

*'Neath
the
Mantle

of

Saint
Michael*

Sylvia Walsh

'Neath the Mantle of Saint Michael

Saint Michael's Catholic Church and Parish
Wagga Wagga, 1858-1987

A History

Sylvia Walsh

Commemorating

The Centenary of Saint Michael's Cathedral, 1887-1987

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McAlroy House

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FOREWORD

*"How I rejoiced when they said to me
Let us go to the house of the Lord" (Ps. 122)*

Every religion has its sacred places. The Australian Aboriginal, while believing like the Jew and Christian that all creation is holy, nevertheless has totemic sites of special significance. The least sacramentally minded refer to Our Lord's country as "the Holy Land" and speak of "the Holy Places".

For the early Christians the Holy places were the tombs of the martyrs whose bodies they translated to their new basilicas when they emerged from the catacombs.

The Church building houses the Church which is God's holy people, bishops, clergy, religious and laity, gathered together. The Church building is a symbol of this sacred assembly which is the dwelling place of God (Apoc. 21.3) built with living stones set upon that Stone rejected by men, but chosen by God, Christ, Our Lord (cf. 1 Pet. 2.4-5).

This book celebrates such a building and the living stones who built it and who are symbolised and so themselves built up by it. This is a sacred place where God is praised and his servants are made holy.

It was the fathers of Vatican II who described the liturgy as the summit and source of all the Church's work, but the pioneers of the parish and diocese of Wagga Wagga knew and lived this truth long before that lapidary statement of it. The Cathedral Church of St Michael, built like the Cathedrals of Europe from the small offerings of a humble flock, stands as a testimony to the rich inheritance of faith they have left us.

Mrs Sylvia Walsh has told the story with her usual discerning eye and meticulous scholarship. In so doing, she has put us all very much in her debt. Certainly, the best way we can repay her is by giving this book the attention it deserves and learning, from what has been accomplished in the past, the great things we can do today for we share the same spirit as our founders.

+ W. Brennan

Bishop of Wagga Wagga

PREFACE

It is difficult to recall when my interest in Catholic Church history began. Perhaps it was always in my mind and was re-awakened and stimulated through an interest in local history and my association during the past 25 years with the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society.

During childhood, life centred around the Church. With other pupils of Mount Erin Convent all major ceremonies at Saint Michael's Cathedral were attended by the school en masse. My confirmation was received from the hands of Bishop Dwyer in 1925 in the first group to be confirmed in the Cathedral following its opening in that year. I have witnessed the development of the Diocese and the expansion which emanated from Saint Michael's Parish.

In my search for historical material I have received assistance from many people. There is always the fear that in giving credit regarding a history researched over a period of many years some names may unintentionally be omitted.

I am grateful to Bishop Brennan for allowing me access to Diocesan Archives and land title documents, for contributing the Foreword to this history and for his patient assistance in many other ways during the past year or more; Archbishop F. Carroll, Canberra-Goulburn Diocese who while Bishop of Wagga Wagga allowed access to archival material and gave valued support and encouragement; Father T.J. Linane, Torquay, Editor of 'footprints' for information regarding appointments of priests including Father Patrick Dunne and for photographs; Father Brian Maher of Bungendore for research at the National Library and Archives of the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese; Father F. Mecham, Haberfield, for early research; Brother J. M. Mahon F.S.C., Sydney, for information regarding early schools; Mr J. Cummins, Archivist of Sydney Archdiocese; Mr Gavan Cashman, Research Officer of the Australian Catholic Historical Society, for research at Saint Mary's Cathedral Archives, Sister Cecilia and Sisters of Mercy, Albury for photographs; Mr Frank Higgins, Albury for extracts from Father Charles Lovat's diary; Mr Jonathon Harrison, Richmond, Victoria for information regarding the Fincham organ.

Nearer to home: Father Peter Quinn, Administrator of Saint Michael's Cathedral, for access to Registers; Monsignor Michael Lane; Monsignor W. Fulton, V.G.; Staff of Bishop Brennan's office, Kylie Murphy, Melinda Walsh and especially the Bishop's Secretary Mrs Anne Dewar; and not forgetting the considerate, young receptionist, Sharon Judd at McAlroy House who opens the heavy door as I approach it; Marie Moxon of the Presbytery staff; Sister Bernadette, Sister Rosarie and Presentation Sisters at Mount Erin for access to Archives and for photographs; Mr Michael Pym for processing and taking photographs; Mr John Winterbottom, assistant at the Archives of the Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education; Mr Graham Kennedy, Principal of Saint Michael's Boys' Regional High School for loan of photographs; Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society for photographs; Mr Keith Swan, and Mr Jack Dennis, a former editor of the *Daily Advertiser*. To all named and unnamed who have assisted I offer my thanks.

Finally, for research assistance and encouragement and for a life-long friendship I thank my class-mate of early days, Mrs Sheila Tearle of Hurstville to whom I dedicate this book.

Sylvia Walsh,
'Sunnyside',
South Wagga Wagga

July 1987

1 *Early Days Yass Mission*

In order to trace a history of Saint Michael's Church and to fully comprehend the significance of the contribution made by the early priests to its establishment we must journey back along the bridle tracks, cross flooded rivers, creeks and forbidding mountains in the awesome wilderness of the Australian bush. These were the paths the missionaries trod in their search for those who yearned for the solace of the Word of God and the administration of His Sacraments.

The history of Saint Michael's is a story of its Clergy, its people both Religious and Laity who were responsible for its foundation, its progress and the contribution it made to the development of Wagga Wagga.

Prior to 1835 three or four priests were endeavouring to attend to a congregation of 20,000 scattered over a wide area. Following the arrival in that year, of Australia's first Bishop, Reverend John Bede Polding, himself an Englishman, a call went out for volunteers to serve in the Australian Mission. Vicar-General, Dr Ullathorne was sent to England on a recruitment assignment. His initial call for clergy fell largely on deaf ears. With the exception of one or two (the mighty Charles Lovat came in 1837) there were no volunteers from England.

After two years in Sydney Father Lovat was placed in charge of the Yass Mission formed the previous year. Prior to volunteering for the Australian Mission the scholarly priest, a professor of Physics and Moral Theology at a Jesuit College at Stonyhurst, knew nought of extreme heat, dust and drought or of sleeping beneath the stars in all weathers and living in the saddle from morning till night. His introduction to life in the interior began during a seven year drought, the most disastrous on record for a hundred years in the area, - the present Sydney Catchment Area and much further afield. James Gormly wrote that his wife's father, Joseph Cox, travelling from Gobarralong with his wife and family during that period, camped on the dry bed of the Tumut River.¹

Following a call in 1838 to Irish Clergy a steady flow of young priests began to arrive and continued to do so in succeeding years, some of them fresh from ecclesiastical college but armed with a deep faith, and courage to face the unknown, the deprivation, the loneliness and all the trials associated with mission life in the southern land. Among these were Fathers Michael McAlroy and Patrick Bermingham.

Through Bishop Polding's efforts Australia was recognised by the European-based Society for the Propagation of the Faith, as a worthy recipient for aid which included defraying the travel expenses of Priests and other Religious recruited from England and Ireland for the Australian Mission. Visits to England and Rome by Dr Polding and his Vicar-General, Dr Ullathorne, to where such funds were channelled from the Society's headquarters were fruitful although the amounts allocated were usually below expectations.²

Not being on the Port Phillip (Great Southern Road) the town of Wagga Wagga saw Bishop Polding only briefly. The Bishop visited the town in 1858 when returning from a journey south. On Sunday, 28 February he confirmed 38 persons, five of whom were converts. Sixty five people received Holy Communion. Mr Richard Cox, son of Joseph Cox, in his "Recollections of a Bushy" mentions that he was confirmed by Archbishop Polding at the Australian Hotel in 1858.³ The hotel, built by Thomas Byrnes in 1857 was one of the venues for Mass before Saint Michael's Church was built. Prior to that time the old Court House was used for the purpose.

Mr Cox (born 1848) was also baptised by the Archbishop but the venue was Mr John Smith's Kyeamba Station on the main road south.⁴ Because of its location the homestead was a

welcome resting place for clergy on their journeys which were mostly undertaken in the saddle. Mr Smith, a Scot and staunch Presbyterian was also a most hospitable host to travelling clergy whatever their religious persuasion.

Despite its comparative isolation Wagga Wagga was not overlooked nor was it deprived of a church for any length of time for, in 1857 Archbishop Polding placed Father Michael McAlroy, the church builder, in charge of the Yass Mission. His coming heralded the beginning of an amazing church-building programme perhaps unequalled in the annals of the Catholic Church in Australia considering the infant state of the Mission, the conditions, mode of travel and long distances involved.



Very Rev. Dr. Michael McAlroy
Apostle of the Riverina
Courtesy of Father F. Mecham

Until his coming there was no complete church between Yass and Melbourne. In the short space of four years (1857-1861), he planned and built eight churches all of which opened almost free of debt. In this he was assisted by his college-mate, Father Patrick Bermingham. A master of the spoken word he made the appeals for funds to build them. There was no doubt of his success.⁵

Wagga Wagga became part of the Yass Mission when it was founded in 1838 under the care of Fathers Michael Brennan and John Fitzpatrick. The Mission covered an area 400 miles long and, in places, 120 miles wide extending from Camden to the Murray River, from the Abercrombies and the Lachlan to the Pacific Ocean. Over that vast area were scattered five thousand Catholics. At that time Melbourne was in the parish of Yass.⁶

FATHERS M. McALROY AND P. BERMINGHAM

In the Australian summer of 1855, on 13 February to be exact, the 'Gypsy Bride' brought two of the most talented and zealous Irish priests to the southern shores. Boyhood friends and college companions, their names were Fathers Michael McAlroy and Patrick Bermingham. From Father Patrick Dunne, a cousin of Father McAlroy, who was already in Australia, they learned of the need for priests in the inland. While on a visit to Ireland Bishop Goold met and invited them to come to his Melbourne Diocese where Father Dunne was in charge at Geelong. Their sojourn in Melbourne lasted only a short time.

Early in 1856 the four Geelong priests (Father Geoghegan was the fourth) were sent to different parts of the Diocese. Father McAlroy was given a roving assignment in Gippsland but returned at the end of a month as he could find only a dozen of his flock in the whole area. There was also unrest among his colleagues. Expressing discontent Fathers McAlroy and Bermingham asked to be released. They then transferred to Archbishop Polding's Diocese of Sydney and were appointed to the Yass Mission where Father McAlroy succeeded Father Patrick Magennis.⁷ A short time later Father Patrick Dunne also left the Melbourne Diocese and returned to his native Ireland where he became President of the Seminary at Tullamore. The year 1861 saw him once again on the high seas, this time in charge of immigrants bound for settlement in Queensland.

These three priests who have earned themselves a place in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, figured prominently in the development of the Catholic Church in Wagga Wagga.

While in Yass Fathers McAlroy and Bermingham lived out their mission to the full. Their time was spent in the saddle searching for isolated Catholic families scattered over a vast area, living in all manner of dwellings, makeshift and otherwise. While one was serving in the remote areas, the other worked closer to home, perhaps not seeing each other for three months. It was estimated that each one travelled eleven thousand miles per year, as well the programme of church building continued. Of the fourteen churches he planned and built in a short space of time all opened almost free of debt including the first Saint Michael's in Wagga Wagga. Of him 'John O'Brien' wrote "he lit the Sanctuary Lamps from the Abercrombies to the Victorian Border".⁸

Father McAlroy was a capable business man who knew how to handle finance. He was refined and highly educated. A knowledge of architecture gained during college days served him well in his church building undertakings. He was an outstanding pastor and leader of men whose name is honoured throughout the vast area in which he ministered. Cardinal Moran wrote that "Father McAlroy laid broad and solid foundations on which to build the Church in Australia". The name of 'Apostle of the South' given him by the Bishop of Maitland, Dr Murray, fitted well the zealous pastor.



Very Rev. Dr. Patrick Bermingham
Courtesy of Father F. Mecham

In 1868 the newly-consecrated first Bishop of the Goulburn Diocese, Dr. Lanigan conferred on him an honorary Doctorate of Divinity and appointed him Vicar-General of the Diocese. He was appointed Parish Priest at Albury where, immediately on arrival he arranged for the building of a Convent for the band of Mercy Sisters who had accompanied him from Goulburn. He was responsible for the building of Saint Patrick's Church in Albury, the Convent and Girls' School.

Although he was a man of outstanding constitution, the strenuous life and long hours of exposure to extremes of climate took their toll on him. He died in 1880 when only 59 years of age. His mortal remains rest behind the High Altar of Saint Patrick's Church Albury where, on one of the Church pillars a tablet honours this friend of the people, a venerated priest, architect and builder of churches. Of him 'John O'Brien' wrote:

"Among the unsung heroes of our Land who in their time and in their own sphere did splendid things for God and Country there is no greater name than Michael McAlroy."

Equally zealous and untiring in his service to God's people was Dr Patrick Bermingham. He was an outstanding scholar and a commanding orator noted for his eloquent sermons. His preaching at Tumut in 1875 on the occasion of the Church Jubilee which was being celebrated universally in that year, caused 'The Times' to pass the following eulogism on his oratory:

*"The Reverend gentleman's oratory is of that rare, dual kind which, besides being refined and scholarly enough to win the admiration of the cultured intellect, is so lucid and perspicuous as to be comprehended by all."*⁹

His services as preacher were sought by Bishop Lanigan as he conducted his Jubilee tour in that year.

Of the five-day celebrations in Wagga Wagga in October 1875 Bishop Lanigan recorded in his diary - "crowded church, double usual attendance, showing the Jubilee to be the best yet. Confirmed 56 males and 100 females".

Besides his Wagga Wagga duties Dr Bermingham was also priest in charge of the Temora district when gold fever was at its height in 1880-1881. Mass was celebrated by him in a large marquee off Hoskins Street.¹⁰

When he and Dr McAlroy returned from Ireland bringing with them 5 Presentation Sisters, Dr McAlroy was presented with a new buggy and a pair of Snowden horses. Dr Bermingham was the recipient of a new buggy and a pair of Timor ponies.

SEEKING A SITE

Before a Catholic edifice saw the light of day in Wagga Wagga there were many problems confronting those charged with the responsibility of providing one. That there was a Catholic Church in the town as early as 1859 is a tribute to the determination and tenacity of the Church authorities in Sydney, Yass and Goulburn, and the small population of Catholics in the town which numbered only 250.

Sites had already been granted to the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist Church but no such provision had been made for the Catholics of the town. Land designated for a Catholic Church was not acceptable as it was subject to severe flooding. It was a low-lying area, close to the river-bank in lower Fitzmaurice Street. In later years it was the site (although not the first) of the stock sale-yards. The latter facility was replaced in June 1980 by a sophisticated, computerised live-stock selling complex situated north of the Murrumbidgee River at Bomen. Now with the levee bank in existence the situation regarding flood danger has changed and the former site of the sale-yards is being developed into a residential area.

Many months of intense correspondence from the Church authorities in Sydney, from Father Patrick Bermingham in Goulburn and the Catholic community in Wagga Wagga followed as the accompanying letters testify¹¹ until finally the land requested on the eastern side of Church Street, South Wagga Wagga was granted in July 1858. Amid great jubilation arrangements were made for the building of the Church of Saint Michael. In less than seven weeks Fathers McAlroy and Bermingham were on their way to lay the Church foundations.

The occasion of the laying of the foundation was also fraught with problems. Heavy rain had been falling for several days, and district rivers and creeks were in flood. Father McAlroy swam his horse and gig across Hillas Creek but on reaching Tarcutta found the bridge closed to traffic as a safety precaution. No explanation on his part regarding the inconvenience to many people his non-arrival in Wagga Wagga would cause, was sufficient to gain him access to the bridge. Once again he swam his horse and gig across a swollen creek.

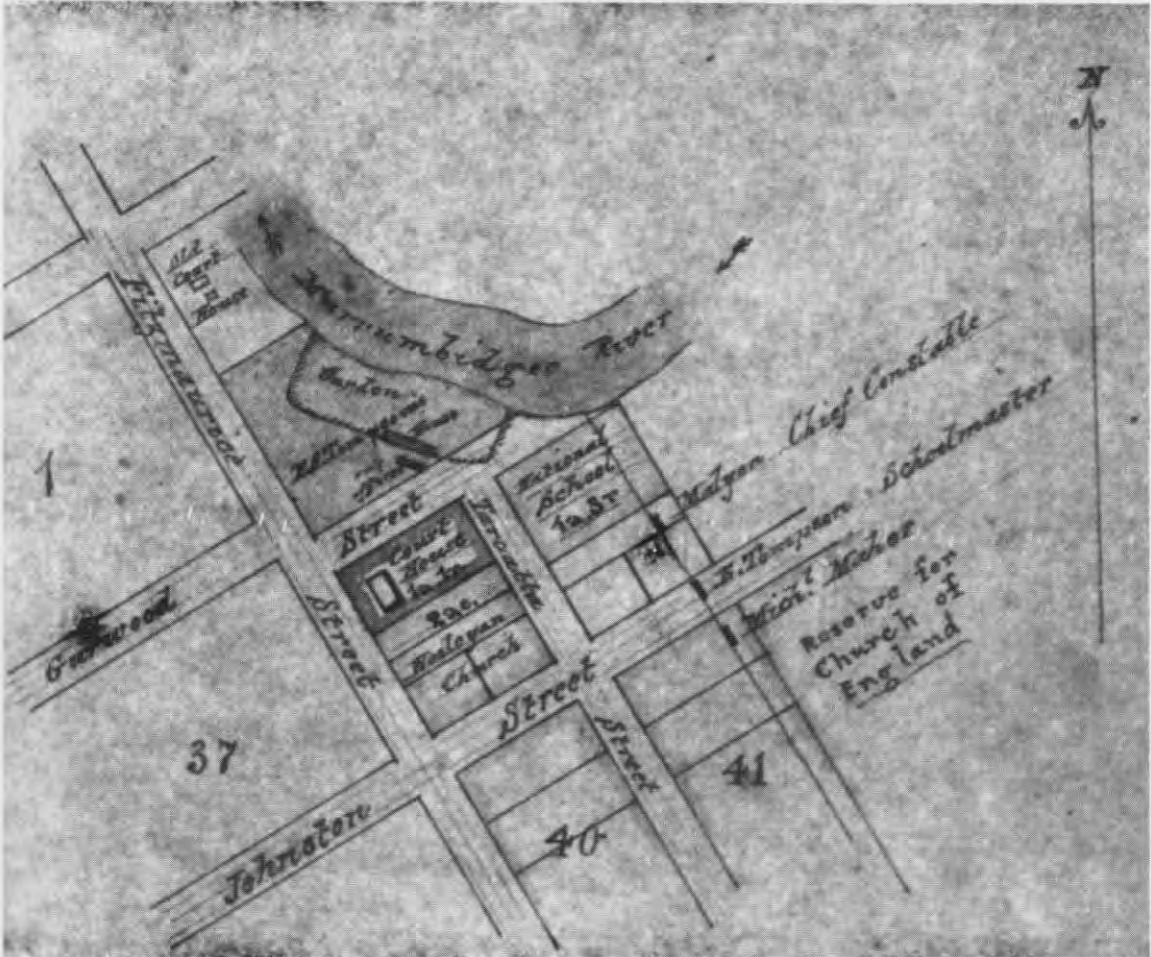
Father Bermingham who was following later, on horse-back was confronted with the same barrier. He found it necessary to inch his way along a lower fence rail while holding on to the top one. Thus the ceremony of laying the foundation set down for Sunday 26 September 1858, was postponed until the following day, Monday, 27 September.¹²

Following the celebration of Mass at Mr Byrnes' Australian Hotel a procession moved off to the church site in Church Street where Father McAlroy, on a damp Spring morning erected a wooden cross on the site of the future High Altar. He then performed the blessing. Father Bermingham preached an appropriate sermon. Assistant at the ceremony was Father Con. Twomey who was stationed at Albury during that period.¹³



Early Sketch of Wagga Wagga, circa 1850's

Courtesy of Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society



Plan from a Surveyor's Sketch Book x 768 1854 - 1857

Courtesy of Archives of New South Wales

Tenders for the brick work with stone foundations were invited in the *Wagga Wagga Express*, 13 November 1858. Plans to be seen at the *Express Office*, at Mr Byrnes' Hotel, Wagga Wagga, Catholic Presbytery, Yass: or at Mr Patrick Fennell's, North Wagga Wagga. Tenders to either the latter or the Presbytery, Yass. Signed by Patrick Fennell.

We may well ask the question: What type of place was this - this town which took its name from the call of the crows? It was a fledging town of some 600 people. Stock roamed its dusty streets at will, an occasional river-boat noisily proclaimed its presence as it disgorged its goods; bullock waggons rumbled along their irksome way, the sound of their grinding wheels in contrast to the rhythmic tune of horses hooves; while the monotonous clang of the smithy's hammer shrieked its unending litany not too far distant from the solitude of Church Street.

This was the scene when, in a bend of the Murrumbidgee arose the first Catholic Church in Wagga Wagga, under the mantle of the Defender of the Faith, Saint Michael. It stood serene, almost in isolation, (soon to be joined by Saint John's Anglican Church), its closest companions being a group of silent sentinels of the past - graves of early pioneers whose resting place was close by the waters which had made their existence possible.

The burial ground was in an area now covered by the playing fields of Saint Michael's Boys' High School. There are one or two former Christian Brothers School pupils who recall that some tombstones remained for quite a number of years after the School opened in 1914, and that one,

at least remained upright. It was used as a wicket for cricket practice. In later years the remains of the departed were transferred to the 'old' portion of the Wagga Wagga cemetery.

There being no suitable stone available in the area, the Church was built of brick with Gothic roof topped by attractive cupola, the 28,000 shingles costing £56 (£2 per 1,000) and the bricks £223.

Tradesmen were: J Wilson, bricklayer and plasterer, D Howell, carpenter and J Houghton, cedar paneller.

Total cost of the Church including seats and vestments (£56), was £1,500/16/- of which £1,489/4/- was subscribed by opening day.¹⁴

Not all subscribers were of the Catholic Faith, in fact many people of other denominations shared the cost. The list of donors - almost a 'Who's Who' in Wagga Wagga, included the names of people who gave their names to streets in the town, including Henry Baylis, First Police Magistrate of the town, Robert Nixon, F Tompson, William McLeay, M.P., John Peter, George Forsyth, Dr A. B. Morgan, Thomas Cartwright and Miss Best. Ashton's Circus Company gave a benefit performance which netted £38.



First Saint Michael's Church opened in 1859

Courtesy of Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society

On Sunday 4 December, 1859 in searing heat the historic Church was opened with the celebration of High Mass by Father Michael McAlroy, an eloquent sermon being preached by Father Patrick Bermingham. Father Twomey was also present. It is a measure of the faith of the Catholic community and of the support and willingness of other townfolk to assist them, that the cost of the building was almost fully subscribed by opening day when Catholics numbered only 250 and the entire population no more than 600.

Prior to the opening of the Church the Riverina area as we know it now, was visited occasionally as time and distance permitted, by Father Charles Lovat who was in charge of the Yass Mission from 1839-1857 and who, during 1839 rode "518 miles in the first three weeks in his parish, in the hottest and driest summer in a century, and all to attend 187 people in congregations numbering from six to thirty people".¹⁵

The honour of offering the first Mass in the town of Wagga Wagga rests with the successor to Father Lovat, Father Patrick Magennis, the year being 1851.¹⁶ The Mass would probably have been offered in the first Court House, erected in 1847 in Fitzmaurice Street. The site is now

occupied by the professional offices of the accounting firm of Selby Watson and Co. A brass plaque records the historical significance of the site.

But what of 1859 and beyond? For the time being at least, establishment of the Church only partially solved the problem of regular services. The shortage of priests at Yass being acute, regular Sunday Mass was an impossibility. Once in every five weeks was all that could be managed, but as Albury, in 1856, had been made the centre of a new parish which included Wagga Wagga, occasional service from there was available and, at times, from Tumut. Even though an offer of £500 per year and accommodation for a priest, was made, none could be spared. It was not until the formation of a separate parish and the appointment in 1871, of Father William Bermingham as first resident parish priest that regular Sunday Mass became a reality.



Town of South Wagga Wagga

Courtesy of Wagga Wagga City Council

Meanwhile Church Street had begun to further don its ecclesiastical robes when Saint Michael's acquired as its next door neighbour in 1860 the Anglican Church of Saint John the Baptist, while on the opposite side of the street arose Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church which opened in 1870 closely followed by Saint Michael's Presbytery in 1871. The Presbytery was a modest 4-roomed brick dwelling, a portion of which is incorporated in the Presbytery of today. Building operations were supervised by Father H Finnegan of Yass.

Life in the parish was not devoid of drama. An eccentric lady, Mrs Callaghan, widow of Justice Callaghan and mother-in-law of Mr Auber Jones, co-founder in 1868 of the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* was attending Mass on a very warm Sunday morning. As the sun streamed through the window above her she suddenly raised her parasol much to the dismay of the startled priest and congregation.¹⁷

In October 1864 there was drama of a different flavour when during Mass in the first Saint Michael's Church "a four foot carpet snake made its appearance in front of the Altar. The priest quickly moved towards it apparently with the intention of despatching it but was restrained by two or three members of the congregation. A gun was procured and the reptile shot and cast out."¹⁸

2 First Parish Priest Education

In response to a petition made to the first Bishop of Goulburn, Dr William Lanigan who was making his first visitation through the Diocese since his return from Europe, the appointment of Father William Bermingham as resident parish priest was made in March 1871. The first entry made by Father Bermingham in the Baptismal Register is 2 April 1871. He had been serving in Albury as curate to Father Michael McAlroy who by this time had earned the title of D.D. He was joined at Saint Michael's by Father John Dunne as curate following the latter's arrival in Sydney from Ireland in February of that year. In that year the population of the town was 1,858.

Father Dunne remained until July when he was appointed to Boorowa as Parish Priest. In 1887 he was consecrated Bishop of Wilcannia Diocese. A strong affection for the town, the scene of his first appointment in the Australian Mission, was maintained by Father Dunne even though he was resident for only a short period. When he attended the opening of the new Church in 1887 as the newly-consecrated Bishop of the vast See of Wilcannia, and youngest Bishop in Australia, he travelled fifteen hundred miles continuously for five days to do so. Three years later he re-visited the town for the opening of the new Boarding School at Mount Erin Convent.

During the next decade Father John Dunne's uncle, Father Patrick Dunne, was to figure prominently in Church affairs in Wagga Wagga, being responsible for building the second Church of Saint Michael which, within a space of thirty years became a Cathedral.



