

Celebrating 130 Years of First Mass at St. Mark's

ON



LION

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A Parish Priest's Perspective

Last year we celebrated on the 3rd November 2018 the first meeting at Birkenhead Hotel to found the first Catholic Church in the area. The original community got together, brought the land and built the first Church building on our present site in Drummoyne. We celebrate and rejoice that our forefathers had such faith and confidence. The people of this area have always had a strong sense of identity and in this issue of the 'On Lion' we hear some of the stories and impressions of St Marks from different perspectives.

Places can be important, but people are even more important. Each week over the last 130 years people have gathered on this site to celebrate Jesus, to make him present in the Eucharist and have gone out from here to live their lives as members of the church within their families and in the business, sporting and all aspects of being human. The preaching and teaching, the camaraderie, the friendships and relationships that have been a part of the story of St Mark's community have had an enormous influence on the lives of countless individuals and families.



Once this church was built, there was no need for the long walk to Rozelle, Rosebank or Concord for Mass on a Sunday. The community had its own place of worship – a place to gather and celebrate the Eucharist. It would be another 20 years before this community was a parish with a resident Priest. Priests previously served the area from Rozelle. The initiative for a Church came from the people of the area prompting Church officials to build a Church. Misses Coles and Sarah Hayes conducted the first Catholic school in the Church for several years.

The desire for a Church and for education in the faith were very strong and to this day remain very much part of the work of the Church in this area. Parishioners have contributed to the life of the community over the years and we give thanks to God for all the people of faith who have contributed to the life of St Mark's community. We pay a special tribute to the Religious who staffed our school over the years when there was no government funding and the families had to provide everything. Generations of families have called this parish home over the years so let us take this opportunity to thank God as we look back, to ask God blessing on the years ahead and strive to remain faithful to Our Lord Jesus Christ under the patronage of the Evangelist St Mark.

*Very Rev. Father Michael
McLean, PP, EV*

130
Years

Words from Mons. Vince Redden

Congratulations St Mark's Drummoyne on celebrating the one hundred and thirtieth anniversary of the first parish Mass! The Mass is the heart and centre of Catholic faith and practice, every Catholic community celebrates the Eucharist, every Catholic parish is centred on the Eucharist.

How inspiring that the impetus for the Mass and the first church was largely led by lay Catholics in the area. They knew the importance of the Mass.

My priesthood is intimately associated with the Mass. My first public Mass was celebrated at the Sacred Heart Church Mosman on 16 July 1961. I was twenty-three and a half years old! My first Mass as parish priest was at St Charles Ryde in March 1979. After five years at St Mary's Cathedral, I celebrated my first parish Mass at St Mark's Drummoyne. The subsequent seventeen years saw a constant celebration of Masses, Masses unifying community celebrations, community tragedies, and community life in general.



The Mass for all of us is the unifying element in our community. As community, we offer the Mass in adoration, love, thanksgiving, petition and reparation to our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Mass is pure gift to us from Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Mons Vince Redden



Early Church—1897



North-west side of old Church

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

ST. MARK'S R.C. CHURCH IN DRUMMOYNE

1887 to 1905.

FIFTY years ago the Drummoyne Peninsula, in the back harbour of Sydney, was only a rough bush, with native trees and rocks, and not a few venomous snakes. Waratahs and many other wild flowers beyond its lovely water frontages made the place attractive. As yet no bridge or ferry was there for visitors, but with the time, even settlers came from the land and the water side, a bridge crossed the Long Cove River to connect with Balmain, another the Parramatta River to connect with Ryde. The top of the hill was called "Birkenhead"; the actual "Park" was called "Drummoyne." At first lonely footpaths conducted to the scattered houses in the bush, and ever since the snakes are disappearing. The Catholic pioneers of the district were assigned to St. Mary's Parish, Concord, but, in fact, people went to Church and children to school wherever they could. St. Joseph's Parish, Balmain (now Rozelle), became decidedly of more help than Concord, and "Drummoyne-Birkenhead" was incorporated to it. The Church of England had already a little church here for a while, when a fervent convert to Catholicism, Mr. David Parker, by trade a simple blacksmith, went to Rev. Thomas O'Reilly, then P.P. of St. Joseph's, Balmain, now P.P. at St. Patrick's, Parramatta, and offered £100 cash, as well as £100 advance without interest, if the priest would cause the erecting of a Catholic Church in Birkenhead. Father O'Reilly took the matter in hand, and called a meeting of the Catholic residents in Mr. Hayes' Birkenhead Hotel towards the end of 1887. They decided upon building a church in their own place. Mr. Parker raised his cash offer to £125, and others followed most generously; for instance, Alderman Mark A. Williamson, then Mayor of Fivedock, with Birkenhead and Drummoyne, after whose name also the church was called St. Mark's; Alderman Michael Stephen Foley, who since then has been Mayor of the district for three times; Alderman Patrick J. Byrne, now Captain of the local Volunteers; Messieurs. Wainman, Hayes, Gates, Casey, M'Govern, M'Kew and others. A fine piece of land, where the church stands at present (section I., lot 19 and 20), was selected. It has 132 feet frontage to a wide avenue, Tramere-street, a depth of 223 feet even and solid building ground, and a 33-foot-wide back lane; South-street separates it from the Public School property. The Very Reverend Father Carroll, V.G., most willingly approved of that beautiful church site, and it was bought for £134 8s, which is about a pound for the foot. The cash donations of Mr. and Mrs. Parker soon made up that sum. A nice church plan was made, cost free, by Mr. Ch. O'Neill, Architect and Engineer, but his Eminence the Cardinal approved of a plainer one, 80 x 22 feet. Mr. M. Hayes signed the building contract for £525, and a local

