

A PILGRIM'S GUIDE TO THE CHURCH OF SAINT PATRICK AND THE HOLY ANGELS, MENTONE

One of the last parish churches built in a traditional style, the Church of Saint Patrick and the Holy Angels, Mentone, was blessed and opened by Archbishop Simonds on 13 March 1960. The late Fr. Frank O'Hanlon, PP, supervised every detail in this noble church. He created a visible catechism, in stone, brick, wood, metal and glass. His architects were Fowell, Mansfield and Maclurcan of Sydney, with Mr Stan Moran of Melbourne as Associate Architect and Mr Thomas Bonnice, the builder.

The Exterior: The specially selected Glen Iris bricks rise in a gently tapered curve to the great tower, long the highest point in Mentone. The crown of concrete, made on site, is our hope of the 'crown of eternal life' in heaven. Beneath the cross is "Patrick", the bell, founded by Matthew O'Byrne in Ireland in 1959. The symbols of the four Evangelists, SS. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are set at each corner of the lantern crown.

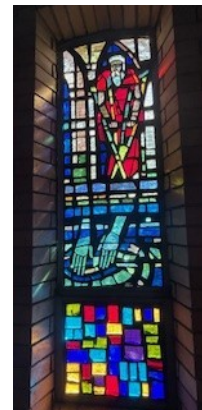


As you enter the doors, look up at the rich mosaics, made in the Vatican studio. The eight mosaics of angels, and the strong sculpture of St Michael Archangel, by Stanley Hammond, make up of the nine Choirs of Angels, reminding us of the dedication title of this church and our pilgrimage towards heaven protected by the pure spirits. Mosaics of Our Lady depict four events of her life: the Annunciation, the Nativity (from Correggio), the Marriage at Cana and the Pieta (from Michelangelo's sculpture). The lower four mosaics depict Our Lady Help of Christians, Patroness of Australia, Our Lady of Lourdes (for the 1958 Centenary), Our Lady of Good Counsel (from the original at Gennazano) and Our Lady of Mercy from the shield of Propaganda College, Rome.

The Interior: Pause awhile in the spacious porch to note the windows. On the right as you face the street, is St Peter, Prince of Apostles, with St Patrick, Patron of the Parish, on the left. On the side wall is St Paul, in stronger style, in the modern 'inch-thick' glass, set into concrete, signed by the famed stained-glass artist, the late Gabriel Loire of Chartres, France, whose other works are to be found inside the Church. Note also two consecration crosses carved into the pale Hawkesbury freestone, the first two of twelve reminding us that this is a consecrated church, built on the living foundations of the twelve apostles.



As you pass through the glass doors, the prayerful serenity of the interior, its quiet toning, provides an atmosphere for prayer. The eye is drawn to the altar and tabernacle, then up to the large crucifix, beneath the canopy, or baldachino. St Anthony seems to welcome you to this Eucharistic house of the Lord, a reminder of the generous giving of the people of this parish, year in and year out, to many charitable causes. Make your reverence to the Lord, and turn left and approach the area that was formerly the Baptistry.



The window on the left is in honour of Fr O'Hanlon and depicts St Francis Xavier, the Jesuit Missionary who baptised thousands. In the iron gates of the former Baptistry the symbol of the dove represents the Holy Spirit, through whom we are reborn in Baptism and so enter the community of the Catholic Church. The area is wrapped in the soft light of Gabriel Loire's glass: the healing pool on the left (John 5), ahead the Baptism of Our Lord. A delicate mosaic on the right wall shows angels bearing objects used at Baptism. The coat of arms of the late Bishop John Kelly, the first Bishop to appointed to the Southern Region and to be resident in the Parish, is on the same wall. His coat of arms as titular Bishop of Zucchabar carries the Cross of Jerusalem, bearing the sun, symbol of light and warmth, set into the waves of the sea, source of our Christian life. His motto is "Instrue me et vivam" 'Teach me and I shall live'.

