

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH 2016



OUR HOLY FAMILY CHURCH 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION



SCHOENSTATT CROWN

*Living and Sharing the Christian Life
as a Growing Parish Family*



THE SYMBOLISM OF THE CROWN ON THE PICTURE
OF OUR LADY OF SCHOENSTATT IN THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT CHAPEL AT HOLY FAMILY, MENAI

The crown features three colours:

- Gold:** A symbol of the majestic glory of the Mother of God.
- Blue:** Represents blue sky, a sign of eternity acknowledging Mary's role in the work of Redemption.
- White:** A symbol of purity and expresses for us the virginity of Mary before, during and after the birth of Christ.

The Holy Family is expressed by the pictures of our Holy Family statue and our church. The logo on the left is the symbol of the Trinity, the example of love and unity. The logo on the right is a symbol of marriage with the reminder of the love a sacrifice of Christ being part of the bond between husband and wife.

The three Purple stones remind us of the three Mysteries of the Rosary – Joyful, Sorrowful & Glorious.

The four Silver stones remind us of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and our task of handing on the Gospel in our family and neighbourhood.

The five Red stones remind us of the territory between the Woronora and Georges River which is the parish of Menai.

The thirteen Blue stones remind us of the number of classes, Kindergarten to Year 12 in the Catholic schools in Menai Parish.

OUR NEW CHURCH IS DEDICATED

Holy Family Church was dedicated and opened on 19 May 1991. Cardinal Clancy officiated the Mass and ceremony. Fr D Foley and 1200 parishioners were present for the grand occasion. A 30 piece concert band from St Patrick’s College, Sutherland added to the festive atmosphere after the Mass.

Here is the front cover of an early Parish publication from December 1991, covering the event.



FAMILY MASSES

“One of the greatest positives of the Parish Family Mass is the gathering and commitment of the Parish Family Mass group - parents of children who are committed to this initiative.

While we have over the years continued our school Family Masses, the Parish Family Mass invites all families in our parish to take part.

A wonderful morning was had by all at the Parish Family Mass, 10am on Sunday. Our Parish Family Masses are ones where the message and music are aimed at our primary school children. A highlight was the many families who registered their children to be part of the ministry of the Mass. The children were excited about serving God with their many talents but did so with great reverence.

Afterwards, families gathered on the netball courts for a sausage sandwich and drink while the children had lots of fun on the jumping castle.”

- Louise Perrau



YOUTH ACTIVITIES

“As future leaders and active members of our Holy Family Parish Community, our youth are an important part of our parish. We have long recognised our parish's need for a vibrant, youth-focussed program that would bring them together and gently mould them into the Christian community of tomorrow.

After concerted effort and resolve to drive this initiative, we were finally able to launch a Youth Program for our youngsters, initially aimed at high school students. While we have a fair way to go, we now have a program that is bringing our youth together on a fortnightly basis, allowing them the opportunity to socialize and engage with like-minded and similar aged young people and gradually leading them towards an awareness of God's plan for them.

With the support of Catholic Youth Services we have been fortunate to have James McCulloch take on the role as Youth Leader for our Holy Family Youth Group. In the few months since James has been at the wheel, he has organised regular gatherings during which our youth are involved in a variety of fun activities as well as providing opportunities to learn more about our Christian faith. On occasion, he has invited guest speakers to deliver key Christian messages and from the feedback received from our youngsters and their parents, the Youth Program is off to a good start and heading in the right direction.



We need to ensure the continued growth and success of the Youth Program for the months and years ahead. To this end, we will need the on-going support of everyone from our parish community. Our teenagers should be encouraged to come along to the fortnightly get-togethers and participate fully in the activities. The entire program is geared towards them and for their benefit so they should feel free to share their thoughts and ideas with James. In the end, what we put in is what we will get out of it so the more engaged we are as a community supporting this endeavour, the more our own children will benefit in the future.”

- Collin Rozario

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH, MENAI

“Living and sharing the Christian life as a growing parish family”

Since the early 1980s, growth in the Menai area was rapid. Parishioners attended Mass first at the Bangor Community Centre and later at the hall in Bangor Primary School. There was a critical need for a new church to be built to cater for a burgeoning population.

