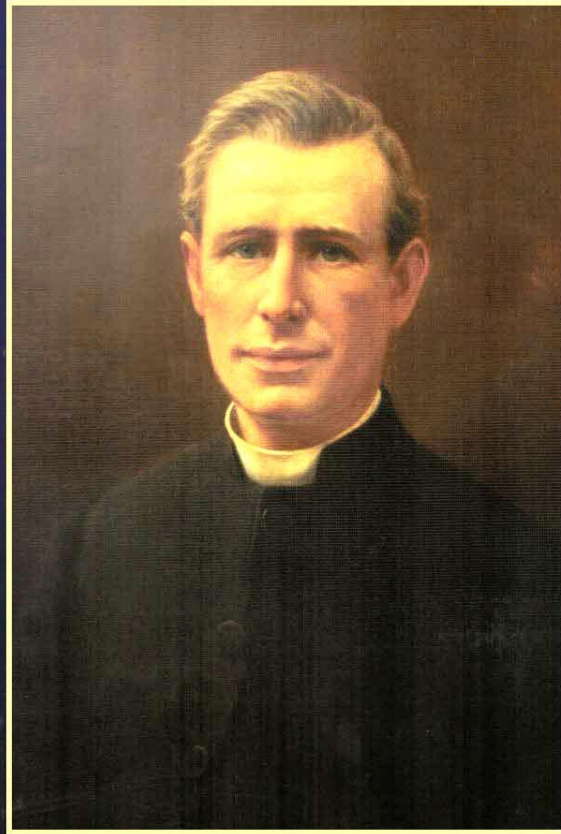


# 100 Years of Parish History

*written to celebrate the Centenary of the Parish in December 2009*



Fr. William Bendon, the first Parish Priest (1909-1920)

## St. Edward the Confessor Parish

*Golders Green, London N.W.11*

# **100 Years of Parish History**

*written to celebrate the Centenary of the Parish in December 2009*

## **St. Edward the Confessor Parish**

*Golders Green London N.W.11*

By

Joan and Martin How

The Authors and Parish do not wish to claim copyright to this publication,  
but hope that if anyone wishes to make use of any of the material which it  
contains, due acknowledgement will be given to the  
Parish of St Edward the Confessor Golders Green

Editorial Team

Researched and written by Joan and Martin How  
Edited by Diana Klein

Photographs by  
Cesar Rodriguez - Duran  
and many others have been donated

Cover picture – taken from a portrait which hangs in the Presbytery.

## CONTENTS

Photographs of the Church	page 4
Forward	page 5
Early history..(Fr Bendon)	pages 6-14
1922-43 (Canon Simms)	pages 15-18
1943 -60 ( Canon Thornton)	pages 19-25
1961-76 ( Fr de Felice)	pages 25-27
1976-84 (Fr Morley)	pages 28-29
1984- 2009 (Fr Helm)	pages 29-32
Conclusion	page 33-34
Photographs of Stained Glass Windows	page 35
ANNEX 1 Clergy of the Parish	page 36
ANNEX 2 Catechetics	page 37-41
ANNEX 3 Comboni Missionaries	pages 42-44
ANNEX 4 Vocations to the Priesthood	pages 45-47
ANNEX 5 St Edward the Confessor	pages 48-50
ANNEX 6 Sermon by Mgr Ronald Knox	page 51
ANNEX 7 List of contributors	page 52



*The church shortly after its completion (c 1918)*



*The church today*

## FORWARD

One of the fascinating things I have always found in visiting old churches has been the scope and breadth of their archives, tucked away in dusty cupboards. The musty volumes of records of baptisms, confirmations and marriages can give a wonderful picture of the vitality of the parish community down the ages. In visiting these churches it is always a delight to delve into their archives and registers and disclose the '*flesh and bones*' that make up the community. Dusty records can deliver some interesting aspects of a community.

I thank Joan and Martin How, the authors of this account of St Edward's over the past 100 years. It has taken a lot of hard work and effort on their part over many months to record and collate all the memories of the tapestry woven into parish life. In reading it we are saved from getting dusty with old record books as we look at the priests, people and personalities that make up the history of our community over its 100 years of growth. This is not an exhaustive account of parish life at St Edward's over the past 100 years, although it gives a good picture of the foundation of the Parish in 1909 with around 40 parishioners, coinciding with the development of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, and its growth to a diverse community of around 900 today from numerous and ethnic backgrounds. Enjoy the record, learn from it and be encouraged, especially if you or your family are of its life blood.

Many have contributed in so many ways to the continued growth of the parish over the past century and in particular we owe a great debt of gratitude for the devoted service of Fr Bendon and the early parishioners for all their efforts in establishing the Parish and laying the foundations of the very beautiful church we have today. In this account we have only really a few memories from past parishioners handed down to us. So much yet remains to be written. Remember that these memories are always being added to by your own and your family's involvement in the parish at the present time. Be involved in the parish life and keep a record of your participation so that future parishioners can share and treasure your legacy.

Lastly, thanks again to the authors for all their hard work in producing this Centenary History of our Parish. And reader, what goes into the next Centenary History of the Parish is up to you. It will be your history recorded.

May God bless you and us in its making

Fr John Helm

Fr John Helm  
Parish Priest, St Edward the Confessor  
Pentecost 2010

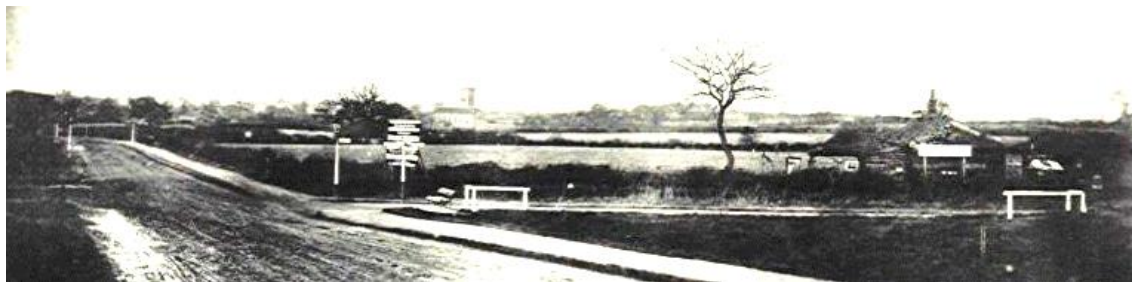




## The Early History

In tracing the "life and times" of St Edward's Parish, we start with a look at the "prehistory" of the Church in this country from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1780, there were only 60,000 Catholics in England. Several factors contributed to a recovery of Catholicism. They included a gradual removal of penalties for practising Catholics, and the opening up to them of learned professions. At that time, there was an influx of thousands of Catholic refugees from the French Revolution and of many skilled workers from Ireland to the industrial North of England – and there was the Oxford Movement led by John Keeble and John Henry Newman. (Newman was later received into the Catholic Church and became Cardinal Newman and will be beatified later in 2010.) When the English Hierarchy was restored in 1850, the Catholic population had risen to 750,000.

With the election of Leo XIII as Pope in 1878, a new era in the Church's history began. The Pope was very learned; he had made a thorough study of the times and encouraged Catholics to enter public life and to influence social issues. With the introduction of further measures, such as permitting more frequent Communion, the spiritual life of Catholics in England received a most welcome stimulus.



*Golders Green circa 1904*

In the early twentieth century, Henrietta Barnett, founder of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, feared that the building of the Hampstead Tube Station threatened ruin of the sylvan restfulness of that portion of the most beautiful open space near London. The idea of the Garden Suburb grew out of the Heath Extension, for which the money was raised and the land handed over to the London County Council to be dedicated to the public as an open space for ever.



*Dame Henrietta*

In 1905, Henrietta Barnett, a visionary philanthropist, outlined her plans for a Garden Suburb with the highest ideals for a social experiment providing for people of all classes a beautiful and healthy place to live in. With the help of influential friends, she formed a company a year later for that purpose; the principal architects for the project were Sir Raymond Unwin and Sir Edwin Lutyens. One of the broad outlines of the scheme was that noise should be avoided,

even to the prohibition of Church or Chapel or Institute bells. This explains why, as we are on the borders of the Suburb, St Edward's has a Tower, but no bell!

## **The beginnings of the parish**

This brings us to July 1908 when Fr William Bendon (born in Glamorgan and aged 36) arrived at the small suburb in London called Golders Green. There were watercress beds at Henley's corner and a few shops in Temple Fortune and trams passed the site of the present church between North Finchley and Golders Green.

The arrival of Fr Bendon in Golders Green coincided with the development of the Hampstead Garden Suburb which was to be part of the parish.



*The Carmelite Monastery*

Fr Bendon resided at Herriot House, Golders Green Road and was Chaplain to the Carmelite sisters who had moved from Isleworth in 1907. The Chapel in their Monastery in Bridge Lane was used as a Mass centre by local Catholics since the nearest Catholic Church was St Mary's East Finchley. (The parish of St Philip's at Finchley was not founded until 1919.) The Carmelite Monastery continued as a great powerhouse of prayer in the parish for a hundred years until falling vocations and increased running costs forced a decision to close the Monastery and to transfer the remaining sisters to Preston in 2007.

The site for the new "Mission" (which is what the parish was originally called) had already been acquired in July 1909 and on September 8th, Our Lady's birthday, the first sod of turf was cut and the building of the presbytery commenced in Finchley Road on the borders of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. Next to the site was the Express Dairy with horses to draw the milk floats and three arches of the stables can still be seen from the main road as part of a building which now houses an Estate Agents. Former parishioner Bruce Kent and parishioner Dr Kate Charles both remember the sight and smell of the horses even in the early 1950's.

The new parish was dedicated to St Edward the Confessor because the land on which the new church was to rise was given by St Edward to the Benedictines for religious purposes when it was part of the parish of Hendon.

The mission was opened on Christmas Day 1909 when two Masses were said in the presbytery by Father Bendon, the first parish priest, in what is now Fr Helm's office and dining room (originally one big room) with 40 people present. Mass was said on each Sunday at 8:00 am and 10:00 am after that Christmas morning and Fr Bendon moved into the new house on January 22nd 1910.



*“The Universe” of the day describes the scene on  
13 October 1910 as follows:*

*"Few outlying missions in the north of London are more interesting than that now in course of development at Golders Green where Father Bendon is so successfully and zealously fostering the ultimate establishment of a thriving Catholic Church in a neighbourhood that hitherto has been destitute of Catholic privileges. At present, the services are carried out in a room adjoining the modest Presbytery in Finchley Road, and here it was that last week, the feast of St Edward the Confessor, the patron Saint of the new church, was solemnised. The tiny sanctuary hardly lends itself to big functions, yet it is beautifully kept and was most exquisitely decorated for the occasion, and the High Mass on Thursday was faithfully and reverently performed in spite of the many drawbacks imposed by lack of space".*

One of the first parishioners to assist Fr Bendon was Mr Caraman, a dried fruit merchant who had 9 children. Two of his sons, became Jesuits and two daughters became nuns.

La Sagesse Convent School in Golders Green Road, originated in classes held by the Daughters of Wisdom at Woodstock House, soon after their move there in 1909. Later they opened an independent day and boarding school for girls of all ages, extending the premises in 1926-7 and 1932. The 1950s and 60s saw an increase in both local Catholic and state school building at both primary and secondary levels; this resulted in a falling need for the independent school and it closed; but from 1965, the school catered for slow learners. There were 86 on the roll in 1969 but a fall in vocations meant that the sisters could no longer continue this work and the site was sold for a Jewish Day Centre.

