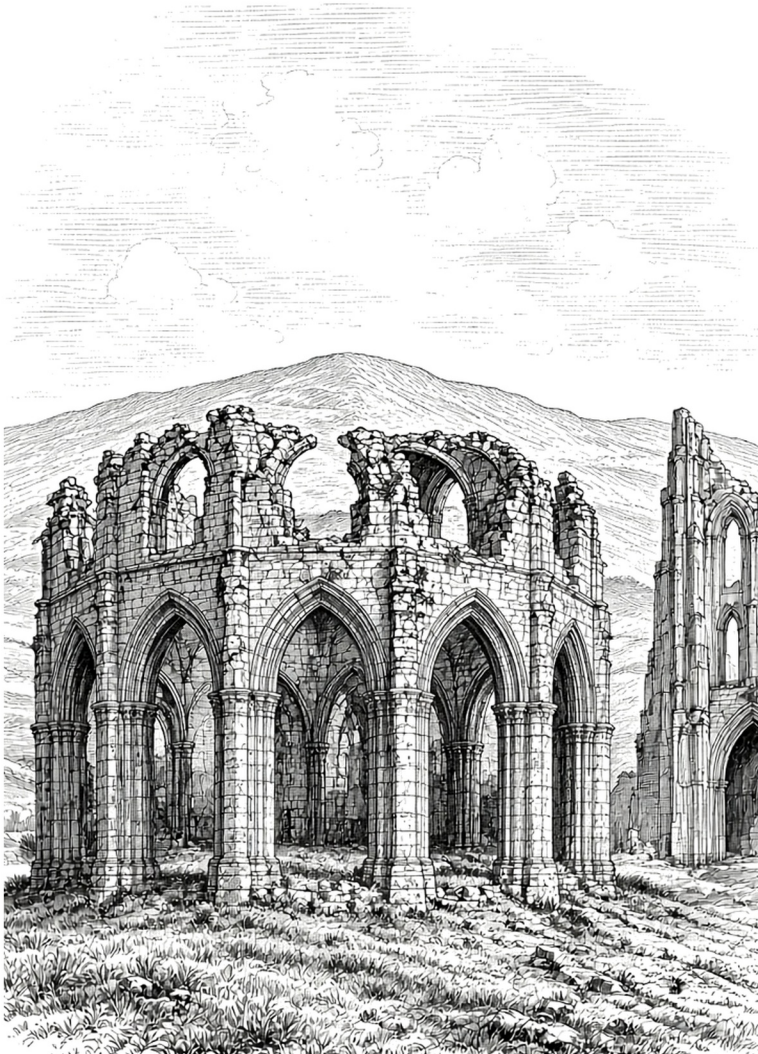




SILENT HOMILIES

The Parish That Kept the Name

*Catholic Wales beside a ruined abbey,
and the church that still answers to Mary*



Silent Homilies

Our Lady of Margam



The Parish That Kept the Name

*Catholic Wales beside a ruined abbey,
and the church that still answers to Mary*

*A history of Our Lady of Margam,
Port Talbot*

Dedication

†

For the people who hired the lorry, converted the stables, served Mass,
paid the weekly contribution, and kept the name of Our Lady on this
road.

Before You Begin



Do you know how this parish actually began? Not with a finished church and a tidy opening day. It began with Mass in borrowed rooms, a house sold after a promise, marriages in what is now the priest's living room, a stable turned into a chapel, and a group of men who spent a Thursday taking an old rugby clubhouse to pieces.

Our Lady of Margam was established in 1951. Before that, Catholics here belonged to St Joseph's in Aberavon. The new parish took a name that already belonged to this place. Margam had been Cistercian ground for centuries. The monks' church was dedicated to Mary. The later Catholic parish kept that name, even though the abbey itself had long been a ruin and an estate church.

I am the present parish priest. The story is not mine. It belongs to the people who found the land, said the first Mass here, paid for the buildings and then looked after them. I have used the parish history already gathered by earlier hands, photographs that people did not throw away, a few public records, and some things older parishioners have told me themselves. Where I am not sure, I will say so.

