

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

1975 - 2025



ST VINCENT DE PAUL RC CHURCH

Southampton

Our STORY

Father French Mullen was Priest in Charge of the Lordswood and Shirley Warren areas and he had the mandate to build a church there. His first move was to purchase 61 Springfield Rd with the financial backing of St. Boniface, and he would refer to it as "my dacha in the country!"

After one or two full starts Father Ffrench-Mullen and Father MacDermot-Roe went together to Bournemouth to engage the services of Mr Broadbent for the design of the proposed church and Monsieur's Jenkins & Sons were awarded the building contract. It was Bishop Warlock's decision to choose Saint Vincent de Paul as patron of the new parish the first in the diocese to be so dedicated. Foremost in Father MacDermot- Roe's prayers was a petition that the building be completed without incurring too larger debt. St Boniface contribution was £40,000. Other contributions came from parishioners fundraising.



St Vincent De Paul

Father Ffrench-Mullen's place was taken in 1975 by Father Anthony Maxwell-Ward who was appointed Parish Priest of the now independent Lordswood parish, the plans for whose church were ready. In 1977 Bishop Warlock having been transferred to Liverpool, the opening ceremony was performed by Bishop Anthony Emery his successor. Thanksgiving for the birth of the new parish was made by Father MacDermot-Roe and Father Maxwell-Ward accompanied by a representative group of parishioners on a lightning pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Vincent de Paul in Paris.

Through further fundraising the church was able to add a porch and back room to the new building to increase offerings to both parishioners and the local community, making it the Church we recognise today.

Based on extracts from St Boniface's Church , Shirley, Parish Memoirs by Maureen Guly and edited by Liz Challand.

Our PRIESTS & DEACONS

Our Parish Priests

Fr Anthony FFrench-Mullen until 1975
Fr Anthony Maxwell- Ward 1976-77
Fr Shaun Budden 1977-1984
Fr Vincent Convery 1984- 1987
Fr Donal O'Brien 1987- 1989
Fr Antony Gatt 1989-1995
Fr Michael Peters 1995- 2001
Fr Michael Cronin 2001-2003
Fr Louis McDermott 2003-2010
Fr Des Connolly 2010- 2015
Fr Blaise Jailosi 2015 - 2017
Fr Tomy Chirackalmanavalan 2017 - 2023
Fr Thomas Parakandathil 2023-

Our Assistant Priests

Fr Kevin O'Brien 1978-1980
Fr Michael Cronin 1980-2024

Our Deacons

Rev Mr Bob Birtles 1984
Rev Mr Paddy Gleeson 1984-1996

"Lord, bless our priests with strength, wisdom, and unwavering faith.
May they be instruments of your love and grace, guiding us with compassion and
leading us to you.
Amen."

Our PARISH MEMORIES

Pat Sweeney, a parishioner since the church opened, remembers taking her young children to pick blackberries on the land where the church and health centre are now built. Pat didn't know anyone when she moved to Southampton, and our parish made her feel at home and protected and made her feel she wanted to come back and never leave.

Moirra Hodgson aged 98 is our oldest parishioner for over 60 years and she remembers going to Mass in the Scout Hut nearby and the joy she felt at the first Christmas Mass in the newly built church was celebrated by Father Ffrench- Mullen.



The Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM) met every week for over 40 years, fundraising through jumble sales, table top sales, summer fetes, cake sales, coffee mornings, Christmas fairs, mother and toddler group, youth club, football team, choir and ending up with carols in the Woodman pub.

They even had a sewing group who made vestments and altar cloths. Lots of talent which you can see in the banners at the front of the church to the left of the altar.

Marie Anderson a founder parishioner has wonderful memories of the UCM, when they were all young mothers together and happily devoted a lot of their time to baking and cooking for functions in the church. The parish priest depended on the UCM to make SVDP a welcoming thriving and generous hub of the community. There's been bingo and quiz nights hosted by Dave Anderson. Dave was the driver on many UCM outings and trips. Dave also led the drop in club with Marie and Hazel Hendry, held on Wednesday afternoons for the seniors in the parish.



