

St Joseph's, Faifley

Golden Jubilee



1957 - 2007

My dear parishioners of St Joseph's,

Half a century has now passed since my predecessor, Archbishop Donald Campbell announced that a new parish, placed under the patronage of St Joseph was to be established for the people of the Faifley area of Clydebank.

It was a time of great excitement. The war years had come and gone and a new future was beginning to emerge. It was also a time of great growth in the Church. During his 15 years in office, Archbishop Campbell established no fewer than 41 new parishes, each with a new church. Your parish forms part of that great legacy.



It's hard now to imagine the great excitement which must have accompanied those years of 1957-58 as news spread of the foundation of the new parish. That enthusiasm was readily harnessed by your first Parish Priest, Canon Thomas Glen who was appointed to St Joseph's in 1957 and was to serve as your pastor until 1980. His long stewardship of the parish won him a very special place in the hearts of the people of Faifley to whom he devoted so much time and energy.

By the early 1970s, hard times hit the parish and the whole Clydebank area as tens of thousands of jobs vanished. It is a tribute to you, that throughout that period of upheaval, parish life continued to thrive.

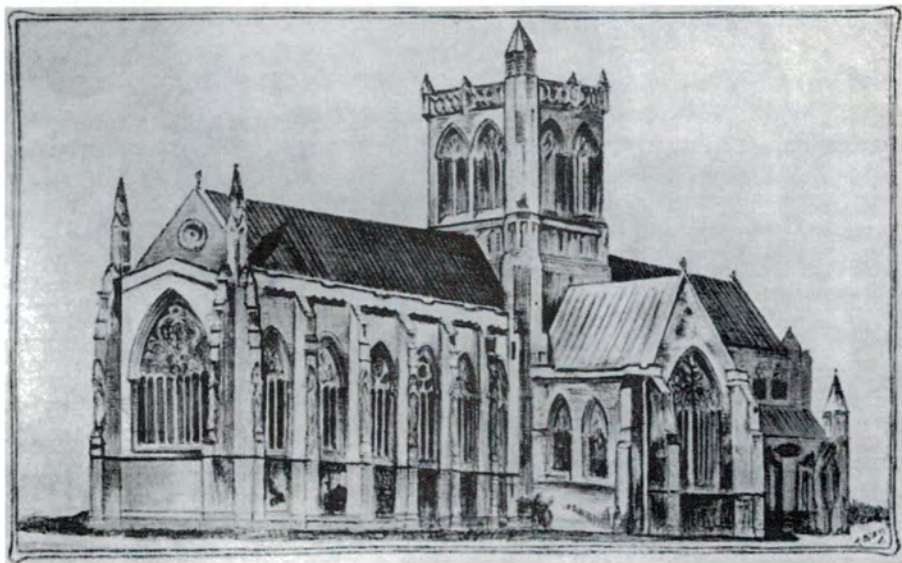
Perhaps the greatest trial came two decades later with the fire which saw the loss of your first and much-loved church. Once more the spirit of the parishioners proved stronger than adversity and your new church was built.

Your parish came into existence under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron of Workers and Patron of the Universal Church. I know that devotion to this most special of saints is a hallmark of your parish and so I ask, on this 50th anniversary, that St Joseph and Our Lady, the Mother of the Church, may intercede once more for you, and for all the people of Faifley, so that whatever may lie ahead in the years to come, you may always know the joy, the peace and the encouragement of God's presence in your midst.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

+Mario
Archbishop of Glasgow





A Short History of Faifley

Faifley is first mentioned as being part of a substantial gift of lands made by an Earl of Lennox to Paisley Abbey in the early 13th Century. The presentation was made for the honour of 'God, Saint James and Saint Mirren'.

During the next 200 years the Abbey had to defend itself against several attempts to strip it of its gifts.

In 1232 an appeal had to be made to Pope Gregory IX to intervene on the Abbey's behalf. Again in 1265, Faifley is named in a Bull of Pope Clement IV confirming the Abbey's ownership. The great Robert Wishart, Bishop of Glasgow and friend of Wallace and Bruce, defended the Abbey's rights with threats of excommunication. As late as 1478 Abbot Schaw was still fighting off claims.

