

OUR HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

FOUNDED ON FAITH

OUR SCHOOL BEGINS IN OUR PARISH CHURCH

Our school was founded on the Catholic faith in the Son of God, Our Lord and King Jesus Christ. This short history of our founding days strives to honour those to whom we owe such gratitude: holy priests and nuns, and countless parishioners of St. Bernadette's Roman Catholic Church.

After the discovery of iron ore and the opening of iron and steelworks in the years that follow, large numbers of Catholics flock to the town in search of work. These families settle in Ashby and, led by Father Albert Lakin, give so generously to the founding of their new church in 1950. Within a year, nuns of the Presentation Order establish a convent in Ashby and start a small school inside the church where they teach children in three classes that are partitioned by folding doors. As numbers grow, more classrooms are added. Then work begins on building our new school.



FATHER ALBERT LAKIN

As Parish Priest of Holy Souls Catholic Church between 1929–1949, Father Lakin sees huge growth in the local steel industry and with it a growing Catholic population settling in Ashby where the need for a new church becomes clear. So, in the late 1930s Father Lakin purchases land on Ashby Road for a new church, and another plot of land on Anne's Crescent for a new primary school.



FATHER JOHN MERRIGAN

In 1950, Father Merrigan arrives in the town to continue the good work of Father Lakin. World War II had delayed the development of both sites purchased by Father Lakin but, helped by voluntary labour of the pioneers of the Ashby community, Father Merrigan oversees the building of their new church on Ashby Road, and the start of the construction of a new primary school on Anne's Crescent.



Father Merrigan digs the first piece of earth from the site of the new primary school and, surrounded by those in attendance, he blesses the land where the new school will be constructed.



5TH APRIL 1954

FATHER JEREMIAH PATRICK MCGILLYCUDDY

The new parish of St. Bernadette's is founded, and Father Jeremiah Patrick McGillicuddy is appointed its first Parish Priest. Immediately, he sets to work building an annex of three extra classrooms at the back of the church to accommodate the growing number of pupils. Meanwhile, on land next to the Queensway, he oversees the building of our primary school, and for the next 30 years works so hard with its staff to ensure that the school is always at the very heart of parish life.

22ND JULY 1954

BLESSING OUR FOUNDATION STONE

Surrounded by priests and nuns, parishioners and school children, the Lord Bishop of Nottingham, the Right Reverend Edward Ellis, uses a mason's trowel and mortar to mark a Christian Cross on our school's large foundation stone. He sprinkles the stone with holy water, and recites special prayers on behalf of those present and everyone in the newly founded parish of St. Bernadette's, to invoke God's blessing on their new school with its construction now well underway.

