150th Anniversary Bulletin

St Vincent de Paul Society, Hawthorn Conference

The Society was founded by 20 year old Frederic Ozanam and 6 companions in Paris in 1833. It spread rapidly through the world. The first conference (branch) was founded in Australia in Melbourne in 1854.

The Hawthorn Conference was established on **March 1st, 1900** and is the third longest continuous conference in Victoria, having been active for all its 119 years. Founding President was V.E. (Eddie) Henderson, Tax Commissioner for Victoria at the time, who presided for 22 years. Other outstanding members have been John Connell, president for 33 years, (1930-1963), Charlie Murphy (1978-1986), who had served as the Member for Hawthorn in the Victorian Parliament, 1952-1955, and Peter Murphy who was responsible for opening the Vinnies Store in Auburn Road in 1972, and for building the VincenPaul Hostel and St Vincent de Paul Nursing Home, in Box Hill. Amazing service over the years has been provided by 50 year members, Leo Blood and the recently retired, but still inspirational, Bill Pierse.

The Conference's prime focus has always been to provide relief to the needy of Hawthorn, whatever form that might take. In the earlier years of last century, conference members often visited prisoners at Pentridge, cared for foreign seamen on ships passing through Port Melbourne and served meals to the homeless at Ozanam House in North Melbourne. Outstanding work was done by members during the harsh years of the Depression. Clothes, blankets, boots, firewood and meals were supplied where needed. Many were helped with medical aid, rent payments and funeral expenses. Nursing accommodation was found for pensioners, and scarce jobs for the unemployed. Activities were financed for the most part by a 'charity sermon' preached once a year by a distinguished Melbourne priest.

Today the Conference continues to support the needy of Hawthorn, 'wherever there is a need', and attends to calls from the inner city areas of Prahran and South Yarra at the weekend. A special interest is the care of refugees and asylum seekers. A home for refugee families in East Hawthorn has been managed by members since 1990. ([click to see separate article](#)).

As well, Hawthorn parishioners volunteer on one of the Society's soup vans which nightly provide meals to the needy and homeless in Collingwood and Fitzroy. Quarterly, Christmas
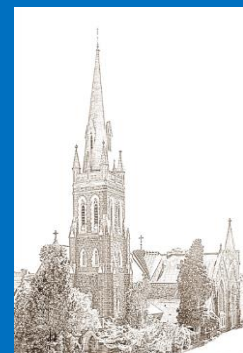
Celebrating
150
years of

Immaculate Conception Church Hawthorn

1869 – 2019

and Easter grants are provided to eight overseas conferences in India, Myanmar, the Philippines and Pakistan. Nowadays, activities are financed through the generous donations of Hawthorn parishioners at the annual Winter Appeal in June.

V.E. (Eddie) Henderson, founding president

St Vincent de Paul Appeal 1913

At the 11 o'clock Mass on Sunday, 13th July, at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Hawthorn, the Very Rev. J. O'Dwyer, S.J., made an appeal on behalf of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Weber's Mass in G was rendered by a choir of 50 voices, with orchestral accompaniment.
The soloists were Misses Maggie Mossop and Mollie Tyrrell, Messrs. K. Brennan and L. Daniels. At the Offertory, Elgar's "Ave Verum" was sung by the choir. Under the leadership of Mr. J. B. North, special music was rendered by the orchestra. Mr. H. Gleeson acted as musical director, and Mrs. Jenkinson presided at the organ. A generous response was made on behalf of this most deserving charity.
Advocate 19 July 1913 p.21

Celebrating

150

years of

Immaculate Conception Church Hawthorn

1869 – 2019