Contents

Dedication

Before You Begin

Part One — Before there was a parish

1. Catholics already here
2. Why the name matters
3. A town that was changing

Part Two — A parish begins

4. Maesgwyn
5. Fr William O'Connor
6. Making do
7. The clubhouse from Porthcawl

Part Three — Building something permanent

8. Growing pains
9. Children at the altar
10. Fr Colin Henneberry
11. The new church, 1972

Part Four — A parish grows up

12. Paying for it
 13. Priests, gaps and returns
 14. The dedication, 1991
 15. What we have received
- Sources and Acknowledgements

Part One

Before there was a parish

Chapter 1

Catholics already here



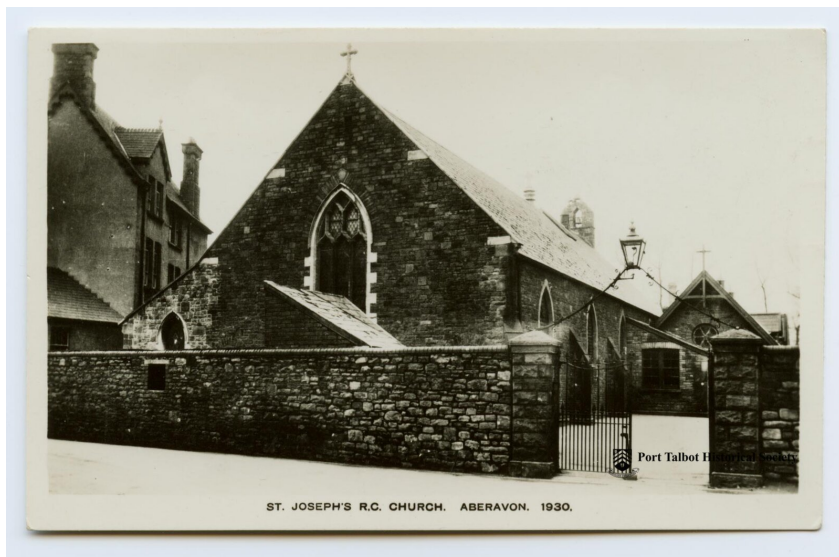
Our Lady of Margam did not appear in an empty landscape. For more than a century before 1951, Catholics in this corner of Glamorgan had been gathering at St Joseph's in Aberavon. That older parish was the mother house. Three later parishes came out of it: Saint Teresa of Lisieux at Sandfields, Saint Philip Evans at Cwmavon, and Our Lady of Margam.

William Joseph Waters, known as Joe, later put it simply. The buying of land and buildings was the first necessity. That work, he said, was done with foresight by Monsignor Peter Gavin, Provost of the Archdiocese of Cardiff, by Canon Quilligan, and by others whose names sit more quietly in the records.

The numbers help to explain why a new parish was needed. Parish histories record that the Catholic population of Aberavon was about two hundred in 1850. By 1925 it was given as three thousand three hundred. A Roman Catholic infants' school had been built in Aberavon in 1896. St Joseph's Comprehensive opened in 1965. Those figures are the kind that survive in commemorative books. They should be treated as the estimates they are. Even so, the direction is clear. The Catholic community had grown with the town.

Before Maesgwyn was bought, Mass for people living towards Margam was offered in three different places at different times: the Henry Davies Memorial Hall, Taibach Library, and an upper room of the Port Talbot Hotel on Water Street. The hotel was later demolished,

in 1984. The library is still there. Anyone who has ever set out chairs in a borrowed hall already understands that stage of parish life.



St Joseph's Church, Aberavon, 1930. The mother parish of Our Lady of Margam.



The interior of St Joseph's, Aberavon, 1930.



Taibach Library. One of the places where Mass was offered before the parish had a church of its own.



*The Port Talbot Hotel, Water Street. Mass was also offered in an upper room here.
The building was demolished in 1984.*

A Reflection

A parish often begins before anyone gives it a name. People already know where they go to Mass. They already know which priest will come if someone is dying. The later building makes that life visible. It does not invent it. When we look at St Joseph's in an old photograph, we are looking at the church that made Margam possible.

A Short Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the older parish that looked after this community before Our Lady of Margam had an address of its own. Amen.