In November 1986, Fr Denis Foley was appointed parish priest of the new parish. He had been associated with the Schoenstatt Movement, the main thrust of which is a strong Marian devotion to Our Lady of Schoenstatt, since 1968. It was the principles of the Schoenstatt Movement that formed the foundations of the culture, centred on family values, in the parish. Later in 1987, The parish was named Holy Family. Demountable rooms and the Multipurpose Hall at Holy Family Primary School were built and Mass was celebrated in the Hall.

Even before the church building was conceived and subsequently built, there were various groups formed for the purpose of supporting the parishioners in living out and deepening their faith.

The Bible Study Group and the Lenten Discussion Group, where a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Bible readings and passages could be achieved;

The Family Group Movement, where families in the parish and particularly parents, could get to know each other beyond the pleasantries exchanged at Mass each week and build genuine and closer friendships through regular monthly social gatherings; Mothers’ Group where mothers and their children could gather and develop long lasting friendships;

The Parish Pastoral Council whose members assisted in the administration of Parish affairs, discerned the needs of the Parish and facilitated links between communities within the Parish. The building that is the church became a focal point for these groups in providing a venue where many meetings and gatherings took place. All the above mentioned groups still exist today. Since the church’s dedication and official opening, many other groups in the parish have used the church as their base with the purpose of serving the parish community in various ways. Such groups would include

The Liturgy Committee, who coordinate the acolytes, altar servers, children’s liturgy on Sundays, musicians and music liturgy, readers and welcomers at Mass;

The Pastoral Care Group who provide support to those going through emotionally difficult times;

FROM THEN TO NOW

Fr Foley left Holy Family Parish in February 1999 and Fr Phil Zadro was appointed Parish Priest and remains so to this day, faithfully serving, supporting and providing spiritual leadership to our parish community.

In 2013, Fr Phil Zadro’s 40th anniversary of Priestly Ordination was celebrated with a Ball and a morning tea. Simon Bradstock of the Parish Council at the time, wrote a tribute to Fr Phil, here is an excerpt:

“Just a short note of thanks for your service to the people of God. There is a lot that we don’t thank you for enough. So here’s our list of things that you may have done for our parishioners.

- Thanks for being there when the time came to bury our parents and friends - We needed your support and your words of comfort.
- Thanks for taking such care with your homilies on Sunday. We always come away thinking, prayerfully, unlike any other time in the week when my mind seems to be rambling about things that just fill up my day with chatter.
- Thanks for being a welcoming presence to newcomers in our parish.
- Thanks for baptizing the many children in our families. Your care and tender way of ritualizing those new lives always comforting.
- Thanks for having an ear for those of us who have been out of work - You helped us realize that while we were unemployed God was still there working things out so that they would soon get better.
- Thanks for providing the Eucharist for us every week. We are often reminded by our Social justice committee about those in the developing world and recognising how disappointed those people are to not have a priest in their midst and therefore no access to the Eucharist. It was then that we realized that we could be that same parish if it were not for you.
- Thanks for guiding us in confession and for doing so in such an accepting way. You never make us feel bad or evil but always let us know that we had the power to do great things if we would listen and trust in God.
- Thanks for simply being a friend. For letting us know that you too, are human and need God’s help.
- Thanks for your patience. It was wrong of us to think that you needed to be Superman. Ironically, however, most of the time you met that challenge with surprising super-human actions—going those extra miles when nobody else would.
- Thank you for me to work alongside you. You have been a model of collaboration with the laity and a pleasure to work with on projects. You’ve respected my own ministry knowing that we all have a call to serve God with our very lives.
- Thanks for visiting our friends in need in hospital.

FROM THEN TO NOW – CONTINUED

There are so many things that we have to be thankful for together. You too, should be thankful today for your own priesthood and rejoice in the man you have become for others.

The church has always taught that God never gives us more than we can handle. And from that simple teaching we learn two things. One is that he must think very highly of you because you have dealt with a lot as a priest –you have handled it all with such grace. The second is that God must also think much of us. Because after all, when we were struggling, God sent us you.

Thank you so much for all that you have been and continue to be as a priest. May God continue to bless all of us with the gift that is your priesthood.”

