



Our Lady Of Lourdes Rivonia

The History of a Johannesburg
Catholic Parish

1931 - 2005

Andrew L Harington

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Preface

Early in 2002 I agreed to write a history of the Catholic Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, Rivonia. The request came from Arthur Davies, of the Parish Pastoral Council. I think the understanding was that I should produce a sketch, about twenty-five to thirty pages, in about four months. Instead I have produced a short book, over more than four years! Obviously the subject has run away with me, which I should not have allowed it to do. But what's done is done. I owe Arthur an apology, which is given without reservation, though honesty compels me to admit that I do not feel extreme remorse. I have enjoyed the work, most of the time.

Since oral evidence, though occasionally important, frequently fascinating, and usually freely given, is not enough, and can be even more misleading than written sources, I have made numerous visits to the Catholic Archives, at the Parish of St Charles, Victory Park, Johannesburg. There, in back numbers of *The Southern Cross*, in *Catholic Directories*, and in various other published works and unpublished documents I learned something of the period c. 1925 to 2000. One of the most helpful of the MSS was a brief description of the situation and developments in Rivonia, generally, and at the Mission, particularly, in the 'fifties, by Rev. Fr J.E. Brady.

Kit McLoughlin, a pillar of Rivonia parish, gave me the benefit of his very considerable knowledge of the liturgy and organization of the Catholic Church. In addition he, and also two other pioneer parishioners, Michael and Angela Waterkeyn, provided much invaluable information concerning the past of Our Lady of Lourdes, based on many years in the thick of things. I am exceedingly grateful to these veterans, and also to Rev. Fr Michael Austin SJ, and Fr Graham Rose, who read the pages concerning their ministries in the parish. They both gave me helpful information and comments, for which I am grateful, as well as their approval, much to my relief. But the main sources have been the minutes of the parish council, and the parish bulletins and news letters. Without them this book could not have been written.

I am indebted to Fr Rose, who gave me access to these vital documents, and to the secretaries in the parish office, who helped me find the relevant files. Similarly, I am extremely grateful to Ms Catherine Page, Administrative Secretary to the Northern

Province of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who introduced me to the archives, pointed me in the right direction, and made many sensible suggestions, besides providing coffee, cake, counsel and encouragement.

The book concludes with a quotation: *Laudetur Jesus Christus ...*!, the motto of the OMI. Its use is particularly appropriate as OMI priests have played a huge part in the history of Catholicism in Rivonia. I am obliged to the Rev. Fr Peter Galloway, O.M.I. Provincial of the Northern Province of South Africa, who suggested that I use it.

Introduction

On 11 February 1962 the Rt Rev. Hugh Boyle, Catholic Bishop of Johannesburg, blessed the hall which had been built by the lay members of The Rivonia Catholic Mission, on part of a large property belonging to The Catholic Diocese of Johannesburg. The intention was to use the building, which stood and still stands on Rivonia Road, at what is now the north-east corner of the North Road crossing, for religious and social purposes, until funds had been raised and a 'proper' church, with a permanent altar, had been constructed and dedicated. The original building would then have become what it had been intended to be, a parish hall and nothing more. But for various reasons no purposefully designed church has been built.

Instead, on 11 February 1992, exactly thirty years after Bishop Boyle had blessed it, the hall-church became a 'proper' church when it was dedicated by Bishop Patrick Zithulele Mvemve, Auxiliary Bishop of Johannesburg.

Since that great day the parish has continued to grow as vigorously as ever. This short book is an account of that growth, infused, as it was and is, with the faith, determination, generosity and hard work of numerous clergy and very many lay people. Despite its many shortcomings I trust that they will accept it as a tribute to them all. Researching and writing it has been a pleasure and a privilege.

A.L. HARINGTON

Rivonia, January 2006

Chapter I

The Carmel, the Mission and the Grail

The first White people to settle on the Highveld in the area now known as Sandton were Boer trekkers, most of whom arrived in the middle 'forties of the nineteenth century. Ten years later one P.J. Marais found traces of alluvial gold in the Jukskei and Klein Jukskei (the Braamfontainspruit) rivers, but there was no real interest in the area until some years after George Harrison's discovery of the huge gold deposit subsequently known as 'the Main Reef' (1886), and not much even then, for the reef was some fifteen kilometres to the south, along the east - west line of the Witwatersrand. It was only in 1902, after the South African War, that the township of Wynberg was proclaimed, to be followed a year later by Edenburg, later Rivonia, on the greater part of Rietfontein farm. Athol, Parkmore, New Brighton and Sandown followed, in 1904 - 1905. Altogether these townships took up the greater part of the adjoining farms: Rietfontein, Witkoppen, Driefontein, Zandfontein, and Cyferfontein.

Well to the north of booming early twentieth century Johannesburg, to which they were only linked by dirt tracks, without any form of public transport, and because the holdings into which they had been divided, besides being too small for profitable farming, were chronically short of water, the development of these townships was exceedingly slow, in fact for long periods there was hardly any change at all. However the land was very cheap, and no rates were levied, so that as the years went by a few Johannesburg *nouveaux riches* set up large country retreats and shooting boxes. They built some substantial houses, at least two of them reputedly designed by no less an architect than Herbert Baker. At the same time a slowly growing number of very much less well-off people, living in scattered, simple, extremely modest corrugated iron, brick and stone dwellings, some of the oldest only slightly better than shacks, scraped a living by selling the flowers, vegetables and poultry which they struggled to raise.

By the late 'twenties little had changed, apart from the establishment of a few 'tea gardens', where people could come and spend a quiet weekend or a restful day, picnicking, with rugs on the grass, sandwiches, cold meats and chicken arranged on plates, wine

bottles opened, and gramophones playing, as long as they were kept wound up! Or they might sit at tables, and be served with tea and cream scones, or perhaps milk tart and cake. Such a place was Sleepy Hollow, the later Rivonia Inn, which opened as early as 1912. There were thatched buildings, set around a lawn, with monkeys and parrots in cages, while a stile gave access to a footpath leading down to the Braamfontein spruit.

Wagstaff's Tea Garden was a similar, though possibly not so successful establishment, for its site was not as attractive as that of Sleepy Hollow. It consisted of a small house and outbuildings, on four and a half acres, now the site of Rivonia Square, a very late twentieth century shopping mall. Wagstaff's entrance was from that part of the Rivonia Road which became Rivonia Boulevard when Rivonia Road was realigned and widened some thirty years ago. Eighty years ago it was a dirt road leading north, then west, along what is now 12th Avenue, and then again northwards, as the present Rietfontein Road, to eventually join a similar track, the Witkoppen Road, running east-west. Today (2006) these two old roads are separated by a major highway, the N1 or Western Bypass.

Catholicism came to the area in the late twenties. In 1928 Pope Pius XI (*regnabat* 1922 - 1939) had issued a pastoral letter requesting the building of a seminary in every diocese or vicariate throughout the world! At that time the poor Mission Territory of Southern Africa relied mainly on Europe for its priests, though in December 1930 Bishop Francis Demont SCJ opened a small seminary in Aliwal North. Two years earlier Bishop David O'Leary OMI, Vicar Apostolic of the Transvaal (1925 - 1950), had decided, doubtless with the pope's request in mind, to acquire land on which a seminary might eventually be built.

Rivonia seemed a suitable place. It was reasonably close to Johannesburg but sufficiently distant for land to be very cheap. Bishop O'Leary accordingly obtained a large property about three kilometres south of Wagstaff's. It lay between what are today First and Third Avenues, and was bounded on the west by Rivonia Road, then known as the Main Road, and by the Sand spruit on the east.

The bishop then reported to Rome that he had a suitable site for a seminary. But in the depths of the depression nothing more could be done. Only in 1948 was a national seminary for training diocesan priests opened, in Queenstown. In 1952 it moved to Waterkloof, Pretoria, as St John Vianney, to be run, initially, by the Franciscans.

In the early 1970's, when, despite various problems, St John Vianney and St Peter's, Hammanskraal, were going well, it had become clear that a seminary would never be built in Rivonia. So towards the end of that decade the Diocese of Johannesburg sold the land between the Sand spruit, First Avenue and the later North Road, for residential purposes. The relevant part of North Road is actually a middle 1980's extension, on expropriated ground, which explains why the church, built more than twenty years earlier, is rather close to the road. The names of four short side streets in the area, 'The Grail', a religious movement for lay women, and 'O'Leary', 'Whelan' and 'Boyle', the first three bishops of Johannesburg, remind observant Catholics that their Church once owned the ground on which they are standing. Twenty acres, from the North Road extension to Third Avenue, were retained by the diocese. Finally, in the last decade of the twentieth century, after numerous delays and prolonged negotiation, the northern half of this remaining portion was also sold. In the opening years of the new century 'office parks' and town houses were built over it.

The Catholic Parish Church of Our Lady of Lourdes stands where it has stood for nearly forty-five years, in the south-west corner of the remaining ten acres, which remain diocesan property. Situated on what is still a fairly large site, where real estate has become very expensive, Our Lady of Lourdes enjoys ample parking, on site, in an area where street parking is inadequate and unsafe.

Buying land, as a first step towards building a seminary, had not been the only thing in Bishop O'Leary's mind in 1928. That same year, three years after becoming Vicar Apostolic of the Transvaal, he went to Rome, making his *Visitatio ad Limina Apostolorum*, and then went on to England, where he visited Darlington Carmel. There he asked the mother prioress to consider establishing a convent in Johannesburg, to serve as a much needed 'power house of prayer', in the sometime mining camp which was to be proclaimed a city in a few months' time. This idea had been suggested to the bishop by his fellow OMI, the Rev. Fr Pat Ryan, parish priest at The Church of the Holy Trinity, Braamfontein, from 1906 until his death in April 1935. Presumably the recent departure of two ladies from Holy Trinity, to enter Darlington Carmel as postulants, had inspired this idea of Fr Ryan's as well as the arrival of numerous religious orders and congregations in southern Africa during the twenties and 'thirties.

Bishop O'Leary's wish was acceded to, as bishops' wishes generally are, and eventually, on 15 August 1931, seven Discalced Carmelite sisters sailed for South Africa in the SS *Adolph Woermann*, a modest cargo ship with passenger accommodation. Five of the group, Sister Anne, who would be Mother Prioress of the new foundation, and Sisters Raphael, Mary Gabriel, Catherine, and Elizabeth were English, the other two, Sisters Inez and Natalie, were the South Africans from Holy Trinity, Braamfontein. There was a third South African, Miss Hilary Rowland in the party, making it eight in all. Though not yet a nun, Hilary Rowland was to become the first postulant of the Rivonia community. She had travelled to England a few months before, with the intention of entering the Darlington monastery, but when it was decided to establish a new foundation in Johannesburg she returned to South Africa, becoming Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus when she received the habit at Rivonia in April 1933.

Sr Mary Gabriel, who had been born Margaret Walmsley, in Blackpool, England, in 1889, and who had made her profession at Darlington Carmel on 16 December 1913, later became Rev. Mother Gabriel of the Blessed Trinity, and Mother Prioress at Rivonia. In November 1952 she went to the Cape, to establish a new Carmel at Wynberg, Cape Town. She remained a prominent figure in the twentieth century South African Church until her death on 24 June 1985. When she left Rivonia Mother Gabriel was succeeded as prioress by Mother Dorothy, and eventually, at Wynberg, by Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus (Hilary Rowland).

No ocean greyhound, the *Adolph Woermann* only arrived in Table Bay on 11 September. It would have been a tedious voyage, and an uncomfortable one, in a small ship, about twenty years before stabilizers were thought of, but special arrangements had been made for the sisters' accommodation, and they enjoyed the experience, or said so. At least they had got their daily Mass, for there were two Catholic priests on board, Mgr Klemann OSFS, the newly appointed Vicar Apostolic of Great Namaqualand, and his secretary, Fr Schmidt.

The party had very little time in Cape Town, for their final disembarkation would be in Durban, and the *Adolph Woermann* was sailing the very next day, but they went ashore, visited at least one convent and the Cathedral of St Mary of the Flight into Egypt,

where they paid their respects to Mgr Kolbe.¹ After arriving in Durban the little party took the train for Johannesburg, where Bishop O'Leary met them at the station. Then at last they were driven by car to Rivonia. What they must have thought as they bumped down the rough and dusty dirt track which was the Rivonia Road can only be imagined. Darlington and the northern English countryside must have seemed very far away. Their final destination and new home was nothing other than the former Wagstaff's Tea Garden, which, its buildings suitably modified, and, as the years went by, altered and enlarged, was to serve as their convent.

That same day, Friday, 18 September 1931, the Rivonia Carmel of St Therese of the Child Jesus came into being, with the celebration of the Holy Mass by Bishop O'Leary. It was the first foundation from the then century old Darlington Carmel, and the first contemplative community in South Africa. In the event the sisters stayed in Rivonia for over sixty years. But in the last decade of the twentieth century they were no longer in sparsely populated open countryside; they were in a growing, busy and crowded shopping cum business mall! So in 1992 they moved to a more suitable location, a disused Portuguese convent in Brentwood Park, Benoni North, and for a time the Angelus bell no longer rang out across the office blocks, shops, flats, town, cluster and dwelling houses of Rivonia. Happily it would eventually sound again from the tower of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Bishop O'Leary had of course bought the tea garden expressly for the Carmel monastery, and there were good reasons for what some people may have thought a surprising choice. Wagstaff's would have been having considerable competition from nearby but better situated Sleepy Hollow, and that may have helped the bishop to get the property at a good price. It was a quiet and remote place, ideal for a community intent on contemplation and prayer. True, providing the sisters with their daily Mass might at first be a little difficult, but that problem would disappear once the new seminary opened just up the road!

The sisters had to have their daily Mass, so, incredibly enough, for weeks after their arrival the bishop visited each day to celebrate. All too frequently, especially as summer

¹ During his life and for some time after his death Friedrich Carl Kolbe (*George 28.9.1854 - +Cape Town 12.1.1936), Catholic convert and priest, theologian, philosopher, poet, writer, critic, botanist and close friend of Gen. J.C. Smuts, was deservedly known as 'the Newman of the Cape'.

advanced, heavy rain made the Rivonia Road impassible, so that he would have to use that part of the Blue Hills road which is today Woodmead Drive. He would have turned left at the corner of Witkoppen Road, and descended the hill to cross the Sandspruit at a drift, long since replaced by a low level bridge. A little further on he would have reached the Rivonia Road, with the Carmel in distant sight on his left. If the water level of the Sandspruit was too high to risk driving his car through² the bishop would remove his shoes and socks, turn up his trousers, and wade across, leaving the vehicle in the care of Pete, the African man who accompanied him on these expeditions into the wilderness. Having resumed his footwear he would have started walking: it was about six kilometres to the convent and back, a lot of walking in a black suit, especially during summer. When he returned the water level would probably have dropped, but he would almost certainly have had to do some more wading, for it is unlikely that Pete would have been able to drive.

There was no chance of such an arrangement lasting. With the envisaged seminary an increasingly remote possibility, it became clear that the Rivonia Carmel had to have a resident chaplain, who would also minister to Catholic laity scattered over a considerable area around the convent. The Rev. Fr W. Ratcliffe CSSR, was the first of several chaplains who were also priests-in-charge of what became The Rivonia Catholic Mission, St Therese of the Child Jesus. He was followed by the Rev. Fr L. Du Manoir, STL. Meanwhile the Carmel had taken root and was growing, so much so that on 27 June 1934 a small party of nuns could be sent from Rivonia to found another monastery outside Bulawayo.

The mission was certainly needed, for although initially there were not that many lay Catholics in the vicinity their number was increasing. In accordance with custom, and thanks to the kind hospitality of the sisters, they were welcome to attend Mass in the monastery chapel. In 1934 a baptismal register had to be opened; from 1938 the Catholic Directories give a telephone number, Rivonia 24, and, more significantly, Mass times, Sunday and Weekdays, at 08.00 am, with, in addition, Benediction on Sundays at 05.00 pm.

In 1939 the Rivonia Mission actually acquired an out station, Leeuwkop Farm Colony, though it was soon closed. These developments, and also the provision of a bus service to Rosebank, ramshackle and infrequent, are evidence for the increasing settlement

² Seventy years ago car ignition systems were far more susceptible to water than they are today.

of the area by Whites in the years immediately preceding the Second World War. In that time of the Great Depression not all the growing number of people in the area had cars, while the roads, or tracks, were not only few and far between, but appallingly rough. Some found it easier to ride horses or walk to Mass.

Lay attendance at Mass in the Carmel chapel was always seen as a temporary solution, though as is the way with many temporary solutions, it lasted a considerable time, thirty years in fact! During the service the laity occupied the nave of the chapel, while the nuns remained behind a grill, or screen, at one side of the sanctuary, through which they were able to receive communion without themselves being seen. Two veteran parishioners remember them as 'shuffling shadowy hooded shapes behind the grill, chanting a most mournful dirge, reminiscent of graveyards! Be that as it may the Catholics in the area had a great affection for the sisters, and were correspondingly grateful to them.

Growth quickened after the return of peace in 1945, as the South African economy expanded, and Johannesburg spread northwards. More and more people entered what would eventually be Sandton, Randburg and Midrand. They were buying land, building more substantial houses, and generally settling down. Bryanston, which had been proclaimed a township in 1940, was especially successful.

Quite a number of the new arrivals were fugitives from the 'Peoples' Democracies', the quaint label assumed by the Communist tyrannies of eastern Europe; most of them were Poles, and devoted Catholics. Quite a number of them had been had been wealthy but all had become poor after being robbed of their property when eastern Europe was 'liberated' by the Russians. In Rivonia, according to an eye witness, some of them were 'selling tiaras to buy chicken farms! Despite their difficult position, and indeed despite suffering real hardship, they did much for the new parish, and were for many years a driving force within it. In the early 'sixties, when the hall-church had been opened for worship, they presented the nascent parish with an icon, depicting the Black Madonna of Shostakova. This was displayed in the building for many years, until the community heard that a member of the clergy had expressed dislike for it. Angry and offended, they took it back!

Though it was undoubtedly growing in the late 'forties Rivonia was still just a *dorp*, with a little post office, housed in a shop corner, a modest police station, a garage, a bottle store, a grocery store and a few other shops along that part of Rivonia Road which

is today Rivonia Boulevard. Dominating all was the imposingly high (or so it then appeared) wall of the convent.

The Rev. Fr H. Van Hommerich OMI, who had been chaplain at Rivonia since 1939, died in June 1949. During an interregnum various priests would have looked after the mission and the Carmel, until the Rev. Fr J.E. Brady OMI (*5.10.1905 - +9.8.1997) arrived on 2 November 1950. An enthusiastic amateur historian and archivist, Fr Brady had been released from parish work by Bishop William Patrick Whelan, Bishop O'Leary's successor (1950 - 1954) in the Diocese of Johannesburg, in order to work on his projected *History of the Catholic Church in South Africa*, and also begin preparations for the centenary of the Oblates in South Africa, in 1952.

Fr Brady has told how he came to Rivonia under the fond impression that it would be a quiet place to do his writing! Instead he found that his duties as priest in charge of The Rivonia Mission and chaplain at the Carmel took up a great deal of his time and energy. The monastery itself would have been quiet enough, but beyond its walls the area was stirring into life. The chapel, increasingly crowded every Sunday morning, was serving not just Rivonia itself, but also Bryanston, Morningside, Sandown and even comparatively distant Halfway House, later Midrand. In 1950 there were about fifty regular Sunday communicants; a few years later that number had trebled, and a growing number of lay people were attending Mass during the week. In addition the number of baptisms increased year by year, twelve in 1954, and twenty-one in 1961, the last year at the Carmel chapel. That chapel had never been intended to hold more than about seventy worshippers at the most; it had become clear that development of the area had reached the stage where it was high time to think of a parish, with a fairly large church. So it was that during 1954 what had been little more than a vague awareness that some time soon something would have to be done became purposeful planning, with a growing sense of urgency. It is significant that 1954 was a Marian Year and that Fr Brady and almost all his predecessors at the Rivonia Mission had been Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This was to have much to do with the future parish's enduring association with the Holy Virgin.

None the less though the Rivonia Mission laity did what they could to raise money for what was referred to as 'future Church Extension in Rivonia', the fund did not grow as quickly as it might have. Money was needed for other things. It was not a wealthy area, and many people struggled to find money for the Catholic education of their children.

Then, in order to keep in touch with his growing but still scattered flock Fr Brady had perforce to rely on the kind help of parishioners for transport. Not surprisingly this did not work very well, so a committee was formed to raise money to buy him an Austin A40, a popular small car in its day. Finally, during the 'fifties all the Catholics in the diocese were expected to contribute to the Catholic Centre Appeal, and to a building fund for a new cathedral, in Saratoga Avenue, Doornfontein. It was to replace the sixty year old pro-cathedral at 130 Kerk Street, the Church of the Immaculate Conception, which had become quite inadequate.

In addition to the Rivonia Mission and the Carmel monastery there was another Catholic institution in 1950s' Rivonia. That was The Grail Centre. The Grail was a worldwide movement of devout lay women, motivated by a desire to share in Christ's redeeming love for the world. Inspired by an idea of Rev. Fr Jacques van Ginneken, a Dutch Jesuit, it had been founded in 1921, in the aftermath of the disastrous First World War. In 1936, with memories of that terrible conflict still fresh, and with another one looming, a group of South African women contacted The Grail in England, and, with the encouragement of numerous priests, established the movement in Johannesburg.

Initially they met on Saturday afternoons at the presbytery of the Kerk Street pro-cathedral, where they studied Grail programs on the Gospels, on Divine Love, on the Mass, on Charity, on Marriage, and other themes. That was in preparation for campaigns on them, during which they composed simple leaflets for distribution at various city churches. While continuing such work they moved on to become involved in organising meetings, courses and retreats at the Catholic Library and Oratory in the city centre.

After Fr Whelan became Bishop of Johannesburg (1950) he visited the Grail's International Centre in the Netherlands, and formally requested them to establish a Grail Centre in Johannesburg, with a full time staff. Doubtless in doing so he had in mind the South African bishops' expressed desire to establish an institute for the formation of lay people. However that may have been The Grail bought a portion of land in Rivonia, opposite the south-western corner of the Church's broad acres. Their intention was to establish a dedicated Grail Centre there, but in the meantime they established themselves in the buildings standing on their ground, an old farm house and its adjacent barn. These became a *de facto* Grail Centre, staffed by Frances van der Schott and Josepha Gail (Netherlands), Margaret van Gilse (Belgium) and Aloy Honeywill, who became a

Carmelite nun in 1955. The barn was partitioned into cubicles, an acceptable temporary arrangement. Architect Michael Waterkeyn, one of the growing number of Catholics attending mass at the Carmel chapel, was engaged to design the Laity Institute which the bishops wanted, but which, like The Grail House, was never built. However for a time it seemed that The Grail might well become a permanent feature of Catholic Rivonia.

As soon as they had settled The Grail ladies busied themselves with Church matters, organising weekend sessions for young women on retreats, holiday camps for high school girls, Family Days, Professional Women's Days, Sunday events, Nativity plays, in which the children of Rivonia parish took part, and also Advent and Lent programmes. They networked with the adult and junior sections of the Catholic Federation, and also the Catholic Nurses' Guild, the Kolbe Society, and the Joint Council of Catholic Africans and Europeans, i.e. of Black and White South Africans, in the terminology of the early 'fifties. Catechetical training was conducted in one of two cottages standing on the diocese's property some distance to the north-east of the farm house. One of them housed 'The National Catechetical Centre', the other the Centre's secretariat and resource library. These cottages, eventually quite tumbledown, survived into the 'nineties.

The Rivonia Centre became a 'landing pad' for Grail women from the United States *en route* to study or take up posts at the newly established (1945) Pius XII University College at Roma in Lesotho. They would spend some days recuperating after a strenuous journey, recovering from what later became known as 'jet lag', generally composing themselves and getting their thoughts together, before travelling on. It was from Rivonia that Grail women went out to found The Grail in Uganda.

Veterans of the Rivonia Grail remembered it with mixed feelings. It was in a beautiful situation. To the east, over what is now Morningside Manor and Gallo Manor, the veld, open but for towering bluegums, scattered veld trees and bushes, stretched away into the distance, across the Sandspuit, then a sparkling stream. Spring was rather dry and dusty, so the early summer rain was welcome. So was fruit, especially peaches, in the orchard, flowers and green grass covering the veld, water tumbling over the rocks in the river, and warm tranquil evenings. But as the season went on there would be ferocious thunder storms, torrential downpours, with lightning, hail and floods, while muddy water streamed across the Rivonia Road and down towards the river. On especially bad days, and, all too often, especially bad nights, water poured through the house, the barn, the

cottages, and, once it had been built, the hall-church of Our Lady of Lourdes. Armed with buckets and mops The Grail ladies did such damage control as they could in all these buildings. When lightning caused trip switches to jump, as it often did, brave and hardy souls would splash through mud and water to the meter box, open it and restore the power. When winter came the grass dried out, and it was time to burn fire breaks around the buildings and the gardens. Jute sacks were collected, soaked in water and kept ready to hand to control that hazardous operation. They would also be used to beat out approaching grass fires. After all this excitement and exertion autumn was always welcome. Since Rivonia was on the Highveld it was the best time of year. It was not uncomfortably hot and violent, as summer tended to be, it was not unpleasantly cold, as winter usually was, and it was not as dry and dusty as spring.

All in all the Rivonia Grail was a pleasant place, one of character, and good for residential sessions and retreats. However, nearly twenty kilometres from the centre of Johannesburg, it was unsuitable for short afternoon or evening sessions and meetings. Apart from a rickety bus in the early morning, and again in the late afternoon, public transport was non-existent. But The Grail had an enormous, possibly insuperable problem, one which had nothing to do with weather, distance, or rough roads. That was the National Party government's (1948 - 1994) apartheid policy. Multi-racial gatherings were illegal, holding them was risky, and a multi-racial residential college unthinkable! As the area became increasingly built up, with peri-urban and remote Rivonia becoming part of urban Sandton, The Grail's colour blind character became increasingly apparent, and increasingly objectionable to some people, especially but not only the authorities.

In 1957 a second Grail centre was established, on the Berea, much nearer to central Johannesburg. Three years later it moved to Observatory, and four years after that to Parktown, to be nearer the University of the Witwatersrand. The last move was to Auckland Park (1994), where it remains, close to The Johannesburg University. For a considerable time the Rivonia and City Centres complemented each other, but eventually, when it had become quite certain that the long awaited Laity Institute would never materialise, the Rivonia Grail was closed.

To return to Rivonia itself; by the middle 'fifties Johannesburg Bishop Hugh Boyle (1954 - 1976) had become well aware that the place had become much more than a mission; it was a parish in all but name, and as such constituted an urgent and growing

problem. A long step towards what would at least be an interim solution was taken in 1956 when the Rev. Fr Terence H. Kelly OMI came to Rivonia as Carmel chaplain and priest in charge of the Rivonia Mission. Fr Kelly was still there in 1962, when Bishop Boyle blessed the 'hall-church' of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Chapter II

Our Lady of Lourdes; the Hall-Church

Fr Kelly (*1899 - +1988) had been born in Greytown, Natal. He was professed an Oblate of Mary Immaculate on 8 September 1922, and ordained priest on 2 June 1928. Living in Natal, and a member of a quintessentially Catholic family, he had been surrounded by Oblates for much of his life. His elder brother, Rev. Fr Brian Kelly, was one, as was his uncle, the Rev. Fr Vincent Kelly (+1937). The Rev. W. Quirk, of the Eastern Province was his great uncle, and a great aunt of his had been the first Mother General of the Assumption Sisters in South Africa.

