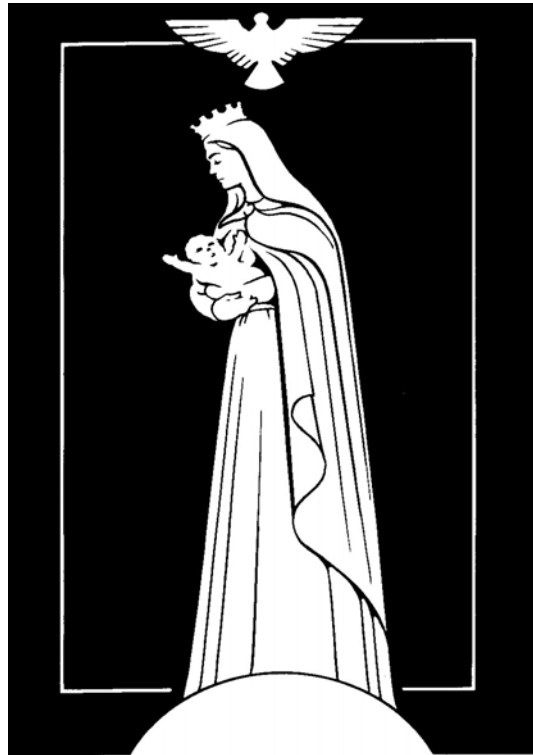


THE ANGELUS



Our Lady Queen of Peace Gladesville

Parish Priest: Fr Brian Byron
Assistant Priest: Fr Roberto Castillo

October 2007
Special Edition
for
Fr Byron's Golden Jubilee Celebrations

Parish Priest's Corner

The Golden Jubilee.

Just as a wedding anniversary is important to married people, so the anniversary of ordination is to a priest. And the fiftieth anniversary is the dream of most priests, though lesser anniversaries along the way are also observed with suitable jubilation.

Our class, the class of 1957, has had the habit of getting together every five years, taking it in turns to gather in Sydney, Adelaide and Perth, where our classmates ministered. I was already in Gladesville in 1982 for the celebration of my Silver Jubilee in 1982. We had Mass in the Church, with a homily by Bishop John Heaps (RIP), and with John MacNamara, the founder of our acolytes one of the main organisers. He died of cancer not long afterwards (RIP). We had the reception in the parish hall. A number of priests concelebrated, including some Marists. Fr Jim Esler SM was present on the altar (as he would try to be twenty-five years later).

The thirtieth anniversary is not quite so important but I remember it well because on the day (20 July 1987) I said Mass on a side altar at St Peter's in Rome. Quite a few people gathered around for the Mass and when I told them it was my 30th anniversary they all responded, "Auguri, Padre!"

The fortieth was observed with a fair deal of celebration here in Gladesville, again with a Mass and reception in the Fr Gell Centre. Some of my beloved aunts who attended have passed away since, though one, Mrs Conse Doohan, was present at my Golden Jubilee.

The Golden Jubilee was observed principally on three days though minor celebrations are going on for several months! The actual day, 20 July 2007, was a Friday and was marked principally by the school community. There was a beautiful school Mass with lovely hymns and special processions for the Gospel and Offertory. After Mass there was an assembly in the quadrangle, the band played a brace of tunes and some short speeches were made. The Principal, Mrs Margaret Morgan, kindly honoured the occasion by renaming the school library, "The Byron Library" with a special plaque to recall the event. Then there was the launch of *Poems of a Seminarian- Fifty Years On*, poems written over fifty years ago and now published by the School and the Catholic Education Office. Copies would be given to each family in the school and also made available to parishioners and visitors for the Jubilee. The function ended with morning tea. I also celebrated that day with an informal lunch with two of my classmates, Fr James Duck and Fr George Connolly.