Chapter 2

Why the name matters



The parish is called Our Lady of Margam. That name was not chosen simply because it looked nice on a noticeboard. Margam had been associated with Mary for a very long time.

In 1147 a Cistercian abbey was founded here. The monks' church was dedicated to St Mary. For four centuries the abbey owned land, farmed, prayed the office and buried its dead. At the dissolution of the monasteries the house passed to new owners. The Mansel family, and later the Talbots, made an estate of what had been a monastery. The east end of the abbey church became a ruin. The west end continued as the parish church of the Church in Wales. That building still stands in Margam Park.

The Catholic parish founded in 1951 is not the abbey revived. There is no straight line of ownership from the Cistercians to 63 Margam Road. What continued was the name, and the memory that this ground had once been held in honour of Mary. Catholics returning to public life in a later century chose to say that name again.

The name tells you where you are. You are in Margam. You are near a ruined abbey that once answered to Our Lady. The new parish decided that it would answer to her as well.

A Reflection

When a community takes Our Lady's title, it is asking to live under her care and to remember the people who prayed here before us. The Cistercians are not our legal ancestors. They are still part of the Christian memory of this hillside. Keeping the name is a way of saying that the story did not begin in 1951.

A Short Prayer

Mary of Margam, keep this parish close to your Son. Teach us to remember the people who prayed here long before we arrived. Amen.

Chapter 3

A town that was changing



The new parish was born into a town that was still being rebuilt after the war and still filling with work. On 13 July 1951 a new steel plant at Margam was already part of the skyline. Housing spread along the roads under the hill. Families moved for jobs. Some of those families were Catholic. They needed somewhere nearer than Aberavon when the buses were full and the children were small.

Margam Road itself tells that story. Old postcards show a wide road, newish houses, telegraph poles, the mountain behind, and the kind of traffic that belonged to the middle of the twentieth century. People waited at gates for trains to pass on Station Road. The place was industrial and local at the same time.

Further back, other families had already made money and a name in grocery and tinplate. Colonel David Roderick David, born in 1842 at Tyisha, Brombil, came from that world. By 1901 his home was Maes y Gwyn at Groeswen, Margam. That house is not the same story as the later sale of Maesgwyn on Margam Road, and it should not be collapsed into it. It simply shows that the David and Llewellyn names were already part of the district long before a Catholic parish needed land.

Cwm Brombil still looks, in an old photograph, like a handful of houses under the hill. Port Talbot from above looks like rows of terraces, a football ground, smoke and a gas holder marked G.K.B. That was the world in which the new parish had to find a site.



Margam Road, Margam. A postcard from the years when the new parish was taking shape.



Margam Road, Port Talbot.



Station Road, Port Talbot, in the 1950s. The parish history remembers people waiting at the gates for the trains to pass.



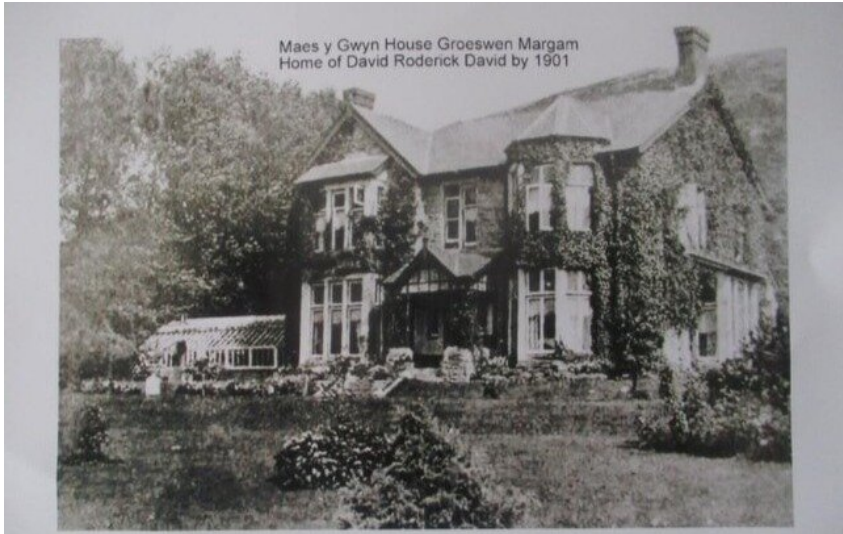
New works and housing at Margam in the early 1950s.



