



CATHOLIC  
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BALLARAT

# Diocesan e-News

## MERBEIN CATHOLIC CHURCH CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, April 10, 2016, the Merbein Catholic Community celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening and blessing of our church, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart on April 8, 1956.



Over one hundred people, including past and present parishioners, attended the Sunday Mass celebrated by Fr Damian Styles. This was followed by a light lunch in the Parish School's multi-purpose room. The school's choir sang at the Mass and a verbal history of Merbein's Catholic Community and the building of the church was delivered by Bernadette Wells. A picture presentation and display in the multi-purpose room detailed the history of the church and parishioners from the 1920's, with the first church-school opening in 1927.

A few weeks before the celebration, a silver chalice, inscribed with the words "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Merbein 1920" was located in Bendigo at St Vinnie's and subsequently returned to us. With no local knowledge of this chalice, and being inscribed before the first church-school was opened in 1927, it is a complete mystery to us. Fittingly, it was used during the 60th anniversary Mass.

The new cream brick church, especially designed and sited for Sunraysia's climatic conditions, was built in 1956 by Mildura's S. J. Weir Pty Ltd and cost £16,400. Terry Lynch Snr was the construction manager and the architects were Russell and Yelland from Adelaide, who later also designed the Civic buildings in Mildura and numerous Adelaide buildings of note. In January 1965, the church community was raised to the level of a Parish, when Merbein and Werrimul were combined. A new presbytery was built and blessed in 1966.



Over the years, the Parish priests have included Frs JJ Russell, Des O'Hagen, William Dwyer, Dennis McCarthy, Frank Monaghan, Michael Linehan, Leo McCormick, Max Jongebloed, Peter Molenaar, Gerry Prunty and in 1996-1997, Administrator, Fr Paul Ryan.

Since 1997, we have been ministered by the Mildura priests. In 1999, Sr Marion McDonald (pictured left with Amos Jenkins) took on the role of Parish Leader and is largely responsible for the continuing operation of the parish and assisting to maintain our parish identity. Today, the Parish of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Merbein stands alone, as from April 2012, the Parish of Sacred Heart Mildura again assumed direct responsibility for Our Lady of Lourdes Werrimul and its parishioners.

*"The celebration was truly a tribute to all who worked tirelessly for the building, establishment and future of our church in Merbein. May we continue to be able custodians of the buildings and grow in faith".*

Bernadette Wells 2016