

THE PARISH CHOIR

Anne Tracey

I arrived with my six children in the Parish in mid-1971; and with my parents moved to Bahrs Scrub in February 1972. I played the harmonium organ for Sunday Mass in old St. Patrick's. Fr. Grace commenced the Parish choir for the Easter ceremonies. We are still singing the Easter Vigil Psalm settings he introduced, which he had learnt at Banyo Seminary. The Choir went on to sing at midnight Mass and First Communion. Fr. Grace was instrumental in buying the Thomas electric organ, and moved the organ to the front of the church. When he was transferred at the end of 1976 I continued with the running of the choir. One of the highlights for the choir at that time was the St. Patrick's Centenary Mass (12 December 1975), and also the opening of St. John's Mass Centre at Woongoolba.

The next big event for the choir was the opening of the new St Patrick's Church, and the closing ceremonies for old St Patrick's (3 August 1980). At the solemn Blessing and Opening the choir sang: 'Behold Among Men the Dwelling Place of God', 'Isaiah 49', 'Psalm 89', 'Now Thank We All Our God'. For the first Mass: 'Glorious God', Kyrie Eleison, 'In Bread We Bring', Agnus Dei, 'One Bread One Body', and the usual Mass parts. At the Inauguration of Eucharist Chapel and turning on of red light, 'I Am the Bread of Life' was sung, and finally 'Let Trumpets Sound'.

During the time Fr O'Shea was parish priest, the Rite of Christian Initiation was introduced with its attendant ceremonies; the choir commenced singing at the monthly Baptismal ceremony, the Vigil service before Midnight Mass was introduced; Ecumenical events at Christmas and Lent/Easter took place; Brother Jeff, a Christian brother teaching at Trinity College, took his Final Vows at an evening Mass; and Fr O'Shea's installation Mass as Dean of Brisbane South (26 September 1984).

In 1985 Fr O'Shea celebrated his Silver Jubilee of Ordination. For this the choir learnt 'Tu Es Sacerdos', 'O Jesu Mi', and 'Veni Creator Spiritus', Catherine Erbacher playing violin. For Fr Ainslie's Golden Jubilee (21 October 1986), the choir was particularly busy learning Latin: 'Tu Es Sacerdos', 'Ave Verum Corpus', 'Pange Lingua', 'O Jesu Mi', the Kyrie, Sanctus and Agnus Dei'.

In mid-1989, I became ill and did not take an active role in the Parish life for a good number of years. During that time Doreen Cormack was co-ordinator of the choir. It was thanks to Doreen and the choir that the Stations of the Cross (tableau form) was started, and has continued as part of the Parish Good Friday observance.

When Doreen left the Parish, Fr Grundy asked me to continue the choir. As I was unable to both conduct and play the organ, Aileen Eley very generously agreed to be the accompanist. Besides Christmas and the Easter Triduum, the choir sang for the feasts of Pentecost, the Assumption, Christ the King, Confirmation and first Eucharist. The Parish started celebrating the parish patronal feast of St. Patrick with the choir singing at an evening Mass followed by a cuppa, and the Memorial Mass in November followed by morning tea. The choir was involved with the multicultural Mass, learning a Swedish and Lebanese hymn.

At the Blessing and opening of the Columbarium (2 November 2001) the choir had a major role in leading the hymn singing. The 50th Anniversary Mass (16 October 2005) at 1.30pm was another wonderful celebration, as was the 60th anniversary this St Patrick's evening.

Fr Grundy also started a men's choir for the 3pm Good Friday service, with Anne Erbacher on organ and daughter Catherine playing violin. The Deanery choral concerts commenced during the time that Fr Girvan was our parish priest. They were wonderful events in which our parish choir and 'Couples of Christ' contributed items. Also, the multicultural Mass became a joyous celebration of faith and togetherness, with the different parish choirs singing together for the Mass.

One other Parish choir memory; the Installation Mass for Fr. Kanatt. The choir learnt the Indian hymn 'Vava Yeshu Nadha' – our teachers had to be very patient!

So many wonderful memories; heart-warming events, and spiritual experiences. Participating in the choir, one has the opportunity to reflect on the different liturgies, really pray the words of the hymns and depth their meaning, whilst experiencing the companionship, laughter and solidarity of fellow Christians.



Parish Choir practise in early 2015
Back row: Theresa, Alan and Aileen our organist
Middle row: Louise and Jenn
Front row: Marleine, Anne, Elizabeth, Bridget and Betty