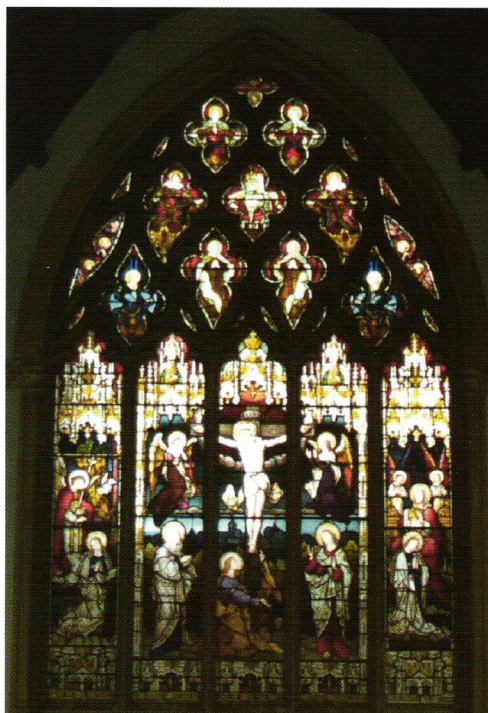
The window encapsulates one of the events recorded in St. Luke's Gospel. The idea of a crib goes back to St. Francis of Assisi in 1223.

Note the angel with the harp, the shepherds with their crook and pipes. Canon Hugh Lawrence Kavanagh was a notable figure in the life of the Parish of Our Lady of Victories. He was Parish Priest for 33 years (1984 - 1927) and was responsible for enhancing the church, and having the school recognised by the Local Education Authority in 1910. He moved the Lady Chapel to the gospel side of the nave and built the Sacred Heart Chapel on the epistle side as a memorial to the fallen of the parish in the 'Great War' 1914-1918. It was during his term of office that the beautiful Stations of the Cross were erected, donated by James and Margaret Flint in memory of their parents, and six of the stained glass windows were installed including the East Window during his incumbency.

**4.** The Main Window over the altar in the chancel consists of five lancets.

The three in the centre portray the Crucifixion of Christ, while in the side panels are depicted the Annunciation and Coronation of Our Blessed Lady.

**Legend.** Pray for Sir Humphrey de Trafford Bart. who for the love of God and His Blessed Mother erected these lancets A.D. 1900 signed Mayer & Co. Munich.



**Left:** The De Trafford Window 1910 - Our Lady of Victories Church.

The central lancet shows the crucifixion. A barbaric form of capital punishment which included scourging and humiliation. Death was slow, but could be hastened by breaking the legs of the convicted. Christ was already dead before his executioners resorted to this cruelty, instead His side was pierced by a spear to make certain. Kneeling at the foot of the cross is St. John who after the

death of Our Lord, took His Mother Mary into his household.

At the foot of the cross are two women, one is His Mother, the other could be either Mary Magdalen or Mary the mother of Cleophas. Both are mentioned in the gospel accounts. Above His head can be seen the dove symbolising the Holy Spirit, Angels, Cherubs and the Lamb.

The lancet on the left shows the Annunciation by the Angel Gabriel that Mary was to be the Mother of God. On the right is the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven, after her assumption, body and soul, into heaven.

Sir Humphrey de Trafford who gave this window, was a great benefactor to the Parish. He and his wife Lady Annette financed the building of the sacristies along with the 'cloister' designed by P.P. Pugin. The tabernacle door of the old Altar was his gift. He also laid the foundation stone to the extension of the old school in 1910. He was present at Canon Kavanagh's Golden Jubilee and one of his descendants came to the Mass celebrating the centenary of the church in 1977.

5. St. Thomas More and St John Fisher.

**Legend.** Of your charity pray for Robert and Mary Catherine Honoria Howett in whose memory their children erected this window in 1950. Signed Frances Tucker, London N.W.2.

St. Thomas More, Martyr 1478-1535.  
Feast Day 22nd June.

