

St Dominic's Flemington

Parish Profile

St Dominic's became a parish in 1928 and Father F. J. Fitzpatrick was the first parish priest from 1928 to 1931.

The parish was part of Concord parish before it became a parish in its own right. Father Byrne used to come from Concord by horse cab or train each Sunday. The records show a Mrs Ellison saying, "In 1920 I attended a Mass in a brick cottage in Tavistock Road, opposite Murphy's timber yard and Father Barlow celebrated the Mass."

Another person remembers Mass in Richmond Road and yet another said Mass was celebrated in a house just over the railway bridge in Marlborough Road.

Among the small Catholic population of those early days, we hear the family names of Culliford, Dewig, McCabe, Pickering, Twomey, Nolan, Murphy, Peates, Madden, King, Casey and Holly. Several of those names are still part of the parish.

A church hall was built in 1920 and the foundation stone was blessed by Mons P. J. Moynagh PP, VG on July 18, 1920. In 1930 a house was purchased for 1874 pounds from a dentist, Mr Peate.

The house was next to the church on 108 The Crescent at Flemington. It became the presbytery and is now used by the Ephpheta Centre of the Archdiocese.

A new church was opened and blessed by Cardinal Gilroy on January 29, 1956. The cost was 33,000 pounds and it was the first of its kind — the first auditorium style church in the Sydney Archdiocese.

The Latvian community has had a strong bond with the parish up to today. The Sisters of St Joseph started teaching children in the

Flashback to 1956



How the sanctuary looked when the church was opened and blessed by Cardinal Gilroy in 1956. This picture shows the contrast with the sanctuary of today.

At a glance

Name of parish: St Dominic's, Flemington. Telephone/Fax: (02) 746 7245

Parish team: Father Ted Wester and an army of volunteers.

Mass times: Saturday Vigil 5.30pm; Sunday, 9.00am and 5.30pm.

Reconciliation: Saturday, 5.00 to 5.30pm.

Number of parishioners: 2000 (census in progress).

School numbers: 115 students (an increase of 15 per cent over last year).

church hall in May 1923. Sr Bernarda and Sr Philomena were the first two nuns at the school.

Sr Bernarda recalled in 1956 that there were 100 children, six desks, two blackboards and plenty of forms. These two sisters came from Lidcombe every day for 12 months, but later they had to travel from North Sydney every day.

They began their journey at 7.40am and travelled by

tram, boat, tram, to Central Station and on to Flemington.

A house was purchased for them by the parish in 1925 at 2 Hornsey Road. This house was demolished in 1958 and a convent was built on the site and opened on July 15, 1959.

The convent has been slightly altered and is now used by the Catholic Youth Service of the Archdiocese.

A new presbytery was opened on November 1, 1959 by Cardinal Gilroy and is now the parish house.

A new school was opened on May 17, 1987, by Cardinal Clancy and at present has 115 students.

Part of the Flemington parish was taken off and became the parish of Homebush.

The population of the Flemington parish has seen many changes due to the expressways and the markets. Long-term residents had to leave the area.

The shopping centre has changed to mainly Chinese shops. There are many people from Chinese-Vietnamese origin, Sri Lankans, Tongans, Indians and Filipinos. The mixture of people is also represented in our parish school and in our parish.

In 1998 St Dominic's Parish will be 70 years old.

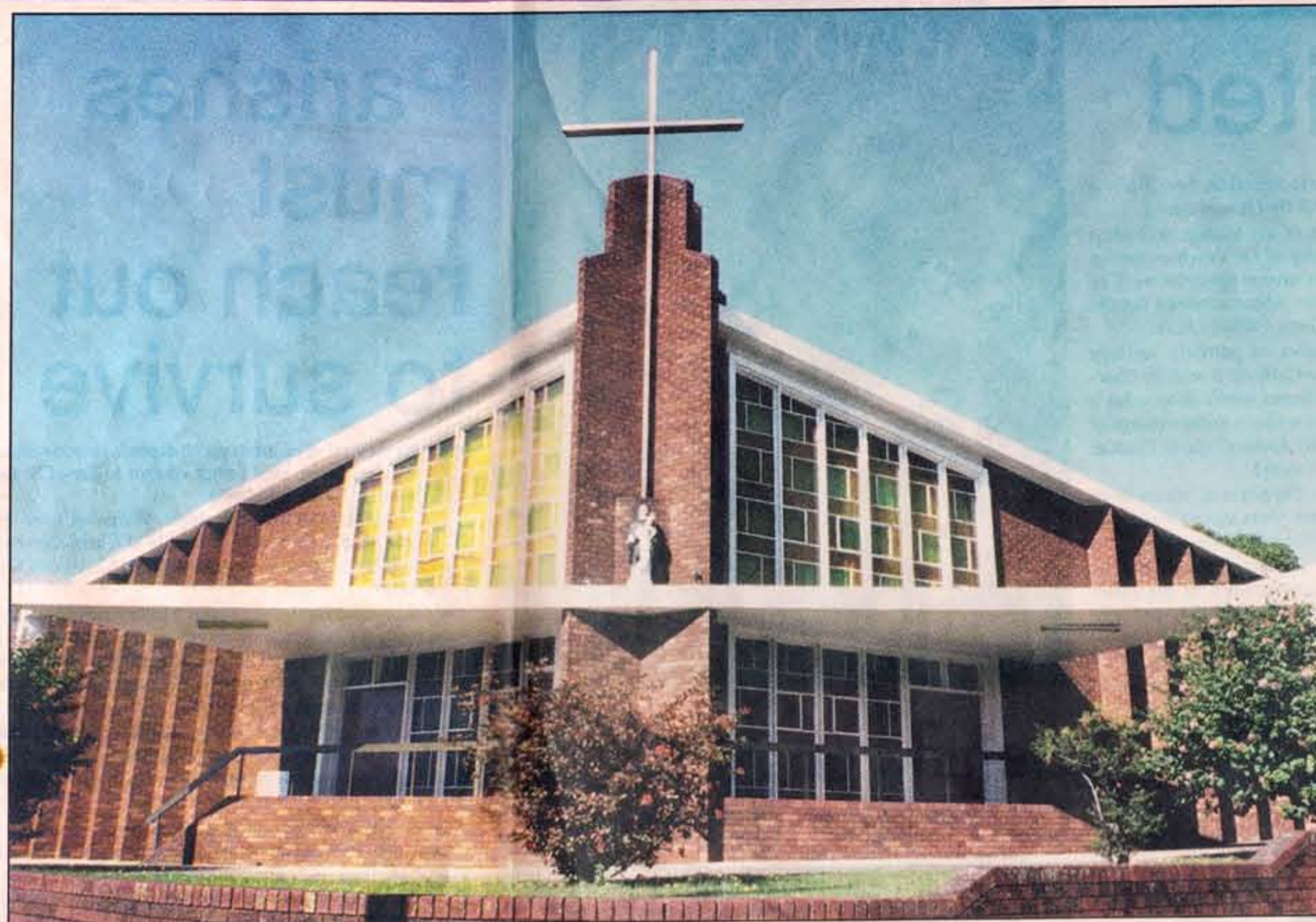
At present the parish is taking a census to enable proper planning of its pastoral work. The parishioners are proud of this because it is unusual — they are relying on the knowledge parishioners have of their own street.

