

German and good Spanish and was the prime mover behind the building of the church hall in 1983. He and his German colleague, the priest at Ochsenfort, established the twinning of Wimborne and Ochsenfort.

*Fr Keith Collins 1986 – 2005.*

Born 18 January 1932. He studied at Oscott Seminary and was ordained on 19 March 1957. His ministry has included the Plymouth cathedral, Dorchester, Bishop's Secretary at Plymouth (Vescourt), Weymouth, Axminster, back to Weymouth, Exeter, Wimborne and finally to Broadstone in 2005. He served as the Episcopal Vicar for Education for many years.

*Canon Kenneth Noakes 1996-97* as assistant priest, then 2005-2018 as priest. Born in 1943 he was ordained as priest in the Church of England serving in Gloucester diocese, at Pusey House, Oxford, and in Truro diocese. He became a Catholic in 1994, and after formation at Wonersh was ordained at St Mary's, Poole, in 1996. He was parish priest at Broadstone 1997-2005 and then at St Catherine's. He was a Natural Sciences Scholar at Trinity College, Oxford, reading Bio-chemistry then Theology, following his MA with a D Phil in Paschan Theology. His interests include cricket and jazz.

*Fr Paul Keys 2018 – 2023.*

Born in 1964 and brought up in Windsor. He studied Theology at Bristol Uni studying Victorian attitudes towards Islam. After various employments including a Careers Advisor, he studied at Wonersh Seminary, ordained in 2013, served parishes in Poole/Purbeck then became Wimborne parish priest in 2018. In 2023 he became parish priest at Bodmin. He loved walking and cooking.

*Fr Darline Joseph Marianathan 2023 - to present.*

Born in 1978 and ordained in 2006, he became parish priest of Okehampton and Chagford in 2011 before moving to St Catherine's Wimborne in 2023. He has a new role in the diocese helping with clergy well-being and teaching student priests. He is a practising Counselling Psychologist & Psychotherapist and holds an MSc Psychology of Education (BPS) from Bristol University and MSc Psychology from Exeter University. In India he has an MSc in Psychology and three bachelor's degrees in economics, theology and philosophy. He is a member of various national and international professional bodies and has published several books and written over 100 short articles in local newspapers.

*(Taken from history by Bill Kennedy)*

## A Brief History of St Catherine's Catholic Church in Wimborne



Above: Presbytery, wooden church and hall in 1926.

Below: Presbytery and present church.



## History

It is thought that the Catholic faith has been active in Wimborne in an unbroken line since 350AD. In 713 AD King Ine donated land on the site of the Minster to his sister Cuthberga on which, together with St Cwenburh, they built twin monasteries. A number of nuns, including St Lioba, went from there to Germany to work with St Boniface, patron saint of our diocese. Throughout the Reformation, Mass was said daily at Stapehill and Upton.

In 1914 Wimborne's catholic community was served in St John's Temperance Hall and later in various houses, including what is now the flat above Long John's Fish and Chip shop.

A presbytery and wooden church and hall were built on newly acquired land in 1926. The church was named St Michael the Archangel but unfortunately by 1933 the wooden buildings were in a poor state of repair.

The foundation for our present church was laid in June 1933. Legend has it that a small chapel dedicated to Catherine of Alexandria existed on the same site and was referred to in historical references in 1660 as being east of the minster in an acre of land known as Streats Mead.

St Catherine was born around 287 in Alexandria, Egypt and became a Christian at age 14. When emperor Maxentius began

persecuting Christians, Catherine visited him personally to denounce his cruelty. Catherine was arrested and tortured and was eventually executed because of her faith in around 305. Her remains are said to be in a crypt in a monastery dedicated to her at the foot of Jebel Musua (the Mountain of Moses).

The original porch of the new church did not have a bell tower. It was added in 1936 and adds an air of completeness to the whole building. Inside is an interesting stained glass window designed and made by Paul Woodroffe (1875-1954) whose most significant work was 15 windows in the Lady Chapel in St Patrick's Cathedral, New York.

The next major build was the church hall which was completed in 1984.

### Parish Priests

Up to 1927, when the Cistercians of Stapehill ceased to serve the Catholic community in Wimborne, there will have been gaps in the provision of a priest by the diocese. However, from 1927 onwards there has been a continuous flow of Parish Priests right up to the present time. The roll call includes the following:-

#### *Canon Michael Burns 1927-31*

He was appointed Provost of the Cathedral Chapter.

#### *Fr. John Haslip 1931-1940.*

Born 12 July 1886 and died 4 March 1958. He studied in Leeds

Seminary and was ordained as a Catholic priest on 29 June 1924. He served at Lanherne, Devonport, Exeter on the Bishop's staff, Okehampton and Chagford, Cullompton, Wimborne, Peverell & Ilfracombe

#### *Fr. Patrick Lynch 1940-1945.*

Born 4 November 1907, retired in 1973 and died 15 August 1977. He studied at the All Hallows Seminary, Dublin, and was ordained on 25 June 1933. He served at Torquay, Sidmouth, Devonport, Wimborne, Barnstaple and South Molton.

#### *Fr William Harper 1945 -1951.*

He was ordained at Beda, Rome, as a convert on 3 May 1931 and died 1 February 1951. He served in Torquay, Kingsbridge and Wimborne.

*Fr. Patrick O'Leary, Feb-April 1951.* Born 14 April 1922, retired to Ballonagh in 2001 and died 13 November 2006. He studied at All Hallows Seminary, Dublin, and was ordained 23 June 1946. He served at Falmouth, Ilfracombe, Torquay (having moved there from Wimborne), Exeter, Lynton and Bridport from where he retired.

#### *Fr Francis McGuiness 1951 -1957.*

Born 9 January 1916, died 8 August 1975 and buried at Lulworth Cemetery. He studied at All Hallows Seminary, Dublin and was ordained 25 June 1939. He served at Teignmouth, was

Chaplain to evacuated children 1941-42, then Torquay, Barnstaple, Wimborne, Budleigh Salterton and Lulworth & Wool.

#### *Fr Martin Molloy 1957 – 1974.*

Born 9 November 1900, retired to Wyke Regis in 1974 and died 31 March 1987. He studied at St Patrick's Seminary, Carlow and was ordained 13 June 1926. His ministry included Plymouth (Keyham), Saltash, Kingsbridge, Plymouth (Beacon Park) and Wimborne. He was reputed to enjoy horse racing and drove a Jaguar of which he was very fond. In his time, St Catherine's Primary School was built in Colehill.

#### *Fr John Day 1974 – 1980.*

Born 16 May 1912, died 31 March 1980 and is buried in Wimborne Cemetery. He was ordained at Beda, Rome as a convert on 25 March 1950. His ministry included Torquay, Weymouth, Lynton, Bideford, Broadstone and finally Wimborne. A scholarly man, he had been a schoolteacher before his first ordination.

#### *Fr M Joseph O'Brien 1980-1986.*

Born 19 June 1912 and died 9 January 1987, buried at Buckfast. He was ordained at Beda, Rome as a convert on 8 April 1950. He served at Plymouth (Keyham), Torquay, Marnhull & Gillingham, then Plymouth (Crownhill) and Helston, The Lizard and Mullion, Dorchester, St Ives, Torquay and then Wimborne in 1980. He was a much loved priest. He spoke fluent