Historical Sketch - Fr Peter Klein sdb

builder, Mr. James, carried out the work. Messieurs Barlow and Roskell were to superintend the work. On the 8th of April, 1888, Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock, the foundation stone was blessed by his Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop, Patrick Francis Moran, who also gave £10 for the subscription on that occasion. Father O'Reilly and others did the same. Good Protestants subscribed also, and £118 17s 9d were realised. The previous donation of £141 5s made it possible that £260 2s 9d were laid upon the foundation stone, besides the £16 18s promised. Further credit was guaranteed in the Bank of New S Wales, Rozelle Branch, and in five months the church was erected. On the 8th Sept., 1888, it was formally opened, Holy Mass being celebrated in it for the first time by the Rev. Father O'Reilly. In the following month of October his Eminence the Cardinal blessed the church. People had to pay many things also for Divine Service, such as an Altar, a Communion railing, seats, an organ, a sacristy press, a church bell, and other items, which explains the following figures of a statement made out in 1892 by Mr. P. J. Byrne as church secretary:—Building of the church, with fees and extras, £594 15s 10d; Furniture, £86 1s 9d; Church Vestments, £27 13s 1d; Fencing, Timber, &c., £46 15s 5d. They fairly kept the interest of the church debt down by quarterly collections, socials and concerts. Mrs. Malone gave a carpet for the Altar steps, Mrs. Foley gave another for the sanctuary, and donated also the 14 Stations of the Cross; Mrs. Williamson gave a runner carpet for the passage between the seats; Mr. Hogan, now in South Africa, made a porch to be built at his own expense for £50; by different exertions the ladies paid for Altar vases and linen, candles, curtains and statues, for an Altar Cross and a fine Mission Cross, for washing and scrubbing, and also for some window-staining. In the last four years before Drummoyne had a priest of its own, Miss M. Casey managed the washing of all church linen; since then it has been done by Mrs. M'Govern and by Mrs. Grew. After Mr. P. J. Byrne, Mr. J. Todd has been church secretary twice, Mr. J. J. Gates once, Mr. P. Grew once, and now Mr. A. Moore has the charge, with Mr. G. Bowe as vice-secretary. From 1888 to 1900 Holy Mass was celebrated in St. Mark's once a week—on Sundays; periodically holy Confessions were heard; some times Benediction was given, and all the other calls were attended to at first by the Reverend Father O'Reilly and his curate, then by the Rev. Father J. P. Moynagh and the curates he had during the years he was also in charge of St. Mark's. Soon after the opening of the church Misses Colse and Sarah Hayes held school in its premises for several years. After these two ladies the Sisters of the Good Samaritan came for several quarters from St. Joseph's, walking all the way through wind and rain or heat, getting a dinner from good families here, and teaching our school children in the same school church.

With Easter, 1900, the Sisters of St. Joseph's took charge of St. Mark's School, and bought a house for convent in Plunkett-street. In the same year his Eminence Cardinal Moran separated Drummoyne, as a parochial district, from Rozelle, and gave it to the priests of the Order of the Divine Word. The Rev. Dr. Jos. Fischer and the Rev. James Fey bought Alderman Gates' cottage, near the church for a presbytery, which was blessed for that purpose on the 6th of January, Feast of Epiphany, 1901. Two religious Brothers were with the priests doing their house-keeping, working the garden, doing the altar and keeping the church clean. Father Fischer soon became popular, and a new life began for St. Mark's. A mission was held by the Marist Father Coné, who also introduced the Sodality of the Sacred

Historial Sketch - Fr Peter Klein sdb

Heart into the district. Ladies collected £18 for a new sanctuary carpet; Father Fischer received chandeliers from America; donators paid for nice window staining, and Brother Gottfried fixed it on—finally, a bazaar with art union for the church funds was organised and ready to be opened, when Father Fischer was called home and replaced by Father Peter Klein. The bazaar was opened by Mr. Farnell, local member of Parliament, on the 18th of Oct., 1902, in the Oddfellows' Hall, Bridge-st (then Carrington Hall). Mr. Charles Fisher was the secretary, and Mr. Thom. Dowling the treasurer of the bazaar. The seven stallholders were: Mrs. Dr. Clune as president with the flower stall; Mrs. Foley with the curios stall; Miss Trick, fancy work; Miss Coise Hayes, fancy work; Miss Sara Hayes, refreshment stall; Mr. Gus. Bowe, produce stall; Miss Mary Grew, children's stall. In one week they cleared £132. Father Klein then discharged the church mortgage, placed the rest of the debt at a lower interest, handed over the land deeds to his Eminence the Cardinal, arranged for new guarantors in the bank, and in that way he was able, with a good church committee, to build a new school. The first idea of Father Klein was to get a shelter for a Young Men's Club, but soon we had offers of a wooden building, 22 x 45, to be erected for £100. Then we thought of building a brick addition to the church for school and hall, but his Eminence the Cardinal did not like that idea. So we decided upon a brick school 60 x 22 to be built parallel to the church. The distance from it is now 24 feet, which room can easily be put under glass roof for another hall as soon as it is wanted. The school building contract was signed between Father Klein and Mr. W. Wallace, builder and contractor, from Annandale, for the sum of £281 10s. The laying on of gas and water and the oil painting of the walls came in afterwards as extras. Mr. Bennett, from Drummoyne, superintended the work. The building was blessed and opened by his Grace the Coadjutor Archbishop, Dr. Kelly, on Sunday, 3 p.m., July 12, 1903. Dr. T. B. Clune was in the chair, and a subscription realised £94 13s, Mr. M. S. Foley heading the list with £15, and Father Klein with £8. Several others gave £5; a piano of £35 was bought later on for the new school-hall, and curtains and panels fixed upon the stage for performances. Once the church was cleared of desks and easels, Brother Robert and Brother Leo painted it outside, and neatly coloured the inside with kalsomine. Father Klein gave more church seats, a new Confessional, a new gallery for the choir, different church vestments, and other items of minor importance. Ladies paid for three lamps, for altar cover and altar lace, and Mrs. Crowley donated the sanctuary lamp. In October, 1903, we held a fair in the school-hall for its building funds. The Reverend Father Moynagh, P.P., from Bozelle, opened it, Messieurs P. J. Grew and Ch. Fisher being secretaries. The stallholders were:—Mrs. Stokes, children's stall; Miss P. Hayes, fancy stall; Mrs. Gates, fancy stall; Miss C. Zann, refreshment stall. We cleared £117 10s. The hall has proved to be very handy also for concerts, socials, dramas and farces. In 1903 a Young Men's Society was organised at St. Mark's, and has done much good to its members and their friends. In 1904 a branch of St. Vincent de Paul Society was started over here, young men and older gentlemen co-operating well together; many good assistances have been given to local poor of all denominations, and also to the Westmead boys. In June 1904, the Redemptorist, Father Murray, preached a great mission in our church, and we re-organised the Sodality of the Sacred Heart; now it has its banners and regular meetings. The Children of Mary are in their first months of aspirancy. The church choir has been improved very much under the direction of Mr. W. Mahony. That choir was started by Mr. Larkin; Mr. Lunn succeeded him; afterwards Misses Hayes, and then Misses Hogan had charge of it. In the last two years our choir has become an object of jealousy for larger suburbs and churches than ours. The Sacrament of Confirmation was