Port Talbot from above, with the football ground and works beyond.



Cwm Brombil, Port Talbot. Colonel David Roderick David was born at Tyisha, Brombil, in 1842.



*Maes y Gwyn House, Groeswen, Margam, home of David Roderick David by 1901.
This earlier house belongs to the wider local story and should not be confused with the
later Maesgwyn on Margam Road.*

A Reflection

Parishes do not grow in a vacuum. They grow where people find work, marry, raise children and look for a church they can reach. The steelworks and the terraces are not a romantic background. They are the reason a second Catholic address was needed on this side of the town.

A Short Prayer

Lord, you meet people in the places where they actually live and work. Bless this town, and the families who still travel these roads to Mass. Amen.

Part Two

A parish begins

Chapter 4

Maesgwyn



Shortly after the war, land for a new church was acquired. The surviving parish history says that the land had been owned by Major Llewellyn David of Maesgwyn, Margam Road. It also says that he honoured a longstanding promise to his friend Monsignor Peter Gavin, and that he sold his house, with its grounds, to the Catholic community for a sum that was never published.

Maesgwyn means, in ordinary Welsh, a white field or a fair field. The diocese still uses the name. The correspondence address of the parish is Maes Gwyn, 63 Margam Road. The house became the presbytery. The grounds became the place where a church could be imagined.

A later family grave at Coedffranc, Skewen, remembers David Selwyn Llewellyn, known as the Major. He died on 25 August 1995, aged seventy-three. His wife, Elizabeth Irene Llewellyn, née Jones, died on 10 September 1975, aged fifty-seven. The stone also names their daughter, Ann. An earlier draft of the parish notes once gave 1975 as his own year of death. The inscription on the stone is the better evidence.

The parish history has long associated that family with the gift of the site. The names on the stone and the name in the older notes are not word-for-word the same, so I will not pretend that a grave settles every question. What the parish has always known is simpler. A house and a field were made available to the Catholic community. Without that, there would have been no stables to convert and no later church on this ground.



The grave of Elizabeth Irene Llewellyn (d. 10 September 1975) and David Selwyn Llewellyn, "the Major" (d. 25 August 1995), Coedffranc Cemetery.

A Reflection

Years after a house was sold for a new parish, a name was cut into stone. We still use what that generation made possible. We do not need every family detail to be tidy in order to be grateful. We do need to remember that the ground under the church was not empty. Somebody had to let it go.

A Short Prayer

Lord, reward those who made room for this parish. Give rest to Elizabeth, Selwyn and all the dead whose decisions still shelter the living. Amen.

Chapter 5

Fr William O'Connor



The first parish priest was Fr William O'Connor. He arrived in 1951 from St Joseph's, Port Talbot, where he had been senior assistant priest. The parish history calls him the first resident parish priest here since before the Reformation. That does not mean no priest had said Mass in Margam for four hundred years. It means this was the first time a Catholic priest lived here as pastor of a named parish.

He was Irish-born, spoke Welsh, and is remembered as warm and kind. He came with a curate, Fr Morrissey. Those two facts already tell you something about the size of the hope. A brand-new parish, meeting in converted buildings, was given not only a parish priest but help.

Fr O'Connor stayed three years. In 1954 he was transferred to Hereford. Three years is not a long pastorate. It was long enough to take a scattered group and give them an address, a priest in the house, and the beginning of ordinary parish habits: Mass at a known time, Confession, funerals, children learning when to stand.



Fr William O'Connor, first Parish Priest of Our Lady of Margam, 1951–1954.

A Reflection

The first priests rarely see the finished church. Their work is to gather people and give them an address. Later generations walk into a building and forget that someone had to start with less. Fr O'Connor's three years matter because they made the later years possible.

A Short Prayer

Lord, bless the priests who begin work they will not finish, and give us the patience to continue what we did not begin. Amen.