As the organising committee thought numbers would be too big it was decided to have two celebrations, one for family and friends, the other for parishioners. Saturday 21 July was the 50th anniversary of my "First Mass" so we had a Mass at 11 am for family and friends. The John Paul II Singers, who use our church for practice once a month, accepted my invitation to sing. The whole choir turned up, twenty-five of them, and what beautiful singing they provided! I wore an alb, crocheted by my mother and worn at my first Mass, and also used the chalice which was presented to me by the parishioners of Central Bankstown for my ordination. Bishop Geoffrey Robinson preached a homily which was widely praised after Mass. Fr Jim Esler SM came to concelebrate but unfortunately became unwell and could not stay. About twenty priests concelebrated, some former residents at Gladesville presbytery, others from the local deanery and various contacts. We even had a deacon, Deacon George Gorzkowski (who was ordained

priest on 4 August). The John Paul II Singers provided the hymns including *Tu es sacerdos* and *Panis Angelicus*. Their singing was much admired by the congregation. Fr Roberto did a great job as MC and kept the ceremony on track.

The reception was held at Holy Cross Hall (thanks again to the generosity of the Patrician Brothers and the College), a delightful meal – so well done Jubilee Committee! Gordon Inglis was the entertaining MC. Speeches were given by my brother Kevin and Greg Smith on behalf of the St Thomas More Society, both of whom spoke well. Jared Rastall also designed a wonderful Power Point presentation which was well received. There was ample time for mixing and talking so all seemed to enjoy the occasion.

Parishioners had their celebration on the following day using the 10 am Sunday Mass. The Parish Choir sang with John Kenny conducting and Gay Walsh at the organ. They also received high acclaim for their efforts. Fr Roberto again kept an eye on proceedings. Again too the reception was held at Holy Cross with the same good menu, a jubilee cake, the Power Point presentation and a speech on behalf of the parish by Denis Keller. John Hardman was the MC: though a bit unwell he did a great job.

Thanks to all who contributed by their presence and hard work, those mentioned above, the Committee including Geraldine and Anna, and others too many to mention individually. It was a memorable occasion which made me very happy.

Fr Brian



OLQP School Celebrations



On Friday 20th July 2007 Our Lady Queen of Peace School celebrated Father Byron's Golden Jubilee of Ordination. What a wonderful day we all had as this special event brought our community together with past principals and officials from the Catholic Education Office to celebrate with us.

This day started with a beautiful liturgy where we gave thanks for Father Byron and the many gifts he has brought to our school. Following mass we dedicated our school library to Father Byron in his honour and in recognition of his support for our school, love of learning, enjoyment and use of technology, a morning tea was then enjoyed by all. Our library will now be known as the **Byron Library**.

We also joined in celebrating the launch of Father Byron's book 'Poems of a Seminarian', which is a collection of poems Father wrote 50 years ago while in the seminary. This book was given to all members of our community as a gift from the Catholic Education Office Sydney.



Brother Kelvin Canavan Executive Director of Schools joined us on Friday 3rd August to continue celebrating this wonderful achievement as Year 6 presented one of Father Byron's poems, 'The Storm' through movement, music, art and voice. Other students shared with our guests the work they are doing in class with a focus on new technologies recently introduced to the school.



We give thanks for the gift of Father Byron to our school and parish.

Margaret Morgan
Principal

An extract from Denis Keller's speech for Fr Brian Byron, PP, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Gladesville - Golden Jubilee 20th July 2007

Reverend Doctor Brian Francis Byron celebrated his Golden Jubilee of ordination as a priest on 20th July 2007. A school Mass was held in our church followed by morning tea at the primary school adjoining the church and the school library was dedicated to him on that day. The next day a Mass was arranged and con-celebrated by Fr Byron, Fr James Duck and Fr George Connolly, each of these priests being Jubilarians on that same day. Invited guests were friends, family members, brothers and fellow priests. The homily was delivered by Bishop Geoffrey Robinson. On Sunday a Mass was con-celebrated with Fr Roberto Castillo, Assistant Priest at Gladesville. The Mass was followed by lunch for parishioners at Holy Cross College Hall.

