

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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First Catholic churches

The first Catholic church in South Australia was St Patrick's on the corner of West Terrace and Grote Street, Adelaide. This building, which for several years served as a church-school, was opened in 1845. A tower was added in 1876. It was replaced by the present St Patrick's Church on Grote Street in 1914 and demolished in 1959. The colony's second church was St Mary's at Morphett Vale, opened in 1846 to serve a cluster of Irish settlers who had begun farming in the southern vales. It still stands.

St Francis Xavier's Cathedral is dedicated to the sixteenth-century Spanish Jesuit missionary St Francis Xavier, a patron of the Catholic Church in Australia. The first portion of the cathedral was designed by an English architect Charles Hansom in Early English gothic style. The foundation stone was laid in 1856 and the building was opened in 1858. A wide aisle was added to the eastern side in 1887. Further extensions, comprising two bays of the nave, a aisle on the western side, the Wakefield Street façade and the bottom stages of the tower, were begun in 1923 and opened in 1926. The tower was completed in 1996.

Migration

The great majority of South Australian Catholics in the nineteenth century came from Ireland or were the children of Irish immigrants. This common background helped to give Catholics a strong sense of cohesion and collective identity. However the Catholic community also included people of other national backgrounds: mostly from England, Scotland and Germany. The first group of Italian Catholics, mainly from Molfetta near Bari, settled at Port Pirie about 1900. After the Second World War, the arrival of large numbers of Catholic migrants from Italy, Poland, Germany and other European countries changed the shape of the church, especially in Adelaide. The archdiocese did not create separate 'ethnic' parishes but imported priests from Europe to minister as chaplains to the various national communities. From the 1970s further waves of migrants came to South Australia from Vietnam, the Philippines, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America. In 2001 28 per cent of the Catholics living in Adelaide had been born overseas and about one half had a non-English-speaking background. Sunday Mass in Adelaide is now regularly celebrated in twenty-two languages.

Catholic education

The Catholic Church has always regarded the education of the young as part of its mission. In the early years of South Australia the small number of Catholic schools in the colony were run by lay teachers. From the 1860s onwards, as elsewhere in Australia, it was the policy of the church to have every child in a Catholic school and to staff these schools with members of religious orders. To provide a sound basic Catholic education for the children of poor families, in 1866 a new religious congregation was founded: the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart (Josephites). From its base in Adelaide, this religious institute spread rapidly into many suburban and country areas. At the same time, many different religious congregations were invited to South Australia to begin schools. The first groups came from Ireland: Dominican Sisters (1868), Christian Brothers (1879), Sisters of Mercy (1880). Another community of Dominican Sisters came from England to North Adelaide (1883). The first party of Marist Brothers (1897) were from France, via Sydney. These were followed by the Sisters

of the Good Samaritan, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters), Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, De La Salle Brothers, and Salesian priests and brothers.

Until the 1940s about 80 per cent of Catholic children in South Australia were enrolled in Catholic schools, but since the Second World War that proportion has fallen. In 2004 it was 58 per cent. From the late 1960s, Catholic schools received regular grants from both state and Commonwealth governments. This enabled many religious orders to reduce or withdraw from teaching in schools and to take up new work. In every school they were replaced by lay teachers. As in every other Australian diocese, it was necessary to expand existing structures to deal with governments, allocate government funds and develop educational policies. During these years the old loosely organised network of Catholic schools was forged into a centralised and virtually lay-staffed Catholic education system in each diocese. A small number of schools operated by religious orders remain outside this system. The chief issues for Catholic schools in the twenty-first century are the maintenance and transmission of their Catholic identity and ensuring that they are financially accessible to a broad cross-section of the Catholic population.

