



ST MARY STAR OF THE SEA, WEST MELBOURNE
RESTORATION APPEAL



1854

The foundation stone for the St Mary Star of the Sea Church School was laid. The original St Mary Star of the Sea Church was completed in six months, at a cost of four thousand four hundred pounds.

ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST SIGNIFICANT CHURCHES

St Mary Star of the Sea is one of the most significant and beautiful churches in Australia. With seating for over 1,200 people, it is the largest Catholic parish church in Melbourne.

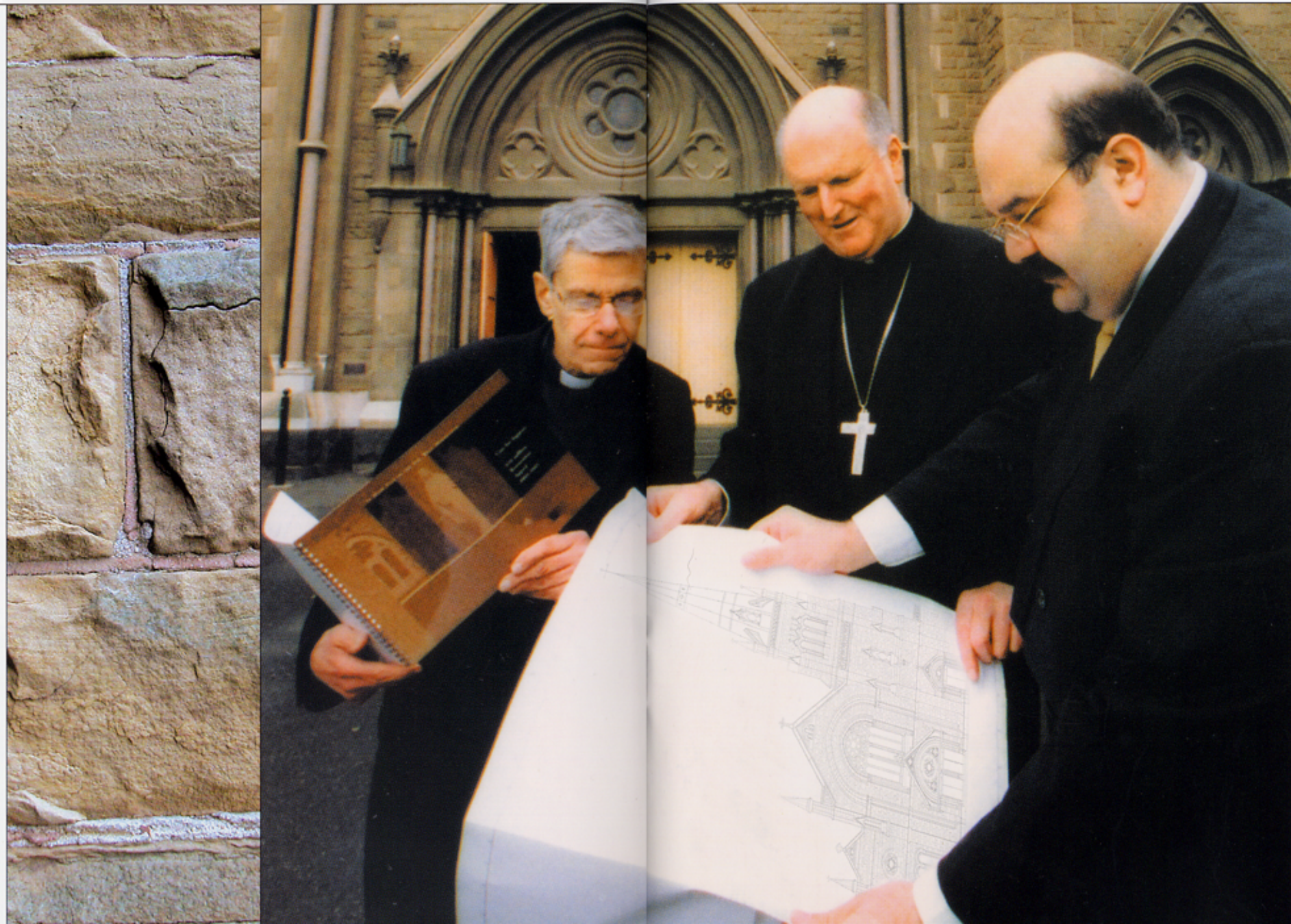
Over the past 150 years, the old St Mary Star of the Sea and our present church have touched the lives of many thousands of people.

That the church exists at all is largely due to the indomitable spirit of the Irish community that helped fund its construction during a period of economic depression. Since then, St Mary Star of the Sea has been a place of worship, inspiration and comfort for many other groups including the Italian, Maltese and Lithuanian communities.

Its parish priests have included prominent figures such as Archbishop Daniel Mannix, Archbishop Justin D Simonds and Auxiliary Bishop Arthur Fox.

Historically and socially, St Mary Star of the Sea therefore played a unique role in a century when multi-cultural Melbourne began to flourish.

*Below left: Another example of deteriorating of Stonework
Below right: L-R Parish Priest Fr Joe Martins, Archbishop of Melbourne Most Rev Denis Hart and Restoration Appeal Chairman Elias Jreisati look at the plans for restoring St Mary's*



Architecturally, it is just as significant. St Mary Star of the Sea was designed by the distinguished architect Edgar J Henderson, who undertook at least 16 similar projects for the Catholic Church. His French Gothic Revival architecture has created a church of great grandeur, with a soaring groined timber ceiling that is thought to be unique in Victoria.

Its imposing marble and granite pillars, intricate marble fittings and exquisite stained glass windows were the work of leading artisans both here and overseas. Its magnificent organ, which is listed on the register of the National Trust, is the largest and most intact surviving example of the work of master organ builder George Fincham.

St Mary Star of the Sea is indeed an exceptional church which must be preserved for the benefit of our people and our city.

1862

The congregation has become too large for the church. A meeting is held regarding enlargements and the meeting subscribed one hundred pounds to add transepts to the building.