Fr Byron was appointed to Gladesville Parish as an Assistant Priest in 1975 and confirmed as Parish Priest in 1979. Over thirty years he has been a tireless worker for the Church, School, Hall and Grounds; enlarging, refurbishing, updating and modernising church property. He introduced the recommendations and directives of Vatican Council II and began to involve the laity in the management of the church and in rites and ceremonies. Clearly he has exercised a profound effect on the church in Gladesville both in its material infrastructure and also on the attitude of parishioners. He has established new and exciting ways to present the various religious rites.

We have many reasons to be thankful to our Parish Priest Fr Byron including his leadership, his innovations, his warmth and humanity during his years with the parish. He has created a community of care and compassion, piety and discipline, prayer and love.

As a thank you to their parish priest the parishioners have dedicated a stained glass window in the church and as a thank you to his parishioners Fr Byron presented everyone with a book of poems he had written in the seminary and published with the assistance of the CEO, titled 'Poems of a Seminarian – Fifty Years On'.

Denis Keller



Ode to Father Byron (by Margaret Brand)

Once upon a time, there was a man named Brian
Who aspired and desired to be ordained a Catholic Priest
And this ambition did never cease
He finally achieved his aim and he became
“Father Byron” in year ‘57
And thus began his journey towards Heaven.

He travelled widely and went to Rome
And soon it became his second home.
Eventually he came back to stay
And so to Gladesville he wended his way.
And wasn't it our lucky day!

He seemed to possess Degrees galore
In academic circles he knew the score.
On matters “Morean” he was a Master
We're very proud of our classy Pastor.

His knowledge was essential on matters consequential
His linguistic skills were noted
In fact quite often quoted
As a Doctor of Divinity who resides in this vicinity...

In the ups and downs of Parish work
He did his duty, he did not shirk
When put to the test, he performed at his best
And lots of our worries were laid to rest.

He loves a joke; it wasn't just a rumour
Our Parish Priest has a sense of humour.
A lover of sport, and great at tennis,
On the net he was a menace.
I should know – he gave no quarter
I recall in one match being led to the slaughter!