Catholic piety

Catholic piety in the nineteenth century was based upon the idea that the world was a place of sin and that the goal of Christian life was to save one's soul and achieve eternal salvation. The Catholic Church was the visible society founded by Jesus Christ to transmit his teaching and to guide humanity to heaven. At the centre of the Church's worship was the Mass at which the priest continually pleaded the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary and through the words of consecration changed bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Jesus was thus present in the tabernacle on the altar in every Catholic church. Catholics were commanded by the church to attend Mass each Sunday and major holy days. The Mass was supplemented by private prayer and devotions to the Virgin Mary, the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to particular saints. This were assisted by devotional aids such as rosaries, medals, scapulars, prayer books, crucifixes, statues, holy cards and

pictures. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was expressed through the Forty Hours' Prayer in parishes and eucharistic processions. In South Australia these processions were held annually at Sevenhill from 1864 and at the Passionist monastery at Glen Osmond from 1902. During the 1930s there was the beginning of a shift in emphasis towards the idea that lay people could achieve holiness through engagement in the secular world.

The Second Vatican Council encouraged Catholics to draw more upon the Bible as a source of Christian life. Many Catholic devotions that had once been popular fell into disuse. During the last twenty years Catholic piety has become more varied in its expressions. These include retreats and prayer groups, Christian meditation groups, creation and feminist spiritualities, private reading of the Bible and other spiritual writings, eucharistic adoration, the rosary, the Divine Mercy novena, and Italian and Polish festivals in honour of popular saints. Individual Catholics make their own decisions about how best to meet their personal religious needs.

The Sisters of St Joseph

The Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart (Josephites) originated at Penola in the South East of South Australia in 1866 to provide Catholic schools for the children of poor Catholics. Bishop Geoghegan had laid down that the church should operate its own schools, independently of the government system, and that all Catholic children should receive a Catholic education. To meet this need, Mary MacKillop and Father Julian Tenison Woods devised a new form of religious sisterhood whose members would live in ordinary cottages among the people they served and wear a simple and distinctive brown habit. The sisterhood they founded grew rapidly, but the influx of so many young and often poorly educated women produced problems. Some Adelaide clergy were critical of its novel features. In 1871 they persuaded Bishop Sheil to excommunicate Mary MacKillop for alleged insubordination.

After five months the sentence was lifted and she was reinstated as superior. In 1874 the order's centralised system of government was approved by Rome and in 1888 its rule was fully ratified. Mary MacKillop (Mother Mary of the Cross) moved the headquarters of the order to Sydney in 1883 and died there in 1909. The Josephites expanded throughout Australia and New Zealand, founding

schools and charitable institutions in almost every diocese. The cause for Mary MacKillop's beatification was introduced in 1973 and she was beatified by Pope John Paul II in Sydney 1995.

Catholics in politics

Catholics, because they formed a small minority of the population, were not prominent in South Australian public life until the end of the nineteenth century. From the 1890s a few Catholics were appointed to ministries in the colonial government. Patrick McMahon Glynn, a South Australian delegate to the 1898 federal convention, was responsible for adding the words 'humbly relying upon the blessing of Almighty God' into the constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia (1901). As elsewhere in Australia, working-class urban Catholics tended to support the emerging Labor Party while rural Catholics were more likely to vote for conservative parties. For much of the twentieth century the majority of South Australian Catholic politicians were Labor. At the time of the Split in the Australian Labor Party in 1954-55, unlike Catholic bishops in Victoria and some other parts of Australia, Archbishop Beovich declined to support the (largely Catholic) Democratic Labor Party. The first Catholic premier of South Australia was Frank Walsh (1965-67). Since the 1960s the Catholic-Labor connection has weakened and Catholics have risen to prominence in the Liberal and National parties at both state and federal levels. There have been two Catholic governors of South Australia: Sir Dominick Daly (1862-68) and Dame Roma Mitchell (1991-96).