Dr. Morgan O'Connor, M.D., K.S.S.
Courtesy of Mount Erin Convent Archives

In that period also (1870's) there came to Wagga Wagga one of the most outstanding laymen of his time in the person of Dr Morgan O'Connor, M.D., K.S.S. He was a fellow countryman of Father Michael McAlroy and Dr. Patrick Bermingham with whom he was associated in Yass following his arrival in Australia.

All three were actively involved in the Catholic Literary and Debating Society in Yass, an activity in which Dr. Bermingham and Dr. O'Connor continued to have an interest in Wagga Wagga.

Dr. Morgan O'Connor was recognised as being one of the most outstanding Catholic laymen of his day. Born in 1829 in Mullingar, Westmeath, Ireland, descended from an historic family of Kerry. He was educated in the College of Adrian VI in the University of Louvain from where he graduated in 1851.

Sailing for Australia in 1859 he made his way to Yass where he commenced medical practice. He was to the fore in all things Catholic, well-versed in the classics, an eloquent speaker, outspoken on such subjects as discrimination in education. Through Literary Institutes in Yass and Wagga Wagga he encouraged young men to improve their knowledge by debate, reading and discussion. He was appointed a Magistrate of the Territory in 1861. In that year he wrote "A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Yass Mission, 1838 to 1861". It is a valuable record of the early Catholic community in southern New South Wales. In 1872 he took up residence and practice in Wagga Wagga.

In recognition of his work for the Church the Pope, in 1874 honoured him with a Knighthood of the Order of Saint Sylvester.¹ His ceremonial sword is in the Archives of the Presentation Sisters, Mount Erin.

EDUCATION

Not the least of the responsibilities of the priests and the Catholic community was the provision of schools and teachers. It was the intention of Archdeacon McEncroe of Sydney to set up a Catholic School in Wagga Wagga in 1858, under the Denominational School Board. This did not take place at that time due no doubt to the delay in granting a church site. In 1860 however, soon after the Church was built a school was conducted within it by John Egan the former teacher at Binalong Catholic School which operated for only a short period.

Egan's administration of the School was not entirely satisfactory. He was hampered by lack of co-operation from the local School Board which did not ensure that the School had suitable furniture and equipment. Archdeacon McEncroe was also remiss in that he did little to ensure that the school had a supply of books. Consequently the School closed at the end of 1861. Thus began a period of instability in the education of Catholic children in the town.

With Francis O'Doherty as teacher the School re-opened in 1864, the salary being £60 per annum which increased to £72 by 1866.² It would appear that the standard of administration improved during that period for, in 1866 the Council Inspector, Mr J. McCredie made favourable comments on the School.³ However O'Doherty's work deteriorated due to the fact that he was suffering with a terminal illness and like John Egan before him was endeavouring to cope with upsets in the local School Board.

The certificate for the School was lost in 1872, perhaps unfairly. The problem regarding education became more serious. For a time the School was conducted as a private one by Charles Coghlan who is thought to have been a University graduate.⁴

In the next few years the scene was to change. A new era in Catholic education in the town began due mainly to the coming of the Presentation Sisters who arrived from Ireland in 1874 to teach in the Australian Mission.

ARRIVAL OF PRESENTATION SISTERS

Bishop William Lanigan sent his Vicar-General, Dr. Michael McAlroy to Ireland in 1873 in search of volunteers from Religious Orders to teach in the Goulburn Diocese of which Wagga Wagga formed a part since the formation of the new Diocese in 1867. Here Dr. McAlroy met his friend and co-missioner, Dr. Patrick Bermingham who was already in Ireland occupying the Professor's Chair in Moral Theology at Carlow College having gained a Doctorate of Divinity while in Rome. He had been absent from Australia for some years.



First Presbytery built 1871
Courtesy of Mount Erin Convent Archives



Stable in which the Sisters taught in 1874, in process of demolition in 1959

Dr. Bermingham who had two relatives in the Presentation Order, Kildare, accompanied Dr. McAlroy on a visit to the Convent where a request was made for some members of the Order to join the Australian Mission. Five of the volunteers were chosen. In the following year they sailed for Australia accompanied by the two priests. On 21 June 1874 the appointment of Dr. Patrick Bermingham as priest-in-charge was announced. He replaced his brother William.

On their arrival the Sisters were given temporary use of the Presbytery vacated by the priests who obtained rooms in the Australian Hotel.⁵ The Sisters set about teaching in a stable behind the Presbytery. Imagine the discomfort suffered by teachers and pupils. The building divided into two sections, was uncomfortable, draughty and ill-equipped. The writer's father, the late Teloçon Lloyd was one of the pupils. Later on he transferred to the Church-School under Mr Moran when the School re-opened in 1876.

Living conditions of the Sisters left much to be desired. The two bedrooms of the Presbytery, shared by five Sisters, were small and provided little privacy. In addition the Sisters often knew the pangs of hunger. Rich silk and satin cloth brought from Ireland to be made into altar vestments and offered for sale, were destined not to be sewn by their hands, instead the cloth itself was sold to provide sustenance.⁶

Building of the Convent of Mount Erin was an undertaking close to the heart of Dr. Bermingham. Two district parishioners, John Donnelly of Borambola Station and John Cox of Mangoplah Station, in their generosity, initiated the building fund. Even before the arrival of the Sisters in Australia Mr Donnelly was casting his eye around for a suitable site on which to build a convent. He subsequently purchased forty acres from Mr Auber Jones, land-owner and co-founder of the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*. Purchase price of the land on a rise overlooking the town, was £1,500.

Mr Cox in an equally generous gesture, promised £1,500 to build the Convent. The project was no longer in doubt although costs far exceeded the anticipated amount, and many problems were encountered. Despite these obstacles the Catholic community and others contributed handsomely to the building which was carried out to the plans of Messrs. Gordon and Sheppard of Wagga Wagga at a cost of more than £10,000.

One thousand people were present when Bishop Lanigan blessed the foundation stone on Sunday 29 November 1874. Assisting clergy were Reverend Drs. Michael McAlroy and Patrick Bermingham, Fathers William Bermingham, John O'Dwyer and William Kelly, S.J.

In the following year yet another milestone in education was reached when Dr. P. Bermingham added a school wing to Saint Michael's Church. A newspaper report stated that

*"Saint Michael's Boys' School will be opened to-morrow.....It is fully established with every requisite for the education of over 60 boys and by its erection, additional Church accommodation is afforded 160 persons. Freshly painted, 120 sittings have been added. Not one shilling yet subscribed but trust an earnest effort will be made to-morrow."*⁷

Dr. Bermingham's saddle mate of earlier years, the Reverend Michael McAlroy was invited to perform the blessing and opening of the School Wing which took place on Sunday 7 November 1875. Dr. McAlroy was, by that time, parish priest of Albury and Vicar-General of the Goulburn Diocese. It was appropriate that he be asked to officiate as he had been responsible for building the Church in 1859. High Mass was offered followed by Benediction and Procession. The Celebrant was assisted by Father Kelly of Tumut. Dr. Bermingham chose as the subject for his sermon 'The House of God'.

To show their appreciation of Dr. Bermingham's labours a number of parishioners met at the Presbytery on the previous Thursday evening. As the number present reached 60 the small Presbytery became overcrowded. The well-wishers then adjourned to a large room in Mr Hopkins Royal Hotel where Dr. O'Connor read an address, here recorded in part:



Foundation Stone of School Wing added to the Church in 1875. The wing was opened by Dr. Michael McAlroy The Stone is in the Museum on Willans Hill, Wagga Wagga.

Courtesy of Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society.

"We have been instructed and impressed by your fervid eloquence, and edified by your holy life and priestly bearing..... We have witnessed your arduous and incessant labours since you came amongst us, your warm-hearted interest in our spiritual and temporal welfare, your ardent zeal for the education of our children."

COMMITTEE FOR SUBSCRIBERS

Morgan O'Connor, Wm. Walsh, D. Bergin, S. Hopkins, H. Lever (sic), J. Purcell, William Bowen, M. Callaghan, John Bourke, P. McAlister, J. Perrin, M. Meagher (sic), T. Cummins.⁸

A presentation of 300 sovereigns was made to the guest of honour with a request that the money be used for his personal needs. Dr. Bermingham declined to give any assurances in that regard. It would be fair to assume that the money would be placed in the building fund which stood at nought. Dr. Bermingham sought no riches for himself, his first thought was for his Church.

The opening ceremony of Mount Erin Convent was an historic occasion. Performed on Sunday 10 December 1876 by the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Roger Bede Vaughan, it was attended by three other members of the Hierarchy, Bishop Lanigan, Goulburn, Bishop J. Murray, Maitland, and Bishop Quinn, Bathurst. The event was one of the most important in Saint Michael's Parish. Not only did the Sisters have a residence but Catholic education which previously had an uneasy road to travel now achieved stability and continuity.

On the other hand the four Bishops who attended the ceremonies had no easy road to travel as they journeyed home to their respective Dioceses. Following the day of rejoicing their return journey was somewhat of an anti-climax. The Archbishop and Bishops were within 8 miles of Jugiong when their horses became too exhausted to continue. The Hierarchy availed themselves of a team of bullocks to convey them to Jugiong. There they met up with Cobb and Co's coach which was very crowded that day. The only seats available were 'outside' ones (in December heat)! It was the only chance they had of reaching Bowning in time for the train.⁹



Mount Erin Convent showing portion of Boarding School and Chapel

Courtesy of Mount Erin Convent Archives

In the same year Saint Michael's School regained its certificate, and education prospects were brighter. The Girls' School was transferred to Mount Erin at the commencement of 1878.

To cater for the spiritual needs of the parish there were three priests on the Church staff - Dr. Bermingham, Fathers Thomas Long and John O'Dwyer.

The teacher engaged for the re-opening of Saint Michael's Denominational School was Mr Moran, a scholarly, well-liked person. Later on he was assisted by Mr J. Davis. Whereas the Presentation Sisters had conducted a mixed school, Moran's School catered for boys only. He ensured that sufficient discipline was applied and he commanded the respect of his pupils.¹⁰

He remained until State Aid to all Denominational Schools ceased in 1882. On his departure he was presented with a purse of sovereigns. Often he returned to the town for cricket matches. Other teachers followed of whom mention is made in "In a Bend of the Murrumbidgee".¹¹ One of these, Headmaster, Mr Boyle retired at the end of 1884 to take up an appointment under the Department of Public Instruction at Ladysmith School.

As well as the Catholic Schools others in the town were the Central or Gurwood Street School, the Wagga Terminus, later known as Bomen School. The latter closed in 1881 following extension of the railway to Wagga Wagga. Bomen was an important settlement at the time being the terminal of railway services until 1879 when the line was extended to Wagga Wagga. From Bomen passengers were previously transferred to coaches, a vital link in the chain of early transport. The North Wagga Wagga School was established in 1878 and is still in existence.

DEVELOPMENT

Pastoral development increased in the 1860's and 1870's following the passing in 1862, of the Robinson Land Act which allowed of free selection of parcels of 320 acres of land previously held by pastoral leases.

The 1870's was a period of great significance and achievement for the Catholic community. The Presbytery was built and the first resident parish priest, Father William Bermingham and an assistant appointed; five members of the Presentation Order, Kildare, arrived to teach in the School; Dr. Patrick Bermingham succeeded his brother as parish priest and added a wing to the School to provide improved educational facilities; further land was granted by the Crown; the Nuns were installed in their new Convent and Catholics were grateful to see more settled conditions prevail in the re-opened Denominational School. Gone too as the decade began were the trappings of infancy when the town was proclaimed a Municipal Borough in 1870.

Already a bridge (fore-runner to the Hampden Bridge) had been built over the Murrumbidgee River opening the way to easier travel, trade and communication. Cobb and Co. was operating a passenger service, and before the decade closed, the long-awaited railway reached the town. If the town needed further excitement it was provided by the sensational long-running legal wrangle which filled the English law courts and delighted newspaper editors when Wagga Wagga butcher, Tom Castro (alias Arthur Orton) claimed that he was the missing heir to the English Tichborne estate. The result was the longest legal case in English history.

The town was the scene in 1876 of an unusual and tragic happening when Irish-born Father William Hely died in a prisoner's cell at Wagga Wagga Gaol on 6 August after having been mortally wounded by a gun shot while staying at the "Belmore" Inn at Deepwater some forty miles distant from town. He was mistaken by police for a man who had previously committed a robbery.

Dr. Bermingham's recently arrived curate, Father Thomas Long attended the unfortunate victim on his death-bed and later read his burial service. Father Hely was buried in a pauper's grave in the Wagga Wagga cemetery. He had been travelling from the parish of Wangaratta where he belonged. On 4 November 1876 his remains were transferred to the cemetery in that town. The hearse carrying his earthly body was met a few miles distant from the town and escorted by 350 of his parishioners and friends.

The inquest into his death left many unanswered questions. The offender in the case was later apprehended and confessed to having committed the robbery.¹²

All the momentous events which occurred during Dr. Bermingham's time as parish priest did so before the advent of the railway to the town. Unfortunately he was not to witness the development which followed the auspicious event in the town's history nor was he to see the great edifice, the second Church of Saint Michael which arose a few years later. In consequence of a continuing lung complaint his health deteriorated in the early 1880's. During his time in the Australian Mission he incurred the displeasure of two Bishops regarding matters, none of which arose from any selfish motives on his part. As a result of his outspokenness few accolades from his superiors came his way but his people loved and respected him.

*"John O'Brien" wrote that "he was a venerated priest, a noted preacher, a respected controversialist in the Church's cause, a cultured gentleman, a scholarly Irishman who pushed aside his books and peeled off his coat to do the diggings in a distant and uninviting section of the vast Vineyard where the harvest was great and labourers sorely needed"*¹³

Dr. O'Connor, his medical adviser and friend of many years suggested that he take a trip to his homeland in the hope of regaining his health. His poignant letter of resignation written in 1882 to Bishop Lanigan is preserved in the National Library.¹⁴ It reads:

Sydney
Pettys Hotel
October 6th 1882

To The Right Rev W Lanigan
Bishop of Goulburn-
My Lord

I find that a year or so of perfect rest and of freedom from worry and excitement affords the only hope of saving my life.

I beg, therefore, to anticipate by a few months my already notified departure from your diocese;-to which I was never affiliated- and to hereby formally send you my resignation-When I'm able- at present I'm very ill- to go back to Wagga and make final arrangements with my Successor I shall call to bid your Lordship good-bye.

Asking your blessing
I remain my Lord
Your obedient servant in Christ
P. Bermingham

The last entry made by Dr. Bermingham in the Baptismal Register at Saint Michael's was 21 September 1882, the first made by Father Patrick Dunne, his successor, was 22 October of that year.

Many of Dr. Bermingham's friends and well-wishers gathered in Sydney prior to his departure. Chairman, Dr. Morgan O'Connor presented him with £900. His return to his homeland came too late to heal his ailing lungs. Australia was not to see him again. While visiting London he died on 9 September 1883 in his fifty-sixth year, and is buried at Kensal Green.

To take over the reins from Dr. Bermingham came fellow-countryman and friend, Father Patrick Dunne.

3 *A Mighty Edifice*

When Father Dunne came to Wagga Wagga in 1883 the little brick church of Saint Michael which had served the early folk well had now, a quarter of a century later, outgrown its flock. Although the School Wing added by Dr. Bermingham in 1875 provided extra seating for 160 people, it did not adequately meet the needs of the Catholic community as already the town's population exceeded 4,000.

As economic conditions were at a low ebb, it was a courageous step taken by Father Dunne when he conceived the idea of a church of such magnificent proportions as the second Church of Saint Michael even though it was not completed at the time. His cousin, Dr. Michael McAlroy had built the first Church and now he was about to commence its successor.

ACQUIRING A SITE

As early as 26 October 1884 a committee was appointed to arrange for the erection of a new Church. A meeting in the school-room of the Church followed on 23 November chaired by Dr. Morgan O'Connor and attended by 40 gentlemen.

The Church already owned the land (2 roods in area) on the western corner of Church and Johnston Streets where the Cathedral now stands. It had been granted by the Crown on 10 August 1874 to Bishop William Lanigan, Father William Bermingham, John Cox and John Donnelly.



**The Church Builder Cousins Father Patrick Dunne and
Dr. Michael McAlroy**

Courtesy of Father T.J. Linane

Messrs. Donnelly Bros., three surviving sons of the late John Donnelly promised £1,000 towards the building fund or, as an alternative were prepared to provide land on the south-eastern corner of Johnston and Tarcutta Streets adjacent to existing Church land in Johnston

Street. To that donation they would add £200. It was pointed out on their behalf that the choice was a matter of indifference to them. There was much discussion and various opinions were put forward.

Dr. O'Connor favoured the latter site saying that Wagga Wagga was destined to be a greater place than most people imagined and it was as well to select a good site. He was supported by James Gormly and Peter McAlister. Mr. Brennan (Inspector of Police) was of the opinion that the Church should be built on the existing Church land and so reap the benefit of Messrs. Donnelly's generous offer.

Mr. Brennan moved an amendment to that effect, seconded by M. Treacey and supported by Patrick Moran and B. Ferry. A vote on the matter resulted in a decision to build on the Tarcutta Street site.¹ However, as history records and to which the Cathedral attests, the decision was later reversed and the Church was built on the land already owned on the western corner of Johnston and Church Streets.

The land on which the first Saint Joseph's School was built (adjacent to the Church) was part of an original Crown grant made to Michael Maher on 13 January 1858. The original grant consisted of an area of one acre. It extended to the south-eastern corner of Johnston and Tarcutta Streets. The section on which the School was built passed, on 16 April 1874, from Mary and Annie Maher, daughters of Michael Maher, to John Donnelly, who in turn, for the sum of £5 transferred it in trust to Bishop Lanigan, Dr. Morgan O'Connor, Reverend Dr. Michael McAlroy, V.G., and John King. The latter, the owner of 'Hanging Rock' Station, was married to a daughter of John Cox.²



John Donnelly

Courtesy of Mitchell Library



John Cox

Courtesy of Mitchell Library

The question may well be asked. Why was the Church not built on the site chosen in 1884 as being the most suitable? Although the land was offered as a gift to the Church in 1884 by the previously mentioned Donnelly Brothers who were already living in different parts of the State, it could be that they did not at that time have free title.

The land had been purchased by them from members of the Maher family, children of the original grantee, Michael Maher who died in 1880. It is possible that freeing of the title may have in some way been delayed following the death within a few months of each other of John Donnelly on 13 November 1879, his son John in February 1881 and of Michael Maher in March 1880. If that were the case, it is reasonable to assume that Church authorities would not commence building on land to which they did not have title. As the decision had already been made to go ahead with the building, tenders were called in February 1885.

On 7 September 1886 seventeen months after the laying of the foundation stone of the Church, the three Donnelly brothers mentioned above sold the remaining 2 roods, the originally intended Church site, to Father Patrick Dunne for £1,000. One wonders why Father Dunne made such a purchase at that time when he was already occupied with the building of the Church. One theory is that the deeds had only just become available and that the Donnelly Brothers had decided to sell it and so gave first offer to Father Dunne. The latter would realise how important its acquisition would be to the Church. The Church would then own the entire southern frontage (1 acre) of Johnston Street between Tarcutta and Church Streets.

Ever with an eye for the future needs of the Church, Father Dunne would no doubt have impoverished himself on its behalf as he had done throughout his priestly life. In this case his brother Denis helped him out by loaning the purchase money, or at least part thereof. Church records indicate that for a time the title deeds were secured by Denis Dunne until 19 December 1887. Father Dunne, on 1 February 1890, transferred them to Reverend William Lanigan, Reverend John Gallagher and Patrick Moran.³

A brick home presumed to have been that of Michael Maher stood on the corner of Johnston and Tarcutta Streets. In 1915 Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Horsley came to live there with their family. They remained there until the land was required for building the new Saint Joseph's School which opened in 1942. Two present-day Diocesan priests, Fathers Tony and Ralph Fitzgerald, spent part of their boyhood there. They are sons of Mrs. Molly and the late Edward Fitzgerald. Mrs. Fitzgerald is the eldest daughter of the Horsley family.

TENDERS CALLED

The plan of Melbourne architects, Messrs. Gilbert, Tuppin and Dennihey was accepted for the building of the second Church of Saint Michael. Father Dunne visited the City from time to time for discussions. Almost immediately an extensive canvass for the building fund was conducted in the town and district, bringing forth a very liberal response. Numerous avenues of money-raising were pursued - a mammoth bazaar during the Spring race meeting and a grand concert for which first-class singers were 'imported' from Goulburn.

Tenders for the foundations were called in February 1885, but as they were higher than expected it was decided to call fresh tenders for the work to be carried out in brick and concrete instead of in stone as originally invited. The *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* commented that "although there can be no doubt that granite foundations are costly, it seems a pity that the new Saint Michael's Catholic Church cannot be built on a more stable material - because of the expense, concrete, brick and cement [are] being substituted for the durable rock."

A few weeks later following further discussions, the decision regarding materials was again reversed. What frustration for the tenderers! The idea of concrete foundation was abandoned in favour of "excellent stone from Gerogery quarries - a more economical arrangement than the first stone decided upon". Tenders were then invited for quarrying stones at Gerogery. *The Advertiser* reported that "the new Church is to be built of blue-stone with free-stone dressings, and if the plans are faithfully carried out, will be one of the finest Churches in the Colony."⁴

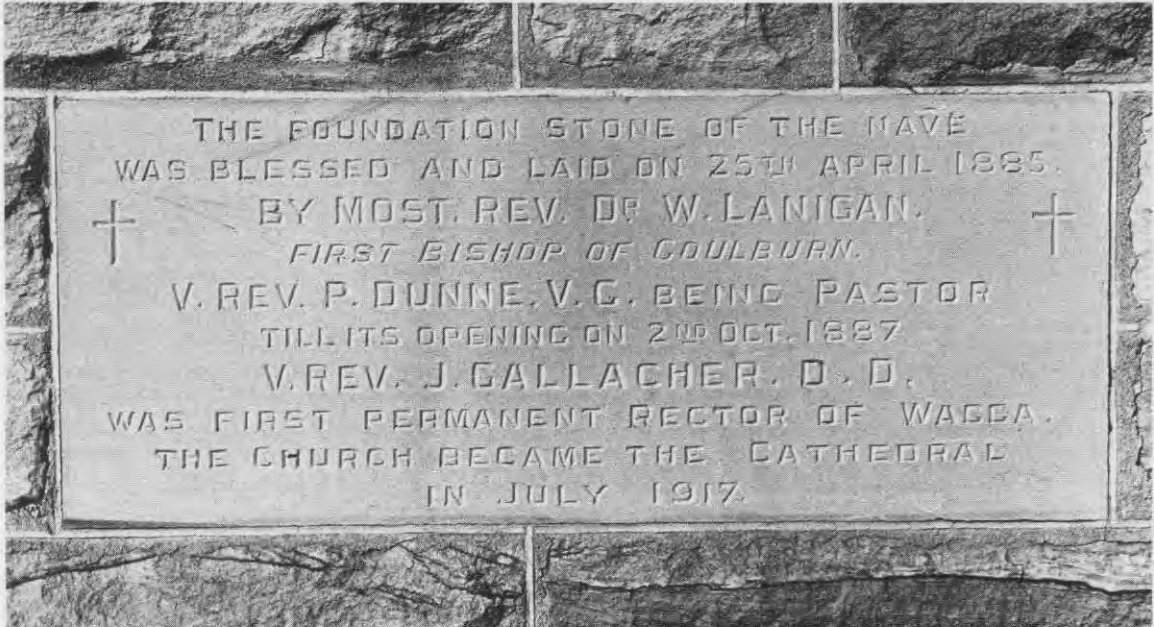
The stone work was that of Mr. Gibbs. Mr. Charles Hardy was responsible for the carpentry and wood-work.

FOUNDATION STONE

26 April 1885 was the day set down for the blessing and laying of the foundation stone performed by Bishop Lanigan of Goulburn. He was ably assisted by the local priests, Fathers Patrick Dunne, Parish Priest, Denis Walsh and Michael Buckley. Apologies were received from the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Patrick Moran, and the Bishop of Maitland, Dr. Murray. The 500 people present saw a procession move from the school-room of the Church, headed by two acolytes, and Dr. Morgan O'Connor, M.D., K.S.S., carrying a richly embroidered banner of the Sacred Heart.

"He made Him Master of His House, the Ruler of all His possessions" was the text of the sermon preached at 11 a.m. Mass by the Reverend Prior Butler of the Carmelite Order, South Melbourne. The record length of Father Michael Slattery's sermons in later years would have

paled into insignificance when compared with Father Butler's sermon of one and a half hours duration! 'John O'Brien' wrote that Father Slattery preached around the clock. Choice of music was from Weber's Mass in G and Haydn's First Mass.



**Second Church of Saint Michael Foundation Stone which replaced the original one
The date is incorrect. The original stone was laid on 26 April, 1885**

Photo - Michael Pym

Bishop Lanigan placed a cross on the site of the future High Altar and recited the 83rd Psalm. Under the foundation stone was placed a bottle containing the following items:

- (1) A Latin inscription on parchment
- (2) A copy of the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*
- (3) Several coins of the realm

Father Denis Walsh who had worked tirelessly in assisting Father Dunne, and whose name appears on the Latin inscription, died one week prior to the opening.

LATIN INSCRIPTION:

"A.M.D.G. Hic lapis Angularis Novae Ecclesiae Apud, Wagga Wagga, sub patricinio Sti Michaelis Archangeli, rite benedictus et positus est a Reverendissimo Domo, Gulielmo Lanigan, S.T.D., Episcopo Goulburnenno, quem circumsteterunt valde Revdus P. Dunne, parokiae pastor, Diocesisque Vicarius Generalis, Revdus D.T. Walsh, Revdus M. Buckley, et frequens fidelium multitudo, A.D. VI Kal Maias, anno salutis reparatae millesimo octingentesimo octogesimo quinto, Papa Leone Pontifice Maximo, Victoria Reginae, Comite Loftus res coloniae vice Reginae frustissime gubernante. Admodum Revdus J. Butler, O.C.C., Prior, orationem disertam acruditam occasione aptane habuit".

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE LATIN INSCRIPTION:

To the greater glory of God. This corner-stone of the new Church at Wagga Wagga, dedicated to Saint Michael the Archangel, was properly blessed and laid by the Right Reverend Bishop Lanigan, Bishop of Goulburn, Reverend P. Dunne, Pastor of the district and Vicar-General of the Diocese, Reverend D.T. Walsh, Reverend M. Buckley, and a large concourse of the faithful, on the 26th day of April in the year of grace, one thousand eight hundred and eighty five, during the Pontificate of Pope Leo XIII, in the reign of Queen Victoria, and under the Vice-Royalty of Lord Augustus Loftus, K.C., M.G., happily governing this Colony of New South Wales. The very Reverend J. Butler, Prior, O.C.C., preached a learned and eloquent sermon suitable for the occasion.⁵

Although some reports regarding ongoing expenses were published no record has been sighted relating to the total cost of the Church. In a statement which accompanied a subscription list for March 1885 - March 1886 showing receipt of £2,409/5/9, Father Dunne advised that the sum of £4,242/9/5 had been expended on the new Church up-to-date (27 March 1886) leaving an overdraft debt of £1,838/8/8. He commented that if all the large promises made when the building commenced were honoured, they would almost cover the debt.

