

THE PARISH OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

DEEPDENE



The Tower at the narthex of the Church.

Architect by Lionel San Miguel 1954

Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish.

In the 1880s Melbourne was a city that was developing fast and there was a demand for grand public and private buildings as well as a need for schools to educate the children of the city. The Catholic community of Melbourne saw the need to build parish schools to accompany the parishes that were growing at this time.

The parishes of Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn were established by 1889 and the area which our parish of Deepdene encompasses was, at this time, part of the parishes of Camberwell and Kew. A letter from a local Catholic, Stanislaus Day in 1919 acknowledged that there was a population of Catholics who lived on the boundary of the parishes of 'Hawthorn, Kew and Camberwell' but that were 'about 2 miles from each church'. There was very little public transport in the area at this time and this posed great difficulties for those who wished to go to Mass. Stanislaus Day wrote to the then Archbishop of Melbourne, Doctor Daniel Mannix, to ask if a 'small church should be built... for the elderly people and Maids at Service'

From 1919 to 1929 over 20 new parishes were established and amongst them our own parish of Deepdene which was established in 1922. At this time and for a number of years this was an area of market gardens and was rural in character.

The first Parish priest was Father T.B. Walsh. He was appointed to the parish in 1922 and at that time there was no church and no school. The masses were celebrated in the old Genazzano chapel and marriages and baptisms took place in the surrounding parish churches. Father Walsh bought the residence that was to become the presbytery and then the six building blocks that were to be used for the parish school and Church. The first building, on the Whitehorse Rd site, which is now part of the school, was used by the parish as both a church and a school. The foundation stone was blessed by Archbishop Mannix on November 26th 1922.



The Parish Choir in the 1930s.

The new parish started with about 80 families, which meant there was a heavy burden of debt for the parishioners to carry. In order to raise the funds to build the school and the church, the parishioners held many functions, dances, fetes and raffles to try to raise funds and it required a concerted effort and the good will and hard work of these families. The Depression of 1929, which meant unemployment and financial hardship for many people, added to the difficulties faced by the new parish of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The St Vincent de Paul Conference was formed very early in the history of the parish and during the Depression it was instrumental in helping out parishioners who were in need.

Father Walsh commenced building near what is now the corner of Whitehorse Road and Campbell Street and the building served as both a church and a school for a number of years. The Church accounts for this period of time show how the parish debt grew and then reduced over the 10 years of Fr Walsh's time as parish priest.

At this time the Eucharistic devotions of the parish included Benediction, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Forty Hours Adoration of the Eucharist.

The parish had a number of lay religious organisations, among which were the Children of Mary, the Women's Sacred Heart Sodality and the Holy Name Sodality. Later the Young Christian Workers and the National Catholic Girls Movement were established. These organisations encouraged people to join the apostolate and take part in religious and social activities of the parish. They were the expressions of religious culture at this time.

The parish Church was begun when Father Godwin was the parish priest and was completed in 1955. The long narrow shape of the church was dictated by the land that

was available between the presbytery and the school. At the opening of the Church, the Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix congratulated Father Godwin on the beauty of the Church and said 'for many generations this church built by Father Godwin and his people will stand, I think, almost unrivalled in its beauty and perfection'.

At the time, 'Good Counsel' the parish magazine included a description of the architecture of the church. The design utilised the "traditional basilica type plan with a prominent central tower dominating the front of the building. The tower covering the whole of the narthex is 66 feet high terminating with aluminium cross, rising 76feet above the ground. External walls are carried out in oatmeal tone brickwork set off and relieved with ivory white architectural terra cotta motifs and trimmings"

The wooden statues of Our Lord and Our Lady which stand either side of the altar were carved by Hans Knorr were added to the church at a later time whereas the large painting Our Lady of Good Counsel was probably placed in the church around the time of its building.

Parish Priests at OLG

1922 – 1938 Fr JB Walsh

1938 – 1947 Fr Denis P Murphy

1948 – 1965 Fr Lawrence Godwin

1966 – 1967 Bishop Arthur Fox, assisted by Fr C McCann

1968 – 1985 Monsignor John Kelly

1985 - Fr Pat Duggan

Fr Maurie Cooney

2007? – Fr Brendan Reed



The Parish School

The School was opened on January 29th 1924 and at this time the close relationship between Our Lady of Good Counsel parish school and the Faithful Companions of Jesus was evident. The early parish masses had been celebrated at Genazzano and this relationship with the school gave the parish its patron saint. Genazzano is a town about 30 kilometres from Rome and it is here where the famous icon of Our Lady of Good Counsel is to be found. The first principal of the school was Mother Evangeline FCJ and there were 60 enrolments. At this time the school went up to Grade 8 and three FCJ sisters taught there and the sisters divided the classes between them. The FCJ sisters taught at OLG C Parish School from its opening until 1980 when the first lay Principal, Mrs Maureen Burke, was appointed. Over the history of the school, twenty FCJ sisters have taught in the school for a total of 113 years of teaching service.