### **St Edward's Hall**



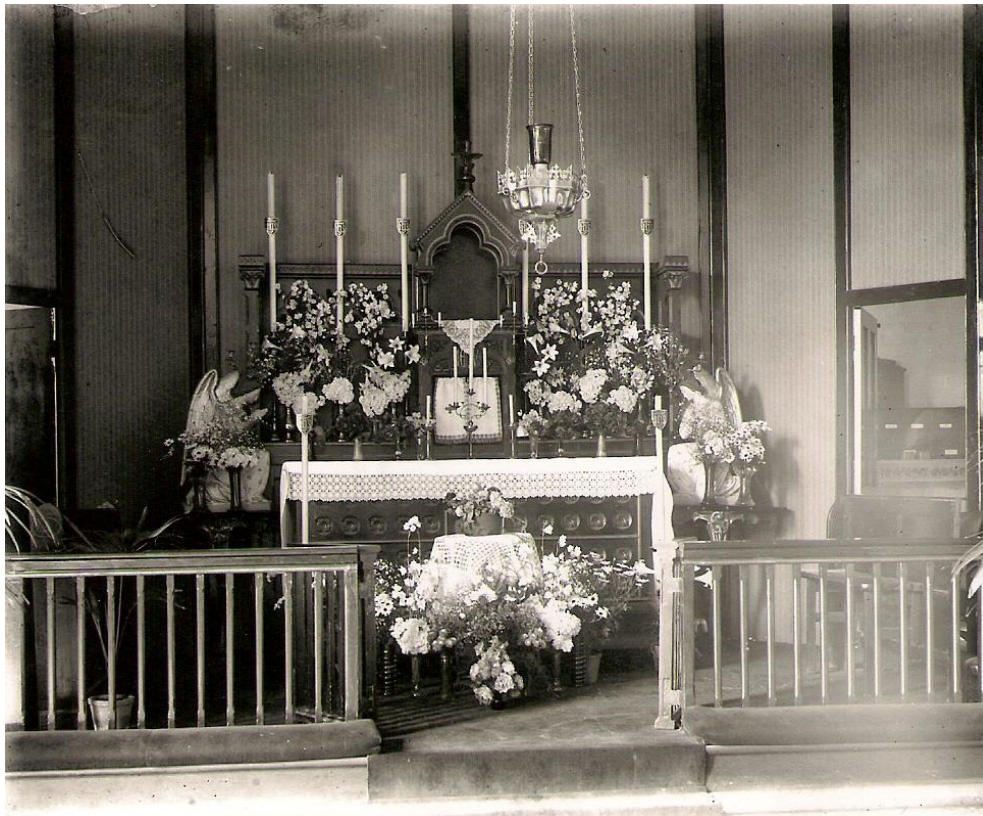
It was soon evident that the temporary chapel was too small; many of those in the congregation heard Mass, weather permitting, on the grass outside the presbytery, or even by kneeling on the stairs leading up to the first floor of the house.

A larger building was soon decided upon, and St Edward's Hall was

*The Hall as the temporary church (1911)*

built in 1911 to accommodate 300 people at a cost of £1,000. The building was opened as the second chapel on Whit-Sunday, June 4th 1911 and used as the temporary church until the present church was completed. The sanctuary was where the club room is now, with the sacristy at the side, and the choir were at the back of the hall where the present stage is located. The entrance was from Hoop Lane. The times of the Masses on Sundays were 8.00 am, 10.00 am and 11.00 am with Benediction at 5.00 pm. An extra Mass had to be said on a Sunday to accommodate the growing number of Catholics who had arrived with the development of the Suburb.

The late Evelyn Dixon (née Brine) recalled some time ago how she loved St. Edward's; she told us how she remembers driving up to the church in a horse drawn cab listening to the clip clop of horses hooves for her First Communion. She remembered the first parishioners in particular Inspector Brand of Golders Green Police and his family and the Reany family from Finchley whose two sons, Edward and William, became priests.



*The Sanctuary in the Temporary Church (1912)*

The 1911 Census recorded the following people being resident at the "Catholic Church" Golders Green:-

Fr William Bendon	- Head of Household	- Priest	- born in Glamorgan
Fr Francis Clime	- Assistant	- Priest	- born in Bristol
Fr Georges Toinard	- Boarder (visitor)	- Priest	- born in France
Annie Downey	- Servant	- Housekeeper	- born in Ballinascera
Mary Downey	- Servant	- Housemaid	- born in Ballinascera

### **The building of the new church**

The mission was fortunate in having a very small debt, only £395 left on the hall representing its liabilities after a floral bazaar held in the previous May. When this debt was cleared in November 1912, Fr Bendon promised to start the new church as soon as the sum of £2,000 was in the Bank. This was achieved towards the end of 1913, and Fr Bendon, who had been occupied for three years on the plans, commenced the new church on March 25th 1914, the Feast of the Annunciation. His Eminence Cardinal Bourne laid the foundation stone, which is situated on the left hand side of the sanctuary at the east end of the Church.

The First World War was declared on August 4th 1914, and the building was carried on under the greatest difficulties and with unavoidable delays. Nothing but the goodwill and courage of the contractors, urged on by Fr Bendon, enabled its completion. With so many young men called to serve in the First World War, the building was completed by an older generation of builders using only scaffold and ladders. Building materials were taken to the site by donkey and cart.



*Donkey & Cart on the Building Site*

By the time Kelly's Directory of Middlesex was published in 1914, those resident at St Edward the Confessor Catholic Church, Finchley Road, Golders Green were listed as:-

Rev William Bendon	Rector
Rev Louis Napier Hemy	Priest
Rev William Guinevan	Priest



Mass times were shown as, 8:00 am, 10:00 am & 11:00 am; Catechism 3:30 pm; evening services Sat 6:30 pm; daily Mass 8:00 am; Thurs 10:00 am; Confessions Sat 11:00 am to 12 noon; 4:00-5:00 pm and 7:00-9:00 pm.

Fr Guinevan served in St Edward's from 1913-1915 when he was appointed to Walthamstow and transferred to the new Diocese of Brentwood. In 1917, he was released to serve as chaplain to the Canadian Forces.



*Building of the Calvary Chapel with the house behind*



*Work on the inside of the Church*

## **Architecture of the church**

Architecture had been one of Fr Bendon's studies and, in devoting himself to this work, he sought to attain those aspirations which a church should embody - beauty, strength, an atmosphere of worship, and the idealism of its sacred purpose. The style of architecture of the building is perpendicular Gothic, and the ideal has been the old pre-reformation parish church.

Fr. Bendon found a kindred spirit in Mr Arthur Young, the architect, and the result to be seen in the completed building is one that created more than a mere passing impression. Even those who confessed to no particular architectural taste were conscious of some compelling attraction which led them to take more than a cursory glance at the new building, and many visitors, including a large number of ministers of other communions, inspected the building with evident interest and pleasure.

The main feature is the central lantern tower, the square massive proportions of which rise up to a height of nearly 80 feet, the ceiling at the top giving a beautiful effect and greatly adding to the appearance of spaciousness in the church itself. The tower rises from the nave on four massive columns. It is 27 feet 6 inches square, and forms the centre from which branch the sanctuary, the nave and the transepts, thus forming the shape of a cross. The width of the transepts is 66 feet and the total length of the church is 128 feet. The nave is 27 feet 6 inches across and bordered by two processional aisles 7 feet 6 inches wide giving a total width of 46 feet 6 inches. The arches between the aisles and the nave are admirable in their proportions. Left and right of the sanctuary are two side chapels dedicated to the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin

The great height of the tower is broken up by a gallery formed with a beautiful carved stone balustrade. The cornice moulding which supports this balustrade is relieved by eleven carved shields, and these have been thoughtfully utilised to commemorate the period during which the church was built; the monograms of Our Blessed Lord and the Blessed Virgin are shown, together with the arms of St Edward the Confessor, the two pontiffs, Pius X and Benedict XV, during whose reigns the Church was commenced and finished and His Eminence the late Cardinal Bourne. A submarine appears on the northern wall together with a big gun, and an aeroplane, indicating the period of the Great War. On the southern wall are the monograms of King George V and Fr W.A. Bendon, Rector of the Church.

The sanctuary was 30 feet in length and 27 feet wide and the altar in such a position that everyone in the church can see the officiating priest. The ceiling of the sanctuary is of oak and moulded ribs and carved bosses, the outstretching wings of four life-size angels poised on tall slender columns mingled with the cornice moulding. These carvings on the sanctuary together with the high altar crucifix, were given in memory of Miss Winifred Foster, who was one of the early converts in the parish.

Above the western (main) entrance to the building there is a stone carving of the Calvary. Ten feet inside the main door is a stone screen going right across

the church, forming an ante-chapel from which the sanctuary may be clearly seen, and which could be left open all day for private prayer. Right and left of this main porch are the baptistery and the Calvary Chapel donated by Miss D'Andria who gave £200 to the parish for a side chapel in memory of her father. The crucifix in the chapel, a masterpiece of carved woodwork, is the gift of Mrs Ronald-Davidson, in memory of her husband (who it is thought may have been killed during the First World War).

The beautiful carved figure of St. Edward in the niche over the sacristy door was the gift of Mrs Mortimer. The unusual Stations of the Cross, which are oil paintings, were donated by parishioners.



*The new church of St Edward The Confessor (1915)*

### **The opening of the new church**

The date for opening the new church was set for September 8th 1915; but that was the night of the first Zeppelin raid over Golders Green. The church was eventually opened on the Feast of St Edward the Confessor, October 13th, by Cardinal Bourne after the first Mass had been said privately by Fr Bendon. Its cost to the congregation was £10,000. Cardinal Bourne, speaking at the end of the High Mass on the opening day, congratulated Fr Bendon, the architect and all the others who had been associated with the raising of the splendid church. He spoke of Fr Bendon's courage and zeal in achieving his work in spite of uncertain health, and exhorted the congregation to assist loyally in meeting the interest on the debt which rested on the mission encouraging them to lessen the debt as rapidly as possible. The sermons on the opening day were preached by Fr Donnelly in the morning and Fr Vincent McNabb in the evening during an air raid.



Among those who preached in the church in the early years were His Eminence Francis Cardinal Bourne; His Lordship Bishop Butt; the Right Rev Dr Keating, Bishop of Northampton; Bishop Fallon of the Canadian Army; the Right Rev. Monsignor Coke Robinson; Fr Bernard Vaughan, S.J; Fr Bede Jarrett, O.P.; Fr Brampton, S.J; Fr G. Nicholson, C.SS.R, Fr Morgan, S.J. and Mgr Ronald Knox whose famous sermon about St Edward (preached on October 13th 1922) is now in the Breviary (annex 5).

The Manor House Hospital in Golders Green, opposite the lovely Golders Hill Park, was a Hospital run for Trade Unionists. Opened in 1917 it was in the care of the parish until it was demolished in the late 1990s to make way for a residential development.

### **Fr Bendon's last years**

The great flu epidemic of 1918 brought sadness to the parish with the tragic death of Fr Louis Hemy at the age of 33. Fr Hemy, the son of a Cornish artist, was a small, fair haired person, very charming and kind. He spent all the seven years of his priesthood at St Edward's. The stained glass window, close to St Edward's shrine is dedicated to St Louis and St Joseph is in his memory.

