



Sr Mary Margaret (Pauline) Dempsey

Pauline Dempsey was born to Hugh and Ella Dempsey of High Craigends Kilsyth. Sr Dempsey attended St Patrick's School in Kilsyth and Our Lady's High School Cumbernauld before entering the noviciate of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. She took her final profession at St Patrick's Church Kilsyth in April 1984. The profession was a double celebration as it was a double profession of faith for two school friends when Brenda Murphy also became Sr Mary Carmella Murphy on the same day.

Sr Dempsey has served as a nun in a variety of countries and communities but is currently stationed in the Caribbean.

TWO LOCAL GIRLS MAKE SOLEMN PROFESSION OF VOWS

The entire parish community of Kilsyth turned out in force last Saturday for a unique occasion in the life of St. Patrick's parish.

The "big day" was the Solemn Profession of Vows in the presence of Cardinal Gordon Gray of two local girls, both members of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

The whole ceremony had a Franciscan flavour — and the spirit of St. Francis was to the fore in the hymns and the words of profession. The homily for the occasion was given by Fr. Isidore Faloona OFM of St. Francis Friary, Cumberland Street, Glasgow.

More than 20 priests joined in the Concelebrated Mass with the Cardinal at which Sisters Mary Margaret and Mary Carmela were professed.

Fr. Isidore and a group of young singers from St. Francis' added to the Franciscan atmosphere of the occasion.

SCHOOLMATES

The two Sisters had been schoolmates together at St. Patrick's Primary School and at Our Lady's High School, Cumbernauld, before

By Jim Coffey

entering the Glasgow-based Order in October 1977.

Sr. Mary Margaret's parents are Hugh and Ella Dempsey of High Craigends, Kilsyth. Mr Dempsey is well known throughout Scotland as Circulation Manager of the Scottish Catholic Observer, a post he has held for 10 years.

Sr. Mary Carmela's parents are Daniel and Marion Murphy of South Barrwood, Kilsyth. Mr Murphy, a miner, is a prominent member of the well known Columban Singers.

Among the concelebrants of the Mass were the Rector of Blairs College, Fr. Keith O'Brien, himself a former assistant priest in Kilsyth and Fr. Raymond Dempsey, a cousin of Sr. Mary Margaret, who was ordained for Motherwell diocese earlier this year.

THANKED

Parish priest Fr. Denis O'Connell thanked all who had taken part in the memorable celebration and conveyed the special thanks of the parish to Cardinal Gray for being present.

Receiving the Vows of the two Sisters was Mother General Felicitas Bradley of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

The Sisters work in Scotland, England, Ireland, Nigeria, and Philadelphia, USA. They have a convent in the Kilsyth parish.

Cardinal honours 'historic event'

TWO LOCAL KILSYTH girls were received into the Congregation of Franciscan Sisters in a ceremony attended by Cardinal Gray at St Patrick's Church on Saturday.

Sister Mary Carmella (Brenda Murphy) of 14 South Barrwood Road and Sister Mary Margaret (Pauline Dempsey), of 35 High Craigends, both Kilsyth, took their final vows at the ceremony.

As well as Cardinal Gray, Mother Felicity, Mother General of the Order, and more than 50 priests and nuns as well as a large congregation were in St Patrick's for the two-hour ceremony.

Opening the proceedings, Cardinal Gray, said: "This is a great and historic event in the history of this great and proud parish."

Father Joseph McIntyre was Master of Ceremonies

Sister Mary Andrew, Superior at Kilsyth, gave a reading

Speaking after the ceremony, Father Denis O'Connell, parish priest said it was encouraging that the young parishioners were responding to the need

for vocations at home and abroad.