Turning right, you walk down the side aisle, past the former confessional. The woods chosen for this church are Queensland Maple, Silky Oak and Australian hardwoods. Pause for a moment at St Joseph's shrine, a small altar of Hawkesbury Freestone, used for all the altars and the Baptismal font. The rich green marble is Grecian Botitini. The statue of St Joseph was carved in Italian pine by Adolf Martiner Ortesei, from the Dolomites, Northern Italy. With the exception of Our Lady's image, he carved all the statues, including the intricate Christmas crib. Pray to St Joseph for the needs of the Church today and for strong Christian family life.



Continue along the side aisle, until you enter the East transept, bathed in the tonings of blue glass, to catch the morning light. The transept window depicts Bethlehem, because this area and the Lady Chapel express the Incarnation, God coming into our flesh, through Mary. Pause to pray before her altar, one of the three consecrated altars. Her statue, Our Lady of Fatima, was carved in Portugal. The Blessed Mother shows us her sorrowing and Immaculate Heart, asking us for "prayer and penance." Above her is a small panel of stained glass, with symbols of the Annunciation. On the left wall, the blue window shows the star of Bethlehem and the crowns of the three "kings". Nearby is the familiar icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour purchased by parishioners' donations in memory of Fr Martin Leach, Assistant Priest, who died in 1995. A metal plaque in the wall below the icon commemorates him. Commend your intentions to the Mother of the Church.



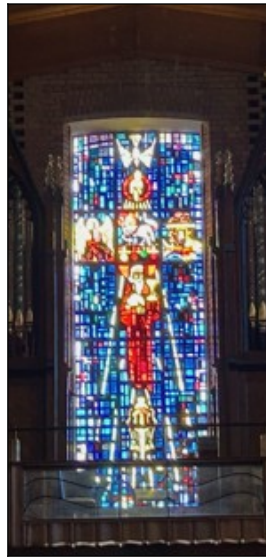
Turning to the right, you come around the steps of the sanctuary, and across to the centre of the church. You face the High Altar, the stone of the sacrifice of the Mass, the sacred table of the Body and Blood of Christ, the central object of this church. To the left of the High Altar is the Lectern, the table of the Word of the Lord.



Directly behind the altar is the tabernacle, placed upon a freestone plinth. The Eucharistic Lamb of God in wrought iron is set into the stone. The Parish of Mentone has a long tradition of daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, formerly by roster 24 hours a day; our church is open daily from 9am – 6pm. The ‘baldachino’ canopy over the tabernacle was carved on site, by the late Mr Jim Buckley of this Parish. Set into Grecian Botitini marble, it also enshrines the noble crucifix, thus expressing the work of our redemption, the power and

purpose of the Mass and the Eucharist. The shield on the left is “The hart drinking from the water brooks”, the graces of the Mass, (repeated on the tabernacle on Our Lady’s altar, and in the wrought iron in the two panels on either side of the sanctuary which were formerly the gates in the sanctuary rails) with the shield on the right representing the fish and anchor of hope, Jesus really present in the Eucharist. Kneel here adore and thank Him, really here, Our Redeemer, our Sacrifice and Food. To the right of the sanctuary is the Baptismal Font, a strong simple form built of the same stone as the altar.

Now turn completely around to face the main doors and the gallery. Now you see what the priest sees from the altar, Gabriel Loire’s glorious window depicting the Sacrifice of the Mass – as the Cross, for it is the same sacrifice as Calvary, with Jesus, Lamb of God, Victim-Priest at the centre of the Cross, and above, the Father, accepting his self-offering, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Dove. The left arm of the Cross is the pelican feeding her young with her blood, with the right arm of the Cross, the bread and fish, another symbol of Jesus nourishing us through his Sacrifice-banquet. The lower part of the Cross shows Melchisedech, the priest, bearing bread and wine, and beneath him, the two-edged sword of the Word, that is, the Scriptures leading us to the Eucharist. The blue background is shot through with rays of light, the graces of the eternal sacrifice.



On either side of the window are the pipes of the Nicholson Pipe Organ. There are 1558 pipes. The keyboard is to the right of the window. This organ first built in 1860 was originally installed in the Uniting Church, Malvern Road, Prahran. When that church was purchased by the City Council in the 1980's the organ was no longer needed there for worship. The Council gifted the organ to St Patrick's Parish and it was installed in the gallery in 1999. The organ is classified by the National Trust and dedicated The Bishop John Anthony Kelly Memorial Organ.