Historial Sketch - Fr Peter Klein sdd

given for the first time in our church on the 25th of February, 1904, to 38 children, by his Grace the Archbishop, Dr. Kelly. Our parochial district is now fairly well organised like older parishes, and the most serious works of all, the education of the children and the formation of the young people are well attended to. The Sisters of St. Joseph presented their first children for the Cardinal's examination at the end of 1908, and all passed with honours. The school has come to a high standard. The elder girls do also nice fancy works, and the priest, giving regularly religious instructions, follows with keen interest the general progress of the school; The diocesan Catholic School inspector, the Rev. Father Whyte, has been exceedingly satisfied with this school of St. Joseph's Sisters for the end of 1903 and 1904. God may bless us always.

PETER KLEIN, S.V.D., Par. Adm.



Father Klein at
45 years of age
in 1917

"Goodbye" Drummoyn,
and God bless you.
We will see again
on the day of the last
Judgement
if not before.
Peter Klein

Father Klein's farewell
message to Drummoyn
taken from St. Mark's
History Book in 1919.

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

Eileen Fernon

Eileen Fernon you have made a wide and interesting contribution to the life and times of St Mark's as a parishioner since 1958. I came to Sydney when I married in 1951 and we moved to St Mark's Parish in 1958. Three of our six children and three of our 23 grandchildren have been baptised in this church over the years. We prayed together as a family at home and as the children were growing up it was important for us to come to Mass together on a Sunday as a family. We came to the 10 am Mass and always sat together in our 'regular' seat.

What for you was significant about St Mark's?

It was so good to have a parish-based Church life. We had the Blessed Sacrament and morning Mass. All the children (Mary, John, Bernadette, Monica, Vincent and Paul) went to school at St Mark's. The boys were all on the altar and Mary and Bernadette were married from St Mark's. I had an active time participating in the life of the parish, mainly by playing the organ for about 30 years (starting when Fr Spalding was curate and Sr Andrea was the music teacher), and through connections with the school through the tuckshop and the P&F, accompanying violin students such as Mary Rota for her violin exams and playing for the school concerts for Sr Audrey. I played for weddings and funerals as well as for Sunday morning Mass. Marie Waldie was another loyal organist in those days, and later on young Tim and Frank took a share in the music role too. I made many lifelong friends at St Mark's, some, such as Rita Baker, Joan Kennedy, Dulcie McGovern, Joan Millynn and Joycie Costello, have already gone to God, but there are many others who are still a big part of my life today.

Another significant thing about St Mark's is the wonderful diversity of the Parish. I grew up in Cairns North Queensland and there were many people from all over the world who were a part of my life at St Monica's and around town in the '30s and '40s. I love the contribution the large Italian families have brought to St Mark's and nowadays people from so many different backgrounds enrich our parish community.

In reflection what may have brought a smile to your face?

Fr Boyle, who was my first Parish Priest in Drummoyne, was a gentle and humble man who never pushed people to oversubscribe to the planned giving. But there was development in the parish in the '60s with the new church hall being built, so I suppose there was a financial need he was anxious about. In his lovely Irish accent he used to ask people to 'just put another thruppence (3 cents) in the plate'!

Tell me about Masses on a Sunday

There were different sodalities for different groups in the parish at the 7am Mass on Sundays. For example the Holy Name Society for the men was on the second Sunday of the month. They would sit together at the front of the church. The unmarried girls joined the Children of Mary Sodality and wore blue cloaks on the third Sunday and the ladies came together on the fourth Sunday in the Sacred Heart Sodality. Praying together like that helped build a sense of community and common purpose in the parish.

What would stand out as a special recollection of Mass?

I suppose the funeral Mass for my husband Jack is the most memorable for me. Fr Conway was our Parish Priest then, he was so generous with his time when Jack died and stayed with the family at home for a long time, and then he was the chief concelebrant for the funeral. As well as a couple of priests who had served at

continued next page

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

St Mark's, several of Jack's friends who were priests and several of my son John's friends who had been ordained joined him on the altar. But it was the warm support I received from my family and the many friends who filled the church that day that I felt so grateful for. We sang a hymn I had heard for the first time not long before Jack died called The City of God. We still sing it at St Mark's. I chose it because Jack was such a fan of St Augustine who wrote a book called The City of God!

Over the many years living in Drummoyne there have been many activities that I have been involved with around the church, including the Lenten discussion groups. Jack used to lead a group in the early '80s and now Monica leads a group at our home.

I volunteered with Canice's Kitchen for a number of years and served Saturday morning breakfast at the Matt Talbot Hostel in Darlinghurst for about 20 years. I only stopped doing that when I gave up driving about 10 years ago. I also supported the Nuns at the Seminary at Manly for many years by cooking for fundraisers and concerts. Now I am a member of the Catholic Women's League. I have had a lot of fun and lot of wonderful experiences at St Mark's, it has been such a significant part of my life. If ever I was away, coming back to St Mark's was like coming home again.



Some of the Fernon clan

John Perkins

John Perkins a St Mark's parishioner with his family, who is the current Chairperson of the St Mark's Pastoral Council.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church? Moved into area in 1994 and it was my local parish

What is your first memory or impression of attending St Mark's Church? It was a friendly community.