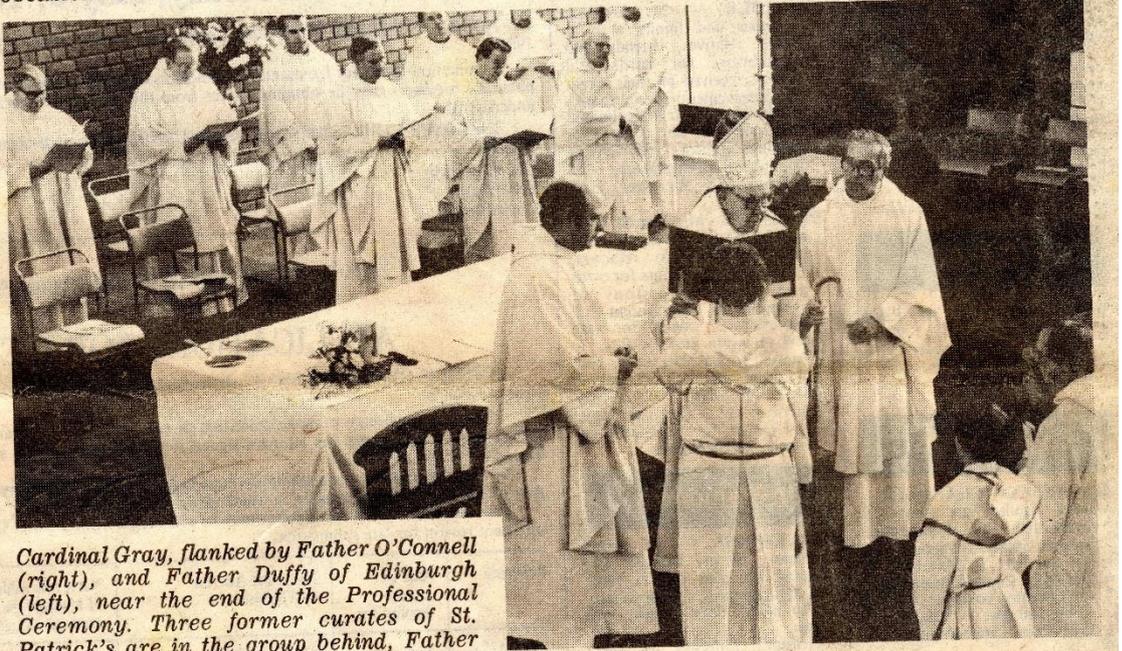
"Only four years ago we were assembled for a similar happy occasion when Sister

Mary Rose Fitzsimmons made her final vows in the Congregation of the Helpers of the Holy Souls," he said.

"With two of our young men pursuing their vocations with the Verona Fathers and with the Divine Word Missionaries and a few young lads at seminaries and junior colleges, it can be said that they are justifying

the confidence expressed in them by the Cardinal in his Centenary Message."

In that message, echoed by Father O'Connell after Saturday's ceremony, Cardinal Gray congratulated the priests and people on their strong Catholic faith.



Cardinal Gray, flanked by Father O'Connell (right), and Father Duffy of Edinburgh (left), near the end of the Professional Ceremony. Three former curates of St. Patrick's are in the group behind, Father Gerry McCabe (Kirkcaldy), Father Michael Bell (Blanefield) and Father Keith O'Brien (St. Mary's College, Paris).

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When asked to contribute an article about growing up in Kilsyth Sr Dempsey wrote the following for the 150th Anniversary Brochure.