Fr Kelly was a man of wide and long experience, experience which made him a good choice for Rivonia, where a church needed to be built. He had been assistant priest at Greyville, Durban (1929 - 1934), before becoming parish priest at St Patrick's, Benoni (1934 - 1937). From 1937 to 1943 he was parish priest at the Kerk Street pro-cathedral. He then went on to St Patrick's, La Rochelle, where he remained, as parish priest, until 1949, and where he played a leading role in building the parish Church of the Holy Family at Turffontein. During 1949 - 1951 he was assistant to the provincial of the Oblates, at St Charles, Victory Park, before himself becoming provincial, from 1951 to 1954. During 1954 - 1955 he was briefly at The Good Shepherd, Orange Grove and Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Vereeniging, before going to Rivonia in 1956. According to Fr Brady Fr Kelly had been transferred to Rivonia, 'for health reasons', after a nervous breakdown. If so Rivonia did him nothing but good; he seems to have made a remarkable recovery! He remained in the nascent parish until 1963, where his monument, altered, adapted and enlarged over the years, is the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Building what was originally a 'hall-church' was certainly a high point in Fr Kelly's ministry, but it was by no means the end of it. From Rivonia this much loved, deservedly popular and seemingly indefatigable priest went on to numerous other parishes, before retiring, in 1987, to the Holy Cross Home in Garsfontein, eastern Pretoria, where he died shortly afterwards, on 2 January 1988.

In addition to being expected to minister to the Catholic laity of far northern Greater Johannesburg, and to act as chaplain to the Carmel, Fr Kelly came to Rivonia charged with building a hall which would be used for worship until a dedicated church had been completed, the usual and most effective way of getting new parishes off the ground. Accordingly one of his first actions upon arrival was to form a committee from among the regular attendants at the Carmel chapel, a committee whose task it would be to push ahead with this project with all due speed. The overcrowding at the chapel was such that the initial steps, making people aware that a proper parish church was needed, and that money would have to be found, were not difficult.

So it was that after some three years matters were sufficiently far advanced for Fr Kelly to write to the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board (28.5.1959) in Pretoria, formally requesting permission to erect a hall, which would also serve as a church, on stand number 10, Rivonia, immediately south of Third Avenue, and part of the large tract of land which Bishop O'Leary had bought some thirty years before.

Permission granted, he asked Mr Jan van Gemert, architect and builder, who attended Mass at the Carmel and who had designed what was then the new Catholic Church in Orlando West, to draw up plans for a spacious hall-church. It was to seat some 400 people, and be sited at what would later become the corner of Rivonia Road and an extended North Road. The axis of the new building lay east - west, with its main entrance at the western end, off Rivonia Road. Since it would be used as a hall, as well as for worship, until such time as a dedicated church could be built, there was a stage at the eastern end, on which a temporary altar would be placed.

Fr Kelly's energy and enthusiasm were infectious, and the Catholics in the area responded with a will. Since the site was on unencumbered Church property Bishop Boyle was willing to leave the question of payment by the parish in temporary abeyance, though he made it clear that once debts on the construction of the hall-church building had been wiped out the debt to the diocese would be the first charge against the collections of the people. In the event those debts amounted to R14 000, a considerable sum over forty-five years ago. But at least the nascent parish had a respite, and every cent raised could for the time being go towards bricks, mortar and construction costs. This meant that work began sooner than might otherwise have been expected, and went ahead with commendable speed.

According to Fr Brady Fr Kelly '... tried to be the contractor himself, and to employ sub-

contractors. Presumably that was with a view to saving money, though Fr Brady says nothing more.

The new hall-church was completed in 1961, and promptly taken into use, though some of the Rivonia faithful continued to attend Mass at the Carmel chapel, especially during the week. Just who celebrated is not entirely clear; possibly Fr Kelly and his successor at Rivonia, Rev. Fr John O'Donoghue, at least until 1965. The available sources are more than usually thin here, but it appears that from that year until 1970 the Carmel Sisters' spiritual welfare was the responsibility of Rev. Fr Richard McNab OMI. He was resident chaplain at the monastery, with his own separate telephone line. Every Sunday Fr McNab would say Mass at the Carmel, before going up to Bryanston, where history was repeating itself, with an increasing number of lay people gathering in the chapel of the Ursuline Convent. These visits continued until, on Easter Sunday 1967, Rev. Fr Roman Byrne CP commenced his ministry at what then became the Parish of the Resurrection.

At the Carmel Fr McNab was succeeded by Fr Philip Erasme, who died at the convent in 1974. He was followed by Fr Dan Lucey, who stayed until the late 'seventies. After him came, briefly, Fr David Jones, and then Fr Michael Tuohy, who stayed until shortly before the convent moved, in 1992. The priests in charge of Our Lady of Lourdes would also have given spiritual care and support when circumstances made it necessary. In return the nuns would feed them, an informal arrangement which seems to have come to an end in 1973, when the presbytery at Our Lady of Lourdes was provided with a more adequate kitchen!

Rivonia's new building was formally opened by Bishop Boyle on 11 February 1962, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. A Pontifical High Mass, with The Grail providing a choir, followed the bishop's blessing of the building, which he placed under the patronage of Our Lady, under the title of her apparitions at Lourdes to Bernadette Soubirous in 1858. Within the temporary altar was an altar stone, containing relics of the Roman martyrs Sts Fortunatus and Feliceissimus. This stone, consecrated in June 1959 by the Rt Rev. H. Gibney, sometime Vicar General of the Diocese of Southwark, London, had been provided by Bishop Boyle. It was one of several in his possession. Beneath the temporary altar was a wooden panel, carved by Cecil Skotness and depicting Eucharistic symbols, which served as a frontal.

There have been several explanations of the dedication. Firstly, Bishop Boyle was bound to have been well aware that his predecessor, Bishop O'Leary, who had recently died (12.8.1958), would, as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, have had a special devotion to the Holy Virgin. Then, shortly before or after being chaplain at Rivonia Fr Ratcliffe had been at Rustenburg, where the parish was called Our Lady of Lourdes. Similarly Fr Van Hommerich, another Rivonia chaplain, had been parish priest at Our Lady of Lourdes, Alexandra Township, a dedication which was later changed to St Hubert. Alexandra is close to Rivonia, and it is from there that Fr Van Hommerich moved to the Rivonia Mission. True, by the time the Rivonia 'hall-church' was blessed, in early 1962, he had been dead for some twelve years, but a train of thought may have been established, and the dedication 'Our Lady of Lourdes' become associated with the area. It is possibly more significant that yet another Catholic Church dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, at Village Main gold mine, had been closed and demolished in the late 'fifties or very early 'sixties, to make way for the M2 motorway, then under construction. Bishop Boyle could quite possibly have had that in mind when he gave his approval to 'Our Lady of Lourdes', and so to the continuation of the dedication at Rivonia. A contributing factor was that four years before, in 1958, the centenary year of the apparitions at Lourdes, the Oblates had organized a National Pilgrimage to the shrine. In any event there are now two churches dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes in the Diocese of Johannesburg, for the Village Main church was replaced by another, on a new site, at City Deep, in 1985.

Not surprisingly the 'hall-church' looked much more like a hall than a church. It was undeniably stark, though there were some well meant, kind, and not undeserved congratulations. The curved, laminated wooden rafters aroused favourable comment; the interior of the building reminded one guest of the Church of the Little Flower, Kolonyama, Lesotho. It was certainly an achievement, but no time to relax. The debt which had been incurred had to be paid off as quickly as possible, and the fund-raising campaign continued energetically.

Apart from that, a few months after the opening of the hall-church The Catholic Women's League organised a fund-raising morning tea in the grounds of Mr and Mrs P. Robinson's Rivonia home. The attendance was not quite as large as had been anticipated, but some new recruits for the CWL were found, and sufficient funds raised to buy a new and impressive crucifix for the hall-church. This still hangs behind the altar, in the

sanctuary of what has become the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes. Another early acquisition, an anonymous donation, was a beautiful carved wooden statue of Mary, Holy and Compassionate Mother. The statue itself is unsigned, but may well be of Bavarian or Swiss origin. It has occupied various positions in the church, and is presently (2006) above the candle rack, on the south wall, opposite the main entrance to the church, where it constitutes the area as a Lady Shrine, while serving to remind all who enter that the Mother of God is the patroness of Rivonia parish. With the passing of time the extent of the property on which the hall-church stood turned out to be an asset, but during the 'sixties it was an embarrassment. It was far too large to be properly maintained; the parish simply did not have the money, especially while paying off the debt to the diocese, and raising money for a church.

Matters were further complicated by the failure of the Peri-Urban Areas Board to install effective drainage along Rivonia Road. Highveld summer storms sent water streaming eastwards down what was quite a steep slope, causing considerable surface erosion, as well as damaging the access road to the hall-church, which came off and returned to the Rivonia Road after circling the building.

A little later, in 1969, the then parish priest, Rev. Fr J. Braniff OMI, admitted that the condition of the grounds was 'appalling'. He explained that the extent of the property meant that although he had an African gardener constantly at work, there were very few visible results. When it was suggested that some of the building fund money might be used for maintenance of the grounds he made it clear that the bishop's permission was needed for the expenditure of any sum over R40, and that nothing would ever be approved for gardening. It was a case of church first and last, garden when possible! Consequently even in the opening years of the 'nineties the Rivonia faithful, when using an entrance from Third Avenue to gain admission to the extensive church grounds, bumped across uneven and iron hard red earth, or slipped and slithered through soft red mud to park some fifty metres or more from the entrance to the building.

Fr Kelly left, amid general and sincere regret, in 1963. His successor was another OMI priest, the Rev. Fr John O'Donoghue. John O'Donoghue had been born in Tralee, Ireland, on the 7 October 1913, and died in Nazareth House, Johannesburg, on 10 May 1990. He had been drawn to the Oblates through the preaching of the Rev. Fr W.F. O'Connor OMI. After initial studies at the Jesuit College he proceeded to the Oblate

Novitiate in Cahernoyke, Limerick, Ireland, in 1933, and made his profession the following year.

In June 1938 Brother John O'Donoghue was one of twelve deacons ordained priest by Bishop Keogh of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. About a year later three of the newly ordained group, including Fr O'Donoghue, received their obedience for South Africa. They arrived in Johannesburg in early September 1939, a few days after the outbreak of World War II.

Fr O'Donoghue taught Church History in the Scholasticate, then in Germiston, for two years, before going on to devote the rest of his life to parish work. He was eight years in Pretoria, and then in Klerksdorp, Mayfair and Rosebank, before going to Rivonia, where he remained until 1967. The four years of his ministry were still early days at Our Lady of Lourdes; it was still a pioneer situation, where the Polish community continued to be extremely influential. Their generosity and enthusiasm had played, and were playing, a considerable part in the rapid progress of the parish, but the need for a measure of guidance and control was becoming clear.

Some priests would have revelled in the challenge which Rivonia presented, but Fr O'Donoghue does not appear to have been one of them. He was well liked, but in retrospect he does not appear to have been altogether settled and contented, possibly not as happy as his flock would certainly have liked him to have been. Perhaps he was not well suited to the surprisingly difficult position in which he found himself, perhaps he was not the sort of man to cope with parishioners who had for many years been used to worshipping in a mission situation, rather than as members of what was fast becoming an established parish. Our Lady of Lourdes needed the sort of priest who could give decisive leadership, and who could be firm without being offensive. Shy, diffident and perhaps too 'nice', Father found it difficult to assert himself, and difficult to say 'No!' So it was that unfortunately some of the more forceful laity began to get a little too positive.

The next major development at Our Lady of Lourdes took place four years after Fr. O'Donoghue's arrival. On the evening of 9 May 1967, a group of twenty-five parishioners met in the hall-church to consider the establishment of a parish council. Father was in the chair, and Mr C.I. (K) McLaughlin was acting secretary. Such councils represented a new departure for the Catholic Church. Their 'Nature and Purpose' were set out in a circular, the first of a series of *Guidelines for Parish Councils* from the Diocese of Johannesburg.

It was made clear that a Parish Council should be seen as a team, consisting of the local priest(s), religious and laity, 'working for the extension of the Kingdom of God'. More particularly their purpose was to reveal and provide an outlet for lay opinion, and to promote the lay apostolate. In seeking to extend the Kingdom of God they were to give attention to a host of things: Liturgy, Youth, Catholic Schooling, Catechetical Instruction, Adult Formation, Public Service, the Aged, the Poor, the Sick, Lapsed Catholics, the Family Apostolate, its promotion, and preparation for marriage, Ecumenism, Race Relations, Vacations, Recreation, and the problems of immigrants. In addition to all this there was Publicity, i.e. publishing a parish newsletter and ensuring that there would be a Catholic newspaper in every home.

The circular also dealt with the composition of a council. The minimum number of members who were to be elected was six, plus the parish priest. In addition an Executive Committee was to be set up. Congratulating the first members of the council, Messrs H. Heidekamp (who became the first chairman), L. le Vieux, C.I. McLoughlin, P. Robinson, M. Waterkeyn, Mrs M. Creamer, Mrs D. Price and Miss J. Smith, with Mrs B. Potter and Mrs J. Irwin representing the Catholic Women's League, Fr O'Donoghue expressed the hope that 'they would all work and pray for the success of this Parish Council experiment', and concluded by announcing that he would ask the Ursuline Sisters at Brescia House, Bryanston, to appoint two representatives to the council. The Diocesan Circular does not actually contain the word 'experiment', but if the councils were indeed experimental then it was likely to be the sort of experiment that is more easily embarked upon than withdrawn from.

For want of a better and more convenient place the early councils met in what the minutes initially refer to as 'Father's rooms', his rather cramped accommodation. Later that year the venue was being described as 'the presbytery' and, eventually, 'Father's flat'. It occupied the space now (2006) taken up by the office to the left of the front door to the present administration block, and the 'Infants Chapel', in its latest position.

From the first the council minutes reflect concern regarding the evangelization of Africans in the 'district', and their spiritual care generally. Rev. Mother Xavier Rowntree OSU, reported that the Ursuline sisters provided transport each Sunday for a group of Africans who attended Mass at Witkoppen, and for two African sisters, Companions of St Angela, who came from Krugersdorp to give catechism instruction each Sunday before

Mass. Notices were posted in shops in the Knoppieslaagte area giving the times of services thought to be most convenient for Africans.

Matters that particularly engaged the council's attention were adult formation, lapsed Catholics, the family apostolate, vocations and ecumenism, as well as the need for a basic organ and a club room for teenagers. Thanks largely to continuing and energetic fund raising by the Catholic Women's League money was available for some of these things, but certainly not for building a club room.

Consideration of adult formation decided the council to study the documents of Vatican II (1962 - 1965), presumably before going further into the matter, while the lapsed were to be approached on 'a friendly social basis'. During discussion of the family apostolate Mother Xavier stressed the need to encourage the Christian Family Movement, while Fr O'Donoghue mentioned that the Paulist Fathers were running marriage preparation courses open to all members of all parishes. As regards vocations Mother Xavier reported that the Vocations Secretariat had plans to form a visiting team, consisting of a priest, a brother, a sister and a layman, who would visit all parishes, with the express intention of talking to parents about vocations. Finally there was ecumenism. The Catholic Women's League was strongly in favour, and told of several successful morning teas with ladies of other denominations.

Proceedings in subsequent meetings show that promoting, strengthening and spreading the Catholic faith were, very properly, among the members' on-going concerns. So were extensions and improvements to the hall-church. The two considerations went together. There was especial concern that a place should be found where 'the youth' of the parish could meet socially, for parties, dancing and games, such as table tennis, in an environment more suitable than some others, and far removed from unhealthy influences. Understandably it was also thought that would help to promote evangelization.

The problem was where should such an extension be built. Perhaps space could be found for a young people's club in the basement beneath the stage. That would have been convenient but it would also have been immediately beneath the temporary altar. Fr O'Donoghue pointed out that Bishop Boyle would never allow the parish to use space so situated for social purposes.

Hiring the Rivonia Village Hall whenever a function was being planned was considered and rejected. It was generally agreed that hiring a hall would not be as

satisfactory as having a place of one's own. Architect Michael Waterkeyn, already prominent in the parish, then suggested building a room adjoining the east end wall of the hall-church, with a level paved area beyond it, a 'piazza', or 'the patio' as it came to be referred to later. Functions such as 'socials' and 'braais' could be held there, with, if necessary, a marquee erected to cover all or part of the paved area. Small meetings could be held in the room itself. Such an extension, soundly constructed on a solid foundation, would have the additional merit of providing the east end wall of the hall-church with the support which, in his professional opinion, was very necessary.

Another problem was that of light in the hall, too much rather than too little. Since the building lay on an east - west axis sunlight poured through the windows on the northern side, distracting the celebrant. The problem disappeared when the present porch was built.

As regards developments in the parish, Fr O'Donoghue remarked that the Knights of Da Gama intended publishing a newsletter and that news items could be sent to them. It was also suggested, with an eye to reading and evangelization, that a local Catholic Lending Library be established, with books being brought out from the Johannesburg Catholic Library. However, after due consideration this was rejected as unfeasible. Running a lending library, and accepting responsibility for another library's books, would probably have been too much for the new parish.

From the outset and quite understandably there was continuing concern about money, about paying off the debt to the diocese. Bishop Boyle had laid down that money paid into the parish building fund could not be used for anything else, and he also made it clear, when approached, that he did not approve of installing heating in the building; instead he pointed out that no Catholic Church in the country enjoyed such a luxury! Even if the bishop was correct that is no longer the case. But the Rivonia faithful shiver to this day. Bishop Boyle went on to explain that if money was required for some other purpose, not connected with building, the parish priest could advance it, with the council accepting responsibility. Finally he made it clear that the remaining diocesan property, between the hall-church and First Avenue, would not be sold without informing the parish, who were welcome to use it in the mean time.

Within months of its establishment the council had established committees for Finance, with Kit McLoughlin as treasurer, as well as being responsible for Youth and Adult Education. In addition it was intended to set up an Adult Formation and Discussion Group.

When it was pointed out that most of the parishioners did not even know each other the question of a parish register again came up, and yet again when Mgr Kelly of the Kolbe Society came to talk about parish councils. The monsignor pointed out that every parish contained talented but diffident Catholics, and that it was the responsibility of the parish priest to identify them and enlist their help.

It was accordingly decided that a census of the parish should be taken, as a first essential step towards drawing up the all-important parish register. Cards were prepared, to be filled in after Mass on Sunday. People were asked to indicate what they thought they could do, not how much money they would give! But despite considerable effort and hard work the sub-committee that the council entrusted with the task still had nothing to report late the following year.

As regards money, in 1967 the annual income was R4 500-00 per annum, raised by an estimated 700 parishioners, in 175 families. Every quarter R650-00 went to the diocese. Sundry expenses amounted to R20-00 p.m. The building fund stood at R4 122-14, but there was only R2 800-00 in cash. The balance had been lent to pay, *inter alia*, for a basic second-hand Hammond organ. Quite apart from satisfaction at the advance of the Catholic Church, concern regarding funds would have caused the council to view the vigorous growth of the Parish of the Resurrection with a certain relief. Though it was only on 15 November 1977 that Archbishop Joseph P. Fitzgerald, Bishop of Johannesburg (1976 - 1983), solemnly blessed and dedicated the newly built Bryanston church, that was fourteen years before the Rivonia hall-church was dedicated as the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes!

Chapter III

Consolidation

Late in 1967 Fr O'Donoghue left for Krugersdorp. The council thanked him for his services, and presented him with a R25-00 book token. He was replaced as priest-in-charge by the Rev. Fr John (Jack) G. Braniff OMI (*Pretoria 1905 - +Johannesburg 1984). Fr Braniff, sometime administrator of the Kerk Street pro-cathedral, and a former Catholic Chaplain to the armed forces, was a very different type of man to his predecessor. One parishioner found him 'a difficult man' who 'didn't like women'. He reminded another of 'a colonel', or, 'better still, a sergeant-major!' 'The Colonel', the actual rank he had held as a military chaplain, was the nickname by which he was known in the parish, behind his back! Certainly he was something of a martinet, who, in his own words, had been sent 'to cleanse the Augean stables', meaning that he was to take the reputedly intractable parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in hand!

Another and quite different reason for his appointment may have been his disagreement with Bishop Boyle regarding the new cathedral in Saratoga Avenue, Doornfontein. Fr Braniff had long cherished the idea of a great new cathedral, in the Gothic style, very ornate, very traditional, very impressive, very different from the pro-cathedral and very expensive. What Bishop Boyle insisted on was relatively economical, rather plain, and very mid-twentieth century. It was likely to 'date' very quickly, and possibly it has! At the time Fr Braniff made no secret of his contempt and dislike for it. Feelings became strained; so much so that it may well have suited the bishop to dispatch him to remote Rivonia, where a supposedly difficult priest could deal with a rather difficult parish in rural seclusion.

However that may be Fr Braniff was of course welcomed by the council when it met at the end of the first week of December 1967. The chairman, H. Heidekamp, himself about to emigrate to Canada, took the opportunity to mention a few things which he thought should be given attention.

Firstly, a hall should be built. That was significant, for it may well have been an indication that rather than building a new church, the transformation of the existing 'hall-

church' into a dedicated church was already in contemplation. From the very beginning Fr Braniff would have been completely against that. Disappointed as regards the new cathedral, he most definitely wanted a new church, as big and impressive as possible. Secondly, Heidekamp urged that the altar should be turned, so that the priest faced the people, as, he asserted, most people wanted, and as Vatican II required.

Finally, he expressed the hope that laymen would continue to play their part in the proclamation of the Word of God during the Liturgy of the Word. The available sources do not reveal why this request should have had to be made. Possibly lay proclaiming had fallen into abeyance during an interregnum between Frs O'Donoghue and Braniff. Another request came from Kit McLoughlin, who asked for a daily Mass. Fr Braniff agreed to the second and third of Heidekamp's suggestions without demur, but had nothing to say about a daily Mass, or, significantly, a hall.

Early the following year (1968) the priest began firmly to assert himself. There should be three weeks' written notice of meetings, they should be conducted in a more business-like fashion, and completed within an hour! He reminded the council that it was only an advisory body, without any executive powers. This meant that the council had been out of order when it had drawn on parish funds in order to send Fr O'Donoghue a farewell present. The moment money was deposited 'in the plate', Fr Braniff explained, it was alienated, and could only be spent with the bishop's express approval.

Nor was that all. All the council meetings which had taken place under Chairman Heidekamp, then, presumably, safely in Canada, might be null and void! This was because he had lived outside the boundary of the parish, and had therefore not been a parishioner! When this point was contested, Fr Braniff replied that he would investigate the suburban boundaries, and determine whether 'the putative chairman' had lived in the parish of Rivonia, or that of Rosebank.

The growing need to make a decision about the future of the 'hall-church' was again brought to the attention of the council when Father reported that Bishop Boyle had refused to give permission to turn the altar. Apparently this could only be done in proper, that is consecrated, churches, which Our Lady of Lourdes was not; it was merely a hall temporarily being used for religious purposes. The council did not take that at all well; they responded with a request that the bishop should be asked to change his ruling. Not

altogether surprisingly Fr Braniff replied that he was in no position to seek such a change, as his position was 'transitory'.

The incident contributed to a growing conviction that using a hall for religious worship was unsatisfactory, and could not go on indefinitely. Consideration would have to be given to raising funds for a church. The existing building could then begin to be used just as a hall, in accordance with its design. When the subject came up several counsellors raised the question of money. That moved Fr Braniff to ask what the parish might think of the bishop's assessment of R2 000 *per annum*, with an additional R500 *per annum* to go to mission schools. Aware as they of the need for a church the council responded that much depended on what the parish was allowed for building. Finally it was concluded that if the parish could show that it was serious about building a church, and was really trying to raise money, the bishop might return part of the assessment.

When a councillor remarked that the present council should not commit the parish to anything, as its term of office was running out, Fr Braniff's response was to emphasize that the council had no executive power and could not commit the parish to anything at all, at any time! The council was not making decisions for the parish; it was merely planning for a possible future in cooperation with himself, as parish priest. The parish would continue whether the council existed or not, as would the entire Catholic Church and all its activities!

Despite such rebuffs the spirit of Vatican II continued to influence the council during the late 'sixties and later, affecting relations between clergy and laity, and the latter's views of the Church, its attitudes and teaching. Could there be increased lay participation in the Mass? Might the Canon of the Mass be prayed in English? Merely asking such questions was significant, even though it transpired that nothing could be done until the receipt of official instructions from Rome. However Father conceded that eventually the Canon of the Mass would certainly be in the vernacular, throughout the world. He also promised that he would ask the parishioners to sing rather more wholeheartedly!

When the council, with Mr Heidekamp's concern regarding laymen's participation in the Liturgy of the Word in mind, specifically asked whether the Old and New Testament lessons and the Psalm might be read by laymen, as had been done in the past, Father pointed out, hardly necessarily, that the practice had ceased, but added that he had no

objection to its resumption. He would, however, like to meet the men who had read. But when the subject came up a third time the council was asking Father to continue reading, 'as he could be heard!' Presumably the laymen's initial efforts had not been entirely successful.

An ongoing question, which was becoming acrimonious, concerned the emigrant Heidekamp's South African address. Fr Braniff insisted that according to the bishop's parish boundary map Heidekamp had lived in Rosebank, which meant that according to the rules governing parish councils he had not been a member of Rivonia parish, let alone chairman of its council. It was an absurd situation, but the implications were exceedingly grave; it might be that the 'council' over which he had presided had not been a council at all!

Not surprisingly this caused consternation, so much so that Fr Braniff adopted a more conciliatory tone. He explained that all his enquiries had been in the interests of truth, and with the proper execution of his mandate in mind. As regards the disputed boundary he intended to petition the bishop to include Parkmore and the balance of Sandown within Rivonia parish. The council then agreed, probably with relief, that as the bishop was going to take a hand in the matter there need be no further discussion. But uncertainty about the boundary between Rosebank and Rivonia persisted until a 'sketch' delineating it was obtained from the bishop. Apparently the Heidekamps had indeed been living within Rosebank's boundaries! But nothing as drastic as Father Braniff's original and dire suppositions came about. Decisions taken under Heidekamp's 'chairmanship' were to be left standing. At the same time it was made clear that while people were strongly encouraged to attend Mass in their own parish, this was not compulsory.

There, sensibly, that particular matter was finally allowed to rest. But disputation continued. The biggest bone of contention concerned the proceedings of council meetings. Were they confidential or were they not? According to Fr Braniff they were, and most councillors agreed with him, but one most certainly did not, arguing strenuously, and with considerable justification, that the council was not a 'secret society'. Like the question of the Heidekamps' address that dispute rumbled on for a considerable time, with much discussion, even argument, about the rights and wrongs of discussing council affairs outside meetings.