He added that no debt exceeding £2,000 would be incurred, and work would be suspended unless the promises were honoured. Indeed the local press⁶ reported: "It is rumoured that building operations may be stopped or indefinitely retarded for want of funds to carry on the work."

Newspaper reports of opening day do not mention the cost of the Church or the amount owing.

SAINT JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

To meet the continuing needs of education, Father Dunne undertook the building of Saint Joseph's School. He was no stranger to the task of establishing schools having built 12 in Victoria during his first years in Australia. The building was made possible by a bequest of £600 under the will of the late Mrs. Maloney of Toole's Creek, a condition being that the money be used for educational purposes. As well as building the Church, Father Dunne now had another building project to occupy his attention and time.

On 25 January 1886 following Mass and procession, headed once again by Dr. Morgan O'Connor, Dr. Lanigan performed the blessing and opening ceremony of Saint Joseph's School. Father John Gallagher who, in the following year became Parish Priest at Wagga Wagga, was also present representing Saint Patrick's College, Goulburn, of which he was President.

Father Dunne lost his main assistant in 1886 when Father Michael Buckley was appointed to take charge of Temora.

With the co-operation of a strong Catholic community, Sodalities and Societies were established and flourishing. To cater for the music-minded, a Liedertafel Society (Choral Society) was formed. Members practised regularly and, on special occasions, rendered classical works in four parts. As mentioned, a very active Catholic Literary Society existed, having such experienced speakers as J. Gormly, M. Mongan, Fathers M. Buckley, M. Phelan, Dr. Morgan O'Connor and Dr. Patrick Bermingham. The latter two were orators of exceptional quality, well-versed in the Classics. Much space was given by the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* to its meetings which were held weekly. So too, the Hibernian Society (H.A.C.B.S.) was on a sound footing.



The historic 1849 St. Patrick's Day Cup

Courtesy of Jack Dennis

On Saint Patrick's Day 1885 when John McAlister was Secretary, to aid the Church building fund and to show their strength, members held a race-meeting preceded by a procession in the Main Street. They marched to the strains of the Wagga Wagga Brass Band. To round off the festivities a 'Select Ball' was held at night in the Freemason's Hall. Patrons danced until 4 a.m. and paid £1/1/- a double for the privilege.

With celtic blood flowing warmly in their veins, the Irishmen of the town (and there were many) were early on the scene in celebrating their national day, in fact as early as 1849 when Wagga Wagga was scarcely more than a village (it was proclaimed in that year) they held a race meeting to celebrate their day.⁷ Inter-school sport was encouraged also, hence we read that cricket teams from North Wagga Wagga Boys' Public School matched their skill against that of Boys from Saint Michael's Denominational School.

OPENING OF SECOND CHURCH OF SAINT MICHAEL

The opening of the second Church of Saint Michael was performed with dignity and ceremonial befitting such an historic occasion. The Ceremonies began on Saturday 1 October 1887 with the arrival by train of members of the Hierarchy, Bishops Lanigan, Goulburn; Moran, Dunedin, New Zealand; Byrne, Bathurst; Murray, Maitland and J. Dunne, Wilcannia, who were conveyed by John Cox in a drag with four-in-hand.

At the corner of Fitzmaurice and Johnston Streets a procession was formed. It moved towards the Church where an address of welcome was given by Dr. Morgan O'Connor and a window to honour Father Dunne (a likeness of him in stained glass) was put in place in the Church. It was the gift of several parishioners who wished to honour him in a lasting manner.

Other visiting clergy were Reverend Prior Butler, Melbourne; Fathers Slattery, Narrandera; H. Finnegan, Gundagai; Fogarty, Goulburn; Treacey and the incoming priest in charge of Wagga Wagga, Father John Gallagher.

On the next day, Sunday 2 October, the formal opening and consecration took place followed by Solemn High Mass. According to the original arrangements, the highest dignitary of the Australian Catholic Church was to have officiated on the occasion and as reported by *Freeman's Journal* "it is no secret that the Cardinal - Archbishop (Patrick Moran) would have gladly availed himself of the opportunity of paying a mark of honour to his old and revered friend Father Patrick Dunne, by personally blessing and opening the Church".

Although not completely recovered from a serious illness, His Eminence had undertaken a long journey to Adelaide from which he had just returned. Imperative orders from his medical adviser were that he could not undertake another long journey so soon without seriously affecting his health.⁸



**Second Church of Saint Michael
opened 1887 - became a Cathedral in 1917**

Courtesy of Diocesan Archives

For the formal blessing and opening of the Church, a former class-mate of Father Dunne, Dr. Moran of Dunedin, New Zealand, was officiating Bishop assisted by the other Bishops

present. High Mass was celebrated by Bishop Byrne of Bathurst assisted by local clergy M. Buckley and M. Phelan. Bishop Lanigan presided. Prior Butler preached the sermon. Music for the Mass was specially composed for the occasion by organist, W.G. Broadhurst. The service concluded with a rendition of the Hallelujah Chorus from 'the Messiah'. Father Dunne announced the receipt of a letter and donation of £20 from Cardinal Moran.

A collection at Mass resulted in the following amounts being received: Father Dunne £50; Father Gallagher £50; Mr. O. Cox £50;

Bishop Murray £20; Bishop Lanigan £20; Bishop Moran £10; Dr. John Donovan, Sydney, £20. Collections in cash together with promises amounted to between £700 and £800.

THE RECEPTION

Besides the visiting clergy, 200 ladies and gentlemen including Mayor and Mayoress, Alderman and Mrs. Fitzhardinge, sat down to a luncheon in Saint Joseph's School, among them were many of other faiths. Father Dunne occupied the chair.

Bishop Lanigan in proposing the toast of the health of Father Dunne said "the history of the venerable priest really meant the history of many places in the Colonies, so much so he might not only be called an Australian, but an Australasian. One of his marked characteristics was searching out for new fields of labour, he being a man of extraordinary zeal and indomitable energy of which practical proof has been given by the success he had achieved in this district, more especially in the crowning effort which had resulted in the erection of the beautiful new Church".

In referring to Father Gallagher who was to be Father Dunne's successor, Bishop Lanigan, in a jocular fashion, said he (the Bishop) had not yet handed him his letter of appointment as he was an impetuous man and "if he had the authority of his appointment he might tell 'the old man' to go about his business".

The esteem in which Father Dunne was held by Cardinal Moran may be gauged by the Cardinal's letter which was then read:⁹

My dear Father Dunne,

I must ask you to say to your good people that my state of health deprives me of the great pleasure I would otherwise have had in taking part in your grand ceremonial on Sunday next, I regret this the more as I was desirous to show by my presence at Wagga how deeply I revere the zealous pastor of that district, and how I appreciate his disinterested and untiring labours for almost 40 years on the Australian Mission.

I will ask you to add my mite to the building fund.

Believe me to be

Yours faithfully and devotedly,
+ Patrick F. Cardinal Moran,
Archbishop of Sydney.

On the preceding Thursday evening, Mr. Broadhurst entertained 500 people at an organ recital in the Church, which had been temporarily lit for the occasion. Mr. George Coleman, Secretary of the Organ Fund and later a Mayor of the town, had the difficult task of seating the audience. The Church furniture previously used in the first Church had been removed, restored and repolished by Mr. Gore in readiness for service in the new Church but it was insufficient for the occasion. Other town organizations willingly loaned seating and gave assistance in other ways.

The audience paid three shillings each to hear the recital on the large Organ specially constructed for Saint Michael's by George Fincham of Melbourne.

The Organ was destined not to grace the Church for long. It was returned to the makers. Although its present whereabouts are known, the circumstances surrounding its return remain a mystery. Perhaps Bishop Lanigan considered it to be too elaborate (he disliked any display of lavishness in Church property) or perhaps it was exchanged for a smaller instrument. The most

likely reason is that the necessary funds were not forthcoming and as a cost saving measure the Organ from the first Church was brought into use again.

At the Organ recital mentioned above, Father Dunne noted that originally he was opposed to the purchase of the Organ as there were so many other calls on the resources of the Church and its people in the difficult economic times which prevailed. For whatever reason, it was returned to Finchams who sold it in 1893 for £300 to the Melbourne Church of England Grammar School for its Chapel.

Saint Bartholomew's Anglican Church, Burnley, purchased it in 1913 and it was moved once more in 1926 when the present Saint Bartholomew's Church was built. Now 100 years after its installation in Saint Michael's Church it is still in use.¹⁰



**Johnston Street from Fitzmaurice Street corner.
The former Methodist Church in the foreground, first Saint Joseph's School
next the Cathedral circa 1890.**

Courtesy of Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society

Two months prior to the opening of the Church, following Sunday Mass on 31 July, a presentation was made to Father Dunne, by Mrs. O'Connor, wife of Dr. O'Connor, on behalf of a number of ladies of the parish. The gift consisted of a set of elaborately embroidered vestments imported from Belgium by Mrs. O'Connor. In making the presentation, Mrs. O'Connor said: "You encouraged the faint-hearted, carried on the zealous and edified [work] and won all to help you by your generous example".

"Our graceful and stately Church, the child and crown of your old age, will ever stand as a monument of your love for God's House and will proclaim to future generations the name and virtues of the zealous priest who, in the face of difficulties which would have appalled a less resolute spirit, undertook and erected it. With scant resources but full of confidence in God, you laid the foundation stone in a season of unprecedented depression and by indomitable courage and perseverance, carried the work on to completion".¹¹

Many people in the community assisted in making the arrangements for the opening of the Church run smoothly. In a letter to the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* on Tuesday 11 October, Mr. George Coleman thanked the many non-Catholics who gave assistance: Mr. W.J. Daley, Master of Lodge Harmony, who loaned chairs for the church free of charge; the trustees of the Masonic Hall through Mr. Corthorn, for the loan of forms; and Messrs. Morrison and Daley who assumed charge of reserved seats and allotment of chairs at the Organ Recital.

Father Dunne was a champion of ecumenism almost before the word was spoken of. Alderman Hayes when speaking at the luncheon said that he attributed the good feeling which

existed between Protestants and Catholics, in a large measure to Father Dunne and he believed there was not one Protestant in Wagga who did not regret his departure.

The magnificent church gave a new dimension to Church and Johnston Streets. It was also in good company architecturally, being in close proximity to a fine collection of stately buildings which arose during the mid 1880's - the Union Bank (ANZ), the Commercial Bank and the Post Office, as well as the Bank of New South Wales (Westpac) erected in 1874.

All of these buildings have been classified by the National Trust as have the Cathedral, and Saint Michael's Presbytery which was later named the Bishop's House. As well, there were the neighbouring Churches, Saint John's Church of England, Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church and Manse. The latter two buildings have likewise been classified by the Trust.

There was a great sense of loss when Father Dunne took his departure from Wagga Wagga to take charge of Albury Parish, replacing his nephew Father John Dunne who was appointed Bishop of Wilcannia. A slight stroke in 1889 caused him to retire. He died on 19 July 1900 in a small cottage built for him at Saint John's Orphanage, Thurgoona, Albury, and is buried within its grounds. Penniless at death he had spent what little he had on the building of the Orphanage. He was Vicar-General at the time of his death.

A PROFILE

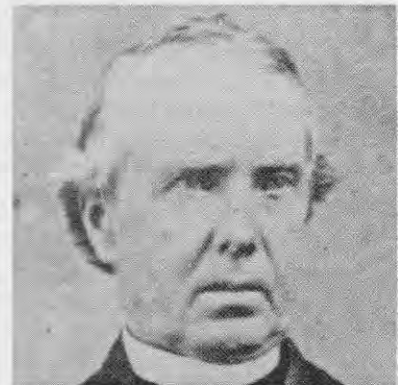
Born in Clonaslee, Queen's County, Ireland in 1818 Patrick Dunne was ordained in early 1846. One of the earliest volunteers for the Australian Mission he sailed in May 1850 a few months before Victoria became a separate State in 1851. His service to the Church encompassed 3 States, Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales. He was the first priest to offer Mass and to live on the Ballarat goldfields, a borrowed tent serving as his Church.

Before going to Ballarat in late 1851 he had already established schools at Pentridge, Moonee Ponds and Darebin Creek (Epping) and was the first to sponsor Superior or Grammar Schools for boys and girls in Victoria. He was the first Chaplain to the Pentridge Stockade. A relative, Alice Dunne who taught in one of his Schools married the Eureka leader, Peter Lalor.

Following a rift in the Port Fairy congregation and a disagreement with Bishop Goold Father Dunne asked for his release. At his farewell he received an address bearing 2,000 signatures, and 600 sovereigns. The latter scarcely *met* personal debts incurred in building Schools. All in all he established 12 schools in Victoria. Officiating at the grave of an unknown man in Geelong cemetery gave rise to the thought that he may have been Sir Roger Tichborne. Clothing bore the initials R.C.T.

In May 1857 Father Dunne returned to Ireland where he became President of Tullamore Academy but was back again in 1861 when he seized an opportunity to bring immigrants from Ireland for whom entry into America was no longer possible due to Civil War. Having persuaded the Queensland Government to accept the new-comers he chartered a vessel which he named "Erin-go-bragh". It almost sank during the voyage. Other such voyages resulted in thousands of Irish people being settled in the northern State.¹² Take a drive through the Darling Downs and you will see the legacy of his endeavours in the names given to towns, villages, bridges and water-ways.

Coming south he became first President of Saint Patrick's College, Goulburn. He was a colourful figure who shared in the honours with Fathers McAlroy and P. Bermingham of being pioneers of Riverina Catholicity. They are the most talked of among present Church historians.¹³ Certainly all three left their mark on the Church in Wagga Wagga.



Father Patrick Dunne, of Erin-Go-Bragh Fame, builder of 2nd Church of Saint Michael (the Cathedral)

Courtesy of Father F. Meham

Father Dunne, a teetotaler, lived a simple life, caring nought for wealth and possessions. His personal funds were expended on the Church and its Schools. He died as he had lived, a man of apostolic charity.

FEATURES OF SECOND CHURCH OF SAINT MICHAEL IN 1887

THE EXTERIOR: Gerogery stone, with Oamuru, N.Z., free stone facings, and in style is modern Gothic, with samples of Early English, the decorated and geometrical.

PROPORTIONS: The proportions are very ambitious and the architects have succeeded in elaborating the design with much skill. When the tower and southern wings are completed, the building will have a most commanding appearance. The Church is in the form of a cross, with a tower in the north-east corner, which with the transepts etc. is not yet erected.

DIMENSIONS: Length 128 feet, width 50 feet in the aisle and nave and 80 feet at the transepts.

The other dimensions when the Church is completed will be:

Chancel 12 x 17 feet; the left-side Chapel 12 feet 6 inches x 12 feet 8 inches; the right-side Chapel 10 feet 9½ inches x 11 feet 8 inches; the priests' scaristry will measure 24 feet x 11 feet 8 inches; and the altar boys' sacristy will be the same size as the adjoining Chapel.

The two transepts will be 25 feet x 21 feet 6 inches.

The nave is 87 feet x 25 feet; the aisles approximately 50 feet x 12 feet 6 inches.

The tower when completed will be approximately 125 feet high.

The whole interior is plaster work, and the clerestory walls are supported by round freestone columns, and having moulded caps and bases.

The Sanctuary is completed both in and outside.

The Altar space has been left of great dimensions, shadowing forth the great religious ceremonies therein yet to take place. The Altar is highly ornate in design and construction, especially the reredos, and the parts made in Rome, inlaid with various coloured emblems or symbols of the Irish faith.

It is supported by four columns representing the great marble of Egypt.

The stained glass windows give a cathedral aspect to the interior.

Triple chancel windows: Centre window presented by Mrs. John Cox, Mangoplah, in memory of Rev. Dr. P. Bermingham - the left one of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord and Immaculate Heart of Mary - on the right erected by Mrs. John Donnelly Snr. contains life size of St. John and Saint Joseph. St. John writing the Gospel with a scroll, whilst the eagle at the feet denotes the eagle glance with which he soared so high in the Church. The left window in memory of John Cox, symbolic figures of Saint Michael and Saint Patrick carrying in his arms a model of the Armagh Church, the first erected in Ireland.

Saint Michael is emblematic of the Christian soldier; with the sword of faith and armour of righteousness, and holds his foot upon the slain dragon.

The whole of the series of windows over the organ erected by the Cox Brothers in token and affection for their esteemed mother. The central window being composed of "The Crucifixion" with the supporting figures of the Virgin Mary on the left and Saint John on the right.

The first two stained windows on the Gospel side were donated by members of 'The Children of Mary', Mount Erin, Guardian Angel and Saint Agnes with olive leaf and lamb.

The second window - the Immaculate Conception and Saint Anne with the Gospel - erected in memory of Mrs. Peter by her grand-daughters, Mrs. H. Welman and Miss Bourke.

The third pair as mentioned - a gift of several friends of the Vicar-General, Father Patrick Dunne, as a memorial, is a token of his valuable labours in connection with Saint Michael's Parish and his special zeal and work of church erection - on either side Saint Patrick and Our Lady of the Rosary are depicted.

The fourth window - a gift of Mrs. King of The Rock, in memory of her late parents-the subject is Saint Mary of Pazzi.

Altar rails: fine cedar - the work of J. Dawson - With cast balusters painted in gold and brown.¹⁴

As most of the work was let by day labour, many tradesmen and artisans were involved in the undertaking. John Joseph Malyon who died before the Church was opened sawed and prepared the timber.

Lighting: Gas. Gas services became available in the town in the early 1880's and a water supply later in the decade.

Stone Work: Mr. Gibbs.

Carpentry and Woodwork: Mr. C. Hardy, contractor.

Capacity: Designed to accommodate a congregation of 1,000.

4 *First Irremovable Pastor Appointed*

When Father John Gallagher came to Saint Michael's to succeed Father Patrick Dunne immediately after the opening of the second Church in October 1887, it was the second occasion on which he had stepped into the shoes of the venerable gentlemen, the first being in Goulburn in 1875 when he succeeded him as President of Saint Patrick's College which opened in the previous year. Respite from his labours was sorely needed, hence his transfer to Wagga Wagga and his appointment as Irremovable Rector, the first in the southern world.

In Goulburn he had been successful in building up the standard of Saint Patrick's College to a height of excellence. On coming to Wagga Wagga he succeeded in having a Girls' Boarding School built at Mount Erin Convent. Shortly after the Sisters first took up residence at the Convent in 1876 Dr. P. Bermingham endeavoured to have one established but his request was not granted by Bishop Lanigan, a reason being that the Boarding School as planned would be part of the Convent, a situation which the Bishop considered to be undesirable.

The new proposal put forward by Father Gallagher thirteen years later was acceptable to the Bishop. The Boarding School opened on 9 February 1890. In that year too the South Wagga Wagga Public School in Edward Street was built.

Meanwhile in Church Street the priests acquired a next door neighbour when Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Manse was built, thus completing the coterie of ecclesiastical buildings on the western side of Church Street.



**Father John Gallagher, first Irremovable Pastor, October 1887,
became ^{second} Bishop of Goulburn in 1895**

Courtesy of Father F. Meham

True to his promise to enlarge the Boarding School, Father Gallagher had the work carried out. At the same time the School Hall known as Saint Eugene's High School came into being. The former name of Saint Brigid's was dispensed with. The additions were opened by Bishop Lanigan on 25 September 1892.

During a visit to Ireland Bishop Lanigan invited members of the Patrician Brothers to come to his Diocese. They commenced teaching at Saint Michael's Church-School at the beginning of 1890. A section of the School-Wing was adapted for sleeping quarters, the balance provided the School room. The girls being taught there were then transferred to the recently erected Saint Joseph's School nearby in Johnston Street.

Three of the Brothers died in Wagga Wagga at intervals of 2 years - 1892, 1894 and 1896, and were interred in the adjacent burial ground. Their remains were later transferred to the Wagga Wagga cemetery.

About this time an important step was taken when the Wagga Wagga Experiment Farm was established a few miles north of the town. From a humble beginning it was fore-runner to the Agricultural Research Institute which was to become the centre of important wheat-breeding programmes and which saw the advent of sub-terranean clover and superphosphate which have had far-reaching benefits to the farming and grazing industries.

Father Gallagher, a classical scholar and pulpit orator par excellence was to the fore in promoting the Literary Society and was a keen participant in debates and lectures at its meetings. Assistants at the Presbytery during Father Gallagher's time in Wagga Wagga were Fathers R. Kennedy and P. McAlroy a nephew of Dr. Michael McAlroy; Patrick Cussen and John Curley.

When Father Gallagher realised that his beloved Saint Patrick's College was in danger of closing, he returned to Goulburn in 1895 to assist in its revival.¹ Four months later he was appointed Coadjutor Bishop to the man who had ordained him in Ireland - Bishop Lanigan. With added responsibilities he was unable to fully concentrate on putting the affairs of the College to right. A decision was then made to bring a teaching Order to the College. It was entrusted to the Christian Brothers.

In the year that Father Gallagher departed for Goulburn, Wagga Wagga lost also one of its most outstanding residents, Dr. Morgan O'Connor who was not only an exemplary Catholic-layman, but a townsman of integrity. He died on 12 August 1895 and is buried in the Wagga Wagga cemetery with members of his family.

FATHER MICHAEL SLATTERY, NEW PRESBYTERY

An equally zealous and capable priest, Father Michael Slattery succeeded Father Gallagher. They were old friends and college mates from Seminary days at Maynooth from where they volunteered for the Australian Mission. They were ordained in 1869 by Bishop Lanigan who was on a visit to Ireland at the time. Their first appointment was at Saint Peter and Paul's, Goulburn, where Father P. Dunne was Administrator. On the latter's death in 1900 at Newtown, Albury, Father Slattery was appointed Vicar-General. His period of service at Saint Michael's was to be his last on earth.

Possessed of exceptional organising ability he had previously carried out the difficult task of forming four new parishes, Crookwell, Corowa, Narrandera and Temora. The latter parish was attached to Wagga Wagga prior to 1881 and later, briefly to Cootamundra.

At the time of Father Slattery's arrival at Saint Michael's, Wagga Wagga was still experiencing a period of depression which was followed at the turn of the century by prolonged drought. Undaunted Father Slattery persevered with the idea of building a new Presbytery as the existing one was small and inadequate.

As early as 1897 a building fund was established, many functions being held to augment it, such as a grand Bazaar during Show week. Opened by the Mayor it continued for the entire week. Because of the difficult times there was a reluctance to further burden the parishioners with a building debt. Work would not be commenced until sufficient funds were in hand to meet ongoing costs.

It would seem that a debt still remained on the Church for, in 1895, an Art Union was conducted to aid its funds. First prize was a Pair of Horses or twenty sovereigns, the gift of Reverend Bishop Gallagher. Drawing was to take place on 11 December 1895.^{1a}

As the site of the old Presbytery was the most desirable and convenient, being adjacent to the Church, it was decided to incorporate portion of the single-storey building in the new one thus, in a material way, linking the past with the present.



Saint Michael's Presbytery opened 1902

The 2 storey face-brick Presbytery of domestic Gothic design has extremely fine verandah work. Timber detailing to valances and balustrading is appropriately ecclesiastical with half timber work to lower parts, bay windows and gables. The hipped and gabled roof is sheeted with iron.

It was not until 11 November 1900 that the foundation stone was laid by Bishop Gallagher who was formerly resident there as parish priest. While building operations were in progress the priests, Fathers Slattery, J.W. Dwyer (later first Bishop of Wagga Wagga) and P. O'Shea took up residence in the old Presbyterian Manse situated around the corner in Cross Street.² The Manse which in 1915 made way for Saint Andrew's Sunday School Hall, had been unoccupied as such since 1891 when the new Manse was built alongside Saint Andrew's in Church Street. There it stands side by side with Saint Michael's Presbytery.

That an ecumenical spirit existed was exhibited in many ways from the time of the building of the first Saint Michael's Church in 1858-59 when several subscribers to the building fund were of other persuasions, so too in a reciprocal manner Catholics made contributions to other Church buildings in the town.³

Prelates, priests and laity assembled on 28 September 1902 for the opening of Saint Michael's Presbytery, a most distinguished gathering, unusual on such an occasion, attributable mainly to the desire of those present to show their regard for Father Slattery who was revered by priests and people throughout the Goulburn Diocese. It was stated that "Wherever he went he brought happiness and had the personal friendship not only of priests, but of every member of the Hierarchy. He was a sound theologian and a good classical scholar, as well he was a brilliant and humorous conversationalist and raconteur".⁴

Dr. Murray, Bishop of Maitland, travelled 400 miles to be present. Dean Phelan represented Archbishop Carr of Melbourne. The blessing and opening ceremony was carried out by the Bishop of Goulburn, Dr. Gallagher, who recorded in his diary that "it is a fine commodious building whose only fault is too much external woodwork and unnecessary ornamentation. But it is on the whole in entire keeping with the other fine Cath. (sic) buildings of Wagga". Fourteen

priests from various centres including Wagga Wagga were present. The Presbytery was built to the plan of W. Monks at a cost of £2,000.

It was intended that a banquet be held following the opening but due to the seriousness of the drought which was one of the worst on record, the idea of such a function was abandoned, instead Father Slattery entertained the visiting clergy at Luncheon in the Presbytery.

When building of the Presbytery was in the planning stage the town was farewelling local young men who had volunteered to serve with the Australian contingent at the Boer War in Africa in 1899. Towards the close of hostilities in the following year when the thoughts of 'the boys' turned to home, the news came that one of the parishioners, Private Joseph F. Palazzi had lost his life on the battlefield. Requiem Mass with military honours was offered for him in Saint Michael's Church.⁵

By the turn of the century with a town population hovering around the 5,000 mark and areas close by gradually becoming settled the responsibilities of the parish were increasing. In true missionary spirit, Father Slattery and his assistant priests reached out to serve those whom distance prevented from attending Mass in the town. They travelled in all weathers (without benefit of the motor car), celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, baptising in centres such as Currawarna, Tarcutta, Yarragundry, Alfredtown, Uranquinty, Lake Albert, Mangoplah, Livingstone Gully, Book Book, Borambola, Toolles Creek, Gobbagumbalin and Eunonyhareenyha. Of these centres only Currawarna had a Church at that time.⁶

Elsewhere Mass was offered in private homes at irregular intervals, at some once a month, others every second month and some twice a year on week-days. As well Mass was being offered every Sunday and Holy Day in Saint Eugene's Chapel at Mount Erin and daily in the Convent Oratory. Benediction was given at Mount Erin three or four times a month on Sunday afternoon. At Saint Michael's there were two Masses on Sunday - 9 a.m. for children and 11 a.m. at which a sermon was preached.

