



# Church of St. Agnes

Port Talbot.

Consecrated June 20th, 1910.



## SOUVENIR

*and Historical Record to celebrate the  
SILVER JUBILEE Anniversary  
of the Consecration.*

1935



## ST. AGNES, VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

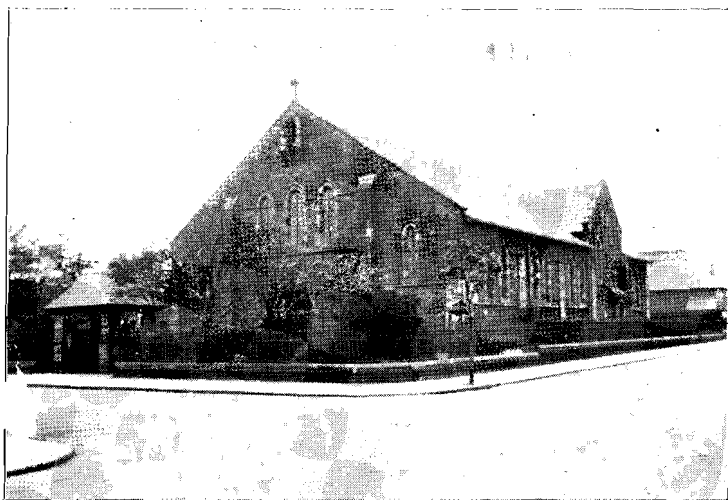
(c. 304 A.D.)

### OUR PATRON.

**T**HE blessed Virgin St. Agnes lived in Rome, at the end of the second century. She was but thirteen years of age at the time of her martyrdom. On her return from school life, the son of a Governor of Rome, a pagan, attracted by St. Agnes' great beauty, sought her in marriage. Great riches, wonderful jewels and all the delights of the world were promised, if she would consent. St. Agnes refused them all, saying that her heart was given to another. The Governor and his son found out very soon that by this she meant that she was a Christian and had determined to devote her life to the service of Christ. There followed a cruel and bitter persecution. Learning that Christians dreaded impurity more than torments or death, the governor condemned St. Agnes to be handed over to dishonour in a house of shame. She was wonderfully protected from all insult. Finally she was condemned to be beheaded, and thus gave up her life. She stands for maiden purity, for courage, endurance, and faithfulness.

May her soul rest in peace, and her example be ever an inspiration to the people who worship in the Church of St. Agnes, Port Talbot.

CHURCH OF ST. AGNES, PORT TALBOT





PHOTOGRAPH BY WESTERN MAIL LTD., CARDIFF

The Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of Llandaff

**I**T affords me great pleasure to write a foreword to this little book. It gives an account of the foundation laying of St. Agnes' Church. The foundation has been well and truly laid during the last thirty-five years. The building is now being erected. It is built of living stones—faithful men and women—who are being chiselled and shaped for the Temple of the Living God.

May God's Blessing rest upon this work of building that is proceeding at St. Agnes, Port Talbot.

T. LLANDAFF.

Trinity Sunday, 1935.

# CHURCH OF ST. AGNES PORT TALBOT.

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Vicar - Reverend IVOR T. BIDGOOD, B.A.

Churchwardens - Mr. HERBERT HUDSON. Mr. W. ROSSER.

Parochial Church Councillors :

Mr. A. J. ARTHUR. Mr. RON GREENFIELD. Mr. HARRY LEWIS. Mr. C. C. LEWIS.  
Mr. ELWYN JONES. Mr. G. ROBERTS. Mr. S. JACOB. Mr. W. WILKIN.  
Mrs. BRINKWORTH. Mrs. T. JONES.

Hon. Secretary - - Mr. J. ERNEST COX.

Secretary for Budget Subscriptions - - Mr. A. J. ARTHUR.

Sidesmen :

Mr. A. J. ARTHUR. Mr. W. GREENFIELD. Mr. N. STOCKDEN. Mr. H. NEWMAN.  
Mr. H. P. HARRIES. Mr. J. S. THOMAS. Mr. C. C. LEWIS. Mr. C. HARDING.  
Mr. J. PICTON. Mr. H. SMITH. Mr. IVOR WALPOLE. Mr. T. POLEMAN.  
Mr. W. WILKIN. Mr. W. DAVIES. Mr. R. PACKWOOD. Mr. A. BRINK-  
WORTH. Mr. D. R. JONES. Mr. E. DAY. Mr. S. JACOB. Mr. G. ROBERTS.  
Mr. J. H. HUGHES. Mr. R. GREENFIELD. Mr. A. MANNING.  
Mr. H. POTTS. Mr. G. M. COX. Mr. C. G. RICHARDS.