St Patrick's Kilsyth – Source of My Vocation



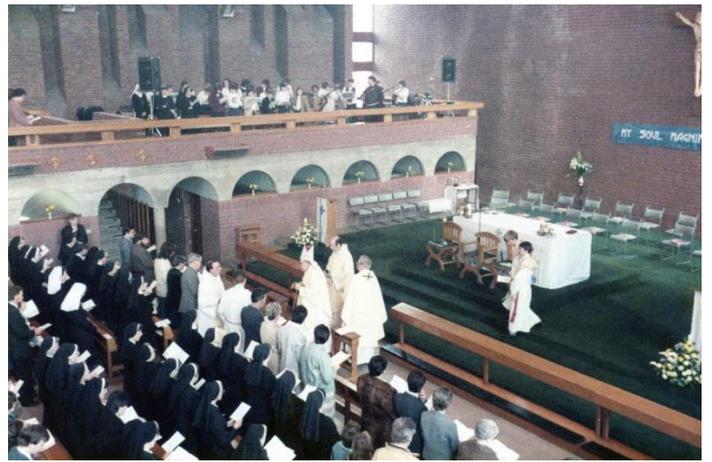
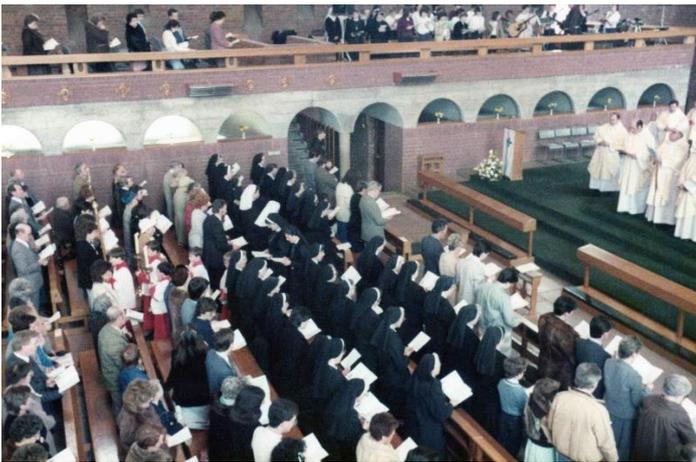
IT IS INDEED a great joy and pleasure for me to be asked to write a short article to mark the 150th anniversary of St Patrick's parish Kilsyth. (Though I'm sure there are others worthier!) Growing up in St Patrick's parish in the 1970s was an amazing experience; there was so much life and vibrancy in the parish. In my early years I'd grown up with Canon Thomas McGarvey as parish priest who was a well-loved, holy and happy character. When he retired and decided to stay in the town everyone was delighted... with parishioners dropping in to see him regularly; he always gave you a great welcome and phoned Eileen and Lucinda to come and make his visitors a cuppa. With the arrival of the dynamic duo of Canon Dennis O'Connell and his curate Fr Keith O'Brien, the parish was turned upside down... in a good way! I was at the right age to enjoy the life they brought with them. Canon O'Connell had idea after idea to encourage people to come to church – particularly the young people. From delivering the Catholic Observer (and other papers) to people in their homes, to becoming an "altar girl", in those days the girls