Mention has been made of the length of Father Slattery's sermons. His contemporary, Monsignor Hartigan ('John O'Brien') credited him with being "the greatest talker of his time,..... he talked right around the clock". In 1879 when the Kelly gang raided the bank at Jerilderie, they divested the two local police of their uniforms, donned the latter and then locked the police and household members in the residence.

Mrs. Devine was permitted to go to the Court House accompanied by Dan Kelly to prepare the Court room for Mass the following morning. Before doing so, Ned Kelly asked which priest was coming, adding that "if it was Father Slattery he would have to be locked up with the others for his own protection and the well-being of all".⁷

For some years Father Slattery's health was the cause of some concern. His suffering with a kidney ailment gradually increased. A serious eye infection some time previously had necessitated the removal of that organ. From that time on, his health deteriorated. On Saturday 16 February 1907 he was relieved of his suffering and died at the Presbytery.

Many tributes were paid to him in the press and by his fellow priests and associates. He was a pioneer of the Goulburn Diocese and one of its five consultors. At the Requiem Mass celebrated by Father Buckley, Bishop Gallagher, his former college-mate, preached a moving panegyric, naming him a 'Parish Builder'.

"He showed a kindly tolerance for the frailties which are inevitably part of man, and took a personal interest in the every day affairs of the people as well as their spiritual needs. A man of unflinching charity who helped anyone in distress he was known to give his very best pair of boots to someone who had none".

"The latest product of his pastoral zeal was the formation of the Aloysian Society for young men, as well he showed a fostering care for the Hibernian Society, the Literary Society, Sacred Heart Sodality and Children of Mary. He was a learned and accurate theologian and a kind, prudent and judicious counsellor".⁸

Father Slattery was interred in the Wagga Wagga cemetery. Among the hundreds of mourners were many from other denominations including the Church of England Minister, Reverend J.N. Ward, the Presbyterian Minister, the Reverend Charles Bell and the Methodist Chairman of the Riverina District, the Reverend Jos. Beale.

MONSIGNOR BUCKLEY CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

A well-organised parish awaited Father Buckley when he became Parish Priest following the death of Father Slattery. He was no stranger to the town having been first assistant to Father Patrick Dunne from 1883 to 1886. His name appears in the Latin inscription which was placed beneath the foundation stone of the second Church of Saint Michael as being one of the priests who assisted in the great work.

Due no doubt to a shortage of priests in the Goulburn Diocese, Temora had apparently been without a resident priest in 1885.⁹ Father Buckley took up duties there in 1886 but later left to take charge of the recently formed Junee Parish. Until a Presbytery was built he lived for many years in a small temporary room near the Church. From there he also provided spiritual care for Temora people until the end of the century.

In 1901 he returned to Wagga Wagga to assist the ailing Father Slattery. On the latter's death in 1907 he was placed in charge and elevated to the Monsignori. As parish priest he continued the provision of Church and School buildings. He brought the Christian Brothers to the town, their Monastery was built, also the beautiful Chapel at Mount Erin. A new wing was added to Saint Eugene's High School, additions were made to Saint Joseph's School and a new Church built at North Wagga Wagga.

Due to unforeseen circumstances in their Order, the Patrician Brothers in 1898 relinquished charge of their Schools in Wagga Wagga as well as in Goulburn and Albury. Saint Michael's School was then placed for a time in the care of Mr. Byrne. This arrangement being unsuccessful, the Presentation Sisters were requested to resume teaching the boys who were then transferred to Saint Joseph's School while the girls were taught in the Church-School. This was the position until the arrival of the Christian Brothers at the end of 1913.¹⁰



Monsignor Michael Buckley appointed first Vicar-General of Wagga Wagga Diocese in 1918

The coming of the Christian Brothers was the culmination of continued efforts of successive pastors supported by parents and other parishioners to expand first class Catholic education in the town. Monsignor Buckley pursued the ideal of having a separate school for boys conducted by Christian Brothers whose reputation for a high standard of teaching was borne out by the achievements of their pupils at Saint Patrick's College, Goulburn.

Schools were already functioning well at Mount Erin and Saint Joseph's in Johnston street. Now the boys were to have similar opportunities. The missing link was a Boys' High School. In good time, albeit later than anticipated, one was built but not before the intervention of a World War and a Depression of giant proportions which broke the hearts and sapped the life-blood and resources of numerous people.

The attractive two-storey Monastery situated on the eastern corner of Church Street adjacent to the first Saint Michael's Church follows the Gothic-style of architecture in keeping with its counterparts in the Street. It was built by Charles Hardy and Co. at a cost of approximately £3,400. The foundation stone was laid by Bishop Gallagher on 11 May 1913. The Brothers took up residence before it was completed. The School opened under the new Order on 27 January 1914 but the official opening did not take place until Sunday 17 May of that year by which time the School was already running smoothly with 120 pupils attending. It opened with 71 pupils.

By the middle of February the number was 100 and to mark the occasion a half-holiday was declared.¹¹

The first Saint Michael's Church which served as a school since 1860, firstly under the Denominational School Board, then the Presentation Sisters, private (male) teachers and Patrician Brothers, was now re-modelled and furnished to present an up-to-date establishment to cater for high school, primary and kindergarten pupils.

Blessing and opening of the Monastery took place on Sunday 17 May 1914, performed by Bishop Gallagher with the assistance of Monsignor Michael Buckley and Father J.W. Dwyer of Temora (the future Bishop of Wagga Wagga). The Bishop presided at Mass celebrated by Father O'Sullivan.

Presiding at the banquet in Saint Joseph's Hall, following the ceremonies, Monsignor Buckley said it was the most important day for the past forty years, since the opening of Mount Erin Convent, as now permanent provision was being made for the education of youth. Bishop Gallagher declared the occasion to be the most eventful and historic in which he had participated since being stationed in Wagga Wagga 27 years ago.

Later in the day the visitors moved to Mount Erin Convent where Dr. Gallagher blessed and laid the foundation stone of the Convent Chapel. An inspection and blessing of new class-rooms at Saint Mary's Primary School below the Chapel then followed.¹²

Monsignor Buckley had the honour of offering the first Mass in the Brothers' Monastery.



**Christian Brothers' Monastery, opened 1914, first Saint Michael's Church in background.
The new school had not then been built.**

Courtesy of Mount Erin Convent Archives

The muted roll of war drums already being heard in Europe when the Christian Brothers began teaching in Wagga Wagga presaged a time of hardship for them, in fact for all of the community. Although school fees were minimal, collection of them was difficult and many parents were unable to pay at all.

When the First World War erupted a wave of patriotism stirred the breasts of many young men who were willing to 'do their bit' even though the theatres of war seemed so distant from homeland shores. One result was the history-making 'Kangaroo March'. With Wagga Wagga as their starting point in December 1915 they marched, eager and energetic, 100 or more strong on their 320 mile trek to Sydney collecting volunteers along the way. The March was described as one of the most colourful events ever held in the history of the town. It would be remembered by some citizens of to-day.

Bishops, including Bishop Gallagher, who guided our destiny before the formation of Wagga Wagga Diocese



Most Rev. John Bede Polding, O.S.B. first Bishop of Sydney.

Courtesy of Father F. Mecham



Most Rev. William Lanigan, first Bishop of the Diocese of Goulburn in 1867

Courtesy of Father F. Mecham

In that year the long-awaited Chapel at Mount Erin was completed, complementing and giving balance to the existing Convent. As on several occasions the blessing and opening ceremony, on 12 September, was performed by Bishop Gallagher with the Bishop of Sale, Dr. Phelan, and several visiting clergy attending. The future Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Father J.W. Dwyer, parish priest of Temora, acted as Master of Ceremonies.

Monsignor Buckley's service as parish priest of Saint Michael's was drawing to a close as indeed was his time on earth. With the formation of a new Diocese and the coming of Bishop Dwyer, many changes were necessary. Monsignor Buckley was appointed first Vicar-General of the new Diocese and transferred as parish priest to his former parish of Junee. With less onerous duties to claim his attention, he was able to continue his interest in football and engage in other hobbies such as gun and coursing dogs. He was known also to have an eye for a good horse.

During his time in Wagga Wagga in the early 1880's he was a visitor to the home of the writer's paternal grandmother, Irish-born Margaret Lloyd (née Clarke) who was widowed in her early 30's with six young children to care for. The eldest son of the family, Theophilus, rode an eye-catching chestnut which was often admired by Father Buckley.

Out riding on the farm one day the young man sheltered under a tree during a storm. The tree was struck by lightning and the rider suffered serious injuries from which he died in 1885. His mother presented the unharmed horse to Father Buckley who in turn gave her a suitably inscribed, massive family bible which is still in the family.

At the Monsignor's farewell attended by many community leaders, presentations were made on behalf of the parish and organisations within it. Bishop Dwyer said he felt that night like a prisoner at the Bar, as his coming had been the reason for the Monsignor going away. He was indeed sorry for being the innocent cause of removing from them one whom they had loved so much.¹³

Less than two years after the coming of the first Bishop, death from pneumonia claimed the Vicar-General at Junee on 9 June 1920 at the age of 70 years. All of the priests of the new Diocese with the exception of Dean O'Connell who was in Queensland, were present at his Requiem in Junee. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Dwyer. Bishop Gallagher officiated at the graveside. Many parishioners from Wagga Wagga attended. As he had brought the Christian

Brothers to Wagga Wagga he was not forgotten by them. In attendance were Brother Garvey, former and present-day students, including A. Buckley, T. Mahon, V. Quilty, B. Mahon, L. Purcell, J. Kennedy, W. Coop and J. Le Gallant.

With the passing of Monsignor Buckley, a chapter closed on the handful of priests of the Goulburn Diocese who, with an abundance of faith and missionary zeal coupled with the inspired help of their team mates, moulded and nurtured the great parish of Saint Michael's. Drs. McAlroy and P. Bermingham had, as it were, turned the first sod and set the pace. Fathers Dunne, Gallagher, Slattery and Buckley kept faithfully in step.

With vision and outstanding leadership, each in turn added to the tally of Catholic buildings. Possessed of the foresight to anticipate the needs of their flock, they provided a new Presbytery, brought the Presentation Sisters, built a school-wing, a Convent with Boarding and High School for Girls, Saint Joseph's School and Hall, a magnificent Church which became a Cathedral, described as a Gothic Gem of the Southern Hemisphere. They brought the Christian Brothers, built their Monastery, a Convent Chapel, Saint Mary's Primary School and a new Church at North Wagga Wagga.

These and a community of earnest, devoted Catholics were the legacy awaiting the first Bishop of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

*Coat of Arms of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga
as depicted in marble on the Sanctuary floor
of the Cathedral.*



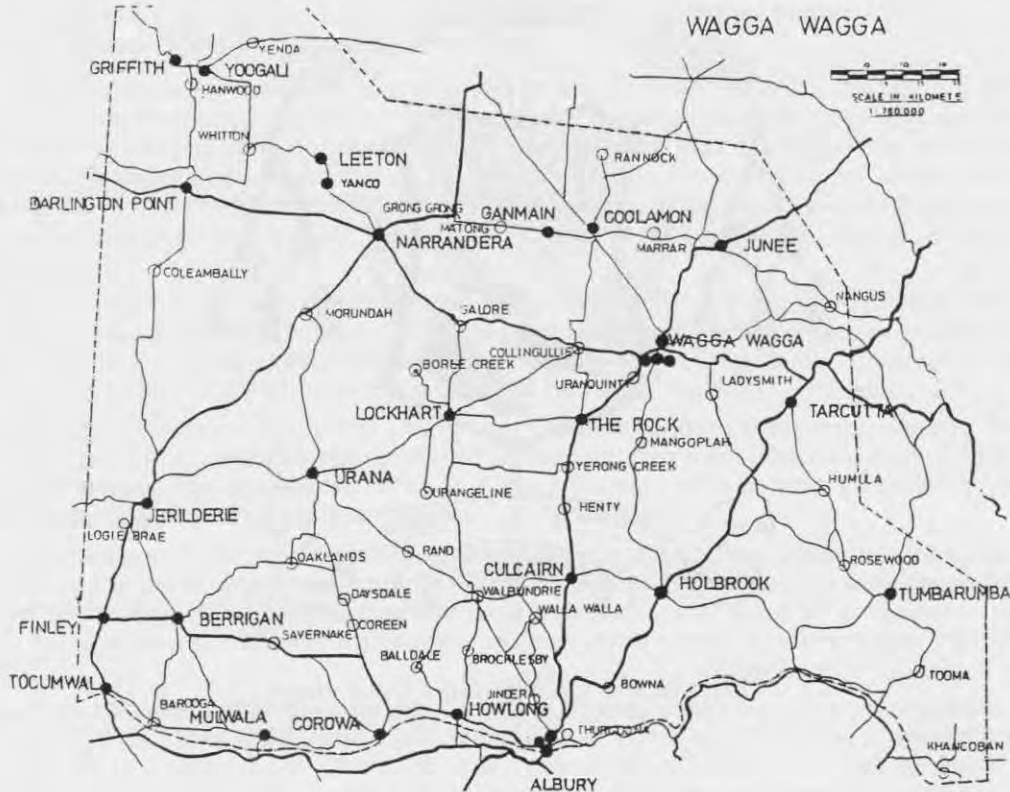
Observe the Crows, God feeds them

5 Formation of Wagga Wagga Diocese Appointment of Bishop J. W. Dwyer

In 1917 the attention of Catholics in the southern area of the State was focussed on the town when an announcement was made of the decision to erect a new Diocese in the Riverina with headquarters at Wagga Wagga. Despite initial opposition by some ecclesiastical authorities to its establishment in that section of the Riverina, the Apostolic Delegate recommended that such important development of the Church in the southern area be undertaken.

Reconstruction of Sydney and Goulburn Dioceses took place. Fifteen districts formerly part of the Goulburn Diocese were annexed while Goulburn received a like number from the Sydney Archdiocese.

The 1919 Australian Catholic Directory describes the area as being bounded on the south by the Murray River, to a point ten miles west of Tocumwal; on the west by a line extending from that point on the Murray to Darlington Point on the Murrumbidgee River, and twenty miles west of Leeton; on the north by a line about twenty five miles north of the south-west railway to Illabo; thence in a south-easterly line to Khancoban and the Murray River.



Diocese of Wagga Wagga established 1917

The fifteen districts were: Wagga Wagga, Albury, Balldale, Berrigan, Coolamon, Corowa, Ganmain, Henty, Holbrook (formerly Germanton) - the First World War was responsible for the name change; Jerilderie, Junee, Leeton (Yanko Irrigation Area), Lockhart, Narrandera and Urana.

Included in this area which covered 24,000 square miles, was the best wheat belt in New South Wales, containing fine Catholic Centres and Schools which the future Bishop helped to develop during his term as Inspector of Schools. The area marked out for an irrigation scheme was included in order to make the portion taken from Goulburn appear worthwhile. This tract of barren land which the Surveyor-General, John Oxley, described in 1817 as being a howling wilderness, was considered to have little value for development as the success of the irrigation scheme had yet to be proven.

One man who envisaged the future awaiting the area was Samuel McCaughey, aptly named 'the father of irrigation'. He was later knighted. The success of schemes developed by him for conserving and distributing water on his 'North Yanko' property which he purchased in 1899, was largely responsible for the Government's decision to undertake the Burrinjuck Dam and the Northern Murrumbidgee Canal Scheme.¹

The Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, the rice bowl of Australia, became the most richly productive 540 square miles in the Southern Hemisphere. An area at first considered of doubtful value became a great asset as Griffith and Leeton were eventually two of the most successful and progressive parishes in the new Diocese.

Group of Prelates & Priests in Albury, 18th August 1918.



Front Row: Monsignor M. Buckley, Wagga Wagga; Bishop J. Gallagher (Goulburn); Bishop Phelan (Sale); Bishop-elect J. W. Dwyer (Wagga Wagga).
 Second Row: Rev. W. Cahill (Goulburn); Rev. T. Ryan (Balldale); Very Rev. T. O'Connell (Junee); Rev. W. Slattery (Adm., Albury); Rev. Dr. Flynn (Wodonga); Rev. P. J. Hartigan (Narrandera); Very Rev. P. Hickey (Corowa); Rev. A. Percy (Goulburn).
 Back Row: Rev. P. J. O'Reilly and Rev. R. O'Dea (Albury); Rev. T. Slattery (Diocesan Inspector); Rev. J. Campbell (Holbrook); Rev. G. Shannon (Henty); Rev. J. Collins (Berrigan); Rev. J. Muirhead (Katoomba). *Courtesy of The Convent of Mercy, Albury*

PAPAL BULL

On 28 July 1917 a brief was issued by the authority of Pope Benedict XV, erecting into a new Diocese of Wagga Wagga the 15 districts mentioned. On 14 March 1918 a Papal Bull was issued appointing Reverend Joseph Wilfrid Dwyer to be the first Bishop of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga in the Province of Sydney.

In Albury during the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Convent of Mercy on 15 August 1918 a meeting was held at Saint Patrick's Presbytery attended by the Bishop and the following priests: Right Reverend Monsignor Michael Buckley, Reverend Fathers Timothy O'Connell, Patrick Hickey, John Campbell, William Slattery, Patrick Hartigan, Thomas Ryan, Patrick O'Reilly, Robert O'Dea and Arthur Percy.

The Diocese was officially inaugurated, the Bull appointing the new Bishop was read to the assembled priests, and the Right Reverend Joseph Wilfrid Dwyer was canonically instituted as Bishop of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.¹ His first act as Bishop was to appoint Monsignor Buckley Vicar-General of the Diocese.

The incumbent Bishop was held in high esteem and had made many lasting friendships in the quiet western town of Temora where he had served as Parish Priest since 1912. He was sad to leave Temora and, in his humility considered he was not equal to the task of carrying out the responsibilities of his elevated office.

^{His} Their father taught in Government Schools from the time of his arrival in Australia in 1856. His final appointment before retirement in 1899 was that of Inspector of Sub-Metropolitan District, Sydney.²

Joseph Wilfrid Dwyer was born in Maitland on 12 October 1869. He was educated at the Dominican Convent and at the Boys' Denominational School in Newcastle. His father's position as Inspector of Schools meant several changes of residence in the ensuing years. For a short time Joseph attended the Jesuit School Saint Kilda House, then situated at Woolloomooloo. His next School was Saint Patrick's College, Goulburn.



Bishop Joseph Wilfrid Dwyer first Bishop of Wagga Wagga Diocese

Preliminary Seminary studies were undertaken at Saint Charles Seminary, Bathurst. He then entered Clonliffe Diocesan College, Dublin on 13 September 1888 from where it is presumed he pursued studies at what was then the Royal University of Dublin.³ In September 1891 he proceeded to the Urban Propaganda College, Rome to complete his Theological Studies. Ordination at the Lateran Basilica of Saint John took place on 28 May 1894. On returning home Father Dwyer taught at his Alma Mater, Saint Patrick's College, Goulburn, for two years. He then was transferred to Gundagai to assist Parish Priest, Father Finnegan, who was in poor health. In July 1898 he came to Wagga Wagga as assistant to Father Michael Slattery, V. G. He was very popular in the community, deeply interested in the Literary Society, an accomplished musician and a member of the Wagga Wagga Orchestra.

From 1899 he combined his position of Inspector of Schools with his other priestly duties. Promotion came later to the important position of Superintendent and Organiser of the Catholic Educational Institutions of the Diocese of Goulburn, with headquarters at Albury.

After three strenuous years he became Administrator of Albury Parish in 1906. As his health was of some concern, he briefly transferred to Yass where he assumed the duties of Acting Administrator. His final appointment before elevation to the Episcopate was Parish Priest of Temora from 1912 to 1918.

EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION

The end of the war in Europe was in sight when Episcopal Consecration of Bishop Dwyer took place in Saint Michael's Cathedral on Sunday, 13 October 1918. An air of feverish excitement prevailed as the town awaited the historic ceremony.

The Apostolic Delegate, Dr. Cattaneo, performed the act of Consecration assisted by Bishop P.V. Dwyer, Maitland (brother of the new Bishop) and Bishop J. Gallagher, Goulburn. Reverends J. McDade and V. Peters were Chaplains, Reverend W. Slattery, Master of Ceremonies. Present were: Archbishops M. Kelly, Sydney; J. Duhig, Brisbane; Redwood, Wellington, New Zealand; Bishops O'Connor, Armidale; Carroll, Lismore; McCarthy, Sandhurst; Phelan, Sale; and Hayden, Wilcannia-Forbes.

Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Cattaneo. It was the first time such a distinguished group of ecclesiastics had gathered in the Riverina for any celebration of the Church. The Cathedral Choir, augmented by members of the Temora Church Choir, specially invited by Bishop Dwyer to participate, rendered Weber's Mass under the baton of Mr. T.R. Mallot. Miss A. Gallagher presided at the Organ.

A large number of clergy from practically every part of the former Diocese of Goulburn attended while every one of the fifteen parishes in the new Diocese was represented. As well, hundreds of Catholic laity came from all parts of the country. The ceremonies were followed by a banquet in Saint Joseph's Hall and, at night, entertainment by the Christian Brothers and their pupils, in the Strand Theatre attended by the Apostolic Delegate and other dignitaries.

List of Gifts presented to Bishop Dwyer at the time of his Consecration:

From the Priests of the new Diocese: A crozier

From the Clergy of the Goulburn Diocese: A solid gold chalice

From the laity of Wagga Wagga: A massive throne artistically carved (still in use) and a splendid set of Tasmanian blackwood chairs for ceremonial occasions and a handsomely bound volume of the Episcopal ceremonies.



Saint Michael's Cathedral, Side view



Saint Michael's Cathedral Western Side

On the afternoon following his Episcopal Consecration the Bishop announced the Diocesan appointments: Consultors for a period of three years: Very Reverend Timothy O'Connell, Administrator; P. Hickey, P.P.; Patrick Hanrahan, John Campbell, Patrick Hartigan, P.P. in addition to Monsignor M. Buckley, P.P. Vicar-General.⁴

Bishop Dwyer was a capable linguist, well-versed in French, Dutch, Italian and Latin languages. His fondness for the Latin language is evidenced by the number of Latin-inscribed foundation stones which dot the landscape throughout the Diocese. He had several hobbies, radio being one of them. The only radio set to be seen at the Bishop's House in the 1920's was one he had built. It was an incredible maze of wires coupled with valves on the outside of the set. Despite criticism of it he declared it the best set in the Riverina.

The Bishop's resourcefulness was demonstrated one summer day when his priests were having a picnic at a private beach on Mr Mahon's property. He made his appearance, ready for a swim, clad in pyjamas which he had jaggedly cut off at the knees.

Well-known as a botanist he was highly regarded throughout Australia as an authority on the subject. His article, "A Floral Survey of the South-Western Slopes of New South Wales", containing a list of 337 plants gathered over a period of five years, was published in the "Australian Naturalist" July 1921.

Perhaps the Bishop's most venturesome undertaking (hobby-wise) was the invention of a hand trafficator for motor cars. From his drawings a local garage mechanic constructed models. The first of these, hardly a show-piece, was operated from a box on the hood of a car. His second model, operated by a lever in front of the driver was more successful. On 7 January 1930 he applied for patents. The application was approved on 29 September of that year (the feast of Saint Michael). The Bishop did not proceed to the stage of manufacture. His prediction that eventually all cars would be required to have a turning indicator, indeed came true.

The service of Father O'Connell, former Parish Priest of Junee, as Administrator of the Cathedral Parish was brief. A shortage of priests existed in the new Diocese, and when

Monsignor Buckley who had succeeded Father O’Connell at Junee died unexpectedly in 1920, Father O’Connell was then transferred back to Junee as Parish Priest.

In the year of his ordination, 1874, Father O’Connell came to Australia. For sixty years he laboured in the Dioceses of Goulburn, Wilcannia and Wagga Wagga. He was known and respected by many. During his 62 years as a priest he did great things in the service of the Church. He was made a Monsignor and, at the time of his death on 28 September 1936 at the age of 85 years he was Vicar-General of the Diocese.

The new Bishop now had the task before him and none realised it more than he. The most pressing concern was a shortage of priests. A period of borrowing continued until the early 1930’s by which time fourteen priests were ordained for the Diocese.

Priests were on loan from the Archdioceses of Sydney and Adelaide, the Diocese of Goulburn, the Diocese of Maitland (the See of his brother) and from Waterford, Ireland. From 1920-27 there were 12 priests on loan and from 1928 until 1931 there were six. The first Diocesan priest was Father McVeigh whom Bishop Dwyer ordained in the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo, on 26 November 1922.



Saint Michael's Cathedral Front View

Concern was felt also regarding the need to complete Saint Michael's Church and provide another Church in the southern section of the town. In fact it was planned at a meeting of the Church Committee, chaired by the Bishop late in December 1918, to build a beautiful edifice on Church land in Edward Street near Mount Erin Convent, land which in later years was occupied by Saint Patrick's tennis courts. It was hoped also to establish a Boarding School for Boys, to be conducted by members of the Christian Brothers. Completion of Saint Michael's Cathedral already discussed, was to be deferred.

A new Church did not become a reality but additions were made to Saint Eugene's at Mount Erin Convent to ease the strain on accommodation for Mass. A period of re-adjustment in the aftermath of World War I coupled with signs of an approaching depression sealed the fate of many hopeful dreams. A Boarding School for Boys was eventually established but not in the parish and not during the Bishop's life time. It was built in the Leeton area to serve all parishes of the Diocese. A Church in the southern section of the town came later, many years later, but not on the site originally intended. The decision regarding Saint Michael's Cathedral was changed in the next few years by unforeseen happenings which will be mentioned later.



Monsignor T. O'Connell, first Administrator of Saint Michael's Cathedral Parish



Dr. John Harper and Father McVeigh at Mount Erin Convent at the time of the Consecration of the Cathedral in 1928.

Father McVeigh was the first priest ordained for the Diocese by Bishop Dwyer

The 1919 Catholic Directory gives an overall picture of the Diocese, its boundaries, disbursement of priests, members of Religious Orders and number of children attending Catholic Schools.

No sooner was the War at an end when disease reared its ugly head in the form of an outbreak of pneumonic 'flu in 1919'. Believed to have been introduced to Sydney by soldiers returning from war, it was highly contagious and quickly spread to other areas including Wagga Wagga. The local Hospital unable to accommodate the many patients seeking treatment, hastily erected tents in the grounds. Those who were not obliged to leave their homes stayed indoors. All who ventured out wore nose and mouth masks. It was an anxious time for the whole community.

