

# Mass of Thanksgiving



## 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST MASS IN THE MACARTHUR

10am 28 August 2022

Bishop Brian Mascord

Fr John Ho

Fr Richard Healey

Fr Feleki Tautunu (*by desire*)

# 200 years of Catholic Life at St John's

*St John the Evangelist Parish, Campbelltown,  
in 2022 celebrates the 200th anniversary of its first Mass.  
Historian **Jeff McGill** paints a brief portrait of those two centuries.*



*The original St John's on the hill (above); St John's before the 1960s extensions (below).*



## The first Mass: Sunday 1 September 1822

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“Wintry, wet, and stormy” is how early Campbelltown historian J.P. McGuanne described the first day of spring in 1822. That was bad news for Father John Joseph Therry, who’d arrived in Campbelltown to celebrate its first Mass in the open air of the village green.

Merely a town in name, Campbelltown was just a few tiny bark huts. It was only six years after the infamous Appin Massacre of 1816 had wiped out Indigenous resistance, and four years before Fred Fisher would go missing (with reported sightings of his ghost) in 1826. Many of the small farmers were Irish Catholic ex-convicts, but they had no place of worship. So the spreading branches of gumtrees on the green – present-day Mawson Park – was all they had as a rainstorm poured down on Fr Therry’s words. So, the pioneer priest led his flock to the nearest building – the unfinished Anglican church. It was without a floor or windows, but it had a roof, so... in they went. That created the historic quirk that the first religious service held in St Peter’s Anglican Church was a Catholic Mass!

The Anglican rector, Thomas Reddall, was not happy about this trespass, or “desecration” by Fr Therry but the unrepentant Irishman insisted his action had merely bestowed honour on St Peter’s: “I took the liberty in question, anticipating your consent, when my dilemma was explained.” The matter went no further... and an unlikely friendship might have even bloomed between the two Christian clergymen. Reddall would later make a donation towards Therry’s appeal for his church building fund.

The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* describes Therry as an “articulate” Celt whose influence was as impressive among Protestants, as it was among Catholics. “He also early formed a lasting interest in the Aborigines, who became very attached to him,” it added. Fr Therry also had great sympathy for his countrymen in convict chains and was known to carry small change and tobacco to share with road gangs he passed.

The priest spent many hours on horseback. The *Catholic Press* on 1 May 1897 would feature the childhood memories of William Byrne, who noted:

“Well do I remember my parents relating how Fr Therry used to celebrate Mass at St Mary’s in the early morning, and then getting on his horse to gallop to Campbelltown, a distance of 35 miles [56km], to say Mass at my grandfather’s house, returning to Sydney the same day, perhaps visiting Liverpool and Parramatta on his way.”

## The original St John’s

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The Catholics of Campbelltown continued without a church for some years, Fr Therry jumping out of his saddle to hold Mass in the green, or in a hut, or “in the Courthouse-room above the noise and stench of crowded criminal cells.” There was also no local burial ground either, the Catholic dead being buried in establishment Anglican plots.

All that began to change when the son of a convict, James Burke (Bourke), made a donation. On 16 June 1825, Fr Therry offered him public thanks in the *Sydney Gazette*, “for his offer of five acres of cleared and valuable land” on the hilltop overlooking Campbelltown (at the corner of Broughton and George Streets). The foundation stone of St John the Evangelist Church was laid on 12 December 1824, with William Bradbury supplying the material.

Fr Therry planned a grand structure, a many-windowed church capable of holding 400 people. The land was consecrated 27 December 1826.

But no real progress happened for years. There was little money to spare among the battling Irish families of Campbelltown, and Fr Therry was half shepherd and half wolf as he pressured people for donations. “Were you ever stuck up yourself, Father?” came one reply.

A public meeting at Campbelltown’s Forbes Hotel in 1833 petitioned the Governor to match the funds raised by the community. He did. The subscription list of 1833 is a who’s who of our Catholic pioneers, names such as Burke/Bourke, Byrne, Vardy, Hurley, Keighran, Bradbury, Scarr, Rose, Meehan, and Rudd.