The Abbots are known to have been good landlords who even managed to win exemption from military service for their tenants. In consequence, the same names occur in the lists of tenants throughout the years; names like that of John Bryson, who worked the coal which, as well as limestone, was mined in the area; or of John Burnside, who had to be taken to court in a quarrel over payment of rates! The loyalty of the tenants to the Church and the Stewarts was shown by those who fought for Queen Mary at Langside in 1568.

At the Reformation the lands passed into the hands of Lord Claud Hamilton and were gradually dispersed among many owners.

In the subsequent centuries the district was probably at its most prosperous in the eighteen hundreds when William Dunn developed the Faifley, Hardgate and Duntocher mills, so that in 1839, 1400 people were employed by him.

At that time there were some 750 Catholics in the whole district of Old Kilpatrick and Duntocher. The revival of Catholic life of the middle and late eighteen hundreds came very early to the district with the establishment of the parish of Saint Patrick's, Dumbarton in 1830 (second in time only to the Cathedral parish) and of Saint Mary's, Duntocher in 1842 (third in time together with Saint Mary's, Abercromby Street).

By 1873, 185 Catholic children were at school in Duntocher, a number which rose rapidly as immigrants from Ireland flooded into the Clydeside.

After the war of 1939-45, the lands of Faifley were absorbed into Clydebank to provide building space for a rapidly growing burgh. By 1957 so many Catholics had moved from the older parts of Clydebank that the district could be separated from St. Mary's and established as an independent parish.

In 120 years the single parish of St. Mary's in the Old Kilpatrick area has become 6 parishes. The 750 Catholics have multiplied by more than 20 times. The 185 children are now well over 2,000 in the primary schools alone. It is a picture which no doubt would have well pleased the monks of the Order of the Cluny.

St Joseph's Parish

A parish is a small section of the flock of Christ. Established in a definite place with the Church at its heart, it forms a religious community of priest and people with a spiritual life of its own. This life lies deeper than any of its activities, but it is manifested in them all according to its vigour. The aim of all parochial life is: *"That Jesus may be known, loved and served by all"*.
– *Pope Pius XII.*

This is then not the complete story of the life of St. Joseph's Parish. It is only a short account of the pioneering efforts of priests and people to set up a parish and to build their church.

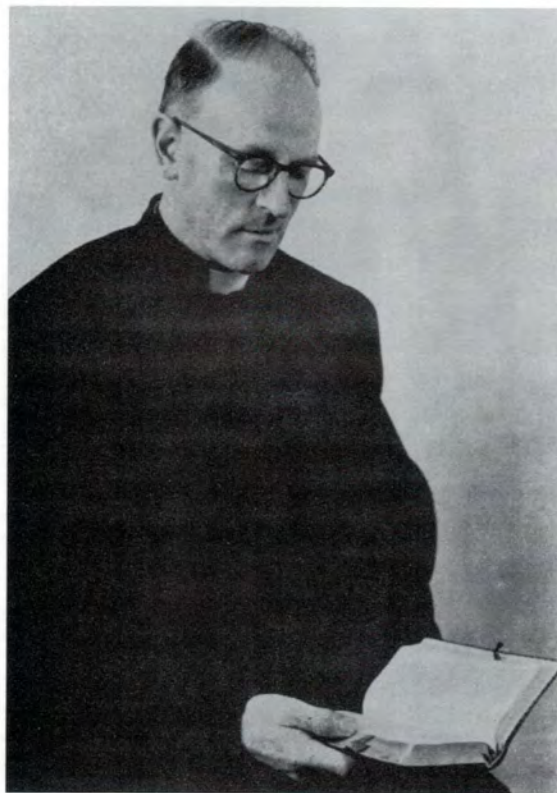
On Friday 13th December 1957, Archbishop Campbell appointed Father Glen of St. Charles', Kelvinside, to open a parish in the housing scheme of Faifley, which up till that time had been part of St Mary's Duntocher. Father Hogan announced the glad tidings in St. Mary's on the following Sunday.

Though the time was short, every effort was made to be ready for Christmas. During the week the necessary arrangements were made with the Education Committee for the use of a school hall, and on the morning of Sunday 22nd December, the first Mass was offered up in Faifley Public School. In spite of the short notice about 1100 people attended the 3 Masses that were said that day. On Christmas Eve there was Midnight Mass with a choir and a crib. So, the parish was born at Christmas time under the patronage of St. Joseph, Spouse of our Blessed Lady.