Another recent achievement was to welcome to the parish the Catholic Youth Service and the Ephpheta Centre, which are both official agencies of the Archdiocese. It is a pastorally important move and is bringing more life to the parish.

Booked ahead

THERE has been a good response to our new Parish Profile series and we are now booked out until the end of July. Here is the list of forthcoming parishes:

- June 2: Randwick North, St Margaret Mary.
- June 9: Forest Lodge/Glebe, St James.
- June 16: Annandale, St Brendan.
- June 23: Summer Hill, St Patrick.
- June 30: Cobargo, Our Lady of Good Counsel.
- July 7: Springwood, St Thomas Aquinas.
- July 14: Newtown, St Joseph.
- July 21: Dover Heights, St Theresa.
- July 28: Broadmeadow, St Laurence O'Toole.



A fan-shaped nave was described as an unusual feature at St Dominic's when it was opened in 1956. The statue of St Dominic came from the Dominican Sisters in Tamworth when their convent was closed about 15 years ago. It came to the parish through Sister Pamela Davis, whose parents are still active parishioners. Pictures by Mike Thorpe.



The crucifix, the altar, the statues of the Sacred Heart and Mary, and the tabernacle are important to the parish because they provide a link with the past. The colourful banner shows Australia in a way to remind parishioners that it is our country regardless of their cultural background. St Dominic's was the first auditorium style church in Sydney. There are no pillars and all seats give a good view of the sanctuary. To the right, Mary of Perpetual Succour has been a devotion in the parish since 1960. The pews are original and the church seats 400, with another 50 in the loft.

St Who

DOMINIC (c1170-1221), founder of the Order of Friars Preachers or Black Friars. Born at Calaruega (Castile), Dominic Guzman was the youngest of four children of the warden of the town.

He was educated by his uncle, the archpriest of Gu-miel d'Izan, and later at Pe- lencia. During this time he became an Austin canon of Osma cathedral.

As a priest he led an out- wardly uneventful life for seven years, devoted to prayer and penance. In 1201 he became prior of the com- munity. In 1204, on his way to Denmark, Dominic first met Albigensian heretics at Toulouse, whose reconcili- ation to the Church was to be a principal element of his apostolate.

In 1208 the murder of the papal Legate, Peter of Castel- nau, led to the declaration of a "crusade" or holy war against the Albigensians. Dominic had no share in the violence and massacres then perpetrated, but used only the peaceful instruments of instruction and prayer. Three times he refused a bishopric, believing himself to be called to other work.

This was the foundation of the Friars Preachers, which occupied the last seven years of his life. Dominic's plan was to provide communi- ties which were centres of sacred learning, whose members would be devoted to study, teaching and preaching as well as prayer. Papal approval was ob- tained for it, but only on condition that it should fol- low one of the already exist- ing rules. Dominic chose the short and flexible rule of Augustine. It rapidly spread all over Western Europe and became a pioneering mis- sionary force in Asia and (much later) in the Ameri- cas.

At the time of his death there were five provinces: Spain, Provence, France, Lombardy and Rome. In six other countries, including



The true likeness of St Dominic — Scientific reconstruction by Professor F. Frassetto and C. Pini (1946).

England, there were smaller groups of Dominican friars already at work.

His preaching against the Albigensians seems to have met with only limited suc- cess, but the foundation of communities dedicated to sacred learning and sound teaching fulfilled an acutely felt need in the medieval

Church, and subsequently the work of Albert the Great and especially Thomas Aquinas represented the ful- fillment of Dominic's ideals. Popular devotion to Dominic sprang up soon after his death and he was can- onised in 1234.

Feast: First 6, then 4, now August 8.

HERETICS are to be converted by an exam- ple of humility and other virtues far more readily than by any external display or ver- bal battles. So let us arm ourselves with de- vout prayers and set off showing signs of genuine humility and go barefooted to com- bat Goliath — DOMINIC

LOOK at me. God's mercy has preserved me to this day in bodily virginity, but I con- fess that I have not escaped from the imper- fection of being more excited at the conversation of young women than by be- ing talked at by an old woman — DOMINIC

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