

SOME PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

You call it "The Old Bank Building". When Father John Bourke was our parish priest, he called it "The Curia" but the parishioners, up to fairly recent times, always referred to it as "The Club". This expression was probably a leftover from Old Testament Times when the C.Y.M.S. seemed to have exclusive use of the ground floor. There must have been one room reserved, however, for the use of The Women's Social Guild.

I am unaware of the year when the Guild commenced working in Hawthorn but my memory tells me it was for many, many years. It consisted of a group of dedicated women who worked tirelessly week in, week out, month after month, year after year. They patched and sewed for priests, the needy and for many other good causes. (Mrs. F. Dammert, aunt of the late Father Brian Murphy S.J. was the capable director.)

A large room upstairs was used for meetings and for small social gatherings. Father Patrick Harper often arranged little supper parties to be held in this room. They were for the promoters of the Women's Sacred Heart Confraternity and for those of the Women's Sodality of Our Lady. The Christmas break-up was a truly grande affaire.

Prior to the Jesuits acquiring Miss Gibney Roche's property in Power Street, the Provincial, Father John Meagher, for some years lived in one of the upstairs rooms. From time to time other priests had their living quarters in the building. I remember Father Beks (predecessor to Father Vargna or was it to Father Gadelis?) and there was also a tall Polish priest, whose name I forget.

Very soon after Father James Kirwan arrived in the parish, he set about establishing a library. The front room on the right hand side of the entrance hall he considered to be the ideal place. Shelving was soon erected and a table and a few chairs were made available. He then made an appeal to the parishioners for books. There was a generous response but the books were not all up to his literary standard. He received one or two cash donations and as a result of a 1 penny raffle, he received another £7: 10 shillings. (About every 4 or 5 months, we would raffle some article to swell the funds. Once we raffled a half-sovereign, but don't tell the Attorney General!)

Every few weeks, Father K. would take a trip into Linehan's and order books of his favorite authors to be delivered, e.g., G.J. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Ronald Knox and Robert Hugh Benson.

The library grew and grew and G R E W. It expanded to such an extent it was necessary to acquire use of the corresponding room on the left hand side of the entrance hall.

Father Kirwan would occasionally ask certain people to review a book; he would then ask them to give a commentary to a small audience in the room at the time. I can recall Mr. Lachal (father of Father Lou), Mr. Tipping (writer of Black and White column in The Herald) Miss Vera Cronin, a teacher and Dr. Luxford

Meagher all giving interesting and informative talks.

Everyone was sad when dear, enthusiastic Father Kirwan was transferred to Richmond and then to Norwood. He was replaced by Father James Magan as Director. After Devotions during the week, he would come into the library every night, providing he was free; he would sit on the table and relate some funny incident that had occurred or tell a few jokes. He was always happy.

There must have been a billiard room somewhere in the building as he used to say he was ready to challenge Father Meagher to a game of billiards. When Father Magan died, the library died too. I have no idea of what happened to all those precious books.

The above information is not in chronological order.