At the beginning of 1958 negotiations were opened with the Clydebank Town Council to effect a change of site for the new church, as it was felt that the site agreed upon was unsuitable. In due course these negotiations were successfully concluded and the present prominent site obtained. Plans were then prepared for an oratory to hold about 200 people, with rooms at the side to accommodate 2 priests as a temporary measure until the church was built.

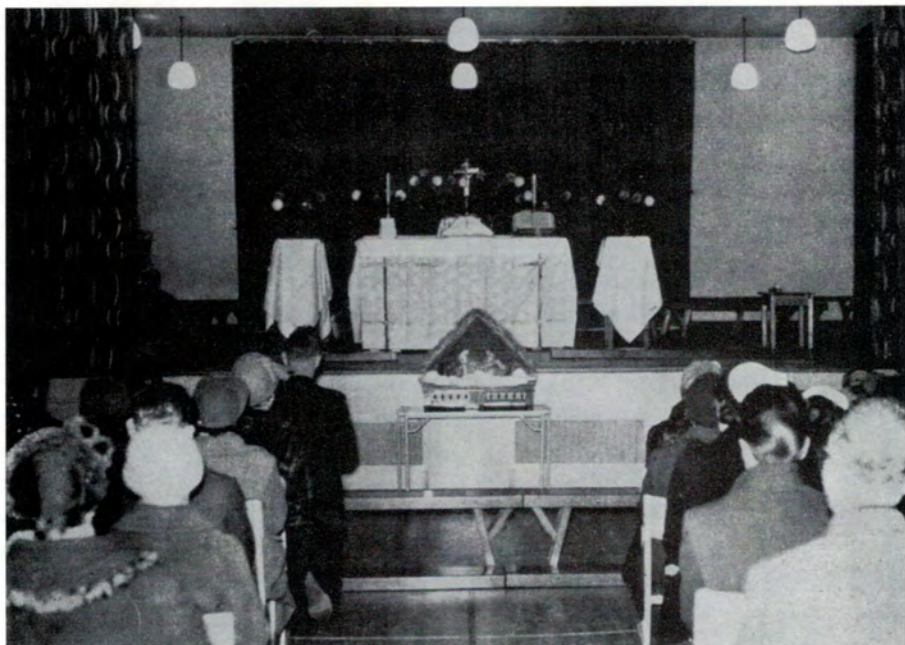
On a dry, dull day in November, 11 months after the opening of the parish, Archbishop Campbell came to cut the first sod. With him were Monsignor Ward, Vicar General and the priests of St .Mary's. Around 1000 men, women and children were present to welcome them. The hymn to St. Joseph was sung and a decade of the Rosary said to beg God's blessing on the work. His Grace then addressed the people commending them for their patience in waiting so long for a parish of their own. Their patience was in part rewarded and they could now look forward with confidence to the realisation of all their hopes. As the choir sang an Ave Maria, the Archbishop blessed the ground and cut the first sod. The ceremony finished with the singing of 'Faith of Our Fathers'. A very happy occasion indeed.

Six weeks later, on 7th January 1959, St. Joseph's School was opened. Here was another reward of patience. For 7 years the children had to travel to Clydebank, which was a matter of serious concern to their parents; yet if the school had been built earlier, it would have been half the size of the present



building and would soon have been too small for the needs of the parish. By waiting patiently the parish has a school capable of accommodating 700 children. The children in turn were fortunate in having as their first headmaster Mr Andrew Magee, M.A. From the beginning, in co-operation with his fine staff of teachers, he set a standard of excellence which is second to none in the county.

Reverend Thomas Glen



Christmas 1957



Site of St Joseph's Church – 23rd November 1958

With the opening of St Joseph's School, we were now able to use our own school hall on Sundays; on 18th January, Mass was said for the last time in Faifley School. We record here our debt of gratitude to the Education Committee for the use of this school and to all concerned especially the headmaster and the janitor, for their continual help and kindness.

The oratory took 6 months to build. During construction, men of the parish took turns as watchmen at night, and when spring came men also gave their free time to lay out the grounds.