THE 'LIGOURI CASE'

The death of Monsignor Buckley on 9 June 1920 was but the first of the sad happenings in the new decade. The following month the quiet southern town was plunged into a foaming sea of sectarian discord and bitterness unprecedented in the history of the town.

Court proceedings of the law suit - 'Miss Brigid Partridge versus Bishop Dwyer' made headlines not only in New South Wales, but also throughout the entire Continent and New Zealand.

The case, widely known as the 'Ligouri Case', concerned a young Irish girl who, in 1909, began her religious life at Mount Erin Convent as Sister Ligouri. Later events proved she was unsuited to convent life. Although the Mother Superior, Mother Stanislaus, offered to pay her travelling expenses to enable her to return to her homeland, she was reluctant to do so and asked to be allowed to remain.

As Sister Ligouri was not suited to teaching, she was given light duties which included playground supervision. Children whom she minded in the playground at Saint Mary's Primary School (the writer included) remember her as being quiet and kind, a gentle person, a dreamer.

On a cold wintery afternoon, Saturday 24 July 1920, she walked out of the Convent and across the road to a Coleman Street residence. She was brought back by two of the Sisters. Complaining of feeling ill she retired to bed and, in the chill of a winter evening she again left unobserved, barefooted and clad only in her nightgown. She went to the home of Mr. Thompson in Coleman Street. From there she was transferred without the knowledge of the Sisters to the home of Pastor Touchell and his wife in Kogarah, Sydney.

The Court Case which followed Bishop Dwyer's efforts to befriend Sister Ligouri and have her returned to Mount Erin became a national talking point.⁵ Her legal fees being guaranteed by the Orange Lodge, Brigid Partridge sued Bishop Dwyer for five thousand pounds.

A verdict was given in favour of the Bishop in July 1921 but no costs were awarded, Brigid Partridge having stated that she had no funds to meet them.

During the entire unhappy episode feelings ran high in the community. Ruvé Cropley in her delightful book "40 'Odd' Years in A Manse" tells of an incident which took place while her father, the Reverend John Calder, M.A., D.D., was Minister of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Wagga Wagga for a few years from 1919.

She writes that their only neighbours in Church Street were Bishop Dwyer and the priests at the Presbytery who were keen gardeners and shared vegetables with the Calder family until their own were established. It was a standing joke as to who owned the pumpkins which grew over the fence in the Calder's yard, although the plants were in the Presbytery garden.

The Orange Lodge was strong in the community at the time but her father was not sectarian in any way and so an unfortunate incident at the time of the Ligouri Case had its amusing side. When Sister Ligouri went to the home of Mr. Thompson, the Matron of the Presbyterian Boys' Hostel (also in Coleman Street), promptly phoned Reverend Calder to report her whereabouts. The Reverend Gentlemen thought it to be no business of his. He went at once to the Presbytery and passed on the information to Bishop Dwyer.

So fierce was the feeling against Reverend Calder that, on Sunday morning the Orange Lodge Band comprised mostly of the brassiest of instruments, marched, banner before them, playing loudly outside Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church making it almost impossible to hear the service. As this had no effect a brilliant coup d'état was planned.

A member of the Lodge had been deputed to lure the Minister down to the river following an afternoon Service at Oura Village, nine miles distant from the town. The news leaked out and the would-be victim was forewarned. His wife feared for his safety for although he was a strong, fearless Scot capable of taking on any such opponent, he could not swim!

On the pretext of looking at some sheep, he drove his horse and buggy to the river bank and said, "Now who is going to throw me in?" Mrs. Cropley wrote that there were sheepish looks on faces all around as the would-be assailants walked away.

A strong tie continued to exist between the reverend neighbours. At the Calder family's civic farewell a few years later, Bishop Dwyer paid the Reverend Calder a magnificent tribute.⁶

In his summary of the Ligouri Case, Justice Ferguson, himself a Protestant, spoke of a letter which Bishop Dwyer had written.

He said (in part)..... The letter met with no reply.... It was not shown to the person concerned, she did not know anything about it. Her place at the Convent was open to her to come back... She was never told that if she did not wish to come back, they (the Sisters) were prepared to find funds for her support. She was not given the opportunity of deciding for herself. She was taken away that night and disappeared into the dark."

The Judge continued "I cannot help thinking that it is very unfortunate for the plaintiff (Sister Ligouri) that at the time she left the Convent she did not meet somebody who would have shown a little common horse-sense" "Whatever your verdict may be, I am sure that there is no fair-minded man in the community - no Protestant, however militant his Protestantism may be - who will not share with his Catholic fellow-citizens, a sense of gratification that these imputations so far as the plaintiff is concerned, have been refuted - not by the contradiction of people interested - not by a balance of conflicting testimony - but by her own deliberate oath".....⁷

Five nights after the verdict was given to the Bishop a meeting was held in the Sydney Town Hall, presided over by the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Michael Kelly, and attended by 8,000 people who cheered and sang "For he's a jolly good fellow" as Bishop Dwyer entered the Hall. Addressing the gathering, the Attorney-General, the Honourable E. A. McTiernan said that the occasion was unique in the experience of most people of this generation. "Let us hope", he said "that the voice of slander and calumny has been silenced forever".

The distasteful affair created a division in the community and brought sadness to many people whose only aim was to live a quiet Christian life. It is doubtful if any high dignitary of the Church has had to face such an ordeal particularly in the first few years of his episcopate and of the Diocese. It was a sad leaf in the book of Wagga Wagga's history. Although the page has been turned now for 66 years, it would be difficult to find anyone who would be willing to discuss the unhappy episode.

6 *Completion of Saint Michael's Cathedral*

Completion of the Cathedral provided a measure of compensation to Bishop Dwyer for the distress and indignity he had endured during the previous twelve months. In the months following the 'Ligouri' case contributions towards payment of his legal expenses came from throughout the Diocese.

Parishioners of Goulburn Diocese presented him with £790. The people of the Sydney Diocese who had supported him at the meeting in the Town Hall arranged a harbour cruise on 18 January 1922 when the balance of the 'Defence Fund' amounting to approximately £1,400 was presented to His Lordship. Catholics and non-Catholics alike contributed to the cause. Soon the costs were more than accounted for, leaving a surplus of £4,000 which was used to help complete the Cathedral, an undertaking which hitherto had seemed impossible.

At the time of the building of the Church in 1887 the concept as planned was not completed. The work was carried out in such a way as to allow completion to be achieved when funds were available. This was done by closing off with painted panels the section to which the two transepts and the side altar (chapels) areas were to be added. During the next four years concentration of energy and resources centred on the mammoth task of completing the Cathedral.

Less than a week after Bishop Dwyer's return from Sydney following a favourable verdict in the 'Ligouri Case', a meeting was held in the Riverina Hall on 2 July 1921 to inaugurate funds to complete the Cathedral. By the hand of providence it now seemed possible to complete what Father Dunne had so courageously commenced. Three thousand five hundred pounds were promised at the meeting. An accompanying statement gives a list of contribution to 31 July 1921. It was one of many to be published in the ensuing four years.¹

The size of the donations is an indication of the respect and admiration the parishioners had for their Bishop and the sympathy they felt for him. But there were others too who made great contributions. It is not possible to assess the value, in terms of personal sacrifice, of the hundreds of small amounts given continuously by parishioners during the long period. The widow's mite, the shilling here and there of the battler, though not recorded in stained glass fittings, nevertheless demonstrated a depth of faith and a earnest desire to see the great Cathedral completed in a manner worthy of it and of those who turned the first sod.

The Bishop wished to complete the Cathedral to stand through the ages as a thanksgiving to God for the vindication of the sinless nuns. It would always be a reminder, said the Bishop, that God is watching over those who work for His little ones in the Schools. The Catholic people saw it also as a tribute to the Bishop in the manner in which he defended the Mount Erin Sisters with dignity and integrity.

Architect for the work which commenced in January 1922 was Mr. W. J. Monks. Local builder Charles Hardy who had many of the imposing buildings in the town to his credit, was responsible for the building operations.

FOUNDATION STONE

On 7 May of that year the foundation stone (latin inscribed) of the completion works was blessed and laid by Bishop Joseph Dwyer in the presence of and with the co-operation of the impressive and colourful Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Daniel Mannix. Also present were the Bishop of Sale, Dr. Phelan and many priests of the Diocese.²

Bishop Dwyer Testimonial.

Completion of St. Michael's Cathedral, Wagga Wagga.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

W. M. J. WALSH, Chairman. P. J. MAHON, Hon. Treasurer. A. J. KENNEALLY, Hon. Secretary.

COMMITTEE: The Hon. James Gornaly, M.L.C., Messrs. W. J. Monks, F. J. Clancy, J. K. O'Reilly, Dr. D. Leahy, R. J. Johnston, Dr. Roy Quinn, J. C. Sheekey, J. F. O'Regan, J. J. Byrnes, Martin Wenke, F. Coop, P. J. Quilty, H. M'Donough, J. Coughlan, Laurence Cox, J. C. Watts, Mark Mongan, E. Sullivan, E. G. Fitzgerald, W. J. Blake, P. J. Coffey, J. P. Salmon, M. A. Salmon, T. Ryan, P. Behan, J. J. O'Regan, J. Toohy, Sergeant O'Rourke, A. J. Monks, D. J. Byrnes, E. J. Quirk, T. Coughlan and F. P. Kirby.

List of Contributions to the 31st day of July, 1921.

Andrews, Harry	21 0 0	Hopkins, Mrs. J. G.	5 5 0	O'Brien, Sergeant W.	20 0 0
Ball, R.	1 0 0	Hopkins Bros.	2 2 0	O'Brien, J.	5 5 0
Benson, Mrs. J.	5 5 0	Hudson, Mrs.	1 1 0	O'Connor, J.	0 10 6
Berrigan, H.	1 0 0	Hudson, Miss T.	1 1 0	O'Dwyer, Phillip	1 1 0
Bourke, N.	0 5 0	Hudson, Miss L.	0 5 0	O'Malley, J.	7 7 0
Brown, H. J.	5 5 0	Hunt, G.	5 5 0	O'Meara, Jas. L.	25 0 0
Butts, Miss	1 0 0	Hyland A. H.	50 0 0	O'Neill, Wm.	5 5 0
Butta, Miss	1 0 0	Hyland, L.	0 10 0	O'Neill, John	5 5 0
Byrnes, D. and J. J.	250 0 0	Johnston, R. J.	21 0 0	O'Regan, J. P.	26 5 0
Byrnes, P. J.	26 5 0	Jones, M.	1 0 0	O'Reilly, J. K.	250 0 0
Carlson, Mrs. M.	10 10 0	Jones, Mrs. M.	1 0 0	O'Reilly, Miss	1 0 0
Carlson, Miss M.	1 1 0	Jones, Mr. and Mrs. A. G.	1 1 0	O'Reilly, F. J.	1 0 0
Carmony, Mrs.	0 2 0	Kavanagh, T.	5 0 0	Paekham, Mrs. Perie	2 2 0
Clancy, J.	21 0 0	Keane, T.	0 10 0	Piggott, M.	3 3 0
Coffey, P. J.	250 0 0	Keane, W.	0 10 0	Power, P. E.	20 0 0
Colreavy, Miss	5 0 0	Kelly, C.	2 2 0	Purcell, Miss Nellie	25 0 0
Connors, O.	2 0 0	Kelly, Miss P.	5 0 0	Purtell, Stan	0 10 0
Coop, F. W.	25 0 0	Kenneally, Mr. and Mrs. A. J.	5 5 0	Quilty, P. J.	10 10 0
Coughlan Bros.	250 0 0	Kenneally, Children	1 11 6	Quirk, P. J.	5 0 0
Coveney, Miss V.	1 1 0	Kynalor, Mr.	1 1 0	Rynehart, Mr. J.	1 1 0
Coveney, Miss P.	1 1 0	Larkin, E. H.	5 5 0	Ryan, T., Rev. Fr.	100 0 0
Coveney, Miss G.	1 1 0	Larkin, R.	5 5 0	Ryan, Patrick	20 0 0
Coyne, D. P.	26 5 0	Larking, Mrs.	5 0 0	Ryan, Jim, Mrs.	1 1 0
Coyne, T. J.	5 5 0	Leahy, Dr.	50 0 0	Ryan, Thomas	0 2 0
Darby, Miss	2 2 0	Leaver, Mrs.	5 5 0	Ryder, E. J. P.	5 5 0
Devlin, Mr.	21 0 0	Lloyd, Mrs. Telaeon	25 0 0	Salmon Bros.	250 0 0
Doonan, Mrs. J.	1 0 0	Lloyd, Mrs. Telaeon	5 5 0	Schadef, P.	5 0 0
Doonan, Miss	0 10 0	Lohan, T.	1 1 0	Scharenberg, Wm.	25 0 0
Doonan, Miss J.	0 10 0	Lohan, Mrs.	1 1 0	Shooley, Mrs. and J. C.	100 0 0
Elliott, Mr. J. R.	1 1 0	Loughlin, Miss Bessie	3 3 0	Slattery, V. G.	21 0 0
Fisher, Mr.	0 2 0	Lynsaght, Mrs. A. P.	1 0 0	Street, A. N. Mrs.	5 0 0
Flanagan, Mr. and Mrs. T.	50 0 0	Lynsaght, Miss M.	1 0 0	Sullivan, Miss	2 0 0
Fox, Wm.	1 1 0	Lynsaght, Miss P.	0 10 0	Sullivan, Eugene	25 0 0
Gaffney, H.	1 0 0	Mahon P. J.	250 0 0	Sweeney, F. H.	3 3 0
Gorman, Miss A.	0 10 0	Mason, Mrs.	5 0 0	Sweeney, Mrs. M.	3 3 0
Gorman, Miss M.	1 1 0	Mongan, M. E.	10 10 0	Sweeney, A. J.	1 0 0
Grogan, F.	2 0 0	Monk, W. J.	250 0 0	Talbot, Mrs. senr.	0 5 0
Guild Australian Holy Catholic	10 10 0	Mooney, A. J.	5 5 0	Tilden, L.	1 0 0
Hastie Mrs. (Nurse)	1 0 0	Mooney, M.	1 1 0	Trohey, J.	20 0 0
Harcourth, Mr.	0 2 0	Mooney, D. F.	1 1 0	Walsh W. M. J.	250 0 0
Harkau, M.	1 0 0	Mooney, J.	0 10 0	Wenke, Martin and Miss	250 0 0
Hogan, F.	1 1 0	McAlister, William	1 1 0	White, Mrs. M.	5 5 0
Hogan, Mrs. J. J.	5 5 0	McAllister, Frank	0 10 0	White, J.	5 5 0
Hogan and Richardson (Nurses)	2 2 0	McDarra, Jas.	5 5 0	White, Master Mel	1 1 0
Homann, E. A.	5 5 0	McDonough, H.	26 5 0	White, A.	2 2 0
Homann, Mrs. E. A.	5 5 0	McGlynn, Miss J.	5 0 0	Whiting, H.	1 1 0
Hopkins, J. G.	5 5 0	McGlynn, Miss M.	5 0 0	Wicht, Miss C. M.	3 3 0
		Nolan, Miss	2 2 0	Woolley, Mrs.	1 1 0
		Nugent, Thomas	2 2 0		

Supplementary Lists for Wagga Wagga and Centres will be printed and issued from time to time.

A rousing welcome awaited the Archbishop who was making his first visit to the town. Some months earlier he had returned from an overseas visit during which he was refused permission to land on his native Ireland to see his aged mother. The events of the time prompted a surge of sympathy and admiration for the Prelate. A body of men mounted on grey horses and headed by Mr. Allie Hyland led a long procession along Baylis and Fitzmaurice Streets.

Bishop Dwyer had arranged special trains from Albury and Leeton to bring visitors, in fact it was necessary to order a second train from Leeton. Recipients of Holy Communion at the 7 a.m. Mass numbered 800. High Mass was celebrated at 11 a.m.

Ten thousand people from Wagga Wagga, Albury and south-west from Junee to Leeton witnessed the blessing and laying of the foundation stone, the second to be put in place in the Cathedral walls. In the evening, Dr. Mannix addressed a large crowd in the grounds of the Christian Brothers' School when £2,000 was collected.

It was an historic occasion for the town for two reasons. It heralded the completion of a mighty Cathedral and coincided with the introduction of electricity to the town. A large crowd which



Foundation stone of completion work of Saint Michael's Cathedral, laid by Bishop Dwyer on 7 May, 1922

Photo - Michael Pym

assembled near the Council Chambers witnessed the turning on of the power when the Mayoress, Mrs. H. Oates, visibly affected by the enormity of the occasion, pressed the official button.

Fortunately the Cathedral was to have the new modern convenience of electricity. Soon after it opened in 1887 it also had a modern convenience of the day - it was lit by gas, a service which the town had enjoyed since 1881. Its predecessor however, had to make do with kerosene lamps.

In the Cathedral in June 1920 Bishop Dwyer consecrated 32 Altar stones destined for Churches and Chapels in the Diocese. Wherever he travelled laying foundation stones, opening Churches and Schools, he was warmly welcomed and presented with cheques to meet his legal expenses. The balance of the monies augmented the fund for completion of the Cathedral.

Tremendous interest was shown in the work and none greater than that of the Bishop himself who recorded in his journal such historic happenings as on 9 April 1924 - "last pinnacle placed on tower of Cathedral and stone work finished"; also in 1924 - "men finished putting new stained glass windows in Cathedral".³

When work commenced Catholics in the Diocese numbered little more than 20,000. The raising of £20,000 in two years seemed almost impossible unless people beyond the town were willing to assist. It was then that publication of *The Cathedral Monitor* began. The first issue came off the press in August 1923. Each month it supplied information regarding work progress and donations received.

In the early years of publication the *Cathedral Monitor* was written by Bishop Dwyer, assisted later on by the Administrator, Father T. I. Barry. The *Monitor* was far more than a vehicle for distributing the above information, it contained such items as the Bishop's Pastoral letters, extracts from early Church history and the lives of Saints, which provided spiritual stimulation.

Fund raising took many forms. People of all ages organised socials, euchre parties or other activities suitable to the age group of their friends. A novel method of gathering in funds was the 'block collection'. A team made up mostly of young male parishioners and some school children who worked in pairs, were allotted street blocks in which they visited Catholic homes each week. Cards were distributed bearing a drawing of the Cathedral on one side and being dotted on the reverse side. On these were recorded the regular promised amount given by each person which in most cases was one shilling or even less. A dot was pierced for each payment. In twelve months £425 was raised by this method.

For three years fund-raising continued. A Queen Competition lasting almost twelve months raised £3,182. The final large effort was an Art Union. Father Ryan, Administrator, reported in the *Cathedral Monitor*, April 1925 issue, that the cost of the completed additions amounted to £34,894/19/4 of which approximately £7,000 was still owing.

During 1923 and 1924 it was not possible to have the blessing of Holy Oils, and other Holy Week ceremonies in the Cathedral due to alterations. The Oils were blessed by Bishop Dwyer in Albury. All ceremonies were resumed in 1925 including Confirmation, prior to the Bishop's departure overseas for the Holy Year Pilgrimage. It is interesting that the children who were candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation were asked to pledge abstinence from alcohol until they had reached the age of 25 years, previously the age had been 21 years. Now in the time of changed social attitudes a pledge is no longer requested.

A GRAND RE-OPENING - CONSECRATION OF CATHEDRAL

Laetare Sunday, 22 March 1925 was the day set down for the Opening. On the previous day Prelates and Priests moved in procession by car from the railway station to the Cathedral. Boys and girls from Catholic schools formed a guard of honour in Johnston Street.



Interior of Saint Michael's Cathedral, 1987 showing detail of wood-work

Courtesy of 'Daily Advertiser'

On Sunday morning at 10.30 a.m. Solemn Pontifical High Mass was sung by Archbishop Spence of Adelaide. The Apostolic Delegate, Dr. Cattaneo presided. Present in the Sanctuary were Archbishops Kelly, Sydney; Clune, Perth; Duhig, Brisbane; Mannix, Melbourne; Bishops W. Barry, Coadjutor of Hobart; Sheehan, Coadjutor of Sydney; P.V. Dwyer, Maitland; P. O'Connor, Armidale; Shiel, Rockhampton; J. McCarthy, Bendigo; W. Hayden, Wilcannia-Forbes; E. Coppo, S.C., Vicar Apostolate of Kimberley; R. Ryan, Geraldton; A. Killian, Port Augusta; J. Barry, Goulburn; J. W. Dwyer, Wagga Wagga and Father Laurent, Provincial, Marists, Sydney.

A monster meeting in the afternoon in the school grounds was addressed by several Prelates, the people numbering 8,000. Almost £4,000 was collected. Benediction was given by the Bishop of Maitland and in the evening by the Apostolic Delegate. On the following day visiting clergy dined at Mount Erin Convent. A Saint Patrick's Day Concert in the Strand Theatre concluded the celebrations.

The Bishop, priests and parishioners were shocked to hear that Father Thomas Ryan, Administrator since 1920, had passed away on 12 February 1926 while in hospital in Sydney. He was ordained with Father Patrick Hartigan by Bishop Lanigan in 1903 and was 47 years of age. Although he did not enjoy robust health at all times, his death was unexpected. A tireless worker during completion of the Cathedral, he capably administered the Diocese during Bishop Dwyer's eight months absence overseas.

Father Ryan was friend to every man and liked by all. People came from throughout the Diocese to pay their last respects. Bishop Dwyer recorded that his funeral was the largest seen in town. Two hundred cars as well as many horse-drawn vehicles were in the funeral procession. In the year 1926 such a number was an exceptionally large one as the motor-car had not yet completely replaced the horse-drawn vehicle. At the Requiem Mass his College-mate and friend of many years, Father Hartigan preached a moving panegyric.

In that year a new era in nursing history in Wagga Wagga began when the temporary Hospital of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary (the Blue Sisters) was commenced in 'Foxborough Hall', the former family home of James Gormly. It was opened on Wednesday, 17 November 1926 by Bishop Dwyer who was instrumental in bringing the Sisters to the town.⁴ He persuaded several laymen of Wagga Wagga and other parts of the Diocese to purchase the 2 storey home and twenty acres of surrounding land, the agreement being that on discharge of the mortgage at the end of six years the deeds would be transferred to the Order.

Before his coming to Sydney in 1928 to open the 29th International Eucharistic Congress the Papal Legate, Cardinal Cerretti was invited by Bishop Dwyer to be present at the Consecration and Dedication ceremonies of Saint Michael's Cathedral provided that the Cathedral debt had been liquidated.

As Consecration could not take place while any debt remained, an extra effort was made to close the gap by organising an Art Union with a Motor Car as first prize. It was already 'Depression' time and money a scarce commodity. Returns were not as high as expected. The balance owing was personally paid by Bishop Dwyer.



Former High Altar Saint Michael's Cathedral



Clergy present at re-opening of the Cathedral in 1925

Front Row: Archbishop James Duhig, Brisbane, Archbishop Daniel Mannix, Melbourne, Archbishop Robert Spence, Adelaide, Archbishop Michael Kelly, Sydney, Archbishop Barolomeo Cattaneo, Apostolic Delegate, Bishop Joseph Wilfrid Dwyer, Wagga Wagga, Archbishop P.J. Clune, Perth, Archbishop William Barry, Coadjutor Hobart, Archbishop Michael Sheehan, Sydney, Bishop P.J. O'Connor, Armidale.

2nd Row: Bishop Richard Ryan, Geraldton (afterwards, Sale), Archbishop William Hayden, Hobart, Bishop John McCarthy, Sandhurst, Bishop Patrick Vincent Dwyer, Maitland, Bishop J. Shiel, Rockhampton, Bishop Andrew Killian, Port Augusta (afterwards Adelaide), Bishop Ernest Coppo, Kimberley W.A. (now Diocese of Broome), John Barry, Goulburn, Monsignor M. J. Treacy, Deniliquin, Monsignor Terence O'Shaughnessy, Cootamundra.

Amongst the priests were: Father Ronald Hayes, Columban, afterwards Bishop of Rockhampton, Father Patrick O'Reilly, Corowa, Father Aeneas Hennessy, Tumbarumba, Father Robert O'Dea, Griffith, Monsignor Timothy O'Connell, V.G. Junee, Father John O'Neill (died P.P. Coolamon), Father Patrick Gahan, Urana, afterwards Coolamon, Father Sharkey, P.P. Tumut? Father O'Looney, Culcairn G. Shannon, Monsignor William Cahill, Binalong. Father Percival McVeigh, Narrandera, Father Laurent, Provincial Marists, Monsignor Thomas I. Barry, Albury, Norman Thomas Gilroy, Sec. to Apostolic Delegate, afterwards, Bishop of Port Augusta; later Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney.

At 6 a.m. on Friday 12 October 1928 (the Bishop's 59th birthday) Bishop Dwyer, assisted by Reverends Dean Martin, Kyneton; F. McKenna, Elwood, and the Wagga Wagga Clergy consecrated the Cathedral and High Altar, a tedious and strenuous ceremony. This was followed at 9 a.m. by Pontifical High Mass.

Following his arrival from Melbourne in his own special railway car attached to the Express, the Cardinal was afforded a Civic Reception on Saturday. On the following morning he was present at the dedication ceremonies at the Cathedral. Pontifical High Mass was sung by Bishop P. V. Dwyer. Other members of the Hierarchy present were Archbishops Redwood, Wellington, New Zealand; Brodie, Christchurch; Duhig, Brisbane; and Bishop Barry, Goulburn; the Bishop of Bathurst and many priests. In the afternoon the Cardinal addressed a large crowd at a reception held in the grounds of Mount Erin Convent.

Mindful of the disadvantages facing children whose homes were a considerable distance from the central part of the town, Bishop Dwyer arranged in 1926 for a special bus service to bring children from North Wagga Wagga to enable them to attend Catholic Schools. An appeal to meet the cost of bus hire was launched at Sunday Masses and supported by parishioners of Saint Michael's. The cost of hiring the bus was 10 shillings per day.

Leisure activity in the form of tennis received a boost when Saint Michael's Tennis Club which had temporarily lapsed into recess, was re-opened at a ceremony conducted by the Bishop who was keen to see young parishioners engaged in healthy sport. As Club-Patron he visited it frequently on Club days. Many a romance began and blossomed into marriage during the social life associated with the Tennis Club. On Sundays play began after the conclusion of 10 a.m. Mass.

White attire was the order of the day and ladies wore stockings!! Many may remember when amid awed silence one of the ladies took her place on the courts - bare-legged! Her bravery was envied by others of the fairer sex or at least by most of them. The parishioner (since departed) shall be nameless. Most resident priests joined in the game with members, no doubt welcoming an opportunity to exchange their black garb for long creams and white open-necked shirts. They could almost be mistaken for lay members except for one small detail - the tell-tale black socks.