More constructively, it was agreed to raise funds for the construction of a repository and the building of a permanent font. Carrying out such projects would require money, and it was decided, reasonably enough, that since the establishment of Bryanston parish had greatly diminished the area of Rivonia, Rivonia had a right to request a reduction in their quarterly assessment. The sources are not clear regarding the response to that request, if it was ever made. At this time, in the late 'sixties, and as always there, were different opinions concerning the state and health of the parish. Some felt that it had lost much of the momentum that had carried it so far, and that there had been a reaction after the completion of the hall-church. Others thought that there were signs of a revival, and that people were mixing more and becoming better acquainted. Certainly the parish was still growing vigorously, with many newcomers coming in from outlying areas such as Wendywood.

As the council's term of office approached its end a copy of the minutes for the past year was sent to Bishop Boyle, for his decision as to whether a new council should be elected. Assent having been given a new council was duly elected, and met on the last day of July 1968. As usual the main subject of discussion was what needed to be done in the near future. It was resolved that a house to house survey of the parish should be carried through as soon as possible, in order that an urgently needed, full and proper parish record could be drawn up.

Fr Braniff fully agreed, and was also eager to see a parish magazine started. He wondered whether there was not somebody with some literary ability who could be persuaded to edit such a magazine, which would keep parishioners better informed and in better contact with each other. Something else that would promote that desirable tendency would be the completion, for social gatherings, of the piazza (patio) and its adjoining room behind the east end of the hall-church. That project was completed late in 1968; it was the start of a process of expansion and adaptation that would continue into the next century. There was an immediate benefit, especially as far as youth activities were concerned. Early the following year Kit McLoughlin launched a youth club, earning the great and well-deserved gratitude of the parish council for his 'tireless' efforts in this difficult field.

Fr Braniff also thought that the parish's extensive property should be fenced, for parts of it were being used as dumps for rubbish and building rubble. A fence would also

make the ground more secure, as would exterior lights around the building. In short there was much to be done, and Father made it clear that he expected the help of the council.

Turning the altar, so that the celebrant would face the people, remained a vexed question. The council was still totally unimpressed by the reason given for refusing permission, i.e. that the altar was merely temporary, standing as it did in a hall, not a church. Councillors regarded that as, at best, a hollow technicality. Eventually Father Braniff promised to take a vote at Mass. If it was unanimously requested that the altar should be turned he would again approach Bishop Boyle.

Not altogether surprisingly when that request was eventually made the bishop did not object, providing the alteration did not cost too much, and that the approval of the Diocesan Building Committee was obtained. Michael Waterkeyn duly produced plans, with an estimate of the likely cost, including an 'amplification system'. It was decided to treat the latter as a separate issue, as indeed it was. He warned that if the apparatus envisaged was actually installed, the cost might be as much as R2 000. The plans were approved by the diocese, and by December 1968 the hall had been amplified, for R233-00, much more modest equipment having been finally bought. That was a considerable saving, but none the less concern about money and builders continued to delay turning the altar.

Money was also needed for the support of Our Lady of Fatima, the Church's Dube Mission, for which Rivonia had accepted responsibility. The council agreed that the parish should guarantee the R150.00 a month that was required to feed the children of the mission. At the last meeting of the year Councillor Potocki or Count Potocki, to give him his actual title, a prominent member of the Polish community, reported that he had written to various presumably wealthy parishes overseas, with a view to their adopting Rivonia as Rivonia had adopted Dube, and so helping Dube through Rivonia!

When, more than two months later, he had received no response to that ingenious approach the council decided, after a long and heated debate, that while Rivonia was making the maximum possible effort to help Dube, and that while it would continue to do so, its own concerns should not be overlooked. Helping Dube was certainly right and necessary, but deteriorating race relations in post-Sharpville South Africa made it difficult and at times even perilous. That was certainly true; Fr Braniff was sure that it would be dangerous for Messrs Waterkeyn and Potocki to visit Dube to measure up for the building

of a hall there, unless the parish priest, Rev. Fr L. Muldoon OMI, was physically present with them.

But during 1969, seven years after the blessing of the hall-church, the biggest question of all was coming still further to the fore. Was Rivonia to build a 'real church' or not? Councillor Walsh was one of those who thought the existing and admittedly fairly large hall-church was quite adequate. Fr Braniff disagreed. Still strongly in favour of a fine and large purpose built church he pointed out that the parish could be expected to continue growing, and that eventually the hall would prove to be too small. In this he was suitably large church, possibly on another site altogether, with a proper presbytery, rather than the modest 'rooms' with which he was then making do. Furthermore, while agreeing that the views of the parishioners should be ascertained, he insisted that the bishop wanted a church, and that the initiative was actually coming from him.

Ascertaining the parishioners' views was certainly important, in fact it was essential, but it could not be done without a parish roll. And progress with that roll was proving to be very slow indeed, painfully so! Eventually, in February 1969, Mr Le Vieux produced a map of the area, and a new sub-committee was set up to proceed with plans for the survey!

One councillor remarked that until something concrete was offered to the parishioners, presumably a plan and perhaps a model of the proposed church, they were unlikely to make 'a concentrated effort'. He accordingly called for a more positive attitude, and was scathing about what he saw as the council's apathy. But another councillor pointed out that as long as space was not an actual problem during Mass most parishioners would see no urgent need for a dedicated church.

According to Fr Braniff these arguments and considerations were irrelevant. Space, or the lack of it, was not the issue; it was not just necessary but imperative that a church should be built. As things were going Sandton might well need three or even four churches in the not too far distant future, but building one right there and then would make the existing building available for social functions. That would lead to a real improvement in parish spirit. He was convinced that a parish newsletter would greatly facilitate making this clear to the people.

Unfortunately the long awaited newsletter was being disappointingly slow in getting off the ground. Despite appeals no suitable person appeared to be willing to organise, edit and produce it. That was a pity, because a newsletter might certainly have helped convince people of the need for a dedicated church, and it could also have done something to revive parish spirit, if it was indeed diminishing. Presumably Fr Braniff was agreeable when Mrs Angela Waterkeyn and Mr Lance agreed to undertake the task, providing they got support from him.

In the late 'sixties had Rivonia really lost something of that enthusiasm and drive that had been so marked ten years before? It is impossible to be sure, but there were grounds for concern. There was only the slowest of progress with the parish survey, essential though it was for drawing up a roll, and none at all with turning the altar. That not very difficult project had been decided upon, and a builder had been retained, but nothing further had been done. It was decided to give him a month's grace, and then, failing any progress, to go elsewhere. In the end turning the altar waited until the whole interior of the hall-church was turned.

On a more hopeful note, the Youth Group seemed to be doing well. It comprised twenty to thirty enthusiastic young people, and, for the next two to three months, there was plenty to keep them busy. Arrangements had been made for a braai, dances and a film show, and there was every reason to expect these to be well attended. There was also a possibility that The Catholic Women's League might be willing to serve tea once a month, after the nine a.m. Mass, in an attempt to inculcate a little more parish spirit. In addition gardening enthusiasts were putting in more plants, and so helping to improve the hall-church's rather bleak aspect.

These were encouraging developments. Another was provided by the choir, who practised every Wednesday evening. They sang lustily, though they could have done with more support from the congregation, whose singing, despite occasional exhortations from the pulpit, was rather subdued!

But all was not well in the council itself. Attendance was falling off, so much so that Fr Braniff thought it would be necessary to inform members who had not attended at least four consecutive meetings that their memberships had lapsed! Worse still, feelings sometimes ran high, so that Chairman Sean Daly had to affirm 'his own unqualified loyalty to and support for his parish priest', before going on to plead for 'harmony and peace' in the

council, so as to 'attract other parishioners into working for the ultimate good of the parish'. Fr Braniff responded in conciliatory fashion, expressing his appreciation of the councillors' 'sense of purpose', and their 'obvious desire to work for the parish'.

Such a desire there may have been, but none the less time went on without meaningful developments. Worst of all, the vital parish roll was still not complete! Frustrated, Fr Braniff indulged in two superficial, unflattering, and unfair comparisons. The press had predicted that Sandton would be, 'residentially', the richest municipality in South Africa. Why then, when it came to building a church, was wealthy Rivonia only able to raise one third as much money as the poor outstation of Riverlea, with less than one third as many families? And how was it that needy, struggling, declining Doornfontein had managed to make a large contribution to the building of the cathedral in Saratoga Avenue? Frustration may have underlain these awkward and aggressive questions, but they did not help matters, springing as they did from a mistaken assessment of the situation, and of Rivonia's circumstances. Fr Braniff made matters worse by going on to point out that the wealthy had the consolation afforded by their money, while the poor only had God! But the wealthy could not take the source of their consolation with them to Heaven! That sort of statement would have been resented.

When considering Fr Braniff's questions and strictures his dispute with Bishop Boyle concerning the new cathedral should be borne in mind, and also the near certainty that he that he had overestimated the reputed 'wealth' of Rivonia. Much depends on how 'wealth' is defined, but certainly Rivonia did not have unlimited resources. There was no chance whatsoever of its being in a position to build a church in the style and with the finish of his envisioned but rejected cathedral. Grievously disappointed, for a second time, Father may have allowed his feelings to run away with him.

Through 1970 more attention began to be given to raising the parish income, and to getting people to know one another better. Despite the lack of a parish roll (promised for April 1970!), and the consequent continuing impossibility of starting any sort of pledge system finances did seem to be improving. Costs were 5% up, but income had risen 20%. During the year since being linked with Dube Rivonia had donated R1302-30 to the Soweto parish. True, the continuing non-appearance of the news letter was arousing concern, but Fr Braniff said that the matter was in his hands, and that there was no need for further discussion!

All in all 1970 was a frustrating year for Our Lady of Lourdes. A plan and a model of the proposed new church, which were supposed to be ready by the beginning of May, failed to materialise. Nor, despite further and repeated promises and resolutions, did the urgently needed parish roll, or the news letter, even though as regards the latter Father had been making what Chairman Daly described as 'desperate efforts' to 'get it off the ground'.

After apparently successful meetings in October and November 1969 the Youth Club appeared to be fading away. Functions such as a Youth Dance and a braai/leis attracted a good many young people, but Fr Braniff thought that they had little understanding of the Holy Mass, so little that their presence was of a token nature only! He concluded that though they might be irresponsible 'we should do our best for them'!

Nor was the building fund doing well, notwithstanding vigorous encouragement. Fr Braniff accordingly asked the parents of working children to urge those children to contribute. Even greater concern was aroused by the people's manifest failure adequately to contribute to the weekly collections. The councillors offered various explanations. Ninety per cent of the parishioners were living beyond their means. The parish was new and still growing, the people did not identify with it, and had to be encouraged to do so. Only the passage of time would finally right matters; only when most of the parishioners had been born, baptised, confirmed, and married in the parish would most of them really feel part of it! The truth of all that was depressing rather than encouraging.

However there was one really helpful and relevant explanation, one that went to the heart of the matter. It was made when a councillor pointed out that until the parish roll was finalised, and the parishioners located and identified, little could be done by way of serious fund raising, or, one might add, by way of fostering parish spirit!

The point was taken. Fresh efforts were begun to complete the roll, hopefully by the end of the year, 1970. Actually the position was improving slightly even while those efforts were being made. An awareness of the need for a church was in the air; despite the lack of a roll the parish was growing, anyone could see the swelling congregation, and, happily, there was a corresponding improvement in the financial position. A braai, in October, was a great success, and the profits were used for improving the garden. Encouraged by this it was decided that the following year, 1971, the parish should hold an ambitious St Patrick's Ball on his festival, 17 March, and a May Fair, naturally on 1 May.

The May Fair was a great success, both socially and financially. That was as well, for it helped to make up for the failure of the ball! That function had been held at the Sandton Village Hall, and all those who attended enjoyed themselves, but unfortunately there were not nearly enough of them! Ticket sales had not gone well, despite appeals from the pulpit at Rivonia and at Bryanston. The loss was over R120-00, a considerable sum in 1971. The members of the council discussed whether they should pay in and reduce the loss, even if they did not wipe it out altogether. To his credit Fr Braniff would not consider that; he insisted that the loss should be put down to experience, and written off. Prickly person though he may have been Fr Braniff could also be understanding, generous and kind, as more than one parishioner discovered.

While all this was going on parish architect Michael Waterkeyn had been working on plans for the church, which, hopefully, would be part of a complex. The form that complex should take, and the purpose(s) it should serve were part of ongoing discussions with the architect, in council, and among the parishioners. As regards the last, it was now known how many there were, and where they lived, for in May 1971 the long awaited parish survey had been completed! 'Planned giving', serious fund raising, could at last be embarked upon.

As ever money was needed for by September plans for an enlarged presbytery and for the modification of the whole church complex had been sent to the bishop for his approval. Another long awaited development came to fruition about this time: the eventual appearance of the Parish News Letter. Having received Fr Braniff's approval the first issue was distributed on Sunday, 5 September 1971. Father thought that future issues should provide space for parishioners' opinions regarding future development, especially building and fund raising. He had become cautious, or perhaps more realistic; he acknowledged that many parishioners found their children's Catholic education expensive.

The councillors were not too concerned about that; an increasingly positive spirit was manifest in their confidence that money for development could be found. As far as can be ascertained the parishioners accepted that a better presbytery was needed, and that the priest deserved something more spacious and comfortable. The council was convinced that building such a presbytery would engender parish enthusiasm, and encourage people to contribute to further development.

But there was still much uncertainty as regards building a large dedicated church, and down grading the hall-church to a hall. Not until October 1971 was it decided to press on with the presbytery. All that can be said is that there was fairly general agreement that there should be development, but what form that development should take was still not clear.

Chapter IV

A Christian Society

Early in 1972 Fr Braniff left for the Kenridge Sanatorium in Parktown, where he had been appointed chaplain. His successor at Our Lady of Lourdes was another Oblate of Mary Immaculate, the Rev. Fr David Adam (*1922 - +2002). Fr Adam had been born in London, of Scottish parents who emigrated some time in the 'thirties, first to Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and then to South Africa. As a young man David Adam had trained as an architectural draughtsman, before serving in the South African Army during World War II. After being captured and taken to Italy he escaped, to rejoin the South African Sixth Division. That involved an enormous walk down the mountainous spine of the country, helped, hidden and sheltered by friendly Italians. It may well have been during this arduous and at times perilous journey that he realized that he had a vocation.

What is certain is that once peace had returned (1945) he joined the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and was ordained priest on 7 December 1952, in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Rosebank. While attached to that parish he also edited *The Catholic Times*, from 1954 to 1957, writing leading articles that were fiercely critical of the then government's apartheid policy. During 1960 he was at Potchefstroom, before going to take charge of Mariadal, the Oblate farm near Krugersdorp (1961 - 1966), and then to St Charles, Victory Park, Johannesburg, where he remained, as superior, until 1968. At various times he had also served in Johannesburg, as chaplain to the Kenridge and St Vincent's School for the Deaf, in Meltrose. In those institutions, and elsewhere, he became justly renowned for his care, compassion and concern.

Fr Adam was a widely read man and a gifted photographer, some of whose remarkable photographs of township scenes and churches are preserved in the Catholic archives at St Charles. After coming to Rivonia he acquired his pilot's licence, flying his own light plane. After a heart 'murmur' compelled him to give that up he turned to sailing, keeping a small yacht on Hartebeespoort Dam. In the early 'eighties he was quick to obtain a personal computer. Not only did he learn to use it, something a lot of people found difficult in those dark days of DOS, he learned programming so that he could write

programmes for his own use and, later, the specific needs of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This was the man who gave over fifteen years of devoted service to the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Thanks to his draughtsman's training Fr Adam took an informed interest in the physical development of the church buildings, but his real and passionate concern was for the spiritual development of the parish. He wanted and strove to promote communal feeling, to encourage the parishioners to get to know one another, not just superficially, but as brothers and sisters in Communion, and so in Christ.

The twentieth century was characterized by the rise and fall of vicious and evil totalitarian states. Inspired by their Fuhrer, Hitler, the Nazis saw history as a struggle between superior and inferior races, while the Communists regarded the class struggle as the key factor in the historical 'process'. Following Marx Stalin insisted that history is determined by 'the means of production'. God, individual freedom and free-will are all illusions. For David Adam such 'mass movements', to use his own phrase, led by 'great leaders', actually great criminals, indeed unspeakable monsters, were anathema, utterly wicked and evil, as was all 'social engineering'. As a soldier he had fought against the Nazis, as a Catholic priest he utterly repudiated both Nazism and Communism, and any other mistaken and immoral theory, such as apartheid, that diminished the individual. 'The Aryan race', 'the People', 'the Workers' and 'the Volk' were just abstract collectives. Individual human beings constituted the only reality. They were spiritual creatures, made in the image of God, and the Church's concern was their salvation. The future of humanity lay in that salvation, and nowhere else.

Turning to matters temporal, when, shortly after his arrival, he surveyed the parish property, Fr Adam saw, not just a fairly large hall, with, as he put it, a couple of rooms, 'tacked on' its side, standing in one corner of a large unkept piece of ground, but rather an opportunity to establish a Christian community, which would be Catholic to the core, but also ecumenical and evangelical, an example of a better way of life, with better values than those of the growing, bustling and worldly metropolis outside its boundaries. One of several such schemes would have had a place for a new Carmel monastery, once the nuns had been persuaded to move from what was becoming an increasingly unsuitable location, even in the 'seventies.

Father Dave, as he was affectionately known, was a compassionate and caring man, and very good at dealing with family problems. Within his limits, and with some success, he did his best to be a 'people person'. He was remembered, by at least one parishioner, a woman, as 'a dear man', by another, a man, as possibly 'a bit of a rebel in his way'. Like all of us Fr Adam made different impressions on different people. Perhaps he was shy, and nervous of women, especially in large numbers, but certainly his sincerity made him generally liked. He was also admired for his short, intelligent and relevant homilies. His teaching of the importance of reflection and contemplation was particularly appreciated. He might have learned something of that during his long and lonely walk down Italy, for he must often have been alone, in hiding, sometimes for long periods.

From the moment of his arrival at Our Lady of Lourdes he insisted that the newsletter be widely promulgated, with a heavy emphasis on the condition and needs of the parish, while actual giving should be postponed, so enabling him to visit the people in their homes and get a first hand picture of their views and circumstances. That done he would be in a better position to decide on a more definite fund raising policy. This was not his only parish visiting; he suggested that people living in given areas should form groups, whereupon he would call, say Mass, and then stay for an informal 'get together'.

That was all of a piece with his strong sense of community. Fr Adam was convinced that a Catholic parish should be far more than just a large group of people, with only their hopefully sincere Christianity in common, briefly coming together for worship, and then once more going their separate ways, until next time. Such a relationship or attitude did little for the religion, but much to explain why, worldwide, it was not in as strong a position as it could and should have been. He emphasized 'Christianity'; the people of Our Lady of Lourdes should remember that while it was acceptable to refer to themselves as 'Catholics' in general conversation, strictly speaking it was the Church which was Catholic. The people were Christians, followers of Christ, linked together throughout the world as members of His Body, the Catholic or Universal Church.

Thus throughout his long ministry at Our Lady of Lourdes Fr Adam was much concerned with ways and means to get people together, so that they would form a group in a deeper sense of the word, a group which, in its Christian cohesion, would be stronger than the sum of its parts. In becoming more aware of each other, more concerned for each other, more likely to support each other, the parishioners would, he hoped, provide an

example of Christianity in action. That would in turn promote the spread of Christianity; and so the fostering of communal feeling would become a part of evangelization.

By 1972 the parish had grown to the stage where three Masses were being said every Sunday, at 07.00 a.m., 09.00 a.m. and 06.00 p.m. Later that year the choir was virtually reestablished by Margaret Creamer, with twenty-one members, and a further Mass was introduced, on Wednesdays at 06.00 p.m., as well as Benediction on Mondays, immediately before choir practice began at 07.45 p.m. Full of ideas and anxious to promote further growth Fr Adam proposed the formation of a 'Men's Society' which would organise rosters of proclaimers, sidesmen and collectors for the three Sunday Masses, and count the collection money. In addition to those things they might promote a 'Discussion Circle', to stimulate interest in changes in the Church and various developments which had taken place, and which were continuing, as a result of Vatican II. They should also do what they could to promote the development of the spiritual and intellectual life of the parish.

The Men's Society got off to a good start. Some thirty men expressed interest in joining, while Michael Waterkeyn offered his home for the first meeting, which he would chair. It turned out that with Rivonia's twin parish of Our Lady of Fatima, Dube, in mind, one of their first concerns would be to devise an effective and acceptable method of raising money. Fr Adam was at all times emphatic that Dube was the responsibility of the whole parish, not just the Catholic Women's League, despite what some parishioners appeared to think.

It was with that responsibility in mind that Dube's offer to sing at the 09.00 a.m. Mass on 6 August 1972 was cordially accepted, and R20-00 put aside for transport and refreshments. The success of the visit led Fr Adam to suggest that Rivonia should form a committee, to promote parish missionary activity generally, and with Dube specially in mind. This was the start of the Dube Mission Sub-Committee, consisting of Fr Adam, Mr T. Teer and Mr W.P.C.B. Adams (not to be confused with Fr Adam), who had been co-opted onto the council to serve on the sub-committee. Another proposal was to hold a Xmas Tree party for Dube. A Putco bus, one of the large green buses run by the Public Utility Transport Corporation, Africans' main form of transport before the advent of the now ubiquitous 'Black Taxi', would be hired, the youth of Rivonia would be asked to provide entertainment, and an ample quantity of toys would be collected in the parish, for distribution to the children at the party.

With his communal concerns constantly in mind Fr Adam had ambitious plans for developing the property, and there was certainly ample room and scope for physical development. Apart from two old and extremely modest houses, little more than cottages, one of which was used to accommodate a caretaker, and both of them dating back to the early days of Rivonia, the hall-church was the only building on the large piece of ground between First and Third Avenues which had been bought so long before for the projected seminary. Even after the diocese had sold the ground between First Avenue and a strip along which North Road would later be extended, a large portion of land, up to Third Avenue, remained in its possession.

One idea was for a retirement village, for which Michael Waterkeyn drew up plans, another for a country club, with tennis courts, bowling greens, a swimming bath and a putting green. These ambitious plans came to nothing. Part of the area was used for parking, and much of the remainder left in its pristine state. There was one exception; an undemanding though by no means unimportant project of Fr Adam's eventually came to fruition. The north-west corner of the ground, now (2006) the site of an 'office park', was reserved for a football pitch for the domestic servants employed in the surrounding residential houses. And it was also with them in mind that Fr Adam instituted a Sunday afternoon Mass, at 04.00 p.m., a time when it might reasonably be expected that they would be free of their household duties. That Mass was not just popular with Africans. From the start it also attracted a considerable number of white communicants.

It was just as well that ample ground was available for parking, for apart from a few living in the immediate vicinity who walked, practically everybody came to church by car, and the parish was growing rapidly. Indeed further development of the hall-church itself was becoming essential. So it was that at the very first parish council meeting that Fr Adam attended, on 9 February 1972, the need for a dedicated parish office was discussed, and the sacristy inspected, with a view to turning it into such an office. This of course meant that attention would have to be given to building a new sacristy. A month later this comparatively minor alteration was reported to be almost complete, and that the office would soon be opened. The first personal computers were still some years in the future, but Mr Lance had kindly and generously donated an 'Addressograph'. The 'plates' for this device were to be updated, and application made for a telephone. Mr McLoughlin had bought a typewriter, on approval, and the purchase of a 'copying machine' (presumably

photostatic), was to be investigated. It was decided that an appeal should be made from the pulpit for a voluntary 'co-ordinating organiser' to run the office, three mornings a week.

Encouraged by their enthusiastic and 'go ahead' priest, with the needs of an ever expanding parish in mind, with the prospect of building a new dedicated church becoming increasingly doubtful the parish councillors now turned their attention to the enlargement and enhancement of the hall-church. True, a new dedicated church and presbytery were still at the back of many peoples' minds, but while the parish building fund was R20 000 in credit, an informed estimate was that building a dedicated church and presbytery would cost about R180 000, and certainly considerably more, were it to be built as Fr Braniff had wanted it built.

As it was the building program was ambitious. Among other things it involved turning the interior of the church through 180 degrees. The temporary altar, on the stage at the eastern end of the building, would be moved to a new, purposely built sanctuary at the opposite or western end, with the traditional three steps leading up to it, and an apse over and behind it. Naturally the celebrant would face the congregation, in accordance with the requirements of Vatican II. Nothing was heard of objections to moving temporary altars. The original entrance, at the western end of the building, would of course be closed, and replaced by a new one on the north side.

The stage, at the eastern end of the hall, would be retained, with a short centrally placed staircase giving access, from the central aisle, to it and to the pews which would be installed upon it. This would, in effect, make it part of the nave, though it has since generally been referred to as 'the balcony', so distinguishing it from the nave proper. Its height, a metre above the long extent of the building in front of it, was a positive advantage, for it gave worshippers seated there, including the choristers, a better view of the comparatively distant altar, in the new sanctuary at the west end. Finally catechism class rooms, and a 'meeting hall', to hold about 100 people, would be built as well as a proper presbytery, with an adequate kitchen.

It was obvious that the work, and the expenses, would have to be phased according to an overall plan. Michael Waterkeyn offered to design the alterations and new buildings, and generally supervise their construction, a generous offer which was accepted immediately and unanimously. He presented preliminary sketches of his intentions to a council meeting on 29 March 1972, where they were received with enthusiasm. Waterkeyn

envisaged altering the interior of the hall-church as has been described, with a 'meeting hall' immediately adjacent, at the eastern end, converting the existing 'dressing rooms' (vestry) to class rooms, and building a proper presbytery, so making the priest self-sufficient. Council having again given its unanimous approval he proceeded to draw up more detailed and formal plans, for display to the parishioners, and for their comments. Meanwhile Fr Adam would present a preliminary set to the bishop, who was confidently expected to give his approval.

When Waterkeyn finally produced formal plans and elevation sketches, in mid-May 1972, they were much praised and gratefully accepted, while his declared intention of keeping the new sanctuary 'simple, and rural, in character' was agreed to without dissent. Changing times were reflected in the considerable attention given to security. The building was to be burglar proofed, while Fr Adam suggested discussing the problem with a consultant at Springbok Patrol, one of the leading security firms of the day.

Regarding the all-important question of money Kit McLoughlin reported that there should be some R26 000 standing to the credit of the building fund by the end of August. More good news came from Michael Waterkeyn, not as architect but as chairman of the Men's Society. At the society's meeting on 6 June it had been decided that the entire parish should be visited. Thirty society members would each visit nine homes. Armed with sketches and simple plans they would explain the project and ask for contributions. Waterkeyn hoped to have such funds as were required in hand by the end of May 1973.

Plans for the alterations and extensions were lodged with the Sandton Municipality in mid-July 1972. By early August the Fire Department had inspected the site, a hopeful sign as it meant that the municipality was likely to give its approval. Meanwhile a builder, Mr Graspoinner, and various sub-contractors had been supplied with a set of plans, and their quotes had begun coming in. Though it was unlikely that the new sanctuary would be ready for Christmas it was hoped that the entire project would be completed by Easter 1973. These expectations did not last long. The delays usually attendant upon building operations soon manifested themselves, and in addition Mr Graspoinner, besides being involved with another contract, fell ill.