What is the most significant change you have seen at St Mark's?

The change in demographics- less families seem to be attending mass

What is your fondest memory of going to Church?

As a family, having all the family at church, and the special events(communions, baptisms etc)

What is your favourite Hymn / Song sung at Mass? How Great Thou Art

What Sacrament do you have a fond memory of? Was it at St Mark's?

All of my 4 kids baptisms, all which were at St Mark's

As a St Mark's, Parishioner, Parish Pastoral Council Member/Chair and having your family growing in our Parish what do you believe could be a way to involve more families with better involvement and commitment and to grow the base of young people in our Parish?

A question I ponder regularly. The class masses are a good start. I see most of my friends families attending less- usual reason seems to be a busier life and less commitment to the Church in general.

I think more connectedness with the Parish once the kids leave St Mark's

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

Keith Cox OAM

Mr Keith Cox OAM a St Mark's parishioner who as a retired nurse practitioner (specializing in oncology chemotherapy) was awarded an OAM for his services to nursing and community volunteer work.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church?

I moved into the Drummoyne parish in March 1991. At one of my first St Mark's parish Masses a parishioner gave a talk, he was doing a recruitment drive for members to join the St Vincent de Paul Society in our community. As someone who has made a career of caring for people, I felt this was my calling, as at the society's heart they have a profound sense of respect for the people they serve. I joined with other new members and Peter Burbidge was our president. Our meetings held in the old Church hall, and our initial care calls were done by telephone, as emails were the future. It was Peter who, along with Fr Conway, inspired me to help volunteer, to coordinate St Canice's Kitchen, and after 27 years' I am still volunteer with both these associations.

What is your fondest memory of being a Catholic?

After completing my training, I entered the ministry as an acolyte for the church. Bishop Robinson celebrated my acolyte ceremony at Leichhardt. Peter and his wife Heather and Sr. Chrys a Sister of St John of God and my sister fondly attended it.

What is a significant memory you have of St Mark's parish community?

I served as an acolyte at the 110th anniversary outdoor mass attended by over 600 parishioners and visitors. The altar was set up in the Church grounds backing onto Tranmere Street with parishioners seating set up on the grass. I remember how everyone came together to make this time a successful community celebration. Although we did have a challenge and laugh about it now, with the sound system, with traffic noise, and vibrations, the choir, musicians and readings were beguiling.

What is your favorite hymn?

"Here I am Lord" I find this song emotionally moves me. When I sing this hymn, I feel that I am talking to, and feel closer to God where on my journey he is walking beside me. Music is not for all, but at St Mark's the choir and music help me celebrate the Mass.

What has been the most significant change you have seen at St Mark's?

I would have to say the increase of children at the school has doubled in intake of students, where the church has declined in numbers attending weekend Mass, which also brought the vote to change from four weekend Masses to three.

What influence has St Mark's had on your life?

I grew up one of nine children, I was lucky number seven and my father became a Catholic to marry my mother. My early influence was my father travelling to Goulburn for supplies and him leaving me at the convent to be minded by the hospital nursing sisters. Their subtle teaching's guided me towards my faith and my nursing career. My mother supported by choice of being a male nurse, not common in those days, but during my nursing career and life I found that having good faith works on inner peace and happiness. Coming to St Mark's Mgr. Vincent Redden was the parish priest and he influenced my faith and my development as a Catholic. Under his guidance, I became a member of the team that help support the formation of training priests and deacons that came to stay at St Mark's parish.

My career has taken me to London training as a specialist Cancer nurse to setting up cancer units in Nepal and New Guinea, to training Japanese nurses. I currently sit on the boards of four major organizations that I am passionate about; my mission is reaching out, and I am honored to be a parishioner, carer and volunteer of St Mark's vibrant, welcoming community.

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

Judith Brown

Judith Brown has embraced our parish community since the 1930's we are bless to have her as a respected member of our St Mark's church, parish and school family.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church?

My parents, Wilfred and Marguerite grew up in Five Dock, where they met and married at All Hallows Church. As my father was a member of the RAAF, they began their married life living at Richmond Airbase. My father loved flying and after building his own 'Gipsy Moth' aircraft he gave flying lessons out of Mascot on weekends in the company of Charles Kingsford Smith who at the time was teaching the famous aviator Nancy Bird. Tragically, 7 months before I was born his plane nosedived into the Cooks River killing him and his student. My mother needing support with two young children, moved into Tranmere Street close by the family and within walking distance to the Church and school, so my life at St Mark's Church and attending St Mark's School began...

What memory do you have of attending St Mark's school?

My brother (Max) and I walked to school each day, along with all the kids in the street. Known as St Mark's Convent School, the school run by the Josephite sisters who could not have been a more humble group of women, where I remember the mothers sometimes cooking homemade meals for them. Classes were held in the First Church, which became the school/parish hall it was draughty, cold and the boys always had trouble opening and closing the stiff windows! One memory that stands out is in the 1940's with the fear of the Japanese forces advancing further south they dug up our front playground to create trenches on Tranmere Street, which today would be in front of the school, church. At school, all classes had to practise in the trenches in the case of an air raid.

What recollections do you have of your youth in St Mark's parish?

The 1950's were vibrant times with the Catholic Youth of Drummoyne. We met under the banner of the C.Y.O of which I was fortunate to be part of, as members, we played sport - cricket and football for the boys, netball for the girls. We went on outings, went to the beach and all sang in the choir at Church and loudly at each other's 21st Birthdays, it was such a strong, fun and lively, organization.

I worked for the State Department of Water Resources and Irrigation and became the head shorthand writer supervising 52 young women spread throughout the department. I joined the Drummoyne branch of St Vincent de Paul as the only girl member and enjoyed volunteering, especially the visitation work. At my workplace, we formed a group with other Vinnies members and performed visitations in our lunch break visiting grand old homes where the handicapped resided in Milson's Point and once a month we served meals at the Matthew Talbot Hostel in Woolloomooloo.



Judith on her First Communion and with her brother Max

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

What hymn/song brings a special memory?

