

Aspect of the History of St Augustine's Parish Barton upon Humber

After the reformation the first priest in January 1842, was Fr James Taylor who lived at 7 Priestgate. From 1848, Benedictine priests & monks from Ampleforth Abbey, North Yorkshire served this extensive rural parish centred on Barton, in North Lincolnshire travelling by train and ferry. They acquired also 9 Priestgate, (now a garage) and built a small chapel which served until 1938.

In January 1925 Fr Noblett (OSB), came to Barton and immediately started to gather funds to build a new Church, on a paddock of Bardney Hall granted by the Rosminian Sisters who from 1927 to 1950 ran a boarding and day Catholic school, called Our Lady of the Snow and St Oswald. The parish was small and approximately 70 attending Sunday Masses and collections less than £ 2 per week. The chief fundraising, were the Annual Barton Rallies... Held each Summer when Catholics from Hull, Brigg, Grimsby and elsewhere would travel by ferry, trains and cars. Processions with the clergy and altar servers vested and children in holy Communion or confirmation or their best clothes and crowds watching the parade to "the field". St Augustine of Canterbury, the new Church opened on 10 July 1938 on this site at the Corner of Whitecross St and Barrow Rd in central Barton. Only a large 4 bedroomed presbytery, a substantial sanctuary, related rooms and half of the Nave were built ending with a temporary wall to the West. These Catholic Rallies were remembered as happy friendly events and would end with an open-air Mass, at the field, generally led by Archbishop Downey of Liverpool. We have many photographs taken during these years and one is of a group of Benedictine monks including Rt Rev Abbot Matthews OBS (Abbot of Ampleforth Abbey) we believe there for the dedication of the New 1938 Church.

During the second world war the Barton priests were also chaplains to the American Air force stationed in Goxhill and elsewhere, Fr Judd is especially remembered in the late 50's. Fr Wall was parish priest from 1962 until 1989, and towards the end of that period a major structural fault was found in the "temporary wall built 50 years before" and the Diocese of Nottingham decided that the Church should be demolished. A factory design and build Church cum Hall was built on the same foundations and opened with a concelebrated Mass on 27 May 1988. During the many months of construction, Catholic Masses were once more said at St Mary's Barton, dating back to the 12 Cent. with thanks to the Parish Priest and his parishioners.

The New 1988 Church was dedicated to a local martyr, former abbot of Melwood priory, on the Isle of Axholme, St Augustine Webster, but continued to be known locally at St Augustine's. Shortly after the opening of this new Church designed and built after Vatican II, Fr Wall retired and the Holy Ghost Fathers, Fr J Gilroy, a former missionary priest and then Fr E Holmes from 1995 to 2001, served this parish. Both worked hard and used the new buildings which included a large presbytery, parish room and Church cum Hall and very extensive gardens to their full potential. Numbers attending Masses increased and a Parish Council, Financial Committee and Social and Fund-Raising Committee were formed and actively assisted the Priests with the running of the St Augustine Webster Parish, Barton.

The modern Church was damaged by fire twice, once on 15 December 1990 and more seriously on 14 June 1991 when the fire damaged the wooden floors and roof timbers and I remember tarpaulins were in place to protect the building. Priest and people pulled together, to repair and restore the Church which was back in use For Christmas 1991. Masses in the meanwhile were said in various homes and in the small parish room with around 30 people on brown plastic chairs. We celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the parish on the 16 January 1992 with a concelebrated Mass said by Bishop McGuinness and priests from all "Northern" Lincolnshire parishes and a meal afterwards in a large marquee on the back lawns for everyone.

After a period of illness Fr Holmes left us in September 2001, to live in Community in his homeland near Motherwell in Scotland. The Parish has been since that date, without resident clergy but the laity pulled together and organised all the essential duties and worked with our Dean, Fr M Moore and supply clergy, Mgr. Canon K Coughlan, from Hessle and Fr A Storey also from Hull. Shortly before Fr Holmes left, following many hard years of fund raising and on receipt of a legacy, we were able to fully repay our debt to the Diocese for building the Church and improvements to the House in 2001. We discovered our Church had not been consecrated and perhaps, as the first group of lay people without a resident priest, booked our Bishop and found out all the necessary requirements. On 20 May 2007, our modern Church with a capacity of between 100-120 people was consecrated, by Bishop Malcolm McMahon. The altar, until then portable, was fixed firmly to the floor with a new granite top and 4 candle holders, fixed to the fabric of the Church to represent the 4 apostles. Show a Church has been consecrated. These can still be seen today and are lit on major festivals and the anniversary of the Church. In 2007 between 3 May and 2 July we had a variety of special events and organised our own tailored, confirmation programme, with a week end away at Ampleforth, and confirmation by Bishop Malcolm (now Archbishop of Liverpool) on 2 July 2007 another fine evening.

Now almost 180 years since the re-founding of this Parish and almost 20 years since our last resident parish priest left us, we have continued, as a well-run, financial solvent, small RC Parish. It is a large rural area with Barton, a town of over 12,000 population and people travel up to 14 or 15 miles or more to attend Mass from Goxhill, Barrow, Wootton, South Ferriby and elsewhere.

We have been looked after by Fr D O'Connor and Fr B Abuo whilst resident at our sister parish, St Mary's Brigg some 15 miles or so away. Over the week end of 25-27 May 2013, we celebrated 25 years of worship in our New Church with a Flower Festival. With the help of flower arrangers, from St Mary's Brigg, Barton Flower Club and our own Flower arrangers, strawberry cream teas were served and people came from far and wide to visit the Church and grounds over a beautiful warm and dry bank holiday week end. Plans were drawn up to improve the entrance to our Church and build a kitchen and Hall extension, however this project did not have sufficient support and did not come into being. We retain the use of a Parish Meeting Room and ample grounds & parking.

We have due to COVID-19 in 2020, suffered the closure of our Church from 20 March until 27 June. Due to the hard work and dedication of our parishioners, it was one of the first Catholic places of worship, in the diocese, to re-open for private prayers and then Mass from Sunday 5 July 2020. We wish Fr Benedict Abuo, well as he moved to London and welcome Fr Michael Gilligan, who has moved to St Mary's Brigg in early July. He has also been asked by the Bishop to become our Parish Priest. We look forward to our future and to keep Catholicism alive in this part of North Lincolnshire.

Details taken from a History Booklet of St Augustine Webster Church published by the parish to mark the Consecration of the Church built in 1988 on Sunday 20 May 2007. Ursula Vickerton 19 7 20