Fr Bendon suffered considerably from ill health during his time as Rector and spent the latter years of his life in a wheelchair. His hair was red, his complexion fresh and highly coloured. He had a heart condition and was destined to die young, but in the short time allotted to him he accomplished much. And, for an invalid, he radiated dynamic energy and zeal. He used to lie on a couch in a room with French windows (now Fr Helm's dining room). He died on December 20th 1921, and was originally buried in Finchley Cemetery but was later re-interred in a special grave outside the church, over which was placed an inscribed stone, erected by the parishioners.

### **1922-1943**

Shortly before Fr Bendon's death, Dr Ambrose O'Gorman was appointed to the parish as administrator.

During this time, the Sacred Heart altar was erected – the gift of Mr and Mrs John Agnew. St Joseph's Shrine (in memory of the late Fr Hemy) was also completed.

On October 16th 1922, the completed high altar, with pillars showing the symbols of the four evangelists, was installed in the church. However, there still remained ten statues to be placed in the niches of the reredos. A brass tablet (close by St Edward's Shrine) was also erected by the parishioners, telling of Fr Bendon's place of burial and stating that the beautiful stone altar and magnificent reredos were erected in his memory.



*The Lady Altar*

In October 1922, Fr Charles Simms, aged 51, was appointed parish priest. Born in London he was educated at St Bede's Manchester, St Edmund's College, Ware and Oscott. He served as a curate at Commercial Road, Ilford and Manor Park. He then became Rector at Wapping where he did much to improve schools.

Fr Simms had his hand firmly on the tiller of parish affairs and was assisted for many years by Fr Alexander Stewart who celebrated daily Mass at the Carmel. He later became parish priest of Muswell Hill. The MC of the sanctuary in the early years was John McGill, whose two sons Bernard and Paul became Jesuits. Parishioners have recalled how Mr McGill was presented with 6 inches of lace for the bottom of his plain cotta in recognition of his being the longest serving altar server!



*Canon Charles Simms*

Efforts were made about this time to reduce the debt on the church, and as a result of a bazaar (the Rainbows Bazaar) the debt was reduced by £1,000 in December 1924. The following year saw the erection of the Lady Altar, subscribed and collected for by the Children of Mary. This was a remarkable achievement for the parish around the time of the severe economic depression of the 1920s.

There was a small choir which was started by Mrs Eileen Murphy and the pipe organ in the organ loft was originally rented until there were sufficient funds to purchase it outright. It was bought by Canon Thornton in 1955 for £400.

In 1927, the harpist Marie Goossens was married in St Edward's. She played many times at the last night of the Proms and composed the signature tune for the BBC Radio programme "*Mrs Dales Diary*." Her step-daughter, Kay Saint, lived in the parish for many years and in the late 1980s Marie Goossens

returned to live at Abbeyfields. Another musician who attended St Edward's for many years was the violinist Alfredo Campoli who during the 1930s became a household name for his many recordings and broadcasts, especially with his Salon Orchestra.

### **Consecration of the Church**

The debt was finally cleared with the result that, in commemoration of the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary, the church was solemnly consecrated. The ceremony was presided over by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Butt, assisted by the Rt Rev. Bishop Bermans (Superior of St Joseph's Missionary Society at the time) on September 30th 1931. The "Catholic Times" reported that there were over 40 clergy present, including two former curates Fr Bickford, (who later became President of St Edmund's College) and Fr Bridgman (later parish priest of Feltham). The Papal flag was flown from the tower that day with the steps of the church covered with red carpet for the occasion. The procession around the outside of the church, during which the walls and Fr Bendon's grave were blessed, aroused considerable local interest. A solid gold chalice with a cross of diamonds, a gift of the Altar Society, was used during the solemn High Mass on the newly consecrated altar.

In the October of the same year, Cardinal Bourne presided and preached at High Mass and was afterwards entertained to lunch by the parishioners in St Edward's Hall, at which the Mayor of Hendon and many councillors and officials were present.



The Reredos

### **Silver Jubilee of the Parish**

In celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the parish, December 25th 1934, ten statues of the English Saints and Beati were placed in the niches of the reredos. These were the work of Lindsay Clark in collaboration with the architect, Mr D Reid. As the Catholic Times of December 28th 1934 reported, Lindsay Clark's work was so skilful and delicate that the statues appeared to have always been part of the whole. This combined an essential simplicity with an expressive strength; the figures have a clear characteristic

solidarity which only serves to emphasise the spirituality of the ideas they embody.

The saints are:- St George, Bl John Fisher, St Etheldreda, St Augustine of Canterbury, St William of York, St Thomas Becket, St Edmund, Bl Margaret Clitheroe, Bl Thomas More and St Alban. (St Thomas More and St John Fisher were canonised in 1935 and Bl Margaret Clitheroe in 1970.)

Together with the choir stalls donated by parishioners and completion of the reredos, the memorial to Fr Bendon was now finished.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Patronal Feast of St Edward was celebrated by His Grace Archbishop Hinsley presiding at Solemn High Mass. His famous sermon on the Pope and War (Italy and Abyssinia) was preached on that occasion. On that day, the new stone font and the gates to the baptistery were unveiled. The old wooden font, which was replaced, had been an interesting feature in the church for some years, having been given to the parish from the old parish church of St Edmund's. The late Bishop of Brentwood, Bishop Ward had been baptized in that font; and it was returned to its old home at St. Edmund's.

At the Midnight Mass on Christmas 1934, which marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first Parish Mass, Canon Simms paid tribute to the generosity of the parishioners which had allowed the sanctuary and reredos to be completed. A gift from the Carmelite Sisters was a magnificently embroidered silk vestment with the orphrey, the emblem of St Edward. Another gift was a magnificent silver altar cruet set from an unknown donor.



*Bernard McGrath*

A former parishioner Bernard McGrath (now living in Canada) recalls a big event in the parish in 1935 when Fr Simms was created a Canon of Westminster Cathedral. A few parishioners bought his canonical robes which were put on display for several weeks at the back of the church. No expense was spared; there was even some ermine sewn together to make a luxurious garment. He also related how Fr Stewart said Mass at the Carmelite Convent, Bridge Lane where Bernard was the regular server there from about 1934 until 1941. Altar Servers in those days wore stiff white collars and shiny black shoes. Sunday Benediction, pre-Vatican II, was a big event and usually well attended. There were usually nuns from La Sagesse convent and one or two "outside" nuns from the Carmelite Convent at the 11:00 am Mass on Sundays.

Although it was a long time ago, Bernard remembers some of the families who were in the parish in the 1930s (in no particular order): the Sharpes, the Bredins, the Grassets, the Turrells, the McGills, the Lofflers, the Palmers, the Murphys, the Kennedys, the McGraths, the Rourkes, the Meschinis, the Beytaghs, the Hubners, the Greigs, the Cautleys and the Hayhursts.

John Murphy (husband of Marguerite) and his friend, Dennis Hallisey, were MCs of the sanctuary in the late 1930s. Dennis (aged 96 and now residing in



Cambridgeshire) recalls that there were many altar servers then, some very senior, and very experienced such as MC. Mr John Magill. Among them were Carlo, Jose and Ferdie Meschini, whose family had a restaurant in central London, and Tommy Duggan, who later became an actor on BBC radio and TV. His father was a senior police officer at New Scotland Yard.

Dennis also recalls that Sunday Masses at 8:00 am, 10:00 am and 11:00 am (High Mass) and Evening Service of Rosary/Stations of the Cross, Sermon and Benediction at 6:30 pm. The liturgy was excellent. Confessions were on Saturdays from 11:00-12:00, 4:00-5:00, 6.30-7.30 and 8:00-9:00 pm. Catechism was at 3:00 pm on Sunday afternoons; Miss Reany took the senior class and Fr Stewart took the intermediate class.

The processions down the centre aisle on Marian feasts, organised by the Children of Mary, were headed by young girls dressed in white. They strewed rose petals from the baskets they carried. and were organized by Miss Whitelaw. The Blessed Sacrament was carried under a canopy held by four men in evening dress.

There were no pews in the church except in front of the side altars. The main body of the Church had chairs; individuals paid £50 to have a brass plaque with their names screwed onto them. Apart from contributing to funds, there was a sort of status that went with them. Even in the 1940s and 1950s Canon Robert Plourde (now parish priest of Pinner) also remembered the 'pew rents'. It meant paying an annual sum for the privilege of having your own named seat and this was very common at St. Edward's. He remembers how people staked their claim, and how it was not unusual for people to be asked to "move out of someone else's seat" just before Mass began!



*The inside of the church just after the First World War*

## Stained Glass Windows

1935 saw the installation of stained glass windows in the church donated by parishioners. A paper on Church Stained Glass windows by Robert Eberhard recorded the following:-

- Our Lady of Fatima and the children (by the Lady Altar)
- Our Lady of Lourdes (Calvary Chapel) (in memory of Arturo and Catherine Meschini)
- St Bridget and St Patrick (in memory of the Duggan and Quinn families)
- St Louis and St Joseph (in memory of Fr Louis Hemy)

These can be seen on the back cover of this booklet.

A former parishioner remembers the morning that the Second World War was declared. It was Sunday September 3rd 1939 and Canon Simms made the announcement just before the Gospel at the 11:00 am Mass. The air raid siren at the Police Station sounded just before the consecration and an RAF bomber on practice returning to Witton in Cambridgeshire flew over the church. The reaction of the congregation was to kneel and pray in silence until the all-clear was given just before the Mass ended. (Happily it turned out to be a false alarm.)

With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the Midnight Masses and other evening services were held by candlelight. Despite the tower dominating the skyline, St Edward's was spared any destruction; but bombs fell in the Jewish Cemetery at the rear of the church and across Finchley Road on the corner of Wentworth Road, where Marie Lloyd had once lived.

"The Universe" of February 5th 1943 recorded Canon Simms' resignation as parish priest due to poor health and announced a collection with donations to be sent to Jules Grasset at 2, St John's Road. The sum of £360 was presented to Canon Simms by Cllr Oldmeadow KCSG in April that year. Canon Simms died in June 1945 aged 74.

## 1943-1960



*Canon Thornton*

Early in 1943, Canon James Thornton, aged 57 (Parish Priest of Hertford), was appointed as our new parish priest. Ushaw College Library records show that Canon Thornton was born in Middlesex in 1886 and had studied for the priesthood, from the age of 13, at the English College in Lisbon. He returned to the Diocese of Westminster in 1910 after his ordination.

The Canon had a very hard early life, being in Lisbon away from his family for so many years and there were no



cheap flights home in those days. A former parishioner described him as always dignified, but with a twinkle in his eye and a kind word. If anyone coughed during his sermon, from the pulpit, he would stop, remove his glasses and peer towards the culprit. The glasses back on, he would start up again until the next cough and the process would be repeated.

The Canon's sitting room in the presbytery was rather like an old-fashioned convent parlour, equipped with a large clock which boomed away at intervals, which could be heard even when phoning the presbytery. Former parishioner Bruce Kent recalls that the presbytery in those days was a fairly frugal place with none of the modern luxuries that we take for granted today. He remembers how members of the parish contributed to some form of extra presbytery heating.

Canon Robert Plourde remembers how the repository was another source of wonder to him as a child. "It was situated in one of the side porches at the back of the church and full of highly coloured statues and other devotional items. He remembers wondering which of the two ladies painted on either side of Our Lady was "Mrs. Daily" who 'sang to Mary!

Mr Middleton-Evans made a big impression on Canon Robert. He ran a prep school in the Suburb and brought the Catholic boys to Mass. He always kissed the votive candle before placing it before Our Lady – a small but significant gesture that Canon Robert remembers. He was fascinated by the Pakenham's (later Lord and Lady Longford) and their ever increasing number of children.