I am someone who likes modern songs and hymns over traditional. My favorite Mass is Midnight Mass at Christmas. I feel that over the decades Midnight Mass always has the same feel, families leave parties and come to Church which is candle lit, music playing and everyone seems to be full of Spirit, and at peace. This brings me to my song 'Come all Yeah Faithful' a song that is joyful and triumphant, and always sung with great passion.

In reflection, what are your memories of St Mark's Church?

As an older 'girl' student of the school, you were on the cleaning roster for the Church. Altar brass was more than just a few candleholders; candelabras have pedestals and the brass seem to take forever to clean. Brasso was your friend 'for brightness sake' so their advertising told us and I still remember that smell today! However, my memories also are of family, I remember walking to Church every Sunday with Mum and my brother, for morning Mass. The whole street was Catholic and we all came to Mass where our parish priest was Mgr. James Meany whom I recall as an aristocratic man who did a lot for the school, parish, and the community. I believe he taught me that community was as important as praying together. My brother became a Civil Engineer, but later was called to the Franciscan Order being ordained Fr. Barnabas O.F.M in 1964, and I remember him as Franciscan Friar founded by St Francis of Assisi celebrating Mass at St Mark's in his sandals.

What significant memory do you have of our St Mark's parish community?

School gave me the option to pursue my passion for sports, spending time playing tennis at the school tennis courts, where we now park our cars for Church today, beside South Street. I have represented the parish and community in a variety of sporting events, and found I enjoy being part of a community. Presently I manage our Drummoyne Branch of the Catholic Women's League, which although small I feel has a part to play as a Ministry within the parish. Our members strongly support the Sunshine Club set up over thirty years ago by St Mark's first pastoral associate Sr. Barbara, as an outlet for seniors to come together, share a meal and to communicate and support one another.

I have been a member of St Mark's Church, parish and community for over 80 years, and been blessed in so many ways. It has supported me through many highs and lows, but the friends and social collective of this parish has always brought me spiritual fulfillment.



Daisy Gill

Daisy Gill a parishioner since the seventies and involved in all aspects of St Mark's Parish life, and was a legendary cook for the MSC Priests and students.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church?

Alan and I moved into Drummoyne from Putney in 1971 and we asked our neighbour for a Catholic Church.

What is your first memory or impression of attending St Mark's Church?

I preferred St Mark's to my Church in England - the people were so amicable.

What is the most significant change you have seen at St Mark's?

The change in St Mark's- I was not sure I wanted them - I have seen is the removal of the altar rails and the placing of the platform around the Altar. Now everything is level and people can walk around the altar. We were all in the church when we had the discussion and I can be a bit outspoken sometimes. I think it is better than before. I used to change the flowers and tend the candles.

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

What is your fondest memory of going to Church?

My fondest memory of St Mark's is the friendship and caring smiles greeting you – there are not many churches like that. The community get together and the way we know each other – it becomes like a big family. The yearly gatherings for St Mark's Day and the celebrations for World Youth Day 2008 when we all got together, and we had people and visitors from all over the world.

What is your favourite Hymn / Song sung at Mass?

My favored hymn is "Come as you are" – I first heard it when the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart priests (MSC) were resident in the parish and then we used to sing it at Mass at St Mark's.

What Sacrament do you have a fond memory of at St Mark's?

My fondest memories of Sacraments at St Mark's is Wedding Anniversaries blessing I found very nice – they can be married for 50 or 60 years – it is a good example that they can be married so long – you've got to ride the waves in marriage – the good and the bad. Father used to say it was a good example to others in the church when we had these celebrations.

What other memories do you have of St Mark's parish community?

Alan and I would go to the Parish hall after Sunday Mass and practice our ballroom dancing (they were a champion couple). Helen and Tim Kennedy would look in the window at us practicing – this is about 1984-5- the old hall was perfect for practicing. I used to love teaching catechism in the State School and the retreat days we had at St Mark's. Sometimes we would gather outside Mass and talk for a long time in front of the church.

Daisy was born in Egypt – lived in Cairo and Alexandria till she was 25 then moved to England for 15 years where she married Alan. I worked for Universal Pictures in Alexandria, Egypt before working at Barclays Bank London Head Office and I also worked at Warner Bros, with a miserable pay of £5 per week, I got better pay at the Bank. We then moved to Australia in March '71 and I have lived in Drummoyne since June '71. Previously published in On Lion is the story of her expulsion from Egypt.

Tony Ficarra

Tony Ficarra has lead a long pastoral life, especially here at St. Mark's. His aspirations over time have made an impact on his Catholic life and career in education. Tony was awarded an OAM for his service to education and to the community.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church?

I went to St. Mark's Primary School from Kindergarten, as I lived in Drummoyne with my brother and parents. My best teacher a St Joseph nun who had an impact was Sr Mary Magdalene who was an artist and left a lasting impression. I became an Altar boy and on a weekday morning at 7am, before school I dressed in my attire of red soutane and white surplice, including white gloves and red slippers and as tradition served the Mass said in Latin.

What is your memory of teaching in Catholic Schools?

After school, I joined the work force at the CBA bank as a paper pusher, but I liked to talk! My change in career took me into Economics, where after completing university at night I became an Economics teacher. I taught in various Sydney Catholic Schools teaching students like Archbishop Anthony Fisher and Tony Abbott, before becoming Principal at Brigidine High School, Cooma, administered by the Brigidine Sisters until my arrival, so having a male principal brought many challenges. A highlight of my professional career was in 1966 elected as Foundation President of help for Economics Teachers Association NSW which conducted student lectures and provided support for teachers.

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's



Tony at Trinity College Auburn 1997

What is a significant memory you have of attending Mass at St Mark's?

I served St Mark's as an Altar Boy for many years in various Masses. I remember Cardinal Gilroy coming for the consecration of St Mark's Church in 1949. It was an elaborate event, he had to go around and bless every Cross in the Church, and at that time, there were a lot.

As the Crosses were placed up high he was pushed on a moveable dais with wheels from Cross to Cross, by the Assistant Priests. The last Cross was up very high on the roof of the Church, so this Cross had an overall blessing from below.

