

St. Marys Mount

Horsforth Decr 936

Dear F. Cotter,

In response to your request I shall endeavor to give you a short sketch of the history of the establishment of the Horsforth-Mission of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

I came to live in Horsforth in the year 1882 and was disappointed to find that Mass was no longer being said there; on Sundays I had to walk to Cragwood Randon or go into Leeds. At Cragwood the late Fr. Earnshaw celebrated Mass in those days and afterwards Fr. Congill (who later became Bishop of Leeds). The Chapel at Cragwood was part of Mr. John Warringtons house.

I do not know why the weekly Mass at Horsforth was discontinued but I suspect it was because there was no one living in the place capable of keeping the people together. The Mass was said in a part of Mr. John Cass Dolans Mill in Troy; he gave up this Mill many years before I came to Horsforth.

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In this story I am afraid many details are irrelevant and I could relate many pathetic and humorous incidents which occurred during those early <sup>years</sup> but this must wait for a further and much more detailed history of the place.

It was in the year 1886 that St. Marys began its existence. Fr. Crookell at that time a Curate at the Cathedral in Leeds came over to Horsforth and discovered there were a number of Catholic families in Horsforth and in some cases the children were attending local Sunday Schools. He came to see me at my office in Leeds and said something must be done to alter this state of things and it was arranged to secure a place of meeting. Fr. Crookell <sup>and I</sup> spent several days searching for a suitable place and at last a room was secured in Town Street large enough for our purpose. An Agreement with the landlady was entered into and all was arranged for our taking possession but when she heard it was to be

used for Catholic purposes she refused to give us possession. Fr. Crosswell said she could keep her room and that we would not commence by taking legal proceedings against her for breach of contract. A further search began and we ultimately decided to take an old house at the top of Bachelor Lane known as Peartree house (it has recently been demolished it was formerly used for weaving and before we took it, it was used as a hen house, the place was in a filthy condition. We had it thoroughly cleaned fumigated floored and disinfected and took possession in the Autumn of 1886. A Meeting of the Catholics was then held in this place and about 60 or 70 attended. Fr. Crosswell addressed the Meeting and spoke of the urgent necessity of having some place where Mass might be said, he would try to let us have Mass as often as possible and Benediction and Instruction every week; but Sunday School would commence the following

Sunday afternoon and all promised to attend.  
The Sunday school was well attended and  
continued until 1891 when the Priest took it in  
hand. A little round table and the old chair  
were our first pieces of furniture, Fr. Croxwell sat on  
this chair and at the little round table with a  
Paraffin lamp on it at these first meetings.  
An Altar Altar rails and benches came from Leeds.  
I think from St. Vincents. We had Mass as often  
as possible and Benediction and Instruction  
every week.

The Queen Victoria's Jubilee was celebrated in 1887  
and the Catholic children took part in the procession  
of the schools of Howforth. Fr. Croxwell lent us a  
beautiful banner of the Good Shepherd which was  
carried in front of our children and was much  
admired by all.

St. Cantwain the first Bishop of Leeds came out  
to Howforth to confirm many who had not received  
this sacrament.

Fr. Croxwell intubated the first Easter Tuesday

Tea party and Concert at which many visitors from Leeds and district attended.

In 1886 after acquiring Pear Tree house I interviewed each family as to an outdoor collection, and each willingly consented to contribute, to meet all necessary expenses, and did so from that time, the collection would be about £1 a week.

About 1887 Fr. Croskell was sent to Holbeck to establish a mission there (St. Richards afterwards St. Francis) and Fr. Mulcahy was appointed to take charge of Horsforth, he came out each week on a Wednesday or Thursday evening and gave instruction on the Catechism followed by Benediction. Fr. Mulcahy leaving the Cathedral Fr. A. Leonard took charge of the Mission, and continued the instructions and Benediction.

After establishing the Mission at Holbeck Fr. Croskell was sent to establish a Mission at Burley Road ~~under~~ dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and he again took charge of Horsforth.