The Solemn opening took place on Sunday 14th June. Mainly because of the size of the oratory, it was an all male occasion: the parochial committee. Pass-keepers, men collectors, the men who drove the priest to Mass on Sundays, the watchmen and workmen on the grounds and a male voice choir. At the evening Mass, with 20 guest priests present, Father Hogan preached an inspiring sermon in which he congratulated the people of the parish in having their own hallowed ground, a house of God, and the abiding presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. After Mass there was a procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the oratory where Canon McGoldrick of Our Holy Redeemer's gave Benediction.

For the first time St. Joseph's was a self contained parish, able to have its own daily Mass, Devotions, Confessions, Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals and all other ceremonies. The spiritual life of the parish, without which all activity is fruitless, was now assured.



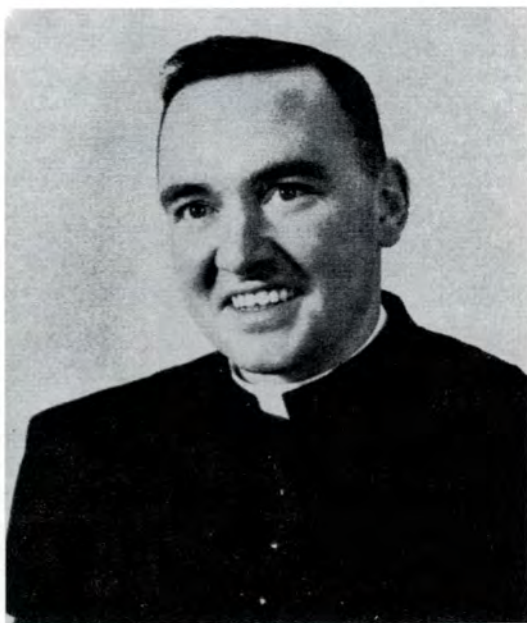
St Joseph's Oratory

The parish was growing in other ways too. It is interesting to note that 5 babies were baptised in the oratory the day it was opened. Also, with the completion of the housing in the scheme, more Catholic families were coming into the district. The numbers had risen to over 2000 and another priest was necessary. On the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the Reverend Peter Garland was ordained to the priesthood and same day appointed to St. Joseph's parish.

In addition to the ordinary work of the parish, Father Garland devoted himself to the youth, and it was not long before he founded a Boys Guild and youth clubs for boys and girls. With the help of good workers these became flourishing organisations providing the young people of the parish with healthy recreation in a wholesome atmosphere.

About this time, too through the good nuns of the Hospice, it was possible to start the Children of Mary and the Guild of St Agnes. In these ways the life of the parish deepened and widened in its scope.

Now the work of planning the church could begin. Many factors enter into the planning of a church: the shape of the site, the character of the surrounding land and buildings, size of parish, cost of building and so on, but more important than these considerations are the spiritual and cultural trends of the times we live in. In 1952 the Holy Office had



Reverend Peter Garland

issued an instruction on sacred art and architecture in which it said *".....in the building of churches, care should be had of the needs and comforts of the faithful, so that they can take part in the divine offices with a better view and attention. Let new churches be remarkable for the simple beauty of their lines, and strictly exclude all deceitful adornment; yet everything that savours of neglect of art or want of pains should be avoided"*.



May Altar



High Altar



Silver Jubilee Celebrations



*Father Tommy Holloran and
Mr Eddie Kane*



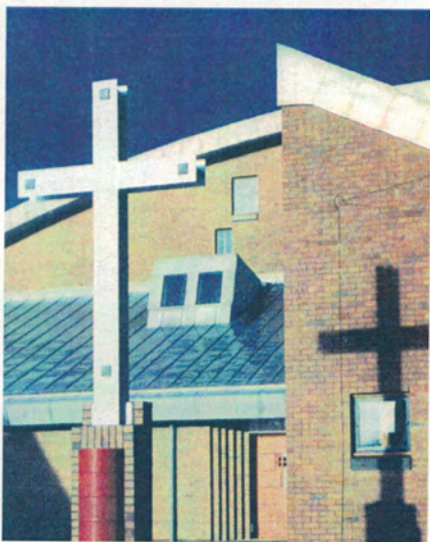
*Archbishop Winning, newly appointed, visiting the
children at school*



