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# BEGINNING A CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE MID 60's

by Fr Paul Bourke

In 1964, Fr George Orlafsky, the visiting bush Priest, with a group of parishioners, approached Frank Pistek and offered to buy his block of land and small dugout in One Tree Hill, Coober Pedy.

Frank accepted the offer and after receiving payment immediately donated some of it back to go towards the Church construction.

Fr Frank Cresp came to live in Coober Pedy in 1965 and it was then that the digging out of the Church began in earnest.

Some of the surnames that come to mind from the stories told, who were involved in the early days were, Drusetti, Vale, Pezzata, Troester,



*Outside the Church, April 1967. Radeka's dugout on far left.*



*Fr. Cresp (with the drill) and Church diggers.*

**MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL  
SATURDAY 4th JULY 1992**

Contact: Beryl Ryan A/H 725935, Peter Vanderfeen A/H 725679,  
Rose Temple A/H 725091, Gwen Watkins A/H 725328

Staver, Cubelic, Barracu, The Russian Spy, Novosel, Mattai, Titheridge, Oppes, Crismani, Coro, Carol, Amorosi and O'Resta.

Labour for the Church construction was voluntary, and generosity rather than creed was the only requirement needed.

The first Christmas Mass in the Church was in 1966 and Mark O'Neil was the first Christening on 4th January, 1961.

The first Wedding was between Lee Anne Telleria and Dino Berti on 16th September, 1969.

The Church, opened in June 1967, became a house of worship for other Religions and this continued until the opening of the Catacomb Church ten years later.

On 27th and 28th June the Church's 25th Anniversary will be held and beginning the celebrations will be the Old Style Dance at the Croatian Club on Saturday 27th June with Hetzel's Orchestra.

Old photos and tales will be on display for all townspeople to peruse.