

My Family, by Nancy Topp

On the occasion of her retirement as Honorary Organist of St Bernadette's Church, 4 June 2011

My family, consisting of my husband and five month old first daughter, moved to the Parish of St Pius X in late 1958

Sometime in 1975, I was introduced by a friend, to the world of Electronic Organs. I loved the sound they produced and decided to take lessons, having had a short time learning piano as a child.



Sister Bridget, MSC was the organist at St Pius at that time and a dear friend encouraged me to fill in at times, when Sr Bridget was unavailable. I was very nervous and made many mistakes (still do!)

Somewhere around 1993, circumstances changed and the old Hammond organ was discarded and replaced with another instrument.

My love of music, especially in Mass, led me to St Bernadette's, during the time when Father Paul Gurry was Parish Priest

When Father Paul heard that I played the organ a little, he encouraged me to begin playing again.

It was never an "official" appointment, but an honorary role which has extended until now, some eighteen years later.

In May 2000, my husband and I moved from Heidelberg Heights to Templestowe, but I continued at St Bernadette's.

When my husband died in December 2005, I stayed on at St Bernadette's because its people were my extended "family" and I felt at home.

Including my time at St Pius X and St Bernadette's, I have been playing the organ at Mass for roughly thirty years, with a break of a few months when my husband was very ill.

I will never be a great musician, but I am grateful for the opportunity to perhaps have helped congregations to praise God in song.

At the same time, it has been my own offering of loving thanks to Him.

I have loved my years at St Bernadette's, with it's beautiful people and after careful thought, I have decided that this is the right time for me to say "au revoir" and continue my life's journey of worship in another place.



Wish me luck!