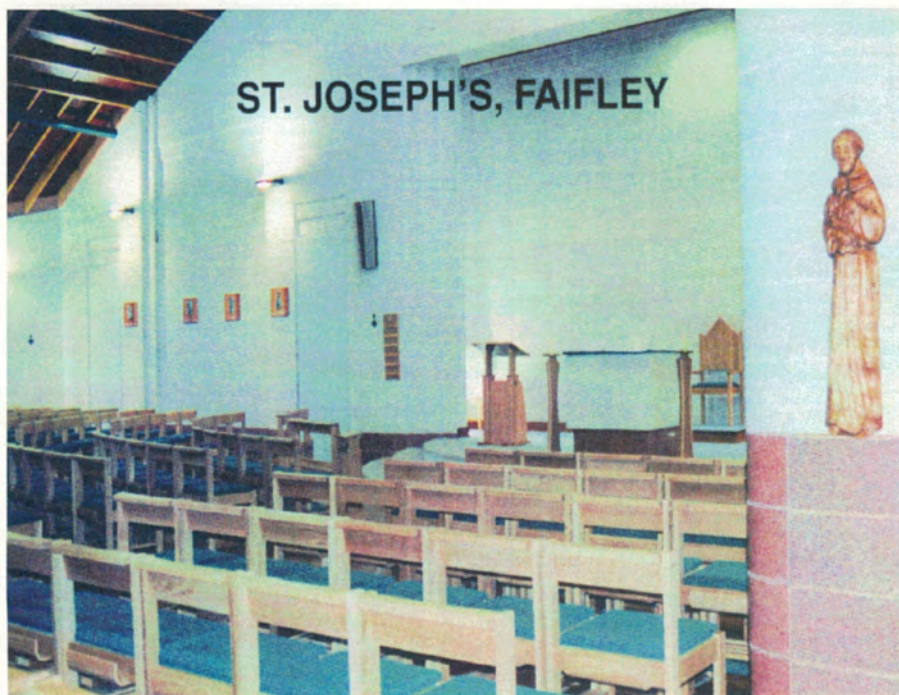
Laying the Foundation Stone



*Monsignor Francis Coyle and
Father Neil McGarrity*



New Church



The interior of the new church



Tabernacle



Baptismal Font

In an attempt to realise these ideals it was decided that the building should be squarish in shape with the high altar set out in the body of the church; that it should have a distinct Lady Chapel and a prominent baptistery.

The work of clearing the site for church and the house began on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1960. The sun shone that day, but the frost had already set in. It was the prelude to a severe winter. Once again patience was necessary while the work went on steadily, but slowly. Very slowly. It was not until the last week in September 1961, that the plans were completed and the actual building of the church got under way.

Meanwhile the life of the parish went on, highlighted here and there by pleasant or outstanding events.

The first Confirmations took place on 19th June 1960 and were the occasion for another visit from His Grace, Archbishop Campbell, who always took a keen interest in the progress of the parish and had a special affection for the children. His Grace confirmed 290 that day, and in his address to them he expressed the hope that St. Joseph's parish would be the seed bed of many vocations.



His Grace Archbishop Campbell administers the First Confirmations – 19th June 1960

Another outstanding event was the children's broadcast. They were invited by the BBC to broadcast the 'Dialogue Mass', which even the infants knew by this time; but the children went a step further and sang the Mass. Archbishop Campbell phoned personally after the broadcast to congratulate the children on the sweetness and devotional quality of their singing.

By 1962 St. Joseph's had grown to be the fifth largest of 19 parishes in the county of Dumbarton, and another priest was necessary. Again on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, Father George Gillespie received his first appointment to the parish. Since his coming, Father Gillespie has carried on the good traditions of the boys' clubs and given a new impetus to the Men's Confraternity.



Reverend George Gillespie

The winter of 1962 was one of the longest and severest in living memory, and of course, one of the worst for building.

At one point work stopped altogether for a period of ten weeks.

Spring of 1963 came at last, and a fair amount of progress was made from then on. The laying of the foundation stone was fixed for 11th June and all the arrangements for the ceremony were made, but it did not take place. On 31st May Pope John died. Lamented by the whole world, his loss had an added significance for St Joseph's parish. The ceremony had to be cancelled and his name erased from the foundation stone. Soon after the election of Pope Paul tentative arrangements were again made; but it was not to be. On 22nd July Archbishop Campbell died suddenly at Lourdes. His name also had to be erased from the stone. When it did take place, the ceremony was carried out by Bishop Ward, auxiliary to the late Archbishop Campbell. The inscription on the stone reads;

"as a perpetual remembrance of this foundation, on the twenty-fourth day of September in the year of our redemption, 1963, Pope Paul VI by Divine

Providence reigning over the Universal Church, the most Illustrious Father and Lord in Christ, James Ward, Bishop of Sita, laid this special stone in this church which is being build to the honour of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary".