He studied at Oxford University, was married had a son and three daughters,

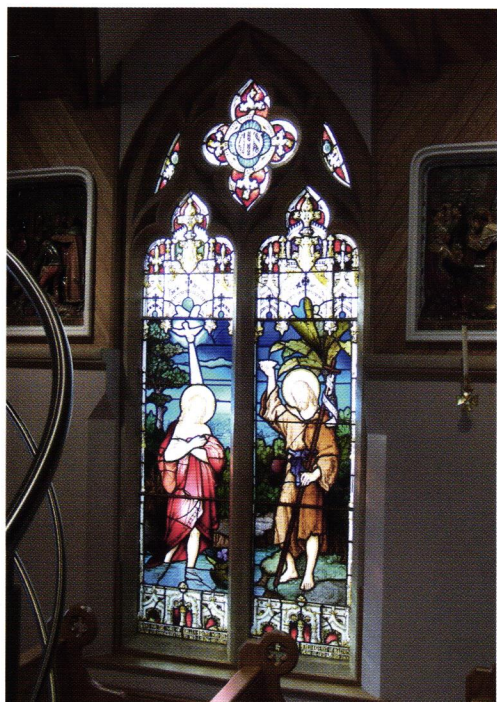
was chancellor of England; friend of Erasmus, Author of 'Utopia' (a land where all men are equal and can worship as they chose). He was knighted by Henry VIII, whom he acknowledged as King of England but not the head of the church in England. He was charged with High Treason and was beheaded. On climbing the scaffold on Tower Hill he said to the executioner "I pray you see me safe up; as for my coming down let me shift for myself". When the axe was about to fall, he asked him to wait a moment until he had pushed his beard to one side, saying "Pity that should be cut which has never committed treason". He died the King's good servant but God's forever.

He shares the same feast date as St. John Fisher.

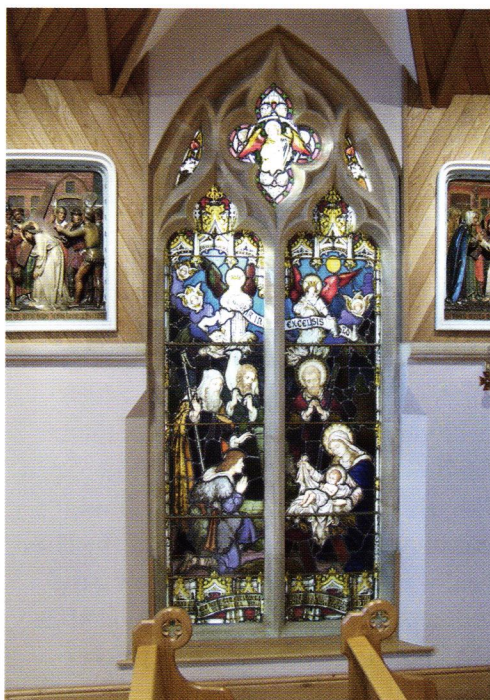
Both were imprisoned in The Tower at about the same time.

St. John Fisher 1459-1535. English Bishop and Martyr; Chancellor of Cambridge; friend of Erasmus and leader in the New Learning. His opposition to Henry VIII's divorce and refusal to recognise him as the Head of the Church in England led to him being charged with treason and being sentenced to death. Prior to his death, the recently elected Pope Paul III nominated him as a Cardinal. Henry VIII is supposed to have said that even if he sent him the Red Hat, he wouldn't have a head to wear it.

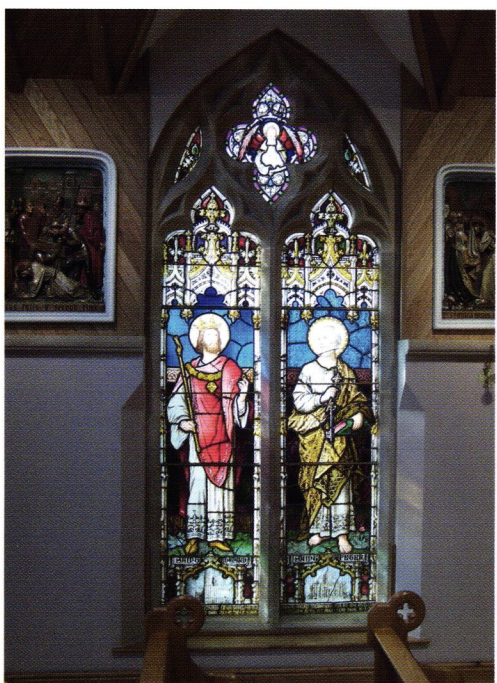
He was executed on Tower Hill and his head was displayed on London Bridge for a fortnight and was then thrown into the River Thames.



