

## Men's Sacred Heart Confraternity

The Sacred Heart Confraternity was introduced by Fr Joseph Fitzgerald in 1940. It had only one serious obligation on members, to attend the Confraternity Mass at 8.00 o'clock on the first Sunday of the month. The large red banner of the Confraternity hung at the back of the pulpit and one of the prefects read the epistle and gospel in English while the priest said it at the altar in Latin. The same prefect led the Latin responses normally only said by altar boys and the entire congregation responded with volume. It was known as a 'dialogue Mass'. Each first Sunday about 800 men and boys attended Mass and it was one of the significant church movements in the diocese of the era.



*Confraternity Mass in the 1940s*



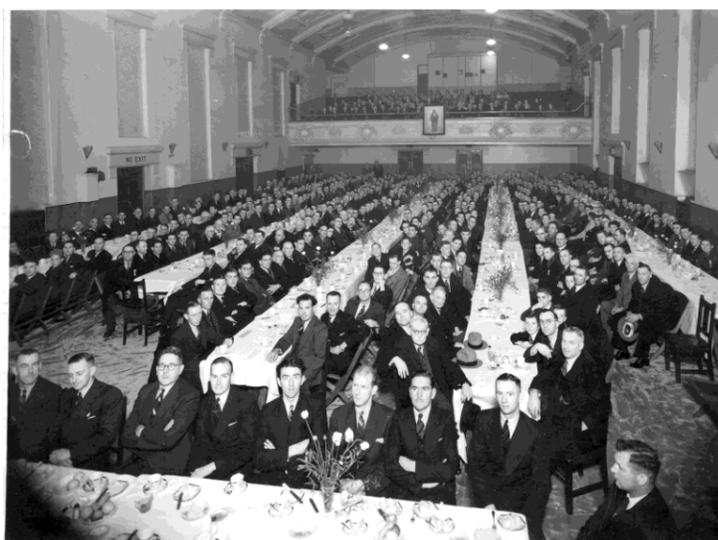
*Monthly catch up after Confraternity Mass in the 1940s*

The Confraternity functioned well because of its efficient organisation and structure. The parish was divided into 40 sections with each supervised by a prefect and sub-prefect. Prefects welcomed new parishioners to the parish, kept the parish census up to date, and tried to bring non-practising Catholics back to their faith.

Fr Fitz kept close tabs on the men who missed the monthly Mass. On one occasion he announced that forty-seven men were missing from Mass the previous month and that he had visited all of them during the previous two weeks!



*Fr Fitz. out visiting Confraternity men*



*Annual Communion Breakfast in Manresa Hall, 1947. Prefects in front*

Although the monthly Mass was the only formal obligation, two other liturgical events were important. One was on Holy Thursday evening when the Confraternity provided teams of men to watch all night, by roster, before the altar of repose. During each hour, Fr Fitzgerald would appear in the pulpit and give a reflection. The other was the annual communion breakfast and meeting which filled Manresa Hall to capacity. Over cold meat and mashed potatoes, men and their sons listened to, and were inspired by, a guest speaker.

Following the Second Vatican Council and the liturgical changes it brought, there was increased emphasis on having whole families attend Mass together. The Confraternity carried on, albeit much smaller, but virtually ceased to exist when Fr Joe himself died in 1973.