What Sacrament do you have a fond memory of and was it at St Mark's?

Yes, it was my First Communion, which was held on a Sunday in October at 7.00am Mass with all the first communicants specially attired, including myself. The girls wore white dresses and veils and the boys wore white shirts and ties with dark pants. I made my First Communion on the (then) Feast of Christ the King on 25th October 1942. Following Mass, the children all moved to the school where Communion Breakfast had been set up.

What is your favorite hymn?

From my First Communion, I can still remember the hymn we sang which was called 'My First Communion Day' and how it sounded with the whole Communion class singing.

What has been the most significant change you have seen at St Mark's?

Over my time, there have been many changes. In 1989 following 2 general meetings where parishioners offered suggestions for parish life a steering committee for formed which eventuated in the election of the team of the Parish Pastoral Council of which my wife Pat was one of the members. 'On Lion' was one of the first initiatives of that time.

What influence has St Mark's had on your life?

My faith is very important to me. The purpose of faith is to act as a measure of a person's hope, and to help a person grow in his or her trust in God the Father and in God's purposes for us as his children. Throughout the year's my role at St Mark's has changed from Altar Boy to Catechist at Drummoyne Public School. With my wife, we have always found a community at St Mark's.

ST. MARK'S, DRUMMOYNE.

The first and second Masses in St. Mark's Church, Drummoyne, on Christmas Day, were largely attended, and there were many communicants. At 10 o'clock a Missa Cantata was sung by the Rev. Father J. Wendel, S.V.D. The choir rendered the short, but very harmonious, "Missa Maria Wait-schach," by Julius Polser. The composer took his motives from the Gregorian Mass, "De Angelus," No. 8, of the new Vatican edition. It is full of harmony, and the theatrical style of many other well-known Masses is eliminated. The "Adeste Fideles" was sung by Miss S. Riddar, Miss Welsh and Mr. Sheridan. Miss C. Hayes acted as organist. The sanctuary was tastefully decorated with palms and wreaths.

31 December 1908
"Sydney Press"

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

Abigail, Claudia & William

Abigail, Claudia and William attend Drummoyne Public School and weekly join our Catechist scripture classes, taught by our volunteer Catechists. We bring you their thoughts on their Catholic life and teachings.

We asked the children here today to say what makes you a Catholic.

Claudia, what do you think? I have to put God first in my life.

William, what do you think? I believe in Jesus and God as my Father.

Abigail, what do you think? I believe in God and follow him. I pray and have faith in Him. That's a good start now...

What would you think makes you Catholic here at Drummoyne Public School?

We have to think about the prayer we say – the 'Our Father', we have to pause at the part of 'Thy will be done here as it is in Heaven'. In our Friday Scripture when we pray we hear about someone passing away or is going through tough times, so we have a time when we have petitions when friends in class speak about grandparents who are ill or have died. We were given Rosary beads in Year 5 and learned the 'Hail Mary' and 'Glory be to the Father'. We try to do what was suggested to say a 'Hail Mary' every day.

Abigail, what kind of prayer do you say? Usually I pray about my day saying Thank you God and asking God for help.

William, what kind of prayer do you say? I say loving prayers and forgiving prayers. ***Claudia, what kind of prayer do you say?*** Sometimes I say the Apostles Creed.

Tell me what you know about the Sacraments?

Two of us started here in Kindergarten when we were told about Baptism for babies. Now we know our Baptismal promises and say "I do" to being asked, "Do you renounce Satan and all his empty promises". First Communion and Reconciliation were Sacraments that we had, and learned about in groups of children from different schools like we are doing again as two of us this year are making our Confirmation at St. Mark's.

Because you get the opportunity at school on Friday to attend Catholic Scripture groups what do those mean to you.

The time is good to get to pray and to learn about our Faith. It is another way to get closer to speak to God. So too it's a good time in petitions to speak about our troubles, to learn about our troubles, to learn about the Holy Spirit and to read about Jesus in our class Bibles. We had a class Mass last year and we went to St. Mark's with Year 6. At the Mass, some of Year 5 boys and girls read our Prayers of the Faithful. We prayed for Fr Michael and Pope Francis, for our parents and our teachers.

We all agree that our Friday Scripture lessons are very special times and hope that there are times next year when we go to High School when these lessons will still be there for us.

Abigail, Claudia and William.

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

Rocco Zoccali

Mr Rocco Zoccali has been a St Mark's parishioner for over 56 years he is an acolyte for our Church and a well-regarded member of our parish community.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church?

It was for the mass in 1962 – a lot of people here – then when I come to the church after my wife passed away – Fr said you have to come and do something for the church – you have to become an acolyte – had to go to St Marys Concord and prepare to be an acolyte. Fr Vince gave me a key – gave it to me and I come to open the church. I remember Fr Boyle PP and Fr Jim he was on the Radio – then there was a priest who used to take the young people to the park for sport and I remember Fr Conway. – Fr Michael Smith came he was a student then a Deacon and then he became a priest – then Fr Vince became Monsignor.

What is your first memory or impression of attending St Mark's Church?

So many people young people – every holiday the parents used to come and paint the school, come and dress it up and work for the school. We had to do it all. Fr Boyle had a wheel barrow and collected the weeds – was nice. The nuns used to make the hosts for the church.

What is the most significant change you have seen at St Mark's?

They make the room columbarium – the sisters used to teach the kids – they change the chapel into a columbarium – then lay teachers to teach the kids – they enlarge the hall. Fr Conway built the columbarium for the ashes. Carmelina she organised everything in the church. She asked me to come and look after the church. Cardinal Clancy came to bless, and everything was finished – he said no but it was already done.

What is your fondest memory of going to Church?

It was good the best thing for the church here – all people were good friends, here the church is good. I feel with my heart I like the church. I remember when there were altar rails and a nice pulpit of marble they take away and they did the petition of the back with the glass not sure when.

What is your favourite Hymn / Song sung at Mass?