Chapter 6

Making do



When the parish acquired Maesgwyn, it had a house and grounds. It did not yet have a church. The house became the presbytery. Before the stables were ready, the young community used rooms inside that house. Holy Mass was celebrated there. Sacraments were celebrated there.

Years later I discovered something about my own living room. During a Bingo and Buffet evening in the Community Hall I was talking with some of the older parishioners about the early days of Margam. More than one of them looked at me with a smile and said, “Father, I was married in your living room.” They meant it literally. The room they were talking about is the living room of the present presbytery, the house where the parish priest still lives.

That sentence stayed with me because it sounded strange until it didn’t. The parish had a priest and a house before it had a proper chapel. For a short time the ordinary rooms of Maesgwyn had to do the work of a church.

The old stables and coach house near the main house were then converted into a temporary church. The men of the parish did the work themselves. When it was finished, in 1951, the building could hold about a hundred and twenty people. That is not a cathedral. It is enough for a community that has decided it will no longer live only in hired rooms.

At the time it meant odd corners, borrowed benches and a building that had not been designed for the Blessed Sacrament. It also meant that

Mass no longer depended on the goodwill of a hall keeper. The parish had a place it could lock and open. The house stood beside it. People knew where to find the priest. Funerals and baptisms had an address.



Our Lady of Margam today, with the statue of Our Lady in the niche beside the porch.

A Reflection

A parish can begin in a living room. That is easy to forget when you walk into a finished church. Before the stables were ready, people in Margam brought their marriages, their Mass and their ordinary need of a priest into the house that still stands here. The later buildings matter. So does the fact that the sacraments were already being celebrated before those buildings existed.

A Short Prayer

Lord, bless the rooms that have to serve for a time, and the people who used them with faith. Amen.

Chapter 7

The clubhouse from Porthcawl



The parish needed somewhere for people to meet when Mass was over. The answer came from an unlikely place: the old Porthcawl RFC clubhouse.

Early one Thursday morning a group of men from the parish hired a local coal merchant's lorry and drove to Porthcawl. They took the whole clubhouse apart in about twelve hours, loaded it, and brought it back to Margam. They put it up again on the site of the present church. That building became the first Catholic social centre in the historic parish of Margam.

Joe Waters later remembered what those rooms were for. Sunday night was music night. Buses came from Maesteg, from Our Lady of Lourdes, and from other parishes. People from Margam hired a bus the other way as well. Young people met. Bands of varying quality played. The dance floor at Margam, he said, was particularly good. Friendships began there that would not have begun in a converted stable alone.

The parish history also says that the social centre helped to give the new community a financial foundation. That is worth keeping in view. A hall is not a distraction from a church. In a working town it is often how a church learns to pay its way.

A Reflection

It is easy to look at an established parish and imagine that it was always there. It was not. Men from this parish hired a coal merchant's lorry, gave up a Thursday, took an old clubhouse apart and put it up again on Margam Road. A great deal of what we inherit in the Church began like that: ordinary people deciding that a job needed doing, and then doing it.

A Short Prayer

*Lord, we thank you for the people who carried timber and raised halls.
Give us the same willingness when the work in front of us is heavy and
unglamorous. Amen.*

Part Three

Building something permanent

Chapter 8

Growing pains



In 1954 the parish welcomed Fr Butler. The older notes remember him as large and affable. Under him the converted stable was extended. Among the improvements was a new confessional. The story that has come down is that Fr Butler had to be measured at eighteen stone so that the box would fit him. The furniture of the parish was being made for the actual priest who would sit in it.

Between 1954 and 1968 other priests served as well. The list names Fr J. Walsh and Fr James Kelly among them. We know less about those years than we would like. There is no need to invent a personality for every name.

What we can say is that the parish was no longer a first experiment. Children were growing up in it. Families were using the hall. The temporary church was being asked to do more than it had been built to do. That is usually the sign that a community is ready, or almost ready, for a permanent building.

A Reflection

Parish memory is uneven. Some priests leave stories. Others leave only a line in a list. That does not mean their work was smaller. A confessional built to fit Fr Butler is a reminder that the sacraments are given by particular people, not by titles on a page.

