



**St Mary Help of Christians
Catholic Church
Old Coulsdon**

A Historical Note

On September 21st 1941, a new Mass Centre was opened in Old Coulsdon with the blessing of Archbishop Amigo. This Centre was at Keston Avenue School. Father Tyndall was Parish Priest of Coulsdon to which Old Coulsdon then belonged; his Curate, Fr Hickey looked after Old Coulsdon, succeeded by Fr Scott. Mass was said for four years at 'The Grange', the home of Mr and Mrs Egbert Cedric Jones and Garden Fetes were organised in their grounds to raise funds for a Church. A site was bought around 1950 – it used to be a brickfield.

In about 1955 the present Hall which served as a temporary Church was built by Plater and Sons Ltd with Philip Browning, Civil Engineer. It cost £5,708. 19s.7d. In 1960, Bishop Cyril Cowderoy decided to separate Old Coulsdon from Coulsdon in order to establish a new Parish, with Fr E Bovington as its first Parish Priest. The Priest's House was built and completed by the end of 1961, costing just over £6,000. At Netherne Hospital the Chapel Our Lady of Lourdes was solemnly opened on Friday 6th November 1964 by Canon William Denning of Purley.

The present Church was completed in 1966. It was solemnly opened by Archbishop Cyril Cowderoy on 17th April 1966. It cost just over £26,000 and the debt was cleared by 1973. The present altar of Shap marble was donated by Mr and Mrs Egbert Cedric Jones of 'The Grange'.

Fr Kevin O'Hanlon became the 1st Assistant Priest in 1978 and was here for a few years. He died on 27th January, 2000. Fr E Bovington retired at the end of 1986 and died on 19th August 1999. Canon Garry Pierce succeeded him and during his time a new porch was added to the Church, gas heating installed, the Church was carpeted and re-decorated. He retired in 1997 and lived in Taunton Lane, still active in helping out in this Parish and in neighbouring Parishes. He moved to London in 2006, and died on 14th April, 2007. Fr. John Bliss succeeded him in 1997. Fr Gerard Bradley succeeded him in 2018 on Fr Bliss's retirement.