

# SACRED HEART

1936 - 1966





*Official Blessing*

*and Dedication*

of

*Sacred Heart Church*

by

*Most Rev. Remi J. De Roo*

BISHOP OF VICTORIA

Sunday, June 26th, 1966, - 3:30 p.m.

OFFICIAL BLESSING

HOLY MASS

BANQUET

Guest Speaker: REV. A. T. ALBURY

## *"This Is Your Church"*

ALL OF US have "days" in our lives we shall never forget, days etched indelibly in our memories.

The first day at school, first Holy Communion, graduation, Holy Orders, Matrimony, the births of children.

Sacred Heart has had its days, too. Thirty - one years and seven weeks, church historians tell us. Days of love and sorrow, of incredible beauty and heartbreak. Days of sacrifice, personal and material.

There is much to be joyful for today. High upon a hill stands the new Sacred Heart, a contemporary home for Him and us, a manifestation of sacrifice. Many were called to have a hand in its readiness for this day of dedication and blessing by the Most Rev. Remi de Roo, Bishop of Victoria.

If it is a time for celebration, it is also a time for reminiscence, a time for meditation, a time to give thanks to those who walked in His path and made a home for Him in the days of our fathers and forefathers.

Let us turn back the pages of time.

Let us start with Patrick Mahoney . . . .



IN THE EARLY spring of 1936, Rev. A. T. Albury, a native of Nassau and resident priest at St. Andrew's Cathedral, was directed by the Most Rev. John Hugh MacDonald, bishop of Victoria, to consider a new parish. Rev. Albury canvassed homes from James Bay to Gordon Head and recommended that a church be built in High Quadra.

Among Rev. Albury's parishioners-to-be was Patrick Mahoney, a fiery, self-made contractor, soon to become closer to God.

Father Albury, chaplain at Mount St. Angela, as clear-eyed and articulate today as he was 31 years ago, recalls their first conversation:

Mahoney: "Father, I'm sick, but I don't want to die. Please pray to God for me."

Father Albury: "You build a church and God will take care of you."

Mahoney: "I'll build a church - and I'll build it free."

Patrick Mahoney kept his word. Working days, evenings, weekends, holidays, he built the first Sacred Heart Church at 1030 Palmer Road. Bishop McDonald loaned \$200.00 to purchase the site; Father Albury borrowed \$1,500.00 to pay the sub-trades. The Sisters of St. Ann donated stained glass windows for the sacristy. Mrs. Mary Louise Wood donated the monstrance for benediction and the Stations of the Cross.

"The rest," recalls Father Albury, "we begged."

THERE WERE problems. Mahoney, his impatience exceeded only by his self-drive, hired and fired workers constantly — "I couldn't keep track of them," Father Albury says.

There were lighter moments. Like the day the organ, a gift from Mrs. Waite, a parishioner, was to be installed.

Father Albury wanted to put it on four - by - fours and lift it to the choir loft. Mahoney demurred. "You're going to drop it and demolish it."

"I'll be responsible for it," Father Albury said.

"You can also be responsible for finishing the church," said Mahoney, untying his carpenter's apron and storming out.

The next morning, en route from St. Andrew's to Sacred Heart, Father Albury detoured past Mahoney's house. "If his car was outside, it meant that he was still mad. If it wasn't, I knew where he would be."

Mahoney's car was not in its usual place. Father Albury smiled.

He found it outside his church and knew, even before he opened the door, that the organ would be in its place. It was.

On May 3rd, 1936, everything was in place. In the pews were some 60 families attending the solemn mass and holy blessing of the parish by Bishop McDonald. Father Albury assisted at the mass, as did Rev. W. Lemmens, Rev. J. A. Gaudette and Rev. T. Geukers.

The records of the time note that Bishop McDonald paid tribute to those who had made it possible. All save one. Patrick Mahoney. This was no oversight by the Bishop; it reflected Mahoney's humility: "I did this for God. I don't want publicity."

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FATHER ALBURY said his first mass at Sacred Heart, May 4th, administered to the needs of his flock from the Cathedral for the next five years. Hectic years, they were.

He remembers the winter day, upon returning from Toronto, he discovered that pipes had cracked dumping water all over the church floor. With Donal Lehane, later to become Sacred Heart's first religious vocation, he dug a ditch and laid pipes from the old church to an open ditch on Quadra.

Those were days when a \$4.00 Sunday collection was not unusual and \$7.00 was munificent.