A Short Prayer

Lord, reward the priests whose names we barely know, and make us faithful in work that may not be remembered. Amen.

Chapter 9

Children at the altar



Around 1959 someone took a photograph of the altar servers. The boys stand in cassock and cotta, some in lace, hands joined, looking at the camera with the mixture of pride and restlessness that belongs to children who have been told to keep still.

I do not know all their names. The photograph does not tell us who later married, who left, who kept coming, who died young. It only tells us that the parish already had a group of children who knew the sanctuary from the inside.

Serving at the altar is a small responsibility. You learn when to stand, when to kneel, how to carry a candle without setting light to anyone, how to be quiet when you would rather not. For some boys that hour becomes a passing memory. For others it becomes part of how they know the Church for the rest of their lives.

You do not put children in the sanctuary if you think the whole thing will be over next winter. The photograph tells us that the parish already expected to last.



Altar servers at Our Lady of Margam, c. 1959.

A Reflection

A parish is also formed through children who are given something to do before anyone knows what their adult lives will become. We should not pretend that every child in an old photograph remained a weekly Mass-goer. We can still see the trust of a community that thought it worthwhile to teach them the sanctuary.

A Short Prayer

Lord, bless the children who serve at the altar today, and those who once stood in this photograph. Keep them close to you. Amen.

Chapter 10

Fr Colin Henneberry



In 1968 Fr Colin Henneberry came to Margam. He was a young Welsh priest from Mountain Ash, and he stayed ten years. During those years the parish finally built a permanent church and a parish hall.

The cost recorded in the parish history is £63,000. The same notes say that the debt was fully paid by 1977. Those two figures matter more than they first appear. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, £63,000 was a serious sum for a parish of ordinary wage-earners. It was not the gift of one family. It was years of envelopes, draws, hall bookings and the kind of fundraising that asks the same people again and again.

Fr Henneberry did not build the church by himself. Architects, contractors and diocesan permissions all had their place. The more interesting question is how a community that had started in a stable decided it could carry a debt of that size and then clear it.

A Reflection

Jesus Christ may be the reason a church exists, but somebody still has to pay the builder. There is nothing unspiritual about that. The people who put money in an envelope in 1970 were taking part in the same work as the men who dismantled the clubhouse. They were making sure the next generation would have a roof.

A Short Prayer

Lord, bless those who gave when the figures looked large. Teach us to be as practical and as generous. Amen.

Chapter 11

The new church, 1972



The new church was opened on 18 December 1972. Archbishop John Murphy celebrated High Mass. That evening Bishop Daniel Mullins, then Auxiliary Bishop, celebrated Mass as well. We do not have the weather, the size of the congregation or the words of the homily.

What we do know is that the day marked the end of the temporary church as the ordinary place of Sunday Mass. People who had been married, baptised or simply tired in the converted stable now walked into a building meant to last.

Opening a church is not the same act as dedicating it. A community may begin to use a building, and even bless it, before the bishop returns for the fuller rite that sets the place aside in a solemn way and, in this parish, deposits relics in the altar. That later day would not come until 1991. In 1972 the task was simpler to describe and harder to achieve. The people had a church.



Holy Mass. The parish exists for this, before it exists for any hall or club.

A Reflection

A new church can look, on the opening day, as if it has always been inevitable. It never was. Years of temporary arrangements stand behind one December morning. The people who came that day were not only celebrating architecture. They were seeing the result of work that had begun in a stable and a hired hall.

A Short Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the day this church was opened. Keep every Mass said here faithful and humble. Amen.

Part Four

A parish grows up

Chapter 12

Paying for it



The debt on the new church and hall was cleared by 1977. That is four years after the opening. Someone had to keep asking, counting and thanking.

One of the instruments was the 200 Club. It was founded in 1970 by David Thomas, who gathered two hundred names for the first draw in January 1971. He ran it for twenty years. Terry Thomas then ran it for twenty-five. In more recent years Jonathan O’Leary has continued the work. In January 2021 the club marked fifty years.