**Far Left:** Baptism of our lord.



**Left:** Adoration of the Shepherds.



**Far Left:** St. Edward and St. Peter.



**Left:** St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher.

He shares the same feast day with St. Thomas More. They were the first two English Saints to be canonised after the reformation. Overhead will be seen their coat of arms. At the foot of the window on the left, will be seen the axe and block and on the right below St. John Fisher will be seen a chalice and eucharistic host surrounded by a crown of thorns. Also within the window the green palm fronds which signify martyrdom. Behind the figures can be seen an outline of the Tower itself. The donors, Robert and Mary Howett's children, are the descendants of the Flint family already mentioned as being the recipient of the legacy from Nevill Holt. They now live in Australia. The late head of the family had gone to Australia on behalf of Symington Corset Factory with twenty girls, to set up a similar enterprise there.

**Right:** Saint Elizabeth 1207 - 1231 and St. Teresa 1515 - 1582

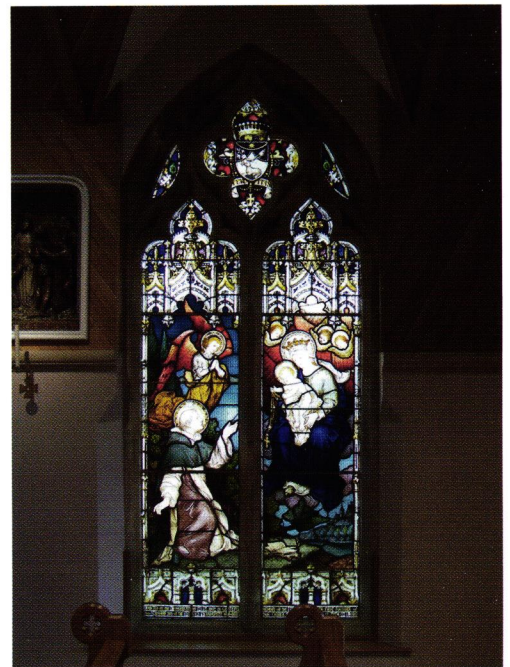
#### 6. Saint Elizabeth 1207 - 1231 and St. Teresa 1515-1582

**Legend.** Pray for Teresa Smith who erected this window A.D. 1901 in memory of her beloved sister Eliza Eales on whose soul Sweet Jesus have mercy. Signed Mayer & Co. Munich. Saint Elizabeth 1207 -1231 The left hand lancet depicts St.Elizabeth of Hungary (Thuringia). She was the daughter the King of Hungary and married Louis the Langrage of Thuringia. She bore three children. Her husband went on a Crusade and died of the plague. Her brother-in-law drove her from the court. She became a Franciscan tertiary. Refused an offer to return to Hungary and lived out her days occupying herself in medial work,

spinning, carding or cleaning the homes of the poor and helping to feed them. She died at the age of 24 worn out by her own austerity. She was canonised in 1255. In her window she is crowned and appears to be holding a bowl of bread. Feast day 17th November.

St. Teresa of Avila 1515-1582.

Virgin foundress of the reformed Discalced Carmelites (they wore sandals not shoes) She wrote the story of her foundation 'The way of Perfection' and 'The Interior Castle' both based on prayer



and meditation. Canonised in 1622 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1970 The first women saint to be so honoured. Her usual emblem of a fiery arrow can be seen in this representation. Her Feast Day, 15th October.

7. St. Dominic receiving the Rosary from the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**Legend.** Erected by the congregation A.D. 1902 in grateful memory of the Reverend N. Malvoisin first founder of this mission and of the Reverend R. Vandepitte who built this church. Eternal rest give to them O Lord.