I think everything is nice – very good impression there was a good team they sing everything. Special Italiano songs 'O Dio mio' – Nancy Saya and Frank were very good. All the singing is good.

What Sacrament do you have a fond memory of? Was it at St Mark's?

The Baptisms Confirmations especially – my children made their sacraments here – my wife's funeral – I was upset and there was Monsignor and Fr Monahan – so many people – she was in the Italian prayer group all the time in the church with Carla Bocalatte. I come here from Italy in 1957 – first Marrickville then Balmain – then married Maria in 1958 in Leichardt - then moved to Drummoyne in 1962 – lived here ever since.

What influence does St Mark's hold for you today?

I served as an acolyte for 12 years - I like it- it is good to do it – I learn what you have to do – Fr Paul, St Marys Concord taught us everything. I like the priest and those who work in the office and I like the people – I am able to help. Everybody is friends with me and me with them.

Rocco Zoccali has lived in Polding St Drummoyne since 1962. He and his wife Maria raised their four children 3 girls and one boy. He comes originally from Italy and the children are good to the church as well. They help out in their communities. It took one month and ten days to come to Australia – they closed the Suez Canal and they had to go the long way, all round Africa.

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

Amanda Gardiner

Amanda Gardiner is a St Mark's parishioner, teacher and mother who has brought up two daughters in the parish and community. She has a passion for music and social justice.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church?

I became first involved in about 1991 when my husband Damien and I started attending Mass. A friend suggested going to the 6.00pm Mass as there was a great MSC Priest called Brian Boyle who did great homilies. Dynes Austin and Cheryl Frazer used to sing! They all drew us in!

What is your first impression of attending St Mark's Church?

My first impression was a very warm, friendly and contemporary parish. Music was great. The Church was pretty full. The lovely Phil Kelly, who has now passed on, was the first person to welcome us. We got to know many lovely people from then on.

What is the most significant change you have seen at St Mark's?

Most significant change-creation of the Parish Centre to provide options for parish groups to gather and meet to plan ways to build and support the community. The enlargement of the school to two streams in 1998. I taught at St Mark's Primary School from 1999. What concerns me is the dropping of people and the lack of consistent attending.

What is your fondest memory of going to Church?

My fondest memory of going to Church - going to St. Columba's North Leichhardt and gathering afterwards with the older parishioners. Our neighbour used to wrap her coat around me when it was cold. I felt very nurtured and at home in that community. At St. Mark's it is the Music group that was very good and I continued in the Music Ministry for 18 years.

What is your favourite Hymn?

Favourite hymn – ooh that is very hard!! I have many favourites!! 'Blessing for Life' by James Maher is beautiful especially for Mothers and Father's Day as is all the music James wrote and recorded. I also love 'How Can I Keep from Singing', which is apparently an old Quaker hymn. There is lots of great contemporary music available, which really helps to energise the community along with the classics of course.

What Sacrament do you have a fond memory of and was it at St Mark's?

The Sacrament I have a fond memory of – Our wedding day it was beautiful. It was at St. Columba's North Leichhardt. Having our families all gathered together was wonderful. I made all my Sacraments there so I felt very much at home. At St Mark's one of my fondest memories is of the 125th Anniversary Mass and I think the children sang "Born Anew". Music has a special place and has been a great way to meet people. People have been very kind and let you know that they have gotten something special out of what you are doing.

As a St Mark's Teacher, Parishioner, Music Ministry member and having your family growing up in our Parish what do you believe could be a way to involve more families from the School, better involvement and grow the base of young people in our parish?

In my family Educator Role with Sydney Catholic Schools, it is a great tool and great support to parishes. I think we can learn something from other Churches and denominations. Caught up in our Catholic world we could learn from others about how we use our resources and base what we do and our initiatives on data. What do people want? Issues around mental health? Offering people a place to share their story? Offering people services they need. Finding things that connect with people in their lives.

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

Sharon Uthappa

Sharon Uthappa is a parishioner, a St Mark's Catechist at Drummoyne Public School, and an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist at St Mark's Church.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church?

I think the first time I came to St Mark's was 2014 August. I just came to Sydney from Bangalore India to study for my Master's in counselling. I discovered St Mark's on one of my walks- a quaint place nestled between the school and the apartment buildings. It felt as though St Mark's found me or I had found my church.

What is your first memory or impression of attending St Mark's Church?

I started coming in for Masses from August 2014. I came in and sat at the back of the church because I was nervous and shy, but it became my church that day. Fr Michael was the priest who celebrated Mass and what he said during Mass resonated with me.

What is the most significant change you have seen at St Mark's?

I think one of the most significant changes was when our youth minister Grace joined the church and I become more involved. I love the mood of the church in the different seasons say during Lent and Easter.

What is your fondest memory of going to Church?

Fondest memories are of the recent Easter vigil where the church was stark and there was only the candlelight. Celebrating Mass especially after confession – making new friends growing within the parish community contacts – Sr Antonia, Grace and all the others. Another fondest memory was becoming an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. The honour and privilege of this ministry. Having the Church open and to be able to come into the church in the evening and have a quiet prayer or to pray the rosary.

What is your favourite Hymn / Song sung at Mass?

Ten thousand reasons 'Blessed be' – As the deer panted for the waters so my soul longs for thee. When we sing *Holy Holy Holy* at Mass – this is when the heavens open up and Jesus comes down.

What Sacrament do you have a fond memory of and was it at St Mark's?

Definitely Confession and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confirmation last year – to be present with people. Attending the Catholic youth festival with the St Mark's group December 2017.

Being involved with Grace and the youth group- what did that mean to you?

Being involved with Grace and the youth group- what did that mean to you? It was a special feeling and reminded me of home when I was involved with the Archdiocese back in Bangalore- youth festivals, night vigils, etc. Doing that and Teaching Catholic Scripture in the Public School has been a great privilege and journey for me. To be able to understand the importance of teaching scripture to young people. To see the curiosity of a child or their inquisitiveness – to know the Lord and his teaching. Special to me because I did not have this growing up. I attended a Hindu and did not have the opportunity to learn scripture apart from my mother teaching me the Our Father and Hail Mary prayer.