A 200 Club is not glamorous history. It is people paying a modest regular sum and hoping their number comes up, while the parish quietly receives what it needs for insurance, repairs and the next unexpected bill. A parish is not built only by large donors. Sometimes it is built by small contributions that last longer than the people who first thought of them.

The 200 Club is one thread. The hall bookings were another. So were the people who never joined a committee and still put something in the plate.

Did you know?

The Catholic population of Aberavon is recorded as about 200 in 1850 and 3,300 in 1925. A Catholic infants' school opened there in 1896. St Joseph's Comprehensive opened in 1965.

A Reflection

Fundraising can look like a distraction from prayer. In a parish it is often a form of fidelity. The person who keeps the 200 Club book for twenty years is doing work that will never appear in a stained-glass window. Without that work the window, if there is one, does not stay in the wall.

A Short Prayer

Lord, bless those who count, collect and keep records. Let even our ordinary money serve the life of this church. Amen.

Chapter 13

Priests, gaps and returns



Fr Timothy Corkery became parish priest in 1978. He served until 1983, when he retired because of declining health. He died in 1984 and is buried beside Fr James Kelly in the churchyard at St Joseph's. After his retirement Margam was served again by the clergy of St Joseph's, Aberavon.

In 1984 Bishop Daniel Mullins was appointed Area Bishop of the Swansea deanery and came to live in Margam. In 1987 he appointed Mgr David Bottrill as his Vicar General. When the bishop moved to Swansea in 1988, he asked Mgr Bottrill to become parish priest. Mgr Bottrill served until he retired at seventy-five in 2000, and then remained in the parish as a priest in residence until 2013.

Canon Sylvester O'Donnell is listed as parish priest from 2000 until 2012. Fr Paul Watson had already been assistant priest from 1996 to 1999. He returned as parish priest in 2011 and remained until 2020, when he was transferred to St David's in Swansea. The two dates overlap for a year. The lists we have do not spell out the exact handover. The simplest reading is that Fr Paul's second period here began in 2011, and that Canon O'Donnell's years in the parish ran to 2012. In 2020 I came to the parish.

A list of dates is not a verdict on anyone's ministry. Some years were stable. Some years the parish had to share priests. Not every decade felt the same.

A Reflection

A parish can survive a period without a resident priest. It does so because lay people keep opening the door, counting the money and bringing the sick to the sacraments when a priest can come. The years after 1983 belong as much to those parishioners as to the clergy of St Joseph's who covered the Masses.

A Short Prayer

Lord, bless the priests who have served this parish, and the people who kept it going when the presbytery was quiet. Amen.

Chapter 14

The dedication, 1991



On 8 May 1991 the Church of Our Lady of Margam was solemnly dedicated by Bishop Daniel Joseph Mullins, Bishop of Menevia. Relics of saints were placed in the altar: Eugenia, Teresa, Philip Neri, Paul of the Cross, John Bosco, Dominic Savio, Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows and Maria Goretti.

So why did a church that opened in 1972 have to be dedicated again in 1991? The two acts are not the same. A church may be used, and even blessed, so that the community can celebrate Mass. Dedication is the fuller rite by which a bishop sets the building aside permanently. Relics were placed in the altar. Those names join this church to saints who never saw Port Talbot.

Nineteen years is a long gap. We do not have a full explanation for the delay. The debt had been cleared by 1977, so money was not the only question. What we do have is the date, the bishop and the saints. That is enough to understand the day.

On the eighth of May nineteen hundred and ninety one

The Church of Our Lady of Margam

was Solemnly Dedicated

by

The Right Reverend Daniel Joseph Mullins

Bishop of Menevia

and the Relics of Saints

Eugenia

Teresa

Philip Neri

Paul of the Cross

John Bosco

Dominic Savio

Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows

Maria Goretti

were deposited within the Altar

The parish record of the solemn dedication, 8 May 1991.

A Reflection

Dedication is the Church's way of saying that a building is no longer only a useful hall with an altar in it. It has been given. The relics in the stone are easy to forget because nobody sees them during Sunday Mass. They are still there. This parish worships on an altar that contains the names of saints who never saw Port Talbot.

A Short Prayer

Lord, you accepted this church on the day it was dedicated. Keep us faithful to the worship for which these walls were set aside. Amen.