Those were days when the choir of 20 would practice in members' homes, providing as Father Albury recalls "an opportunity to know not only each other well, but their families too."

Those were the days when card parties at parish homes were the money-making vogue. "The first was held at Edith Webb's house. The children pushed the downstairs furniture into the backyard so we could get in more tables. We made a flat profit of \$35.00. When it was over everyone danced to Irish and Scottish reels. Bishop MacDonald who seldom relaxed, took off his coat and joined in."



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*Patrick Mahoney  
and  
Father Albury*

1936

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IN 1941 Sacred Heart ceased to be a mission of the cathedral. Upon the posting of pastor protem Father Albury to Courtenay, Rev. Thomas Mangan became the first full-time pastor. He was installed by Rev. John Cody, Bishop of Victoria, on May 13th.

A year later, Bishop Cody returned to Sacred Heart for another pleasant duty. He celebrated solemn High Mass and then blessed the new rectory adjacent to the church.

In September, Sacred Heart expanded again. A school was opened in the basement of the rectory under Miss Ruth George. The following July, four sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from Los Angeles came to Sacred Heart, at the invitation of Father Mangan, to supplement the teaching staff and give birth to an association which happily pertains to this day.

"FIRSTS" WERE frequent in the ensuing months. The parish's first public May procession was held May 28th, 1944. The first "Holy Communion Class"—eight in all—received the Holy Eucharist on June 11th. Two weeks later, Sacred Heart School's first graduation class stepped forward to receive diplomas.

In 1946, Father Mangan, beset as his successors would be with parish growing pains, spoke of plans for a new school. Property was purchased near the top of Palmer Street but zoning regulations forced its sale. The site finally chosen was in the 800 block McKenzie Avenue where our present school-convent complex is located.

Bishop Cody turned the first sod in 1946. Hardly had the foundation been poured when sharply rising costs forced postponement of work. But the seed had been planted and Fathen Mangan's foresight was to yield fruit a decade later.

FATHER MANGAN was not to be witness to this. A severe stroke on March 19th, 1949, brought his duties to an end. But he had not passed our way in vain; he had built "upon the rock" laid by Father Albury, saw the institution and growth of the Holy Name Society, Catholic Women's League, parish school, shared in the joy of all when Donal Lehane, the boy who helped Father Albury with the plumbing problem in 1936, was ordained.

Rev. Geoffrey Penfold officially became the second pastor of Sacred Heart in September, 1949. An able administrator more than a "hail fellow well met," he started the dialogue mass, formed an Altar Boys' Club, and was a joyful witness to the ordination of Rev. Michael O'Connell on June 4th, 1950 and of another Sacred Heart boy, Father Philip Hanley on May 20th, 1951.

Sorrow came to Sacred Heart on June 10th, 1951. Father Mangan died peacefully in St. Joseph's Hospital. Pontifical requiem mass was celebrated by Bishop James Hill at St. Andrew's Cathedral.

Then as now, the parish was active. Graduation ceremonies were followed by garden parties, warm welcomes for new teachers and sad farewells for departing sisters. For the Hanley family, August 7th, 1951, was a day to remember—daughter Mary left for IHM novitiate.

On May 1st, 1955, Father Raymond Cunningham, assisted by Fathers Penfold and Jan Planeta, the latter newly arrived in Victoria from Poland, celebrated his first solemn mass at Sacred Heart.

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THE SPIRITUAL influence of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was felt again in September, 1955, when Barbara Smith left for the IHM novitiate.

Never too strong, Father Penfold was hospitalized in November, 1956, three months after the Holy Name Society, under his direction, had taken a parish census in preparation for a fund drive to build a school at the McKenzie Avenue site.

Father Planeta ceased to be an occasional priest at Sacred Heart, left the Cathedral to assume the spiritual direction of the parish.

Father Bernard Hanley joined the growing honor roll of SH graduates to the priesthood on April 28th, 1957. That summer a group of zealous parishioners under the late Maurice Connor campaigned in earnest for \$40,000 to proceed with the school building program

Work began on St. Patrick's Day in 1958. Five months later the school opened with 152 pupils in four classrooms.



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*Father Planeta  
and  
Lawrence Webb*

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SISTER MARY PAULA, on her second tour of duty at Sacred Heart, was principal. The measure of esteem with which she was held was aptly demonstrated on February 26th, 1959 when parishioners, religious, former pupils and her "children" joined in celebrating her silver anniversary.