were taught how to set the altar and set vestments out for Mass, while the boys did the altar serving. At the weekly midweek Novena Mass we processed in front of the boys, and took our seats at the front of the church (wearing mantillas), as the boys went onto the sanctuary. We learned the novena prayers and hymns/devotion to Our Lady... *"Mary let perpetual succour be the answer to our prayer."* After Mass we all went into the hall and had a disco of sorts for an hour before we all had to go home to get ready for bed as it was a school night! In those early days, Canon O'Connell thought it would be a good idea to have religious sisters in the parish, and asked folk in the parish if they knew any nuns that might want to come and work in the parish. Thanks to Mary Gordon (rest in peace), she gave the Canon the address for a convent she had two friends in. (Sr Helena and Sr. Therese of the Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception) The rest, as they say, is history..... In 1972, after accepting the invitation to come to Kilsyth, Sr. Gertrude and Sr. Adelaide started coming out from the mother house in Merrylee midweek for the weekly Novena Mass, and on a Saturday to work with the young folk. I remember playing a very boisterous game of netball in the church car park and "breenging" into Sr. Gertrude as I ran for the ball.... this is still being cast up to this day... one of Gertrude's fond memories of Kilsyth! During the time the sisters were coming to the parish weekly, Canon O'Connell was looking for a house for them, eventually buying St Andrew's cottage, paving the way for a permanent community to come and minister in the parish. The Celtic Club bought them their first car – a wee wine Fiat 127 and the people of the parish were so delighted to be having sisters coming to live amongst them. Four sisters came to live in Kilsyth – the community were of differing ages – two sisters always taught in St Patrick's Primary, and the other two worked in the parish responding to the needs of the time such as visiting the sick and bereaved, attending meetings, running many activities e.g. starting the St Monica's Guild. Long before bereavement groups were thought of, the sisters said the rosary at the wakes and supported the families who had lost a loved one. Sr. Adelaide gave guitar lessons to many of the young people; within a few weeks the oldest group were playing at Masses in the parish. Adelaide very kindly chose hymns that were in the right key for the few chords we knew by then, a very clever strategy, which built up our confidence and encouraged us so much. Before long we were performing round the district and playing once a month at the Sunday Mass in the Royal Infirmary as well as playing at St Pat's. I'm still playing the guitar – at church liturgies, in my school and anywhere there's a wee sing song going, all part of the ongoing legacy of the Kilsyth Franciscans. The other night I was privileged to take part in a concert in Holy Cross Parish Glasgow with your very own Columban Singers - a first for me, and I think I did ok! Sr. Andrew (RIP) ran a craft club. Most of us were not too interested in the crafts but loved her mum's home baking and the socialising. In the summer term instead of doing crafts, we went for long walks and enjoyed the light night marvelling at God's creation. Andrew was very knowledgeable about plants and flowers, and birds, which amazed us. Srs. Dolores and Agnes worked full time in the parish, while Andrew and Adelaide taught in the