Be everlasting praise to God.

The stone still bears the scars to remind us of the loss of two great and well-beloved men whose influence for good will long be felt in this world and in the Archdiocese of Glasgow. On a lighter side, it is the first foundation stone in Scotland to bear the name of Pope Paul and the first foundation stone laid by Bishop Ward.

The end is in sight. The parish was born at Christmas time 6 years ago, and arrangements are now being made to open the church this Christmas. God grant that it may be so. The way has been long and hard enough at times, and the work has suffered many setbacks. But if these trials, which seemed pointless at times, have helped to strengthen the spiritual life of the parish then in the Providence of God they have not been in vain. May the people of St. Joseph's soon enjoy the fruits of their patience and self sacrifice; and may all the men and women of the parish, too numerous to mention by name, who have worked so loyally during these years, see in the new church a visible reward of their labours.

The New Church of St. Joseph

The church, oratory and the house were designed by Mr Jack Coia, R.S.A; F.R.I.B.A; A.M.T.P.I; of the firm Gillespie Kidd and Coia, in conjunction with his assistant, Mr Isi Metzstien. St Joseph's is the 18th church in the Province of Glasgow designed by Mr Coia, and 4 more are in the planning stage or under construction.

The siting of the new church of St. Joseph's completes the third side of the large paved square, which also gives access to the church hall and presbytery. The church accommodates 560 in seating on 3 sides of the centrally placed altar, with an additional 80 seats in the Lady Chapel, and the same number in the choir gallery. The remaining accommodation provides a baptistery, 3 confessionals, a large open sacristy with ancillaries and a narthex. The form and appearance of the building derives from the near square plan which results from the unusual seating arrangement and the use of high level windows between steeply sloping roofs to light the church and especially the centrally placed sanctuary.

While the sacristies are an extension of the church space and are integrated with it, the baptistery and Lady Chapel are individually expressed and boldly attached to the body of the church and are, like the church, lit by high level windows. In contrast the sacristies have, in addition to high level lighting, deeply recessed coloured glazing scattered over the rear wall.

The construction combines thick load bearing wall partially buttressed by the upward extensions of the confessional walls, with massive laminated timber girders and beams carrying a boldly modelled copper covered roof. Internally, the walls are of textured cement plaster and the floor, which slopes gently towards the sanctuary, is covered with quarry tile with inserts of travertine, which is also used on the sanctuary steps and kneelers. The floor of the sanctuary is covered with hand decorated ceramic tiles of some richness. Natural wood finishes match the character of the exposed timber roof construction. The external walls are of sand faced brick topped by a deep coping of textured concrete. The high level windows which are fitted with remotely controlled ventilators, are of bronze and set directly into the exposed laminated timbers of the roof structure. The heating is by electrical coils embedded in the floor and the artificial lighting is generally of concealed fluorescent strip.

Solid travertine is used for the altars, the font and altar rails, with further use of travertine for pulpit, holy water stoups, etc. The seating is of solid hardwood construction and a timber canopy hangs over the altar.

The original brochure was produced for the opening of the new Church in 1963. Father Glenn having built the Church and maintained it through every difficult and problem. His devotion to his pastoral work among his people was legendary.

It was with great sadness that he decided to retire in December 1980, due to a heart condition. In his own words he thanked all his parishioners:

"Not only have I had a great affection for you; I have also admired you and respected you for your many great qualities. Your loyalty and co-operation, too in the support of the parish have been an inspiration to me in my work".

He met them when Pope John Paul II came to Bellahouston; he was delighted and had missed them all very much.



Reverend John Tobin

Father John Tobin came as a parish priest in 1981; he extended the hall and celebrated the silver jubilee of the parish in 1983. He died in December 1984.