In this window St. Dominic 1170-1221, is dressed in the order which he founded, the Dominicans. Their habit is white with a black cloak worn over it, hence their name, Black Friars. He was sent as a missionary to Toulouse by the Pope to preach to the Albigensians, men came to follow his way of preaching and teaching and from these grew the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) O.P. The Rosary had a set of 150 beads divided into 15 groups or decades of ten beads. Usually the decades are separated by one larger bead. Attached to his string there are five beads, two larger and three small ending in a crucifix. This is the complete rosary. The rosary in common use has only five decades. It is a form of prayer to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary. A Hail Mary (Ave) is said on the small beads and an Our Father and Glory Be said on the larger one.

While saying the rosary one of the Joyful or Sorrowful or Glorious Mysteries can be contemplated. Recently a decade was introduced called 'Light'. According to tradition, the Rosary was given to St. Dominic for devotional use by Our Lady, but prayer beads had been in use several centuries before his time but not in that arrangement. Feast Day 8th June.



**Left:** St. Dominic receiving the Rosary from the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The dedication to Reverend Fathers Malvoisin and Vandepitte is a reminder of earlier times and those priests who have brought the Faith to this Parish.

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**Right:** Our Lady of Victories Main Window and previous altar.



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**Right:** Our Lady of Victories Main Window and altar.



## Stations of the Cross

"These Stations were erected in memory of James and Margaret Flint by their children in 1897"

James Flint was the donor of the Land. These beautiful representations of the Via Dolorosa were made by De Beale of Ghent in Flanders. They were classified in a recent archeological, historical, and architectural survey as being 'of exceptional quality'.

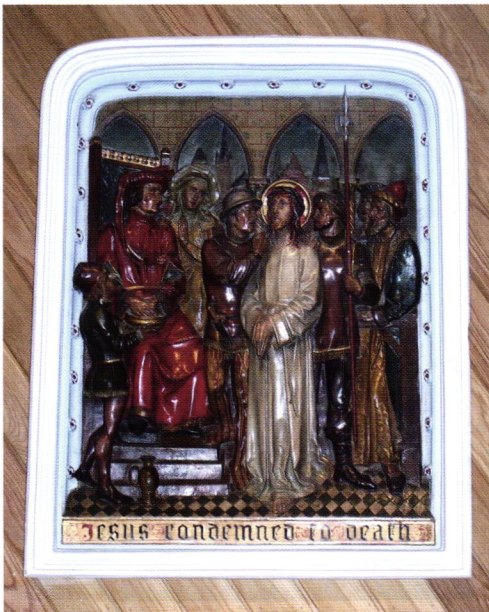
They depict the fourteen 'Stations' (or stages) of the sorrowful progress of Christ's Journey from Pilate's Palace to His Crucifixion on Golgotha and eventual entombment. They have a great spiritual significance to Catholics, who especially during Lent, endeavour through prayer and devotion, using these representations, to walk Christ's last journey with Him. Stations:

1. Jesus is condemned to death.

2. Jesus is made to bear His cross



3. Jesus falls the first time



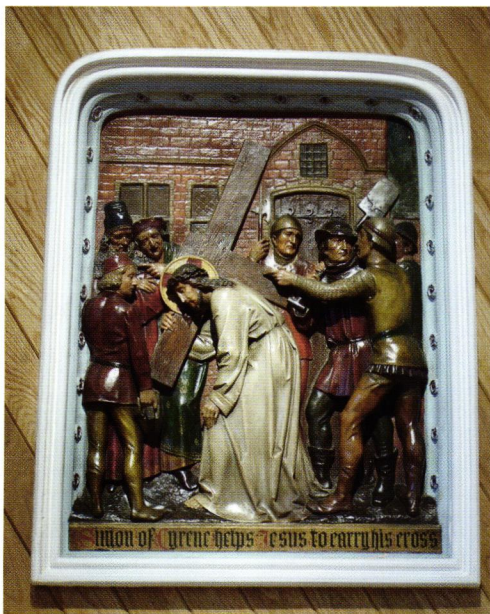
4. Jesus meets His Sorrowful Mother



6. Veronica wipes the Face of Jesus



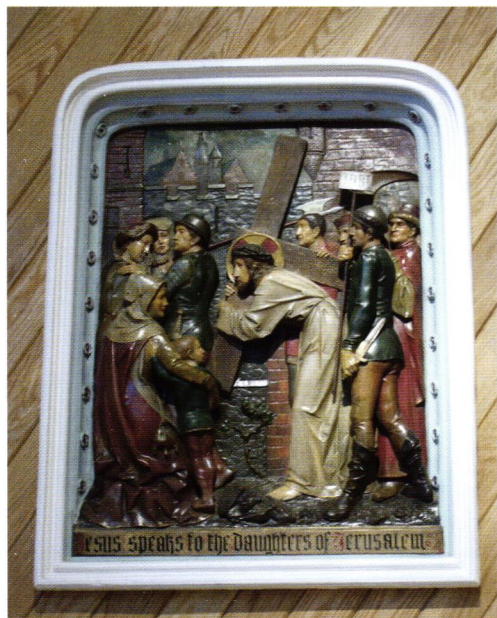
5. Simon of Cyrene help Jesus to carry the cross