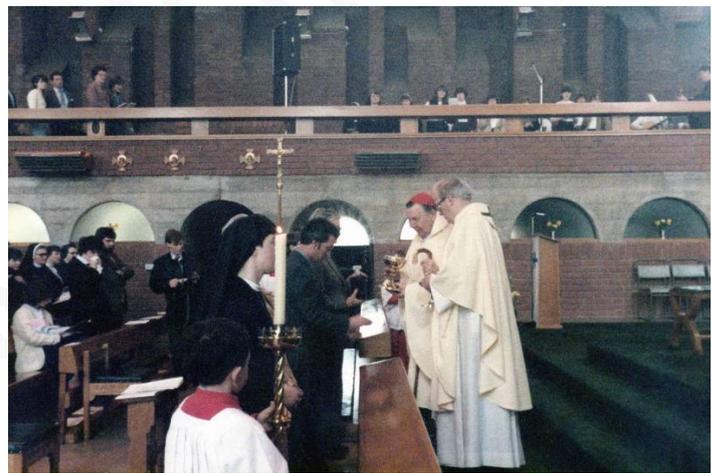
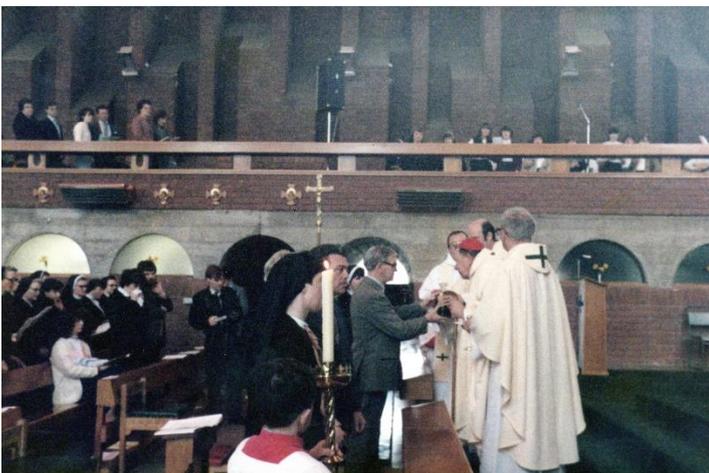
school and worked with the young people in the evenings and at weekends. Sr. Agnes had a very specialised ministry working with the Alcoholics Anonymous community in the town and beyond. She supported so many and was at the end of the phone for anyone who needed her during the night if need be. She was also a great speaker, being asked to give talks at AA meetings, guild meetings, prayer meetings, ecumenical groups etc. Her talks were so uplifting and positive, but also real. I cannot mention Sr. Agnes without mentioning "*Phil the Fluter's Ball*", her famous *party piece*. Those who remember will be smiling now. It was in these formative years that my vocation was born. The example and encouragement of the sisters and Frs. O'Connell, O'Brien and McGarrigle made me think that I could have a vocation and possibly offer myself to the church. Seeing my father being so involved in parish life – Chair of the parish council, covenant coordinator for the parish and a very active member of the archdiocesan team. My dear mother being so supportive of all his church activities ... though I once heard her say "You should take your bed up to the chapel...!" Being part of this parish community helped form me and helped me to believe that I had gifts to offer. It was from here that I left my home and family on 4th October 1977 for the Convent in Bothwell. Canon O'Connell said Mass for me that evening in the sisters' flat at Townhead (where they lived when the convent extension was being built), then my parents took me to Bothwell, which seemed a million miles away! I almost didn't get there in time but did! I was holding onto the last few seconds with my beloved parents. Since then many sisters have passed through Kilsyth working with Fr. Gerry Hand and his curates. Sr. Angela and Sr. Bernard worked full time in the parish getting to know the people and responding to all the needs of a busy, vibrant parish. The sisters were part of the teams that made soup and provided the purveys in the old hall after funerals as well as doing all the other things mentioned previously. Latterly some sisters were part of the convent community but had jobs outside the parish. They still got to know and love the people in the parish; you couldn't live in Kilsyth and not love the folk, could you? Maybe I'm just a little biased! In 2006 due to a lack of personnel, the sad decision was made by the convent authorities that the sisters should leave Kilsyth as they no longer had enough sisters to keep the community or work going. It was with a very heavy heart that they left Kilsyth. Cardinal O'Brien came through to say a Mass of farewell for them on Monday 15th May, which was particularly appropriate as he had been there at the very beginning when the sisters had arrived in Kilsyth. The sisters may have gone, but I'm sure they're not forgotten. Each and every one that spent any time in Kilsyth will have left part of themselves there – the prayers they said, the lives they touched, the laughs they shared... true Franciscan Joy. Personally, I want to thank you the people of St Patrick's Kilsyth for being my inspiration and support as I journeyed and still am journeying, trying to live the Gospel as a Franciscan Sister of the Immaculate Conception. Know that there isn't a day goes past without me offering a prayer for the people, priests and sisters (past and present) of the parish. The night before I entered the order my Uncle Philip Dempsey (Manse Road) asked me to say a "slow Hail Mary" for him now and then.... he didn't want load of prayers chanted like a train. Years later I realised the wisdom of his words. Let's say a slow Hail Mary for each other! With love, thanks and joy. May God Bless you and yours on this wonderful 150th anniversary!