Canon Robert also recalls the Good Friday Stations of the Cross in those days, before the Reforms instituted by Pius XII. They took place at 3:00 pm and the church was packed to the doors. The servers gave up their stalls and sat on the altar steps with men from the congregation occupying their seats. Another time the church was packed was for the Parish Mission in the late 1940's – when chairs were added to all the aisles and you had to be in church at least 20 minutes before the service began to get a seat !

On December 8th 1944, Canon Thornton and Fr O'Dwyer established the Legion of Mary in the parish and the Praesidium of our Lady of Fatima has held weekly meetings for 65 years, visiting the sick and housebound in the parish and the Manor House Hospital until it closed. Two of the original members were Ilka Hubner and Eileen Wenish, who was the sacristan for many years.

Christopher Allmand (brother of Michael Allmand) remembers that during the War years his grandfather sometimes used to take him for an afternoon walk and they would end up at the corner of Hoop Lane and Finchley Road. From there they would go to St Edward's where there was Benediction some afternoons at 4pm at which he used to serve.

In 1947, the memorial window over the high altar was made by Hendra & Harper and installed some few years later. It was the gift of the parishioners, in thanksgiving for the safe deliverance of the church, and to commemorate the heroism of a former parishioner Captain Michael Allmand (brother of the late Marguerite Murphy) who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in 1943 for his heroism in the Far East. According to Christopher Allmand, Canon

Thornton consulted his parents on the design of the stained glass window which was made in around 1947 and installed (he thinks) a little later. Whenever he served Mass Christopher said that he felt a link to his brother who is remembered in that window. During his time in the parish he also knew Peter Gormley whose brother, Anthony, designed the sculpture "The Angel of the North"

### **The Memorial Window**

Taking its proper place as the main feature of interest in the tracery is a symbolic representation of the Crucifixion portrayed by the Lamb of God carrying the banner bearing a red cross and standing upon the book with seven seals (Apoc V). Surrounding the centre piece is a scroll held by angels upon which is written the most significant exhortation concerning sacrifice. The colour and placing of the angels and scroll are designed to give firmness to the general lines of the whole composition.



The Memorial Window

In the main lights and lower traceries, the background is formed by a light Gothic screen, reflecting the style of the reredos below and the general character of the church. This ensures that the subject matter which moves from one light to another (e.g., the tail of the dragon, etc) does not detract from the architectural effect of the mullions. On this background, the main figures are placed in such a way as to enhance the main shape of the whole window particularly from the swinging of the arch.

In the centre light of the window is placed the figure of St Edward the Confessor, the patron saint of the church, bearing his scepter and ring. Below the figure is depicted the church which is illuminated to the front and rear by the flashes of bomb explosions demonstrating its remarkable preservation from destruction. It is to be noted that each explosion is tinged with evil, by the dragon's claw on the one side and the wing of Lucifer on the other.

In front of the church is a portrait of Canon Charles Simms (who was parish priest from 1922-1943) in full canonicals, commemorating his devotion to this parish.

Crowning the centre light in the lower tracery are the arms of St Edward and of Pope Pius XII. Supporting the centre light on the right is the Archangel Michael casting Lucifer from heaven, the flaming sword in his right hand and his left pointing to his shield which bears the inscription "Quis ut Deus?" - Who is like to God? On the left is St George subduing evil represented by the dragon; shown in the tracery above the figure is a shield bearing the cross of St George. Both these lights are thus concerned with action forming an effective contrast to the dignity of the centre figure of St Edward.

It is appropriate that the courage of the individual parishioners of this parish should be symbolised in these two lights by the magnificent example of Captain Michael Allmand, VC. His action is commemorated beneath St George by the badge of his regiment (6th Lancers) and below St Michael by the badge of the Gurkha regiment (showing the crossed kukri) to which he was attached when he won the Victoria Cross, the latter being superimposed upon the badge. Michael was a contemporary of the late Cardinal Hume at Ampleforth.

Above the simple inscription in the outside lights are the soldier saints, St Alban on the left and St Martin on the right. Above each of these in the lower traceries are their arms. The figure of St Alban by his bearing alone suggests the glorious example he set and this example is equally well suggested in the action of St Martin dividing his cloak with a beggar.

To complete the whole scheme the remaining tracery lights are filled by the flags of the Services.

### **A description by the late Audrey Knighton.**

There were three curates who worked in the parish for many years .Fr Michael O'Dwyer, who was ordained in 1942 and left Golders Green in 1955 to join the

Catholic Missionary Society. He was later to become parish priest at St John's Wood. He sadly died in 1977 in the Holy Land following a heart attack. Fr



*Michael Allmand VC*



*Michael's sister the late Marguerite Murphy with the original VC shortly before its presentation to the Gurkha Museum*

Leonard Collingwood came to the parish in the early 1940s and was later appointed parish priest of Hounslow. Fr Percy Fielden (a former Anglican Clergyman) succeeded Fr O'Dwyer and was later appointed parish priest of Hertford.

When the Second War was over, Bishop John Heenan (later Cardinal Heenan) was given the task of finding a new headquarters for the Catholic Missionary Society (CMS) whose headquarters in Willesden Green had been bombed during the war. A house in West Heath Road was found and the CMS remained there until it closed in 2003 when the Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation (CASE) was inaugurated. (CASE was closed at the end of 2009.) During those early years, when the CMS was in the parish, many of the priests celebrated Mass in St Edward's and many parishioners assisted at the Catholic Enquiry Centre which was located at the CMS Headquarters.

### **More memories**



*Bruce Kent*

Bruce Kent recalled that one of the most impressive events was always Midnight Mass: a packed church, candles, lights and general sense of mystery decorated with a wonderful crib with two ducks 'floating' on a piece of mirror, as well as oxen and cattle in their usual places. He remembers how we would enjoy watching the curates who had the embarrassing job of going out amongst the congregation with baskets for the Christmas offerings for the clergy.



With such a crowd at the Midnight Mass, there was also a good chance of a bit of a confusion when one of those who had paid for a brass plaque on “their” bench or chair found that someone else was already installed on it.

Many parishioners also remember the youth club in the 1940s which lasted into the 1950s and maybe longer. It was the brainchild of a local dentist, Ronald Cautley. Another thing many parishioners remember is the parish jumble sale organised by Fr Collingwood – an annual parish fund raising event.

Throughout his tenure at St Edward’s, Canon Thornton was very keen to have a Catholic primary school and money had been raised for the building of the school on the tennis courts at the left hand side of the presbytery. But in the late 1950s, the Diocese was unable to agree to this project because there was insufficient land; in addition, a large number of children in the parish were away at boarding schools and the La Sagesse Convent in Golders Green Road included a junior school where some of parish children went. Regrettably, the land had to be sold and the first house in St Edward’s Close was registered in 1964. The money raised from the sale was later used to purchase benches for the church and the laying of a new floor over the original flagstone floor in the church.

From about 1948 to 1970, St Edward’s Choir sang at the 11:00 am Mass on Sundays, Masses and Motets by Vittoria, Palestrina, Byrd and Tallis. The photograph below shows the choir outside the Carmelite Convent, Bridge Lane, where they had sung. The conductor was Aidan Daniel, followed by Bruno Turner. Pat Bliss was the organist (and also sang bass); he played for hymns, carols and sometimes plainsong.

Later the choir disbanded because members moved from the area, and because of the changes to the liturgy arising from Vatican II, and in particular the Mass being celebrated in English, it meant there was no longer scope for this type of choir.



*The Choir outside the Carmelite Monastery (1950's)*

Canon Thornton celebrated his Golden Jubilee in 1960 when he was created a Canon of Westminster Cathedral. He died shortly afterwards on November 8<sup>th</sup> 1961. He never forgot his training at the English College in Lisbon; he was responsible for establishing the Lisbonian Association for priests educated at the College. Shortly before he died, he gave a legacy to the English College in Lisbon for the training of a priest for the Diocese of Westminster. Little did he know that, in 1984, Fr John Helm who had trained in Lisbon would become parish priest at St Edward's.

### **The Second Vatican Council**

*The 1960s began with Pope John XXIII calling the Second Vatican Council, made up of all the Bishops of the Catholic Church. It met over four years and its deliberations were over by the end of 1964. The two documents which heralded the greatest visible changes in the life of the Catholic community were Sacrosanctum Concilium, the document on the liturgy, which called for greater participation of the laity, especially by the use of the vernacular and Gaudium et Spes which signalled that the Church saw itself in dialogue with the world. It was a time when the institutions and traditional values of society were being challenged by the new generation of young people born since the end of the Second World War.*

### **1961 - 1976**

Canon Thornton's successor was Fr Carmine De Felice. He was no stranger to the area, having spent 20 years of his priesthood at Hendon and then 7 years at Swiss Cottage before arriving in Golders Green. Born of Italian parents in Scotland, Fr de Felice told a reporter from the Hendon Times during an interview in 1972 that he had thought about being a lawyer and had spent a great deal of his time listening to cases in Court. It was a comment from a priest that led him on the path to the priesthood. He studied for the priesthood at Blair's College in Aberdeen (which he thought a wonderful city), in France and at St Edmund's College, Ware and was ordained for the Diocese in 1935.

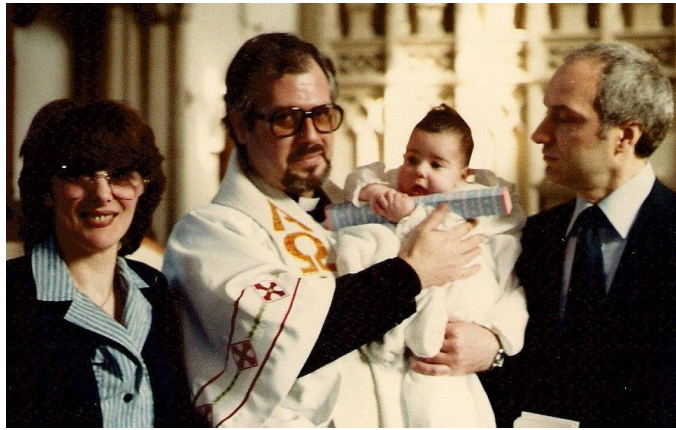
Although not tall, Fr de Felice made up for it as a larger than life character who was very kind and who enjoyed meeting people and helping them to resolve their problems. He was always smiling and was outside the church on Sunday mornings with a cigarette in his hand. He loved to chat to people, and to stage manage baptisms and weddings, and was always pleased to be invited for meals in parishioners' houses. He was very fond of the telephone but, since he did not enjoy meetings, he would arrange to be called away during meetings to answer a telephone call. He was devoted to his pet dachshund who often followed her master into the church (but not at Mass times).

On the other hand, Kate Charles recalls that his silence was also impressive if she was taking him in her car to visit parishioners and he was carrying communion for the sick. She recalls how, following Vatican II, Fr de Felice had a portable wooden altar built: but he was loath to say Mass facing the people and the altar remained in storage. It was used for the first time when she was





*Fr de Felice with Rachel Beard*



*Fr Andrew Morley with Christian Fugallo*

*Representing all the children baptised over the past 100 years!*

married in 1965 when he agreed to set it up and use it for the wedding; but he joked that he had to, since the Cathedral Administrator was concelebrating! She remembers his kindness to a monk who stayed with her family for many months who was too ill to concelebrate at St Edward's every day. Fr de Felice encouraged him to celebrate Mass in the house where neighbours were welcome.