Inter-Club matches were arranged with Half-Holiday Club, Railway, South Wagga Wagga, North Wagga Wagga, Saint Patrick's in Edward Street as well as further afield to near-by towns and villages.

Many Societies to encourage spiritual activity and promote interest in parish life were established under the guidance of Bishop Dwyer. The Holy Name Society, Sacred Heart Sodality, Children of Mary, Saint Vincent de Paul, Champion Society, Knights of the Southern Cross and Catholic Young Men's Society, the latter's aims being to improve in its members the art of debating, drama and public speaking. The C.Y.M.S. could claim to have launched (in Queensland) the speaking career of one of its great orators, the late Archbishop Sir James Duhig of Brisbane.⁵

Rooms in which members met (next to the former Oxford Theatre) contained a library, billiard room and recreational hall for indoor games. The club which was opened on 21 November 1933 by Bishop Dwyer provided a measure of comfort to young parishioners during the Depression. Father Barry's interest and guidance was largely responsible for its success. The Club was used also for a series of Catholic Evidence Lectures introduced in 1935.

Catholic Young Ladies also had their own organisation. The Young Men's Club continued for many years. It was joined by members of its counterpart. In the 1940's it became the Catholic Youth Movement for members of both sexes under the guidance of Bishop Henschke and Father Brian Gallagher.

It was fitting that such a grand Cathedral should have a choir worthy of it. The coming of Mr. Melichar to the town made it possible. Born in the 'land of music', Austria, he was a most talented musician. Under his baton a choir was assembled which was remarkable in the



Scene on the day of re-opening of the Cathedral in 1925

Courtesy of Sheila Tearle

standard of its achievements. Members, tested for their choral ability, practised weekly. To be absent from 3 practices in succession meant dismissal from the choir gallery.

Many beautiful Masses were rendered in four parts at 10 a.m. Sunday Mass. The Choir, 40 strong at times, travelled to other towns in the Diocese for concert performances. Later on a stringed orchestra was added for special occasions. Following his departure from Wagga Wagga, Mr. Melichar was appointed choir-master at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne.

Laying of the foundation stone of the permanent Lewisham Hospital (now Calvary) on 1 May 1927 was a milestone in the history of the parish. Archbishop Mannix remarked, on the occasion that "Bishop Dwyer" he was sure "could look back on this day as one of the greatest of his episcopate".⁶ Bishop Dwyer performed the ceremony in the presence of Dr. Maurice O'Reilly, many priests, distinguished guests and a gathering of more than 10,000 people. A similar number witnessed the opening ceremony performed by Bishop Dwyer on 30 March 1930 in the presence of Archbishops Sheehan, Sydney; Duhig, Brisbane; Bishops Barry, Goulburn; Gleeson, Maitland, and again many priests, the Mayor, Alderman E. E. Collins, and the Honourable Frank Forde, M.H.R.

Already the Depression had begun to bite hard. Most countries of the world ground to a halt; towns were struggling for their existence, and Wagga Wagga was no exception. Of the many who were unemployed, some took to the roads seeking work. They chopped wood, did gardening, in fact any job that might be offering. People of abundant charity very often 'found jobs' to be done around the house in order to spare the itinerant the indignity of receiving a 'handout' without having contributed his labours in return. Church organisations and Benefit Societies were to the fore in helping the needy.

At the instigation of Dr. Sheehan, Coadjutor Bishop of Sydney, a religious course by correspondence was introduced in 1935 in all Dioceses of the State in order to reach those children who were unable to attend Catholic Schools. Father Brian Hayden of the Cathedral Parish was appointed to conduct the course. Following on from these courses a week-long summer school for country children was held in December 1937. For months prior to the School much spade work was done by Father Hanrahan, Tumberumba, Fathers Desmond and Glover, Cathedral Parish. They travelled hundreds of miles taking enrolments.

Summer Schools continued for 30 years their successor being the Motor Mission of the 1960s.

Despite the Depression the plan to build a new Christian Brothers School went ahead. Bishop Dwyer blessed and laid the foundation stone on 18 March 1934 and in the following year the most important event for him was the blessing and opening of the new School. With the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Daniel Mannix by his side Bishop Dwyer performed the ceremony on 30 March 1935.

Church Missions were an important part of parish life. They were eagerly awaited by parishioners who packed the Cathedral to hear members of Missionary Orders give instruction and preach sermons which revived the faith of some, strengthened it in others and put the fear of God in all.

The second and third decades of the new century were history-making in regard to Saint Michael's parish. A new Diocese was erected and its first Bishop consecrated, the latter was successful in a most extraordinary law suit the result of which made possible a remarkable achievement - the completion and consecration of Saint Michael's Cathedral.

The magnificent edifice now stands solid and majestic, a gothic gem of the Southern Hemisphere. From his lofty height above the portico Saint Michael, sword in hand proclaims (in effigy at least) his defence in aeternum of the Church and all it embodies.

BISHOP DWYER'S DEATH

Towards the end of the 1920's a most strenuous and demanding period for him Bishop Dwyer's health began to deteriorate. On several occasions he travelled to Sydney and entered Lewisham Hospital for treatment. When, in 1931 a Branch of the Hospital opened in Wagga

Wagga he became a semi-resident. If well enough he visited the Bishop's House each day to attend to business matters.

Priests of the Diocese while attending their annual retreat in January 1932 presented the Bishop with a cheque for £150 and expressed a wish that he attend the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin. While in Dublin so impressed was he by the 'Grail Movement' whose members were present from Holland, that on his return he espoused their cause. Eventually in 1936 members of the Order came to set up a foundation in Australia. The Order was an early form of the Lay Apostolate.

In 1934 the Bishop's health improved temporarily allowing him to resume his pastoral duties but the respite was short-lived. During 1936 he spent seven months in Lewisham Hospital, Sydney. He suffered with angina pectoris and severe arthritis.

In 1937 the Bishop requested Pope Pius XI to grant him an Auxiliary Bishop. On 20 May 1937 he received word of the appointment of the Right Reverend Monsignor F. A. Henschke of Jamestown, South Australia as Titular Bishop of Praenetus and Auxiliary Bishop of Wagga Wagga. Bishop Henschke was appointed Vicar-General and Parish Priest of Junee from where he assisted the ailing Bishop with many of his duties.

One of Bishop Dwyer's final acts among his people was to carry the Blessed Sacrament in a procession at Mount Erin Convent in October 1938 when 5,000 people marched. He had introduced the Holy Name Society to the Diocese, and members came in 3 special trains to participate in the great act of faith.

Bishop Dwyer's life was coming to an end. On 11 October 1939, one day short of his 70th birthday he passed away in Lewisham Hospital, Wagga Wagga.

Hundreds of people from the Diocese and beyond came to pay tribute to the departed Bishop. On the eve of his burial from 9 p.m. until 6 a.m. the following day members of the Holy Name Society recited the Rosary while they kept vigil over the Bishop's earthly remains. On the morning of burial 45 Masses were offered at the 5 Cathedral Altars as well as at Mount Erin Chapel and Lewisham Hospital. The Pontifical High Requiem Mass offered prior to The Bishop's burial was celebrated by His Grace, the Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Norman Gilroy (later to become Cardinal), in the presence of the Archbishops of Melbourne and Hobart, nine Bishops, 96 other clergy and a huge congregation many of whom were unable to find space in the Cathedral. Loud speakers were installed and Radio Station 2WG broadcast the Ceremony. Bishop Henschke delivered the panegyric.

On the day of burial, 17 October, all business houses closed their doors as the funeral procession, headed by Archbishop Mannix and watched by hundreds of people moved from the Cathedral on foot, traversing one block of the main business area before returning to the Cathedral for interment of Bishop Dwyer's remains near the Sacred Heart Altar.

FEATURES OF COMPLETED CATHEDRAL

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS: In addition to the windows installed in 1887 a number record the history of the Cathedral and perpetuate the memory of those who were a part of that history.
POPE PIUS XI: In the first years of whose Pontificate the Cathedral was completed; Dr. LANIGAN: first Bishop of Goulburn who laid the original foundation stone in 1885 (the window is in the eastern Sacristy); DR. JOHN GALLAGHER: second Bishop of Goulburn who became first permanent pastor, at Wagga Wagga following the opening of the Church in 1887 (the window is in the western Sacristy); Dr. JOSEPH W. DWYER: first Bishop of Wagga Wagga who was consecrated in the Cathedral in 1918.
TRANSEPTS: An eastern and western transept were added; **TWO CHAPELS** (Side altar areas); **TWO SACRISTIES;** **A BELL-TOWER** and **CENTRE FRONT DOOR.**
TRIPLE STAINED GLASS WINDOW in eastern transept donated by Bishop Dwyer; **WESTERN TRANSEPT** window donated by Mr and Mrs D. Byrnes.
SINGLE WINDOWS: donated by Mr and Mrs James Donnelly; Mr and Mrs John Daly, Mullengandra; Mr and Mrs F. W. Tietyens;

TWO WINDOW FACING WEST: IN MEMORY OF Mrs Josephine Gleeson, Burrumbuttock. FLOOR OF THE SANCTUARY, a mosaic, is a masterpiece in marble. It contains the COAT-OF-ARMS OF THE DIOCESE.

THE BELL was donated by Bishop Dwyer; THE STATUE OF SAINT MICHAEL on the front protico was donated by Mr James K. O'Rielly.

The most beautiful furnishing was the marble HIGH ALTAR imported from Carrara, Italy and donated at a cost of £1,700 by Mrs Gertrude Moran in memory of her husband, Patrick Moran. Four other marble Altars for the side Chapels were also imported from Italy.

Extra seating was donated by parishioners and well-wishers. The full complement of seats was not complete until 1937 when an appeal was made for donors of the last 25 seats at £10 each. The organ which replaced the original one was not installed at the time of completion of the Cathedral. It was donated in the mid 1930s by Mr and Mrs A. J. Monks and Miss Bessie Monks.

7 War Enthronement 1940's 1950's

Scarcely had the dust of Depression settled when the horror of World War II ignominiously descended. Necessity demanded the tightening of belts. Shortages of numerous commodities and restrictions on their use, the introduction of rationing of essential food items and fuel, the exodus of man-power (woman-power too) to the forces and essential services meant a slowing down of development within the parish not in a spiritual sense, in fact more and more people turned to their religion for spiritual help and comfort in the difficult times, but in its building programme which ground almost to a halt. This was the situation when Dr. F. A. Henschke succeeded Bishop Dwyer.

Bishop Francis Augustin Henschke already Auxiliary Bishop residing at Junee and filling the position of Parish Priest had been carrying out some of the duties associated with the high office of Bishop of Wagga Wagga. For several months the health of Bishop Dwyer was in decline. He spent many of his last years as a patient at Lewisham Hospital, sleeping there and going to the Bishop's House during part of the day.

The official appointment of Bishop Henschke as second Bishop of Wagga Wagga was announced on 16 November 1939. His enthronement took place in Saint Michael's Cathedral on Sunday 31 March 1940. Eight Bishops, 66 priests and members of Religious Orders, as well as an overflow congregation, attended the Ceremony performed by the Apostolic Delegate, Dr. Panico. Hundreds of people who could not find room in the Cathedral listened in by wireless installed in Saint Joseph's School room.

Weeks of preparation by a parish committee guided by the Administrator, Father T. Barry, preceded the enthronement of Bishop Henschke. Following the ceremony the newly-enthroned Bishop celebrated Pontifical High Mass of Thanksgiving. Bishop T Fox of Wilcannia-Forbes delivered the occasional address. The occasion was unique in Catholic Church history in Australia. For the first time an Auxiliary Bishop was appointed to succeed the one to whom he was appointed Auxiliary.

Visiting clergy were entertained to dinner at Mount Erin Convent when the Bishop was presented with a wallet of notes on behalf of the priests of the Diocese. Mr. J. F. O'Regan presided at a garden party which followed. On behalf of the laity he presented Bishop Henschke with an Oldsmobile car and a



**Bishop Francis Augustin Henschke, D.D.
Second Bishop of Wagga Wagga**

Courtesy of Diocesan Archives

wallet of notes. The address was read by Mr. F. J. Brady. Both of these gentlemen were stalwarts of the parish, mindful of the needs of others. Mr. O'Regan, a master-butcher, showed his concern for the needy in a practical way, especially during the Depression years when he distributed meat free of charge to those who were most in need. From 1921 - 1940 he was a member of the Legislative Council. Bishop Henschke was also tendered a civic reception.

JUBILEES SAINT JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

One important event which took place during the war years was the building of the new Saint Joseph's School and Hall which replaced the original Saint Joseph's School. It was blessed and opened by Bishop Henschke on 1 March 1942 in the year of the silver jubilee of the Diocese. As a tribute to the late Bishop who had made a significant contribution to education, particularly during his years as Inspector of Schools in the Goulburn Diocese, the building was named "The Joseph Wilfrid Dwyer Memorial School and Hall". Now in 1987 the name of Saint Joseph's School has been dispensed with as the School is now part of Saint Michael's Regional High School for boys.

In that year also, Bishop Henschke celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood. The joyful occasion was celebrated with High Mass offered in the Cathedral by Father Barry with the Bishop presiding.

WAR TIME

During the war years Bishop Henschke was faced with a shortage of priests, at a time when there was an influx of service personnel and their families. Many thousands of air force and army personnel were in the R.A.A.F. Training Bases of Forest Hill and Uranquinty and at Kapooka Military Base.

Some of the men who passed through were from distant shores - United States, Britain, Canada and New Zealand. Each day the skies were abuzz with training planes while young trainee pilots, like fledgling eagles, tried their wings in readiness for combat. When war in the Pacific was at its height many an American bomber flew over en route to Tocumwal for servicing.

The untiring service of members of C.U.S.A. in the parish was greatly appreciated by servicemen. Many miles from home, they looked forward to the warmth of welcome, a cup of coffee, a friendly chat and spiritual comfort.

The shortage of priests continued in the post-war period. When the flow of migration began, service was given by migrant Clergy who with others of their countrymen fled their homelands in the devastated theatres of war in Europe. One of these priests, Father R. J. Kunze was Chaplain at the Migrant Centre established in the former Uranquinty Air Base. He baptised scores of infants born while their families were in temporary quarters. Bishop Henschke was concerned for the welfare of these homeless people who travelled thousands of miles in search of a new life in a safe and hospitable land.

The spiritual welfare of the children of the newly-arrived migrants was also a matter of concern. At first Father Kevin Wright provided religious instruction at the Uranquinty Migrant Centre but as numbers increased three Sisters from Mount Erin Convent, in 1949, accompanied by Polish Priest, Father Josko, carried on the work. Despite difficulties with the language barrier they instructed children aged 5 to 15 years who had come mostly from the Baltic States, Poland and Yugoslavia.

A sympathetic committee was formed in the Parish with Mr. Jerry Bowe as President and Mr. Kevin Walls as Secretary. Named the Migrant Committee, its members organised visits to the Centre in an endeavour to help the new-comers, who spoke no English or very little, to become assimilated and feel wanted in the community.

When the first contingent, fleeing the horrors of Russian - invaded Hungary, arrived by plane in 1956 destined for the Bonegilla Migrant Camp, they were greeted at Forest Hill Aerodrome by car loads of parishioners.

POST-WAR YEARS

When war ended, Wagga Wagga with its usual resilience rallied to the task of re-organisation. Amid the drama and difficulties of post-war life, having met the requirements necessary for exalted status, it was proclaimed a City on 25 April 1946.

The City, which at that time could boast a population of 16,000 had as its Mayor a parishioner of Saint Michael's parish - Mr. John V. Doyle, who was an ardent supporter of the Catholic Church. Since coming to Wagga Wagga in 1923 his name featured in many church organisations and committees and did so until his retirement in recent years.

Mr. Doyle served his country at Gallipoli in the First World War, and was, for many years, a familiar figure in the local Anzac Day March, very often leading the parade. He passed away at his home on 25 February 1987 in his 96th year. He was dressed ready to attend the lunch-time daily Mass at the Cathedral.

In the closing years of the war Wagga Wagga was to experience yet another misfortune. The years 1944-46 brought one of the most severe droughts on record. In 1944 only 9 inches of rain fell whilst in the following 2 years the rainfall was only 18 inches in each year. As a result the waters of Lake Albert completely dried up.¹

ORDINATION

Parishioners of Saint Michael's were proud to witness in the Cathedral on 28 July 1947 the priestly ordination of Reverend Edward Patrick Fitzgerald (Tony). It was an historic occasion as Father Fitzgerald was the first young man from the Cathedral parish to be ordained for the parochial clergy. He is the eldest son of Mrs. Molly Fitzgerald and the late Mr. Edward Fitzgerald. The home in which the family lived, on the corner of Johnston and Tarcutta Streets was probably the home of the original grantee, Michael Maher. It was demolished to make way for the building of the new Saint Joseph's School and Hall in 1942.

It is a happy coincidence that one who spent most of his boyhood beneath the portals as it were, of the Cathedral should eventually become one of its priests, in fact in later years he was to fill the important position of Administrator of the Cathedral Parish from 1968 to 1972.

The Fitzgerald family gave yet another son to the priesthood when Father Ralph was ordained, also in the Cathedral by Bishop Henschke in 1955.

Saint Michael's parish welcomed the attendance of young Catholic student-teachers in the congregation when in 1947 a new concept in education began with the opening of the Wagga Wagga Teachers' Training College in the former R.A.A.F. Hospital which is now the South Campus of the Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education.

When, at the end of two year's training, the first group of history-making graduates emerged they made a general Communion in the Cathedral and were addressed by Father Owen Cosgriff, Chaplain of the Thomas Moore College which was established within the College. The objectives were to afford members social recreation in leisure time and provide them with the opportunity to keep in contact with the important things of parish life in which they would be associated if they were in their own homes.

Following his return from World War II in which he gave service in the Middle East, Father Cosgriff assisted in Goulburn and Wagga Wagga Dioceses. During his time at Saint Michael's he made many friends and gave much enjoyment by his violin-playing. His penmanship was commendable also. For much of his time in Wagga Wagga, he was editor of the *Catholic Monitor* which was launched in August 1949 to replace the *Cathedral Monitor*. Publication of the latter was suspended during the war years.

Father Cosgriff who had known Monsignor Patrick Hartigan ('John O'Brien') well, wrote a fine tribute to him after his death. It was part of a series under the title of 'His Reverence', with a fictitious Father Gilhooley as the principal character.² Monsignor Hartigan, former parish priest of Narrandera for 27 years, needs no introduction to present-day readers. He lives on in his poetic works of true Irish-Australian flavour, perhaps the best known being 'Around the Boree

Log'. His writings have captured the hearts of thousands and are still doing so. Saint Michael's saw him infrequently but always on special Church occasions. Memories linger still of the times when, invited to deliver the sermon, he packed the Cathedral to overflowing.

To fulfill the obligation which is part of a Bishop's lot, Dr. Henschke made his *ad limina* visit to Rome in 1950. He was loath to be absent from his Diocese when so much needed to be done following the holocaust of the 1940's but kept in touch by letters which were published in the *Catholic Monitor*. In one of the letters the Bishop with his typical humour told of an incident which occurred during his tour of Ireland.

Tickets were hard to get for the final of the hurling competitions. Already thirteen Bishops were there, and when an over-worked official was asked what he could do for an American Bishop who had just arrived, he replied, "All I can do is raise my hat to him". He wrote too that although there were many beautiful places to delight the eye of the traveller, the best place in the world was Church Street, Wagga Wagga. Although taken from the family hearth as it were he readily adapted himself to life in a new area. From the day of his arrival he called Wagga Wagga his home.

Recognition and honour came to Monsignor Barry in July 1948 when Pope Pius XII bestowed on him a very special and rare honour, that of Prothonotary Apostolic, the highest dignity that can be bestowed on a priest. Father Thomas Ignatius Barry, after spending some months in Berrigan, came to Wagga Wagga in December 1918 and remained until 1925 when he went as assistant to Monsignor O'Connell at Junee. In 1926 he was in charge at Urana but in 1927 following the death of Father T. Ryan, Administrator, was recalled to replace him as Administrator of the Cathedral parish, a position he held during the life-time of Bishop Dwyer. He was associated with the 'Monitor' for many years.

When Bishop Henschke succeeded to the See of Wagga Wagga in November 1939 he appointed Monsignor Barry, parish priest of Junee and Vicar-General of the Diocese.

Official investiture with his new honour of P. A. came at the hands of Bishop Henschke on Sunday, 19 September 1948 at Junee. On the death of Monsignor William Slattery he was appointed parish priest of Albury where he died in 1952.

It is not possible to mention the numerous clergy or even a small proportion of those who ministered to the spiritual needs of the Wagga Wagga Cathedral parishioners. Among them there was none more likeable than Father Augustus Lacey who came in the late 'Depression' days of 1933. Of quiet demeanour, but strong of character, he was a man of prayer, a hard worker who inspired in others the will to get things done.

Born on 2 April 1900 at Pyramid Hill, Victoria, he was ordained by Bishop J. W. Dwyer in 1930. During his time in Wagga Wagga he was Spiritual Director of the Holy Name Society at a time when its members filled almost two thirds of the Cathedral during Mass, and again at Evening Devotions. The Catholic Young Men's Club was fostered by him. Under his direction it developed into the Catholic Youth Movement which included young women as well as young men.

Father Lacey left Wagga Wagga by horse and sulky in 1937 to take up his first Parish - Culcairn, and, as Father T. Desmond wrote, he was still driving a horse and sulky when he transferred to his next Parish of Corowa in 1940.

The building of a large Church, the Presbytery and Hall, Saint Francis' Marist Bros. College and the Assumption Villa in Leeton are credited to him and to his ability to encourage his parishioners to raise funds. While in Leeton he was chosen along with Father Bongiorno, by Bishop Henschke to conduct a Diocesan Appeal mentioned in other pages. In 1957 he was raised to the high ranks of the Monsignori. Ill health caused his retirement in 1968. Returning to the town of his birth, he lived with his nephew Frank and family who provided for him a private Chapel. Death came to him on 11 April 1974 at the Bethlehem Home, Bendigo, where he spent the last years of his life.³

A spiritual exercise which engendered renewed fervour and brought many blessings, spiritual and temporal to Catholic people was the devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, a devotion re-inforced

by the presence in the parish for a short time of Her special Statue brought from overseas. No-one present in the Cathedral on the day in 1951 when it was carried in procession up the aisle, could forget the aura which surrounded it and the reverent feelings it evoked. Into whatever parish it was taken it left a deep impression. Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne who, at that time, was in advanced old age, said he was grateful to God for being spared to see the remarkable blessings obtained in his Diocese following its appearance.

A young lady of the Diocese, Joan Westblade, who had been suffering for years with paralysis following poliomyelitis and as a consequence was unable to walk, was present in Saint Michael's Cathedral on the day of the arrival of the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima. At the end of the ceremony she was able to walk again. No miracle was claimed nor was any publicity sought or given. With a deep faith such as hers, it seemed that she had been smiled on from above. She is now a member of the Little Company of Mary and in recent years was in charge of 'Overdale' Retreat and Conference Centre near Wagga Wagga. ⁴

Fatima devotions were initiated in the parish by the Catholic Women's Social Guild (Catholic Women's League). The devotions continued to be held monthly drawing large congregations on all occasions.

CHARITABLE ORDERS — ORGANISATIONS

Restrictions and shortages, while the wheels of industry were slowly gaining momentum in the immediate post-war years, meant a delay in renewal of a building programme, and although power cuts and twice-a-day black-outs were for a while a way of life, the 1950's saw the beginning of a great revival. Long-needed additions were made to the Christian Brothers Monastery in 1949. It was built in 1913 to accommodate 4 Brothers who were teaching 100 pupils. In 1949 there were 8 Brothers in residence teaching 350 boys.

Bishop Henschke had a long cherished ambition to establish a Home for the Aged and Infirm, a Boys' Orphanage and a Diocesan Boys' Boarding School. Projects such as these required money, much money and so he set the wheels in motion to raise it. He chose well in his appointing of Dean Lacey of Leeton and Father Bongiorno of Urana to this special Diocesan work to, in fact, visit every parish in the Diocese seeking funds. The appeal began in Berrigan in March 1950 and by January 1951 the funds totalled £57,186/12/0.

From then on members of Religious Orders not previously seen in the area, came to carry on their charitable, spiritual and educational work. The first of these were from the Order of 'Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion' who came in 1953 and opened what is widely and affectionately known as The Home of Compassion. They provide tender care for the aged and afflicted, irrespective of class, creed or colour, those for whom very often no place can be found elsewhere in the community.

At first the Home was established in a large residence in Fox Street, previously occupied by the late Mr. W.M.J. Walsh and his family. It had been built by Mr. Smith of Kyeamba Station.

Converted to fill its new role it was in use until a large "Home" was built in the Ashmont area. The latter was blessed by Bishop Carroll and opened by the Hon. Wal Fife on Sunday, 8 December 1974.

The gentleman mentioned - Mr. W.M.J. Walsh, a local solicitor had for many years given untold service to the Church. In recognition of his outstanding service to the Pope and to the Church he received in 1949 the 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice' Medal. Investiture was carried out in the Cathedral by Bishop Henschke.

Meanwhile at Lewisham Hospital the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary were living in cramped quarters within the Hospital, their Chapel being a small area on the top floor. As well, hospital space was strained to the limit (and beyond). The decision to build a Convent and Chapel adjacent to the Hospital was timely. Bishop Henschke laid the foundation stone on 30 March 1952. He blessed and opened it on 27 September 1953. In 1954 the name of Lewisham Hospital was changed to Calvary.

In the midst of rapid expansion came the reminder that we are not the controllers of our own destiny. The City experienced a set back when in the early 1950's, successive floods caused

havoc and sent people fleeing temporarily from their homes. "It was estimated that in the 1950 flood, almost half of the City had been inundated when the Murrumbidgee River rose to the level of 33 feet."⁵

That was not the only set-back. In 1952, the year in which construction of the Snowy River Scheme commenced, bush fires raged through the eastern part of the Riverina resulting in the loss of two lives and inestimable damage to homes and property. In that year also there was further flooding of the Murrumbidgee River and its tributaries.

RURAL SETTLEMENT

Of considerable importance during Bishop Henschke's episcopate was the National Catholic Rural Movement, a branch of Catholic action specially adapted for rural areas, working towards making an atmosphere in which Christians could breathe easily and remain Christians.

As Episcopal Chairman, a position he held for more than 25 years, Bishop Henschke chaired its Annual Convention held in Wagga Wagga in April 1951⁶ when Professor McDonald-Holmes, Mr. Colin Clark and Miss Barbara Ward all with expert knowledge of regional development, were guest speakers.