- Simon Bradstock

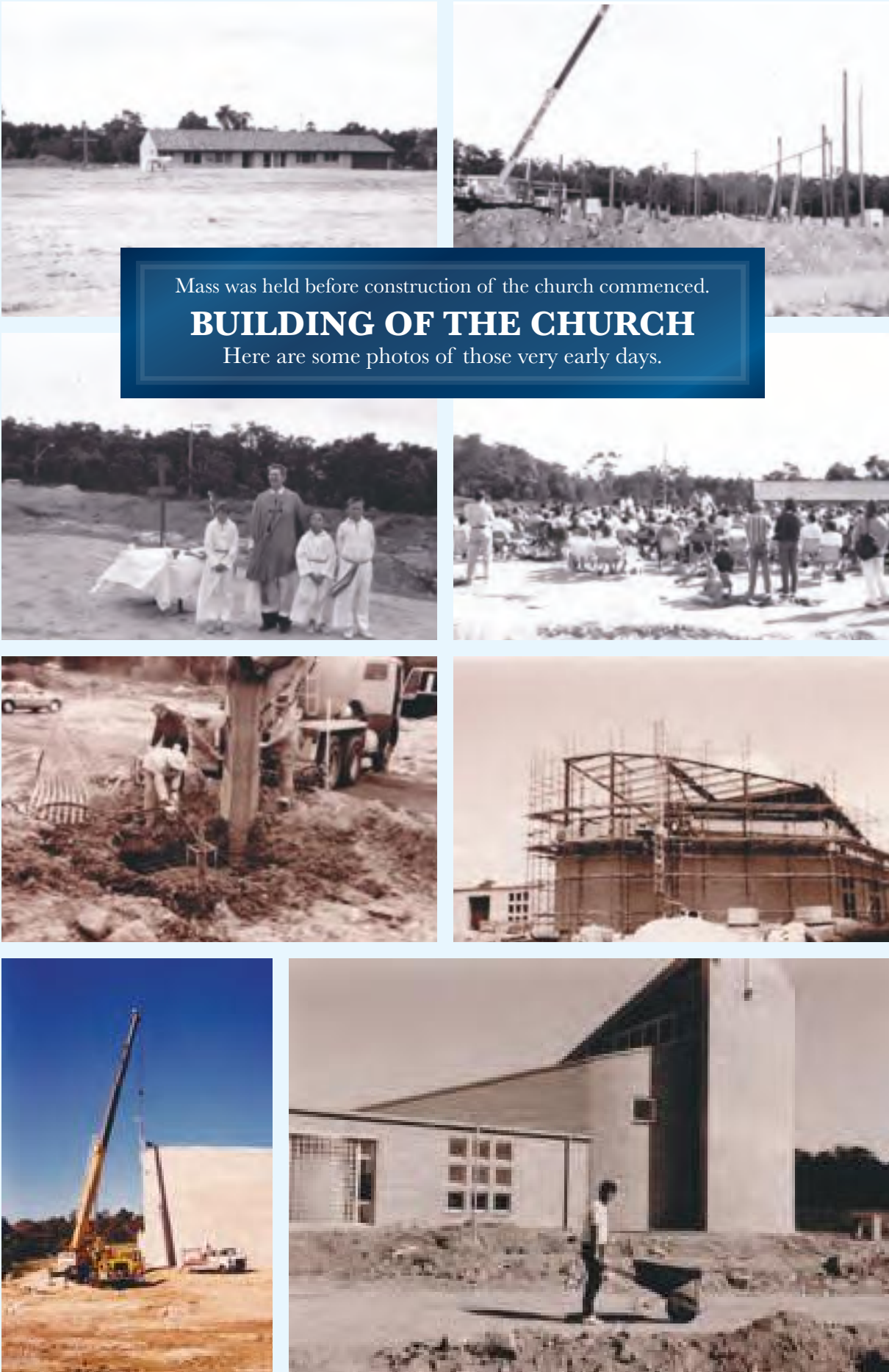
Over the past 25 years there have been various initiatives undertaken in the parish designed to inspire, reinvigorate and lead to a renewal in the faith journey of parishioners. Periodically there have been inspirational guest speakers invited to the Parish, such as The Catholic Guy, Robert Haddad and programs like Alpha and parenting courses have been well attended and received.

