

30 years at 1120 Palmer Road



Sacred Heart Faith Community 1936-2006

*"Love the Lord"
and*

"Love your neighbor as you love yourself"

40 years at 4040 Nelthorpe Street



From His Sacred Heart . . .

Jesus answered, “‘Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and most important commandment.

The second most important commandment is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’

The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of prophets depend on these two commandments.”

— **Matthew 22: 37-40**

Jesus replied: “The most important one is this: ‘Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’

The second most important commandment is this: “love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ There is no other commandment more important than these two.”

— **Mark 12:29-31**

“**W**ho is my neighbor?”

Jesus answered, “There was once a man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when robbers attacked him, stripped him, and beat him up, leaving him half dead.

It so happened that a priest was going down the same road; but when he saw the man, he walked on by the other side.

In the same way, a Levite also came there, went over and looked at the man, and then walked on by on the other side.

But a Samaritan who was traveling that way came upon the man, and when he saw him, his heart was full of pity.

He went over to him, poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them, then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

And the next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Take care of him,’ he told the innkeeper, ‘and when I come back this way, I will pay you whatever else you spend on him.’”

And Jesus concluded, “In your opinion, which one of these three acted like a neighbor toward the man attacked by the robber?”

The teacher of the Law answered, “The one who was kind to him.”

Jesus replied, “You go, then, and do the same.”

— **Luke 10 30-37**

And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.

—**John 13: 34-35**

'Greatest' commandments define path for Sacred Heart parishioners over 70 years

After 30 years at Palmer Road and 40 years at Nelthorpe Road, the two 'greatest' commandments, "love the Lord" and "love your neighbor" (with the tough benchmark: "as you love yourself"), continue to underline the *raison d'être* of the Sacred Heart faith community.

It is a parish that is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus — where "heart" embodies the divine love of Jesus and where parishioners try to reciprocate this love by following and living the two 'greatest' commandments.

Also, in Christian trilogy of Faith, Hope and Charity, the symbol of charity is the heart — appropriate for a faith community that shows its love for its neighbors through charitable deeds:

- special collections for missions and for emergency assistance when there are natural disasters;
- the 'red bag' collection, for local and overseas charities, that replaced the former 'bread for the hungry' collection;
- food and clothing sent to poor in many countries;
- sponsoring, welcoming, housing and feeding refugees;
- the parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society that assists in visits and distribution of aid to the needy in Greater Victoria area;
- the special monthly envelope from parishioners to aid the St. Vincent de Paul Society;
- the cart of donated groceries collected weekly for distribution by St. Vincent de Paul Society;
- the support for Anawim House and the Poor Clares through donations of cash, food and clothing;
- the annual parish bazaar and a separate clothing sale to raise funds for charities;

- the parish's social justice committee that promotes social awareness and initiates action to bring about changes where injustices or denial of human rights exist;
- the parish's involvement in the Development and Peace organization;
- caring of the sick and shut-ins and administering the Eucharist to them;
- bereavement support after death of parishioners' loved ones;
- fund-raising by the Catholic Women's League and the Knights of Columbus.

Parish marks anniversaries of two eras

Saanich's Sacred Heart faith community's dynamic contribution to Catholicism on Vancouver Island can be divided into two location-based eras: the first 30 years at 1120 Palmer Road; the next 40 years nearly 2.5 kilometres northwest at 4040 Nelthorpe Street

When the new Sacred Heart mission was established in Saanich's Lakehill area in early spring of '36, it was:

- **162 years after** two Franciscan friars became the first Catholics to come to Canada's west coast in 1774 as chaplains aboard the Spaniards' *Santiago*;
- **146 years after** the Spaniards built the first Catholic church at Fort San Miguel at Nootka on Vancouver Island and erected wooden crosses at Sooke and Royal Roads in 1790;
- **93 years after** the first Sunday mass was celebrated in Camosun (now Victoria) on March 19, 1843, for 1,200 First Nations people, Hudson's Bay Company's Chief Factor James Douglas, several Canadians and two Catholic ladies; after the service, 102 First Nations' children were baptized;
- **90 years after** the Vancouver Island diocese (it was renamed Victoria Diocese in 1903) was established on June 28, 1846;
- **89 years after** Fr. Modeste Demers was consecrated as the diocese's first bishop on November 30, 1847.