Ultimate outcome of the Movement's influence was a unique venture aimed at benefiting young Christian families of the future. On a portion of 'Moorong', the property of the late Mr. John Roach, Bishop Henschke proposed to establish a Christian Rural Settlement.⁷ With his love of the land and all it embodied, the Bishop perceived a future in which a community of working people could own their own small rural block, live in harmony, growing some of their own food and raising their families in a country environment. The San Isidore Settlement was the fulfilment of his ideal.

The Settlement began in 1956 and is in existence today. Blocks averaging under 10 acres in size, mostly 5 acres, were offered for sale by Bishop Henschke at a very modest price. One of the first of the 'pioneers', Mr. Kerry Pierce and family are in residence still. The opening by Bishop Henschke took place in 1957.

First Chaplain was Father Norman Duck who was also Chaplain at the Kapooka Military Base. His home at San Isidore was a disused army hut part of which served as a Chapel. Mr. William Mulrooney was the first school-teacher appointed by the Government. Sisters from Mount Erin travelled out each morning to give Religious instruction. One of the last acts of Bishop Henschke before his death in February 1968 was to give permission for a Church to be built.⁸ It was opened on Sunday 27 October of that year by the third Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Dr. Francis Carroll, who con-celebrated Mass with Father Duck at an open-air Altar. Anglican Ministers, Archdeacon K. Osborne and Reverend Owen Dowling (now the Anglican Bishop of Canberra) attended as did civic dignitaries and 330 people.

The original concept of San Isidore has changed somewhat. Regulations regarding re-sale of land no longer exist. The former 'Common', a community facility for live-stock is no longer in use. The land has been sub-divided for sale by Church authorities. However, the spirit of Christian neighbourliness is still evident in the settlement and, as one resident of more than 30 years standing recently remarked, "San Isidore is a great place to live".

Much of the balance of John Roach's estate was bequeathed to Catholic Institutions. He had supported the Church in life and in death remembered it also. A bequest of £4,000 was made to the Christian Brothers' High School, £7,000 was to be divided between Lewisham Hospital, Wagga Wagga, and Mount Erin Convent.

Establishment of a Boys' Boarding School had been the desire of Bishop Dwyer from the time he began organising his new Diocese in 1918. It was one of the matters under discussion at a meeting held in Saint Joseph's Hall in late December of that year. It and other projects were postponed when the Depression and world events in the form of another war intervened.

Bishop Henschke with the same thought in mind secured, in 1950, 45 acres in the Yanco-Leeton area. Although not in Saint Michael's parish as Bishop Dwyer had envisaged, it was to be of benefit to students from within its rural communities. Named Saint Francis' it began

operations under the Marist Brothers Order on 7 February 1956. The official blessing and opening followed on 24 March 1957. Additions were made in 1967 and 1971.

In 1958, the year of the Lourdes Centenary, a grand effort was made to fittingly commemorate the occasion. Parishioners of Saint Michael's joined with thousands from throughout the Diocese to stage a monster rally in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes. Fourteen thousand strong from all points of the Diocese, they converged on Saint Francis' College, Leeton, on Sunday 12 October, arriving in 600 cars and more than 30 buses, reciting along the way 42,000 Rosaries. The Bishop had requested that 3 Rosaries each at least be offered during the journey.

Bishop Henschke celebrated Mass from an Altar erected on the back of 2 semi-trailers. An eighty-strong choir from Wagga Wagga led the singing. In the afternoon a procession moved to the new Grotto (a gift from the Diocese) which was then blessed by his Lordship. An impressive sight was the number of Sisters of Religion from various Orders. They marched together, 260 strong.



BISHOP'S HOUSE
WAGGA WAGGA, N.S.W.
22nd June, 1959.

Dear Father Lane,

I warmly approve of your application for permission to conduct an "Every Catholic Canvass" for the Parish of St. Michael, Wagga Wagga. I do so because I am convinced that this method of fundraising presents to all Catholics the only truly Catholic way of supporting their Parish and its needs.

I have had ample proof of the zeal, devotedness and spirit of work of your parishioners since I have been Bishop of this Diocese of Wagga Wagga. But I am afraid that the bulk of the work has been left to a comparative few. Your Canvass will give to the parishioners of St. Michael's Parish the opportunity to pull their full weight in the tremendous developments that await the Parish.

I am certain that the result of your Canvass will be beyond your expectations and that this will be most marked in the spiritual sphere. When all your parishioners have the satisfaction of knowing that they are really "Giving to God" in a thoughtful and sacrificial way, the spiritual life of your parish must of necessity be quickened.

I wish the blessing of Almighty God upon the Every Catholic Canvass of the Parish of St. Michael. I know that God will bless an hundred-fold, my dear Father, the efforts of yourself, your priests and the splendid men and women who are rallying to your side.

Your devoted servant in Christ,

F. A. Henschke

F. A. Henschke, D.D.,
Bishop of Wagga Wagga.

The Very Rev. Fr. J.D. Lane, Adm.,
Bishop's House,
Wagga Wagga.

When Bishop Henschke came to Wagga Wagga as Bishop in 1939 there were 23 parishes in the Diocese staffed by 36 priests. The Catholic population was estimated to be 25,000. In the post-war years there was a dramatic population growth. It was evident that provision of educational facilities was an important factor in the development of the Church. More so was it

true at the close of the Bishop's life in 1968, by which time the number of Catholics in the Diocese had reached 45,000, the number of parishes 30 and the number of priests 60. As the time had come to explore alternative means of obtaining parish finance, a concept new to the Cathedral parish was put in train.

Although an envelope collection was in operation and certainly an improvement on the former 'see-saw' method of 'up one week and down the next', it did not provide the security of being able to budget for future needs. The new scheme called the 'Every Catholic Canvass' came into operation in 1959 under the direction of Father John Desmond (Des) Lane who was Administrator of the Cathedral Parish. His application to Bishop Henschke for permission to proceed with the programme brought an encouraging reply.⁹

It was intended that the funds raised in this manner would take care of payment of salaries for Catholic lay teachers, liquidation of the debt on Galore Church, the building of a new Primary School at Kooringal, and many more, needed projects. Planned giving would also mean the elimination of Primary School fees. The target was £90,000 in three years. The result in 1962 was a smaller amount of £77,000.

The Scheme, a most futuristic concept, was a major undertaking by Father Lane who studied Schemes existing elsewhere before embarking on the project.

Planned-giving along the same lines has continued, although various types were introduced. For the past six years Saint Michael's Parish has organised its own scheme.



The Home of Compassion

Courtesy of Mr J. Sheahan

8 *Winds of Change - 1960's* *Consecration of Bishop F. Carroll*

Within the Catholic Church the winds of change were blowing as the first half of the 20th century drew to a close. Aid for independent schools seemed to be on the horizon, Vatican Council II was preparing for its history-making sessions and, coming close to home, the Diocesan Provident Fund was born.

If the expansive programme of building was to continue more avenues of obtaining finance were needed. As the 1960's dawned, so too did the day of credit restrictions, the result being a halt to the building programme. Finance previously available from Banks and other Lending Bodies, dried up in the credit squeeze which was announced by the Prime Minister, the Hon. R.G. Menzies, just at the time when Father J. D. Lane, Administrator of the Catholic Parish, was in Sydney seeking loans.

It was suggested to Bishop Henschke that he consider establishing a Provident Fund similar to that operating successfully in Victoria. Believing that the number of people in the Diocese was insufficient to contribute to such a fund, the Bishop was at first reluctant to introduce it.

Sharing with Father Lane an interest in such a project, local Accountant, Mr. Brian Allen, had further discussions with Bishop Henschke who then decided to go ahead with the idea. He (the Bishop) travelled throughout the Diocese appealing for funds.

In 1961 the Diocesan Provident Fund, with headquarters at Wagga Wagga, was launched. Monies invested were, in turn, loaned to the parishes. The first deposit in April 1961 of £100 was quickly followed by others until at the end of the first twelve months more than £200,000 was out on loan.¹ By 1969 with one million dollars or more put to good use by the parishes, success of the programme was assured.

Mr. Brian V. Allen was the inaugural Secretary of the Fund, its affairs being administered by his Accountancy staff. To-day, the Diocesan Provident Fund with Mr James Mercer-King as Manager is based at McAlroy House in Tarcutta Street which opened in September 1986.

Figures released by the Provident Fund in March 1986, the year of its silver jubilee:

By 31 March 1986 total funds of depositors had risen to	\$8.8 m
made up of	
Parishioners deposits	\$3.2 m
non-Parishioners deposits	\$5.6 m
Total advances since the inception of the fund	\$9.7 m

The Provident Fund together with Planned Giving helped to ease the financial burden.

Due to the flow of immigrants the number of catholic children attending public schools in the 1950's called for action on the religious front. This led to the formation, in 1961, of a Motor Mission. Two Sisters from Mount Erin Convent covering 400 miles per week by car dispensed religious instruction to children in seventeen public schools including Wagga Wagga High, Gurwood Street, South Wagga Wagga, North Wagga Wagga, Forest Hill, Burrandana, Mangoplah, Gumly, Millwood, Collingullie, Euberta, Kapooka, The Rock and Yerong Creek.

In Koorungal from 1963-1968 two lay catechists with no previous experience joined the ranks, visiting the Koorungal Primary School once a week for the period allotted to all catechists, imparting religious instruction to 45 or 50 children from Kindergarten to 6th Class. The pupils in "Scripture Class" as it was called, were divided into two sections and were prepared for First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

The Motor Mission gained strength. More and more centres were visited by the Sisters. Later on a new dimension was added when 'Live-In' Instructions Camps were held at 'Overdale' and the Father Charles Holdsworth Christian Formation Camp at San Isidore. At that time these two centres were able to accommodate 40 and 120 students respectively. The programme of preparation for Holy Communion and Confirmation continued in this way. As well, Counselling days were held for secondary school students and, in the evenings, instruction in the faith was given to the many women seeking it.²

Regular training courses for catechists were introduced and, in 1972, at the instigation of Bishop F. P. Carroll, a new scheme was commenced in an effort to co-ordinate catechists in the State Schools of the Diocese, especially in the training of catechists and involving parents in the Religious Instruction of their children. At the helm was a Presentation Sister, Sister Maria. She was followed by Sister M. Carmel of Mount Erin Convent. In 1973 a new Diocesan Education Group was formed in Wagga Wagga.³

EPISCOPAL JUBILEE:

On 12 March 1962, the year of Bishop Henschke's episcopal silver jubilee, the Bishop Henschke Boys' Primary School in South Wagga Wagga, named in his honour, was dedicated and opened by the Apostolic Delegate, the Most Reverend Maximilian De Furstenberg, D.D. At the opening ceremony when replying to the Apostolic Delegate, Bishop Henschke said: "I must be looking sick because usually it is not until after death that a person has a building named after him".

His sense of humour was evident on many occasions. Once he was asked what was the difference between a Bishop and an Archbishop. He replied that he thought it was something to do with the spine. The older one became, the more pronounced the arch.

To honour Bishop Henschke also in a visible and permanent way on the occasion of his episcopal silver jubilee, a wing was built on the north-western section of the Bishop's House for his private use. It consists of a private suite and a small chapel. Opening took place on 15 August 1962. Many visiting Bishops and priests were in Wagga Wagga to celebrate the jubilee. Some of the clergy were accommodated in private homes.

SCHOOL FUNDING:

Development within the Parish from the 1950's onwards was influenced to a large extent by the progress of the City itself. The Church kept in step all the way while the Catholic people continued to dig deep into their pockets as they had done for a century. Their greatest task was, not only to assist in the provision of schools, but as well to meet the expenses of their children's education.

Attempts were made in the post-war period to revive the question of 'State Aid' but without result. Cardinal Moran's philosophy was that aid should be forthcoming to any school which provided an appropriate standard of secular education irrespective of whether it was a Government school or a private one.⁴ Almost half a century after his death that remained the ultimate aim of his successors.

Anxiety was expressed throughout the Catholic School system regarding the lack of Government financial support for non-Government schools. Matters came to a head when Catholic School Authorities in Goulburn threatened to close their Schools and send the pupils to the Government schools. Following a meeting of 850 concerned people a 'school strike' was organised in an effort to demonstrate the enormity of the task which Catholics were facing in educating their children. Catholic children, 2,000 strong arrived at Government Schools one chilly morning in July 1962 to enrol. All Australia watched and awaited the outcome.⁵

Patrick O'Farrell wrote that "In opening the 1963 election campaign, Sir Robert Menzies announced a federal grants plan, available to all pupils and schools. Ten years later Commonwealth grants to non-government schools totalled \$47.6 million".⁶

In 1962, the year in which Vatican Council II was opened and during a critical period for education, Bishop Henschke set up a Diocesan Council for Education consisting of clergy, religious and laity. His enlightened leadership and his confidence in his people resulted in Wagga Wagga having perhaps the most efficient diocesan system in New South Wales.⁷ The vexed question of Government aid still remained.

Bishop Carroll on becoming Bishop of Wagga Wagga carried the torch. He was well qualified to put the case for Catholic Schools. For a period of fifteen years he was involved in organizations dealing with education: as Diocesan Director of Catholic Education 1965-1967; Secretary/Treasurer, Bishops' Committee for Education 1968-1969; Chairman, National Catholic Education Commission 1974-1978.

With the growth of the City in the post-war years came development in residential areas and consequently the need for new Churches and Schools. Already in 1955 a parish had been formed in the area south of the railway line which was named South Wagga Wagga. The Church of Our Lady of Fatima was blessed and opened by Cardinal Norman Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney on 10 October 1953. The Saint Maria Goretti School alongside the Church was opened on 11 May 1952 by Bishop Henschke. Three more school rooms were blessed and opened on Sunday 6 October 1968 by Bishop Francis Carroll.

In the 1960's when the population of the City reached 22,000 expansion into the suburban areas of Koorringal on the east and Ashmont (West Wagga Wagga) on the west brought the need for further extension of Church services. The Parish of Koorringal was formed in 1965 closely followed in 1966 by West Wagga Wagga. North Wagga Wagga Church erected during Father M. Buckley's time as parish priest, continued to be served on Sundays from the Cathedral until Christmas Day 1984 when Monsignor W. Fulton, V.G., offered the last Mass in the Church. Inundation of most of North Wagga Wagga during high floods was a deterrent to major development in the area.

With a century-old history behind it, the Catholic Church had now spread its branches in the direction of the four points of the compass.

As Director of Mission Appeals, Father Fulton in 1964 set up a Mission Centre in Baylis Street to provide a source of religious goods and reading matter for the Diocese. The Centre distributed school texts, any profit being directed to education in the Diocese. A Catholic Book Shop was housed next door. It is still in operation.

When the Christian Brothers were celebrating in 1964, the golden jubilee of their teaching in Wagga Wagga, the last days of the first Church of Saint Michael were drawing to a close. It had faithfully served its flock since 1859 but now had outgrown its usefulness, or so it seemed. It had been first and foremost a house of God, then a school, a residence for Teacher-Brothers (the Patricians), its final service being as a school tuck-shop.

It was part of a glorious beginning; we might say it was 'the grain of mustard seed' sown beside the Murrumbidgee. Now it was to give way to the modern age, but its tradition will live on.

The last curtain fell on the story of a pioneering faith when, in 1965 it was demolished to make way for the Technical and Science Block of Saint Michael's Christian Brothers High School.

In a letter to his people, dated 5 May 1966, Bishop Henschke wrote of "his earnest desire to have a Monastery of Contemplatives (men or women) in the Diocese". He welcomed the proposed establishment of a Branch of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and appealed for support for them. He wrote "The generous promise of the men of Wagga to raise 40,000 dollars has given the Nuns and myself new heart".

Four Sisters of the Order came from Kew, Melbourne, in 1966. At first they lived in private homes for fourteen months while awaiting the building of their Monastery in Ashmont.

In Saint Michael's Cathedral on 11 October 1966 Bishop Henschke celebrated Mass to mark the Foundation of the Carmel in the Diocese. He did not live to see the Monastery and Church

completed. The ceremony of blessing and opening was carried out by his successor Bishop Francis Carroll on Sunday 9 June 1968. The Church was dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Peace. Since that time ecumenical days of prayer have been held when christians from other Churches have come together to join in prayers for peace. Retreats for women and men are arranged as well as other spiritual exercises.

In December 1968 Bishop Carroll addressed an Ecumenical gathering of 200 people where prayers were offered for peace and in 1972 an Armistice Day Commemoration Service also at the Carmel was attended by all local Ministers of religion.

A Church Mission with a difference was held in Wagga Wagga in 1967. Although different in its structure, it brought the same message of faith and commitment. As an introduction to the Mission a ceremony was held in the Cathedral at which Bishop Henschke called on his people to be a part of the Mission. Conducted by members of the Redemptorist Order, it continued for a period of six months. The Missioners arranged for discussion groups to meet in private homes, a Priest being present to answer questions and give guidance. A successful Religious Canvass was undertaken as an ecumenical project. These groups continued this spiritual exercise for a long period. Now groups have been organised, perhaps in different forms, but each serving a common purpose. The Family Group Movement is one such which has come into being.

One of Bishop Henschke's greatest interests was the family and family life, and as Bishop Carroll said of him in the panegyric delivered on the day of his Requiem:

*"He saw the family as did the Second Vatican Council, as the domestic Church.
He saw the future of the Church and of the Nation standing or falling on the quality of its family life".*

Such a statement from a very wise Churchman has relevance in the present day when the world is beset with many evils which endanger family life and threaten the very heart of Christianity.

The Missioners returned at the end of the six month period to organise the last part of the Regional Mission - the 'Renewal'. As a result a Social Apostolate was formed incorporating groups from areas such as Mangoplah and Collingullie.



Demolition of first Saint Michael's Church and School in 1965
Christian Brothers' High School in foreground

Courtesy Graham Kennedy, Principal of Saint Michael's Regional High School

One of the interesting priests at the Bishop's House during the Episcopate of Bishop Henschke was Father William Gilby. Many will remember him for his clear tenor voice which was heard to advantage particularly during Holy Week Ceremonies and at Parish Concerts, before the introduction of Planned-Giving programmes rendered such functions redundant. He filled the position of Diocesan Inspector of Schools, also that of Private Secretary to Bishop Henschke until ill health forced his early retirement.

What a picture the latter pair presented to the eye of the passer-by in Church Street during the 1950's and early 1960's as they walked along, one slowly, the other more hurriedly in order to keep pace; Father Gilby, short, very short and rotund, the Bishop tall and slim, his 6ft. 4 inches height dwarfing his companion.

Father Gilby suffered a severe coronary occlusion at the age of 55 years. He spent most of his last years in Calvary Hospital, Wagga Wagga, where he died on 8 May 1973 at the age of 70 years.

Accommodation at the Bishop's House was taxed to the limit in the latter part of the 1960's when clergy numbers were at a peak. Besides Bishop Henschke there were seven priests in residence early in 1967.

Unfortunately such numbers have not been sustained in later years. A decline in vocations to the priesthood has reduced the numbers in 1987 to three resident at the Presbytery, and Bishop Brennan who now lives privately. Wagga Wagga Diocese is not alone in this problem. It is a matter of concern world-wide.

During 1967 the last year of his active life, Bishop Henschke had the joy of celebrating the golden jubilee of his priestly ordination. A special honour was conferred on him when the Civic fathers granted him the "Freedom of the City of Wagga Wagga", an honour only bestowed previously on two people - the late Alderman Ivan Jack, M.B.E., who was Mayor of the City for eleven years, and the late Honourable E.H. Graham, M.L.A., a local lad who had risen through the ranks to become the popular Minister for Agriculture in the New South Wales State Government.

In that year also, on Tuesday 5 September, the Bishop had the further joy of performing the Consecration of his successor, the young Coadjutor Bishop, Francis Patrick Carroll, who in 1983 was elevated to the position of Archbishop of the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese.



Class-room of first Saint Michael's Church-School (Photo taken in 1960)

Courtesy of Graham Kennedy, Principal of Christian Brothers' Regional High School



**Bishop Francis Patrick Carroll D.D., D.C.L.
Third Bishop of Wagga Wagga**

Courtesy of Diocesan Archives

EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION OF BISHOP FRANCIS CARROLL

Francis Patrick Carroll was born in Ganmain on 9 September 1930. He attended Saint Brendan's Presentation Convent School in that town, and completed his secondary school studies at De La Salle College, Marrickville. His seminary training was undertaken at Saint Columba's College, Springwood, and Saint Patrick's College, Manly.

It was a day of great rejoicing in the town of Ganmain and surrounding districts when on 27 July, 1954, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Henschke in Saint Brendan's Church in which he had been baptised.⁸ His first appointment was as Assistant Priest at Griffith from 1955-1959 during which period he was appointed, in 1957, Assistant Inspector of Diocesan Catholic Schools.

In 1959 he was transferred to Albury where he remained until 1961 when Bishop Henschke arranged for him to pursue post-graduate studies at the Pontifical Urban University de Propaganda Fide, in Rome. In 1964 his studies completed, he gained high honours and emerged with a Doctorate in Canon Law.

On returning home he was appointed to Wagga Wagga in 1965 as Chancellor of the Diocese. When the Catholic Education Office was established in that year he was appointed Diocesan Director of Catholic Education and Private Secretary to Bishop Henschke, replacing in the latter position, Father William Gilby who was in poor health.

Two thousand people filled to overflowing Hoyts Plaza Theatre and the adjoining R.S.L. Hall in Baylis Street, Wagga Wagga, when Bishop F.A. Henschke, assisted by Bishop F.R. Rush of Rockhampton and Bishop D.J. Warren of Wilcannia-Forbes consecrated Father Francis Patrick Carroll, Coadjutor Bishop of Wagga Wagga, the youngest Bishop in the Commonwealth.

In the early Spring of 1967 on 5 September, people came from far and wide to see a district-born son receive this high honour of the Church. Present were his widowed mother, his two brothers and three sisters and Monsignor O. Clark of Ganmain who had baptised him 37 years earlier.

Among the visitors were 23 Bishops, 250 priests and 200 Religious Sisters. The Anglican Bishop of Riverina, the Right Reverend J.B. Grinrod was present in the Sanctuary. Other local visiting clergy included the Venerable Archdeacon K. Osborne, Rector of Saint John's Anglican Church, Reverend K. MacKenzie Baird, Rector of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Reverend K. Brooks, Rector of the Methodist Church and Major J. Reid of the Salvation Army.

It was the first time in Australia that the Canon of the Mass was celebrated in English. Special permission having been obtained from Pope Paul the Papal Bull granting such permission was read prior to the ceremony of Consecration. Following the ceremony an in-door function (due to rain) was held at Mount Erin Convent and attended by 1,000 people. It was announced by Bishop Henschke that his new Coadjutor would be placed in charge of South Wagga Wagga.

Bishop Henschke was to live only 5 months after his successor's episcopal consecration. Official proclamation of Bishop Carroll as Bishop of Wagga Wagga was made on 24 April 1968. Bishop Carroll expressed the wish that there be no enthronement or any ceremony to mark the occasion.

DEATH OF BISHOP HENSCHKE

Bishop Henschke attended every session of Vatican Council II which involved the making of 4 visits to Rome and back. Each session meant a 2 to 3 months absence from his Diocese. As the Council drew to a close his health began to deteriorate. In line with one of the recommendations of the Council that Bishops would offer their resignation at the age of 75, Dr. Henschke on approaching that milestone in 1966 wrote to the appropriate authorities in Rome offering his resignation to the Pope. In the event of his offer not being accepted, he requested the assistance of a Coadjutor Bishop. As a consequence Father Francis Patrick Carroll, a priest of the Diocese, was appointed Coadjutor Bishop on 1 July 1967.⁹ The title of Coadjutor gave Bishop Carroll right of succession. The title differs from that of Auxiliary Bishop which does not give that right.

Further deterioration in Bishop Henschke's health in the next few months necessitated hospitalization in Wagga Wagga and in Sydney Lewisham Hospital for treatment. The cancerous condition of the lymphatic system was taking its toll. The Bishop, though ill, returned from Sydney to attend a Diocesan rally in Albury knowing full well that it was the last occasion on which he would be among his people. The rally in 1967 was arranged to mark the golden jubilee of the Diocese, also of the apparitions at Fatima and of the Bishop's own ordination to the priesthood. Bishop Henschke passed away in Calvary Hospital, Wagga Wagga, on 24 February 1968.

Thousands of Catholics, as well as members of other denominations, paid their last tribute to the late Bishop in a two and a half-hour of imposing and solemn ceremonies on 29 February 1968.

Even in death Bishop Henschke was instrumental in the writing of a small part of Catholic History in Australia. He became the first member of the clergy for whom a solemn Requiem Mass was offered wholly in English.

Cardinal Gilroy, Sydney, was the principal celebrant of the solemn Pontifical Requiem Mass. Other celebrants were the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop D. Enrici; Bishop Collins, Ballarat; Bishop Gallagher, Port Pirie; Bishop Brennan, Toowoomba; Bishop F. Carroll, Wagga Wagga; Right Reverend Monsignor J. H. Larkins, parish priest of Albury, Fathers N. Duck, Wagga Wagga, J. D. Lane, Administrator of Saint Michael's Cathedral, Wagga Wagga. There were 8 Archbishops and 13 Bishops present. Numerous priests of the Diocese, Religious Sisters and Brothers were among the 1,000 people who packed the Cathedral. Four Bishops distributed Holy Communion to those seated outside the Cathedral.

Among the representatives of other denominations were the Anglican Bishop of Riverina, the Right Reverend J.B.R. Grinrod; Archdeacon K.A. Osborne, Rector of Saint John's Church of England; the Reverend K. Brooks of the Methodist Church, and the Reverend D. Mackenzie Baird of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

Bishop Henschke's successor, Bishop F. P. Carroll preached a moving panegyric.

Local dignitaries present were the Mayor, Alderman R.J. Harris, the Honourable Wal. Fife, Member of Wagga Wagga, the Town clerk, Mr. W. Ellis and Officers of the R.A.A.F. and Army.

Thousands of people, in some areas 10 deep, watched as the funeral procession moved slowly, traversing one block of the main City area before returning to the Cathedral for interment of the Bishop's remains near those of Bishop Dwyer.



The Carmel, showing Chapel entrance

Courtesy of Sisters of Carmel

9 *Vatican Council II Ecumenism*

Shortly after he became the third Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Bishop Carroll had the joy of officiating at the priestly ordination of Reverend Bernard Moylan in the Church of Saint Margaret Mary, Randwick North, on Saturday 11 May 1968. Father Moylan was ordained for the Wagga Wagga Diocese and is now, in 1987, Parish Priest of Albury. His priestly studies were undertaken in the first classes to pass through the newly-established Pope John XXIII Seminary for Delayed Vocations in the United States.¹

Bishop Carroll came from a family of sportmen and as in most country towns, football was a favourite sport. In October 1968 when he had already succeeded to the See of Wagga Wagga, he participated in a charity match - the Carrolls versus The Rest (of Ganmain).