Sister Pauline Dempsey OSF - St Andrew's Day 2014

Some Photos of the Final Profession at St Patrick's April 1984



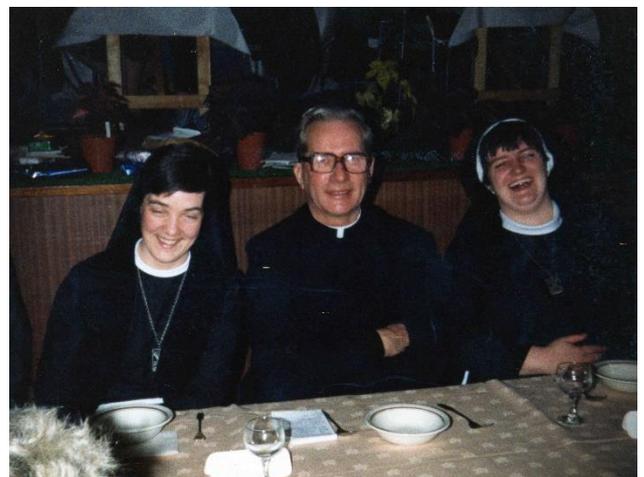
The Congregation



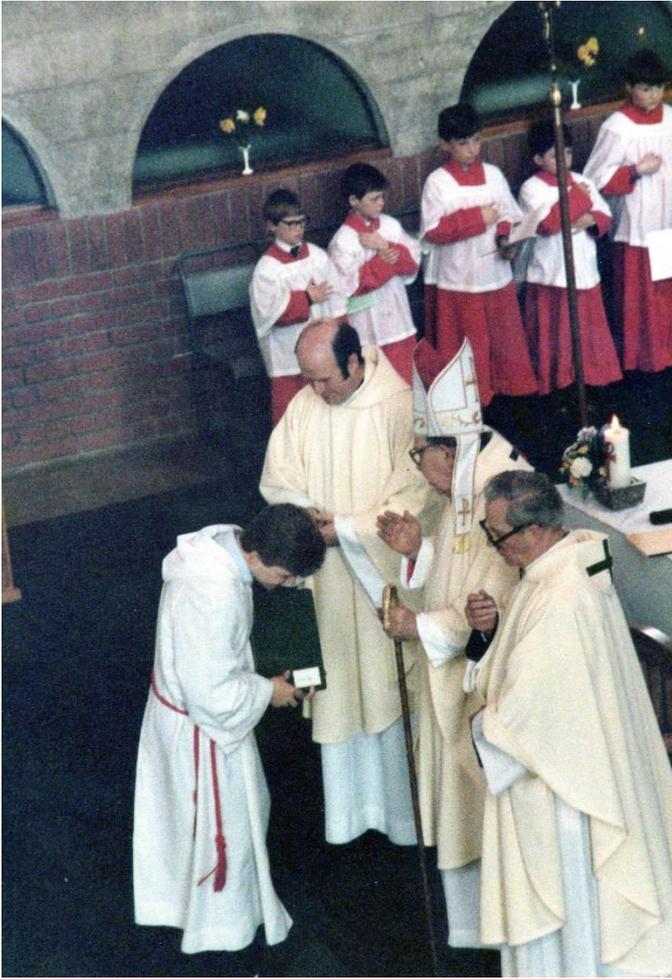
The offertory procession where the parents of the two Nuns gave over the gifts



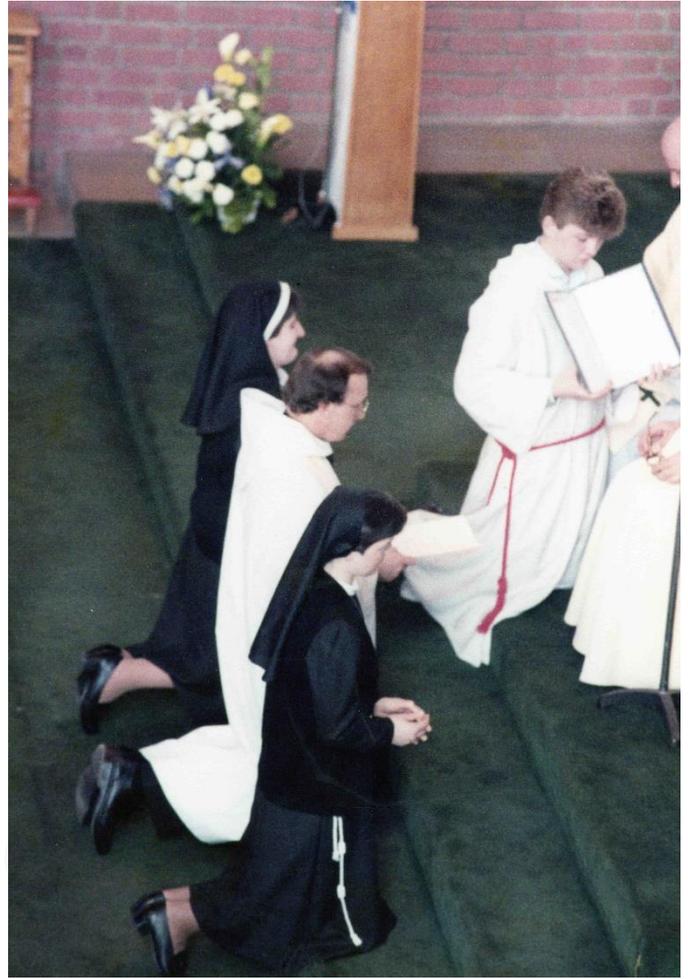
The Choir for the Profession Mass.