Four months later, Father Planeta marked his silver jubilee anniversary as a priest. People of Sacred Heart honored their pastor in a tangible way, gladdening his heart with their prayers, Masses and Holy Communions.

Time dims the memory for some, but not all. Mr. and Mrs. Rob Turner will never forget August 1st, 1960, the day their daughter Margaret Mary left for the IHM novitiate. How many will forget the day at the end of the school year in 1960 when Sister Paula announced her departure? Or the pleasure in August of meeting her successor, Sister Catherine Rose? Or the sadness when Monsignor Penfold passed away on January 8th, 1964?

By this time four Sunday masses were being offered in the little church on Palmer Road. A growing parish was stretching the seams of the building and giving Father Planeta cause for concern.

Here Father Planeta demonstrated the talents of an able administrator-pastor, the ability to recognize a problem and act on it. He went to Bishop de Roo with facts and figures, won approval to consider a new church.

John Di Castri, an established architect whose talents were apparent in the new St. Patrick's church and neighboring St. Joseph's, applied his skills to the task. On October 13th, 1963, Mr. Di Castri

outlined to the Holy Name Society plans for a church to hold 500 parishioners, rectory for two resident priests and a hall beneath the church.

Two months later, a survey was completed on land owned by the parish above the school site.

Meanwhile progress and change marked the parish's growth and development.

ON FEBRUARY 17th, 1964, Sacred Heart Parent-Teachers' organization was formed. On February 21st, in keeping with the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council, the lessons, epistles and gospels were read in the vernacular at all masses. The spirit of charity which characterized the members of Sacred Heart from the earliest times showed itself once more on April 5th. Hearing of the tidal wave which had wrecked havoc at the Christie Indian School near Hot Springs Cove, the parishioners responded with donations of money and clothing.

That same month, on April 20th, Sacred Heart elected its first school board.

Work started on the grounds of the new church on September 1st, 1964; the road from McKenzie to Lakeview was cleared and graded.



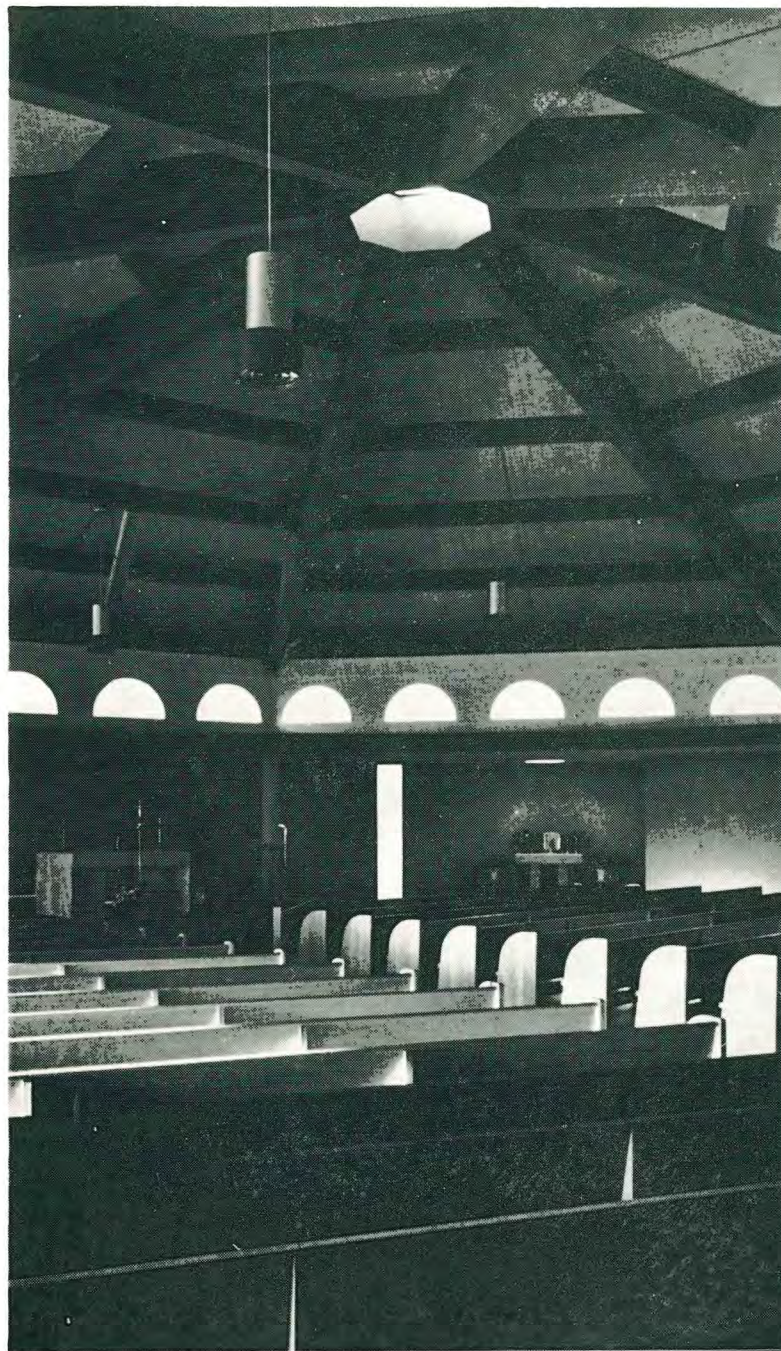
Final plans for the church were outlined and approved by the parishioners at a meeting September 13th. On October 4th, Father Planeta turned the first sod. Recalls current historian Mrs. John Magee: "It was a beautiful fall day of golden sunlight and gorgeous autumnal coloring . . . a day to remember."