Eventually he submitted a quotation of R34 721 for the building work. This did not include wiring (R2 000), and certain other smaller items, such as Ozite carpeting for the presbytery, but there was every reason to believe that R38 000 should amply cover the

entire costs of the building program, leaving R3 000 of the building fund's target figure of R41 000 available for furniture and fittings in the altered hall-church, the enlarged presbytery and the new hall. Since this was well within the resources of the parish it was decided to award the contract to him. Building was expected to begin in late October or early November 1972. However a shortage of labour delayed the work on which he was then engaged, so that a disappointed council learned that work would only begin after the builders' holidays. Even so, by May 1973 nothing had been done apart from laying a new entrance court! It was only in August 1973, that the project was finally complete.

The councillors had consoled themselves by reflecting that at least this meant that they had been given an opportunity to raise more money! That was just as well; the cost when the work was complete came to R51 000, which left the parish with a debt of R30 000. To the parishioners' credit subscriptions to the building fund enabled that to be paid off by July 1975.

While these things were going on the condition of the long entrance road leading to the church from Third Avenue had been causing renewed concern. It was little more than a track; cars lurched and bumped over clumps of tough veld grass and through potholes and depressions, or slithered in mud, much as they had done ten years before. Fr Adam wondered whether it could be tarred, or brick paved. Council agreed to ask for quotations early in 1973.

The early 'seventies were not just a time of struggling to raise money for physical development. There was real and ongoing spiritual growth, while despite Father's ongoing concern regarding insufficient social contact in the parish, Our Lady of Lourdes could boast of an active branch of The Catholic Women's League, a Men's Society, a Youth Club and a Discussion Circle. Unfortunately the long awaited, expected and promised news letter had still not appeared. The problem was that age-old one, not enough copy, but apparently, and hopefully, Mr Lance was 'in control of the situation'!

Late in 1972 Fr Adam decided that it would be desirable, right and edifying to have a life size Christmas crib set up at the end of the year in the area immediately outside the church. Perhaps the Men's Society could take charge of such a project? So it was that Michael Waterkeyn, seemingly indefatigable, constructed the stable set on which the figures would stand. They were designed, painted and donated by Nina Ristic, a member of the Polish community. The obvious Slavic influence made them different and interesting.

Though nowhere near life size, which was probably as well, they were extremely attractive. The council accordingly thanked Mrs Ristic, 'for the beautiful crib figures'. It is a pity that they were later packed away and seemingly forgotten.

Rivonia did not forget Dube. The most obvious considerations regarding their twin parish were its size and extent, the number and variety of its needs, and its poverty. There were 4 000 families in Dube. The mission, for that is what it actually was, could boast of a St Vincent de Paul Society, a St Anne's Society, two sodalities, and a choir, whose recent visit to Rivonia had been a success, in itself, and as a mutual goodwill exercise. There were also numerous well supported parish activities, but very little money and pathetically inadequate accommodation.

'Twinning' was all about understanding and mutual help; as regards understanding Rivonia and Dube had much to learn about each. As regards help there was much that affluent Rivonia might do for Dube, but not much that poor Dube could do for Rivonia. Apart from teaching African languages to interested Whites, the fees to go into Dube parish funds, all that Dube really had to offer was assistance with Rivonia's choir. That might have been a possibility; certainly when a group from Rivonia attended a Dube First Communion service on 26 November they came away vastly impressed by the excellent singing.

Dube made numerous suggestions as to how Rivonia could assist them. One idea was that Rivonia might promote home industry in Dube, and supervise the marketing of the finished products. Perhaps there was a lawyer in Rivonia willing to give Africans legal advice for a nominal fee? Groceries in Soweto were exorbitantly priced; could Rivonia help with setting up a discount wholesale business? And with amateur dramatics and stage productions? Possibly a Nativity Play could be produced in 1973, as a joint effort by both parishes. Dube was looking forward to the Christmas party; perhaps a picnic could be arranged for the occasion, and transport provided, by Rivonia, in the form of a hired Putco bus. Rivonia's jumble would be useful, to clothe the needy, or to sell for mission funds. Idle young people in Dube were becoming a problem; assistance with starting a Youth Club would be helpful, as would information regarding employment opportunities for those people in Dube who were out of work. And of course handymen, painters, carpenters, gardeners and others could be employed in Rivonia during the weekends. Last of all, the women of Dube would appreciate art classes, if these could be provided.

The Rivonia council were somewhat taken aback by this catalogue of requests, though they accepted that general assistance and guidance were needed. They decided to give Dube's requirements further attention, once they had been further assessed.

From the outset it was clear that the people of Dube required basic commercial training if they were ever to become better able to support themselves, increase their earning power, and obtain a bigger slice of South Africa's then rapidly expanding economy. There was an urgent need for classes in typing, filing, bookkeeping, telephone operating, in English and Afrikaans, and general literacy. The women needed instruction in cooking, home nursing, dress making and baby care. Hundreds of young unmarried mothers had not the slightest idea of how to look after their babies and young children.

Eventually it was decided to make a start with what were deemed to be the most urgent projects. These were identified as clerical training, legal aid, home industries and an employment agency. In return Dube would find people willing and able to teach Zulu and Sotho to interested Rivonia parishioners, and, when possible, provide assistance with the Rivonia choir. Three Black language teachers were prepared to conduct classes in Rivonia, if transport and a suitable venue could be found, but first of all, and very significantly, it appeared that pupils would have to be 'encouraged'.

Initially the people of Dube were interested in attending classes, more so than the people of Rivonia. In mid-1973 the bookkeeping class could boast of 'between six and twelve members', and Mr Adams was also running a commercial telephonist's course. He was a little disappointed at the Rivonia parishioners' lukewarm response to the opportunity to learn a 'Bantu' language, but consoled himself with the thought that attendance might pick up when facilities improved.

Adams was to be further disappointed. Despite some initial enthusiasm, in Dube, if not Rivonia, none of these classes seem to have come to much. Various factors reduced their chances of success, among them pressure of work, in both parishes, distance, transport problems, unsafe conditions in Dube, and, as time passed, fading enthusiasm. As a chartered accountant Adams might have been an outstanding bookkeeping instructor, but by October 1973 his class had shrunk to two Dube parishioners, who finally gave up early in 1974. Meanwhile, at Rivonia, no one had shown any interest in learning an African language.

A year earlier the Men's Society had also expired, after a brief existence. It had become obvious that it had little point, as the same people were members of both it and the Parish Council, whose work it largely duplicated. That was the real reason, not apathy, though apathy was a problem at Rivonia, much as it is in every parish. In all probability it was the reason for the poor and unhelpful response to the parish census at the end of 1973.

But despite all disappointment, Fr Adam remained as concerned as ever with Dube, and with mission work generally. One of his ideas was to establish a bursary fund to assist deserving young African parishioners there. However the council felt that it was too early to diversify fund raising, and that the matter should be reconsidered once the building project was complete. This was not the start of putting Dube and its problems aside. On the contrary, awareness led to concern. When councillor M. O'Farrell reported on a regional meeting which he had attended, where the bishops' 'Call to Conscience' had been discussed, the Rivonia council agreed that greater awareness of the parish's duties regarding race relations should be developed.

Fr Adam took the opportunity to emphasize the need for better understanding, and suggested setting up a racial affairs educational programme. He feared that Rivonia might become too wrapped up in its own affairs and problems, including Dube, and that the work of the Church, and its far bigger problems, throughout South Africa, would be forgotten.

One of those problems, probably the most urgent, was the great shortage of vocations. The situation would only be rectified by a radical change in the attitude of the Christian community throughout the country. Rivonia, for a start, could and should become far more 'mission minded', more aware of the work of the missions and the seminaries. Missionary priests suffered from loneliness and isolation. Parishioners on holiday should try to visit missions, and take an interest in their work and the conditions in which it was being done.

Such idealism was very right and proper, but Mr Adams was also right to bring the discussion back to earth, and immediate practicalities, when he reminded the council that Rivonia had a definite obligation to Dube, its 'twin', and that nothing should interfere with that responsibility. There is no reason to believe that anything did, or that subsequent visits by small groups to missions, such as those at Rustenburg and Cedara did anything but good.

The 'new' turned around hall-church and extended presbytery met with general and enthusiastic approval when they were eventually opened on Sunday, 12 August 1973. The ceremony went off very well; the choir, supported by that of Dube, excelled themselves, as did the members of the Catholic Women's League, who managed the catering.

About this time, late 1973, the council decided to nominate 'portfolios' to facilitate the management of parish affairs. The 'Secretariat' portfolio consisted of Mrs McLoughlin and Mrs Lance, who ran the parish office, which was open for messages and communications every Thursday morning. This particular portfolio was soon abolished, as it was quickly realized that secretarial work was a general and routine parish service. The secretaries would accordingly be directly responsible to Fr Adam.

The other portfolios remained in being. 'Publicity' was Messrs Lance and Savage, who would publish the parish news letter, co-ordinate pulpit announcements, and, when necessary, have posters professionally made. Mr Prashma was in charge of the 'House Committee', taking care of the parish assets and controlling basic parish functions. 'Finance' was in the hands of Mr McLoughlin and Mr Adams, who would manage parish funds, and who were empowered to spend up to R60-00 without prior reference to the council. Mr Aguirre, assisted by Mr Schneider, was to initiate and take charge of functions, under 'Entertainment'. Mr Aguirre was anxious to arrange more religious functions, and especially a retreat. The 'St Vincent de Paul' group would be run by Mr Winstanley. A 'conference' of six members of that society had been established in Rivonia; their concern was with charitable works in general, and especially with the poor, whom they visited in their homes, distributing old clothing which they had collected. A 'cultural' portfolio, intended, somewhat vaguely, to '... foster the intellectual life of the parish', was envisaged, though initially no one was asked to manage it. Finally, the difficult portfolio of 'Youth' was to be taken care of by Mr Prashma, who, prudently '... agreed to be responsible for encouraging the youth of the parish to start activities of their own', and to decide their format themselves. That was in accordance with Fr Adam's own views. However eager he might be to promote evangelization he was absolutely against offering entertainment and then converting the gathering into a platform for spreading the faith. He was well aware that would only be counter-productive.

The people responsible for the portfolios were to co-opt helpers, and report to the parish council at its regular meetings. They should also liaise with the Catholic Women's

League, so as to avoid overlapping activities. It was intended eventually to set up a further portfolio, for the co-ordination and promotion of mission work, and for more effective twinning with Dube.

Twinning with Dube was certainly turning out to be difficult. The black parish was far from Rivonia, and in an area which was unsafe for white people at all times, and life threatening at night. In addition the demands of their work made it especially hard for Mr Adams and Mr Teer adequately to liaise with Dube. But Rivonia went on trying. Efforts were made to establish the cost of educating a pupil at secondary school, with a view to assisting promising African scholars. A similar idea was to finance the education and training of a seminarian either at St Peter's, Hammanskraal, or at Groblersdal.

In the council the portfolio system does not appear to have met with immediate and universal approval. Certainly it was not long before Chairman H.J. (Jimmy) Carter found it necessary, firstly, to assure the members that no extra meetings would be required, and, secondly, to emphasize, with support from Fr Adam, how useful it was to have a particular person responsible for a designated parish activity.

The parish was pleased with the 'new', 'turned' church, but, as is so often the case, once the alterations and developments were 'complete' it became obvious that a number of adjustments, alterations and additions would make it even more satisfactory. Happily a balance of some R6 000 was available, in terms of the parish's overdraft facilities. Among other things some of it was spent on a bookcase for the library, a burglar alarm for the presbytery, a carpet for the church, floodlighting for the front gable, kitchen cupboards, extra vestments and altar cloths, and further grading and grassing of the property. Over R2 000 went on more benches, so as to fill the available floor space and provide seating accommodation for the choir.

The choir was still at the eastern end, on the balcony, where its members liked being, and where they wanted to stay. However that was seen as liturgically incorrect, and they were moved towards the south-western corner of the building, immediately in front and to the left of the sanctuary, the area which later, having been glassed in, served as a 'cry room', or 'Infants' Chapel' until late 2001. During the final months of its existence it also served, briefly, as an Adoration Chapel. Thirty years ago this 'choir space' was open to the body of the church, but, try as they might, the choir's singing was not as audible as it might

have been. There was nothing for it but to move them again, to a central position on the new south aisle, where they remained for many years.

In the first six months of 1975 a library was established and the 'church road' was tarred. This was the private drive, which in those days looped around the church, starting and terminating at openings into Rivonia Road. During the following two years parking was laid out, the presbytery was finally completed and a start made with the further development of the grounds. This work brought the total capital outlay in the parish since its beginning to R85 000. As far as the interior of the church was concerned a 'presidential chair' was on order in early 1975, while altar boy benches were to be ordered, to go at the sides of the sanctuary.

Fr Adam seems to have been reasonably satisfied with the state of the parish in the middle 'seventies. Addressing the council in 1974 he explained that policy could be divided into three areas: spiritual, material and social. The first was of course the most important; spirituality, after all, was what the Church was about. Here, thankfully, all appeared to be well, though there was, as ever, room for improvement. The choirs, adult and children's, were being well looked after by Mrs M. Creamer, and the sacristy was in the capable hands of members of The Catholic Women's League. However attention should be given to the quality of worship; the actual practice of the liturgy. It would be as well if attendance at daily Mass could be improved; if that could be done the spiritual tone of the entire parish would benefit tremendously.

Fr Adam had less to say about the material and social areas. The first of these, which had to do with the maintenance and development of the buildings and grounds, was being very well looked after. As regards social matters the council was doing its best to promote community spirit, within the parish and by maintaining the relationship with Dube. Parishioners should remember that they were bound to take part in activities outside the immediate environs of Rivonia. Apart from the assistance which was being given to Dube such activities included promoting vocations, alms-giving and the domestic workers' project, the latter mainly concerned with education. Finally, there was evangelization, spreading the Gospel, and this brought Fr Adam back to the subject which was so close to his heart, missions, support for them, and visits to them.

He wanted council to propose to the Regional Council that a survey be made of missionary activity in South Africa; he wanted all parish councillors to familiarise

themselves with missionary activity in a given area, such as Soweto; and he thought that a local travel agent should be encouraged to promote tours to missions. But that would only be the beginning. Father wanted a detailed study to be made of the feasibility of Our Lady of Lourdes and four other parishes in the region jointly establishing and maintaining a mission station. If mission involvement to this extent was to become a reality maximum and ongoing exposure of the idea to the members of all five parishes would be essential. That would in turn require the establishment of a joint bulletin, to provide full coverage of the mission project, as well as normal parish news and other articles of general interest. Each parish, he concluded, should make an initial donation of R500 towards the project, to cover initial expenses.

The council seems to have been slightly taken aback. Questions were asked, questions which led Fr Adam to point out that before the South African laity could hope to have their opinions consulted they would have to establish 'a stake' in the life and activity of the Church in South Africa. If the Regional Council, a sort of 'Deanery for the Laity', ran a mission its members would be able to claim practical experience and knowledge of 'most of what such work entailed'. In response to further questioning he acknowledged that it would be perfectly reasonable to ask Dube to assist in this endeavour.

Taken aback or not the Rivonia council and parish took their enthusiastic priest's ideas and proposals seriously. Further determined efforts were made to keep in contact with Dube. Members of the Black parish's council were invited to Sunday afternoon teas in Rivonia, where they were entertained by their opposite numbers. But teas, however well-intentioned, and however much appreciated, were not enough. There were grave and growing difficulties. Apart from the ominous deterioration of the political situation during the 'seventies there were serious communication problems between the two parishes. These were caused by huge cultural, language and financial differences, and the physical distance between Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Fatima, the latter made worse by inadequate transport.

An absurd and now almost forgotten 'oil crisis' made things even more difficult. During the middle 'seventies an erroneous belief that the world's oil supplies might be exhausted in the near future, deliberately fostered by people in search of even greater profits, aroused all sorts of fears concerning the availability of fuel. The situation was exacerbated by politically motivated assertions that, as part of a largely imaginary 'total

onslaught' on South Africa, international sanctions would deprive the country of fuel, and so bring about the collapse of the National Party Government, and consequently of law, order and civilization!

Stringent restrictions were placed upon the use of fuel. Severe speed limits were introduced, ninety kilometres per hour on the open road, and, for a time, until some cabinet ministers had endured long road journeys, seventy! These limits, fiercely enforced, had one beneficial effect; the accident rate came plummeting down! Finally the sale of petrol and diesel fuel was forbidden over weekends. That meant that anyone intending to travel on Saturday and Sunday, including prospective visitors to missions, would have to apply to an official known as 'the Petroleum Controller', in practice, a magistrate, who, once they had proved their *bona fides*, might grant them permission to carry extra fuel, in cans in their car boots, a very dangerous practice. Some such visitors would have been members of the Rivonia Missionary Society, which, with an initial membership of twelve, had been formed in early 1974, thanks largely to the initiative and encouragement of Councillor Pitt.

In retrospect it can be seen that the petrol panic was ridiculous, but it was taken extremely seriously, and for a long time. Years later, in August 1979, the second Sunday Mass time was changed from 9.00 a.m. to 9.30 a.m., not with attendance in mind but to allow catechism classes to be moved from Saturday morning to Sunday. This was admittedly more convenient for the parish's dedicated and hard working teachers, but the major argument in favour of the change was that it would save fuel.

In May 1974, with the most of the building program behind them, apart from minor embellishments, Fr Adam and the council paused to take stock. After Councillor Aguirre's proposal that councillors should wear 'tiny identification marks' had been accepted, and he had been asked to have thirty *chi-rho* lapel-pins made, the *chi-rho* being the parish emblem, Fr Adam addressed them on the way they could and should be moving, now that the running of the parish was well in hand. Efficient administration and management were basic; they should now face up to their responsibility for spiritual growth, which meant fostering that communal spirit which he had always regarded as vital. That was an aspect of evangelization, and where that was concerned there should be no false dichotomy between clergy and laity. Both had to look constantly to the future, for their joint task was the extension of the Kingdom of God through Christianity. Modern life, with its rush and pressure, had reduced people to a state where they were too taken up with their own

concerns to look about them and remember the community of which they were part, and which was consequently becoming weaker. Indeed there were very few communities left; people acknowledged individual commitments, but not communal ones.

According to Fr Adam the 'resurrection' of a proper understanding of the value of the community was most certainly the duty of the parish council. Following the example of the early Christian communities as described in the Acts of the Apostles the council should establish a feeling of cohesion in the community, so opening the way to a better society. That would be Christian, for Christianity was the only remedy for the evils of the time. It should be understood that when the priest spoke of a 'Christian society' he meant all baptised Christians, though the emphasis was naturally upon members of the Catholic Church.

In the middle 'seventies, when Paul VI, with his affection for Anglicanism, was pope, when ecumenism was in the air, and Anglican 'women priests' were twenty years away, Fr Adam and various council members attended ecumenical discussions at St John's Anglican Church, Parkmore. After a meeting on 27 October 1975 Fr Adam proposed that another be held at Our Lady of Lourdes'. It was in keeping with his ecumenical outlook that in April 1978 St John's parishioners were invited to attend Corpus Christi celebrations at Our Lady of Lourdes, where their rector, Fr Hugh Harker, would preach. The following year Fr Harker and his people were invited to take part in the Corpus Christi procession at Rivonia. Both invitations were accepted; both occasions were enjoyed by all.

However necessary, the establishment of a better society could only be an exceedingly ambitious long-term goal. As a first step towards it Fr Adam suggested that in future the first half-hour of council meetings should be devoted to mundane parish affairs, and the remaining time to a programme of evangelization, in short to the formation of an apostolic group. This second part of the meeting would be open to the entire parish. The council agreed, and resolved that future council meetings should begin at 7.30 pm, before being opened to all interested parishioners at 8.00 pm. It was a momentous decision. A good response from the parish would mean a revolutionary transformation of the council, and an enormous expansion of what had originally been seen as the duties and responsibilities of such a body.

But enticing people to attend regular evening meetings at the church was not easy. In his enthusiasm Fr Adam did not realise that most of the laity are not really anxious to

do anything of the kind. After fighting the traffic to work in the early morning, a hard day's work, and another battle going home in the evening, the laymen of Rivonia, and an increasing number of the laywomen as well, were, and still are, far more interested in seeing something of their children, hopefully looking over their homework, a drink, a glance at the evening paper, dinner and bed. If events did not follow that course it was usually because they had brought work home. Many would doubtless have protested, reasonably enough, that if they attended Mass on Sundays and other days of obligation, responded to the Church's financial requests, and tried to live in a Christian spirit, they were doing all that they could. Attend parish council meetings? No!

So too regular cheese and wine evenings, which were supposed to enable people to get to know one another, had to be abandoned as the attendance was so poor. However, though few new faces had been seen, a social braaivleis, during a weekend, was regarded as having been more successful. Accordingly the council decided to try a regular braai on the first Saturday of each month, followed by a film. *My Fair Lady* was the first of these. But all too soon the braaivleis and film evenings faded away as had the cheese and wine 'get-togethers'.

Fr Adam must have been disappointed by these negative developments, but he would have been heartened by a letter, dated 23 October 1974 which he received from the Ministry Commission of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference. The bishops thought the Rivonia laity were making a creditable contribution to the running and growth of their parish. Rivonia was perceived as a parish where lay people had been given and had accepted responsibility for tasks formerly fulfilled by priests, religious and catechists. That being so they wanted Fr Adam to attend a 'consultation' at St Peter's Seminary, Hammanskraal, so that they could ascertain his views on increased lay participation in the work and mission of the Church. Such developments would be in accordance with guidelines laid down at Vatican II; it was envisaged that such helpers would be officially recognised by the Church as 'lay ministers'. In time, and after successful completion of appropriate training courses, it might be possible to ordain them as permanent deacons, perhaps even self-supporting priests.

But at the same time, though the bishops assembled at Hammanskraal were well aware that the Sunday readings were already being read by lay people in many parishes and missions, some of them at least were concerned about the possible repercussions of

increased lay participation. They were not all that sure that it would mitigate the ill-effects of the shortage of priests. Might it not weaken clerical authority, or even destroy the existing celibate clergy? And in any case as far as matters spiritual were concerned the laity were still largely a passive community. Could they be transformed into an active and witnessing community, with a deeper understanding and experience of the true nature and needs of the Church?

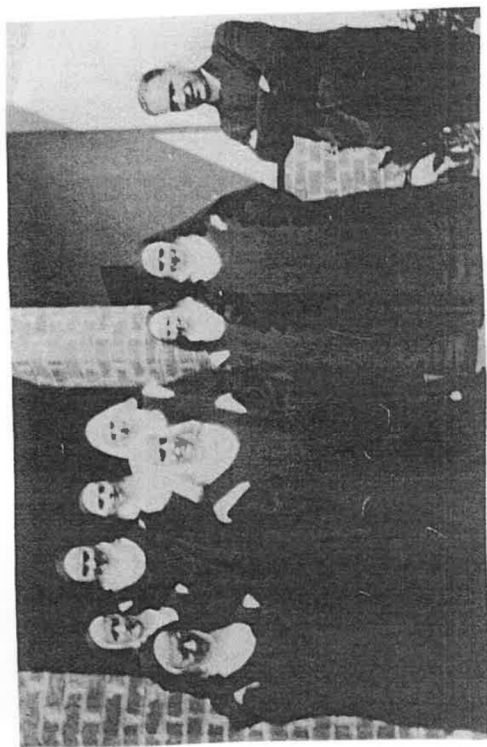
The mere fact that Fr Adam was summoned to this conference suggests that, however disappointed he may occasionally have felt, he and the Rivonia faithful were performing well. Full details of the proceedings of the conference are not available, but obviously he must have told his clerical superiors something of what he was attempting in his parish.

But even bigger things were in Fr Adam and the parish councillors' minds during the second half of 1974 and into 1975. They were intent on doing nothing less than developing the whole of the church ground, all ten acres of it. There appeared to be no chance of any sort of educational institution, such as a Catholic school, being erected on the site, or any part of it. But there was general agreement that it could not be left lying fallow in perpetuity.

Father came up with an ambitious 'lay community centre', a town-house type development, with communal facilities, such as a swimming bath, a bowling green, a putting green, tennis and squash courts, and of course the football field. Though not quite full size the last was turning out to be a great success; Africans played soccer there regularly, until well into the 'nineties. There would also be parking for a hundred cars, and a well set up club house. Accommodation would be provided by fourteen one storey, eleven two storey, and fifteen three storey units. There would also be a flat, for a manager and his or her family.

The inmates would be Catholic, dedicated and devout, well equipped to set an example of Christian living, not least in their willingness to help the wider community whenever and wherever possible. Individual family members would be encouraged to become lay ministers, who would be responsible for ministries such as the choir, catechetics, and youth activities, while supporting and promoting missionary endeavour in the surrounding area.

This was ambitious indeed. Nothing like it, *linked to a church*, had been envisaged before. Plans were drawn up, and much discussion followed. Fr Adam realised that he was flying high, and prudently decided that the parish would have to wait for the coming appointment of a new bishop before presenting their proposals for approval. That may have been a mistake. It was only in 1976 that retired Archbishop J.P. Fitzgerald temporarily replaced Bishop Hugh Boyle as Bishop of Johannesburg. Archbishop Fitzgerald had to 'settle in', and was not immediately in a position to give a very big project the attention it required. So the scheme lay dormant for too long, and was eventually forgotten, which was a pity. Had it gone ahead the suburb of Rivonia would have benefited from such an establishment in its midst. It would also have been a fitting monument to Fr David Adam

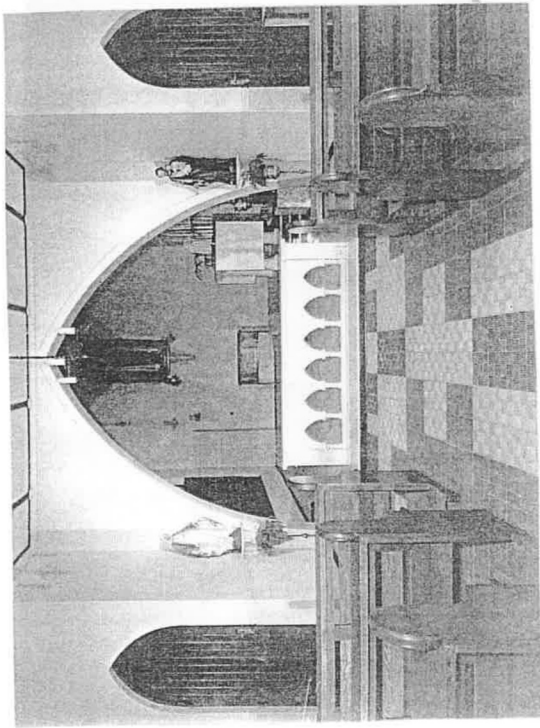


Bishop O'Leary OMI and the Carmelite sisters, 1931.