Ten bishops later

The diocese's 11th leader, Bishop John Hugh MacDonald, established the Sacred Heart mission in '36 and since then, and over the last 70 years, six bishops have provided spiritual guidance to the faith community:

- 1936 - '37: Bishop John MacDonald
- 1937 - '46 (nine years): Bishop John Cody
- 1946 - '62 (16 years): Bishop James Hill
- 1962 - '99 (37 years): Bishop Remi de Roo
- 1999 - '04 (five years): Bishop Raymond Roussin
- 2004 - present: Bishop Richard Gagnon.

Sacred Heart mission (1936 - 1941)

The Sacred Heart mission — with no full-time pastor — was administered for five years from St. Andrew's Cathedral until 1941.



Fr. Carl Albury

Bishop MacDonald had directed Bahamas-born Fr. Carl Albury to establish the mission. He served the mission until Bishop Cody succeeded Bishop MacDonald in 1937.

The other priests who administered the mission from the cathedral included Fr. James Crowthers, Fr. Joseph Augustine (Gus) Gaudette, Fr. Theodore Geukers, Fr. Wigglesworth and Fr. Roy Monahan.

Sacred Heart parish (1941 - present)

In 1941, Sacred Heart parish came into being when it got its first full-time pastor.

10 parish pastors

Ten parish pastors served the Sacred Heart faith community — for over a period of 64 years — from the time it became a parish in '41 until the current pastor was appointed in October 2004.



Fr. Thomas Mangan

1941 - '49 (eight years): Ontario-born Fr. Thomas Mangan, Redemptorist;



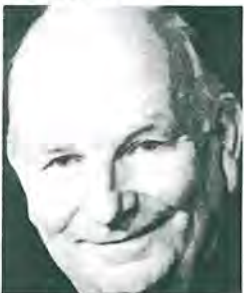
Fr. Geoffrey Penfold

1949 - '63 (14 years): Montreal-native Fr. Geoffrey Penfold; he became monsignor in '60;



Fr. Jan Planeta

1963 - '67 (four years): Polish-born Fr. Jan Planeta; he joined the parish in '55 as assistant to Fr. Penfold; he left to serve at Qualicum Beach and Parksville in '67.



Fr. Donal Lehane

1967 - '73 (four years): Irish-born Fr. Donal Lehane, a diocesan priest and Sacred Heart Church's first parishioner to be ordained.



Fr. William Bulloch

1973 - '76 (three years): Ontario-born Fr. William Bulloch, a diocesan priest, served until he retired in '76; he was elevated to monsignor on December 14, '77.



Fr. Guy Merveille

1976 - '79 (three years): Belgium-born Fr. Guy Merveille, a Norbertine; he served until he was transferred to Gold River.



Fr. Harold Heard

1979 - '84 (five years): England-born Fr. Harold Heard, a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, or a 'Holy Ghost Father.'



Fr. Sigismond Lajoie

1984 - '04 (20 years): Alberta-born Fr. Sigismond Lajoie, a Franciscan; he was also the diocese's chancellor (Aug. 1, '82 – Jul. 1, '86) and vicar general (Jan. 15, '85 – Nov. 1, '03); in Apr. '04, he was hospitalized; he died on June 27, '04, the day the parish was to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination, three days before the actual date.



Msgr. Michael Lapierre

April 2004 - October '04: Monsignor Michael Lapierre; he had served as assistant pastor to Fr. Sig since October '03.



Fr. Anthony Gonsalves

October 2004 - present: Pakistan-born Fr. Anthony Gonsalves, a Franciscan.