As the walls went up, Fr Therry offered the first Mass at St John's on 27 July 1834. In 1835, Fr Therry made Campbelltown his home as its first parish priest, residing in a rented "Chapel House" in Cordeaux Street.

The hilltop cemetery got its most famous burial in 1837 when James Ruse – Australia's first farmer – died. His headstone noted he "sow'd the first grain".

By 1838, St John's Church had a roof, and the rising building could be seen from the main street, but that same year Fr Therry was sent by Archbishop Polding to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).

Campbelltown's new parish priest was Fr James Alipius Goold (*or Gould*), who saw the opening of the first proper Catholic schoolhouse in 1840. Erected on land donated by Bradbury's daughter, Mary Sheil, its cornerstone was blessed on St Patrick's Day, so it became known as St Patrick's School. The building still stands as *Quondong*, the Campbelltown Visitor Information Centre.

St John's Church on the hilltop was finished shortly afterwards, a bold stone structure with two rows of windows, the larger over the smaller, which gave the idea of the church having two floors. (Fr Therry had a great weakness for what he called "opes" – openings, without any consideration for the intense heat and glare of summer light.)

The *Australian Chronicle* reported that on 31 August 1841 the Church of St John the Evangelist was officially opened with a Solemn High Mass by Fr Murphy, the Vicar-General of NSW. "The church is situated upon a beautiful eminence, commanding a view of the town and the surrounding district," the newspaper reported.

## Building a second St John's

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That commanding view, it must be noted, took a fair bit of time and sweat for parishioners to reach without a horse or buggy. So Fr Gould held many of his Masses at his presbytery in Cordeaux Street, a portion of which was fitted out as a worship hall. This policy was also adopted by his successors, Fr John Paul Roche, Monsignor John Lynch and Fr Augustus Petre. The hilltop church looked like an expensive white elephant.

*Sydney Mail*, 27 October 1883, noted that reality:

“The presbytery or parsonage is situated at the foot of the hill... [and] apart from the exertion necessary to reach the church, there was little occasion to use the larger building. In referring to the selection of such an inconvenient position for a church, not only on the ground of inaccessibility, but also from its exposed character.”

The idea of building a better-sited church, next to the presbytery, was obviously in play as early as the 1840s as the church began buying land along Cordeaux and Lindsay Streets.

When Fr James Dunne arrived as the new parish priest in 1886 he bit the bullet and started work on a more practical building. In March 1886 he signed a contract for the erection of a new St John's in Cordeaux Street for a sum of £1686. Its Gothic architecture was very different from the hilltop church, set off by an elaborate stained glass circular window framed in dressed stone above the main entrance. This new building was in use by December, but officially blessed and opened by Cardinal Moran on 22 May 1887.

Worshippers were sentimental about having to say goodbye to the old church off Broughton Street, but older folk “will gladly accept the boon of being able to worship without having to climb the steep hill,” the *Campbelltown Herald* noted.

## Sisters and Brothers

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“Old St John’s” was renamed St Patrick’s Convent in 1888 and handed to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. They turned it into a Catholic secondary school for girls – St Patrick’s College – and it remained at that site until 1970 when it transferred to the Westview site on a nearby hilltop that had previously been St John’s Preparatory School for Boys. (This is why the road outside today’s St Patrick’s College is called St John’s Road).

The Sisters, in the 1880s, also took over St Patrick’s Primary School but it ceased to exist when a new St John the Evangelist Primary School opened off Lindesay Street, next to the church, in 1914.

The Marist Brothers arrived in Campbelltown in 1926 and converted the old Badgally homestead into a secondary school for boys called St Gregory’s College. In the 1930s, the Rudd family estate off Narellan Road – Maryfields – was donated by Sarah Mary Keane to the Franciscan Friars. A large brick novitiate was erected in 1955; the Poor Clare Nuns arrived in the 1960s.

These religious orders remain a vital part of the story of St John’s Parish.