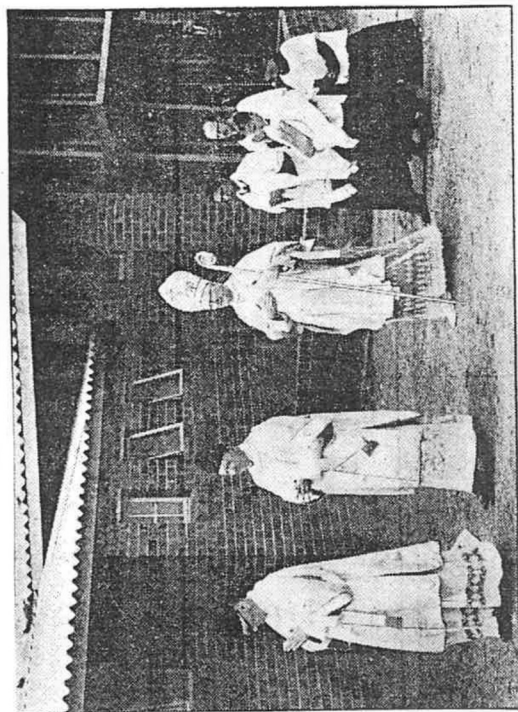
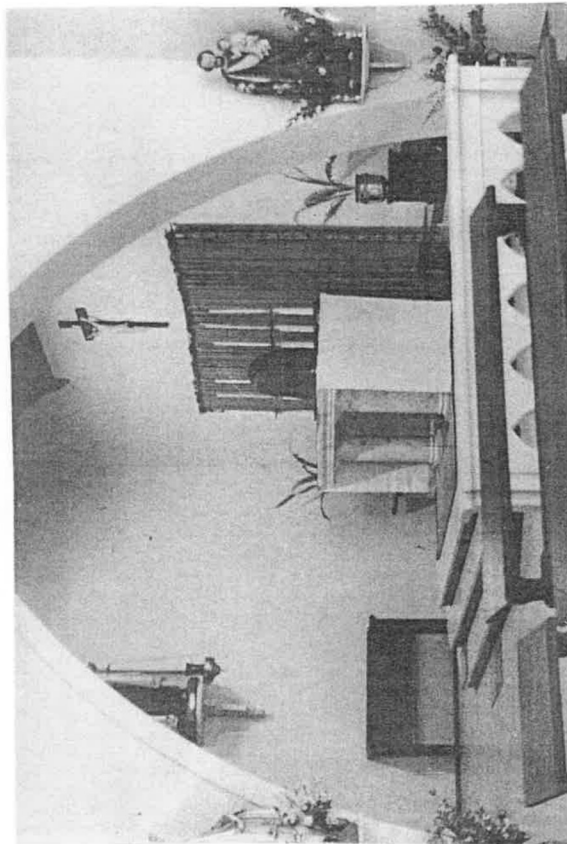
Carmelite Sisters



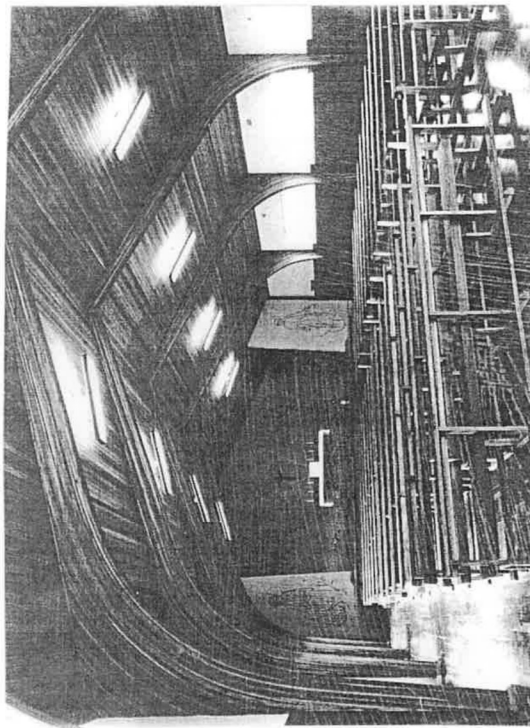
Rivonia Carmel (1939), now (2006) the site of Rivonia Square.



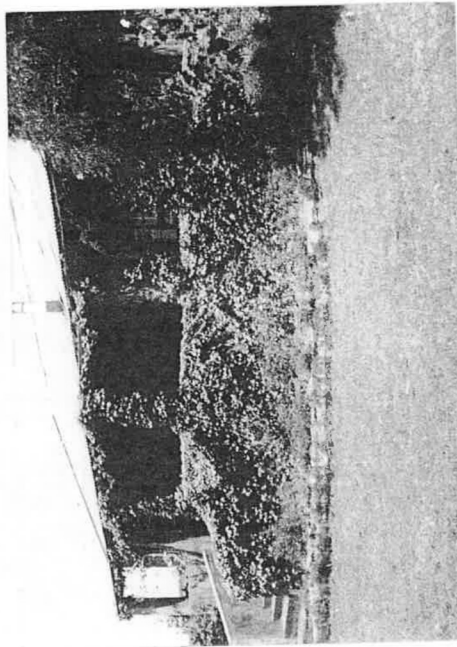
The sanctuary, Rivonia Carmel Chapel, 1931



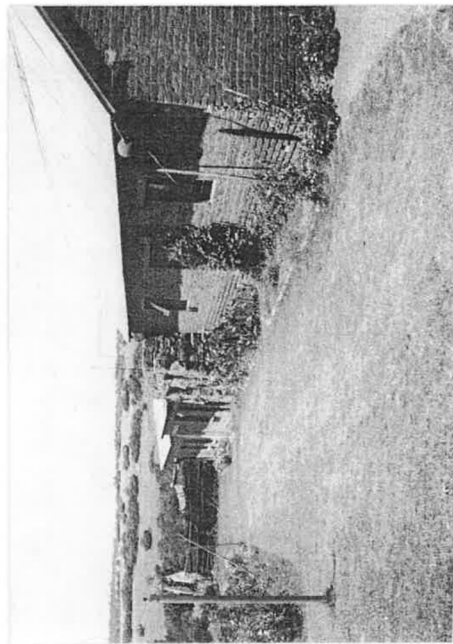
Bishop Hugh Boyle in procession after blessing the hall-church and celebrating mass, 2 February 1962.



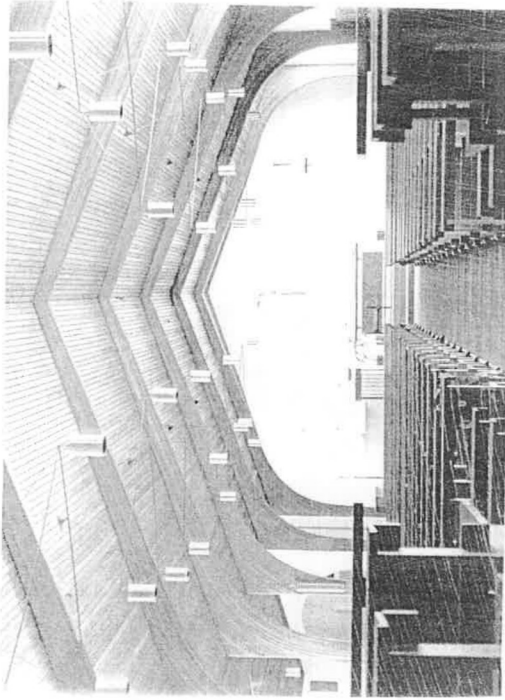
The east end of the hall-church, 1963. The temporary altar, with its carved wooden frontal, is on the stage, later the balcony.



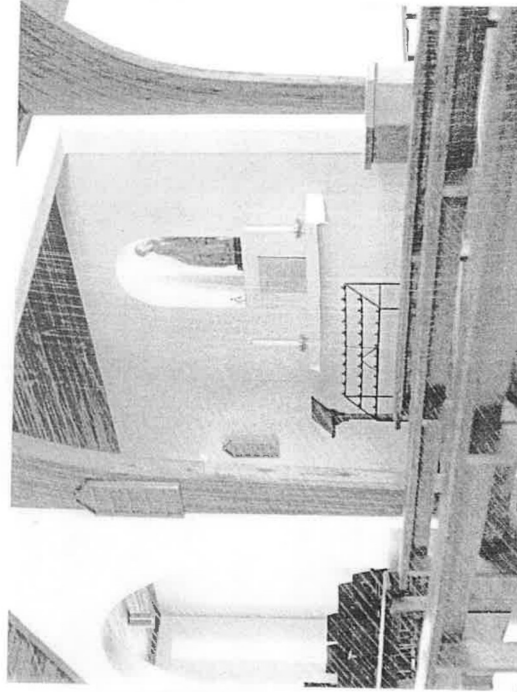
The Grail House (1955) at what is now (2005) the corner of First Ave and Rivonia Road.



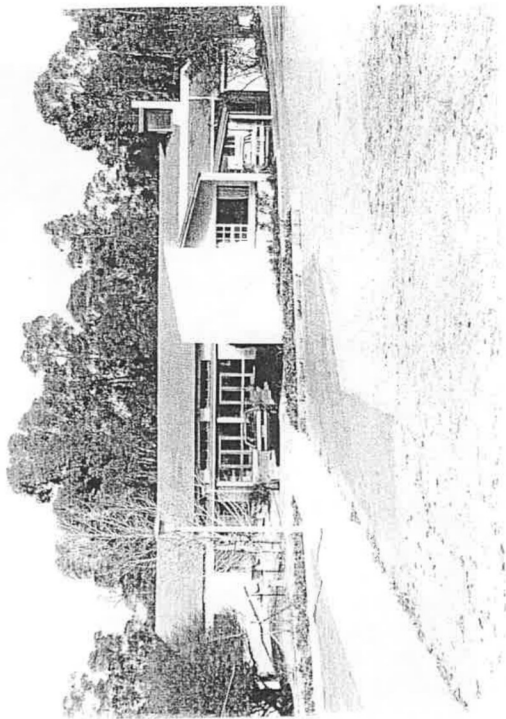
The Grail Cottages (1955). The view is towards the present Gallo Manor.



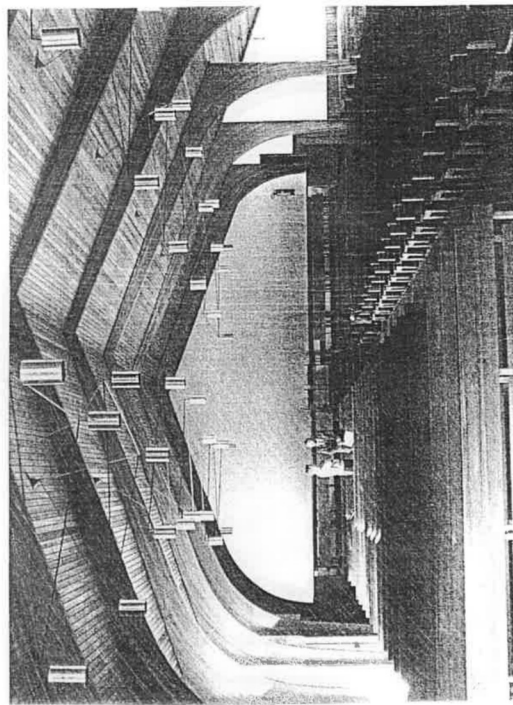
The sanctuary, with its temporary altar and wooden frontal, from the balcony, 1983.



The Lady Shrine (1983). The choir seats, to the extreme left, are in an area now (2006) included in the adoration chapel



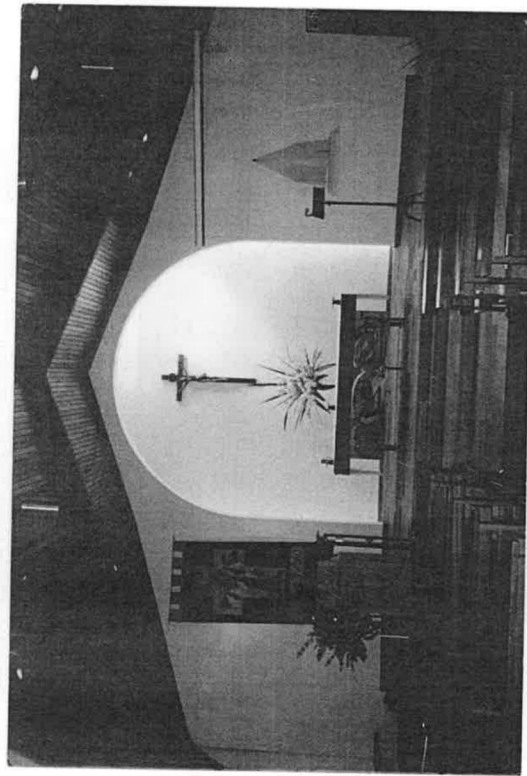
Our Lady of Lourdes, from the north, 1983.



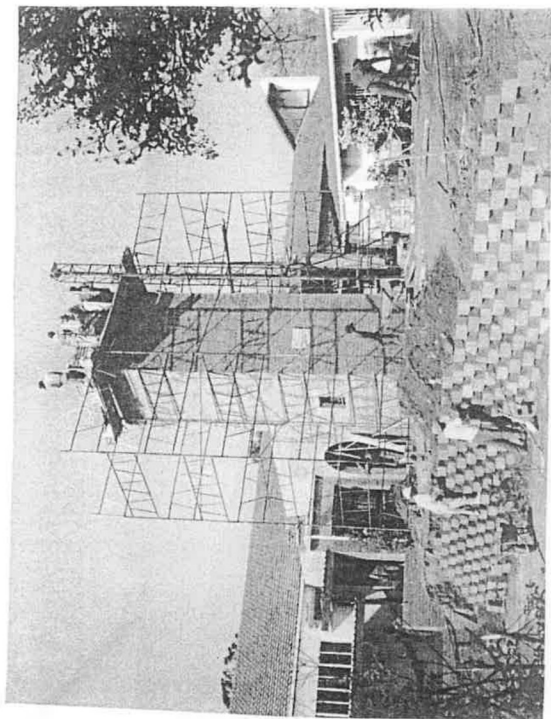
The east end of the hall-church (1983), after being 'turned'. Fr David Adam (left) in conversation with Mr H. Willis, organ builder.



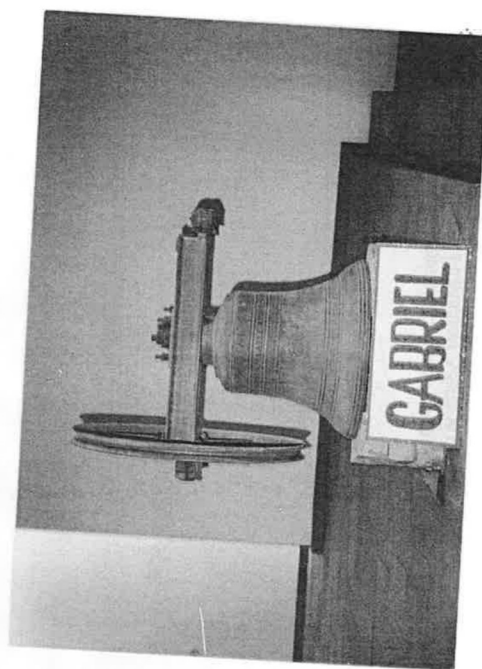
Nina Ristic's crib, in the late 'eighties.



The sanctuary, with its temporary altar and wooden ambo (1991), shortly before the construction of the permanent altar and ambo.



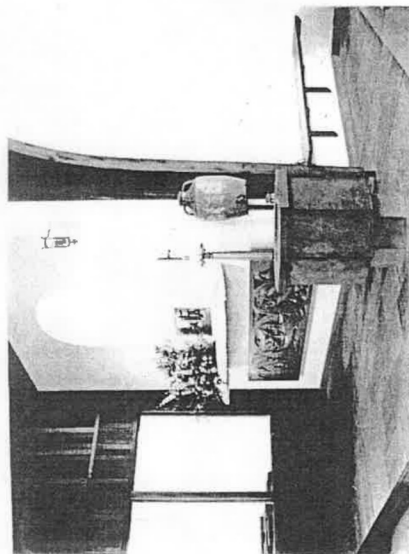
The tower under construction, 1992 - 1993



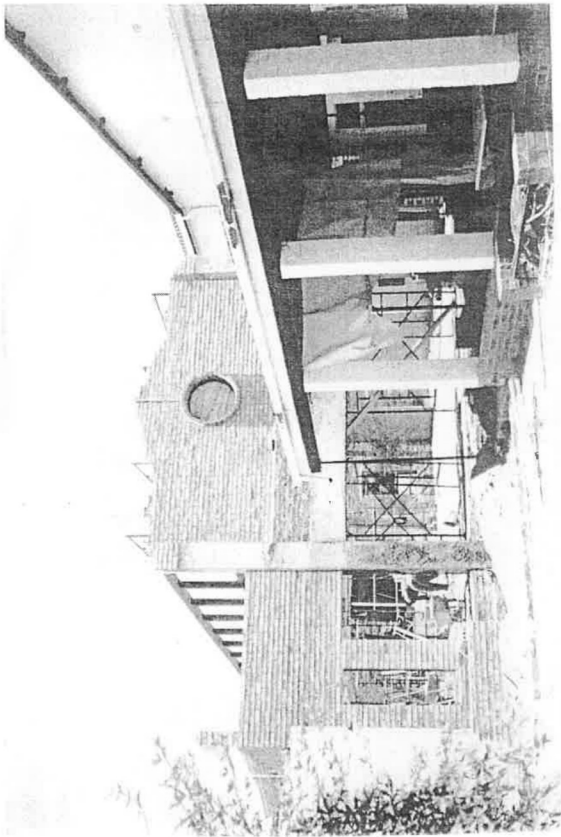
Gabriel awaits installation in the tower.



Bishop P. Mvemve consecrates the permanent altar, 11 February 1992.
Left to right: Fr M. Austin, a mason, and Deacon P. Holliday.



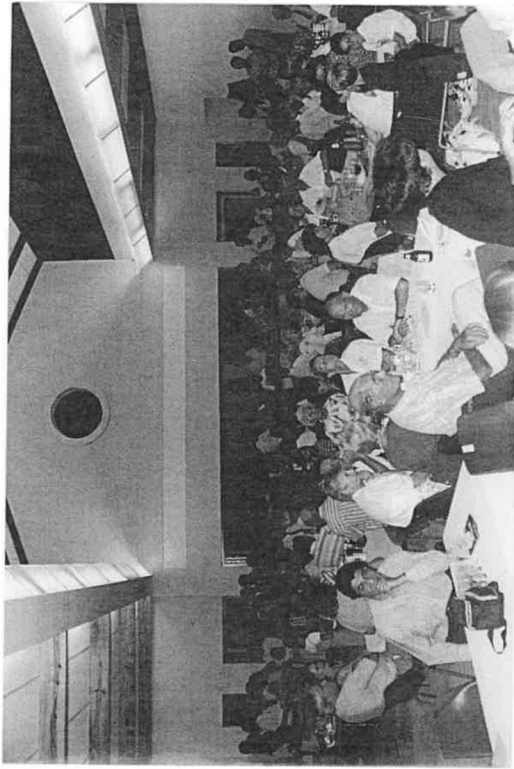
The Blessed Sacrament Shrine (1992). This was formerly the Lady Shrine, while the wooden panel was the temporary altar frontal.



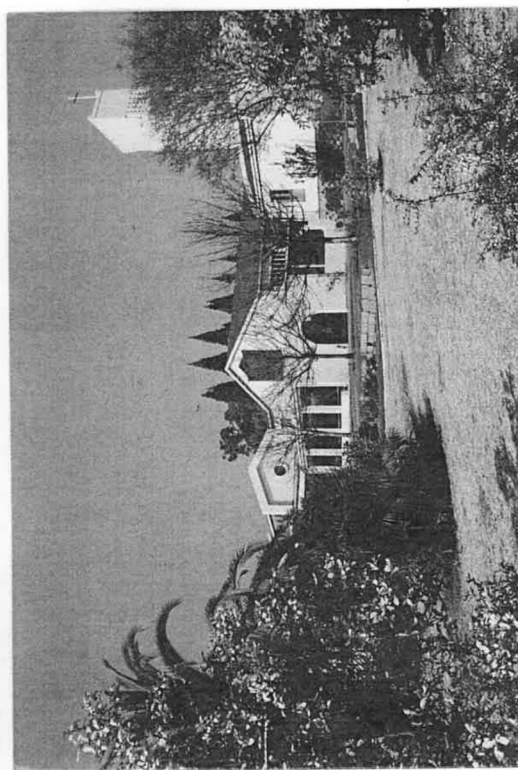
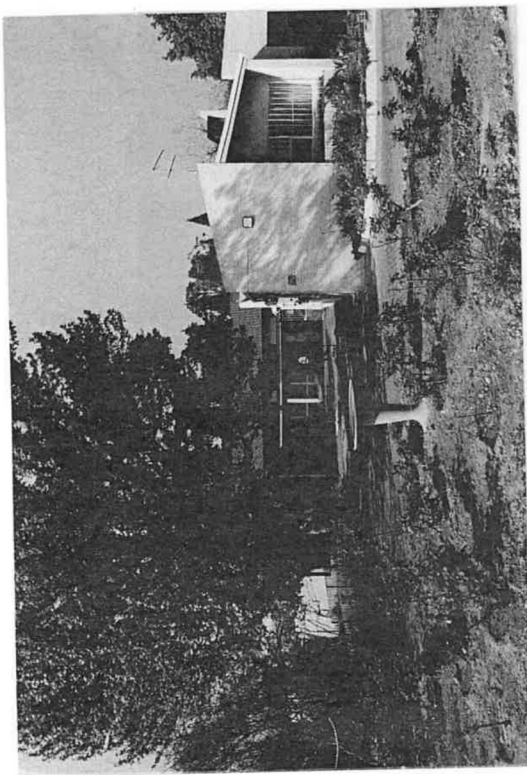
The new hall under construction.



Bishop Reginald Orsmond opens the new hall (1995).
Fr Michael Austin is on the right.



Followed by a party.



Our Lady of Lourdes, 2005.

Chapter V

Expansion and a 'Lay Community'?

Although the 'lay community' idea dwindled and died Fr Adam, convinced as he was that Western Civilization had taken a fundamentally wrong turning during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, remained certain that the best hope for the future lay in reviving and fostering a sense of community. He was increasingly disturbed by the way in which families were becoming more and more self-sufficient, each forming a little closed environment, in which children were brought up in isolation. Bringing families into contact with one another was thus a matter of the utmost urgency. Communal consciousness underlay the Christian religion itself. Not for nothing was the central act in the Mass known as 'Communion'.

He had tried, socially, with braais, film evenings and cheese and wine parties, as well as, intellectually, with discussion groups. None of these had been really successful. In the spring of 1975 he concluded that in this sunbaked colonial society outdoor recreation, in a word, sport, might be the answer. Even if, regrettably, the proposed Catholic community never took off, the parish could at least make full use of its large grounds to provide reasonably ambitious sports facilities, and so, hopefully, entice people to emerge from their lairs and get to know one another.

He approached this latest scheme with praiseworthy caution, fully aware that if it was to have the slightest chance of success the parishioners themselves should be involved in the decision making process. And it would have to be a success because it would involve spending a considerable amount of money. Accordingly he decided briefly to present the scheme at each Mass on Saturday, 1 November and Sunday, 2 November. The people would be provided with reduced copies of a plan of the proposed facilities, drawn up by the ever obliging Michael Waterkeyn, and then given a week to think it over.

The cost would be considerable, about R45 000-00 for two tennis courts, with flood lights, a sixty by thirty foot (18.88m x 9.144m) swimming bath, a squash court, a putting green, the football (soccer) field, a car park and the necessary earth works. According to Kit McLoughlin if the then quarterly building fund contributions could be increased by

50%, i.e. from R2 000 to R3 000 a quarter, the debt could be paid off in four years. The figure of R3 000 a quarter could also be attained if each family paid R1 00 a week. At the time less than one third of the parish were contributing anything at all to the building fund! The council agreed that these facts should be drawn to the people's attention.

The following weekend meetings were held after each Mass; with all the councillors in attendance. Mr Slavín, an architect, described what was envisaged, chairman Jimmy Carter gave the council's view, while treasurer McLoughlin presented the all-important financial side. On the 25 November the council met to assess the results of the meetings. After much animated discussion and little agreement Carter concluded that it seemed the majority had been in favour. While he had nothing to say about that Fr Adam thought that they should proceed with the plan, even though he was sure it would fail!

Deep and repeated disappointments may explain this strange, dismal and confused opinion, which was in marked contrast with his initial attitude of cautious optimism. Perhaps he was depressed for he went on to complain that no one was willing to do anything remotely resembling a 'menial task', and, secondly, the general attitude was entirely wrong. The spiritual state of the parish was 'horrible'. Everyone accepted, in theory, that 'the parish should be run by the people', but in practice they continued to regard the parish priest as the 'absolute boss'. This meant that they did what the priest apparently wanted but quite failed to understand that they were supposed '... to accept the yoke of the service of God.'

Mr Lance disagreed, arguing that attendance at social functions was improving, and that in general people were taking more interest 'all the time'. Anyway, he concluded, was not that the reason for the proposed sports facilities, to get people together and involved?

Unimpressed, Fr Adam retorted that five of the eleven councillors had sent in their apologies, for what was certainly a most important meeting! He deplored how projects had been started and never completed. That resulted in the focus of discussion shifting to the council's possible shortcomings. Eventually it was agreed that a roster of duties for all portfolios might help, and that Father and Mr Daly should draw up such a roster, for presentation at the first meeting in January.

Lastly Father suggested that, in addition to the roster, a 'secretariat' should be set up by January, 1976. The proposal had a very mixed reception, possibly owing largely to a failure to define the term. What exactly was meant by it? Two years before it had been

used simply as a label for the staff of the parish office, i.e. Mrs McLoughlin and Mrs Lance. But now it appeared to be being used to denote some sort of permanent administrative body. After much discussion, some of it quite heated, Mr Lance made it clear that he was against any form of 'secretariat', 'if it involved a lot of women telling [him] what to do.' On that note a not very happy meeting closed.

The roster was produced on 5 January 1976, at the first meeting in the New Year. There were six portfolios. Mr C.I. McLoughlin was in charge of Liturgy and Choir; Messrs C. Schneider, A. Slavín and M.J. Waterkeyn were responsible for the Building Programme; S. Daly and D. Pigot for Maintenance; V. Landuyt for Social Affairs; W.P.C.B. Adams would lead Intellectual Development, while general Charities were in the hands of J. Martin and J. Lance. Mesdames M. McLoughlin and J. Shirran made up the secretariat, which, in the end, meant no more than the parish office. They would not be telling people what to do!

Though the sports club eventually followed the retirement village into limbo, as Fr Adam had expected, many improvements to the grounds were made during 1976 and 1977. The parking area was cleared and tarred, and as soon as a bulldozer was available the site of the future football field was cleared and levelled. In addition a children's playground was set up. Twenty-five years later swings and a 'jungle gym' could still be seen, in vigorous use, on the lawn beneath the tower. By mid-January 1977 Mr Graspointner had been fully paid. Finally, consideration was being given to having the sole entrance to the property in Third Avenue, and making the existing entrance and exit, off Rivonia Road, an exit only.

The football field was an instant and great success. The decision to provide it had been made with an eye to the needs of large numbers of African domestic workers, who had little more to do with their Sunday afternoons 'off' than roam the streets. For some twenty years, as long as the field endured, large numbers of enthusiasts came to play and to watch. It was an important component of a development programme which both reflected and encouraged that positive attitude and growing community spirit which Father Adam so dearly wished to promote. But as regards large-scale and expensive building activities there was some uncertainty, arising out of the uneasy, possibly even threatening climate of the times. Fr Adam rightly pointed out that Christians should have the greater glory of God constantly in mind, and that their planning and activity should not be qualified

by political and economic uncertainty, and an inability to know how current developments would work out. This sound theology and simple common sense provoked much discussion in the council and the parish generally. There were many and varying points of view, but the important thing is that eventually an impressive, extensive and very necessary building and development programme was approved and carried through to completion.