Priests who have helped to administer to the community's spiritual needs at Sacred Heart Church include:

- Fr. Bernard Hanley (1967-'68);
- Fr. Paul Blancard (1972-'73);
- Fr. Gerhard Hartmann (1976);
- Fr. Leo Robert (1976-'84);
- Fr. Joe Ponc (1977-'78);
- Fr. Eugene Trainor (1979);
- Fr. Peter Ho (1984-'85); and
- Monsignor Michael Lapierre (2003-'04).

In '79, the parish hired its first lay employee, Cheryl Stinson, to assist the pastor in various activities. She served for 18 years and was followed briefly in '98 by Noel Burns and then by Darcy Kimmitt, co-ordinator, '99-'01.

Marilyn Bojko, current secretary/facilitator, joined the parish staff in January '97.

30 years at Palmer Road location

In early spring '36, the diocese loaned \$200 to buy the site at 1120 Palmer Road for a church for the new Sacred Heart mission.

Contractor Patrick Mahoney built the church without any fee for his services, and Fr. Albury borrowed \$1,500 to pay the sub-trades. The new Catholic church became the 9th in the area now known as the Capital Regional District on May 3, '36, when 60 families attended the Mass and blessing.

Today, 70 years later, only Winnie Doyle, Theresa Bijold and Norman Webb remain as the original members who are still with the Sacred Heart faith community.

Other original mission members still living include Joe Webb, who lives in Vancouver, and Monsignor Michael O'Connell and his sister, Ellen, who are in the Victoria diocese.

The church at Palmer Road was built when the capital region, with a total population of about 70,000, had about 10,500 Catholics in '36. Saanich had some 15,600 people and about 2,600 of them were Catholics.

The existing churches that year were:

- St. Andrew's Cathedral downtown;
- Our Lady Queen of Peace in Esquimalt;
- St. Margaret's Church in Strawberry Vale;
- Our Lady of Lourdes Church at Haultain;
- Our Lady of the Assumption Church on West Saanich Road;
- St. Elizabeth Church in Sidney;
- St. Francis Xavier mission at Otter Point; and,
- St. Rose of Lima Church in Langford.

Sacred Heart Parish School

In '42, the parish acquired a house at 1130 Palmer Road, a few houses uphill from the church, for a new rectory.

That year the Sacred Heart Parish School opened in the basement.

In summer '43, four Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters arrived from Los Angeles, California, to teach at the school.

They bought the building for \$2,700 and the parish acquired a house at 3905 Quadra Street for a new rectory along with a vacant lot at the corner of Quadra and Union streets.

Three years later, property near the top of Palmer Road was bought for a new school building, but zoning regulations forced its sale.

This prompted the parish to buy a site at 880 McKenzie Avenue.

Fr. Penfold, after being hospitalized in '56, initiated the drive in '57 to raise \$40,000 for the new Sacred Heart School building at 880 McKenzie Avenue.

The next year the diocese authorized the parish to get a \$90,000-loan and a further loan of \$18,000 in '59.

In September '58, the new school building opened with 152 students in four classrooms, the Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters moved into the new convent next door, and a year later the school got two new classrooms to accommodate 205 students.

New church needed

In December '63, the parish decided to build a new church and rectory at 4040 Nelthorpe Street above the Sacred Heart Parish School site.

A '62 census had indicated there were 385 Catholic families in the parish with only 231 families attending services because of overcrowding at Palmer Road.

The site on the southern slope of the 108-metre-high Christmas Hill totalled 4.12 hectares.

The church was planned at the elevation of 53 metres above sea level — with a commanding view of Victoria and the Olympic Mountains —and the rectory at 58 metres.

The school was at the 30-metre elevation along McKenzie Avenue.

Year '64 was hectic:

- the diocese authorized the parish to get a \$200,000-loan on August 19;
- the parish approved on September 13 architect John Di Castri's plans for a church to hold 500 people;
- Fr. Planeta turned the sod on October 4; and,
- a \$140,000-construction contract with Donesta Construction Ltd. was signed on November 5.

The next year, on September 19, parishioner Lawrence Webb began the construction of the rectory from working drawings by Kenneth Brown. It was completed by March 4, '66, allowing Fr. Planeta to move in three weeks later.