## A world moving on

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Fr Dunne, who erected the new St John’s in 1887, remained as the beloved parish priest of Campbelltown until his death in 1931. His successor, Fr Arthur McHugh, remained until 1954. That was the year Campbelltown became part of the newly created Wollongong Diocese (1951).

It was during Fr Tom Grant’s time as parish priest, that brick extensions to the church were made, and in 1964 a group of parents working as volunteer labourers and building classrooms at a cash-strapped St John’s Primary School came up with the idea of creating a local social club, with the profits helping to fund Catholic education. Campbelltown Catholic Club opened its doors in December 1968.

As we look back on 200 years, most of the old landmarks in this story still exist. The green where Fr Therry preached his first Mass (Mawson Park) still survives, as does St Peter’s Church. The first Catholic Church on the

hilltop was restored in the 1980s, and the second Catholic Church dating to the 1880s is still a beating heart of parish life.

The generations of parishioners who have come and gone are not as immediately visible to us – dust to dust, ashes to ashes – but their spirit *does* live on today. As St Paul notes, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (*I Corinthians* 3:16)

Architecture and historic dates are important, but it is the spirit, faith, families, community work and humanity of St John’s Parish that truly makes 200 years of Catholic life worth celebrating.

## Pastors of St John’s

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### *Archdiocese of Sydney*

*(Erected in 1834 as the Vicariate Apostolic of New Holland and Van Diemen’s Land; became the Diocese of Sydney on 5 April 1842, and the Archdiocese of Sydney two weeks later on 22 April 1842.)*

- 1835 – 1838    Fr John J Therry – *Parish Priest*
- 1838 – 1848    Fr James A Goold – *Parish Priest, then Archbishop of Melbourne*
- 1850 – 1877    Fr John P Roche – *Parish Priest*
- 1878 – 1883    Mgr John P Lynch – *Parish Priest*
- 1884 – 1885    Fr Augustus W Petre – *Parish Priest*
- 1886 – 1933    Fr James Dunne – *Parish Priest*
- 1933 – 1954    Fr Arthur McHugh – *Parish Priest*

### *Diocese of Wollongong*

*(Erected 15 November 1951; extended to include the Macarthur in 1954)*

- 1954 – 1955    Fr Thomas Vaughan – *Administrator*
- 1955 – 1957    Fr Isadore Ekerick – *Administrator*
- 1957 – 1974    Fr Thomas Grant – *Administrator*
- 1974 – 1978    Fr Peter Lewis Comensoli – *Administrator*



1978 – 1985	Fr Paul Ryan – <i>Parish Priest, later Monsignor</i>
1985 – 1997	Fr Bryan Jones – <i>Parish Priest, later Monsignor</i>
1997 – 2017	Fr Michael Healy – <i>Parish Priest</i>
2017 – now	Fr John Ho – <i>Parish Priest</i>

## Parishes in our diocese created from Campbelltown

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The original territory of St John's Parish was not clearly defined. The pastoral care extended across the whole of the Illawarra to the south coast, and the southern highlands through to Goulburn and Yass. The dates that 'daughter' and subsequent 'grand-daughter' parishes were created from the original territory of the parish are:

<b>1838</b>	<b>Wollongong</b> (St Francis Xavier)
1852	Kiama (Ss Peter & Paul)
1867	Albion Park (St Paul)
1886	Bulli (St Joseph)
1890	Milton (St Mary's, Star of the Sea)
<b>1847</b>	<b>Picton</b> (St Anthony)
<b>1859</b>	<b>Camden</b> (St Paul)
1965	The Oaks (St Aloysius)
2015	Oran Park (St Mary MacKillop)
1889	Moss Vale (St Paul)
1917	Mittagong (St Michael)
1948	Bowral (St Thomas Aquinas)
<b>1968</b>	<b>Ingleburn</b> (Holy Family)
1977	Macquarie Fields (Mary, Mother of the Church)
1980	Varroville (Our Lady of Mount Carmel)
<b>1984</b>	<b>Ruse</b> (St Thomas More)
<b>1991</b>	<b>Eagle Vale</b> (Mary Immaculate)
<b>1994</b>	<b>Rosemeadow</b> (Our Lady, Help of Christians) ( <i>includes St Bede's, Appin, built 1837</i> )

# Celebration of the Eucharist

- Welcome to all (Mary-Ellen Bland)
- Welcome to Country (Uncle Ivan)

## **Entrance Hymn – Gathered As One**

*Deanna Light & Paul A. Tate. © 1997, World Library Publications. Used with permission One License A-705725*

Many faces, the young and the old, Gathered as one in our God!  
Throughout history the story's retold, Gathered as one in our God!