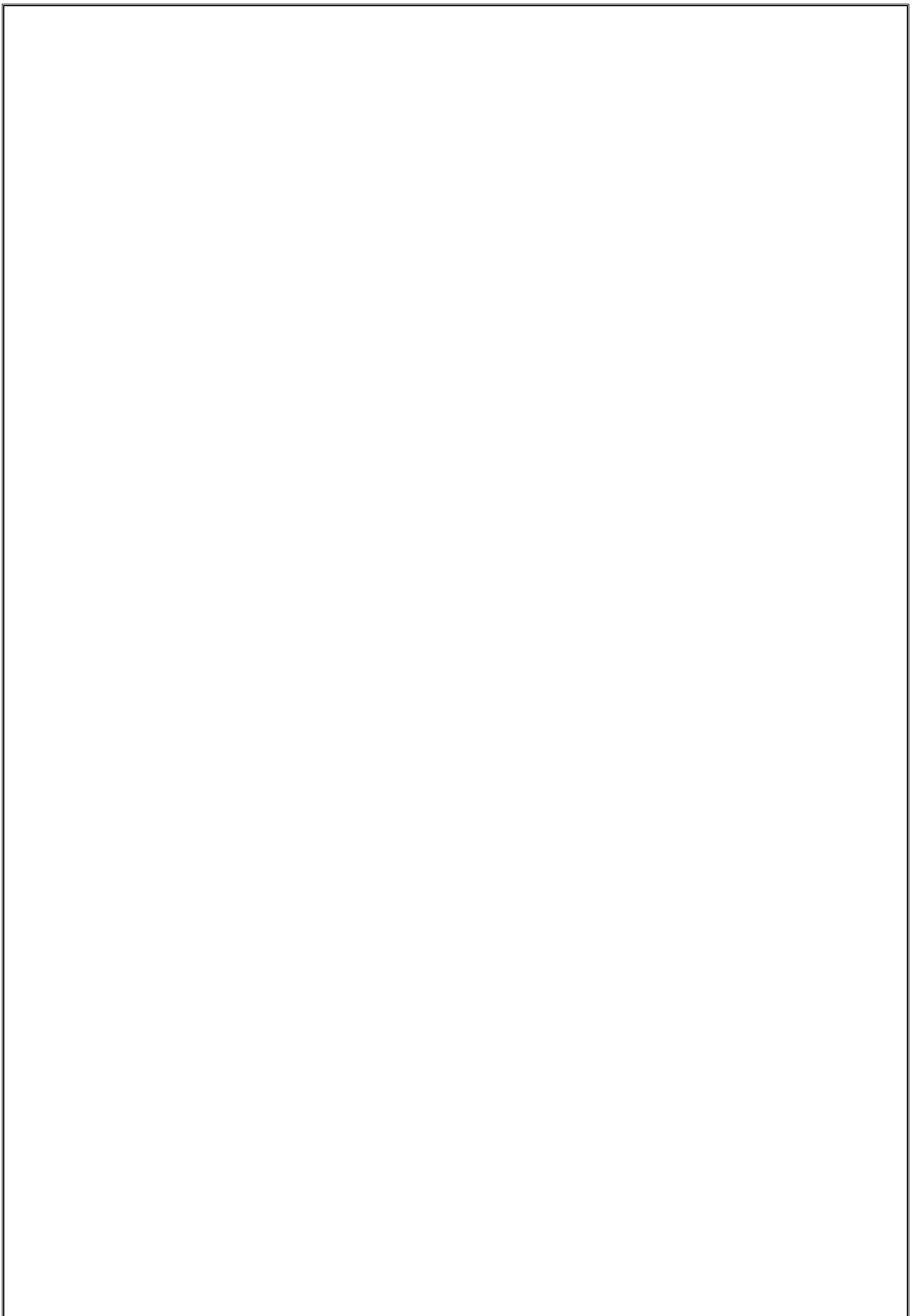
Father B is beguiling, particularly when smiling
However, beware, his temper can flare
One thing though is simply amazing
He barracks for the Bulldogs, now isn't that crazy?
In Tiger country, he's courting disaster
He's a very brave man, our Gladesville Pastor.....

Not for him is the Biretta, he's usually in a sweater,
Preparing his homily and beavering away
On his computer, on which he loves to play.

And now he has notched up 50 years
With plenty of sweat and perhaps a few tears.
He is a man who loves to party
And just not one, but three – how could this be??
They were all super duper, and it just goes to show
How much he is loved by all, and so ...

As I was invited on this big occasion
(And I might add with a little persuasion)
To write a few lines, maybe a sonnet
I've therefore set my seal upon it.

In conclusion Father, we all love you dearly,
And I say this most sincerely,
We'll pray for you till the journey ends
And you know in your heart, we'll always be friends.



Auguri, Padre!

This heartfelt salutation of “Good Luck Father” borrowed from this issue of the Angelus’ Parish Priest’s Corner surely echoes this community’s sentiments of love and heartfelt respect for Father Byron – a truly Australian cleric with a proud Irish background – the Gallaghers.

Elsewhere, he describes in illuminating detail the liturgical celebrations to honour his 50 years.

The Church was packed to the rafters on both occasions and I thought the John Paul II singers in their crimson gowns sang marvellously, led in the Psalms by their imposingly (bearded) Cantor.

A brilliantly produced glossy booklet “Poems of a Seminarian – Fifty Years On” by Father, was freely distributed and copies are still available from the school or through Father’s Parish Secretary, Geraldine Rastall.

This booklet reveals Father as a man of wit and great learning and piety. His family escutcheon, on his study door proclaims the Byron clan: “Armé a tous points” - a strong defender of the Faith and not to be trifled with.