From his time in Hendon, Fr de Felice had been involved in civic affairs in the borough where he had done much good – particularly regarding the Church and the local community. He was a Governor of Bishop Douglass School he took a great interest in Catholic education in the Borough. In recognition of his services, Fr de Felice was invested as a Knight of the Venerable Order of the Knights of Malta and St John of Jerusalem by the late Bishop Casey in November 1969.



*First Communicants with Fr de Felice (c 1974 )*

*Representing all the young people who have made their First Communion in the parish*

Noreen Steedman recalls that in 1968 that Fr Eric Grace, the Provincial of the Verona Fathers, came from Dawson Place on Sundays to assist Fr de Felice. This was the beginning of the link between the Verona Fathers (later called the Comboni Missionaries) and St Edward's which lasted until 2006 when the Priory closed. Fr Benito Di Marchi, now resident in Dawson Place, still assists on Sundays when his other duties permit. A full account of the Combonis' links with St Edward's is included in at Annex 2 of this book. In 1968, the Pallotine Fathers moved to 64 Armitage Road where they stayed until 1976; they also assisted Fr de Felice on Sundays.

Fr de Felice was assisted from 1961 until 1974 by retired priest Fr James Coughlan who enjoyed playing the violin and ainted the backdrop for the Christmas crib.



It is worth mentioning three events that took place during Fr de Felice's time in the Parish. In 1962 in keeping with the laity playing a greater role in the Church, Fr de Felice established the first elected Parish Council. The second was the installation of the stained glass window by the Calvary Chapel which was donated by the Cautley family in memory of Ena Cautley, a long-standing parishioner. The window depicts St Thomas More, St Theresa of Lisieux and St John the Apostle who is linked with the legend of St Edward.

The third was the fire (which the police suspected was arson) which broke out in the sacristy one summer Friday evening in the early 1970s. Two young lads walking down Hoop Lane saw the smoke and alerted Fr Coughlan. Fortunately, the fire was contained mostly in the sacristy which had to be completely refurbished. The church suffered smoke damage and was re-decorated. Local Churches, in particular St Michael's in Golders Green Road (now the Greek Orthodox Church) lent altar linen and vestments until replacements were made.

Sadly, Fr de Felice's health deteriorated. He fought a brave battle against cancer and retired to Peacehaven in 1976, where he was looked after by Peggy who had been his housekeeper for many years. He died on 28 March 1978 aged 71 and Cardinal Hume presided at his Requiem in St. Edward's.

The Editorial in the "Hendon Times" of November 25th 1969 paid this tribute to Fr de Felice at the time of his investiture as a Papal Knight. It sums him up so well:

*"Fr de Felice is a larger than life character who epitomises all that is modern in religion and religious thinking. His humour and effervescence have brightened the daily drudge of thousands of parishioners over the years. The non-Catholic community shares a pride in his investiture."*

## **1976- 1984**

Following the retirement of the much respected Fr de Felice the next parish priest to introduce is Fr Andrew Morley who was appointed to the parish from Westminster Cathedral in 1976 at the age of 38. His family were Polish and he was educated at Finchley Catholic Grammar School. He was ordained in 1963, he had served in many parishes including Swiss Cottage, Tollington Park and Holloway.

Whilst attending the Grammar school, he often attended the nearby Marian House participating in the Byzantine liturgy in Slavonic. Thus he was enabled to further his awareness of comparative liturgy. He revealed himself as a first rate liturgist and an extraordinary biblical scholar. Later while in the parish, these attributes became even more pronounced. The liturgy in all aspects showed itself in its celebrations and his grasp of scripture coloured his sermons (often off the cuff). He enjoyed praying the Office (Breviary) using various languages.

Fr Andrew had a superb speaking voice and made every word of the Mass (which he celebrated with great reverence) clearly audible to everyone in the congregation. He loved visiting the sick, the elderly and the handicapped and they looked forward eagerly to his visits. He made careful note of all their interests, their devotion to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady, their grandchildren, their pets, their books and their music and would include references to them in his follow up visits. He was very sensitive in times of distress when he gave much help and spiritual guidance.

One of our parishioners Rosa Beard still recalls how he quickly became a friend of her family and a regular visitor to their home. She says that Fr Andrew was a big man with a big personality. She felt that some parishioners believed he was quite aloof but this was not the case. She got to know him better than some as she was then closely involved in the arrangement of social activities in the parish. He had a keen sense of humour and was an excellent mimic. Her daughter Vanessa used to read at Mass when she was a teenager. He enjoyed being in a family environment and made those who opened their homes to him feel relaxed. Fr Andrew was also a brilliant musician. His talents extended to playing the organ, piano and oboe although he could never be persuaded to perform in public (perhaps part of his quixotic nature). He had a superb singing voice and would sometimes sing the entire Canon of the Mass.



Rev Graham Jenkins

Fr Andrew was responsible for instigating the tradition of coffee after Mass on Sunday mornings which is still hugely popular today.

Rosa went on to say that the arrival of Graham Jenkins in 1974, as a newly ordained Permanent Deacon for the Christian/Jewish Dialogue, with his wife Phyl, helped to complement Fr Andrew's talents. They played a very important part in working with Fr Andrew to make the parish community strong. They were a pivotal source of support not just to the parish but to many of its members.



Graham also held a weekly bible study class at his home which many parishioners attended over the years. He was active in Churches Together in Golders Green and his wife did much to foster Christian/Jewish relations.

Fr Andrew left the Parish in 1984 to explore his vocation as a Benedictine Monk at Downside Abbey and was often visited by groups of parishioners from St Edward's with whom he left a lasting impression. After five years at Downside, Fr Andrew returned to the Diocese and spent two years at Cadogan Street working with the late Canon Veal. He later moved to Ashford where he died suddenly on December 27th 1993. At his Requiem in Westminster Cathedral on January 5th 1994, Cardinal Hume was the principal concelebrant.



*Fr Andrew with parishioners at Downside*

Fr Andrew was a man whose personality and spirituality contributed to parishioners' lives personally and those of our parish in his own very inimitable way.

### **1984 – 2009**

Fr. John Helm became Parish Priest of St. Edward's in October 1984 following in the footsteps of Fr Andrew Morley. Previously Parish Priest at Harefield, Fr John grew up in Fulham and was educated at the London Oratory, St Edmund's College Ware and the English College in Lisbon where he was ordained on April 7th 1962. Fr John has served in many parishes including Our Lady of Willesden, Welwyn Garden City, and a spell as Royal Naval Chaplain on a number of ships including HMS *Ark Royal*.

The parish he inherited was a very different parish to the one we see today having started to see a decline in Mass attendance numbers. Fr John recognised the potential of St. Edward's and lost no time in making the church a beacon for local Catholics – and for families in particular.

Under his guidance, St. Edward's is now a focal point not just for parishioners but for the Christian community in North West London. When he was bishop in North London, Bishop Vincent Nichols made numerous visits to St Edward's for Parish celebrations and for Area events including Vespers for the new Millennium with Cardinal Basil Hume shortly before the Cardinal died. It was no coincidence, therefore that the Westminster Diocesan Office chose St Edward's

in June 2009, to host the Mass to welcome the new Archbishop, Vincent to the community in North London.



*Mass of Welcome for Archbishop Vincent Nichols*

Fr John has also continued to foster strong relationships with local Catholic Missionary Orders—particularly the Comboni Missionaries (see Annex 3) and the Xaverian Missionary Fathers. Many Comboni Missionaries have played a regular and important role in church life with Fr Benito de Marchi celebrating Masses regularly. Many members of the parish will remember the ordination of Jose Joaquin to the diaconate as a joyful and spiritual occasion as well as his visits while home from the missions to the parish – as well as those of Fr. Carlos Alberto Nunes.



*60's Disco in the Hall*

Over his years of service Fr. John has worked very hard to improve, protect and enhance the parish – integrating St Edward's more and more into the local community. He has overseen major projects at the church including the re-modelling of the sanctuary and the installation of St Edward's Shrine, in 1997;

the re-decoration of the church and renovations to its external fabric including the recent restoration of the tower .He also recognised the potential of the church hall as an opportunity not only to bring the parish together but also the local community. He set about improving and extending its facilities and the church hall is now used almost to its maximum capacity by parishioners as well as local external organisations. The following is an extract from the *Westminster Record* in 1995 written by Chris Fanning the Diocesan Surveyor regarding the extension to the Hall.

*“The original Edwardian brick built hall has been extended on at least three previous occasions, and now comprises a main hall with toilet block, kitchen, entrance lobby connecting the church to a bar and social room; recent works have now added a two storey extension providing a much needed meeting room, bar extension with nearby toilets, a link corridor and a small conservatory.*

*“The building works have been carried out to the highest standard, all in keeping with the original design using red hand made bricks and pointed joints on the external walling, which has resulted in a very handsome addition. The internal decorations are also very smart and pleasing, thanks to the well thought out design and imagination of the hard working parish priest, Fr John Helm.*

*“Fr John has greatly increased the pastoral and social activity within the parish, and has extended the hall in all areas using up all available space to create a very useful parish hall. Owing to the increased demand for catechetical training, it was necessary to provide extra space, and this has been achieved by extending the rear of the hall and furnishing a large unused loft space by plastering and installing new flooring and windows to create the new meeting room.*

*“All thanks to Fr John for his kind and thoughtful manner evident in the efforts that he has put into building up this splendid suburban parish.”*

However, there is one particular area of ecclesiastical life in which Fr. John is renowned as having established an outstanding reputation at St. Edward's – church music. Working with Mary Whittle (Jones) over many years, Fr John has worked to enrich the personal religious experience for parishioners attending weekend Masses through music. The parish choir forms an important part of the parish community and parishioners are extremely fortunate to enjoy a full and varied range of music during Mass. The Christmas Carol Service and the music at the Easter Services make an invaluable contribution to the life of the parish in its worship (and who can forget the invitation to Christmas punch and mince “tarts”). This reputation even led St. Edward's to host the celebration of the Palm Sunday Mass on Sunday Worship on Radio 4 in 1997.





*The Choir 2009*

But it is the family which Fr. John has laid at the heart of St Edward's and which, I believe, draws people from even outside of the parish boundaries to our church. Drawing from Christ's love for children, St. Edward's is a warm and nurturing environment for families to attend Mass. Any parent fearful of the noise that a child might make during Mass is reassured by Fr. John's comment "Don't worry – it is just the child's way of praying!" The introduction of the Children's Liturgy at the 10:30 am Mass and his integration of more children as altar servers has enabled the parish's young people to engage in the Mass in a manner which is directed specifically at them. Catechism classes have become an integral part of parish life, attended by large groups of children – as anyone who attends coffee after the 10:30 Mass will testify! Fr John has also supported the Parish RCIA Group through which he has welcomed many new Catholics into the Church, (see also Annex 2). A recent count of attendees revealed a weekly attendance of almost nine hundred people.

However, Fr. John's work for the well being of the parish is matched no less by his personal support for families and individuals in need. In this centenary year of the foundation of the Parish and following the twenty fifth anniversary in 2009 of Fr. John's appointment to St. Edward's in 1984, many people have been led to reflect upon his many achievements and to recall the times when he had come to their aid – at a time of rejoicing or grieving, when relationships became difficult, when problems arose and the hand of God seemed to have disappeared – at all of these times Fr. John has been there beside us working with us all.

*(Venessa Gearson has kindly provided these thoughts on Fr John's 25 years as Parish Priest)*

## CONCLUSION

Our Christmas Midnight Mass in 2009 brought the history of the first century of the parish to a conclusion and started the second one.

