THE HISTORY OF MT GRAVATT

Today, we value the history of peoples who have lived in this area:

- the Indigenous clans for tens of thousands of years – people of the Jagera, and maybe also the Turrbal clans

- graziers, who came in the decades following John Oxley’s first recorded sighting of the mountain in 1823, developing ‘Slacks track” along the indigenous peoples’ north/south pathway

- the contribution of the German community in the 1860s, the surveying and naming of Logan Rd in 1864 which Cobb & Co. used

- the Post-World War I soldier settlement families farming poultry in Holland Park West, and

- the rapid expansion of the population of Post-World War II families in housing estates from 1140 in 1947 to 9006 in 1961.

Until 1945, hunting, food gathering, grazing and dairy farming were the occupations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people living in this area. The track through this area to destinations north and south has been important since indigenous times. What was known as “Slack’s Track” was surveyed in 1864 and developed as Logan Road. In the twentieth century, urban development has been shaped by Logan Road’s tram tracks until 1968, the South East Freeway in the 1970’s - to be renamed the M2; and later, the Busway.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR FOREBEARS

While it is not yet clearly resolved which clan lived here, every week at Assembly, we remember and honour the ‘Traditional Carers of this land’ who have gathered here near the slopes of Kaggur Mabul (the Indigenous name for Mt Gravatt mountain) for learning and ceremony for tens of thousands of years.
We also remember and honour members of our St Agnes Catholic Community have gathered here for prayer and service, since before 1921.

In 1921, Archbishop Duhig blessed and opened the first St Agnes Church, then included as part of St James Parish, Stones Corner (Coorparoo). In 1950, as an offshoot of St Joachim, Holland Park (established 1936), St Agnes was established as a Parish with Fr John Rosenskjar as Parish Priest.

**ST AGNES COMMUNITY OF FAITH**

Within this new Parish, extending from Mt Gravatt to Woodridge, a rich spirit of faith, hope and love underpinned the prayer and resourcefulness of this community’s service, stewardship and celebrations. In 1960, the original St Agnes Church was replaced by a modern St Agnes Church, again blessed and opened by Archbishop Duhig. The new Church was dedicated to the memory of all who had served and died at Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea where Fr Rosenskjar had been Padre during the historic military victory 25 August – 7 September, 1942.

In 1962, with leadership from Fr Rosenskjar and the Sisters of St Joseph, the Parish community established St Agnes School with. From those first three classrooms and the Convent which had been a house on Cavendish Road, the School developed with the vision and pastoral care of Fr Rosenskjar, the generosity and Mary MacKillop spirit of the Sisters of St Joseph, the generosity and enthusiasm of lay teachers, and the active practical involvement of the parent and Parish community. In 1986, Peter Blundell became the first lay Principal of St Agnes School. Succeeding Principals have been Chris Brown, Steve Taylor and Rick Sheehan. In 2002, the Sisters of St Joseph left the Convent at St Agnes. The Convent developed as the School’s Learning Support Centre, still with the ambience of the stillness of the Convent and affectionately, though informally, called “Penola”.

In 1969, St Agnes Parish contracted in area with the establishment of St Bernard’s Parish. In 2003, St Agnes Parish was re-incorporated with St Joachim Parish to become the Holland Park Mt Gravatt Catholic Parish. Though legends about Fr Rosenskjar’s service never abated with his retirement in 1985, the community continued to be well served by conscientious and loved Pastors and their Associates. Fr Rosenskjar died in 2013 aged 96.
In 2005, Sr Kari Hatherell O.S.U. was appointed Lay Pastoral Director of the
Parish. Sr Kari provided for both St Agnes and St Joachim Communities and
Schools leadership in Liturgy, spiritual life, community life, pastoral care,
education, administration and organisational development. Sr Kari knew and
was known by the staff and students in both St Agnes and St Joachim Schools.
Although the Parish did not have its own Parish Priest, during these years, the
children at St Agnes School developed liturgical literacy through celebrations of
the Prayer of the Church – Morning Prayer. With awareness and skills, the
children then participated in and contributed well to the whole school Masses
and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In 2014, we welcomed Fr Joseph Thottankara as Parish Priest of Holland Park
Mt Gravatt Parish. Fr Joseph has brought another new tradition to St Agnes
Parish and School through his Religious Life as a priest within the Missionary
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament and through his extensive pastoral
experience in India, in the Toowoomba Diocese and in the Brisbane
Archdiocese.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Parents of children at St Agnes School join with all children throughout the
Parish Community in Sacramental Programs to prepare the children for their
participation in the Sacramental life of the Church community. In 2014, Mrs Josephine Sii has been the Co-ordinator of the Parish’s Sacramental
Programs Reconciliation supporting families preparing their children for:

- the Sacrament of Penance - a Sacrament of Reconciliation and Healing
  (generally about Yr 3) and
- the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist
  – completing the Sacraments of Initiation (generally about Yr 4).

These Sacramental Programs are intensive preparation periods to enhance the
children’s readiness to celebrate the Sacraments. In the School, we provide
the children with Units related to Reconciliation in Yr 2 and for the Sacraments of
Initiation in Yr 3. Therefore, when the children come to prepare for the
Sacraments as part of their Religious Life, they come with background
knowledge. The students are also supported during the respective intensive
preparation periods. Parents are encouraged to contact Mrs Sii at the Parish
Centre adjacent to St Agnes Church - phone 3349 2280

or email sacpr.hpmg@bne.catholic.edu.au