The Music Ministry in the parish has come a long way since 1991, with musicians and singers singing at all Masses in the month. In June 1990, taped music was a feature of the Masses held at Holy Family. The only Mass where live music was sung was the 10am Mass on the third Sunday.

Youth Masses started in the mid 2000s, were held once a month, with senior high school aged students and young adults providing the music and singing. This slot has now made way for primary and junior high school aged children, who are a regular part of the Music ministry with songs presented in a modern and vibrant way.



Grade Masses have always been a feature of Holy Family Parish. However Family Masses are also being reintroduced with more regularity, with parents and families being largely involved in the organising and participation of the masses. The theme of these Family Masses together with the liturgy, homily and music are children oriented.



Mass was held before construction of the church commenced.
BUILDING OF THE CHURCH
Here are some photos of those very early days.

A BRIEF HISTORY TIMELINE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MENAI

(taken from the bulletin on 19th May 1991)

Catholic living in Menai.	1900	
	1922	Mass said in Menai.
Mass said in Bangor.	1983	
	1986	February: Menai Catholic school commenced at the old St Patrick's Church of Sutherland. Principal – Sr Judith Baz.
February: Menai Catholic Primary School located in demountable rooms on the Parish site. The first Mass was celebrated in the Multipurpose Parish Hall. March: Lenten Discussion Group and Youth Committee formed. May: Parish Pastoral Council initiated. Parishioners voted on the name Holy Family Parish. July: Cardinal Clancy blessed the Multipurpose Parish Hall and the demountable school buildings. Fr Foley's Silver Jubilee of priesthood Start of Schoenstatt Pilgrim Mother Apostolate. September: First Planned Giving programme. October: Children's Liturgy commenced. December: Open air Christmas Vigil Mass.	1987	November: Fr Denis Foley appointed first Parish Priest of Menai Parish.
	1988	April: Building of permanent classrooms and administration area of Primary School. July: Passionist Family Group Movement commenced. August: Marian Pilgrimage to St Patrick's Sutherland. September: Marian Pilgrimage to Mt Schoenstatt, Mulgoa.
	1989	February: Schoenstatt Mothers' Group formed. May: Bethel Bible Study Group commenced.
	1990	January: The parish was chosen as one of the pilot parishes for Parish 2000 – a Renewal effort in the diocese. July: Building of a permanent church requested by the Parish Pastoral Council. September: Meeting to ascertain support for a catholic high school in the parish. October: Fr John Knight appointed as first assistant priest. November: Mass on the church site before commencement of building the church.
May: Church solemnly blessed and opened.	1991	

HOLY FAMILY PARISHONERS OVER THE YEARS



Multicultural Food Night



Social Justice



The Bible Study Group



Pre-Schoolers Group



The Holy Family Choir with Fr Phil in France

"Put the question – What am I doing and why – to every aspect of Parish life"

– Fr Foley



The Craft Group



RCIA Confirmed Candidates and their Sponsors



St. Vinnies

HOLY FAMILY PARISH STATISTICS

Since 19 May 1991, Holy Family Church has celebrate the following sacraments:



Catechists, who provide religious education to children in State schools in the parish;
The Society of St Vincent de Paul, who reach out to individuals and families in times of financial difficulties and hardship;

The Parish Choir and other musicians and singers who practise in the church for purposes of providing music for worship at each week’s Masses;

The Craft group who get together for craft activities to support various charitable causes.

Prayer and faith based groups like the Schoenstatt Rosary Group; The Christian Meditation Group; The RCIA (Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults) Group; Rosary and meditation (Cenacles – Immaculate Heart of Mary) Group, all have their focus and activities centred around the church, the Blessed Sacrament Chapel or the meeting rooms in the church.

Fr Denis Foley expressed the hope that all who come to the church, will come closer to God and each other. For the parishioners who come to church for Mass, there is a sense of community as well as belonging. For the church groups that operate within the Parish and their respective causes, the Parish’s mission of loving and sharing the Christian life as a Parish family is truly being fulfilled.



* Figures for baptisms and confirmations also include adults through the RCIA programme.