



## LOURDES PARISH – EARLWOOD

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- **St Bernadette's Church History:** On 31<sup>st</sup> July 1938 the First Mass was celebrated in St Bernadette's Church located then at Bexley Rd Bexley North on the northern side of Wollie Creek Valley. An Infants School was commenced at St Bernadette's in 1948 by the Sisters of Mercy, Earlwood, and in the same year the new parish of Kingsgrove-Bexley North was established. The school was taken over in 1949 by the Ursuline Sisters. In December 1952, the school closed and a new school at Kingsgrove was opened in 1953. In 1960 the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in the Church and daily Mass commenced. In January 1961 land was purchased at 193-195 Bexley Road as a future Church site for St Bernadette's. This land was subsequently sold with a church being built at the present location, the corner of Bexley Rd & William St. The old Church of St Bernadette's was sold to the Dept of Main Roads and demolished for extension to the M5 Motorway. The last Mass was celebrated in October 1965 and the First Mass at St Bernadette's Clemton Park a week later, on the Feast of Christ the King Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October 1965. In February 1966 Clemton Park was established as a separate Parish with Fr Eric Corbin was appointed as the First Parish Priest. The Official Opening & Blessing of the Church took place on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1966 by Bishop Thomas Muldoon at a 10.30am Mass. The first First Holy Communion was held in 1966. Since then 600 children have made their First Holy Communion in St Bernadette's Church, mostly State School Children. The First Confirmation was administered in 1972 by Archbishop Carroll. Since then 500 children have received the Sacrament of Confirmation in St Bernadette's.
- **Parish Priests of St Bernadette's Clemton Park:**
  - Fr Eric Corbin Feb 1966 – Apr 1996
  - Fr Don Willoughby Apr 1996 – Jan 1999
  - Monsignor Lex Johnson Jan 1999 – Apr 2002
  - Fr Colin Mason Aug 2003 – Jan 2015
  - (Parish Merger OLOL & St Bernadette's as Lourdes Parish) Sept 2012
  - Fr Patrick Njenga Jan 2015 –



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- **Beautiful Features of St Bernadette's Church:** Concrete glass panelling depicting the Seven Sacraments, designed by Steven Moor, renowned in the field of Glass Design; Sandstone Grotto of St Bernadette with statue of St Bernadette hand carved from Queensland Maple and First-Class Relic of St Bernadette in Bulletproof Glass Reliquary; Marble Altar, Baptismal Font & Lectern; the Living Stones – the parishioners of St Bernadette's past, present & future – a priceless collection.
- **Bishops who celebrated Mass at St Bernadette's Altar:** Bishop Thomas Muldoon, Archbishop Carroll, Bishop David Cremin, Cardinal Edward Clancy, Bishop Barry Collins, Bishop Terry Brady, Bishop Peter Ingham (in residence in St Bernadette's Presbytery from Jan 1999 to July 2001).
- **Sacraments at Clemton Park:** Over the past eighteen months St Bernadette's has celebrated fourteen (14) Baptisms. This shows that it is still a growing and active community. Over the past two years, as a result of Catechist activity at Clemton Park Public School twenty two (22) children have received the Sacrament of First Eucharist and seven (7) children have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- **Relic of St Bernadette:** In 2007 one of our parishioners Antoine Fabien journeyed to Nevers in France, where the incorruptible body of St Bernadette is reserved in a glass coffin in the Convent of St Gildard, with the express purpose of obtaining a Relic of St Bernadette for St Bernadette's Parish. Miraculously the Relic arrived from Nevers just in time for the big Celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Apparitions at Lourdes on Monday 11th Feb 2008. It is a hair of her head beautifully enshrined in in a bulletproof glass reliquary in the Church, where it is venerated by everyone who visits St Bernadette's Church Clemton Park. Each First Saturday we hold a Special Mass to venerate the relic. What will happen to this relic if the Church is sold? Will the Maronite Church of Australia uphold this tradition?  
*'God speaks to the heart without the sound of words' St Bernadette*

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