Our PARISH MEMORIES

Renee Sharp, a parishioner since the beginning, remembers when St Boniface was the mother church and the nearby Scout Hut became a temporary parish for the many Catholic families in this area. The Diocese bought a bungalow in Springfield Crescent for the first parish priest and plans were drawn up and fundraising commenced to build a new church for the people of Lordswood and surrounding areas.

All of our priests have been inspiring each bringing something different but special which has made our parish that wonderful parish it is.



Dee Heatley remembers how important the parish of St Vincent de Paul was to her beloved parents Ruth and Paddy Gleeson. Ruth as one of the founding members of the UCM and Paddy, one of our Deacons until he died in 1996. They both devoted much of their lives to St Vincent de Paul church.

Shirley Keates joined the parish in the early 90's when she gave a lift to another parishioner to the church. She came in and stayed and became a very involved parishioner and flower arranger. She will often be seen flipping pancakes for Parishioners on Shrove Tuesday.



Xavier and Debbie Fernandez were the eleventh couple to be married at SVDP. Their eldest son Lawrence was the twenty-third baby to be baptised.

One Palm Sunday, parishioners were invited to meet before Mass in the car park where a donkey and Father Michael would lead them into the church. The donkey was reluctant to enter the building and needed encouragement to take its place at the altar. The donkey brayed during the Mass and Father needed a bucket to clear up after the donkey at the end of the service," Christine Thomas.



Our PARISH MEMORIES

"My brother was one of the first babies to be Christened at SVDP and I remember it clearly, for it was the day after Southampton FC won the FA Cup in 1976. There was a bus tour of the City organised in celebration of the Saints achievements, and me being a girl, was not allowed to go with my Dad and all the menfolk who rushed off from the Christening into Southampton to join the crowds," Liz Challand.



During one of the programmes to prepare children for first Holy Communion the parents asked if we could continue with a Sunday school. So, with the help of Sandy Burnage, Wendy Milne, Christine Thomas and Colette Clark started the Children's Liturgy programme. After more than 30 years it is still running.

The hall has seen many international evenings when a variety of food from across the globe has been shared. Colette Clark organised a very successful and joyful AGAPE meal in the church hall. Over eighty people enjoyed a three-course meal, interspersed with prayers and readings.



Our PARISH MEMORIES

Paddy Maxwell remembers, "In the late 80s, I knew the day was a holy day of obligation but somehow managed to get the time of Mass wrong and got to the church a half hour early. I opened the church door, and the hall was on fire with a fierce blaze. I shouted out, asking was anybody inside the church, getting no answer, I quickly ran to the presbytery and alerted Father Antony Gatt to the situation. Father gained entry through the front door of the church. He knew where the extinguishers were and the Minister from the little church opposite saw the action and ran over to assist. Luckily, they were able to put the fire out. Father Antony's quick actions, saved the church!"



"Friendship, joy and love, are my most abiding memory of Saint Vincent de Paul church. Every Sunday, before COVID, after Mass, parishioners would gather in the hall for tea or coffee and a chat. Most Sundays the hall was so crowded it seemed that the whole parish was present. Children played, conversations flowed, new friendships developed, old ones were reaffirmed. These simple, special, interactions led to an overwhelming feeling of friendship, then joy culminating in a collective sense of love- the essence of our faith." Trevor Delves

Chris Fitzgerald remembers the kindness of the parish priest father Anthony Gatt when her husband was terminally ill and how Father Louis McDermott would visit her at home on the anniversary of Bob's death.

Maureen Carmella who moved to Southampton 10 years ago at the age of 70, knew no one and came along to our parish for Mass and she was made to feel so welcome. She feels her friends in the parish helped her to continue living independently through their kindness.



ST VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH *Southampton*

Stay in touch

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Our FIRSTS AT ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Our first Christening

The first Christening recorded was on 25th January 1976 and was a joint occasion for Jeremiah Edward and Thomas Arnold Taylor.



Our first wedding

The first wedding recorded was on 7th June 1977 of Thomas Anthony De La Cour to Jennifer McDermott.

Our first funeral

The first funeral recorded was on 23rd June 1976 of Michael King.

