



ASSEMBLY SPACE

In this single open space, surrounded by the simple texture of concrete walls, a unified assembly can easily gather in the presence of God. Lighting is especially successful in creating a human space which is open to the transcendent. By day, a large skylight lets diffused natural light fall on the sanctuary from the front. By night, the suspended lights sparkle and create a joyful sense of wonder. Careful positioning of the back wall panels tends to push the sanctuary forward into the midst of the people; perhaps this could have been taken further. It is well ventilated, designed to capture and control the sea breeze.

The design of the sanctuary furniture is drawn from the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* which offers the image of two tables - the table of the word and the table of the eucharist. *The Mass is made up as it were of the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist, two parts so closely connected that they form but one single act of worship. For in the Mass the table of God's word and of Christ's body is laid for the people of God to receive from it instruction and food.* (GIRM 8)

EXTERNAL

This stunning church is a first church in a new parish. It uses the simple industrial construction technique of tilt-up concrete panels. But creative design and attention to the quality of the finish have produced a building of great sculptural form and strong presence.

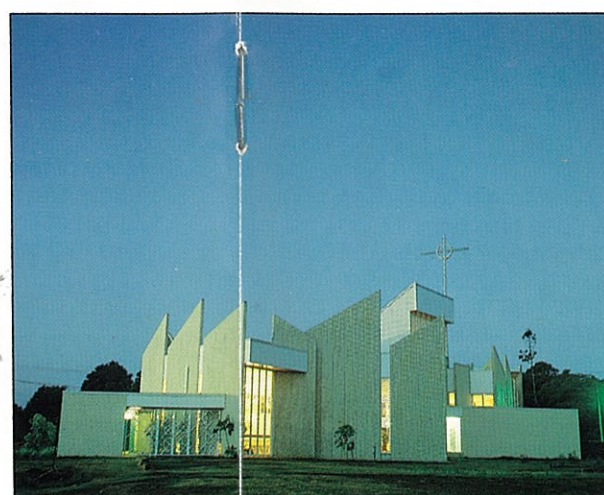
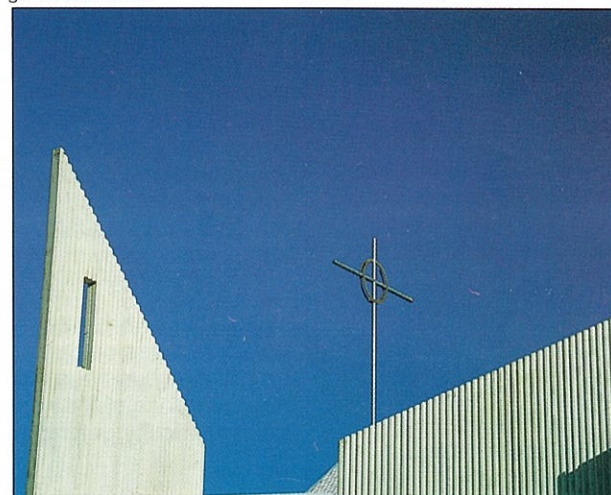
Located on the high corner of the site, with future buildings and car parking kept at a distance, this church works well in the round. There is a constant play of shapes and angles as you walk around the building or approach it from different sides.

The church remains to be finished when finances allow. The reconciliation chapel is yet to be built; the meditation garden between reconciliation and eucharist chapels is still to be established; the gathering space needs

to be completed with a porte-cochère and an enclosing screen wall; the main entrance will one day be identified by a high cross bar with spaces to hang bells; the baptismal font needs an upper part for the immersion of infants; a reflecting pool will in due course throw sunbeams onto the wall behind the baptismal font; and provision has been made for an outdoor chapel.

GATHERING SPACE

The relationship of gathering space to car parking is very satisfactory. No matter how people arrive at the building, they are drawn to a common gathering space. Here are located all the services required: toilets, kitchen, sacristy, piety stall, store. It is a covered pedestrian area separate from the car driveway. Like the side verandah, it provides good overflow space for large occasions.



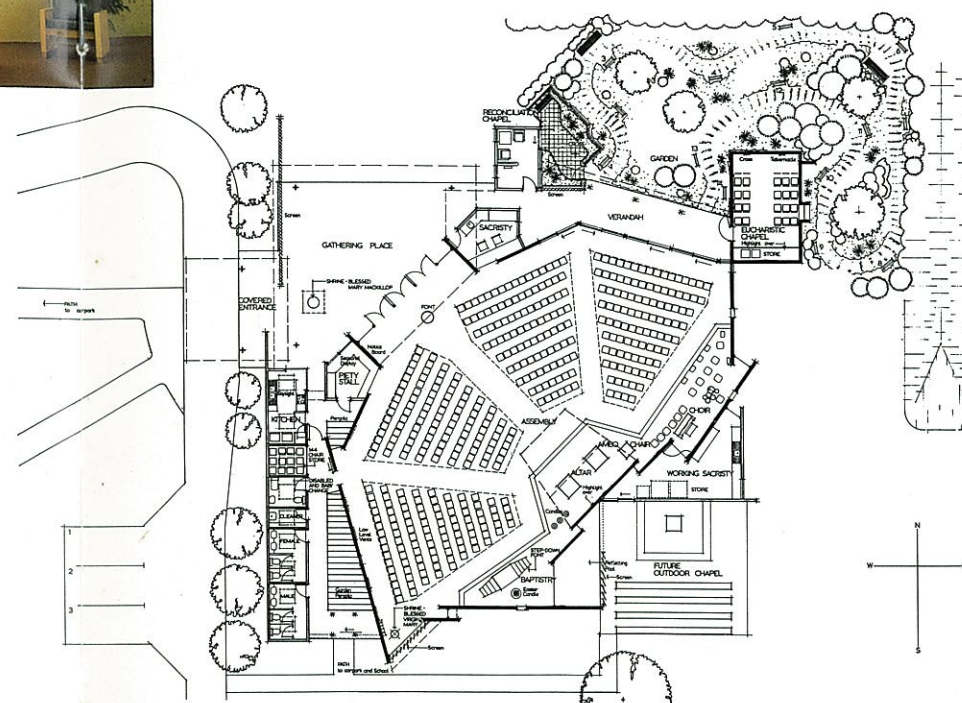
MARY MACKILLOP CHURCH BIRKDALE BIRDWOOD ROAD

ARCHITECT: ROGER HEATHWOOD (Heathwood Cardillo Wilson Pty Ltd)

OPENED: MARCH 1995. SEATING: 400

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Seating for the people is very simple but offers the advantages of flexibility. Music leadership and the baptismal font are well located at either side of the sanctuary, visible from the all parts of the assembly, but not compromising the sense of people gathering around the altar.

BAPTISMAL FONT

This tomb-shaped font is strong testimony to the Pauline notion of baptism as a burial with Christ. Immersed in the waters of baptism, we enter the saving death and resurrection of Christ. *May all who are buried with Christ in the death of baptism rise also with him to newness of life.* (Blessing of the font)

It will be easier to use for the immersion of infants when a higher section is built on one side. Safety for toddlers is ensured by sheets of plate glass placed just below the surface of the water.

EUCHARIST CHAPEL

The dramatic use of space and light makes sacred the atmosphere in this place. It is prominent in the structure of the building and quite accessible from both the sanctuary and the gathering area. It allows for 24-hour access even when the church is closed. Surrounded by its meditation garden, it will be quiet and conducive to private prayer. It should not be used for the celebration of weekday Mass.