Organist and Choir Master - Mr. J. ERNEST COX. Deputy - Miss C. G. PROCTER.

Sacristan - Mr. G. GAMBLIN. Cross Bearer - Mr. C. HARDING.

Servers :

Mr. N. STOCKDEN. Mr. S. THOMPSON. Mr. REG. GREENFIELD. Mr. REG. JONES.  
Mr. DOUGLAS RICHARDS. Mr. W. R. BENNETT. Mr. B. HUGHES.

Sunday School :

Superintendents - - - Mr. W. ROSSER; Miss C. G. PROCTER.  
Women's Bible Class Leader - - Mrs. E. M. BIDGOOD, B.Sc.  
Young People's Bible Class Leader - - Mr. SHEA.  
Pianist for Sunday School - Miss MARJORIE PHILLIPS.  
Treasurer - - - Mr. A. J. ARTHUR.

Mothers' Union :

Enrolling Member - Mrs. E. M. BIDGOOD, B.Sc. Hon. Secretary - Mrs. JOHN.

2nd Port Talbot (St. Agnes) Scouts Group :

Scoutmaster - - Mr. W. R. BENNETT. A.S.M. - Mr. L. LAVERY.  
Cubmaster - - Miss ANNIE BENNETT.  
Assistants - Miss ALICE BENNETT. Mr. REG. GREENFIELD. Miss C. G. PROCTER.  
Young People's Fellowship: Hon. Secretary - - Mr. RONALD GREENFIELD.  
Lady in charge of Altar Linen - - Mrs. BRINKWORTH.  
Girls' Sewing and Embroidery Class: Leader - - Miss ANNIE BENNETT.

Vergers - Mr. R. JONES.

# THE FESTIVAL SERVICES.

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SUNDAY, JUNE 16th—

6.30 p.m. Evensong. Preacher: The Ven. J. D. JAMES, M.A.,  
The Archdeacon of Llandaff.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19th—

8.0 a.m. Holy Communion.

7.0 p.m. Evensong. Preacher: The Rev. A. J. EDWARDS, M.A.,  
The Rector of Radyr.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23rd—

8.0 a.m. Holy Communion.

11.0 a.m. Choral Eucharist. Preacher: The Vicar.

6.30 p.m. Evensong, followed by the Dedication of the Reredos  
by the Right Rev. The Lord Bishop of Llandaff.

MONDAY, JUNE 24th—

7.30 a.m. Holy Communion. (St. John Baptist's Day).

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26th—

8.0 a.m. Holy Communion.

7.0 p.m. Evensong. Preacher: The Very Rev. D. J. JONES, M.A.,  
The Dean of Llandaff.

THURSDAY, JUNE 27th—

9.30 a.m. Holy Communion.

3.0 p.m. Service for the Mothers' Union. Preacher:  
The Rev. W. AUSTIN DAVIES, B.A., The Rector of  
Cadoxton, Barry.

SATURDAY, JUNE 29th—

7.30 a.m. Holy Communion. (St. Peter's Day).

SUNDAY, JUNE 30th—

8.0 a.m. Holy Communion.

11.0 a.m. Choral Eucharist. Preacher: The Vicar.

6.30 p.m. Evensong. Preacher: The Rev. A. R. DAVIES,  
The Vicar of Dyffryn.

Special Service for Children, when the Church Jubilee Medals will  
be presented:—

SUNDAY, JUNE 23rd, at 2.30 p.m.

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On Thursday, June 20th, the work will be commenced on the erection of the  
reredos. The Vicar will be in Church from 10.0 a.m. to 12.0, from 3.0 p.m. to 4.0,  
and from 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., to receive gifts either for the Memorial Fund, which  
will pay for the centre panel, erected in memory of the late CLIFFORD NEEDHAM JACOB,  
or for the reredos itself, which is erected by the parishioners, on the occasion of the  
twenty-fifth anniversary of the Consecration of the Church.

The Vicar



PHOTO BY NEWARK LEWIS.

The Reverend Ivor T. Bidgood, B.A.

CHURCHWARDENS



**Mr. J. C. Jones**

1921—1933

Mr. Morgan Cox

1910—1933

Mr. W. Rosser

1933

**Mr. J. M. Edwards**

1910—1921

Mr. Edgar M. Abraham

1933—1935

Mr. Herbert Hudson

1935



**I**T is with very great joy that I respond to the request of the vicar and officers of St. Agnes for Jubilee Greetings from myself—your old friend and parish priest.