Today’s installation of the stained-glass window in his honour facing the memorial to a fallen Australian soldier recognises him as a soldier in the church militant.

Many men have been influenced by Father in his days as a Professor of Theology at Banyo Seminary, including a few present day bishops, so I believe.

He has been host to many assistant curates as PP, among whom we note Fr Danny Meagher who acted for him after his incapacitation and has gone on to become PP of North Leichhardt and a big wheel in the forthcoming WYD08 (World Youth Day Sydney 2008).

It would be wonderful to top these events in his life if we were able to restore to its former glory the foundation stone so sadly weathered by rain and pollution on the Victoria Road entrance.

So, Father, we extend to you the cheerful toast, “Ad Multos annos” (many years yet!).

John Payne

Fr Byron's Jubilee Party Preparations (Behind the scene)

I would like to share with everyone the rewarding experience I had in helping to organize Fr Byron's Jubilee Celebrations.

After the initial committee meeting, the decision had to be made where this function was to be held. Quotes were obtained to hire a marquee with tables and chairs at the Fr Gell Hall. After many discussions with Geraldine and the committee it was decided for the comfort of our parishioners for it to be held at another venue. Lucky for us Holy Cross Hall was available for July.

Then came the decision to be made on food and drinks. Many wonderful suggestions came pouring in, our final choice went to Dominic's Catering, and I can happily say the food was enjoyed by all. Then many hours for the next few weeks were spent either on the phone or driving around acquiring the perfect prices for everything we needed ranging from crockery, glasses, tablecloths, decorations. The cake was baked by A & P Sulfaro's Pasticceria, Kate's great selection of wines etc etc. Fr Byron must have thought I was a crazy woman running in and out of the presbytery on many, many occasions and asking many, many questions.

Our final meeting came, and final decisions were made. We were all very excited and glad that Fr Byron was well enough to enjoy this wonderful celebration.

The weekend was upon us and everyone went into action. It all began Friday night: - tables and chairs to set up, decorations put in place etc... Early Saturday morning, bread and cake was to be picked up, let caterers into hall, car park attendant on hand waiting for the action to happen..... Then the clean up.

Early Sunday morning.... Repeat as above.

In conclusion, leaving all the hard work behind, I personally had lots of fun and felt privileged to be involved. I would also like to take this opportunity in thanking Geraldine, while working closely with her I witnessed the many hours she worked behind the scenes making sure things were going to run smoothly for all our 400 guests over the whole weekend. So as anyone who knows about organising big affairs there is a lot of work involved prior to the event and the success of this event is owed to a group of dedicated and hard workers as listed below:

Filomena Agostino

Maria Albanese

Cath Campbell

Margaret & Terry Brand

Clara Cincotta

Kate Curtis

Leonie & John Hardman

Jeanette Hewlett

Vaughan Kelly

Yvonne & Gordon Inglis

Robert Mitchell

John Payne

Jared Rastall

Dorothy Saville

Rae Wales

Gay Walsh

Geraldine Rastall & Anna Alessi

Anna Alessi

FIFTY YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD

Of the fifty years I have been a priest, over thirty-two have been spent in Gladesville. I was previously in other parishes, some of them very briefly. My first appointment as Assistant Priest was to Ashbury, then I had terms in Erskineville, Five Dock, Elizabeth Bay, Camperdown, Manly, and Toukley. I had three interruptions to parish life: from 1964-66 I had the opportunity of studying in Rome which coincided with Vatican Council II some of whose sessions I attended. From 1969-72 I was a lecturer at the Queensland seminary at Banyo. I also had a year as Acting Spiritual Director at St Patrick's College, Manly (1973-4). After so many changes I was happy to settle down!

