

Here too, the Vicar and Churchwardens made it possible for local Catholics to have a monthly evening Mass in the beautiful 800 years old Church of St. Mary until such time as other arrangements can be made. While there is no longer a monthly Mass in St Mary's, we are grateful to be able to use the church for a Mass each year on Christmas Eve.

The Catholic community is grateful for these facilities made available in the spirit of our common faith in Christ with the prayer that one day the perfect unity of all Christians may be a fact.

THE MILLENNIUM

Since Canon Dobson prepared this booklet for the parish centenary in 1975, and the reprinting in 1991 to mark the centenary of Kelvedon church, a number of significant changes have taken place. At the time of the centenary of the parish Canon Dobson had been studying various options for re-ordering the sanctuary so as to facilitate the celebration of Mass facing the people. His initial wish had been to dismantle the altar and store it for future use in the new church at Tiptree but the commissioning of a new stone altar was prohibitively expensive, and so at the end of 1974 he took the decision to move the existing altar forwards. Because of the confined space and to preserve the sight-lines it was necessary to reduce the size of the altar from five arcades to four, and also to remove the altar rails and screening to either side of the sanctuary area.

An even more important change from the point of view of the life of the parish was the closing of the convent and departure of the Dominican Sisters. The Dominican Sisters in England and Wales had a varied origin and in fact comprised several different Congregations (see Anselm Nye, *A Peculiar Kind of Mission: the English Dominican Sisters 1845-2010*, Leominster 2011). These had joined together in 1929 and one of the decisions taken was to amalgamate smaller houses to ensure that there were sufficient Sisters to sing the Divine Office in a dignified way. The Dominican community at Dovercourt was experiencing financial difficulties, and with the permission of Bishop Doubleday, half the community, together with the residents of their convalescent home, joined the community at Kelvedon, with Mother Mary Augustine Browne taking over as Prioress at Kelvedon. Diminishing numbers of Sisters led the General Chapter to