Ecumenism

For more than a century the relationship between Catholics and other Christian denominations was shaped by the doctrine that the Catholic Church was the one true church founded by Jesus Christ, therefore other Christian bodies lacked divine authority and were in doctrinal error. This viewpoint limited the possibility of religious cooperation. Catholics were urged by their clergy to maintain a religious and social separation from their Protestant neighbours and to join specifically Catholic sporting and social organisations. Marriages with non-Catholics were firmly

discouraged. On the other hand, Catholic priests were often on friendly terms with the clergy of other denominations and in many places, especially in the country, it was the practice for the whole community to support each church's fund-raising activities. The charitable work undertaken by Catholic women's religious orders was admired and supported by many who were not Catholics. From the 1940s Catholic leaders occasionally joined with the heads of other denominations to express a common view on public issues. The Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism encouraged Catholics to cooperate with other Christians and allowed them to take part in joint worship on special occasions. There was a new emphasis on what Christians had in common rather than on what divided them. Catholic clergy joined local ministers' associations and participated in ecumenical activities. In 1979 St Francis Xavier Seminary became a founding member of the Adelaide College of Divinity, an interdenominational grouping of theological colleges which awards degrees in theology from Flinders University. Since the 1990s the archdiocese of Adelaide has been a member of the South Australian Council of Churches. Many Catholics took up interchurch activity with enthusiasm, though others have regretted the loss of the old sense of being a distinct and separate group. Catholics are actively involved with other Christians in many different causes, including Right to Life and Birthline, support for refugees and asylum seekers, and other areas of social justice.

Social welfare work

In the early years of the colony of South Australia there were no separate Catholic charitable organisations or institutions. Father Michael Ryan, the first vicar-general of the Adelaide diocese, sat with clergy of other denominations on the Destitute Board which granted assistance to the very poor and ran the Destitute Asylum. During the 1860s, as the Catholic community grew larger, the bishops sought to establish separate institutions and societies for Catholics in need. The object was to demonstrate Christian charity and mercy within the Catholic community and to keep Catholics together. The first such Catholic institutions were in Adelaide: St Vincent de Paul's Orphanage (1866) and the Catholic female refuge (1867). In 1868 the Sisters of St Joseph (Josephites)

founded a Providence for aged and destitute persons which eventually evolved into an aged care facility, Flora McDonald Lodge at Cowandilla. In 1890 the Sisters of Mercy took over from the Josephites St Vincent de Paul's Orphanage at Goodwood, while the Josephites began an orphanage at Largs Bay (1906). The Little Company of Mary founded Calvary Hospital in North Adelaide (1900), the Little Sisters of the Poor opened a home for aged men and women at Myrtle Bank (1912), and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd began a home for girls referred from the courts at Plympton (1941). The Brothers of St John the Baptist ran a boys' reformatory at Brooklyn Park until 1941 when it became an orphanage. In 1944 the Salesians assumed control. The Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul began work among poor and homeless people of the city (1954). During the later twentieth century many new works were undertaken. The Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, founded in 1942, evolved into Catholic Family Services. During the 1990s, along with all other diocesan community welfare agencies, it adopted the name Centacare. Southern Cross Care, founded by the Knights of the Southern Cross, is the state's largest provider of aged care accommodation. Other services to the community are provided by the Daughters of Charity, the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St Joseph and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Vatican II and its aftermath

The Second Vatican Council, called by Pope John XXIII, met in Rome from 1962 to 1965. It passed a number of decrees that reshaped Catholic theology and worship and the church's stance towards the modern world. In the years before the Council reformist ideas circulating in Europe were starting to affect South Australian church life in areas such as religious education and liturgy. However, no one expected that the consequences of the Council would be so far-reaching. Two decrees brought immediate changes to Catholic life. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy led to the virtual disappearance of Latin in worship, the introduction of English in the Mass from 1964 and an emphasis on active participation by the congregation as a eucharistic community. Many Catholics welcomed these changes but some felt confused and resentful.

Since the Council the successive archbishops of Adelaide have set out to implement its decrees as fully as possible. In church government, reflecting new ideas on collegiality, they encouraged a certain amount of consultation in decision-making. In 1968 a Diocesan Pastoral Council was set up to advise the archbishop and each parish was encouraged to form a parish pastoral council. The future church, it was often said, would be based upon the idea of shared responsibility and collaborative ministry. In 1986 Archbishop Faulkner set up a Diocesan Pastoral Team to administer the archdiocese, comprising the archbishop, the vicar-general, a religious sister and (later) a lay woman. Archbishop Philip Wilson has continued to develop this structure and has appointed women to senior posts in the diocesan administration.