I hold in the vaults of my memory so very many treasured recollections of the years I spent in your midst, that it is very difficult for me to sort them out, in order to bring one or two into the light of day.

Since the day I left you, in February, 1930—how long ago it seems—I have never entered St. Agnes' Church. I have been afraid lest I should destroy from my imagination valued memories of its altars, shrouded with the curling whisps of incense; memories of kneeling figures prostrate before the Presence; of the children offering up their praise and acoration. These things are too sacred to risk destruction.

Together we faced many difficulties, and I shall never forget your readiness, nay eagerness to respond to the many heavy demands made upon your pockets, your time, and your energies in the maintenance and development of our work.

It was God's work, and therefore of abiding value. God blessed the work and gave the increase. I have never doubted for one moment that St. Agnes was destined to take a predominant part in the religious life of Port Talbot. It has witnessed unflinchingly to the unfathomable love in the Sacred Heart of Our Redeemer, the love poured forth so prodigally in the Holy Sacrament, and so richly bestowed in Absolution. It has witnessed to the beauty and dignity of Catholic worship, and, I trust, in the lives of those who call upon His Name.

I write these words on the eve of Whitsun, and recall how we sang in procession before the Whitsun Mass:

On the faithful, who adore  
And confess Thee, evermore  
In Thy seven-fold gifts descend:  
Give them virtue's sure reward;  
Give them Thy salvation, Lord;  
Give them joys that never end.

No words can better express my prayer for you and for the good priest who so faithfully ministers to you.

Go forward as a united church, holding fast to the faith once delivered to the saints.

God bless you all.

From the Rev. T. S. PERROTT, L.D.  
1930—1933

My ministry at St. Agnes was not a long one, but during those few years I made many friends, and have recollections of many happy incidents. On the occasion of the Jubilee Anniversary, I send my best wishes. Port Talbot is an important centre of industrial life, and I think that St. Agnes may bear witness to what is called the social application of Christianity. Was it not in Antioch, in the busy life of a town, that some of the first followers of our Lord so acquitted themselves that they were first called Christians.



From Mr. NORMAN E. MACKIE (abridged by L.T.B.).



PHOTO BY NEWARK LEWIS.

"What memories the Jubilee recalls. The beginning—a small room of a disused school; windows all smashed, the rooms containing a cartload or two of stones . . . The furniture for the first services consisted of some very uncomfortable benches, an old table and a grocer's box . . . Time has simply flown, but memories cannot be effaced. Who can forget JOHN HAZELL, stern old gentleman, but a good Christian; the Rev. A. J. EDWARDS, with his ready wit, loved by all the children; the Rev. AUSTIN DAVIES and the Rev. J. JAMES; the present Dean of Llandaff, known to us then as "the Vicar," who took us out to Carmarthen Row for open air meetings; a young priest who assisted at a parochial mission, now the Bishop of the Diocese. Memories such as these enable us to see that St. Agnes has stood for something during the past twenty five years, and please God, she will not fail to retain "a vision." The future is bright. St. Agnes has done much in the past, and much is expected of her in the future. As the older members depart, they hand on the torch to the younger brethren, and it will be seized with eager hands. I feel confident about the future, that St. Agnes' Church will continue to witness for the Faith, and go on from strength to strength."

# CHURCH OF ST. AGNES, PORT TALBOT

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## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO — AND NOW.

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**T**HE beginnings of St. Agnes Church in Port Talbot can be traced back quite clearly to about 35 years ago when, in 1901, was formed a Sunday School in the old and disused day school, known as the Forge School, which had ceased to be used as such when the new central school was erected by the public authority.

Previous to that time, one of the clergy of the Parish of Margam—and later of the Parish of St. Theodore—visited the district, but most of the people living in the neighbourhood went to the Church of St. Mary, Aberavon.

To meet the need arising, the Rev. Z. P. WILLIAMSON, Vicar of the Parish of Margam, approached Miss EMILY CHARLOTTE TALBOT, and she repaired and furnished the old Forge School. The Rev. ARTHUR JENKINS EDWARDS, now Rector of Radyr and Rural Dean of Llandaff, took the oversight of the work thus commenced, securing the help of Mr. DANIEL HOWELLS as Superintendent, and it is on record that twelve children came to the school on the first Sunday it was opened.

Mr. DANIEL HOWELLS was succeeded by Mr. NORMAN E. MACKIE, happily with us today, still as keen in the welfare and advancement of St. Agnes as he was eager in the days of its inception.

