

Jesuits first came to Australia in 1848, when on 8 December [Fr Kranewitter](#) and Fr Klinkowstroem arrived at Port Adelaide. They were members of the Austrian Province, and they accompanied a group of migrants from Silesia.

Soon after the Silesian group together with Fr Kranewitter settled in the Clare Valley at a place they called Sevenhill (a reference to the seven hills of Rome). There the Jesuits established a parish, a school for boys, a novitiate and a vineyard. The parish's southern boundary was at Gawler. There was no northern boundary, since most of what lay north was not yet explored by Europeans. But Sevenhill became the centre of a vast mission territory in the central north and north of South Australia. Later a mission was established in Darwin and from there at Daly River. The Daly River mission, named Uniya, was a remarkable and innovative venture with the indigenous community.



Meanwhile in 1865 Jesuits from the Irish Province were invited to Melbourne by Bishop Goold to staff St Patrick's College in East Melbourne. In the following year they were invited to staff the parish of Richmond, an invitation readily accepted by the superior, Fr Joseph Dalton. The Richmond parish had been established in 1853, with a church, St James, situated on the corner of Bridge Road and Coppin Street. But the area was subject to flooding from the Yarra, and the Jesuits looked for property on higher ground.

An opportunity quickly presented itself in the shape of a property on the top of Richmond Hill. It was owned by a Dr Stewart, who was apparently in some financial difficulties and looking for a quick sale. According to Fr Dalton's diary, Richmond Hill was populated by Protestants who would have been adamantly opposed to having a Catholic church next door. The sale was organized through a proxy, a Mr Cameron of Brunswick. Dalton records that the Protestants were dismayed to discover that the property had fallen into Catholic hands, and that, when they discovered that the Catholics in question were Jesuits, "they became even more frantic"! The property was sold to the Jesuits for 2,500 pounds, the money coming from Irish Jesuit funds, which themselves were from the Therry bequest (Fr Therry was one of the first priests to work in NSW).

In 1867 work was begun on St Ignatius' Church, designed by architects William Wardell and his sons. It was substantially complete in 1894, with the spire (not part of the original design) being added in 1927.