Chapter 15

What we have received



If you walk into Our Lady of Margam now, you see a brick church, a porch, a stone niche with a statue of Our Lady, flowers at her feet, and Mynydd Margam rising behind. None of that was inevitable. The first generation found the land, used the living room, converted the stables, moved a clubhouse, built the church and hall, and paid the debt. Later generations kept the place going. The present generation inherited those buildings.

In 2025 and 2026 the parish had to do something substantial to look after them. The roofs of both the church and the Community Hall were completely renewed. This was not a few replacement tiles. The whole roof covering of both buildings was replaced. As Parish Priest, I would describe it as the biggest transformation these buildings have seen since they were built.

We often think history means black-and-white photographs and people who have died. It does not. The work being done now will one day be the old photographs and parish notes that somebody else reads. The first generation had the harder task of creating the buildings. Later generations maintained them. This generation has had to renew the roofs. The next generation will receive whatever condition we leave behind.

The past was not a golden age in which churches were always full and priests never tired. It was a sequence of ordinary Catholic lives, with money worries, changes of clergy, illness, and the usual mixture of

devotion and distraction. I do not know all the names in the photographs. A great deal of the work was done by people who expected no memorial except a church that would still be open on Sunday.

The question that remains is not whether the old parish was wonderful. It is what people fifty years from now will receive from us. They will inherit a building, a name, a set of registers, and whatever faith we have actually practised.

A Reflection

We walk into a church other people paid for and pray before an altar other people prepared. The honest response is not a speech about heritage. It is to keep the place fit for Mass, to welcome the living, to bury the dead, to teach children, and to leave the next generation something that still answers to Our Lady of Margam.

A Short Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the people who built this parish before us. Help us to care well for what they left in our hands, and to leave something living for those who will come after. Amen.

Parish priests



1951–1954 Fr William O'Connor

1954–1968 Fr Butler, Fr J. Walsh, Fr James Kelly

1968–1978 Fr Colin Henneberry

1978–1983 Fr Timothy Corkery

1983–1988 served by the clergy of St Joseph's, Aberavon

1988–2000 Mgr David Bottrill

2000–2012 Canon Sylvester O'Donnell

2011–2020 Fr Paul Watson (assistant priest, 1996–1999)

2020– Fr Andrzej Kukliński

Sources and Acknowledgements



This book is rewritten from the parish history of Our Lady of Margam compiled and updated by Fr Andrzej Kukliński in January 2025, itself drawing on earlier local work.

Brian Jones, *St Joseph's Aberavon: A Parish and its People* (1987).

St Joseph's Aberavon Port Talbot 1831–1981: Golden Jubilee retrospective history.

Catholic Province of Cardiff, Wales and Herefordshire directories and yearbooks.

The parish record of the solemn dedication, 8 May 1991.

The inscription on the Llewellyn grave at Coedffranc Cemetery, read from the stone: Elizabeth Irene Llewellyn, née Jones, died 10 September 1975, aged 57; David Selwyn Llewellyn, died 25 August 1995, aged 73.

Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia parish listing for Our Lady of Margam, 63 Margam Road, Port Talbot, SA13 2HR.

Photographs from the parish collection, from Port Talbot Historical Society postcards reproduced in the parish history, and from additional prints supplied for this edition. Historical postcards remain the property of their original publishers and of the Society that preserved them.

Oral recollections shared by older parishioners with Fr Andrzej Kukliński, including the memory of marriages celebrated in the present presbytery living room.

Parish knowledge of the renewal of the church and Community Hall roofs in 2025–2026, recorded here as the present Parish Priest’s account of that work.

Thanks are due to those who kept the photographs, to Joe Waters for his memory of the early social nights, to the older parishioners who spoke about the first years in Maesgwyn, to David Thomas, Terry Thomas and Jonathan O’Leary for the 200 Club, and to every unnamed person who did not throw the records away.



Silent Homilies

Our Lady of Margam

A word of thanks

This book is offered to the parish that kept the name. If it helps someone understand how this church came to stand on Margam Road, it has done its work.

www.silenthomilies.com