On May 1, '66, Sacred Heart faith community's first priest, Fr. Albury, celebrated the last Mass at 1120 Palmer Road, and on June 26, Bishop Remi de Roo dedicated the new Sacred Heart Church.

40 years at 4040 Nelthorpe Street

The new church at Nelthorpe Street was needed to keep pace with a growing municipality: Saanich's population had grown from 15,600 in '36 to 58,800 in '66.

The only other Catholic church in the municipality, St. Margaret's Church in Strawberry Vale, had closed in '62 while St. Joseph's Church at 785 West Burnside Road had opened in May '63.

In '70, Sacred Heart School at the bottom of the hill from the church closed its doors and the next year, on June 30, the diocese purchased 2.9 hectares of the parish's 4.12-hectare property that housed the school and the convent.

The deal involved, among other things, the adoption of the parish's \$120,000 debt plus a \$34,000-payment to the parish for the land.

The diocese was anxious to use the school for the Victoria Indian Cultural Education Centre and the convent for Laren House Society's transitional home.

In '77, the rectory's carport was converted into the Pope John XXIII meeting hall and chapel and weekday Masses have since been held to this day in this chapel.

In '83 the two buildings at 880 McKenzie Avenue became the diocesan St. Andrew's Regional High School, relocated from Pandora Street.

The next year, the parish signed a \$700-per-month, 10-year lease agreement with the diocese for 0.2 hectares of land in the northeast corner of the parish's property to be used for a Diocesan Pastoral Centre.

The three-storey structure to this day houses the diocese's administration offices, including the offices of the bishop, vicar general, chancellor and financial administrator.

Design reflects revised liturgy

The new Sacred Heart Church was designed in keeping with the changes in the liturgy brought about by the Second Vatican Council.

- Parishioners form a positive assembly around the altar and ambo.
- The positioning of the altar and ambo enables the pastor to face the congregation.
- There are no communion rails and communicants receive the Eucharist standing.
- Lay men and women serve as readers and administer the Eucharist.
- The altar of reservation is in a separate area, but still related to the sanctuary,
- The baptistry is an extension of the nave.
- The choir is beside the sanctuary.
- The celebrant is at the rear of the sanctuary where he can preside over the assembly.

- The forecourt at the church's entrance allows for social exchanges between parishioners and permits a change of attitude before entering the House of God.
- The courtyard and church entrance provide easy access to persons in wheel chairs.

Altar Society / Catholic Women's League

Soon after the Sacred Heart mission was established in '46, the women organized an Altar Society to clean the church, look after the linen, and raise funds.

On December 5, '40, they organized themselves as the Sacred Heart Council of Catholic Women's League, working "for God and Canada" under an organization that also sought the spiritual development of its members.

Over the last 65 years, the parish's CWL has undertaken parish projects, particularly fund-raising events which allowed them to use their culinary and creative skills and to socialize.

Today, the parish's CWL group, besides being involved in parish activities, is also active in Birthright, Transition House, Mental Health, and Capital Families.

It is also active in the national CWL organization — which counts more than 150,000 members — that makes its voice heard on legislative matters, health, education and social justice. And it has some involvement in international issues.

Changes in liturgy

In '66, after the Second Vatican Council, the diocese returned to the "old-time religion" with hymn singing and congregational participation.

For the first time, prayers were said in English.

Fr. Planeta introduced the changes in the liturgy at Sacred Heart Church.

Polish Masses

As an immigrant from Poland, Fr. Planeta also introduced Masses in Polish on Christmas, Easter and other special days until Bishop de Roo appointed Fr. Anthony Kwarta, in March '67 to serve Canadians of Polish ancestry.

Regular Sunday Masses in Polish at Sacred Heart Church began that year and were celebrated by Fr. Kwarta until he died in December '88.

He was followed by Polish-speaking priests from Vancouver until the successive appointments of Fr. Valdemar Kuchta, Fr. Bogdan Sianozecki, Fr. Jozef Kobos, and Fr. Slawomir Sciechowski, to serve the Polish-speaking community.