Clearly the church had to be enlarged. The rapid and continuing growth of the congregation made that urgent. Growth had in fact never ceased, and would continue into the new century. Putting on yet another Mass would have alleviated the problem, but only temporarily, and meanwhile building costs were rising steadily. In addition Fr Adam made it clear that the extensions should include a Lady Chapel, to encourage active veneration of Our Lady, patroness of the parish. Finally, according to him there was a distinct possibility that they might be asked to accommodate an Anglican congregation some time in the future. He did not explain what that had to do with the size of the church; perhaps he had occasional joint services in mind. In the mid-'seventies Anglican - Catholic understanding was growing, though subsequent developments within Anglicanism have caused it to diminish or even vanish altogether!

Back at Our Lady of Lourdes it was argued, perfectly reasonably, that extensions to the building would only be a temporary alleviation, and that they would be very expensive. Some R60 000 would have to be found, without making allowances for furniture. Most people agreed that the real solution would be to establish a new parish, further north. Hindsight shows that to have been correct; urban development north of the N1 has been phenomenal.

Michael Waterkeyn's first idea was to lengthen the church by demolishing the east wall and building out over the patio. However after further consideration he decided that would be a major job, and prohibitively expensive. A better, simpler and cheaper operation would be to widen the church, by constructing another aisle on the south side. That would allow a further 100 people to be accommodated, and also provide space for a Lady Chapel. Tabling his plans, which also made provision for roofing over the patio at the eastern end of the church, he emphasized that as far as increased capacity was concerned, that was all that could be done within the dimensions of the existing building.

Eventually the parish council approved the construction of extra aisles on both the north and the south. That was in response to a plea from Fr Adam, who pointed out that

over the past five years the number of parishioners had doubled, that new suburbs were constantly opening up, and that ESCON's move from Braamfontein to Sunninghill would bring in a number of new families. Certainly the Catholic parish of Rivonia had come a long way from the small though growing group who had attended Sunday Mass in the Carmel chapel some twenty-five years before.

The growth of both the parish and all Sandton were clearly shown by the remarkable increase in Sunday Mass attendance during the 'seventies. In 1972 the total Sunday Mass attendance had been 500. For the rest of the decade it increased by an average of well over 100 *per annum*, reaching no less than 1200 in late 1978! All of this had now to be put to the parishioners. Copies of the plans were displayed on Saturday, 12 March 1977, and special meetings, with Messrs Carter, Waterkeyn and McLoughlin in attendance, were held after each Mass the following weekend. They explained that since the establishment of another parish was not on the cards, Our Lady of Lourdes would have to be enlarged, and that the longer the delay the more expensive the job would become. The parishioners accordingly voted in favour of the more ambitious extension, i.e. extra aisles on both south and north sides of the existing church. But Fr Adam's complaint, that the people were content to leave everything to the priest and the council, appears to have been justified. Only ninety-one voting forms were returned, of which eighty-six were in favour. Despite that lukewarm response building began early in August 1977, with a view to finishing by 30 September. Fr Adam wanted to build a sports stadium as well as tennis courts, but nothing came of that.

When the work was completed the new southern aisle made it possible to provide a Lady Shrine, with the carved wooden statue of Mary in a niche above the shrine altar, as well as seats for another 100 people, so bringing the total accommodation up to 600. The northern addition became the present porch. The double wooden doors to the left of the glass doors were originally the west entrance to the hall-church. Besides solving the old problem of direct sunlight in the church this porch accommodated a small infants' chapel, while providing space for the display and sale of Catholic books, pamphlets and *The Southern Cross*, together with home made cakes, tarts, jams and other foodstuffs. The latter raised a little money for various charities; the books and pamphlets helped to propagate the Faith, while *The Southern Cross* kept people in touch with on-going developments in the Church.

Propagation of the Faith and understanding Church developments, in a time of great change, were rightly regarded as important, so much so that in addition to selling the newspaper in the porch people were encouraged to subscribe, so that it would be posted to their homes. It was estimated that some 250 to 300 subscribers might be found, but since there was as yet no parish register that estimate might well have been more optimistic than accurate. The Council was very well aware that a parish register was urgently required; without one they were working in the dark. But actually getting one together was turning out to be a very considerable task.

Alterations and building continued apace through August and September, and beyond. Fr Adam had decided to go straight on with a tribune for the choir, a repository, the roof over the patio, and extensions to the presbytery, including a guest-suite and a new carport, while the old one was converted into a dining room for the priest, whose sleeping and study accommodation were also improved and enlarged. Much needed improvements to the servants' quarters, especially their toilet facilities, was also carried out. In the 'old South Africa' such things, and many others, were strictly segregated, but there was no great urgency about making them equal!

Even if they did not actually disapprove, quite a number of concerned parishioners wondered whether so much ambitious, and expensive building activity was really 'wise', a word much heard among white South Africans in the late twentieth century. Perhaps it might be better to 'wait and see', another popular sentiment. This was because the political situation in the country, once threatening, became positively menacing in mid-1976. An ill-advised and arrogant attempt to impose tuition through the medium of Afrikaans on Black schools led to fierce and prolonged rioting in Soweto. This spread rapidly to most parts of the country, despite extraordinary security measures and eventually violent efforts to contain it. Unrest and tension reached such proportions that it was feared that serious inter-racial conflict might be imminent. So it was that early in 1977 Fr Adam received a letter from the Sandton Town Council asking whether the church could be used as a feeding centre in the event of a 'civil emergency'.

In those circumstances hesitancy regarding investment and expansion was understandable. But with the great benefit of hindsight it can be seen to have been mistaken, based as it was on misconceptions concerning the nature of South African history, society

and politics, quite apart from a failure to realise that tomorrow never comes, it's always today!

To the credit of the parish it should be noted that political prejudice and fears were never allowed to interfere with everyday human contact. Late in 1977 the Catholic Women's League sent a 'very generous cheque' to Dube, to enhance their twin parish's Christmas festivities. At the same time the parish council invited the children of Dube and accompanying adults to spend a day at Our Lady of Lourdes. In a letter to Mrs C. Irwin Rev. Fr G.V.M. Coleman OMI, of Our Lady of Fatima, thanked 'the good ladies' for their 'very generous cheque' and also '... the Parish Council for the wonderful day our people had at Rivonia. They enjoyed it to the full. It was such a lovely occasion for some of the kids to get out of this place even if it was only for one day. It was like heaven to them. God bless you all for your charity.'

Fr Adam, still as intent as ever on developing a warm community spirit, was greatly pleased when the tennis courts, in charge of a sub-committee of three, Mesdames Pamela Scrutton, Alice Goemans and Jackie Spiers, turned out to be extremely popular. Father was eager to go on with building a pavilion at the courts, and in January 1979 the council noted that a 'low-cost tennis pavilion' would cost about R2 500. There was no immediate action, for it was just at this time that work was beginning on modifying the basement under the stage, with a view to providing two extra classrooms. These were completed in March 1980.

In the course of 1979 it was suggested that the tennis club borrow R8 000-00 from the parish, rather than the bishop, to build a more ambitious pavilion. But again nothing was done. Money may indeed have been becoming a problem in the parish at the end of the 'seventies. Fr Adam, disappointed, and probably concerned about the parish's financial position, remarked that the amount people donate to the Church is equal to the level of their spiritual development! That was unfair. Political concern probably had more to do with what turned out to be just a passing phase.

But the tennis pavilion was abandoned 'for the time being'. That was a pity, as the tennis club appears to have been one place, perhaps the only place, where at least some parishioners were getting together socially and regularly. True, that was only those who were tennis enthusiasts, but it was something.

Once again the council turned its mind to the social problem; perhaps that old standby, a braai might attract people to spend at least a part of the second Sunday of each month at the church, that being the day when the parish council met. Some misgivings were voiced. Were people really anxious to spend 'a day at the church'? When it was pointed out that only the tennis players had attended a recent well publicised parish braai, the idea was abandoned. Chairman Sean Daly remarked that before trying to get all the parish councillors to attend a braai an attempt should be made to get them all to attend a parish council meeting!

Fr Adam may well have agreed, but he had something even bigger than full attendance at council meetings in mind; as usual it concerned the development of the church property. This time it was nothing less than the establishment of 'a lay persons' community', to be run '... along the lines of a boarding-house, since the church [was] so isolated from parishioners.' He was confident that such a project would be viable and that the bishop would approve. This novel idea was considered at length, though in the prevailing political climate nothing could be finalised.

The Soweto (and eventually South African) Riots of 1976, and the resulting world-wide publicity, had dealt a mortal blow to the 'old South Africa', a South Africa where all political power was in white hands, or, more correctly, Afrikaner hands. The world had seen many things on its TV screens that it did not like, so much so that by the end of the decade it was quite obvious that change was coming. All that remained in doubt was when, and whether it would be violent and destructive, or peaceful and constructive. It was in keeping with the spirit and perceptions of the times that in April 1979 Archbishop Joseph P. Fitzgerald despatched a memorandum to all the parish councils of the diocese, in an attempt to ascertain the views of the laity concerning the role and policy of the Church in a country which, it was clear, was entering a period of unprecedented change.

Our Lady of Lourdes parish council did not feel competent to express the views of about 400 White Catholic families without prior consultation. Accordingly at all Masses on Saturday and Sunday, 19 and 20 May 1979, a parish councillor addressed the congregation, exhorting them to answer the questions on the reverse side of the photostat of the bishop's memorandum which had been given to each member of the congregation on entering the church. After a good response the council was able to inform the bishop, *inter alia*, that seventy-five per cent of the parishioners were in favour of racial integration in

Catholic schools, providing the existing standard of education was maintained. They were against the Church having any connection with the World Council of Churches, but thought that it should take a more definite stand politically, and that all Catholics of all races should be encouraged to prepare themselves for changes in 'the pattern of living'. Social contact with Black Catholics, and more intermingling of the races at church services should be encouraged, and efforts made to have Black priests visit White parishes, to celebrate and preach. There should also be more contact with 'other Christian bodies'.

So much for political, social and ecumenical matters. On the spiritual side it was felt that more attention should be given to involving children and adolescents in the life of the parish and in the celebration of the Mass. Significantly many parishioners made the revival of the spiritual life of the parish their first priority. They called for the revival of Benediction, Bible classes, missions within the parish by visiting clergy, and retreats for the laity, whose prayer life should be encouraged and whose theological education should be given more attention.

There were numerous other suggestions: that there should be closer ties between priests and parishioners, and between bishops and parishes. As far as the priests were concerned the old practice of house visiting should be resumed. Girls should be allowed to serve during Mass, not just boys, and women to proclaim, not just men. The ordination of permanent deacons within the parishes should be encouraged, and personal retirement schemes and medical aid schemes for diocesan priests introduced. Interestingly, there were requests that the Church make the Tridentine Mass available 'at least once a month for older parishioners'.

About 50% of the respondents thought Charismatic Renewal would be beneficial, while a considerable number believed that the diminishing number of vocations had been caused by lowering the standards required for the priesthood or religious life. All of this must have left the authorities at the cathedral well aware of two things: that Rivonia knew what it wanted, and that Rivonia expected quite a lot.

Rivonia was also prepared to give quite a lot, as their ongoing relationship with Our Lady of Fatima, Dube, clearly showed. The children of the Black parish were invited to spend a 'Children's Day' at Our Lady of Lourdes on 11 October 1979. At least 200 came. They arrived at 9-00 a.m. for Mass at 9-30, after which they were regaled with tea, for the adults, and cold drinks, sweets and chips for the children, followed by sports. Lunch

followed, hamburgers, ice cream and more cold drinks, and then soccer matches. The day ended with Benediction at 15.00 p.m., after which it would have been back to their buses for the return journey to Soweto. Fr Adam expressed his pleasure that '... quite a few parishioners attended, and, above all, assisted.'

On the 9 December Rivonia's choir went to Dube, in response to an invitation to sing at their Mass. Like the children's day, that visit was a great success. The good feelings engendered by these visits, when political feelings were still running high in South Africa, contributed to a growing conviction that members of both parishes should have an opportunity to acquire a better understanding of the problems confronting the other. It was proposed that joint meetings of members of both parish councils should be held quarterly, the venue to alternate.

Two months earlier, in October, Father Adam had again expressed his ongoing concern at what he felt to be the parish council's insufficiently pastoral attitude. After some discussion it was suggested that special quarterly meetings should be held, to discuss spiritual matters, attendance to be by invitation only. Remarkably the council agreed to that, and also that Father and two councillors should meet to discuss who should be invited! The first such special meeting was held early in the New Year, where Father was assured that each of those attending would accept an 'area of competence'.

In turn Father announced that in addition to the spiritual meetings he would be holding a series of talks on Wednesday evenings during Lent. With one exception the parish councillors present felt that he should 'goad' people into attending the meetings. The exception was Kit McLoughlin, who asked that his objection to such goading be minuted.

During 1980 it became all too apparent that still more accommodation was badly needed for catechetical classes. The parish was fairly large, and becoming larger, but there was no Catholic school within its boundaries. By June plans for such accommodation had been drawn up, the approval of the Sandton Municipality had been obtained, and the parish council had asked a building contractor for a quotation. Since they expected to pay about R23 000 his figure of R31 000 came as a shock.

One councillor suggested that the catechism teachers could manage for another three years if the newly roofed patio was glazed in and room dividers installed in it and the hall. A horrified Michael Waterkeyn pointed out that such modifications would be an aesthetic disaster, and not particularly cheap. To proceed with them would result in wasting money

rather than saving it. The council then decided to approach Mr Graspoinner, who had already done so much work for the parish. He quoted R26 000 to R27 000, and in October the council decided to go ahead, despite a prevailing shortage of bricks.

As things turned out there was no need to be too concerned about the shortage, or about the builder's January 1981 warning that the price would be higher than his original quote! Early in March he announced that he would be unable to start until the end of May, and when May came he announced that he would definitely be starting in July! Plagued though it was by the difficulties and vicissitudes which are seemingly inseparable from building projects, on that occasion mainly shortages of bricks and tiles, as well as plumbing problems, the building work went on steadily but slowly, so that it was only in mid-January 1982 that it was anywhere near complete. And even then a further R947 had to be found, for curtains, furnishing and office equipment.

Meanwhile there was much to do, and, since there were many expenses to be met, it was as well that offertory collections were bringing in some R8 000 a quarter. A joint meeting of Rivonia and Dube councils, on 8 February 1981, had revealed that the Black parish was as much in need of help as it had ever been. In February 1980 the council had contributed R500-00 to their school fund, and had made further contributions quarterly. The parish priest, Rev. Fr Buti Joseph Thlagale OMI distributed the money at his discretion. Exactly a year later Fr Thlagale was given another R500-00, which, it was stipulated, should be used to help children in difficulty with their school funds.

In March 1981 the parish council noted that two 'young people' living in one of the cottages were prepared to act as caretakers. It was decided that such an arrangement should be tried, and accordingly Erhardt and Jane Smith were appointed caretakers, on a six months' trial basis.

That same year, 1981, the question of a parish newsletter came up once again, at a special general parish meeting, on 6 May 1981. It was hoped to publish such a news letter on the first Sunday of each month, starting in July, providing an editor/manager could be found. Four days later the parish council appointed Mr Bill Godfrey, who had previous experience in the field. The council also decided that annual general meetings should be held, to keep people in touch with developments in the parish. This despite the fact that the special general meeting had only been attended by fifty people, and had revealed little other than that it was felt that a newsletter would be a good idea!

In October it became apparent that the parish car, a 1968 Peugeot, was not worth repairing. Accordingly a 1.3 litre Toyota Corolla was bought the following month, for R2 960. Fr Adam certainly needed a car, besides which he wanted a catechist, who would make daily visits to Catholics in Leeuwkop Prison. It was hoped that a Mr Mogwane, who had been introduced to Father by the parish priest of Alexandra, might be suitable. If he was acceptable to Archbishop Fitzgerald, to Colonel Van Moeschenbroek, the resident chaplain of Leeuwkop, and to the government, the parish would pay him R300 a month. If, after three months' trial he proved satisfactory, Fr Adam would approach the diocese for financial help.

By mid-1982 it was becoming clear that Rivonia needed a dedicated though not (yet) a full time secretary. Maria McLoughlin was finding timely production of the council minutes very difficult, and it had become apparent that leaving the job to her, on an *ad hoc* unpaid basis, simply because she was conscientious and willing, and a member of the council, was neither fair nor correct. Eventually Mrs Yvonne Pollock was appointed parish secretary, on 15 August 1982. She was to help Father in the office, and circulate letters regarding parish affairs to all councillors. For that she would be paid R5 per hour, as it was thought that there was not enough work for two whole mornings a week. But, quite rightly, that was expected to change soon.

Meanwhile Father Adam had decided that the Sunday morning parish council meetings were too rushed for adequate discussion of spiritual matters. He had accordingly decided to have 'parish discussions', on an evening in the week preceding a parish council meeting, to which discussions all those actively involved with the work of the parish were invited.

Yet again the response was disappointing, and the 'parish discussions' had to be abandoned. Nothing daunted, Father decided to enlarge and reconstitute the council. Council meetings were opened to all adult parishioners, while it was decided to make an attempt to recruit additional councillors at an ox-braai, to be held on 29 January 1983.

A minor but extremely practical improvement, in mid-1983, was to fit hymn book racks to the backs of the pews. This was approved by all, with the possible exception, according to Fr Adam, of 'the McLoughlin brood, who [would] miss their keep fit exercise of issuing and collecting the hymn books.'

But hymn book racks were a trivial matter compared with Father's continuing desire to make more use of the parish's large property. There was, for example, ample room for a retreat house, a possible project which received serious consideration. However, another matter, probably even closer to the priest's heart, was the almost desperate plight of the Carmelite Sisters. That was due to the changing nature of the monastery's surroundings.

Fifty-one years after its foundation the Rivonia Carmel no longer stood in peaceful solitude on empty veld, but in an increasingly built up urban area. No longer did the great gate open onto a generally deserted dirt road but into what was becoming a bustling shopping mall. In November 1982 the council gave its approval to Father's persuading the sisters to visit Our Lady of Lourdes and, having seen the parish's ample property, consider building a new Carmel on part of it. That could have been done quite quickly. Michael Waterkeyn estimated that no more than eighteen months would be required.

The projected move would have been good for the Carmel, good for Our Lady of Lourdes, and good for Catholicism in Rivonia, but the sisters were very reluctant to move. The mother prioress and one or two of the senior nuns visited the parish, and went away unconvinced. The ostensible reason for their eventual rejection of the idea was that their dead were buried in the convent grounds; the real one, for the dead could have been exhumed and moved as well, and might eventually have to be, was probably that they were old ladies, and the mere thought of uprooting themselves, and moving, even a very short distance, was too disturbing to contemplate.

Fr Adam was disappointed, but there was nothing to be done. Early in 1984 the parish council resigned itself to the Carmel remaining where it was, 'for the time being', while continuing to hope that it would eventually relocate to the church grounds. But nothing further happened for another eight years.

Back at Our Lady of Lourdes development continued, driven by the parish's growing needs and facilitated by the its healthy financial position in the early 'eighties, which made it possible to raise fairly large sums fairly easily. However there were limits, and the council was well aware that though much had been done, much remained to be done, and also that, quite effortlessly, expenditure was rising to meet income! Thus, though it was generally agreed that the hall was far too small, and that the patio was an unsatisfactory extension, even with the awnings which Michael Waterkeyn had suggested

installing around it as a temporary measure, building a new and bigger hall would have to wait for some years.

Then it was felt that it would be good to have a pipe organ, in place of the existing, ageing, second hand and very modest Hammond. Mr Henry Willis, managing director of the renowned English organ building firm Henry Willis and Sons, Ltd, visited the parish in 1983, and later submitted a detailed quotation for an 'entry level' pipe organ, together with an explanation of how it could be installed, and then enlarged and enhanced, in stages, while in use. The council considered it, and liked everything, except the price. At the then rate of exchange that was about R360 000-00, for the basic instrument. The project was reluctantly abandoned. Fr Adam suggested that they could perhaps obtain an organ for very much less from a church which, for whatever reason, had been abandoned and was to be demolished.

In August 1984 it was decided to tar the roads on the property, for nearly R5 000. Just over a year later fans were installed in the church, which could become very hot and uncomfortable during Rivonia's warm summers. The relief they gave was much appreciated, but none the less another R5 000-00 had to be found. Development and maintenance of the existing buildings, the grounds and refurbishing the tennis courts, this last with a view to injecting new life into the club, had reached the stage where a full time caretaker or parish manager would have to be found and employed.

Furthermore, getting a living-in manager meant that one of the two little houses on the property, dilapidated relics of an older Rivonia, would have to be refurbished, in order to accommodate him. That would cost some R35 000. Finally there were the everyday costs of maintaining a growing and increasingly valuable property. With all these considerations in mind the parish welcomed Arthur and Jo Crawley as parish managers in November 1983. They would be concerned with the secular affairs of the parish, on behalf of and under the guidance of the council.

Meanwhile Fr Adam was as concerned as ever about the lack of community spirit and of spiritual and intellectual stimulus in the parish. In the early and middle 'eighties that concern was particularly taken up with what he perceived as a lack of lay understanding regarding the sacrament of Christian marriage. On 19 August 1984 he presented a report at a council meeting, asserting that advance in the life of the Church called for modification of what he called the 'Social Situation'. Promoting that modification, he insisted, was the

true and proper ministry of married couples, linked in a relationship which was blessed in Genesis and a sign of Our Lord's with His Church, and bound as they were to be fruitful and fill the earth. But unhappily there was, as yet, no proper understanding of this important truth. He accordingly suggested that, at a time when the parish of Rivonia was enjoying 'a respite from concern about purely material concerns' the Parish Council should give its attention to questions arising out of '... the ministry proper to the Sacrament of Marriage.'

There was no immediate response from the councillors; possibly they were slightly disconcerted by what they may have seen as a novel notion. Instead they went on to discuss something quite different, another of their priest's ideas, the possible erection of a senior citizens' condominium on the parish property. Was that feasible, in view of the parish's future building plans? Might such a condominium generate extra income, always much needed? The discussion then went on to the old question of a dedicated church at Rivonia.

Father Adam having agreed to write to Bishop Reginald Orsmond, Bishop of Johannesburg (23.9.1984 - 19.5.2004), for his opinion regarding the condominium, the meeting went on to agree that the dirt roads on the property should be tarred, at a cost of R7 400, given the approval of the executive committee. Little more was heard of 'social modification', though some months later, when another old subject, the parishioners' allegedly aloof and impersonal attitude came up, Angela Waterkeyn pointed out that in their own various ways the parishioners did try to help those in need, which was perfectly true.

She was well qualified to defend them, for it was she who recruited people to work in The Rivonia Centre of Concern, which had been in operation in the parish since the early 'seventies. There parishioners, well aware of their obligations towards those less fortunate than themselves, conducted classes, mainly for Black domestic workers, in subjects such as First Aid, cooking, dress making, and reading and writing English.

Helping people was not always very easy, in fact it was often difficult, and sometimes impossible. That became clear at the same meeting (19 August 1984), when Kit McLoughlin announced that the connection with Dube had been severed, by Dube, following instructions from The Azanian Peoples' Organization, a radical Black political movement, very much concerned that Black South Africans should stand on their own two feet, and avoid being beholden to Whites as much as possible. That was in January 1985,

at a time when the Parish Feeding Scheme, in response to requirements provided by Black social workers, was distributing food parcels, each of them containing mealie meal, tea, sugar, dried beans, soup powder, milk powder, dehydrated vegetables and pitchards, to the value of R6-00, three times a week. By the end of the year about 100 people were being given parcels. This was certainly a great, generous and ongoing charitable work; both it and the Centre of Concern must have been in Angela Waterkeyn's mind when she spoke up about helping those in need.

The Rivonia branch of The Catholic Women's League was also deeply involved in charitable work, expending much time and energy on raising funds to help needy Black people. In the mid-eighties they were doing all they could to help Margaret House, a secure home for 'families in crisis', and also Sekgweng School, a farm school for children at Rooibokkraal. Children were boarded there, from Monday to Friday, for five cents a day. Not surprisingly the school appreciated help with everything, from blankets and clothes to pencils and exercise books with unused pages.

Fr Adam would have been well aware of all that, and duly approving and grateful. However he seems to have had something far reaching and even radical in his mind when he continued to speak about 'modification of the Social Situation', something well beyond the field of the ministry of married persons. Given the political climate and situation in the 'eighties the councillors were probably right in suspecting that he had the intensifying struggle against an increasingly embattled and desperate apartheid government in mind; a struggle in which the South African Catholic Bishops' Council was becoming ever more involved, under the leadership of Archbishop Denis Hurley, Father's brother OMI.

If that is correct they would have been greatly concerned, even alarmed, for most of the faithful at Our Lady of Lourdes, as in all 'White Catholic parishes', were seriously disturbed by political developments in the late 'seventies and through the 'eighties. Thus it was that in April 1984 the parish council resolved to send a telegram to Bishop Orsmond, telling him that certain of the bishops' proposals were 'ill-advised'. Thus it was that the Catholic Defence League had been formed in 1980, to support the South African Defence Force in what was seen as its 'heroic struggle' against atheistical Communism. The South African laity, and some white priests, were not alone in their concern. Pope John Paul II and the Curia were similarly disturbed. That was because they misunderstood the liberation movement, or 'the struggle', as it was coming to be referred to, and tended to see it as the

South African government's propaganda presented it, an attempted Communist takeover. Meanwhile the South African Bishops' Conference supported conscientious objection to military conscription, whereby thousands of young White men became involved in a disastrous war in Angola. The conference also exhorted all Catholics to eliminate racist prejudices and practices in the Church, and in their daily lives. They were far less strident than the Protestant South African Council of Churches, but many White Catholics thought they were going too far too quickly, while Black Catholics thought they were not going far enough quickly enough. It was a time of fearful stress and strain in South Africa, affecting and dividing people in their families and in all walks of life, not least in the Church and the parishes, including Rivonia.

To return to parish affairs and less contentious matters; on 17 November 1985 the Parish Council had been replaced by a Parish Pastoral Council and a Parish Finance Committee. This was in terms of the 1983 Code of Canon Law. The parish priest was president of both bodies, but the laity could not be members of both, though each member of the Parish Pastoral Council enjoyed a consultative vote. The Parish Pastoral Council would concern itself with pastoral affairs, advising and assisting the parish priest in his task of evangelization, while the Parish Finance Committee took care of the finances and goods of the parish.

In 1986 it was decided to fence the lengthy boundaries of the property, and to provide a new screen wall to the south of the Church, where the Sandton municipal authorities had expropriated a strip of the parish's property, for an eastward extension of North Road, across Rivonia Road and down to Stiglingh Road. That expropriation was unfortunate, for it meant that the church building had become closer to a public road, hence the need for the wall. However the new road was not, then, especially busy. Furthermore, it would be possible to open a new entrance/exit into it, and close the old one, to Rivonia Road, in the south-west corner of the property. That was as well, for Rivonia Road was becoming ever more congested.