Later he was in turn succeeded by Mr. J. M. EDWARDS. Slow but steady progress was made until, as JOHN BUNYAN wrote of his immortal allegory—

“It came at last to be  
“For length and breadth,  
“The bigness that you see.

But this thought for the care of the young held within itself the germ of something bigger—the opportunity to form the nucleus of the congregation and communicants that was later to foregather, and worship in the completed Church of St. Agnes. The ultimate result was that on the second Sunday after Easter, April 13th, 1902, Divine Worship was inaugurated and Evensong was sung.

Two years later—on the first Sunday in Lent—the services were increased. A Celebration of the Holy Communion was held at 9.0 o'clock, followed by Matins and Sermon at 11.0 o'clock and Evensong at 6.30. Weekly Evensong on Wednesdays soon followed. The Rev. D. J. JONES, Vicar of the Parish, now the Dean of Llandaff, used every possible means to develop the work.

Both congregation and communicants increased, and from time to time during the years when the Rev. DAVID JOSHUA JAMES was in charge of the work, and those which followed, when the Rev. WILLIAM AUSTIN DAVIES was in charge, the School-room was altered and adapted to meet requirements. With unity of aim and singleness of purpose priests and people co-operated to achieve their objective, and it eventuated that on Saturday, October 10th, 1908, the Foundation Stone of the present Church of St. Agnes in Port Talbot was laid by EVELINE LADY BYASS, wife of Sir SIDNEY BYASS, BART.

The Churchwardens and Sidesmen presented Lady BYASS with a silver trowel suitably inscribed; the contractors gave the necessary mallet. The architect was Mr. F. R. KEMPSON, Cardiff, and the building contractors were Messrs. COLLINS & GODFREY, of Tewkesbury. The building was completed with the exception of the two vestries and connecting passage.

Miss TALBOT bore the expense of the Nave, Heating Chamber, Boundary Walls, all the Seating, the Altar, the Lych Gate, the Heating Apparatus and Gas Fittings.

The Parishioners undertook the cost of the Chancel, Organ Chamber and Lady Chapel.

The Church was consecrated on June 20th, 1910, by the Right Reverend JOSHUA PRITCHARD HUGHES, the Lord Bishop of Llandaff, the preacher on the occasion being the Rev. ARTHUR J. EDWARDS.

The Church was served by the clergy of St. Theodore's Parish until Low Sunday, 1924, when the new Conventional District of St. Agnes was formed by the union of the district, served by the St. Agnes Church, in the Parish of St. Theodore, with the Valindre District taken from the Parish of St. Mary.

The first Priest in Charge was the Reverend WILLIAM THOMAS DREDGE, whose devoted and untiring service and inspiring personality will ever be a lasting remembrance. To him the training of the young was more than a duty; it was almost an obsession. Throughout his ministry the Choral Eucharist took the supreme place in the scheme of worship; during it the organ was installed and dedicated to the memory of those who gave their lives in the Great War; the Vicarage was acquired, and electric took the place of gas lighting of the edifice.

He was succeeded in 1930 by the Rev. T. S. PERROTT, and in 1933 the Rev. IVOR T. BIDGOOD, B.A. was appointed. The fact that the number of communicants at Easter and Christmas is steadily increasing is not only an indication that the traditions of St. Agnes are firmly rooted in the hearts and affections of its people, but an augury of what may be looked for under his guidance. A man of deep culture, warm and generous sympathies, a faithful Priest, he has during his short period among us endeared himself to old and young alike.

The history of St. Agnes Church will always be associated with the name of Mr. MORGAN COX, who was People's Warden from the opening of the Church until 1933, and it was only at his own strongly expressed wishes that he was allowed to relinquish the duties he had carried out for such a long period, with consistent diligence and zeal. He was succeeded by Mr. WILLIAM ROSSER, who holds that office today.

The first Priest's Warden was Mr. J. M. EDWARDS, who served from 1910 until Mr. J. C. JONES was appointed. On his decease he was succeeded by Mr. E. M. ABRAHAM, who in turn was succeeded by the present writer.

Tribute must here be paid to those present with us today, and those who have passed on, who, through all these years carried on so splendidly under great difficulties, whose sanctified imagination could invest the Old Forge School and out of such a humble structure create a home of the Spirit, working with true sublimity steadily towards the heritage that is ours.

It is appropriate in this review of the past not to lose sight of the fact that the duty of completing the structure by the erection of the two vestries and ambulatory (or connecting passage) has been handed down to us. It is purposed in the very near future to put this work in hand, so that not only will the original conception of St. Agnes Church be brought to fruition, but a very urgent present day need be filled.