In 1891 he arranged with the Rev. Dr. J. Bray of the Seminary, to give us Mass every Sunday. This was a great event for Horoforth. Fr. Bray very soon won the affection of the Horoforth Catholics, and even our separated brethren came to admire his zeal in his attention to the people placed in his care. He came out to Horoforth on Saturday afternoons to hear confessions and say Mass on Sunday morning, later he visited the people after Mass, and gave Benediction in the evening. During this time Fr. Bray had various improvements made in Pear tree house. He organised a number of trips for the people, Fountains Abbey, Blackpool, Redcar and Saltburn etc.; he also organised many enjoyable entertainments.

It was during Fr. Brays time Fr. Crookell began to broadcast many thousand appeals for the Mission, <sup>promising a weekly Mass for benefactors.</sup> and one of these appeals came to the notice of Mrs Mahony of Blarney near Cork, and as she had money left by her husband for a like object as ours, we were able to get the promise of the building of a School Chapel, provided we

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should have a resident priest.

Previous to this Fr Croskell, in his walks through Horsforth, pointed out the site. He wished to secure for a Church and instructed me to buy three quarters of an acre, the money for this land had been obtained from the appeal, so that we had the land when we received Mrs Mahoney's offer to provide the funds for the School Chapel.

<sup>16<sup>th</sup></sup> <sup>March</sup> <sup>1896</sup> The foundation stone was laid by Bishop Gordon, a special train brought him, and a number of people from Leeds. A Procession headed by the Horsforth band, playing 'Faith of Our Fathers' and other Catholic hymns, led the procession from the Station with the Bishop in a carriage bringing up the rear. <sup>Canon Motley V. G. was the preacher.</sup> It was a wild day in March and the ground was ankle deep in mud, on the site of the building. This was followed later in the year, the twentieth of September 1896 by the solemn opening of the new building by Bishop Gordon, with Pontifical High Mass at which were present Mrs Mahoney, her son and grandson Luncheon was served at my house, at which were Fr. Bray, Fr. Cowgill and other guests; as a

matter of fact my house was the Presbytery during the whole of the time Fr. Bray came to Horoforth.

At this time there were no buses and Fr. Bray walked to Headingley on Sunday evenings after Benediction taking with him the Blessed Sacrament, and as the road at that time was a very lonely one, eight men of the congregation, volunteered, to act as a guard two for each Sunday, to follow him and to see that he was not molested; it was considered a special honor to be chosen for this work.

I think it may be noted here that the first Urban District Council was elected in Horoforth to replace the old Local Board and Fr. Bray was very anxious that the Catholics should be represented, 15 members were required, there were over 40 candidates nominated and I was one of that number, I was elected one of the 15, this success was largely due to the great work done by Fr. Bray and our people; on the appointment of the new Education sub-committee I was appointed ~~a~~ a member; a prominent Non-Conformist and myself were nominated and I was elected as Chairman, and retained his position until my retirement from the Council in 1902 in consequence of a breakdown in health.

When our school was being built a serious attempt was made by the Non Conformists to have a School Board in ~~the~~ ~~North~~ ~~forth~~ as it was contended there was a shortage of accommodation. I informed the Committee that it was intended to build a Catholic school and thus provide more accommodation. This having appeared in the press a prominent Non Conformist wrote a letter to the press that we going to proselytise &c. I replied to this that it was "an infamous" imputation; we were building the school for our own children and we did not wish to have any others. This correspondence continued for very many weeks in which we were depicted as priest ridden papists and all the old false accusations. In the meantime an application had been made to the Board of Education in London to establish a school Board and notices were published by the Board of the intention to form a Board School Board. I obtained an Ordnance plan of the District and marked on it the position of each school and the accommodation in each. I had a census of the children in the District

I sent this to London stating there was ample accommodation and it was unnecessary to form a School Board. This effectually disposed of the question of a School Board and our School was formally recognised as an Elementary School.

Fr C. H. Walsh was appointed as first resident priest in the summer of 1896 and it was with great sorrow that we lost those two great priests, who had done such a great work for Newport.