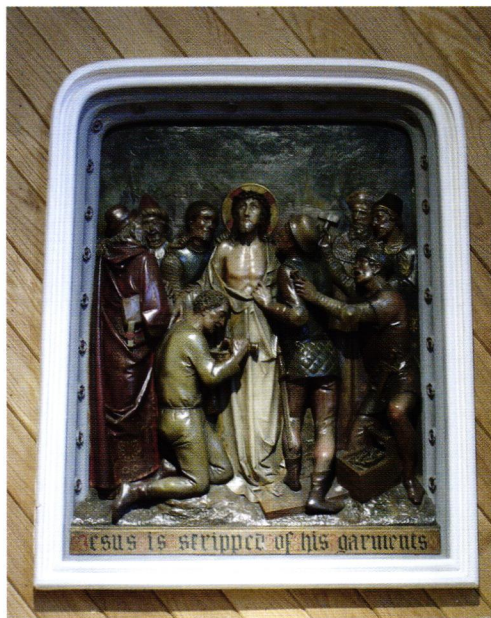
7. Jesus falls the second time



8. Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem



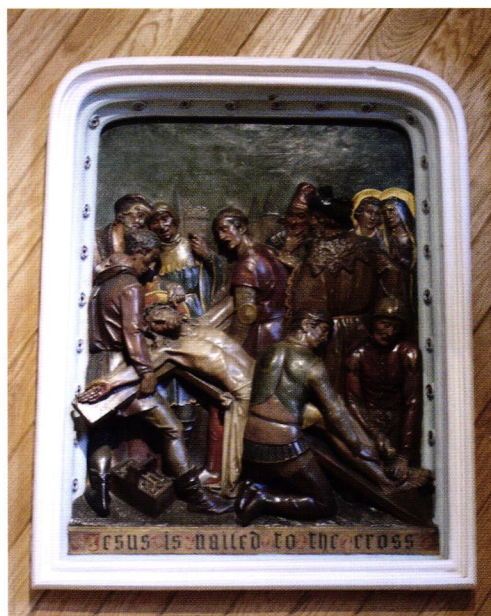
10. Jesus is stripped of His garments



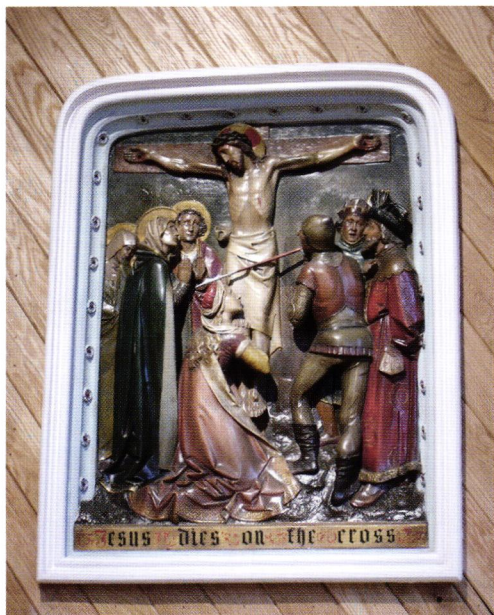
9. Jesus falls the third time



11. Jesus is nailed to the cross



12. Jesus dies on the cross



14. Jesus is placed in the sepulchre



13. Jesus is taken down from the cross



To the right of the chancel and on the right when coming through the tower main entrance is the Sacred Heart Chapel. This was going to be the Lady Chapel to house the famous 17th Century wooden carving of Our Lady of Moorsele in 1877, which eventually went to York. After the Great War of 1914-1918, the then Parish Priest, Father Kavanagh, moved the Lady Chapel to the Epistle Side of the chancel (left hand side) and reconsecrated the Chapel to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to commemorate the fallen of the Parish in that War. It was built with stone from the Roman Quarries in Seaton, Dorsetshire. The elements of P.P. Pugin's small cloister is preserved as an inner wall connecting the Narthex (entrance) with the Presbytery and the old school block. It runs from the tower wall round behind the Church proper until it meets the Priest's Sacristy c.f. plan.

## **The History of Recusancy**

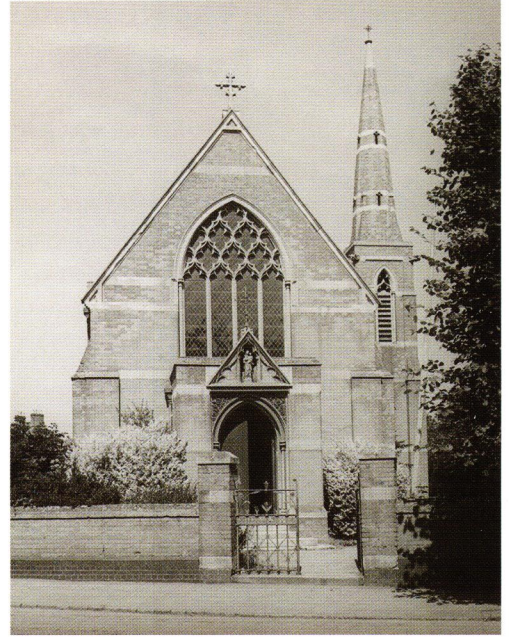
Recusancy was a term used to describe anyone who refused to acknowledge the crown as the head of the Church of England, or who did not attend the services of the Church of England. Therefore practising Roman Catholics among others were labelled Recusants (RUCUSARE = to refuse).

This refusal to attend the services of the C.of E. and the ability to hear Mass and receive the Sacraments during penal times was secretly supported by the arrival of priests from the Continent. Particularly Jesuits (Society of Jesus). Leicestershire was included in the Midland District of the Church, an area that comprised Derbyshire in north to Oxfordshire in the south and from Norfolk in the east to Shropshire in the west. In this area there were 8800 Catholics served by 91 priests; Secular, Jesuits, Franciscans and Dominicans. These missionary priests were considered a serious and dangerous problem for the implementation of the New Church of England, as the Roman Catholic Faith had tenacious routes throughout the social structure of the kingdom, especially in the northern parts. These posed a threat to the succession to the throne. In the country as a whole, at that time there were 60,000 Catholics. The total of 530 priests in 1706 dropped to 375 by 1800. The difference was caused by the suppression of the Jesuit Order by Pope Clement XIII in 1773 which was restored in 1814.

Throughout the eighteenth century the Catholic's Mass centres and missionary bases in this area of the Midlands, were at Aston Flavel, Leicester, Husbands Bosworth and Nevill Holt. The influence of the 'missioners' and the nobility who harboured them was steadily eroded by the Penal Laws. The penalties imposed by the Acts of Uniformity of 1549, 1552 and 1559 were heavily reinforced by the statutes of 1581 and 1586-7. Further penalties the Judges and Juries became increasingly unwilling to impose the full penalties of death, banishment or life imprisonment, although forfeiture of estates and goods, double taxation, monthly fines and civic disabilities remained.

**Right:** Cardinal Henry Edward Manning (1808-92) convert 1875. Cardinal 1891 Ardent supporter of the doctrine of Papal infallibility. He preached the sermon at the solemn opening Mass of O.L.V in 1877.