Early Life

I was born in Bankstown, the fourth of seven children to Michael Thomas Byron and Rosanna nee Gallagher, both originally from Tynedale on the Clarence River. (In fact, if you drive along the Pacific Highway there you will still see Byrons Lane and Gallaghers Road.) Both families came from Irish stock. We belonged to St Felix's Parish, Bankstown, and attended the parish school of St Joseph. I also spent 1945 at St Patrick's College, Strathfield. We were children during World War II and saw many warplanes and some crashes around Bankstown aerodrome. I started formation for the priesthood as a twelve year old, going to the Minor Seminary of St Columba at Springwood in 1946 to do my secondary schooling and begin philosophy. After seven years there I moved on to St Patrick's College, Manly for five more years.

Ordination

I was ordained to the Catholic priesthood on 20th July 1957 at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, by Cardinal Norman Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney, the ceremony starting at 8 a.m. on a frosty morning. Our ordination class of twenty-two was small for those days! Ten of us will celebrate our Golden Jubilee.

After the ordination ceremony we gave our "first blessing" to our parents and families and many others, friends and strangers, who lined up in the Cathedral. Later we returned to our families for a social celebration.

The next day I offered my "first Mass" at my home parish of St Brendan's, Central Bankstown, with Fr Geoffrey Dickinson as preacher and my five brothers as altar servers- no altar girls in those days so my sister missed out! The Church was packed and again there was demand for the new priest's blessing. For my ordination and first Mass I wore an alb whose medallions had been patiently crocheted by my mother over the years. I will wear it at the Jubilee. I also used a chalice presented to me by the parish of St Brendan and which I will also use for the Jubilee Mass.

After a week of celebrations we returned to St Patrick's College, Manly, to finish our seminary training. I was doing the degree course so had to study quite hard. It paid off at the end of the year when I presented myself for the Licentiate in Theology and became the first to receive that degree from the newly established Pontifical Theological Faculty of Sydney. After seven years in parishes I got a bursary which enabled me to study in Rome. I eventually got the doctorate in theology with a thesis, "Loyalty in the Spirituality of St Thomas More", which was published in Holland. The choice of subject was a happy one and my connections with the world of Thomas More enriched my life over the subsequent years. Vatican Council II came to a conclusion while I was in Rome: it deeply affected the life of the whole Church and my own, requiring much re-thinking of priestly ministry.

My theological qualifications provided the opportunity to become a lecturer and I spent four years (1969-72) at St Paul's Seminary at Banyo in Queensland. On returning to Sydney and settling in Gladesville I kept up the academic life by occasionally lecturing at various Theological Institutes and Teachers' Colleges. I also enjoyed writing theological works and published two books on the Eucharist and a number of articles on scriptural, canonical and theological topics, some of which were published in Australia and others overseas. And you thought I was just watching T.V. at nighttime!

Parish Life

I came to Gladesville in March 1975 as Assistant Priest to Fr Richard Bede Coughlan. When his health deteriorated the same year I became Administrator which role lasted till his death in July 1979. I applied for the parish and was inducted as Parish Priest on the feast of St Vincent de Paul in September by Cardinal James Freeman.

Pastoral life has always been a privilege and a joy. I have presided over many important moments in your lives, Baptisms, First Confessions and Communions, Confirmations, Anointing of the Sick, Weddings, Funerals, and anniversaries. Though sermons did not come easily I always tried to preach from the scriptural readings the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Though our community is multicultural, the Italians have had a special place because of the devotion to Our Lady of Terzito. We have also had regular Italian Masses on the first Sunday of the month and also on Tuesday mornings, which I enjoyed celebrating.

By contrast with the pastoral, the administrative side of parish life has not always been so joyful. However we have been blessed and the parish plant has been renovated and enlarged. The new school had been built in 1974 but the old one was derelict. Gradually we refurbished it and named it "The Father Gell Centre" after the builder of our church and original school, the Parish Priest of Ryde, Fr Edward Gell. We built the side porch and the Prayer Chapel onto the Church, rearranged our properties in Oxford St, buying, selling, demolishing and building. In 2000 we added three new classrooms to the school and refurbished the library and office areas. Some of this administration was "a pain in the neck" and I am grateful to those parishioners who advised and encouraged me during these exercises.