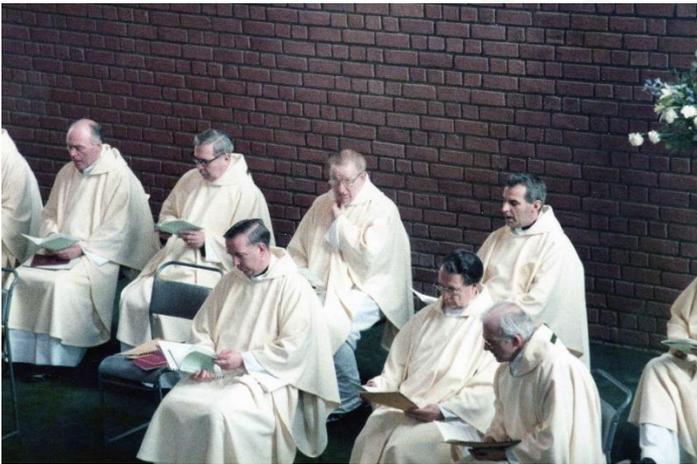
In the Parish hall after Mass with Fr Denis O'Connell pp



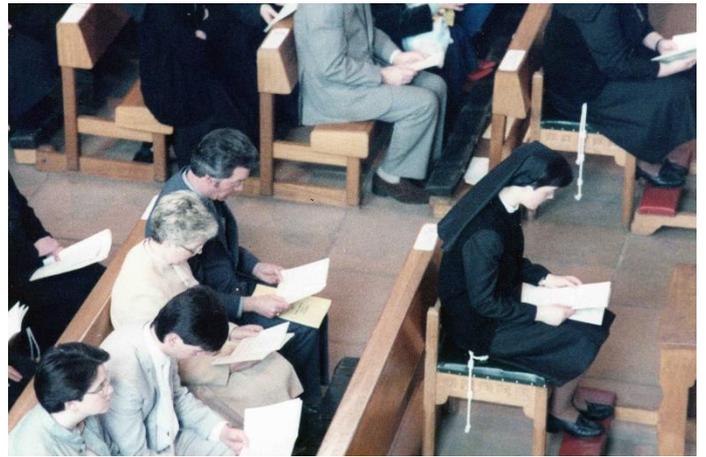
Fr Duffy, Cardinal Gray, Fr Denis O'Connell and altar boy John Maley at the final blessing.



Sr Mary Margaret Dempsey, Fr Joseph McIntyre assistant priest at St Patrick's and Sr Mary Carmela Murphy.



The priests who concelebrated Mass included Fr Keith Patrick O'Brien and Fr Michael Bell.