The Christmas Carol "*O come all ye Faithful joyful and triumphant*" was very appropriate at the Midnight Mass celebrated by Bishop George Stack, which marked the Centenary of the first Mass celebrated in 1909 by Fr William Bendon. The Mayor of Barnet, Cllr Brian Coleman, joined a packed church for the celebration. During the Mass, Bishop Stack and Fr Helm laid a wreath at a plaque in the church marking the place outside the church where Fr Bendon is buried.



*The start of the Midnight Mass*

Below is an extract from the sermon delivered by Bishop Stack to mark the occasion:-

*"On the Feast of St. Edward the Confessor some fifty years ago Mgr. Ronald Knox preached the sermon in this church. It was a classical sermon, so beautiful that it was later printed in the breviary which priests use for their daily prayers..... (see Annex 6)*

*The privilege of being a member of the Church is that Sunday by Sunday we re-tell that story of the revelation of God in the Incarnation. We re-present the events which brought us into union with God. We remember, we put back together again the broken parts of the Body of Christ. No wonder the most precious word in the life of the Church is "Memory". No wonder at the heart of our religion are the words "Do this in Remembrance of me".*

*Tonight we remember that one hundred years ago this parish was established to gather people together to re-tell that story and put it into practice in their lives. And what a privilege it is tonight to give thanks to God for the devoted service of Fr. Bendon who inspired that community and laid the foundations of*

*this church in which we worship tonight. At the beginning of this Centenary year it is our job to continue to remember, re-tell the story of the revelation of God in the Incarnation of Jesus and all that means. We know how difficult it is to put into words the deepest things that lie in our hearts - about life, about love, about faith itself. That is why in a church we surround ourselves with signs and symbols which speak to us in a language which goes beyond words, which goes deeper than words. The statues, the candles, the windows, the incense. The altar, the lectern, the priest's chair. And tonight the cross and the crib. All symbolic of our service of God – and his love for us. This building has been sanctified and consecrated by those who founded it, those who have worshipped here since it was built. Each of you will have memories of Baptisms and Communions, of Marriages and Funerals. Times of happiness and joy. Times of suffering and sadness. All of them are part of the tapestry woven into the life of this parish of St. Edward's Golders Green."*



*Bishop Stack laying the wreath*

---

We hope you have enjoyed reading this account of the history of St Edward's Parish over the last 100 years. Our research started almost a year ago, with just two newspaper extracts and some photographs of the building of the church kindly provided by Fr John. Many parishioners generously lent photographs, provided snippets of information, and put us in touch with former parishioners now scattered all over England and in Canada and we are greatly indebted to them for helping to build up our history of the parish. A list of contributors is at Annex 7.

We pray that St Edward the Confessor, Patron of the parish, will continue to guide and inspire the priests and people in the second century as Fr Bendon inspired the community one hundred years ago to build the foundations of the diverse and vibrant community we have in Golders Green today.

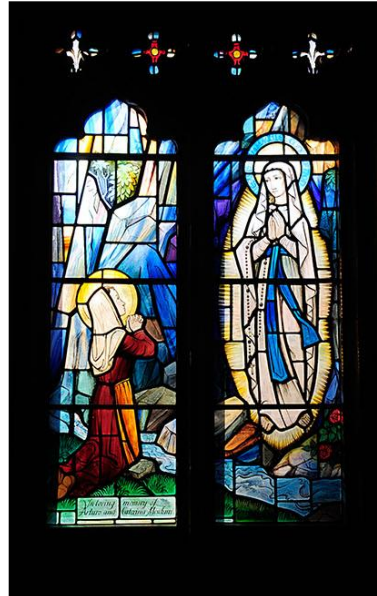
Joan and Martin How



## THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS



*The Fatima Window*



*Our Lady of Lourdes*



*St Patrick & St Bridget*



*St Louis & St Joseph*



## ANNEX 1

### Clergy 1908-2009

1908-1921

Fr William Bendon assisted by	Fr Charles Seagar	1910
	Fr Percy Clune	1911
	Fr Louis Napier Hemy	1912-1918
	Fr William A Guinevan	1914-1915
	Fr J McGuckin	1916-1918
	Fr John V Simcock	1919
	Fr Richard Bridgman	1919-1921
	Fr Francis Bickford	1920-1921

1921

Fr Ambrose O’Gorman (Administrator)

1921- 1943

Canon Charles Simms assisted by	Fr Alexander Stewart	1922-1935
	Fr Bernard Whelan	1936
	Fr Charles O’Connor	1937-1938
	Fr Francis Smith	1939-1940
	Fr John Mills	1941-1943
	Fr Leslie Cole	1942
	Fr John Clayton	1943
	Fr Michael O’Dwyer	1943

1943- 1961

Canon James Thornton assisted by	Fr Michael O’Dwyer	1943-56
	Fr Patrick C F Kelly	1946-1947
	Fr Leonard Collingwood	1948-1961
	Fr Percival Fielden	1957-1961

1961-1976

Fr Carmine De Felice assisted by	Fr Leonard Collingwod	1961-1962
	Fr James Coughlin	1962-1974

1976-1984

Fr Andrew Morley assisted by	Deacon Graham Jenkins	1982-1984
------------------------------	-----------------------	-----------

1984-

Fr John Helm assisted by	Deacon Graham Jenkins	1984-1994
	Deacon Anthony Clark	2008-

### Source Catholic Directory

Note – This history also lists one other priest resident in 1911 (Fr Georges Toinard) shown on the census but not listed in Catholic Directory.

## ANNEX 2

### Catechetics

From the earliest days in the history of St Edward's parish, a vibrant catechetical programme has been in place for the children of the parish. The earliest records show Catechism (or Religious Education) Classes taking place at 3:00 pm on a Sunday afternoon but this was later moved to Sunday morning. Many of the young people in the parish have attended Catholic schools or boarding schools but many parishioners and the Sisters from La Sagesse Convent have helped to prepare people for the sacraments and have offered catechetics for our children who attend non-Catholic Schools over the years.



*Confirmation Group of 1985*

### The early days of the children's' Liturgy

It only started out as part of my Duke of Edinburgh award and was only meant to last six weeks. Ten years later, I surely had done enough 'community work' to pass the award. Over this time, I had witnessed many children come and go, most of them parents in our parish today. The Children's Liturgy was set up so that the children of St Edward's could celebrate the Liturgy of the Word in a way that was accessible for them. Averaging about 60 children ranging from 3-13 years, whoever led the liturgy sure had their work cut out. We read the Gospel and had creative activities to help them break open the scripture. Depending on what Sunday it was, children would come bearing hats, pictures and even daffodils in a procession down the centre aisle of the church. Choosing who was to bring down the offertory gifts was always a highlight for any of the

children. They frantically wave their hands and call out 'Pick me, pick me' and frantically waving hands.

Over time we celebrated special Masses with the children, had Nativity plays and even invited a donkey to play a part in a Palm Sunday Mass. It was organised by one of our parishioners, Patricia Casey. We were planning to get the donkey to process down the aisle with children waving palms and material. However, on the way into the church one of the children accidentally hit him on the nose with the door, and the donkey decided not to move. We tried pulling him, pushing him, even coaxing him with carrots supplied by Fr John, but he would not move. – not even for the start of Holy Week. Stubborn was definitely his middle name; he would not budge.

Many happy memories and I am very happy to see that the liturgy is still going strong today!

Sonja Krauss

### **Memory of Easter Workshops 1992**

Imagine my surprise when, aged 9, Fr John handed me a letter sent to the parish but addressed to me from the area bishop, Vincent Nichols. Joan How had asked me to write to invite him to our Easter workshop, but I don't think I expected that he would actually say yes!

The Easter and Christmas workshops were fantastic – we created all kinds of grand artworks with which to decorate the church, expertly guided by Pat Casey, Marielle Yap and other talented parishioners. Over the years there were competitions, articles in the local press and many children of the parish dying to exercise their creative flair and proud that their hard work would go on display in the church at Christmas or during Holy Week and Easter.

On the year in question, we had created five huge scenes based on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary for Holy Week. Mum and Dad had helped me to memorise them the night before, but of course when the bishop arrived I was so nervous I could only remember four – it was the crowning with thorns I'd forgotten, though Bishop Vincent was very kind! After I had shown him around, he stayed and spoke to everyone, and I was abuzz about it for days afterwards.

In hindsight, the workshops fostered such excitement and interest in those key events in the life of the Lord. For all the fun, there was a serious side too. The artwork was meant for God's greater glory and to help the parish worthily celebrate those great mysteries. Also, because the subject was the living Lord, present in our midst, it brought us a kind of spiritual closeness with him, for which children have an oft-neglected but remarkable capacity. I remember those times very fondly, and thank God for them.

Andrew Connick



*Young Edwardians with Fr Helm at the 1992 Easter Workshop*

### **Our children's programme**

The numbers of children attending the catechetics sessions has steadily grown; and there are now 170 children registered to attend the catechetical programme led by a team of 20 catechists. Maruka Fraga co-ordinated the programme from 1978-1995 when she retired back to Spain. Jenny Kettleton is now our Catechetical Co-ordinator.

The programme takes place after the 10:30am Mass on Sunday mornings when the hall becomes a very lively and busy place. The children meet in nine different groups according to their age from age 5 to age 13+. The sessions take place during school term-time while parents and parishioners meet for tea and coffee.

- Parish Religious Education is available for children using *Walk With Me*, a programme, recommended by the Conference of Bishops in England and Wales. It is the parallel programme to *Here I am*, which is offered to children in Catholic Schools. Through it, the children are helped to reflect on experience in the light of Catholic belief, Scripture, doctrine and liturgy. The repetition of nine life/faith themes each year enables the key aspects of Catholic faith and practice to be deepened as the children grow and develop.
- First Reconciliation and First Communion preparation uses the *God's Greatest Gift* programme and
- Candidates preparing to be confirmed use the *Born in the Spirit of Jesus* programme.

All the programmes recognise the crucial, primary role of parents in their children's catechesis and initiation into the faith community. Their involvement is supported and encouraged through parents' sessions in the parish and through the invitation to help the children at home by completing their workbooks to consolidate what they have learned.



The success of our parish catechetical programme is due to the commitment of our parents and the team of volunteer catechists who give their time Sunday after Sunday to share their faith with our children.



*The Confirmation Group 2009 at their 24 hour fast*

*These Confirmation photographs represent all the young people who have been confirmed in the parish*

### ***Our adult programmes***

Adults who express an interest in becoming Catholics are prepared through the RCIA programme (*The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*). The RCIA is an extended period during which candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance aimed at training them in the Christian life. Since all catechesis is based on the catechumenal model, like our children's R.E. programme, the RCIA also reflects on experience in the light of Catholic belief, Scripture, doctrine and liturgy. Since 2000, Joan How has co-ordinated the RCIA programme, which has been running in the parish since 1985. We are greatly blessed to have a steady number of people coming into the Catholic Church through the RCIA each year. The Group is very fortunate to have the support of Fr John, Deacon Anthony and many parishioners who share their faith every Thursday evening and support those on their journey to the Easter Vigil.



*The RCIA Group at the "Rite of Welcome" November 2009  
Our new catholics in the centenary year*

A Bible Study Group of around 25 people, lead by Deacon Anthony, meets on the first Tuesday evening of each month. Beginning with the diocesan programme "*At Your Word Lord*" the parish has had a number of active small communities which meet twice a year in the period leading up to Advent and again during Lent using the materials produced by the diocese.

