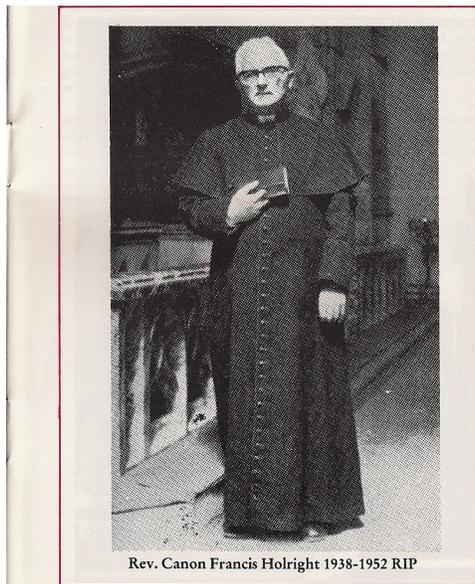
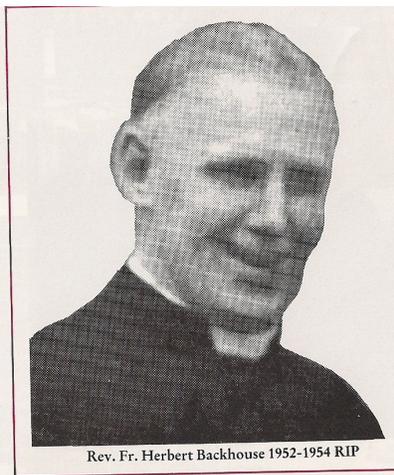


## Past Parish Priests of St. Nicholas'



### **Rev. Canon Francis Holdright 1938 - 1952 RIP**

Canon Francis Holdright was a pioneer in the establishment of St. Nicholas Parish. He came to Gipton to establish the church practically penniless from St. Peter's Chains in Doncaster. He bought the present site, where St. Nicholas school, the parish hall and the church are built. He established himself in the Gipton area, offering Masses and other Sacraments at Wykebeck School and in private houses. Canon Francis was transferred to St. Stephen's, Skipton, leaving the Hall built.

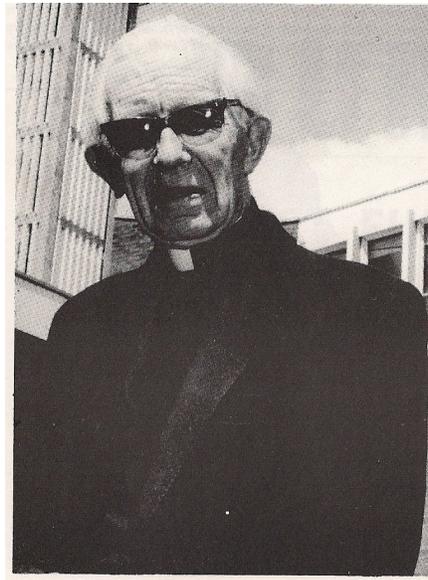


### **Rev. Fr. Herbert Backhouse (1952 - 1952 RIP)**

Father Backhouse was the second Parish Priest of St. Nicholas. He took over from Fr. Holdright, the pioneer in establishing the Parish. Fr. Backhouse incorporated into Parish worship more reading of the Scriptures and encouraged the singing of

hymns. He succeeded in getting transport to take all the children down to Catholic schools, and so Parish catechesis ceased for a while as children learned their Catechism in school. He was a faithful steward in looking after the church hall. The altar which had belonged to the old Seminary was always kept in beautiful condition due to the support and encouragement he gave to the church cleaners and sacristans. He also formed the Guild of the Blessed Sacrament with the object of encouraging people who were not in solidarity to come and pray before the Blessed Sacrament. He gathered quite a group who came regularly during the day through out the week for private prayer whenever they could do so. He also inaugurated the Guild of St. Stephen for the altar servers. He greatly encouraged would be converts. After a comparatively short period Fr. Backhouse was replaced by a third Parish Priest, Father Francis O'Driscoll, in 1954.

### **Rev. Canon Francis O'Driscoll (1954 – 1987) RIP**



Rev. Canon Francis O'Driscoll 1954-1987

Father O'Driscoll had just finished constructing the church hall in 1952 at St. Winefride's Parish in Wibsey. He had been Parish Priest of the just newly formed St. Winefride's since 1947. When he arrived in Gipton, Mass was still being celebrated in the old wooden Chapel which had served as a Chapel of Ease to St. Joseph's for 14 years.

Early 1947 was a very severe winter and it soon became apparent to Fr. O'Driscoll that a more substantial structure was required, and plans were drawn up for a temporary Church. It was through the hard work and support of the parishioners, via weekly collections and fundraising efforts that the new church hall was built in 1952. Fr. O'Driscoll strived hard to purchase land for the school and set wheels in motion for the formation of the new Parish of St. John's and the building of their church in Cooper Lane.

Just a year later after moving to St. Nicholas, Fr. O'Driscoll saw the opening of St. Nicholas Primary School. He celebrated Mass in the company of several former Priests who had worked hard to achieve the goal. Through his fatherly and gentle guidance, Canon O'Driscoll helped the Church expand. A parish football team, encouraged by the curates, was established and is still going strong after so many years.

After having borne the burden of parish work for thirty-two years Canon O'Driscoll retired to the surprise of everyone: Father O'Driscoll WAS St. Nicholas's, they used to say! It would be hard to imagine Gipton without him. He after his retirement he remained at St. Nicholas's residence providing support to the fourth Parish Priest, Fr. John Nunan.

Canon O'Driscoll died on 29 January 2003 and his Requiem Mass was celebrated at St. Nicholas Church on 7 February 2003.

### **Rev. Canon John Nunan (1986 - 1997)**

Fr. John Nunan took over the Parish as Parish Priest from Canon Francis O'Driscoll.

Among the notable things that Fr. Nunan did for the Parish include making the Church and its surroundings look beautiful, home visitations, working for the elderly and the sick, the less fortunate and for the bereaved. He became a well known figure on the Estate known by all the people - Christians and non-Christians alike. He worked with the other Christian Churches in the area to forward true Christian principles.

Fr. Nunan was Chaplain to St. Nicholas' School and its children and staff.

At the time of leaving St. Nicholas Parish, Fr. Nunan (now Canon Nunan), left a much more organised Christian community at St. Nicholas'.

### **Rev Fr. John Galvin (1997 - 2007)**

Fr. John Galvin succeeded Fr. Nunan and he continued Fr. Nunan's work to expand lay involvement. Fr. Galvin easily identified with culture and roots of Gipton. He was an excellent steward of the church, which was greatly appreciated by the parishioners. He was always keen to promote the dignity to the Church's celebration of its liturgy and services and maintained a high standard among the altar servers.