

One hundred and forty years of the Catholic faith was commemorated on the Feast of Christ the King in the Parish of Ss Michael and John's, Horsham. Celebrations began with Mass followed by a dinner in the newly built Coughlin Park Community Centre with over eighty people in attendance. The tables were decorated with placemats that showed the history of the Parish in pictures and these were a memento.



### A brief history of the Parish

<b>1857</b>	First Mass in the new village of Horsham was celebrated at the home of Michael Healy by Fr Patrick Madden from Ballarat. Eighteen children baptized
<b>1876</b>	Horsham became a Parish with the appointment of Fr John Doyle O'Sullivan the first Parish Priest, until 1878
<b>1878</b>	New Parish Priest, Fr James O'Farrell built the first Presbytery, a four room brick building facing Splatt St (original name for Roberts Avenue)
<b>1879</b>	Bishop O'Connor opened and dedicated the first church to St Michael and St John, a wooden building facing west to McPherson Street. The first Catholic School opened in the Temperance Hall next door (now the car park off Roberts Avenue) before transferring to the rear of the new wooden Church, then to a new wooden school room built by Fr Joseph O'Brien.
<b>1881</b>	St Mary's Church, Murtoa, opened by Dean Moore VG, on June 10.
<b>1889</b>	St John's Church, Natimuk, was opened by Fr J Hogan, September 15.
<b>1906</b>	St Joseph's Church, Dimboola, opened by Bishop Higgins on October 29.
<b>1912</b>	St John the Baptist Church, Rupanyup, opened by Bishop Higgins, April 21.
<b>1913</b>	On December 14, Bishop Higgins of Ballarat opened the new red brick Church facing Roberts Avenue, the Parish Priest was Fr Michael Meade. The Co-Adjutor Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Daniel Mannix, was the special guest and preached a long and learned discourse on the "True Church". The 1879 Church then became the school, being turned on its axis to face McLachlan St.
<b>1919</b>	On September 14 the foundation stone of the Convent was laid by the Bishop of Ballarat, Dr Foley. Following the arrival of five Brigidine Sisters in April 1920, the first Mass was celebrated in the Convent Chapel on 12th April. The first day pupils and boarders arrived. Called St. Brigid's Convent.
<b>1937</b>	The brick building of four class rooms on the corner of Roberts Avenue and McPherson Street for St Michael and St John's Primary School, was opened by Bishop Foley on February 29.
<b>1963</b>	Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School Murtoa opened
<b>1968</b>	St Brigid's Secondary College in Robinson Street, on land purchased by the late Fr. John Coughlin, was officially opened on December 3.
<b>1987</b>	On May 10 the new Church of St Michael and St John on the corner of McLachlan and Urquhart Streets, was blessed. The 1913 Red Brick Church was used by the primary school until it demolished in 1997.
<b>1995</b>	The Parish Centre, incorporating hall, meeting room and Pastoral Associates office was built on the site of the old church.
<b>2000</b>	The 1878 Presbytery was demolished to make way for a new home for the Priests. The Parish Centre was extended to incorporate the parish offices. Opened and blessed by Bishop Connors on October 1.
<b>2010</b>	Ss Michael and John Primary School was re-opened on its new site.
<b>2011</b>	The Convent was demolished
<b>2012</b>	St John Baptist Church, Rupanyup, decommissioned by Bishop Paul Bird.
<b>2015</b>	Coughlin Park Clubrooms demolished
<b>2016</b>	New Coughlin Park Community Centre was opened on June 25.



### Cake Cutting

A commemorative cake was made by parishioner Betty Russell. The cake marvelled people as it was a replica of the first church built, complete with horses at the back and birds on the roof, but when it came time to cut the cake that was removed and underneath was the cake that commemorated the achievement of our Parish. Betty has worked on this masterpiece for months. The cake was cut by the oldest person, Viv McGennissen (96) and the youngest person, Archie Elliott (pictured below).

It was a lovely celebration of thanksgiving to God for the faith and witness of parishioners over these one hundred and forty years.

Anita Masiero – Parish Secretary