As you look towards this glorious window, walk down into the nave and look up at the bas-reliefs of the saints, surrounding God's people, a "mighty cloud of witness." On the left, facing the doors, you see Pope St Pius X, St Maria Goretti and St Augustine, and on the right, St John Vianney, St Agnes and St Stephen, deacon and first martyr. These saints sum up so many aspects of the People of God, laity and clergy, of distant and recent times.

High up, near the ceiling, are shields, the two nearest the altar being the arms of Pope Pius XII, on the left, and Pope St John XXIII, on the right, the Pontiffs during the years of the building of this church. The next six shields represent six of the seven sacraments, the seventh being the Eucharist – in the great window. The shields on either side of that window are the arms of Archbishop Mannix and Archbishop Simonds, the Archbishops of Melbourne during the building and completion of this church. Turn back to the high altar, make your reverence to the Lord and turn right into the West transept and Sacred Heart chapel.

Now we can see the symbolism of “moving across” from the blue glow of the East transept, the dawn, the Incarnation, through the Redemption by Sacrifice, the high altar, sanctuary, and now the red and gold glow, the Resurrection and Ascension, the glory of Christ, shining as King in the high transept window. Pause awhile before the Sacred Heart altar, and commend to the gentle heart of the risen Christ someone you love, someone in need. Before you leave this transept, which catches the light of sunset, come before the stylised statue of St Patrick, our patron, dressed as a medieval bishop. Pray awhile in gratitude for the Irish clergy and religious who pioneered the faith in Australia. Note the familiar symbols, the shamrock in Patrick’s hand, and the snake beneath his feet and in the window on the west transept Christ the King bears the Celtic cross on his sceptre. Before leaving the transept of Christ’s glory, our hope of heaven, do not forget the small red window next to the Sacred Heart altar showing Christ’s pierced hands offering you a share in His Cross, through your sufferings – and so – a share in His victory.



As you turn right, to return by the side aisle to the front doors, you will continue to be interested in the vivid scenes of the Stations of the Cross. These are original oil paintings by the notable Australian realist artist Paul Fitzgerald. Later, if you wish to make the Stations of the Cross privately, there is a light switch near Our Lady’s altar, which illuminates the Stations, with a switch to turn off these lights near the Sacred Heart altar.

As you walk down the side aisle towards the entrance porch you come across the other shrine, matching that of St Joseph. This is perhaps the only shrine of St Teresa of Avila in an Australian parish church. The great mystic, reformer of the Carmelite nuns, was born in Avila, Northern Spain, in 1515 and died in 1582. Pope St Paul VI proclaimed her a “Doctor of the Church” for her masterly spiritual teachings, which is why she bears a book in her left hand, with “Omen Novum” – “A New Sign” written across its pages, while her right hand is raised to teach and to point to eternity. Along with relics of most of the saints depicted in the bas-reliefs on the nave walls, a relic of St Teresa is kept in the Sacristy.

You may pause at this shrine to commend the women of the Church to the prayers of St Teresa, remembering our religious sisters, especially the Brigidines who have lived and worked in this parish for 100 years.

You continue along the side aisle back towards the entrance porch. But, before you complete your pilgrim’s tour of our noble church, pause before the mission crucifix, to kneel and say the familiar prayer “Eu ego” set beneath the feet of Our Redeemer. This reminds you of the purpose of your visit to this church and indeed the meaning of all signs and symbols worked into this building.

You will see the magnificent bronze entrance doors installed since November 2004, inscribed with names of some of our parishioners, and blessed by Cardinal Pell on 21st November 2004 to celebrate the Centenary of the Parish of St Patrick and the Holy Angels.

You entered the church in your Baptism, and through the sacraments of Confirmation, the Eucharist and Penance you share in the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ. So you entered this church, a kind of “sacramental” of the pilgrimage of the Christian life of a Catholic – the way we share in the Incarnation, Redemptive death and Resurrection of Christ.

This guide was written by Bishop (then-Father) Peter Elliott in 1983 for the Holy Year of Redemption 1983-84. It has been updated to allow for changes made to the church since then.