The enrolment figures from the time between the opening of the school and the 1940s remained around 150. By 1965 there were 239 students enrolled and in 2009 there are 370 students at OLG C.

Principals of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish School

1924 – 1928 **Mother Evangeline**
1925 – 1933 **Mother Miriam**
1933 – 1948 **Mother Rosa**
1949 – 1967 **Mother Mary John**
1968 – 1980 **Sister Peter**
1981 - **Mrs Maureen Burke**
Michael O'Reilly
Gilbert Keisler

The New Parish Church



Architect's drawing of the Parish Church 1953.

THE PATRON SAINT

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL.

Counsel is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Mary, the mother of God possesses that gift in its fullness and hence her title; Our Lady of Good Counsel.

The Deepdene parish is the parish of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The shrine is located at Genazzano which is about 30 miles southeast of Rome. The link between the school and the Parish is firmly located at the shrine. The image of Our Lady is part of a fresco which is located at the Augustinian Church at Genazzano. A fresco is a painting on a thin sheet of plaster which is attached to the wall of the church.

Parishioners will be familiar with the picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel which hangs on the wall of the church, near the altar. This is one image of the Patroness of the parish. This picture is one of the representations of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The more traditional representation can be seen in both the presbytery and the school.



The legend associated with this image is that it was miraculously transported to Genazzano from its home in Scutari, in Albania in order to evade the Turks. Two men claimed that they had followed the picture across the Adriatic Sea to Genazzano where it then appeared. News of this miracle meant that thousands of pilgrims flocked to Genazzano and many miracles were attributed to this image.

One striking aspect of the Fresco which has lent credence to the legend which surrounds it is that the upper portion of the image is separated from the wall and leans slightly forward. The fresco which is nothing more than a thin layer of plaster has survived for centuries in this precarious state even during the aerial bombardment of Genazzano during World War Two. There is no doubt that the Church was being renovated in 1467 and there is proof that the picture appeared then. The manner of the appearance, however, is not documented.

Between the years of 1957 and 1961 the picture was examined and restored and the experts believed that the fresco and the image of the Madonna was the work of fifteenth century artist Gentile da Fabriano, painted in the time of the Papacy of Martin V (1417- 31). In the restoration of the painting, someone noticed that on the edge of the child's robe were letters as in a signature and in 1974 this signature was deciphered as that of Antonio Vivarini 1410 – 1476. Vivarini's early work shows the influence of da Fabriano. At some later date the fresco was covered with a layer of plaster.

Sometimes copies of this image are presented with a crown and necklace. They are not part of the picture but rather are just hanging in front of it. They were added by pilgrims at some point in the picture's history. They have been removed for safe keeping.

The image of Our Lady of Good Counsel has a remarkable history and continues to attract pilgrims today.

OLGC MINISTRIES and PARISH GROUPS

There are many groups within the parish who work in particular ministries and areas of need as well as providing the social life of the parish community.

The Parish Leadership Team is the group who provides leadership and direction in the life of the parish.

As well as this leadership group, the following are the groups that operate in the community

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Baptism Preparation and Connections

Sacraments

CoordinatorCatechetics

Children's Liturgy of the Word

New Mums Group

Deepdene & District Inter-Church Council

Boroondara Council Interfaith Network

Boroondara Deanery

Craft Group

Communique Magazine

OLGC Social Justice Group

OLGC Parents' Association

St.Vincent de Paul

Asylum Seeker & Refugee Support Group

Care Group

**Communion to the Sick
Mass of Anointing**

Family Groups

Parish and School Education Advisory Team (PSEAT)

New Parishioners Welcoming Group

Social and Hospitality Group

Youth Group (Years 7-9)

Tennis Club

Seniors Social Group

'Around the Piano'

**Sacristans/Sacristy
Linen//Flower Arrangers:**

Hiring Service