In August 1987, despite all this development during the 'eighties, and the ongoing expenses of the Parish Feeding Scheme, which was feeding some 130 families and individuals, Our Lady of Lourdes, as generous and aware of its social responsibilities as ever, decided to contribute R100 000, over two years, to Bishop Orsmond's Education Trust. That was a considerable sum of money, and it was to be raised by substituting a

Trust Collection for the monthly Development Fund Collection, allocating the Quarterly Surplus to the Trust, and soliciting tax-deductible donations from the parishioners.

By that time Fr Adam had been parish priest of Our Lady of Lourdes for over fifteen years, an unusually long time. He was regarded with great affection; many parishioners had never known any other parish priest, and there was general dismay when they heard, in March 1987, that he had been assigned to the OMI General House in Rome. In August he departed, amidst general regret.

In the General House he was to do valuable work as Coordinator of Computer Services, as well as writing programmes and doing the layouts for the OMI Information Service publications. In the late 'eighties there were not many priests who could do that, or lay people either. His computer expertise had actually been an important factor in the decision to summon him to headquarters, and in all probability he found the work a welcome change.

David Adam died on 14 April 2002, aged eighty, and was buried in the Oblate chapel at the Campo Verano Cemetery in Rome. At Our Lady of Lourdes parishioners who still fondly remembered him came together for a memorial Mass on 25 April 2002.

Chapter VI

St Mary's, Rivonia

Neither the Oblates of Mary Immaculate nor the Diocese of Johannesburg were able immediately to supply a priest for Rivonia. During the *interregnum* which lasted until the end of December 1987, when the Rev. Fr Ivan George Bougaardt SJ (*29.3.1932 - +31.12.1995), arrived as *locum tenens*, the parish was supplied by The Church of the Immaculate Conception, Rosebank.

Fr Bougaardt seems to have greatly enjoyed his all too short stay. During February 1988 he introduced the Novena of Grace, in honour of St Francis Xavier. Each of the nine days ended with Benediction, a practice which, despite at least one recommendation from the parish council, had been too long neglected. It was very well received, which pleased him greatly. During his time at Our Lady of Lourdes Fr Bougaardt went on leave, but the assistant ministers of the Eucharist rose to the occasion, so that daily communicants were not deprived of the Eucharist. The weekend Masses were celebrated by the Rev. Fr David Rowan SJ.

In 1988 Ash Wednesday fell on 17 February. By then Fr Bougaardt and the Rivonia faithful were aware that the Rev. Fr Michael Austin SJ, who had visited the parish during the interregnum, would be coming to Rivonia, as parish priest, presumably after Easter. Things did not turn out like that. On Sunday, 13 March 1988, Fr Bougaardt found himself celebrating Mass for the last time at Rivonia, before making a hasty departure for Yeoville, where the incumbent had fallen ill. Fr Austin's arrival had accordingly been brought forward as far as possible, to assume his duties as priest in charge on Friday, 25 March 1988, the Friday immediately before Palm Sunday!

Naturally both Fr Bougaardt and Fr Austin were disturbed by these changes. Indeed Fr Bougaardt was distressed, not only at having to move, and so abruptly. He had been happy at Rivonia, and had hoped to continue his ministry there into the Easter season. The parishioners were similarly disturbed; they had cherished the same hope. But there was no help for it. He thanked the council and the parishioners for their generous support. He had found being at Our Lady of Lourdes a wonderful experience, ministering to a 'strong

community of devoted, faithful, worshipping Catholics, black and white.' The Parish Pastoral Council expressed their great gratitude to him, and stressed that in a short time he had gained '... much the same love and respect as that felt for Fr David Adam'. And then he had to go.

For his part Fr Austin had hoped to celebrate Easter with the community at St Vincent's; now he was compelled to start his new ministry at Rivonia just before Holy Week, at a time which should actually have been the culmination of six weeks' Lenten preparation. However, as he remarked resignedly, 'With our trust in God we make the best of the situation.'

Apart from matters spiritual Fr Austin was greatly interested in religious education and training. He had spent twelve years as a university chaplain, three at London, and then nine at the University of the Witwatersrand, before becoming parish priest at Holy Trinity, Braamfontein. Four years later he moved into Adult Religious Education, as a member of the Pastoral Institute team of the Diocese of Johannesburg. Being parish priest at Rivonia would be additional to his existing responsibilities as Director of Adult Religious Formation. The diocese 'envisioned' that while parish priest at Rivonia he would continue to conduct Adult Religious Development programmes, teaching Church History and Ascetical Theology, the latter to include responsibility for the spiritual training of candidates for the diaconate. He was also a consultant for the Society of Jesus in South Africa. In addition, and further to his interest in evangelism and religious education, Fr Austin, who had been a regular broadcaster on both radio and television since 1981, became a member of the SABC Radio Chaplains' Panel early in 1990.

All of that amounted to a formidable load. Indeed had Our Lady of Lourdes not been a comparatively small parish it would have been too much for one man. From the beginning Fr Austin made it clear that the bishop wanted him to do many things, and while he looked forward to working with and for the parishioners, their cooperation would be essential. Thus, from the very beginning of his ministry, or even before, both the diocese and the parish understood that he would occasionally and inevitably be absent from Our Lady of Lourdes at weekends, and that consequently *locums* would have to be found. One was required quite soon, in July 1988, when Fr Austin was away for nineteen days, leading a pilgrimage; Rev. Fr Gerald McLoughlin SJ stood in for him.

One of the first things that the new pastor did was arrange for a census of Mass-goers. This was held on the four Sundays of June 1988. It was seventeen years since the previous one, during which time there had been a great deal of development in Rivonia and the adjacent suburbs, so much so that it had become important, as well as interesting, to know how many families and how many practising Catholics there actually were in the area. The response was not as good as it might have been. Only 543 families registered; disturbingly, while newcomers had cooperated, and were continuing to do so, too many older parishioners had not. It was accordingly decided to renew the registration drive in November.

One innovation of Fr Austin's was not well received. He thought it unfortunate that the parish was not generally referred to by its official title, 'Our Lady of Lourdes', which he was convinced was hardly known to the majority of the parishioners. The parish stationery was simply headed 'Rivonia Catholic Church', which was really not acceptable. In order to rectify the situation and, hopefully, put the name of the patroness of the parish on everybody's lips, he asked Bishop Ormond to give his approval to a shorter title, 'St Mary's', for everyday use. The official dedication would of course remain 'Our Lady of Lourdes'. Bishop Ormond was happy to approve, since the only other 'St Mary's' in the diocese, at Munsterville, Krugersdorp, had recently been demolished, in a late attempt to apply the by then failing Group Areas Act.

Fr Austin accordingly put his proposal at every Mass on the Feast of the Assumption, 20 August 1988, and received what appeared to be a favourable reaction. Though there was at least one vehement (written) objection the presence of a mere thirty people at an AGM where the use of 'St Mary's' was debated seemed conclusive. So it was, if absence really does indicate consent!

'St Mary's Rivonia' duly appeared on the parish stationery, but the name never really 'took'. The effect of Fr Austin's well meant idea was actually to make the parishioners more aware of their parish's official title, 'Our Lady of Lourdes'. Seven years after his departure in July 1997, references to the parish as 'St Mary's' are never heard, though the women's committee refer to themselves as 'The Ladies of St Mary's', and the hall is 'St Mary's Hall'. But the faithful have certainly become more aware that the parish is

dedicated to 'Our Lady of Lourdes', as appears on the stationery and the notice boards outside the church.

At the parish meeting of 13 November 1988 Fr Austin mentioned a comment which Bishop Ormond had made to him: '... perhaps you ought to build a new church.' The question which had hung over Rivonia for over half a century, ever since lay people first attended Mass in the Carmel chapel, had once again come to the fore. Much discussion followed, inside the meeting and outside it, and continued, sporadically, for months, before dying away, inconclusively, but not finally. It was still being discussed in 2006; it has always been in parishioners' minds.

As Advent 1988 approached a Liturgy group had taken what the Parish Pastoral Council referred to as its 'first faltering steps'. Kit McLoughlin outlined the activities planned for that season. Besides displaying the Crib, an Advent Wreath was set up, its candles to be lit, Sunday by Sunday, with the appropriate prayers, and so draw parishioners' attention to the symbolism of light. Arrangements were also made for a Vigil service on Thursday, 8 December, as well as a pre-Midnight Mass carol service and Vigil.

It was about this time, late 1988, that a number of Mexican Oak saplings, which had been donated by parishioners, were planted in a line extending across the property, straight towards Third Avenue, to afford shade for parked cars. Unhappily the infant trees were attacked and destroyed by pests. Other, 'conventional' oaks, were planted immediately to the south of Fr Adams's soccer field, in what is now the north-western corner of the truncated church property. They took root and still stand, affording shade for the cars of all who arrive early enough to find a place beneath them. Signs of changing times were manifest in the provision of two safety gates for the presbytery, one at the car port, and another between the presbytery and the church. Crime was partly a consequence of poverty; Rivonia parish did what it could to alleviate that by starting a highly successful 'Car Wash Project', which was in operation every Saturday morning at the Morning Glen Pick and Pay Shopping Centre, from March 1993. It was successful, and for several years generated a considerable amount of money, until the establishment of a commercial operation compelled it to close.

Within a short time of his arrival, or possibly even before it, during his interregnum visits, Fr Austin had noticed a lack of conformity with the rest of the Church in some

aspects of worship at Rivonia. With that and Vatican II's teaching, that the Liturgy is 'the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church' firmly in mind, he was determined fully to implement that teaching. That would mean correcting whatever was irregular. In doing so he was fortunate to have the help and support of some dedicated parishioners, mostly members of the Liturgical Committee. Their cooperation greatly facilitated the implementation of such changes as were required. There were a number of these from about April 1988 and through 1989.

It was hoped to encourage and improve congregational singing by moving the choir into the body of the church, and providing a more powerful organ. Father Michael was able to find a good second-hand instrument, another Hammond, but twice as powerful as the existing one, for which the parish paid R8 000-00, less the trade-in value of the one they were using. Another acquisition was an overhead projector, to encourage singing, and, outside the celebration of the Mass, for teaching purposes. There would be a formal Procession of Gifts at all Sunday Masses and, as regards collections, plates were replaced with bags. New vestments and altar cloths, made by The Ladies of St Mary's, were obtained and brought into use. A flower roster was introduced. More assistant ministers of the Eucharist, more proclaimers, and more sacristans and servers were recruited, as well as 'Welcomers' or ushers. The latter would welcome newcomers, conduct collections and supervise the sale of *The Southern Cross*.

In mid-1989 the following parish groups each had one *ex officio* member on the Parish Pastoral Council: Catechetics, the Catholic Women's League (later The Ladies of St Mary's), Finance, Justice and Peace, Liturgy (whose nominee represented assistant ministers of the Eucharist, Proclaimers, Ushers and Choir), the Prayer Group, the Sacred Heart Sodality and the Youth Group. These considerable increases in lay participation were of course entirely in accordance with the spirit and pronouncements of Vatican II.

When Fr Austin arrived Our Lady of Lourdes was enjoying the services of six Assistant Ministers of the Eucharist, but he wanted 'at least' sixteen, so that two of them could be on duty at each of the Saturday 18.00 and the Sunday 09.30 Masses. Probably even more would be required if Holy Communion was to be taken, every Sunday, to Morningside Clinic, as well as Jabula House and Sandown Country Villa, two local old age

homes. These institutions were all within the boundaries of the parish. Within a few years Sunninghill Hospital had to be added to the list. In addition there was to be proper provision for the house bound, Catholics unable to leave their homes owing to illness, injury, infirmity or increasing age. Sure enough, with the training and appointment of more AMEs these services improved, becoming something upon which the parish laid considerable emphasis, and did correspondingly well. Similarly, in October 1991, when it was officially decided that Father should have Thursdays' off Bridget Hodge was able to organise 6.00 p.m. Communion Services, which AME volunteers conducted with growing confidence. Arrangements were also made for visits, on request, to Leeuwkop Prison by the Diocesan Prison Chaplain.

Where children and 'the youth' were concerned some aspects of the situation at Our Lady of Lourdes were satisfactory, others less so. All was well as regards spiritual education and formation. A regular Children's Mass had been introduced, and Catechetics, where Mrs Dobrowski was in charge, were well organised. The secondary school children's confirmation classes, organised according to the regulations of the Diocese, were being taught by seminarians from St John Vianney, Pretoria.

But socially there were continuing problems. In the last years of the 'eighties and the early 'nineties renewed attempts were made to get youth clubs off the ground. One suggestion was to have meetings for primary scholars on Friday afternoons and for secondary scholars on Friday evenings. It was a good idea, and should have helped, but as always there was a good start, followed, after a short time, by a steady fall-off in attendance. This was how things had been for some thirty years, there were simply too many other clubs and activities competing for the attention of adolescents and young adults. The tennis club, on the other hand, for different participants at a different time of day, was doing very well, in fact it was flourishing, though new members were always welcome, and, it seems, there were plenty of them.

All parishioners were encouraged to form and attend Bible study and prayer groups. An Enquiry/Adult Instruction course, which began in early 1989, for Catholics 'out of touch', and for interested Protestants, was a continuing success. Provision was also made for preparation for the sacraments of marriage and baptism. Having decided that

baptism classes were to begin early in the New Year (1989), Fr Austin made it clear that he would not be baptising children whose parents had not attended them.

All of these things were good and necessary, but it was clear that more classrooms were urgently required. The problem was to find a place where the new classrooms should be built. Once again the old idea came up: put them on the patio. Once again Michael Waterkeyn would not hear of it. A proposal that Zozo huts should be erected, for temporary use, was approved by the Parish Pastoral Council, but eventually it transpired that owing to maintenance problems and expenses Zozo Huts were unwilling to lend huts on a temporary basis. Finally, in early 1990, the problem was alleviated by 'borrowing' classrooms from Mrs Warren's Rivonia Nursery School, in Third Avenue, almost opposite the then main entrance to the church.

It was not just a question of classrooms. Fr Austin had noticed the urgent need for an administration block, such as the one at Bryanston's Church of the Resurrection. Now, as parish priest, he mentioned this to Bishop Ormond, who again suggested building a new purposely designed church, enabling the existing buildings to be adapted for a hall, classrooms, and offices. That had always been the idea, ever since the hall-church had been opened. But would it be fitting to spend a great sum of money, during a critical time in South Africa's history? Concerned parishioners debated the matter at length, but failed to reach a firm decision, possibly because they did not realise that in South Africa the times are always critical.

There were other difficulties and problems, none of them insurmountable or insoluble. There was a poor response to an appeal for proclaimers, and, perhaps even more serious, Fr Austin had concluded that the Parish Pastoral Council did not appear to appreciate its *raison d'être*, which was to assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual life of the parish. He decided that training was needed, and that a suitable course should be introduced in November, after the election of a new council.

Improvements to the grounds and garden of the church continued through the late 'eighties and into the last decade of the twentieth century, with Tony Slavin playing a big part. In mid-1988 Michael Waterkeyn was drawing the plans of a new reconciliation room, making use of the space then occupied by the repository, the tabernacle decoration

was being improved or 'highlighted', as Fr Austin put it, and the possibility of converting the stage, or part of it, for use as an Infants' Chapel was being considered.

In a small way the advent of the 'New South Africa' could be seen in Dr Geoffrey Lee's attempt to start a Justice and Peace Group in the parish. On 21 May, 1989, Dr Lee, who had been a member of the Justice and Peace Group at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Rosebank, addressed the Parish Pastoral Council. He pointed out that Vatican II had laid a heavy emphasis on the importance of attaining and maintaining justice and peace in society. There was a national committee in Pretoria, and a diocesan committee in Johannesburg, which were working towards that goal. Many parishes in the diocese, particularly in Soweto, had active committees, as did Victory Park and Rosebank. Such committees' functions depended on the parish priests' interaction with their members, who usually needed a degree of self-education, while parishioners in general needed to be made aware of the great need for the protection of justice and peace values. Certain parishes had undertaken attempts to redress injustice in specific areas, such as homelessness, Alberton; domestic workers, Rosebank; detainees, Martindale.

Though by 1989 Fr Austin had discerned an increasing ('albeit slowly') momentum in the spiritual life of the parish, 'on all fronts', the Justice and Peace Group was not a runaway success. There were only nine attendees at the first meeting, on 11 June 1989. Nevertheless they visited the Alexandra parish, with which they resolved to maintain contact. In mid-August Dr Lee reported that there was a 'hard-core membership' of eight parishioners, and a 'floating' or less active group of about sixteen. About thirty people had attended a public meeting on 10 August, and he intended to hold more such meetings, in the hope that the parish would become increasingly aware of the group and its activities. But things did not go as well as they might have, despite the best of intentions. Within a year Justice and Peace were looking for more members. The group's failure to take off may have been due to the old reluctance to get involved in what were regarded as sensitive political affairs.

Conversely, perhaps the dawning of the 'New South Africa', and a decision that Rivonia parish's Black 'community' should have direct access to Fr Austin, made people feel that such a group was no longer necessary. The Parish Pastoral Council noted that in general relations with the black community were good, and that their participation was

increasing. None the less in the late 'eighties definite problems were arising concerning the 4.00 pm Sunday Mass instituted by Fr Adam some years before. Fr Adam had been mainly concerned with Northern Sotho domestic workers, who had originally attended the Mass with gratitude and appreciation. However with the passing of time, and in the absence of male catechists to give a lead, the group divided into two sodalities, St Anne's and Sacred Heart, each of them dominated by women who were vying for prestige and power, and who thought of the 4.00 p.m. service as 'their Mass'. Such an exclusive attitude would always have been unacceptable theologically. It was also abnormal and unhealthy as regards African culture, and in the changing South Africa of the late 'eighties it was also offensive and unrealistic.

That was because group thinking had diminished while increasing numbers of other Africans, especially Malawians and Zulus, were present, as well as Whites, some of whom had always attended. As a result the forty-five Northern Sotho women constituted rather less than ten per cent of the congregation. In fact the old 4.00 pm 'Sotho Mass' had ceased to be primarily for Sotho-speaking Africans, and had become simply a Sunday Mass for the parish, for Blacks and Whites speaking a variety of different languages. Nevertheless the Sotho group maintained a confrontational attitude, demanding that the hymns continued to be sung in Northern Sotho, and that as regards the Offertory practices peculiar to mission churches in black areas be introduced. In an attempt to deal with the problem the Rev. Fr Xolile Keteyi SJ was invited to Rivonia, to address the dissatisfied, but their response was disconcertingly poor.

Fr Austin's next move was to explain that the Church did not practice apartheid, though he did offer to bus the discontented to Alexandra or Bryanston if they were determined to attend services run on mission lines. He also offered to let the Sotho women have their own Liturgy of the Word service before the start of Mass, when all three Sunday readings could be read in Sotho. These offers were rejected. Several attempts were made to find a Black priest willing and able to attend to the Black community of Rivonia, one who would be able invariably to adhere to the agreed place and time, but without success. There was similar lack of success in obtaining a Black Sotho-speaking catechist from Alexandra to organise the two sodalities. And there, for the time being, the situation remained, deadlocked. Eventually the problem disappeared when, in the 'New South

Africa', people ceased to think or at least regulate their affairs in terms of separate communities.

By then alterations to the church had been in progress for several years, in fact since July 1988. The confessional, immediately to the right of the main entrance to the church, had been opened up to form an extension to the sacristy area, which could be used as a servers' vestry, while the repository, opening out of the nave immediately to the left of the main entrance, had been converted into a reconciliation room. A penitent could make a private confession through a screen, in the traditional manner, or he or she could speak to the priest face to face, in a more relaxed and informal counselling context. It was pointed out that men had always had that option, as could be seen in medieval European cathedrals. This was the reconciliation room as it remained until late 2001, when further extensive alterations and additions to the church began.

At much the same time the Parish Pastoral Council was considering erecting a wooden screen with plate glass windows, and a door, also with a window, across the open front of the unused Choir tribune, to serve as a 'cry chapel'. This was quickly done, and the 'infants' chapel', to use the more acceptable name, as suggested by Fr Austin, was ready for use in mid-February 1989.

Early in 1990 a specially commissioned set of four free-standing candlesticks were acquired. At about the same time a considerable donation was made towards the cost of constructing a permanent altar. Ever since his arrival at Rivonia, and with the sacredness of the altar, temporary or not, firmly in mind, Fr Austin had forbidden anything upon it, apart from the linen, the bowls of communion bread, the chalice and the Sacramentary. However, since the shape of the temporary altar was not suited to the use of freestanding candlesticks an exception had been made, and two candles, in short holders, placed upon it. There was no difficulty with the lectern, and one of the freestanding candlesticks was accordingly placed on each side of it. The remaining two were reserved for later use, one at each end of a future permanent and dedicated altar.

As the last decade of the twentieth century approached the continuing development and growth of Our Lady of Lourdes kept the administrative and secretarial staff, parish manager Justin Meth, and secretary Rini van den Handel, in attendance Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9 am - 12 noon, more than busy. It was becoming apparent that more

office space, and more staff, working longer hours, through the week, were going to be needed in the near future.

In September 1989 the Annual General Meeting had adopted the ward system, whereby the parish was divided into wards, each of which elected a Ward Representative to the Parish Pastoral Council. In accordance with diocesan policy a new council would be elected late that month. In order to facilitate the cultivation of community spirit the parish was divided into eight wards, each with a representative on the council. The wards were: 1/Rivonia and Paulshof (98 families), 2/Morningside (64 families), 3/Gallo Manor, Morningside Manor and Woodmead (85 families), 4/ Wendywood, Kelvin and Varna Valley (54 families), 5/Duxberry, River Club and extensions (43 families), 6/Parkmore, Benmore Gardens and extensions (42 families), 7/ Bryanston and Lonehill (58 families) and, 8/ Sandown and Strathavon (42 families).

This was with a view to promoting community feeling and pastoral effectiveness. Each ward representative would be responsible for organising functions, such as House Masses, listening to tapes, socials and participating in Marriage Encounter in his or her ward, suggestions which can only be described as well intentioned but optimistic. Attempts actually to get people together socially, as a preliminary to encouraging attendance at Mass, were as disappointing as they had been in the past. They confirmed what previous experience had repeatedly shown; on the whole people were not very interested in 'get-togethers'. They preferred to socialize with their existing friends. The ward representatives concluded that, all things considered, the parish was definitely in need of spiritual renewal. But at least the practical day to day management of its affairs was facilitated by the computerization of the parish register, which was completed in early 1990.

The new council would differ significantly from its predecessors. In terms of the 1983 Code of Canon Law the property and possessions of parishes were to be administered by Parish Finance Committees. The existing Parish Pastoral Council would be replaced by a Pastoral Council, of which Eddie Shepherd became chairman, and on which each of the eight wards had a representative. The Pastoral Council's sole concern would be religious formation and pastoral action. Each of the eight wards would be expected to give

its full attention to evangelism and the renewal of the people of God in the Parish, according to the mind of Vatican II.

Confronted with this considerable challenge Our Lady of Lourdes decided that the Pastoral Plan, which seemed to aim at nothing less than the transformation of individual hearts and so of the whole of society, would best be implemented by fostering a community in which everyone would feel at ease and accepted. With the experiences of other dioceses in mind three possible ways suggested themselves. These were the establishment of small Christian communities, the implementation of Task Groups, or the application of the Renew Programme.

After due consideration it was decided that Renew would probably suit Rivonia best, though new Task Groups were established as well, greatly pleasing Fr Austin. They were Liturgy, Assistant Ministers of the Eucharist, Proclamation, Bible Study, Catholic Enquiry, Justice and Peace, and Prayer, which was divided into three sub-groups, Charismatic, Intercessory and Meditation. Each of these groups had one *ex officio* member on the Parish Pastoral Council. Altogether there were no less than twenty-one groups functioning in the parish in the first years of Fr Austin's ministry. Apart from those already mentioned there were Catechism, sub-divided into Primary and Secondary School, The Catholic Womens' League, the Centre of Concern, the Choir, the Finance Committee, the Feeding Scheme for the Poor, Flowers for the Altar, the Parish Pastoral Council, the Plant Management Team, Readers, Tennis Club, Ushers, welcoming Team, Youth Group and Youth Music Band.

During the early 'nineties, after some consideration and disputation, and despite Fr Austin's alarm and concern, the Rivonia branch of The Catholic Womens' League, a nation-wide organization, was replaced by The Ladies of St Mary's, which was parish bound. This was owing to disagreement concerning the distribution of funds raised by The Catholic Womens' League, and by concern regarding ladies attending monthly meetings in Johannesburg's decaying and increasingly dangerous city centre.

Renew was launched in July 1991. The actual season, 'The Call of the Lord', opened a month later. Six weeks of focussed preaching, prayer and Gospel sharing on the theme did much for to the spiritual upliftment of the parish and promoted Community

formation. The programme was to continue into 1993, with Fr Austin happy to admit that early doubts concerning the likelihood of its success had been groundless.

In May 1990, and with evangelism in mind, Mrs Shirley Doyle had organised a welcoming team, the members of which would visit and welcome any newcomers who had completed registration cards. The new parishioners would be invited to the parish teas, which were held monthly after the 9.30 Sunday Mass, and also given information sheets with details of Mass times, as well as the classes and groups in which they might be interested.

About a month later further endeavours were made to get 'young people' 'involved', with special emphasis on the Saturday evening 'for Sunday' Mass. A music group was formed, mainly playing guitars, while other young people became proclaimers, took the collection, organised and took part in the gifts procession, welcomed newcomers and sold the *Southern Cross*. The immediate response was very satisfactory, and continued to be so.

Meanwhile, with the parish roll computerized, lists of names and addresses were run off for each of the ward representatives so that they could begin the immense task of contacting every parishioner, assessing their needs and initiating community-building projects, among them Neighbourhood Gospel Sharing.

A highlight of the 1990 Advent season was the acquisition of a magnificent banner, designed by Nina Ristic, and stitched by Florence Fuchs. In February 1991 Nina followed it up with a splendid Lenten 'triple banner', depicting the three acts of penance, Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting. This was stitched by Audrey Armstrong. Finally Nina produced a beautiful Easter banner, which was stitched by Roma Carter. Year after year these banners have enhanced the church at the appropriate seasons. Designed and worked with love and devotion they are aesthetic acquisitions, and effective spiritual aids. After the banners came a beautiful amphora for holy water, which was duly installed in the sanctuary. It had been made and presented to the parish by master-potter Digby Roets; Carl Pingle had made and donated the wrought-iron stand.

A low point, in February 1991, was an expensive burglary. Thieves broke through the louvre windows next to the choir. Three microphones and the overhead projector were stolen, as well as everything made of brass or copper that the burglars could lay their hands on, including three pairs of candlesticks, the bell and the font bowl. Bad enough in

itself, this incident aroused serious concern for the safety of Fr Austin, alone in his remote house, with its vulnerable telephone line. The parish car, in an open car port, was also obviously at risk.

By that time, 1991, it had been (finally?) decided that, given the social and economic condition of South Africa, the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes could not justify spending at least R1.5 million on building a dedicated church to accommodate over 600 people, as large or larger than the building in which they had been worshipping for thirty years. None the less that building, though hallowed by much worship and prayer, and despite numerous additions and modifications over the years, was, technically, still just a hall, the hall it had been designed and built as. With a dedicated church building always in prospect it had never been consecrated, and consequently lacked a permanent altar and ambo. Rivonia needed a 'proper' consecrated Catholic church, and should have had one long before. The 'Lebanese church', at the Lebanese recreation club, Cedar Park, which Bishop Orsmond had blessed on Ascension Thursday, 1991, was a chapel of the Maronite Rite of the Catholic Church, and could not be regarded as a substitute for a parish church.