Construction began November 1st, 1964. Work parties were formed. On April 5th, 1965, Sacred Heart lost one of its pillars of strength when Maurice Connor died after a lingering illness. Few had done so much so willingly in His name. Sadness turned to gladness on June 26th when Bishop de Roo conferred Holy Orders at St. Andrew's Cathedral on Joseph Gubbels and Frederick Magee, school-mates of Sacred Heart, now Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

As the church went up block by block, many were called to assist and many answered, men in the mold of John Magee and the late Lawrence Heather who back in 1949 designed and installed the Altar of Repose in the old church. How prophetic were they of the coming ecumenical era and Father Plantea's reminder to us all: "This is YOUR church."

For two young Christians, Christine Blaszek and William Atkinson the first mass, on August 28, 1965, was an occasion never to be forgotten . . . their nuptial mass.

Father Planeta celebrated the first Sunday Mass on September 5.



ON SEPTEMBER 19th parishioner Lawrence Webb, as calm as his predecessor-contractor Patrick Mahoney was fiery, undertook construction of the rectory from working drawings by Kenneth Brown.

The Rectory was completed March 4th, 1966. Three weeks later Father Planeta took up residence in the "home" built by Webb at less than cost.

On April 2nd, 1966, parish Guides and Brownies attended mass together. Afterwards on the sloping lawn by the rectory they planted a cypress sapling to mark B.C.'s Centenary.

With the coming of the new came the inevitable . . . the passing of the old. On May 1st, 1966, the last mass was held at Palmer Road. Fittingly the parish's first priest, Rev. Albury, was the celebrant before a packed congregation. Appropriately his sermon recalled the joys and sorrows, the tribulations and triumphs of the early parishioners.

In a real sense an era had ended and another had began.

No history of Sacred Heart would be complete without a tribute to the priests and sisters, the men, women and children who contributed so much so often so willingly.

Public acknowledgement pales when compared with the self-satisfaction of a task well and truly done. Surely the accounting on His ledger is their lasting reward . . . as it was 31 years and seven weeks ago for Patrick Mahoney . . .

H. J. M.



COVER:

*Panoramic Vista of the new Sacred Heart Church, top, contrasts with more familiar view of old Church in Palmer Road.*

— Photos courtesy John Barnard —

## INVITED GUESTS

Most Rev. Remi J. De Roo, S.T.D.,

*Bishop of Victoria*

Monsignor M. T. O'Connell

*Chancellor, Victoria Diocese*

Rev. J. Planeta,

*Pastor, Sacred Heart*

Rev. A. T. Albury

Rev. E. W. S. Gilbert and Mrs. Gilbert

G. L. Chatterton, *MP*, and Mrs. Chatterton

J. D. Tisdalle, *MLA*, and Mrs. Tisdalle

H. A. Curtis, *Reeve of Saanich*, and Mrs. Curtis

Mrs. Agnes Connor

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Di Castri

Mr. and Mrs. J. D. McInnis

Mr. and Mrs. J. D. McNab