[Bridge] Like those come before us We listen and learn,  
We remember the promise and await your return.  
So, without hesitation a new generation  
Proclaims the salvation of God!

[Chorus] Gathered as one, with Jesus your Son,  
Lifting our voices in praise,  
We know and believe and long to receive  
The bread that is strength for our days,  
Gathered as one!

Many pilgrims, sharing at feast, Gathered as one in our God!	Many voices, raised up in song, Gathered as one in our God!
All are welcome, the greatest and least, Gathered as one in our God!	In one family where all can belong, Gathered as one in our God!
[Bridge] [Chorus]	[Bridge] [Chorus]

## **Penitential Act**

### **Gloria**

*(Refrain)* **Glory to God in the highest,  
Glory to God in the highest,  
Glory to God, glory to God,  
and on earth peace to people of goodwill.**

## Collect (*Opening Prayer*)

### Liturgy of the Word

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**First Reading** † *Sirach 3:17-20.28-29*

**Responsorial** † *Psalms 67:4-7.10-11*

**God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor. (*Refrain sung*)**

**Second Reading** † *Hebrews 12:18-19.22-24*

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Gospel** † *Luke 14:1.7-14*

**Homily** - Bishop Brian Mascord

### Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
*who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,*  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father  
almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

### The Universal Prayer (*Shared in multiple languages*)

1. [*St John's students*] For our leaders in the church, that they may have the minds of holy sages and an attentive ear for divine wisdom.  
[*pause*] Let us pray to the Lord.                      **Response: Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. [*Philippines*] We give thanks for the faithfulness of God in continuing to call his people across the ages, and the many pioneers in faith who tirelessly built the community of St Johns.  
[*pause*] Let us pray to the Lord.
3. [*Tonga*] For the grace of humility, that we may find favour with God, exalted by His right hand because we have humbled ourselves in His presence. [*pause*] Let us pray to the Lord.

4. [*South Africa*] That the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and the vulnerable may be welcome at the table of earth's plenty by the rich and the powerful of the world. [*pause*] Let us pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord, hear our prayer.*
5. [*Samoa*] That as we unite with the angels in their festival gathering under the sprinkled blood of the Saviour, we may joyfully invite others to this saving banquet. [*pause*] Let us pray to the Lord.
6. [*India*] For those who are sitting in the lowest place at life's feast: the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the abandoned, that they may hear the invitation in divine love to move up higher, as they are healed and restored. [*pause*] Let us pray to the Lord.
7. [*Lebanon*] For all who have died in our parish during the last 200 years – especially those who have died as a result of violence and abuse – that they may find a home in the city of the living God, among the spirits of the just made perfect. [*pause*] Let us pray to the Lord.

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

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### **Presentation of Gifts – We come to your feast**

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*We place upon your table a gleaming cloth of white,  
The weaving of our stories, the fabric of our lives,  
The dreams of those before us, the ancient hopeful cries,  
The promise of our future, our needing, and our nurture; lie here before our eyes.*

(Refrain) **We come to your feast, we come to your feast,  
The young and the old, the frightened, the bold,  
The greatest and the least.  
We come to your feast, we come to your feast.  
With the fruit of our lands and the work of our hands  
We come to your feast.**

*We gather 'round your table, we pause within our quest.  
We stand beside our neighbours, we name the stranger guest.  
The feast is spread before us, you bid us come and dine.  
In blessing, we'll uncover, in sharing, we'll discover  
Your substance and your sign. (Refrain)*

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice...