Masses in Polish are celebrated to this day at Sacred Heart Church.

Portuguese Masses

In May '72, the first Portuguese-language mass was celebrated at Sacred Heart Church by Fr. Daniel Johnston, who began residing in the rectory and served Canadians of Portuguese, Italian and Spanish ancestries.

Italian-born Fr. Arduino Antonello succeeded him in September '82.

Portuguese Masses at Sacred Heart Church continued until the Our Lady of Fatima Church at 4653 Elk Lake Road was built in '84 and became the first Portuguese-language parish.

Vietnamese Masses

In October '82, a Vietnamese refugee who was a seminarian ready for ordination, arrived at Sacred Heart Church.

Fr. Heard introduced him to Bishop de Roo, who placed this refugee in the parish's care.

Peter Ho lived for a year with different families to acculturate him before he went to St. Paul's University, Ottawa, for further studies.

On December 8, '84, newly ordained Fr. Ho returned to Sacred Heart as assistant pastor and the next day he celebrated Mass in Vietnamese for the growing number of Vietnamese refugees.

His stay as assistant pastor at the parish was brief. He left in July '85 but continued to celebrate Mass for Canadians of Vietnamese ancestry at Sacred Heart until April '94.

Liturgical ministries

The liturgy — from the Greek word *leitourgia* or “work of the people” — at Sacred Heart Church comes about through the contribution of a large core of liturgical ministers who provide the parish with their gifts and dedicated service:

- Altar servers;
- Eucharistic ministers;
- Proclaimers/readers of intersessions;
- Children's liturgy;
- Greeters/ushers;
- Sacristans/enviromentalists (who adorn the altar with flowers).

Choir and folk singing groups

Many parishioners, including youth groups and school choirs, have given their time and made use of their musical talents and great voices to serve the faith community at its liturgical celebrations.

They are too numerous to be listed here.

However, one individual stands out: Beryl Sheard was the parish's organist for 39 years!

She “retired” in '05 and talented singer and pianist Rafael Oei from Singapore is now the parish music co-ordinator.

Parish Council

In November '67, again thanks to the Second Vatican Council that promoted increased involvement of parishioners in the parish's financial and administrative affairs, the first Sacred Heart Parish Council was elected.

The parish council co-ordinators/chairs over the years have included:

- James Wood ('67-'72)
- Dr. Jack Nash ('72-'73)
- Tom Turner ('73-'74)
- Vaughan Thompson ('74) — in '74 the pastor, Fr. Bulloch, elected to handle the council's responsibilities
- Dan Taft ('76-'78)
- Pete Brady ('78-'80)
- Ray Bower ('80-'82)
- Ken Cotter ('82-'84)
- Dorothy Sage ('84-'86)
- Roger Weiker ('86-'88)
- Jack Whitehead ('87-'89)
- Norman Cox (89-92)
- Kathy Weswick ('92-'93)
- Claire Holmes ('93-'94)
- Ernie Sketchley ('94-'97)
- Heather Sluchinski ('97-'98)
- Bernie Shaw ('98-'99);
- Pat Mitchell ('99-'00)
- Jim Haffey ('00-'01)
- Mary Lou Konrath ('01-'02)
- Jim Haffey ('02-'03)
- council members rotated as chairs ('03-'04)
- Mary Ann Belfry ('04-'05), and
- Mary Ellen Ross ('05-'06).

Caring for others

Also in '67, while the parish had since its early days a monthly collection for St. Vincent de Paul Society, the parish's own St. Vincent de Paul Society conference was established on July 17 to assist with visits and distribution of aid to the needy in the Greater Victoria area.

This parish conference continues to this day.

The parish also began in '67 its involvement in the Development and Peace organization when it was given the mandate by the Canadian bishops to fund socio-economic programs in developing countries.

By '76 the parish had its own Development and Peace committee.

In November '78, the parish held its first bazaar to raise funds exclusively for charities — before, the parish bazaars, which began in '36, were for parish purposes.

Because of its success, a clothing sale is now held prior to the “attic treasures” bazaar.