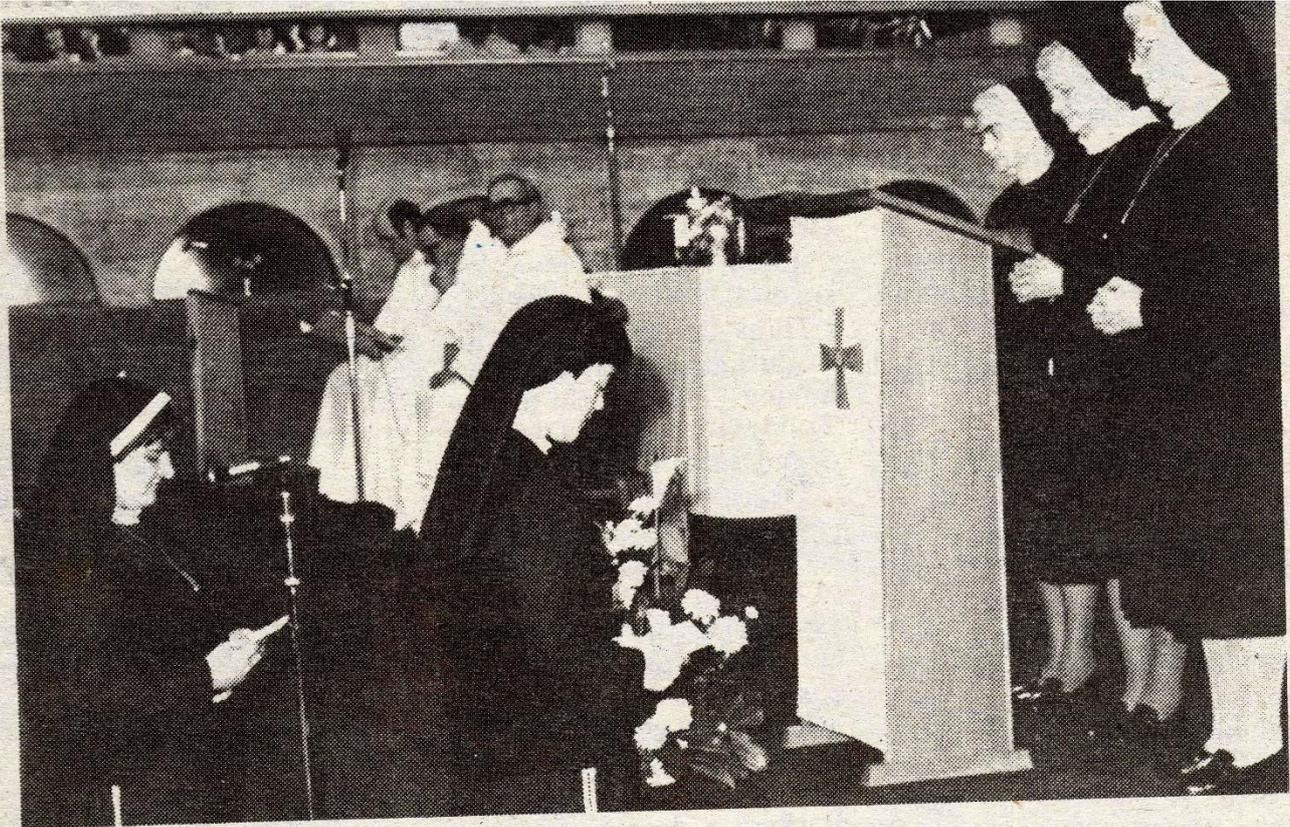
Sr Murphy and her family



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In 2009 Sr Dempsey celebrated her 25th Anniversary in Consecrated Life with a celebration Mass at St Patrick's Kilsyth with her sister Nuns. Mass was said by Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien.



Sr. Mary Margaret Dempsey and Sr. Mary Carmela Murphy make their Perpetual Vows before Mother General Felicitas (centre), Sister Mary Dolores and Sr. Mary Francis. Below: Cardinal Gray with the two newly-professed Sisters, their parents, Mother Felicitas and (partly hidden) Fr. O'Connell.



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