**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands  
for the praise and glory of his name,  
for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

- Prayer over the Offerings
- Common Preface IV & Eucharistic Prayer III

**Glendalough Mass – Holy, Holy, Holy** (*sung*)

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, Lord God of hosts.**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

The mystery of faith: (*sung*)

**Save us, Saviour of the world, Save us, Saviour of the world.  
for by your Cross and Resurrection,  
you have set us free, you have set us free.**

*After the Doxology, the people acclaim:*

**Amen. Amen. Amen.** (*sung*)

**The Communion Rite – The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,**

**thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

## **Glendalough Mass – Lamb of God**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.**

*Sign of peace*

## **Communion Songs**

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### **One Bread, One Body**

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*(Refrain)*    **One bread, one body, one Lord of all.  
One cup of blessing which we bless,  
And we, though many, throughout the Earth,  
We are one body in this one Lord.**

- Gentile or Jew, servant or free,  
Woman or man, no more. *(Refrain)*
- Many the gifts, many the works,  
One in the Lord of all. *(Refrain)*
- Grain from the fields, scattered and grown,  
Gathered to one, for all. *(Refrain)*

### **Bread of Life**

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Bread of Life, *our consolation.*

Word of God, *O light eternal.*

Bread of Life, *our source of hope.*

Word of God, *foundation strong.*

Bread of Life, *our strength & courage.*

Word of God, *resound within us.*

Bread of Life, *come make us one.*

Word of God, *forevermore.*

Lamb of God, *for all you suffered.*

Bread of Life, *our consolation.*

Lamb of God, *you died and rose.*

Bread of Life, *our source of hope.*

Lamb of God, *you'll come in glory.*

Bread of Life, *our strength & courage.*

Lamb of God, *to lead us home.*

Bread of Life, *come make us one.*

## Hymn of Praise – You Are Mine

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I will come to you in the silence,                      I am hope for all who are hopeless,  
I will lift you from all your fear.                      I am eyes for all who long to see.  
You will hear My voice,  
I claim you as My choice,  
Be still, and know I am near.                      I will be your light,  
Come and rest in Me.

*(Refrain)*      **Do not be afraid, I am with you.**  
                  **I have called you each by name.**  
                  **Come and follow Me,**  
                  **I will bring you home,**  
                  **I love you and you are mine.**

I am strength for all the despairing.  
Healing for the ones who dwell in shame.  
All the blind will see, the lame will all run free  
And all will know My name. *(Refrain)*

I am the Word that leads all to freedom.  
I am the peace the world cannot give.  
I will call your name, embracing all your pain  
Stand up, now, walk, and live. *(Refrain)*

## Concluding Rites

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### **Blessing – St John's Students (Call and Response)**

### **Prayer after Communion**

### **Notices, Thanks, and invitation to lunch**

- Mary-Ellen Bland

# Recessional Song

## Send down the fire

*Marty Haugen © 1989, 1990, GIA Publications, Inc. Used with permission One License A-705725*

*(Refrain)* **Send down the fire of your justice,  
Send down the rains of your love;  
Come, send down the Spirit, breathe life in your people,  
and we shall be people of God.**

Call us to be your compassion, Teach us the song of your love;  
Give us hearts that sing, Give us deeds that ring,  
Make us ring with the song of your love. *(Refrain)*

Call us to learn of your mercy, Teach us the way of your peace;  
Give us hearts that feel, Give us hands that heal,  
Make us walk in the way of your peace. *(Refrain)*

Call us to answer oppression, Teach us the fire of your truth;  
Give us righteous souls, 'Til your justice rolls,  
make us burn with the fire of your truth. *(Refrain)*

Call us to witness your Kingdom, Give us the presence of Christ;  
May your holy light – Keep us shining bright,  
Ever shine with the presence of Christ. *(Refrain)*

***Please join the community for a shared multicultural lunch and entertainment  
in the grounds of the school, the Parish Hall, and the lower carpark.  
Browse the parish ministry showcase.***



**St John**  
the Evangelist  
CATHOLIC PARISH CAMPBELLTOWN