The building of the Presbytery was completed in the early part of Fr Walsh's time, his first duty was to furnish and equip the School with desks and other requisites, these were not provided at that time by the Education Authority. The cost of the building of the Presbytery was defrayed in ~~the~~ great part out of the Appeal funds. He provided the two Statues of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady out of funds collected for the purpose. Fr Walsh was an accomplished pianist and a good musician and he got together an exceedingly good choir - Queen Victoria's diamond Jubilee was

Celebrated in his time and our children took part.  
In 1901 Fr. Walsh was appointed to Newworth.

Canon Glover next took charge of the Mission and instructed Fr. Walsh to take everything out of the Presbytery. He provided the present Stations of the Cross and he devoted the proceeds of the out-door Collection to the purchase of the binnacle for the Mission. He also gave us the Statue of St. Joseph and a number of other things for the church and he decorated the whole property. He was not in good health and retired in 1903.

He was followed by Fr. Halb a German priest who only remained a few months.

Fr. Shine (the present Bishop of Middleboro') came in 1904. He built the club for the boys and furnished it with the Billiard table &c. He also built the high wall round the Presbytery; to raise funds for this work he had a Bazaar in the Haverford Mechanics Institute and realised sufficient to clear all debts on the Mission. He got a number of vestments for the Mission. He left us in 1908 on

his appointment as Administrator of the Cathedral.

Father J. Curran of St. Patricks Bradford succeeded Fr. Shine, he was a young Priest full of zeal and put his heart and soul into the work. He came to an empty house as his predecessors had done except Canon Glover. He had the School Play ground completed. There were two Bazaars in the Club.

In the course of a few years the attendance at Mass gradually increased and as time went on it ~~became~~<sup>was</sup> evident the school was becoming too small, even the class rooms were insufficient for our needs.

and it became necessary for him to take into serious consideration the building of a Church, when he had decided to build a Church he commenced the work with determination to succeed.

He organised two large Bazaars for this object whilst we were preparing for the first Bazaar, Fr. Curran made his famous trip to America to beg for funds for the new Church and he met with great success bringing back a sufficient sum to enable him to get out plans and specifications. He organised a

Donkey Derby at the Healdingley Football field  
in which all the leading jockeys took part.  
Fr Curran was much interested in obtaining a  
piece of ground on which the boys and young men  
might play games of Football Cricket and  
Tennis. He secured for this purpose three acres  
of ground adjoining the School and Rectory.  
The Church was afterwards built on part of this  
site.

The laying of the foundation stone and opening  
by Bishop Cowgill were great events in the history of  
Horsforth

Fr Curran persuaded me to be again nominated  
for the Horsforth Council and I was returned at the  
head of the Poll. I was twice Chairman of the Council  
and each time there was a Civic Sunday at St. Marys

Fr Curran consolidated and strengthened our  
position in Horsforth and his 25 years were years  
of progress and the beautiful Church is a standing  
memorial to his zeal and perseverance.

He was successful in getting the Feast of the Cross  
and Passion established in Horsforth and the children

of the Parish had the inestimable advantage of the training by these good Nuns.

Fr John Shine a brother of Fr Shine procured the very beautiful picture of Our Lady of Good Council for us in Rome it was ~~in~~ hermetically sealed in its frame

Fr Curran said the Mass for benefactors each week.

I have also omitted to say that before we had a resident Priest Fr Crookell contrived to let us have a three days mission and also a weeks Mission later by the Redemptorist Fathers who were giving a mission in the old Cathedral facing down Park Row Leeds.

Fr Shine got Fr Putterfield S.J. to give us a mission in Fr Curran's time we had several Missions by the Franciscans and Passionists.

In concluding this sketchy and I feel very inadequate history of the Hunsforth Mission I am conscious of my failure to do that justice to the subject it deserves.

Unfortunately I have been hampered in writing this at night by artificial light, my sight is not so good as formerly.

If I had realised how difficult and long this

task would prove, I am afraid I should have been  
very reluctant to undertake the work, however it is  
done and I am glad.

I am Yours sincerely  
Wm. Wood.

P.S. I should very much like to have this  
manuscript back when you have done with it.

J.M.