The parish bazaar for charities was organized because the parish discontinued pew collections for the “red bag” in '76.

Parish mothers and their daughters started the “red bag” collection during Mass, initially called ‘Bread for Hungry’, in March '67.

The “red bag” now consists of a large container placed in the centre aisle at the back of the church with half of the proceeds going to local charities and the other half to charities overseas.

In '80, in keeping with the Second Vatican Council's teachings, the parish council established a Social Justice Committee with a mandate to promote social awareness and to initiate action to bring about changes, wherever injustices or denial of human rights exist.

This committee continues to do good work to this day

The parish has also always tended to its sick and shut-ins.

Parishioners are trained to give spiritual solace and to administer the Eucharist to those who are unable to come to church.

In '99, the parish established the bereavement support ministry led by Claire Holmes and John Tomczak to meet the needs of those who have lost their loved ones.

Helping refugees

The parish has a long history of helping refugees. It began nearly 50 years ago, when in '56, Fr. Planeta quickly organized the parish to respond to the Hungarian refugees' need.

In '61, the parish sponsored a family from West Germany and they were looked after until they settled down.

During his three-year term as parish pastor ('76-'79), Fr. Merveille presided over the welcoming of the "boat people"— the refugees from Vietnam — by the faith community.

Parishioners, particularly the youth, brought or collected canned foods from the community and by Christmas '78, food cans and packages were piled up to the ceiling behind the altar.

Some of the Vietnamese refugees were given temporary residence in the rectory and eventually the work of assisting them was taken over by the parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society Conference.

In '84-'85, the parish and the St. Vincent de Paul Society assisted a refugee family from Uganda.

Catechetics

With the closure of the Sacred Heart Parish School in '70, parishioners were prompted to enter the challenging era of lay involvement in an expanded catechetics program.

Since '82, the classes have been held after Sunday Mass in classrooms of the St. Andrew's Regional High School.

Fr. Merveille also introduced the family Mass on Sundays with children serving and bringing the gifts to the altar. He invited the children to the altar after the Gospel and gave them a brief catechetical lesson on the readings, the Gospel, or on other matters.

He also initiated the baptism of children during Sunday Mass so that the community could welcome them.

Adult education

That year, the parish initiated an adult education program on the histories of the church and theology.

The program also included ecumenism, social issues and concerns, canon law, the child and the family, and other subjects.

Dr. Edward Pires coordinated the program until it was changed in March '81, when it focused on pre-marriage counselling, marriage encounter and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Diocesan Synod

Sacred Heart Parish actively participated in the five-year Diocesan Synod, called by Bishop Remi de Roo, from October 31, 1986, to October 31, 1991.

Parish delegates to the Synod organized parish meetings to get parishioners' input, attended workshops and attended lively discussions with other delegates from across Vancouver Island at the Bethlehem Retreat Centre.

The results of the Diocesan Synod were published in *Forward in the Spirit: Challenge of the People's Synod*.

Sacred Heart Church today

Five churches now serve Catholics in Saanich with Sacred Heart Church located near this big municipality's geographical centre.

The other four churches are, as the crow flies:

- St. Joseph's Church, 2.4 kilometres to the west, established in '62 at 785 Burnside Road
- Our Lady of Fatima Church (Portuguese), 3.5 kilometres to the northwest, established in October '84 at 4553 Elk Lake Road
- Holy Cross Church, 4.6 kilometres to the north east, opened in February '83 at 4053 Gordon Head Road
- St. Leopold Mandic Church (Croatian), 4.7 kilometres to the north east, established in '85 at 4081 Gordon Head Road.

The Sacred Heart faith community owes much of its strength, vitality and spiritual well-being, over the last 70 years, to the six bishops who provided spiritual leadership and guidance during this period, the parish's dynamic pastors, nuns, administrators and other priests, who served as assistants, or, who came just to help.

The messages of Christ, particularly His teachings about the two "greatest" commandments, continue to be the challenges to be met.

Dedicated to the "Sacred Heart" of Jesus Christ, the faith community at Nelthorpe Road today is striving to do just that.