Father David Currie came to the parish in 1985. His health suffered due to a stroke and it was shortly after that the Church was vandalised and set on fire in December 1993. Because of health and safety it had to be totally demolished. The insurance was adequate for the re-building of the Church.

The Church hall was used for Mass at the weekends and the meeting room was used during the week. There

were delays in beginning the process of the re-building and it was only in December that Father Currie was persuaded to move to St. Vincent's in Thornliebank. Father Coyle the parish priest there came to Faifley and started the rebuilding of the Church. His brother Monsignor Francis Coyle also took up residence and helped in working in the parish. Monsignor Coyle had a wicked sense of humour, in Thornliebank they were known as Francie and Josie.

The Church design was put out to architects to take part in the design of the new Church. Since we were replacing a Coia Church, Scottish Heritage and Historic Scotland would have to supervise the design.

Five models were produced and Cardinal Winning thought the parishioners should see them before the Committee decided the next day.

The Committee's decision rested between two models. One was chosen unanimously by the members of the Committee. Father Coyle had the final say and could have rejected both, but he favoured the Committee's choice. The parishioners favour the other one and he was slightly unpopular for a certain period of time.

However, work did start in preparation during the summer of 1995. It was a long process which took two years to complete.



The Church after the fire



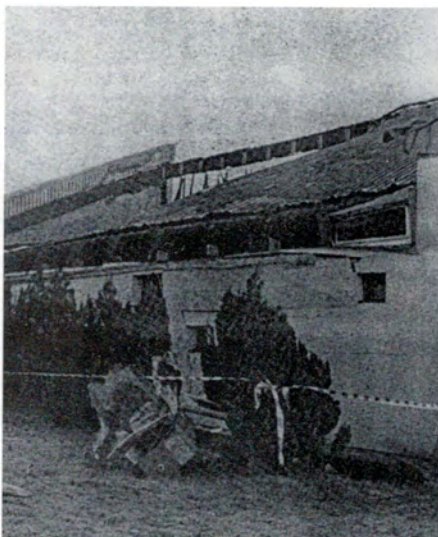
Burned Out



Hosing down the burned out shell



Salvaging what they could



Parish Shattered

The Church was dedicated by Cardinal Winning in November 1996 and eventually opened in July 1997. Monsignor Coyle was delighted to celebrate his Golden Jubilee in September in the new Church. He was very proud of it, especially the fine woods which had been used in the interior, as he was a great carpenter and joiner. Canon Glenn had encouraged and trained him in this lifelong hobby.

Monsignor Coyle had suffered several strokes and had to be operated on in Gartnavel Hospital in June 1998 for an aneurysm in his stomach, he died shortly afterwards.

The Stations of the Cross came from a Sculptor in Lourdes, along with the plaque of St. Anthony and the Sacred Heart.

Priests who have served in the Parish.

- Father Thomas Glen (R.I.P) 1957 - 1980
- Father David Currie (eventually retired from St Vincent's and died in August 2000)
- Father Peter Garland 1959 - 1971
- Father George Gillespie 1962 - 1967
- Father William B Donnelly 1967 - 1971
- Father John J Sheary (R.I.P) 1971 - 1979
- Father Anthony Beckett (R.I.P) 1971 - 1973
- Father Thomas Holloran (R.I.P) 1973 - 1979
- Father Colman McGrath 1978 - 1979
- Father Allister McLelland 1980 - 1984 (he has sent and email wishing you all the best in the celebrations)
- Father Anthony Sweeney 1980
- Father Terence Friel 1980, 1984, 1987 - 1989
- Monsignor James Clancy 1989
- Father Eamon Friel 1991 - 1995
- Monsignor Francis Coyle (R.I.P) 1995 - 1998
- Canon Gerard Conroy 1998 - 1999

Throughout the years we owe a tremendous debt to the Education Department who allowed us the use of the Schools for the Sunday Masses and Sacraments, when the original Church and Hall were being built. After the fire we had to use the school again for the Sacraments. The Head Teachers and staff of St. Joseph's School have been tremendously co-operative in helping at all times in our pastoral care for the children and parents.

We have also a very good relationship with Faifley Parish Church of Scotland, with many united services. Everyone appreciates this and it had increased the understanding between us. The Clydebank Churches together have also been a source of sharing views and discussions both in the services and the fraternals when the Priests and Ministers meet to discuss topics of interest.