Sharon Uthappa a counsellor and group worker who has made her home in Drummoyne for nearly five years and has adopted St Mark's as her parish.

Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

Josephine Chrystie

Josephine Chrystie is a student at St Mark's Catholic Primary School and a Junior Eucharistic Minister (JEM) at St Mark's Church.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church?

I became part of the St Mark's Church officially at my baptism in 2007, but my family was involved with the parish for a number of years before this.

What is your first memory or impression of attending St Mark's Church?

I have been coming to Mass with my family since I was little, and I always remember sitting in the pew looking up at the choir. Also, if we were to attend one of the 6pm Masses I always remember falling asleep on my mum's shoulder as a little girl.

What is the most significant change I have seen at St Mark's?

The most obvious change in the parish for me was the change of priest, as Monsignor Vince retired and we were granted with Father Michael, who continues to make Mass an enjoyable, safe, and prayerful place for all.

What is my fondest memory of going to Church?

One of my fondest memories at Church was the very first time I carried the cross down the aisle of the Church when I performed my first ever altar service. It was a way for me to ignite my faith.

What is my favourite Hymn / Song sung at Church?

I like 'We Come to The Table' because it is telling us to come and join Jesus and receive him through Eucharist. I also enjoy 'One Family' because it explains that Catholics and Christians are all one family, and we have God's special help and guidance to make the journey of faith together.

What sacrament do I have fond memory of? Was it at St Mark's?

I really enjoyed making my First Communion, as it was the first way of which I physically received Jesus, through the form of his body, rather than through prayer and songs. I also savour my Confirmation as it was the first time I have really had the chance to make my own choices and empower my christianity through receiving the Holy Spirit. Within Confirmation, receiving the Holy Spirit really gives me the guidance to find the fruits and gifts from within me to benefit others. I made both these sacraments at St Mark's.



Josephine on her Confirmation

As this is the Year of Youth in the Catholic Church, what initiatives could be implemented to encourage the involvement of young people in the Church?

Some ways of which we could encourage younger children to attend Church is by creating more student involvement in Masses (readings, roles, etc), having more engaging activities for older students during children's liturgy, and more ways for children to connect with the parish.



Stories and Impressions from St Mark's

Corey Griffin & Denis Leech's Letter

Corey Griffin is a young St Mark's parishioner aged 17 attending St. Aloysius College as a Year 11 student.

When did you become associated with St Mark's Church?

Mum and Dad brought me to church from the time I was born. My first memories of St Mark's are just before I started school.

What is your first impression of attending St Mark's Church?

My first impression of St Marks was of early one Sunday morning and we had been to Mass the night before. Mum had lost a ring and she thought it was at Mass. We came early Sunday morning, Mons Vince opened up the church, and we found the ring.

What is the most significant change you have seen at St Mark's?

The biggest change for me was when our Parish Priest changed. As I have grown up now I do understand the homilies. When I was younger, I used to enjoy going to children's liturgy.

What is your fondest memory of going to Church?

My fondest memories of going to Church are meeting people I don't usually speak to – so catching up with them and having a chat after Mass.

What is your favourite Hymn?

My favourite hymn is 'How can I keep from singing' – there are others I like, when I hear them.

What Sacrament do you have a fond memory of?

I have fond memories of my First Communion at St Mark's. That was a big deal in my family with all the family members there.

What does coming to Mass mean for you?

When I come to Mass, it is time to get away from the business of everything else and I can concentrate on the readings and the homily. I also look after the plates for collection on Sunday night, so I have a role.

What would help more young people to come to church and make it more attractive?

We live in a visual time so some visuals during the homily. Some think Mass is boring – maybe let them run a Mass and if it was good, the young people would tell others.

DENIS LEECH

MEMORIES OF SCHOOL AT ST MARK'S
DRUMMOYNE
1950

I started school in 1950.

St Mark's opened its brand new classroom block, everyone was very proud.

The teachers were primarily from the Presentation Order in full black habits and veils, with a few young trained female teachers together with some volunteer parents, including my mother Bonnie.

All students walked to school (some with their pet dogs), I'm sure of this because, few families had a car.

It was tight community, later having all gone our separate ways, from time to time we have all regathered at St Mark's, sadly for funerals, but the bond remains.

The Parish Priest, Monseigneur James Meany was 'larger than life'. He was an integral part of the day to day life of St Mark's School. He was the founder of the Catholic Radio Station 2SM. He was instrumental in the formation of St Michael's Golf Club at Little Bay, Sydney, where parish priests could enjoy golf as a weekly escape.

At the age of 7, most of the boys were trained as altar boys, the average mass had a 'staff' of 3 to 4 altar boys, sometimes more.

We tripped over, dropped implements, spilt wine, forgot the lines and where we should stand, terrified of the Monseigneur, but never were criticised by him later. I'm pretty sure he was a special man.

Sport was promoted by volunteers with very few resources, but strong community support.

By way of example, in Tranmere Street, directly opposite lived George Barnes, The Empire Welterweight Boxing Champion, who gave generously of his time and support to the school.

St Mark's Catholic School and Parish, Drummoyne is a wonderful legacy, thank you.

Denis Leech
Architect

Memories from the past



Catholic Press (Sydney, NSW : 1895 - 1942),
Thursday 11 April 1912, page 23



St. Mark's, Drummoyne
High Mass was celebrated in St. Mark's Church, Drummoyne, on Easter Sunday by the Rev. Father P. Klein, S.V.D. The choir, under the conductorship of Mr. W. A. Mahony, rendered Gounod's "Messe Solenne" with marked expression. The chief soloists were Miss Daisy Ridder and Mr. Gerald Curriek, the other soloists being Miss Muriel Mahony, Miss Henley and Mr. Mallett. The choir sang the "Hue Diez," and the "Hallelujah Chorus" of the Offertory. After Mass the members of the choir were entertained by Father Klein at the presbytery.

Thank you to everyone who has provided us with this golden opportunity to interview them and to allow us to print their words and images.

*We hope you find our St Mark's stories a good read.
Blessings September 2018.*



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