I have had occasional archdiocesan roles: I was chairman of the Commission for Ecumenism for several years and am still Spiritual Director of the St Thomas More Society. Our parish is a foundation member of the Gladesville-Hunters Hill Inter-Church Council of which I have been Chairman and held other roles on the executive. Ecumenism is a special interest. I am grateful to those of other churches for their friendship, prayers and collaboration.

A number of priests have lived at the presbytery with me over the years and I thank them for their support and friendship. There have also been Parish Associates, Sisters of various congregations, whose contribution to the spirit of the community has been great.

During my annual and extended holidays I have travelled a lot overseas and around Australia, sometimes on pilgrimages, sometimes to conferences on Thomas More- indeed I organised two TM events in Sydney, a Congress in 1978 and a Conference in 1992. After Christmas I would usually make an annual short visit to "The Sandon", a humble family shack up the North Coast where we had been going since childhood.

For recreation I enjoyed various sports: I played a lot of tennis and kept up an interest in cricket, rugby league, especially the Bulldogs. On Mondays I joined a group of priests at Bateau Bay, often enjoying a swim.

I thank and ask God's blessing on all who have supported me throughout my life, and especially during the last fifty years- my parents, family, colleagues in ministry and members of the lay faithful, especially presbytery staff, church workers, committees and liturgical ministers. School Principals and their staffs have always been loyal collaborators in the Lord's work. I apologise if I have omitted anyone!

I thank, as I did at my first Mass, God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for everything I have that is good and ask His pardon for my many failings.

History of Initiatives in our Parish

Among initiatives in Gladesville: acolytes, a number of Missions, mostly by Redemptorists, but also one by The Better World Movement, another by the Vincentians;

At one stage we had a large youth club with over 100 members. It was supervised by parents. We had several discos in the hall. It went for a couple of years but it was difficult to get parents to take on responsibility of supervising.

Instituting the Pastoral Council and its Committees, eg Liturgical Committee, Finance Committee; the Pastoral council went for many years.

"The Angelus" was revived under Santo Perrone and John Payne. It also went for many years and provides a ready source for the history of parish life.

Wider community: [Fr Byron] said prayers for opening of sessions of Ryde Council for many years (30?) by roster; foundation member of Inter Church Council of Gladesville-Hunters Hill; member of Ministers Fellowship; supporter of Ecumenical functions, eg World Day of Prayer, Men's Ecumenical Breakfast, Prayer Service or Prayer Meal in Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; participation in prayers at Anzac Day Service at Hunters Hill bringing in Pastoral Associates, Sisters from various Congregations, hosting various priests who had other jobs/studies but helped in the parish: Fr Jim Ware SM, Fr Ben Hensley OP, Fr Charles Rue SSC, Fr Francois Roesch, Fr Ed Kenny, Fr John Hampton; Fr James Thoppil from India, and others.

We had only one curate, Fr Vincent Riley for about a year.

Buildings: refurbishment of old school; building of side porch; side chapel, 3 new classrooms onto new school in 2000; demountable classrooms, several re-paintings of the church.

Purchase of four properties in Oxford St; sale of two properties, rearrangement of those in Oxford St by demolishing old houses and building duplex and re-positioning of lane so that there is access to land on Victoria Rd. Rent from duplex provides income for parish.

Licensing of part of Fr Gell Centre as pre-school kindergarten. Provides income for parish.

One 'Vocation' to religious life, Br Nick Harsas [ie in the last 32 years].

RCIA- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults- we had it for some years and received converts into the Church through it.

Celebration of anniversaries and jubilees of church, school (1925), parish (1946) and my priesthood (25th, 40th and now 50th) ordination 1957.

Collage of photos of Fr Byron's Jubilee celebrations



Holy Cross Hall Golden Jubilee Lunch