Alternate years on the Tuesday in Holy Week, we have a Passover Seder. This was introduced by former Deacon Graham Jenkins; and it has continued to be well attended. They are now led by Alan Brudney, a member of the Alyth Synagogue.

Other opportunities for adult spirituality and catechesis include days of reflection during Lent and annual pilgrimages to Walsingham and Aylesford with our neighbouring parish, St Philip's.

In our Centenary Year, over 50 parishioners plan to go on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and there will also be a visit to the Shrine of St Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey.

## ANNEX 3

### St Edward's Parish and the Comboni Missionaries

In 1968, the first Verona Father (Comboni Missionary) students came to London for their priestly, missionary and theological training at the newly established Missionary Institute at Mill Hill. For two years, our students were hosted by the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) at St Edward's in Totteridge Common, until they moved in 1970 to their own residence at The Priory in Barnet Lane (Elstree-Borehamwood).

It was in those early years, sometime between 1969 and 1970, that Comboni students started to become a familiar presence at St Edward's Parish, Golders Green. Pastoral experience, in fact, was an integral part of the priestly and missionary training at the Missionary Institute. Students were then, year after year, assigned by their respective Superiors to various surrounding parishes, who were happy to welcome them. Over some 40 years (until the close of the Priory in 2006), a strong bond of friendship and mutual support developed between the parish community of St Edward's and the Comboni community of the Priory.

Not only were dozens of students affectionately sustained and accompanied in their first steps in ministerial practice at St Edward's but also one of the priests at The Priory helped on regular basis with the Sunday services. St Edward's, with its cosmopolitan and cross-cultural make-up and a good number of African and Asian Christians, represented an ideal context for the formative journey of future missionaries. Somehow, the two communities of St Edward's and of The Priory came to form one extended family; friendship developed not only between the parishioners of St Edward's and individual Comboni students and priests involved in the life of the parish, but also with the community of The Priory at large. In this way, young men coming from different parts of the world, who had left their families and their countries, found a new home, new sisters and brothers, a lot of friends.



*The Comboni Open Day c 2003*

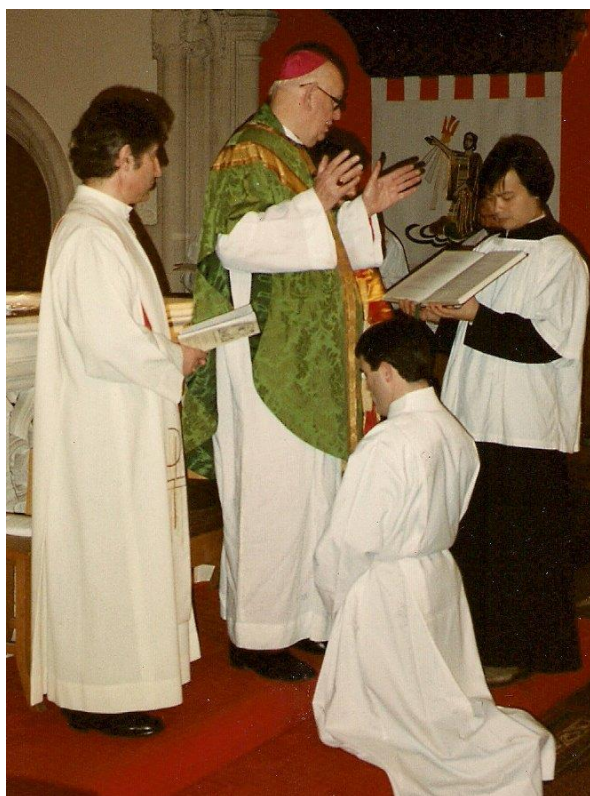


Great credit for this success should be given to the various parish priests - Fr Carmine De Felice, Fr Andrew Morley and Fr John Helm - whose support was a decisive factor in creating an open environment conducive to mutual acceptance, collaboration and to a positive pastoral experience.

Personally, I feel very lucky to have had the possibility of sharing for over 20 years something of the life of St Edward's Parish community. I have enjoyed the fellowship and friendship of so many loving and caring people – and I have received much more than I was able to offer in return.

I have found in Fr John a good friend; I have always appreciated the capacity of giving space to and enabling other people. I am grateful to the choir for the joy and beauty that their singing brought to liturgical celebrations, and for the atmosphere of community and participation it helped to create. Students over the years joined different parish groups and participated in various pastoral activities such as the catechetical programme offering religious education to children who were not attending Catholic schools, first communion and confirmation preparation, the choir, liturgical animation and au pair pastoral care.

Of course, some of the students were more gifted than others or more popular but all of them were loved very much. Among those still well remembered for his musical talent and exuberant character is Fabrizio Colombo. For a couple of years he organized and led a folk group for the Sunday evening Mass, but, in particular, he and some younger members of the parish community set up the "Open Arms" group who gave concerts here and there. But others too have left their mark: Jose Joaquim da Siva



Araujo, who went as missionary first to Mozambique and then to Malawi; and Jose Juan Valero Macia, who has been working for the last 12 years in Uganda. There was, too, Alan Dominic McGinty who unfortunately died at the age of 35, after a number of years of missionary work in South Africa. Among the various Comboni priests who exercised their ministry for a longer or shorter period at St Edward's we recall Fr Antonio Valdameri. a great friend of Fr de Felice, Fr John Baptist Antonini who went back first to Khartoum but is at present in Kenya, Fr Danilo Castello who continued to lecture at the Missionary Institute until its being closed in

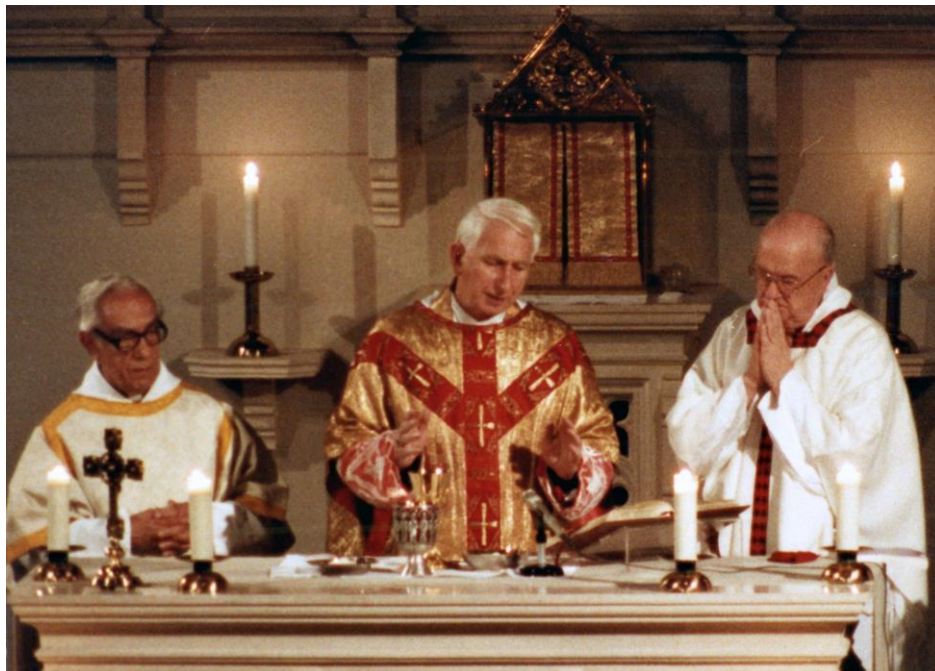
*Fr Joachin's Diaconate 1989 by Bishop Harvey*



2007 and who is now in charge of the centre of Comboni Spirituality in Limone on Lake Garda (the birthplace of St Daniel Comboni), Fr Tiziano Laurenti who returned to Malawi, Fr Lorenzo Carraro now in the Philippines, Fr Lorenzo Farronato now in Congo, Fr Carlos Alberto Nunes now in Zambia and Fr Teckie Hagos who is now serving in his home country of Eritrea.

Students and priests of The Priory who passed through St Edward's are now dispersed throughout the world. But they have taken with them, as a 'viaticum' – food for the journey -- the memories of the many friends whom they have come to know here and all that they learned from St Edward's Parish community. In their apostolic work and in the new Christian communities they serve, something of St Edward's Parish continues to live. The bond of love and friendship unites still. It is beyond time and space -- even more so since it is founded on love and friendship in Christ.

Fr Benito Di Marchi



Cardinal Hume concelebrates Mass with Fr Helm and Fr Antonini during a visit to the Parish in xxxx

## ANNEX 4

### Vocations to the Priesthood from St Edward's Parish

The Parish has been greatly blessed with many vocations to the priesthood over the past century. These are the priestly vocations of which we are aware but there may be others.

**Fr Edward Reany, MHM** lived in Cavendish Avenue, Finchley and attended St Edward's Parish with his family in the early years before St Philip's Parish was started. Fr Edward spent many years as a missionary in the Congo (called the Belgian Congo at the time) and was honoured several times by the King of Belgium. He died March 20th 1959.

**Dr William Reany, DD**, brother of Fr Edward, was ordained in 1912 and was a lecturer at St Edmund's College Ware for many years. He often visited St Edward's where he celebrated Mass and was present for the Consecration of the Church in 1934. He died in 1968 aged 80.

**Fr John Caraman, SJ** was born in Golders Green in 1905 and was educated at Stonyhurst College. He joined the Jesuits at Roehampton in 1924 and was ordained in 1939. Most of his priestly life was spent as a Missionary in Zimbabwe (called Rhodesia at the time) and Zambia.

**Fr Philip Caraman, SJ** was born in Golders Green in 1911 and, like his brother John, was educated at Stonyhurst College. He joined the Jesuits at Roehampton in 1936 and was ordained at Farm Street in 1945 where he remained for 16 years. In 1959, he was appointed vice-procurator for the cause of the Canonisation of the Forty English Martyrs and was in St Peter's when they were canonised in 1970 by Pope Paul VI. After spells lecturing in Church History at St Edmund's College Ware and in Norway he retired to a parish in Somerset where he died in 1990.

**Fr Bernard Magill, SJ** was born in Golders Green in October 1911 and lived in Templars Avenue. He was educated at Stonyhurst College from 1922-1929 and joined the Society of Jesus in 1929. He studied at Roehampton, Heythrop College and Campion Hall Oxford where he graduated in mathematics. Fr Paul was ordained in 1944 and taught at Stonyhurst College, St Ignatius College, Stamford Hill, Preston Catholic College and Newman 6<sup>th</sup> Form College in Preston. He died in Preston April 30th 1995.

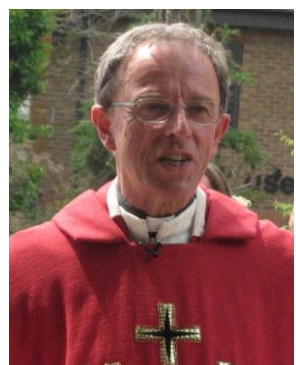
**Fr Paul Magill, SJ** was born in London in January 1913 and, like his brother, was educated at Stonyhurst College. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1935 and studied at Roehampton, Heythrop College and Campion Hall Oxford where he graduated in science. He was ordained at Stonyhurst in 1947 and taught there for almost 30 years, including a period as Rector, and was the moving spirit of the College's annual pilgrimage to Lourdes. In 1978, Fr Paul retired from teaching and became a parish priest. He suffered from a major heart attack in 1984 and died in Blackburn January 1st 1985.