Eventually, as ever after much discussion and consideration, it was settled that the 'hall-church' should be upgraded, naturally in compliance with the requirements of post-Vatican II liturgy, and with special attention to the sanctuary area. With a proper, permanent and dedicated altar, the building could then become a church in the full sense of the word, dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. It would cost a lot of money, but much less than building a new church.

The way had been cleared to go ahead and restart the Parish Development Fund when the parish had successfully met their commitment to Bishop Orsmond to pay R100 000 to his Education Trust by the end of 1989. That money had gone towards upgrading the Mission Schools of the Diocese.

The development was to be carried out in phases. The first was concerned with modifying and reordering the sanctuary, including building a permanent altar and ambo, modifications which were absolutely essential if the building was to be consecrated. More effective ventilation and lighting would be provided and the sacristy extended, with double doors opening into the church for processional purposes. In addition a fireproof safe would be installed.

Once these things had been done the parish would be able to go on with the second phase, which was not concerned with essentials, but with the highly desirable. There should be further catechism accommodation, and a Garden of Remembrance. The church should have a covered entrance, and a bell-tower, with a new repository in its base. Michael Waterkeyn's drawing, on display in the porch, showed how, besides giving the building an additional dignity, the tower, surmounted by a cross, would signal to every passer-by that there was a Christian church on the corner of Rivonia and North Roads.

Finally, new and more ample clergy living quarters were to be built between the western end of the church and the Rivonia Road boundary. That would enable the existing presbytery to be modified so as to provide separate offices for the priest and the secretary, in fact more office space for a growing parish and secretariat, and also provide Father with the privacy which he would lose when completion of the entire scheme would place the public square of the complex, i.e. the area between the tower, the entrance and the presbytery, immediately in front of his existing accommodation. Conversion or not, it was an ambitious scheme. Completing it would mean finding and spending a lot of money. Parishioner Alice Goemans organised a 'Spring Fete', which was held on the 20 October 1991. It was highly successful, raising a little over R15 000. True, by itself that would not have got the project off the ground, and in any event half went to the Rivonia Parish Project for the aged poor of Alexandria, to assist with the next phase of development at The House of Peace. But that was not the point; the fete made the parishioners aware of pending major and important developments at the church, of the need for money, and of the need to be involved. Giving half the proceeds to The House of Peace reminded them of the hardships of people less fortunate than themselves. That was the aim of the Pastoral Plan for the Church in South Africa, as a document recently issued by the bishops had made clear.

The Garden of Remembrance may be dealt with separately. In accordance with decisions taken at Vatican II the Catholic Church had allowed cremation since 1969. In February 1988, with that concession, and Santon's lack of a cemetery (other than the sad, largely forgotten, and much neglected little plot near the western end of East Pont Road, Rivonia) in mind, it had been decided to establish a Garden of Remembrance and a Marian Grotto at the church. Indeed Fr Austin had been interring ashes since his arrival in

anticipation of such a development. A parish pastoral council sub-committee, Messrs A. Crawley and M.J. Waterkeyn, pursued the matter and in March 1990 a large wooden cross was erected at 'the rose beds'. As soon as Tony Slavin and Richard Tyack's design had been accepted, the plan finalised, and the necessary money found, a wall was built, to which suitable memorial plaques could be attached.

The Garden of Remembrance was dedicated on 2 November 1990, the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed. On that date there were as yet no memorial plaques attached to the wall, just two plaques of polished grey granite, bearing scriptural texts. It was only in April 1991 that all the concerned parties were able to reach agreement regarding the dimensions and material of the actual memorial plaques. They were to be 25 x 7 cms, slightly smaller than a brick, in polished grey granite, like the scriptural plaques. The name of the deceased, and his or her dates of birth and death would be engraved on them, and nothing more.

Granite had been chosen for its weathering qualities, and because with the advent of the 'New South Africa' the theft of all manner of bronze and brass plaques, house numbers and name plates had become lamentably common, for rogue scrap metal dealers were only too willing to buy them. Many churches had suffered in this manner, and Our Lady of Lourdes did not wish to join them. The grotto was not forgotten, but it was decided to leave it until later, as the property was developed and the garden landscaped.

In April 1991 Waterkeyn's plans for the reordering of the sanctuary, providing for a permanent altar and pulpit, and the re-siting of the Tabernacle and the Lady Shrine, were submitted to Bishop Ormond for his approval. As ever there was a delay: seemingly inevitable where building projects are concerned; nine months went by before work began in November 1991.

A fixed altar and ambo were built, for the celebration of the sacrificial meal and the proclamation of the word of God, and a presidential chair installed. Both the altar, the centre of the thanksgiving accomplished in the Eucharist, and the ambo, where scripture would be proclaimed and expounded upon, were in 'noble' materials, rosa stone, granite and copper, giving them a proper dignity. The manner in which they matched each other emphasized the presence of Christ in both Sacrament and Word.

The altar and the ambo are focal points of the liturgy. Since nothing should distract the attention of the faithful from the celebration of the Holy Mass, the ambury, i.e. the wall-safe containing the reserved Sacrament, had no place in the vicinity of the altar, where the Eucharist was brought into being for the celebration of the Holy Mass. The ambury was accordingly removed from its position in the apse wall at the right of the temporary altar. A fine new ambury replaced it, but in the position then occupied by the Lady Shrine, to the left of the sanctuary. Thus a Blessed Sacrament Shrine was established, in a position well-suited to adoration.

On each of the double bronze doors of the new ambury were ancient Christian symbols. On the left hand door were a fish and a basket of loaves; the originals of which appear on a 5th century mosaic in the church at Tabgha on Lake Galilee. They refer to the miracle of the feeding of the 5 000, which prefigured the food of the Eucharist. On the right hand door were the letters IHS, the monogram for the name Jesus, formed by abbreviating the corresponding Greek word. IHS is also a Greek acronym, I the initial letter of Jesus, H of *Huios*, Son (of God) and S of *Soter*, Saviour. In the late Middle Ages the monogram IHS was often used by the Franciscans, and in the Early Modern Period it became popular among the Jesuits, who were inclined to interpret it as *Iesum Habemus Socium*, 'We have Jesus as our companion.' Below the ambury was the altar of repose, and below it the wooden panel, which Cecil Skotness had carved, and which had served as a frontal for the temporary altar for over thirty years.

The Blessed Sacrament Shrine having been established, the Lady Shrine, with its anonymous but beautiful carved wooden statue of Mary, Holy and Compassionate Mother, had to be set up elsewhere. As mentioned in Chapter II a position on the south wall, above the candle rack and opposite the main entrance to the Church was chosen, as being particularly appropriate. Hopefully, since it was directly in front of people entering the church, the shrine would remind them that the Mother of God was the patroness of Rivonia Parish.

But moving the statue had left the niche which had housed it in the original position of the Lady Shrine empty. Since that niche was close to and directly above the ambury doors Fr Austin pointed out that it would be good and right if a symbol of Our

Blessed Lord could be placed there. He suggested a statue of the Sacred Heart, or perhaps a tapestry, and waited for offers.

His patience was rewarded on 9 June 1996, when a stained glass window, by Verena Brand, which had been donated to the parish, was installed at the Blessed Sacrament shrine, immediately above the aumbry. That was a particularly appropriate place, for the subject of the window was *Vitaticum*, the giving of the Blessed Sacrament to strengthen those in imminent danger of death with grace for their journey into eternity.

Understandably, with so many alterations in train the possibility of relocating the choir in a special tribune was raised, but Fr Austin did not agree. He was sure that removing them from the body of the church would make it difficult for them to support and encourage the congregation to participate. That was true, as previous experience had shown.

By late November 1991 the modifications which were essential for consecration had been completed and paid for, and, thanks to good management, generous contributions to the monthly Development Collection, and some very generous private donations, the parish was entirely free from debt. That was also essential for consecration.

The solemn Mass of Dedication was accordingly celebrated at 7.30 pm on Tuesday, 11 February 1992, the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes, patron of the parish of Rivonia. It was exactly thirty years since Bishop Boyle had blessed the building. Since ill health precluded the attendance of Bishop Orsmond, his auxiliary, Bishop Patrick Zithulele Mvemve, would conduct the solemn consecration, whereby Rivonia's hall-church, the new altar and ambo, and the Eucharistic vessels were dedicated exclusively and irrevocably to the service of God.

When the day came Bishop Mvemve was assisted by Father Michael, as parish priest, and four other priests, Fathers Brian van Zeil, from neighbouring Bryanston, Michael Lewis SJ, regional superior of the Jesuits in South Africa, David Dryden SJ, David Rowan SJ, and a deacon, the Rev. Mr Peter Holliday, one of the catechists from St John Vianney. Mr Christopher Townsend, later Fr Townsend, but then a second-year student at St Peter's Seminary, Hammanskraal, whose family had long been associated with the parish, acted as master of ceremonies. In his homily Bishop Mvemve congratulated the Parish of Rivonia on its acquisition of a dedicated church.

In the second century AD Tertullian, one of the more prominent of the early Christian Fathers, had proclaimed that 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church'. That proclamation, and the celebration of Mass on the tombs of the martyrs in the catacombs of Rome gave an initial impetus to the tradition of enclosing physical relics of martyrs within the fixed altars on which the Eucharist is brought into being. So it is that placing physical relics of a saint or saints within a permanent altar is a traditional and integral part of its dedication, and of the Church's perpetual honouring of her martyrs, destined as they are to a glorious resurrection, as temples of the Holy Spirit. By such depositions the Church echoes the words of John the Seer, 'I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the Word of God and for the witness they had borne' (Rev. 6.9). Finally, such relics are powerful reminders that loyal Christians are the living stones with which Our Lord builds his Church.

Thanks to the endeavours of Fr Austin, and with the assistance of Fr Paolo Molinari, Postulator General of the Society of Jesus in Rome, relics suitable for inclusion in Rivonia's permanent altar had been obtained from that city. These were of St Valentine, a third century Roman priest and martyr, believed to have been beheaded on the Flaminian Way during the reign of the Emperor Claudius the Goth, on 14 February, 269, and three late sixteenth century Japanese martyrs, St Paul Miki SJ, a Jesuit priest, who came of an aristocratic Japanese family, and who was renowned for his preaching, and St John Goto and St James Kisai, Jesuit lay-brothers (feast day 6 February). In 1597 they, together with six Franciscans, four from Spain, one from Mexico and one from India, and seventeen lay people, the latter all Japanese with the exception of one Korean, had been bound or chained to crosses, before being killed by spear thrusts.

A suitable niche, accommodating the original altar stone from the temporary altar, with its relics of Fortunatus and Felicissimus, as well as the reliquary, sent from Rome, containing those of Valentine and Paul Miki and his fellows, had been provided at the back of the new altar, at about knee height. While Bishop Mvemve was engaged with the dedication Fr Austin inserted the stone and the reliquary into the opening. An attendant mason then sealed it with cement, finishing it off with an engraved tablet, while all present sang hymn 58: 'For all the saints ...'. The inscription on the tablet reads: *IN HOC ALTARI IACENT RELIQUIAE MARTYRUM QUORUNDAM ROMAE. ATQUE*

IAPONIAEA 11-02-1992 CONSECRATO. (In this altar consecrated on 11-02-1992 lie the relics of certain martyrs of Rome and Japan.)

The ceremonial part of the service continued with the bishop anointing the newly consecrated altar with Sacred Chrism, that is pure olive oil scented with balsam, which he poured onto the five incised crosses which remind us of Our Lord's Five Holy Wounds. Next Fr Austin anointed four consecration crosses attached to the walls of the church. The altar was then covered with a white cloth, emphasizing that it is the Table of the Lord, from which we are fed with the Eucharistic Food. Finally the candle-sconces on the four Consecration Crosses were lit by Fr Austin, so concluding the dedication. The service continued with the Liturgy of the Eucharist, using a special preface for the rite of dedication.

During 1992 Our Lady of Lourdes acquired its tower, with a new repository in its base, and linked to a new covered entrance to the church. Brian Lawlor was the civil engineer; the design was by Michael Waterkeyn. It was the last of his many great works for the parish. Following a suggestion by Tim Joyce, of the Parish Pastoral Council, the sloping ground next to the verandah was levelled while the foundations for the tower were being built. That made the area more suitable for outdoor functions, while planting a lawn and flowers enhanced its appearance.

Besides proclaiming a Christian presence in Rivonia, the tower greatly improved the appearance of the church. It was of course a bell-tower, which meant that a peal of bells was required, or, at the very least, a bell. The smallest suitable bell would have cost R9 000-00 if bought from a European bell foundry. That sum would have been considerably increased when the costs of transport and erection were taken into account, as well as those of the automated bell-ringing mechanism, and its transportation and installation. Finally, a commemorative stone would have to be built into the base of the tower.

The parish of Rivonia had never been unwilling to raise and spend money, but they were grateful and perhaps relieved when the Carmelite sisters offered them their Angelus bell, Gabriel, named for the archangel, and which had been blessed by Bishop Hugh Boyle in 1961. In 1991, when the sisters celebrated their sixtieth anniversary in Rivonia, they had finally come to terms with the prospect of moving; they realised that urban

development had made the location of their monastery grotesquely unsuitable. But now circumstances compelled them to undertake a far more arduous journey than just 'up the road' to the grounds of Our Lady of Lourdes. The nearest suitable site was in Brentwood Park, northern Benoni, where there was a disused Portuguese convent. They moved in 1992, once the renovation of what would be their new Carmel had been completed. Gabriel remained behind, awaiting installation in the newly completed church tower. A multi-story building, of shops, restaurants and offices, 'The Cloisters' (!), arose on what had been the site of the Rivonia Carmel. Mercifully in late 2002 the name was changed to 'Rivonia Square'.

After a long wait for the ringing mechanism to arrive from the Konicklijke Klokkegieterij, at Aarle-Rixtel, in The Netherlands, Gabriel was installed on 12 February 1993, and the Angelus once again rang out across Rivonia. Unfortunately people living in nearby town and cluster houses did not appreciate the ringing of a large bell at six in the morning. The programme had therefore to be modified to allow for that weakness!

So it is that there are two inscriptions on the foundation stone at the base of the tower. The first reads: 'To the Glory of God and to commemorate the Dedication of this Church to Mary the Mother of God on 11-2-1992', and the second: 'Gabriel the Angelus Bell donated by the Carmelites in memory of the Rivonia Carmel 1931 - 1992'.

No sooner had Our Lady of Lourdes hall-church become a proper consecrated church than the question of the little building that served as a hall came up. It had long been realised that the hall, really little more than a large room, was far too small and cramped for a parish the size of Rivonia. While its enlargement was being considered the Parish Pastoral Council received a suggestion (10 October 1993) that the problem could be solved by converting the church into a multi-purpose building! A chapel for weekday Masses and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament should be provided, the pews removed and replaced by chairs, and movable screens provided, to close off the sanctuary area during the week. There were precedents for such an arrangement, but happily the idea was rejected. Those against the scheme argued that the design of the church did not lend itself to such a conversion; the sanctuary would not be visible except to those in the front rows of chairs, failing radical rebuilding of the church.

Instead, on 6 June 1994, the Parish Pastoral Council decided to go ahead and double the size of the existing hall, by extending it as far as possible towards North Street. Brent Buchanan's design was ambitious. The hall would not only be enlarged but upgraded, with a proper stage, an enlarged and refurbished kitchen, and new toilets, including two for the use of paraplegics. A new store for parish equipment would also be built, and two new classrooms. Not surprisingly the estimated cost, with various extensions and renovations, turned out to be far higher than had originally been expected, R660 000 rather than R130 000.

Very wisely Rivonia Parish has always tried to do things properly. When, on 28 February 1995, Shrove Tuesday, Bishop Orsmond came to open and bless the new hall complex, with a pancake supper to follow, there was general agreement that a lot of money had been very well spent. There was also some dismay when it was found that the roof leaked, badly! But in due course that was put right.

In 1995 South Africa was blessed with a visit by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. A group from the parish were part of the huge congregation at Gosforth Park, when the pope celebrated the Holy Mass there on 17 September.

That same month there was yet another attempt to involve the youth of the parish. PLUG stood for Peace, Love, Understanding and Giving. As with similar, earlier movements, it got away to a good start.

At the end of October 1995 gardener Piet Bulalo retired. He had served Our Lady of Lourdes faithfully for twenty-five years, in recognition of which he was presented with a well deserved purse of R3 123-00.

The Alpha programme, a ten week course which had originated at the Anglican Church of the Holy Trinity, Brompton, London, was embarked upon at Our Lady of Lourdes in January 1996, as a pilot project for the Catholic Church in South Africa. It had two objectives: the re-evangelization of practising Christians in the basics of their faith, so enabling them to attain the second objective, which was the evangelization of friends and family who did not attend church.

After the completion of the Renew Programme in 1993 Rivonia had changed to a task oriented council. At the Annual General Meeting on 11 February 1996 the way the council was going came under renewed scrutiny. The possible advisability of returning to

the ward system was raised, or should the existing system be retained, but with new members? It was decided that motions for further discussion at subsequent meetings should be submitted to the parish office.

Later that year, 1996, the new presbytery was completed, immediately to the west of the church. A R220 000 donation, with the balance being made up from the sale of land by the diocese, ensured that it was not a financial charge on the parish.

In June 1996 Rivonia instituted dedicated giving, it was the last 'White' parish in the diocese to do so. The financial needs of the parish made the change imperative, but Fr Austin was also anxious to transform Our Lady of Lourdes into an even more dedicated, devoted and caring community than it already was. He appealed for more people to offer their talents to the service of the Church, in all fields from Assistant Ministers of the Eucharist to Ward Representatives.

On 4 July 1996 Fr Austin was in London, where he celebrated at the Jesuit Church of The Immaculate Conception in Farm Street. It was a Mass of Thanksgiving; he had been ordained there twenty-five years before. A month later (6 August) Our Lady of Lourdes celebrated their pastor's Silver Jubilee with a special Mass at 9.30, followed by a champagne breakfast on the grassed ground which had been levelled during the building of the tower. Two weeks later he celebrated the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, wearing the splendid vestments which had been commissioned by the sacristans, and presented to him to mark his Silver Jubilee. They were to be worn on all the Feasts of Our Blessed Mother.

In July 1997 Mrs Brand completed a stained glass light design above the sacristy, to go to the right of the sanctuary area. This continued the colours and movement of the three lancet windows, and so made a complete, integrated and attractive picture. Unhappily it no longer exists, having been removed during further alterations, subsequent to Fr Austin's departure.

During the winter of 1997 Father's health collapsed; he recovered, but it was clear that his many commitments were becoming too much for him. So in April 1998 he left the parish, having completed the ten years' service that the Jesuits had originally agreed upon with Bishop Orsmond. The parish gave him a farewell party on the 17 April, prior to his departure for the United Kingdom and the United States, to attend refresher courses

at the Jesuit College of Theology at Heythrop, London, and at St Mary's Seminary, Baltimore. He would return to South Africa in October, to embark on full-time lecturing in Theology and Scripture in the Diocese of Johannesburg. A farewell collection brought in nearly R9 000, as well as a number of Sterling notes and U.S. Dollar bills.

Thanking the parish Fr Austin remarked that he took that generous gift, the party, the number of people present, and the manner in which they had evidently enjoyed themselves as signs of the esteem in which he was held. He left, he said, '... with a good feeling of having achieved good things at St Mary's. It [was] certainly a very different parish to the one [he had been] missioned to in 1988!' He felt that together he and the parish had grown spiritually, which was what Christian ministry in the Lord's Name was all about. Assuring the parishioners that his and their paths would cross again, he prayed that God would continue to bless them and keep them in His love.

During the subsequent interregnum the parish was looked after by a number of priests, among them Rev. Frs Sergius Wroblewski OFM, Francois Dufour SDB, Reginald Anthony OMI, Emil Blaser OP, Bernard Connor OP, and Fr Richard Monaste.

On the 28 June 1998, the Rivonia faithful heard that Fr Austin's successor would be a diocesan priest, Fr Graham Rose. Fr Rose's ministry would begin two days later, on the 1 July, but it was only on the 20 December that he was officially appointed priest-in-charge of Rivonia, for six years, beginning on 1 January 1999. It is significant that in accordance with Bishop Ormond's instructions, the bulletin in which the appointment was announced is headed Our Lady of Lourdes, as they all have been since.

Fr Graham had been born in Springs, on 23 December 1951. He was the second child of six children in a family of converts. After matriculating at Christian Brothers' College, Kimberley, where he had been head prefect, young Mr Rose did a year's national service, as a second lieutenant in the Administrative Services Corps, before proceeding to the University of the Witwatersrand, to graduate BCom in 1973 and LLB. In 1976, the year in which, having decided to devote his life to the Church, he entered St John Vianney Seminary, in Waterkloof, Pretoria. Towards the end of 1979 he was ordained deacon, and a year later he emerged, a Bachelor of Divinity, *magna cum laude*, to be ordained a priest in the Diocese of Johannesburg on 12 December. His first ministry was at St Pius X, Mofolo, Soweto (1981 - 1983), from where he went on to the Catholic college at

Maynooth, near Dublin, Ireland. There he graduated (1987) Doctor of Divinity in Moral Theology, before returning to South Africa and, in 1988, a part-time teaching post at St John Vianney Seminary, Waterkloof, Pretoria. In 1989 he was appointed to two adjoining parishes, St Joseph's, Mokoena, Katlehong, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Thokosa. Later that same year he was transferred to St James's Parish, Boys' Town, Magaliesberg. As he continued to lecture at St John Vianney, where he had been appointed vice-rector in April 1991, he was compelled to spend his weekdays at St John Vianney, and his weekends at St James. This demanding arrangement actually continued after he had been appointed temporary rector of the seminary, in August 1991, but ceased when he became full-time rector in October. Six years later, in 1997, he became priest-in-charge of Our Lady of Lourdes, where his ministry has been marked by the ongoing growth of the parish, and by a continued and growing awareness of communal responsibility.

There have been further alterations and additions to the structure of the church. The former sacristy has been changed to an infants' chapel, with access to an entirely new, considerably larger, better equipped and better furnished sacristy at its western end. The wall that divided the old sacristy from the nave has been largely replaced by plate glass windows, while plate glass panels have been inserted into the upper parts of the double doors giving access to the nave. Apart from its primary purpose, giving worshippers in the chapel a view of the sanctuary, these windows and panels admit more light into what was a rather dark area. This is a real improvement, but it is unfortunate that, with one exception, Mrs Brand's stained glass windows, all of them memorial donations by parishioners, have been removed.

Directly opposite the new infants' chapel, on the southern side of the building, across the chancel, the original Holy Water font may still be found, but the original baptismal font has been replaced by a larger one, in a totally different style. It stands near the entrance to a large Blessed Sacrament or adoration chapel, which has been built at the south-western corner of the church, from which it is divided by plate glass panels. Access to the adoration chapel is through double plate glass doors at the back of the space formerly occupied by the infants' chapel. In it is a freestanding wooden tabernacle, in the same style as the new baptismal font. This has two compartments. One contains the Reserved Sacrament, consecrated hosts in a ciborium, behind a locked door. In the other

is the Blessed Sacrament, a consecrated priest's host, mounted in the lunette which can be fitted into a monsternace when required. This compartment has double doors which can be opened for exposition and adoration. The original and sombre Stations of the Cross have been affixed to the east wall of the chapel, immediately to the left of the entrance. There are new ones in the church, brightly coloured, and in a totally different style.

Opening and blessing this chapel, on Sunday 7 April 2002, was the last public function performed by Bishop Reginald Orsmond, before his final illness and death a little more than five weeks later, on Pentecost Sunday, 19 May. Bishop Orsmond's visit is commemorated by a small plaque on the chapel wall, also to the left of the entrance. On 29 June 2003 he was succeeded as Bishop of Johannesburg by the Rt Rev. Buti Joseph Thagale OMI, Archbishop of Bloemfontein, and sometime parish priest of Our Lady of Fatima, Dube.

At the end of the nave a large stained glass window has been let into the east wall, above the balcony, with the intention of giving the more than forty year old building still more of the 'feel' and atmosphere of the church which it became by virtue of its formal dedication in 1992, and through the great generosity, devoted labours, and constant prayers of many clergy and religious, as well of hundreds of lay people.

In October 1989 the Diocese of Johannesburg had made known its intention to ask a development company to present proposals and plans for the development of part of what remained of its once extensive property in Rivonia. The matter was discussed at a public meeting in the church hall, where, as ever, both proposals and plans met with a mixed reception. A long delay ensued. Eventually, towards the end of the 'nineties a fence was erected, dividing the property into northern and southern halves. The northern portion was sold, and construction went ahead. Bulldozers swept away the football field and the old cottages, which were by then completely derelict. Two office parks and six town houses went up early in the new millennium. In mid-2004 building resumed, and a number of office and apartment blocks now (2006) overlook the church.

So it is that since 1962, when Bishop Boyle blessed the Rivonia Mission's new hall-church, the appearance of the building and its surroundings have changed, not beyond recognition, but very considerably. However the nature and character of the parish remain much the same. Our Lady of Lourdes has always been able to rely on the support

of many enthusiastic, loyal and concerned Catholics, spiritually steadfast, confident in the future, and generous, with their money, their time, their talents and their labour. Great credit is due to them for their concern for those less fortunate than themselves; such concern has been and remains practical, not just sentimental. The sick and the needy are helped in a multitude of ways. Parishioners have been generous with their time, their skills, their energy, their money and, for that matter, their blood! Regular visits to the parish by The South African Blood Transfusion Service help to remind the people of Our Lady of Lourdes of their duty to others. Similarly they deserve praise for their energy and the manner in which they have furthered and contributed to the growth of the parish over the last half-century, keeping pace with the extraordinary expansion of Sandton itself during that period.

For years the parish went without the spiritual benefit of a mission. From time to time, especially in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties, the idea of having one had been considered, but no action was ever taken, largely because most people believed that the Renew programme would do as much for the parish, and do it more thoroughly and effectively. Renew certainly helped, but possibly not as much as might have been expected. During May 2003 the shortcoming, if there ever was one, was made good, with remarkable success, by a three man team of Redemptorist priests, the Rev. Frs Anthony Padua, Scott Davidson and Bafana Hlatshwayo. Considerable credit for the manner in which the Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes is moving into the twenty-first century, spiritually invigorated, with continuing confidence and total trust in God, must go to them.

Epilogue

Fr Rose left Rivonia on the 26 December, 2005. He was succeeded by Fr Peter Bernard Doherty, who came to Our Lady of Lourdes from the parish of St John the Apostle, Florida, where he had been priest in charge since 1994. Born in Johannesburg on 26 February, 1938, Peter Doherty had been educated at the Assumption Convent School, Maryvale, before going on to St Paul's Parochial School and eventually Marists Brothers College, Observatory, later the Sacred Heart College. He entered St John Vianney Seminary two years after matriculating, and was ordained on 1 July 1962. From 1963 his first appointments included the Cathedral, Alexandra and Vosloorus parish. In 1970 he was sent as Priest in Charge to Alexandra. A year in Turfontein (1982) was followed by a ten year appointment to Benoni in 1983.

*LAUDETUR JESUS CHRISTUS ET MARIA
IMMACULATA.*