**Far Right:** Original entrance to the church before the Narthex was built circa 1963.



The Relief Act of 1778 allowed Roman Catholics to purchase and inherit the land and Priests and Schoolmasters were freed from persecution. (This caused the Gordon riots in London - numerous Catholic houses were burnt and 210 people died).

In 1791 the Relief Act abolished compulsory attendance at C.of E. services for Recusants, but still many disabilities remained.

Daniel O'Connell, a charismatic Irish orator and lawyer, mobilised the Irish peasantry and middle classes to agitate for full emancipation for Roman Catholics. He forced the issue when he won the Parliamentary by-election for County Clare in 1828. He insisted that he would not take his seat until the anti Roman Catholic oath required of Members of Parliament was abolished. This compelled the British Prime Ministers, The Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel to carry the Catholic

Emancipation Act of 1829.

This Act admitted Irish and Roman Catholics to Parliament and to all but a few remaining public offices including the throne. In 1850 saw the restoration of the Hierarchy. Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman (1802-1865) became the first Catholic Cardinal in England since the Reformation. The Restoration, it is sometimes referred to as the Second Spring.

In 1871 the University Test Act opened the Universities to Roman Catholics. By this time Catholic Emancipation was virtually complete except for a few cases i.e. R.C. and C. of E. clergy are disabled from sitting in Parliament but not Ministers of the Free Churches.

The early history of the Catholic Church in Market Harborough and its eventual expansion can be judged against the foregoing.



**Left:** *Corpus Christi*  
*Procession 1964.*



**Left:** *Corpus Christi*  
*Procession 1964.*

### **A summary of the Laws against Recusancy**

**1549** Imposition of the Book of Common Prayer -no Latin  
Non compliance - fines or imprisonment

**1552** Compulsory attendance at church on Sundays and  
Holidays  
Non compliance - fines  
Attending any other form of worship - imprisonment

**1559** Anyone supporting any other form of worship  
Non compliance - fines, imprisonment or execution

**1585** Catholic Priests expelled  
On return - death

**1593** Act against Recusants  
All Catholics had to register and had to have permission to  
travel further than 5 miles  
Non compliance - loss of income and property for life.  
Second offence - banishment or death.

**1778** Relief Act  
Catholics allowed to purchase and inherit land.  
Priests and schoolmasters freed from persecution  
(Gordon Riots)

**1791** Relief Act  
Abolished compulsory attendance at C. of E. Services for  
Recusants.

**1829** Catholic Emancipation Act

**1850** Restoration of the Hierarchy

**1871** The University Test Act.



**Left:** Fr. James Cahill  
1985-2001



**Left:** Leaving presentation  
to Fr Weo'dowd 1969-1985  
of a hostess trolley and a  
water colour of O.L.V.  
church by Dr. Smith, L.R

## Apologia

It is an invidious position for the author of a history of the church such as this to list benefactors, as unwittingly some will be overlooked and could cause heartache. Every endeavour has been made to search the parish records in order to rectify this, but the list is only as good as what has been set down in the past, and in a few cases recounted via aural memory. I would like to thank all those who have shared their memories with me.

### Grateful acknowledgements to:-

Leicester Record Office Wigston and Leicester, Museum Service Market Harborough and S. Grant photographs, reproductions and information.

John Holton, Architect and Keith Douglas for coloured photographs of stained glass windows and the Stations of the Cross also for the reproduction of the photographs.

Anna Odell for typing and producing the several versions of this work

Many parishioners who loaned items for inclusion.

Susan and Robert Constable Maxwell for background literature on recusancy in Leicestershire and environs  
Sheila Plowright for her unfailing memory.

Charles Matthew, without whose help this monograph would not be possible.

### Finis

Our Forebears laboured hard and long to provide us with a church in which we can worship the One True Living God. They left very little record of their perserverance hardships and sufferings during penal times, except that they have handed down to us in unbroken succession, the Faith of the Apostles. Let us in gentler times rejoice in our Faith and pass down to our successors in trust this symbol of our devotion to Mary the Mother of our Saviour.

(The entire proceeds from the sale of this book will go to the fund for the extension of Our Lady of Victories Church 2005.)