**Fr Thomas le Blanc Smith**, OCSO began his life as Graham le Blanc Smith. He lived in Kingsley Way and was a parishioner of St Edward's. He worked at the Bank of England, and then studied for the priesthood at Mount Melleray and in Rome until 1940. He entered Mount Saint Bernard Abbey, the Cistercian monastery in Leicestershire and, as Fr Thomas, he was much involved in the music of the choir for many years, serving as organist and choirmaster. He taught philosophy and theology to students preparing for the priesthood and was active in ecumenical work with the Church of England. He gave spiritual guidance in the guesthouse and was greatly loved. Fr Thomas died peacefully in 2005, aged 92

**Fr Mike Smith, SJ** was born in Golders Green, baptised in the Church and began his schooling there until his family moved to South London in 1950. He joined the Jesuits in 1963 and was ordained in 1978. He taught in many Jesuit schools including Stonyhurst College and Wimbledon College where he was Head. Fr Mike later became Director of the Southwell House Youth Project in Hampstead until it closed in 2009. He recalls that he met many of the confirmation candidates, and some of those already confirmed, as they visited for a part of their preparation or for a retreat. He stopped telling them how long ago he was baptised there when he realised that it was well over half a century ago!



**Canon Robert Plourde** was born in 1944 and baptised at St Edward's by Fr Michael O'Dwyer. He was educated at Manor House Convent, Finchley, Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, East Finchley, and the Salesian College, Cowley, Oxford. After working for 3 years Canon Robert trained as a teacher at St Mary's College Strawberry Hill. and taught from 1967-69 at our Lady of Lourdes Primary School East Finchley.



Canon Robert began his studies for the Priesthood in 1969 at St Edmund's College Ware and following his Ordination in 1975 he served as a curate at Isleworth (1975-76) and St Mary's East Finchley (1976-1981) and was Vocations Promoter from 1979-83. Canon Robert was appointed Parish Priest of Gunnersbury in 1983 and then St. Bartholomew's, St. Albans 83 - 94 where he was also RC Ecumenical Chaplain to St. Albans Cathedral From 1995-98. Canon Robert worked for CAFOD preparing for the Millennium 95 – 98. He became Parish Priest of the Holy Apostles, Pimlico 98 – 2001 and St. Luke's, Pinner in 2001.



**Rev Andrew Connick** was baptised and grew up in St Edward's Parish. His parents were married there. In fact all the great sacramental moments in his life were celebrated in Golders Green. He became an altar server after his First Holy Communion and Bishop Vincent Nichols then confirmed him there in 1995. He attended primary school at Our Lady of Lourdes in Finchley, and then Queen Elizabeth's Boys School. Computing has long been his favourite hobby and, after a gap year, he went to Cambridge to read Computer Science in 2001. He says that those three years were fantastic – a real privilege – but it was also a graced time, and he became increasingly convinced that the Lord was asking something different of him. After much thought and prayer he spoke to the chaplain at Cambridge and to Fr John at home and he applied to the Diocese of Westminster the year after he graduated. He is now in his fifth year at Allen Hall seminary, still slightly surprised that the Lord should call him to the priesthood, but content that his life is in God's hands. Andrew will be ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop Vincent on Saturday June 26th 2010 in Westminster Cathedral.

### **PERMANENT DEACONS**

The Second Vatican Council restored the order of permanent deacons which had fallen into abeyance by the 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor decided to promote the training and ordination of permanent deacons. Today there are 16 Deacons in the Westminster Diocese including one of our parishioners in the diocese

**Deacon Graham Jenkins** was ordained by Cardinal Hume in 1982 and was closely involved with the work of the Council of Christians and Jews with his wife Phyl. He assisted both Fr Morley and Fr Helm in the Parish until his death in 1994.

**Deacon Anthony Clark** was ordained by Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor at St Edward the Confessor on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2008. He continues to serve in the parish as well as being a volunteer chaplain at the Royal Free Hospital.



*Deacon Anthony Clark at his Ordination by Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor*



## ANNEX 5

### Who was St Edward the Confessor?



St Edward, the Patron Saint of the parish, was also known as the Peacemaker. He was born in 1003, and reigned as King of this country from 1042 until 1066. He married the daughter of Earl Godwin, though there was no friendship between the two men, as the King was of Norman origin whilst Godwin was a Saxon.

Despite these internal squabbles, the reign was free from war either by Edward's personal passive nature, or, it was his good fortune that no other country was at logger-heads with this country. Edward was deeply preoccupied with religious matters, in his private life and his good works, one of which was to build the great Benedictine Abbey, St Peter's at Westminster, consecrated in 1065, but Edward died the following year before he had much time to enjoy the Extraordinary foundation.

*The Statue above the Sacristy Door*

His body was translated into the Abbey within a special shrine behind the High Altar. He was canonised in 1161.

Edward's unofficial title of Peacemaker remained with him, and for a long time after, and he was declared the Patron Saint of England. Around the year 1347 he was 'demoted' in favour of St George, as it was felt, in those war-full days, that he was hardly a good example to hold before men being recruited to join the army.

At the period of the Reformation, St Edward's shrine was despoiled, but now it has been restored with love, and has become once again a place of pilgrimage by Catholics and Anglicans.

His feast day on October 13th commemorates his translation to the Abbey.

## The Legend

The legend as told by Amy Steedman is that "The King's life was drawing to a close just as the great abbey at Westminster was completed, and Edward knew that this was so. It was said that as the King was on his way to the dedication of a chapel to St John, he was met by a beggar who asked alms of him. *'I pray thee help me, for the love of St John,'* cried the beggar. Now the King could not refuse such a request, for he loved St John greatly. But he had no money with him and Hugolin, his Steward, was not at hand, so he drew off from his finger a large ring, royal and beautiful, and gave it with a kindly smile to the poor beggar.

Not very long afterwards, the legend tells us, two English pilgrims far away in Syria lost their way, and wandered about in darkness and amidst great dangers, not knowing which road led to safety. They were almost in despair, when suddenly a light shone across their path, and in the light they saw an old man with bowed white head and a face of wonderful beauty. *'Whence do ye come?'* asked the old man, *'and what is the name of your country and your King?'* *'We are pilgrims from England,'* replied the wanderers, *'and our King is the saintly Edward, whom men call the Confessor.'* Then the old man smiled joyously, and led them on their way until they came to an inn. *'Know ye who I am?'* he asked. *'I am St John, the friend of Edward your King. This ring which he gave for love of me, ye shall bear back to him, and tell him that in six months we shall meet together in Paradise.'*



*St Edward's Shrine installed in 1996*

So the pilgrims took the ring and carried it safely over land and sea until they reached the King's palace, when they gave it back into the royal hand and delivered the message from St John. For a few days he lingered on, and then from the land of dreams he passed to the great Reality, and the old chronicles add the comforting words: 'St Peter, his friend, opened the gate of Paradise, and St John, his own dear one, led him before the Divine Majesty.'

A Short History - written by the late Rev Graham Jenkins, former deacon in the parish  
The Legend - extract from Amy Steedman.

In St Edward's Church, here is a magnificent wood carving by Siegfried Pietsch of Redbourne, Hertfordshire showing St Edward giving his ring to a beggar who asked for alms.

### **The arms of St Edward the Confessor**

The arms attributed to Edward the Confessor originated in the silver coins of his reign, which bore a cross between four doves: symbols of piety and gentleness. The arms assigned to the Confessor were Azure (blue) a Cross Flory between five gold Doves (see below). References to these may be found in the heraldry of Westminster Abbey, Westminster School, the City of Westminster and old Westminster Hospital.



The arms of St Edward can also be seen carved on the ends of the choir stalls on the church Sanctuary.

## ANNEX 6

**This reading which is in the Divine Office for the Feast of St Edward the Confessor on 13<sup>th</sup> October was taken from a sermon which the late Monsignor Ronald Knox preached in St Edward's on the Patronal Feast 1922**

*When we venerate St Edward, we venerate a failure. We do so advisedly. Not because success in life necessarily falls to the grasping and unscrupulous, so that success itself should be mistrusted by Christians as a sign of rascality. Not that there have not been great saints who were also great kings, great statesmen, great warriors – Saint Oswald, Saint Dunstan, Saint Joan of Arc. But because we will not let ourselves be blinded by the lure of worldly success so as to forget that the true statesmanship is exercised in the council chamber, and the true warfare fought on the battlefield of the human soul.*

*Ask yourself which you would rather have been in life, of all those great dead who lie in Westminster Abbey, and you will find it a difficult question to answer: there is so much that dazzles, so much that captivates the imagination. Would you rather have written this, have painted that, have built that, have discovered that, have won this triumph or have carried that enactment? You can hardly say. But ask yourself which of those great dead you would rather be now. Is there any Christian who would not ask to change places with the Confessor? Who would not choose his resting-place, there to wait for the opening of the great Doomsday Book, in which nothing is recorded of men but whether they meant good or evil, whether they loved or neglected God?*

*Many of those who sleep in King Edward's Abbey were devoted servants of their king, who left the world better for their passing. But this is certain, that true satisfaction came to them and true success crowned them only so far as their ambitions were for a cause, not for a party; for others, not for themselves. Man's happiness lies in devoting himself; his success in the offering he can make. And our Confessor was a successful man, yes, even in this world, because in his simple piety, in the unaffected generosity of his nature, he set himself to serve the men about him by easing their burdens, by relieving their necessities, by confirming them in their allegiance to the faith. Great opportunities passed him by, and he never marked them; he might have altered the dynastic history of England, have left us different manners and a different political constitution, if he had been other than he was. Instead, he left all these things to God's Providence; and God's Providence, using the ambitions of human agents as its puppets, moulded our history beyond man's expectations. The Conqueror, who diverted the stream of history, went to his grave disappointed, and lies there a historical memory. The Confessor, whose ambitions could be satisfied by finding a poor man his dinner, saw no corruption in death, and lives the patron of his fellow countrymen.*



## ANNEX 7

### A CENTURY OF MEMORIES

“The secret of a good memory is attention, and attention to a subject depends upon our interest in it. We rarely forget that which has made a deep impression on our minds.”

**Tryon Edwards** (1809 - 1894)

When compiling this history, the authors contacted a large number of present and past parishioners of St Edward's who were most generous with their memories of times gone by and it was felt that it would be a loss to our future if these were not included. So they have been included within the text itself. Those contributing were:-

Christopher Allmand  
Rosa Beard  
British Province of the Society of Jesus Archivists  
Dr Kate Charles  
Rev Andrew Connick  
Pat Danaher  
Evelyn Dixon  
Fr Stewart Foster Brentwood Diocesan Archivist  
Kate Fugallo  
Vanessa Gearson  
Peter Gormley  
Denis Hallisey  
Fr John Helm  
Sonja Kauss  
Bruce Kent  
Jenny and Kieran Kettleton  
Anne Lowthian  
Fr Benito di Marchi  
Anne McGarry  
Bernard, Moira and Pam McGrath  
National Archives – Public Records Office Kew  
The Staff of the National Newspaper Library Colindale  
Canon Robert Plourde  
Ann Rose  
Fr Nicholas Schofield and the staff of the Westminster Diocesan Archive  
Fr Mike Smith SJ  
St Edward's Parish Magazine contributors  
Noreen and Paul Steadman  
Gladys Tavener  
St Edward's Web Site and other Web Sites, and various newspaper articles

Our grateful thanks to all those listed above. If we have omitted any names please accept our apologies.

## The interior of the church



*Inside the church as it was in 1915*



*Inside the church today*

There is no charge for this book.  
You are invited to make a donation of £3 towards the publishing costs