HERBERT HUDSON.

From the Very Reverend D. J. JONES, M.A., The Dean of Llandaff, (formerly Vicar of St. Theodore's Parish, Port Talbot, 1901—1920).

(Abridged by I.T.B.).

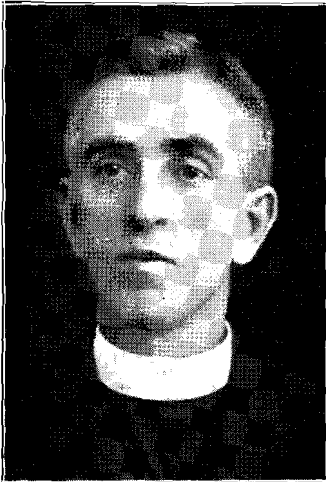
"It was my privilege to be connected with the starting of St. Agnes' Church, and I thank God for it. It meant that a new Church came into being; not the building—proud as we are of that—but the congregation which I think has meant much for the spiritual life of the district . . . Priests and laity planned and re-planned the old school buildings till finally the new Church came into being, the greatest of St. Agnes' triumphs . . . After the building of the bricks and mortar, came the building up of the Body of Christ, and this had its triumphs too . . . Who will ever know of the love and kindness, patience and humility, sins and tears, service and sacrifice, prayer and sacraments? . . . What can I say in answer to your priest's kind invitation to write this message? For him I can wish no greater happiness in his work at St. Agnes than mine was; and for St. Agnes' people, while the St. Agnes' I knew grows older and passes on, may the St. Agnes which you know grow ever stronger and younger in ready and devoted and joyful service for Christ and His Church.



PHOTOGRAPH BY WESTERN MAIL LTD., CARDIFF

From the Reverend ARTHUR J. EDWARDS, M.A., Rector of Radyr and Rural Dean of Llandaff, (formerly assistant curate of Margam and of St. Theodore's, Port Talbot, 1898—1908).

(Abridged by I.T.B.).



PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITLOCK, CARDIFF

Messrs. W. BARNES; M. ANGUS; T. BESSENT; J. HAZEL; W. J. NEYLAND and J. M. EDWARDS. The meeting thanked Mr. NORMAN E. MACKIE for his many services to the Mission Church during the year.

"It is particularly gratifying to me to hear that your Vicar, with the help of a few veterans, is producing a *Souvenir* book containing some history of the origin and progress of St. Agnes. As he reminds me, I was there at the beginning; I was present at the first Sunday School that was held, and I can claim to have suggested the name "St. Agnes" . . . (Mr. EDWARDS gives a vivid word picture of the cleaning of the Old Schoolroom and the building of the boundary walls, all done by voluntary labour, including that of the clergy). The average attendance at Sunday School the first year was 88, the second year 118, and 178 in the third year. The collection at the first Sunday evening service was 7/3, but the average for some months after was about 40/-. . . On September 25th, 1902, a Sale of Work was held to "repair and seat the Forge Schoolroom" and realised £41/8 8 . . . The first Vestry or congregational meeting was held in Easter week, 1903, when the following officers were elected:—Treas: Mr. ALEXANDER LEWIS; Sidesmen:

So St. Agnes started on its mission and we who are privileged to assist in these humble beginnings thank God for what He has done for and through the Church already.

THE CHOIR, 1935



MR. J. ERNEST COX, Organist and Choirmaster



THE MOTHER'S UNION



PHOTO BY NEWARK LEWIS.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS



PHOTO BY NEWARK LEWIS.

THE 2nd PORT TALBOT (St. Agnes) GROUP



PHOTOGRAPH BY IMPERIAL STUDIOS, ABERAVON

*Let tribute here be paid to the late Clifford Needham Jacob, who died on Aug. 7, 1933.  
He was a staunch Churchman, a benefactor of this Church and took  
a keen interest in the welfare of boys, particularly through  
the Boy Scout Organisation.*

**AN INVITATION.**

TO THOSE WHO FOR A LONG TIME HAVE NOT WORSHIPPED IN ANY  
HOUSE OF GOD AND IN WHOM THIS LITTLE BOOK HAS NOW AWAKENED  
SOME DESIRE TO DO SO AGAIN,

WE BID YOU WELCOME IN CHRIST'S NAME.

TO THOSE WHO WORSHIP IN ST. AGNES' CHURCH AND ARE NOT  
KNOWN TO US BY NAME, PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS IN  
THE CHURCH BOX.