The Bishop's garb was to change several times during Sunday 6 October. His day began with celebration of Mass, then the opening of new school rooms at Saint Maria Goretti School at noon, then on to Ganmain for the big game which was the talk of the district for sometime. He was the team's non-playing coach, and led the team on to the field. After winning the first bounce he then joined the crowd and watched the Carrolls win the match.

An ABC T.V. crew was there to catch the action, while front page headlines of the *Daily Advertiser* declared "Football was never quite like this before". The game resulted in \$600 or more being added to the Ganmain Swimming Pool Fund.

WYNDHAM SCHEME

Major changes in education followed the introduction of the New South Wales Education Act. Requirements set out under the "Wyndam Scheme", as it was known, affected Secondary Schools and necessitated alterations within the school curriculum. Pressure on the finances of Catholic Schools was enormous. Combining of resources of the 2 existing Catholic High Schools - Christian Brothers and Mount Erin, appeared to be the answer to some of the problems.

Commencing in 1966, a period of 4 terms of experimentation was undertaken. Senior girls from Mount Erin, approximately 140 in number, travelled daily by bus to Saint Michael's School at the other end of town, where teachers from both Schools shared classes on a half-day basis teaching English, Science and Mathematics. The boys travelled to Mount Erin for some of their subjects.² The introduction in 1967 of an extra school-year, Form 6, created further problems. A panel of Inspectors granted a provisional Sixth Form as not enough subjects were available to students. Fifth and Sixth Forms were fully implemented in 1968 thus placing a strain on accommodation for co-education at Saint Michael's School.

The outcome was a decision to build a new High School. Pre-fabricated demountable classrooms were erected near the corner of Kildare Avenue and Coleman Streets on portion of Mount Erin Sports Oval. Trinity Senior High School opened on Wednesday 31 January 1968 with Sister M. Rosarie as Principal and Brother P. M. McCallum as deputy. Brick additions were progressively added, including a Science Block, all officially opened by Bishop Carroll. In the following year a Commonwealth Grant was received.

Trinity School was a new concept in education later emulated by other Educational Institutions. In five years enrolment doubled from 107 in 1968, to 215 in 1973 and almost trebled by 1977.

St. Vincent de Paul Society, active with its christian work in the Parish since its early days, established in late 1960's a Christian Formation Centre on 5 acres of land opposite the Church at

San Isidore. The purpose of the Centre was two-fold. It was intended for use as a Centre in which to conduct summer schools for spiritual education of Catholic children attending Country and State Schools; and as a Recreation Centre for Children of underprivileged families in Wagga Wagga and further afield, possibly even from Metropolitan Centres.

When not in use for these purposes, it would be available for school retreats, seminars and cursillos. The Centre has continued to fill this role and has had wider use by various organisations such as the Diocesan Pastoral Council which was formed in 1979, and by youth organizations as well.

Following the tragic death on 16 November 1979 of Father Charles Holdsworth in a car accident, the Centre was named the Charles Holdsworth Christian Centre.

Youth Organizations, active in the past as they pursued their Christian ideals, decided in September 1969 to publicly demonstrate their faith and make it known that some of the present day youth is genuinely trying to uphold Christian principles. Led by Bishop Carroll, they quietly marched, 1,000 strong with banners aloft, down Fitzmaurice and Baylis Streets and on to the Kyeamba Smith Hall in the Showgrounds where Mass was celebrated by the Bishop.³

Adjustment to changes in Society generally and the Church in particular, posed problems for both young and old. Television and jet travel brought the world almost on to our own doorstep. Parish life was changing. By far the greatest and most unusual changes experienced in the Parish occurred following implementation of the findings of Vatican Council II.

Bewilderment and unease was evident among many of the senior parishioners. They believed that in some respects most of the customs and rituals which had been part of their lives since childhood were being replaced by less acceptable methods of worship. However, time possesses a mellowing ingredient and now 20 years later most inhibitions have been laid to rest, albeit, in some cases, grudgingly.

Even though Bishop Henschke was himself a participant in the sessions of the Vatican Council, it would seem that he found difficulty in adjusting to, at least, one change - that from the former requirement of a head-covering to be worn by ladies when receiving Holy Communion. When giving Communion he sometimes placed his hand lightly on the top of the heads of young women, in a gesture of disapproval of their bare-headedness.

Gone were the Societies and Sodalities or at least a number of them. Benediction, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the Holy Hour were almost a memory - a cherished memory. For many, the recitation of the Rosary followed by Benediction on Sunday evenings rounded off, as it were, the observance of the Sabbath. The introduction of planned-giving programmes, necessary as they were and are, nevertheless diminished the togetherness achieved through socials, card parties, dances, balls and the like, but the fruits of Vatican Council II are now being seen in many ways.

Celebration of Mass with the Priest facing the Congregation and, as in Saint Michael's Cathedral, almost surrounded by his people, has made the Mass more meaningful; the Offertory Procession, particularly when members of a family participate, is a source of encouragement to the young to become a part of the Mass. The friendly handshake as a sign of peace has removed barriers. It has taken time but now there is total involvement by the congregation with lay men and women participating in the distribution of Holy Communion, in reading the Lessons, in leading the singing, in taking part in the Offertory Procession, and, regarding mundane affairs, in the counting of collection money after Masses.

The liturgical changes which were designed to restore the faithful to the role of active participants so that they could obtain the full fruits of the Mass have achieved their purpose. There are other changes too from which much good has come; the relaxing of laws governing fast before Holy Communion, the change in Religious dress which better suits the existing climate, the encouraging of Nuns and Brothers to take their place on community committees, particularly those relating to education. Bishop Carroll gave the lead in respect of the latter. He was appointed a member of the first Council of the Riverina College of Advanced Education founded in 1973, a position he occupied until 1981.

Removal of Altar rails eased discomfort for many who found kneeling difficult, it also hastened movement of communicants. Saturday evening Masses were welcomed by congregation and priests alike, particularly by the latter as an increase in the shortage of priests became evident.

One desirable outcome of post-Vatican II changes was the increase in ecumenism. Civic celebrations on a large scale took place in Wagga Wagga in March 1970 to mark the centenary of the establishment of Local Government in the City. The ceremonies opened with a gathering of Christians from all denominations. A procession was formed which passed the Churches. It was joined at each Church by Congregations at the conclusion of their various Services.

Pausing at the Court House where a prayer was offered for justice, truth, honesty and other Christian values on which the welfare of the City depends, the gathering then moved to the Council Chambers for the final prayers of thanksgiving. Bishop Carroll gave the final blessing.⁴

The Bishop and his priests continued to further the cause of ecumenism resulting in much more cordial relations with our Christian neighbours. Inter-Church services are now frequently held, several in the cause of World Peace. More and more people are losing their shyness about entering a Church of another denomination. The Shrine of Peace at the Carmel has been the scene of such services when Christians of various persuasions have come together to offer prayer for the good of mankind.

'Ecumenism at Work' could well have been the title for 'A Week of Prayer for Christian Unity' held at Saint Thomas' Church of England, Narrandera, in mid 1972. It opened with a sermon given by Bishop Francis Carroll who was present at the invitation of the Anglican Bishop of the Riverina, Reverend J. Grinrod. Bishop Carroll stressed the necessity of the followers of Christ to be aware of their duty to bring Christ to those about them. He also took his place on a Panel of 10 during an Open Forum. Sixteen Anglican Priests were among those present.⁵

On the occasion of the induction of the elected Aldermen of the City Council who were commencing a four year term in September 1983 an ecumenical ceremony was held in Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church to mark the occasion and offer prayers for the guidance of those entrusted with the affairs and welfare of the City. Administrator of Saint Michael's, Father R. Leaver, participated. A Bishop had not yet been appointed following Dr. Carroll's departure for Canberra.

The first edition of a new-look "Together" came off the press in 1970 under the editorship of Father John McGee, Parish Priest of Khancoban. It was designed to meet the needs of the whole Diocese - a means of closer communication particularly between Bishop Carroll and the wider family of Catholic people. It is still in circulation, the present Editor being none other than the brother of the first. Father James McGee has been Editor since 1986. He is also Parish Priest of The Rock.

It was proposed in 1971 to establish a memorial to the late Bishop Henschke, and what more fitting tribute than to re-design the Cathedral Sanctuary in a way that it would meet the requirements of the new Liturgy as outlined by Vatican Council II. In order to meet these requirements, it was recommended that there be one Altar, close to the people, and simple in design at which Mass could be celebrated by the priest facing the congregation.

The shrine of the Blessed Sacrament (Tabernacle) was to be separate from the Altar but not directly behind it, and the Baptistry close to the Sanctuary to enable future baptisms to take place during Mass if desired. The large High Altar, a masterpiece in marble, the gift of the Moran family in 1925 at a cost of £1,700, almost a fortune in those days, was dismantled but not discarded. It now serves a three-fold purpose. It has been incorporated in the Altar of Sacrifice, the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament and the Ambo (Pulpit). Under the former place of the High Altar is a crypt in which the mortal remains of Bishop Henschke are interred. It was intended that Bishop Dwyer's remains should rest there also but it was not possible to transfer them. The inscription from the top of his tomb is now in the centre panel of the crypt. On the Sanctuary floor also (in marble) are the Coats of Arms of the three former Bishops of Wagga Wagga. At the same time as these changes were implemented, very necessary restoration work was carried out in order to preserve the building and protect it from high levels of moisture.⁶

The Administrator, Father E (Tony) Fitzgerald, welcomed the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Paro, who blessed the newly renovated Sanctuary, Altar and the crypt. The occasion was the centenary of the creation of the Wagga Wagga Parish and the appointment of the first parish priest, Father William Bermingham.

When Wagga Wagga became a Cathedral City, the population was 8,403.

EDUCATION MILESTONES

Catholic Education took its rightful place in the history of Wagga Wagga when, in 1974, the Presentation Sisters of Mount Erin Convent celebrated a noble centenary. From the time they came, five in number, in 1874, they have achieved a remarkable record of service to Christian Education and a substantial contribution to the welfare of the City which celebrated its own centenary of Local Government just 4 years previously in 1970.

To acknowledge these attributes, the Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Alderman Morris Gissing, on behalf of the City, conferred on the Sisters the Freedom of the City, an ancient honour which acknowledges distinguished achievements, the highest Order of recognition a City can bestow. It had previously been granted in Wagga Wagga on only 5 occasions. The ceremony took place in the Civic Theatre on Thursday evening 2 May 1974 during a Civic Reception which marked the beginning of a four-day programme of Centenary Celebrations. Some weeks earlier when acquainting the Sisters of the Council's decision to confer the honour Alderman Gissing told them with a smile that they could if they wished have the privilege of marching through the streets of the City of Wagga Wagga with fixed bayonets.⁷

More than 5,000 people attended an Open-Air Youth Mass at Weissel Oval, 300 of them being students. Celebrant of the Mass was Bishop Francis Carroll who was assisted in the distribution of Communion by 25 priests.

During the Centenary Mass offered on Saturday 4 May, Saint Michael's Cathedral was filled to capacity.

On the previous night a glittering Grand Ball was held in Kyeamba Smith Hall. Ex-students State-wide and Interstate were present to celebrate the grand occasion. They also attended, on Sunday morning, their own special Mass in the intimate confines of the Convent Chapel which had echoed to their footsteps or perhaps their tip-toes through many happy years.

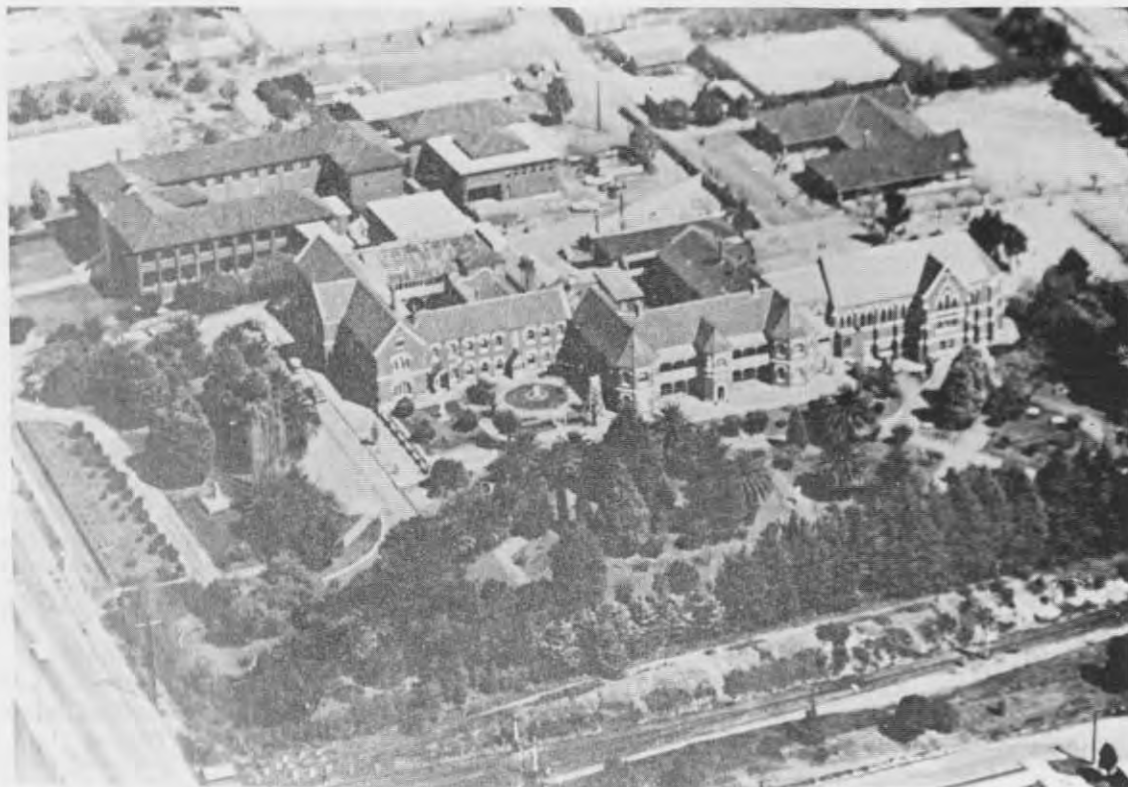
One of those ex-students, Mrs. Sheila Tearle, B.A. (née Byrne) was co-author with the late Mr. Bernard Dowd of the Centenary History written for the occasion. It embodied many years of research and is a valuable source of information for writers of Catholic Church history.

Celebrations concluded with a garden party at Mount Erin on Sunday afternoon attended by 5,000 people. Other important milestones in the history of Mount Erin have been celebrated over the years, the golden jubilee in 1924 and the diamond jubilee in 1934, as well, in that year one of the original five Sisters who founded Mount Erin, Mother M. Stanislaus, also celebrated her diamond jubilee.

The year 1974 was also a milestone for the Christian Brothers who celebrated the diamond jubilee of the arrival in the town of the first 4 Brothers in January 1914. Hundreds of ex-students and former teachers converged on Wagga Wagga to join in the celebrations.

In Saint Michael's Cathedral, Bishop Carroll and two ex-students or 'old boys' as they are better known, Father Norman Duck and Father Tony Loth, the latter being at that time Diocesan Director of Catholic Education, con-celebrated the Jubilee Mass. At the dinner, among the 360 men present were former Principals and teachers, Brother J.A. McGlade, Provincial of New South Wales, the Mayor Alderman M. Gissing and the Parliamentary Representative for Wagga Wagga, the Hon. W.C. Fife. A special Mass for students was also celebrated by Bishop Carroll.

The School began on 27 January 1914 with a roll call of 71 which by the middle of February had increased to 100, the occasion resulting in a half-holiday for the boys. First to enrol was local boy, Thomas Purcell. He was the first 'Old Boy' to enter the priesthood. Ordained for the Passionist Order, he took the name of Father Lawrence.



Aerial view of Mount Erin Convent

Courtesy of Mount Erin Convent Archives

In the jubilee year a 2 storey jubilee wing was commenced to mark the occasion. The foundation stone was laid in 1974 and on 27 April 1975 the building was blessed by Bishop Carroll and opened by the Minister for Education, Hon. Kim Beazley. A much needed library - the first for the School, was incorporated in the complex besides a computer room, canteen and other amenities.

During the 60 years, 3,358 boys passed through the School. Bishop Carroll in paying a tribute said: "The Christian vision of man and his world that inspires the life of the Christian Brother is also the basis and focal point of the work of Education that the Brothers have carried out so well for the youth of the City and the district".

From the original School conducted in the first Saint Michael's Church-School, the Christian Brothers School developed into three separate Schools - the Bishop Henschke Primary School for Boys, adjacent to Maria Goretti Girls' Primary School in South Wagga Wagga parish; the present day Saint Michael's Regional High School for Boys which at present is using also the class-rooms of the former Saint Joseph's Primary School near by, and Trinity Senior High School, a co-educational High School for Boys, and students from Mount Erin Girls' High School who undertake studies at Year 11 and 12 level. It is situated in the grounds of Mount Erin.

Maria Goretti School has been incorporated in the Bishop Henschke School. Now in 1987 there are 3 Primary Catholic Schools in the Wagga Wagga area all of which are co-educational.

A serious fire at Saint Michael's Boys' School in 1973 destroyed one class-room and damaged two others. Equipment and books valued at many thousands of dollars were also destroyed. Temporary school accommodation was found in Saint Joseph's School. The problems were alleviated when, shortly afterwards, a grant of \$147,000 was made by the Federal Government.

SCHOOL ENROLMENT	Feb '87	July '83	Aug '79	Aug '76
Mt. Erin High School	581	591	536	546
Trinity Senior H. S.	370	313	239	239
St. Michael's H. S.	575	493	466	406
Henschke	555	514	634	489
Sacred Heart Primary	512	501	451	415
Ashmont Primary	196	217	135	36

With a crisis looming in education due to increased costs, a gathering of 130 clergy, religious and laity assembled in Wagga Wagga in January 1974 to discuss the problem. Hard decisions were necessary. Unpalatable as they were, it was found necessary to increase Primary School fees as well as parish contributions to the primary system to meet the short-fall after Government funding was taken into account.

Appointment in 1975 of Bishop Carroll to the Pontifical Commission for Catechetics was indeed a great honour. The appointment was for a term of 5 years. It meant that he was required to attend a meeting in Rome each year.

At the Mass of the Holy Oils on Monday 12 April 1976, the Bishop spoke of his trip to Rome as a member of the Commission which is made up of 25 people from 23 nations across the boundaries of nation, race, colour, from a diversity of cultures, languages and experiences. Members gathered to find answers to the question "How is the Church to present the Good News of the Gospel to to-day's world".

PERSONALITIES

An historic era came to an end with the passing of Monsignor Jeremiah Galvin who died in the Home of Compassion on 25 April 1976, almost reaching the century mark. Born in County Clare, Ireland, in 1878, he was the last survivor of the band of priests who made up the first "team" when the Diocese came into being in 1917. The choice of remaining in the Goulburn Diocese or being part of the new one was given to priests who were already stationed in the area covered by the new Diocese.

Although the Monsignor was not at anytime attached to the Cathedral Parish, he would be well-known to many who remember the formative years of the Diocese. Despite the problems of distance, priests of the Diocese often congregated in Wagga Wagga to share in special occasions of the Church, and, as in other pioneer undertakings, even minor events by to-day's standards would command special attention from all the clergy. Children in the schools were beneficiaries of such visits which provided a release from at least a half hour of lessons and gave the children and opportunity of better-knowing the priests.

Father M. Burgess wrote: "He guided his flock by word and good example. He was a true servant of his flock. He kept up with all the changes in the post-Vatican II Church though switches in the Liturgy often cost him dearly. He agreed in principle with Ecumenism, but in practice he was a little short of a good length! He once refused an invitation to join the younger priests in a prayer session with members of other Christian Churches at Christmas time, but offered to sprinkle them with Holy Water when they returned to the presbytery!"⁸ Monsignor Galvin's life is a story of dedication to God and to his fellow man.

Among appointments by Bishop Henschke on succession to the See of Wagga Wagga was that of Father J. H. Larkins as Administrator of the Cathedral Parish. It was the latter's second period of service at the Cathedral. Previously he was an assistant in 1927-1932 during Father Barry's time as Administrator and succeeded him in 1940 where he remained until 1949.

As a Diocesan Consultor to Bishop Henschke and Bishop Carroll during a period of 31 years, for 23 of which he was Vicar-General, his opinion and experience was well appreciated. Papal Recognition of his dedicated service came his way in 1952 when he was made a Domestic Prelate followed in 1957 by the highest rank of Monsignor - a Prothonotary Apostolic (P.A.) Ordained by the first Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Dr. J. W. Dwyer, in Ascot Vale, Victoria, in 1926, he was the sixth priest ordained for the new Diocese.

In 1964 Bishop Henschke chose him as Chairman of the newly - formed Diocesan Advisory Council on Education which initiated involvement of laity in policy making at top diocesan level. It was the fore-runner of the Diocesan Education Commission. He held that post until 1969.

When the National Catholic Rural Movement was making its mark in the Diocese under the Chairmanship of Bishop Henschke in the 1950's Father Larkins as National Chaplain travelled extensively in the Diocese giving addresses and spiritual guidance and encouragement to conference delegates.

A man of simple tastes but with a high regard and concern for ordinary people, he became a legend in his own life-time. He remains fondly in the memory of all who knew him, remembered too are the shrug of his shoulders, the perpetual pipe and the friendly greeting. Many humorous anecdotes were related at the time of the golden jubilee of his priesthood in 1976.

One evening in the Cathedral when reciting the Rosary he had reached the 39th Hail Mary in one decade when, from the front seat came the concerned voice of a late well-known parishioner, Rene McGee: "Glory, Father, Glory" and like 'Daddah' in John O'Brien's 'Trimmins on the Rosary' - "He gloried like a shot!".

Monsignor Larkins' last parish (in 1973) was Culcairn where he was happy in a country environment. In 1980 he retired to Lavington. Death claimed him on 18 October 1982. He is buried in Albury.

Bishop Carroll concerned for the welfare of refugees whom Australia had accepted from South Vietnam stongly supported moves which led to their sponsorship and care.

Sponsorship of some refugees resulted in their settlement within the San Isidore community. The Bishop took a special interest in them, blessed their vegetable gardens and generally assisted them to become integrated into the community.

Bishop Carroll was one of the two Australian Bishops elected as delegates to the World Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome in 1977 to discuss "Catechetics in Our Time". Cardinal Freeman was the other. It was only one of a long list of appointments and of responsibilities he accepted during his time in Wagga Wagga.

'Who's Who in Australia' in its 1985 issue records a formidable account of his appointments which give some indication of the contribution he has made to the Church and his people.

APPOINTMENTS OF BISHOP FRANCIS CARROLL, D.D., D.C.L.

Assistant Inspector of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga 1957-61.

Gained Doctorate in Canon Law at Pontifical Urban University De Propaganda Fide, Rome, 1964.

Bishop Henschke's Secretary; Chancellor of the Diocese; Diocesan Director of Catholic Education 1965-1967.

Australian Representative International Catethetical Commission 1975-1980.

Australian Representative, Synod of Bishops, 1977.

Chairman, Bishops' Committee for Education in Australia, 1980.

Chairman, National Catholic Education Commission, 1974-1978.

Consecrated Titular Bishop of Tasacorra and Co-adjutor Bishop of Wagga Wagga by Bishop Henschke on 5 September 1967. Succeeded as Bishop, 24 April 1968.

To celebrate Bishop Carroll's silver jubilee of priesthood, a con-celebrated Mass was offered by visiting Bishops and priests of the Diocese with Bishop Carroll as Principal celebrant. Later in the evening of Friday 20 July 1979 during supper a presentation was made to the guest of honour.

Bishop Carroll urged his people to answer the call which the Second Vatican Council made to the Church - 'to renew'. 'Together in Prayer 1979' was the title given to the programme of prayer and retreats which followed. Monsignor J. D. (Des) Lane, now retired commented: "It had a tremendous influence on my personal spiritual life... I received a new slant on Christology ... the priests and people coming together was a big thing".

It has been a time of new commitment. The 'Renew' programme which flowed from the call to prayer, continues.

A seizure while driving a car in Wagga Wagga claimed the life of Monsignor Brian Boru Gallagher, Parish Priest of Griffith. Ordained at Goulburn in 1935 for the Wagga Wagga Diocese, Father Gallagher spent 3 years on loan in Rockhampton. Coming south he was assistant at Albury, Wagga Wagga (1940-1949), Jerilderie for a short while then Parish Priest for 7 years at Yenda.

He was well chosen for the position of pioneer Parish Priest of the newly-formed Parish of South Wagga Wagga in 1955, a Parish which progressed remarkably due to his drive and foresight. He received the whole-hearted support of his people who admired his dedication and zeal. In October 1967 he was placed in charge of Griffith Parish where he remained until his death on 20 July 1979.

Among the offices he held were Diocesan Consultor, Diocesan Chaplain of Saint Vincent de Paul Society and Director of the Catholic Youth Movement. From 1975 he was Vicar-General of the Diocese.

He is buried in the grounds of the Parish Church at Griffith alongside another pioneer - Father Robert O'Dea, founder of the Griffith Parish.

It was a sad loss when Father Ronald Corbett, not yet 40 years old, was called to God on Wednesday 9 November 1977 just five years after his ordination to the priesthood. His first and last appointment was to Griffith. The illness which caused his death had already taken hold when he was ordained. Father Corbett, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Corbett, was born into a farming family in the Euberta-Millwood district, north-west of Wagga Wagga. Seventy-five priests were present when Bishop Carroll celebrated his Requiem Mass in Saint Michael's Cathedral.

In the late 1970's the family of Patrick Moran, donors of the High Altar at the time of completion of the Cathedral remembered once again their Church. The last surviving daughter, Rose died in 1977 at the age of 97 years. In her last Will and Testament a bequest representing three quarters of her estate was made to the Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga. Over a period of 3 to 4 years Bishop Carroll, on behalf of the Diocese received approximately three hundred thousand dollars.⁹

10 *Towards a Noble Centenary Consecration of Bishop W. Brennan*

Bishop Dwyer's episcopate was marked by development of a new Diocese - no mean task, Bishop Henschke's by re-growth following the economic hardships of the Depression and the war that followed. Bishop Carroll continued the development in all respects not only in regard to educational needs but in the development of the Lay Apostolate in response to the findings of Vatican Council II. He sought to do this by awakening in the laity the need of their whole-hearted commitment so necessary in the changing times.

No longer would a passive laity suffice. Now more than ever before, a more active role by the laity was needed at a time when an acute shortage of priests and other religious became a stark reality. Father G. Iverson, a former Administrator of Saint Michael's Cathedral Parish, now President of Saint Patrick's College, Manly, was quoted on A.B.C. radio in late June 1987 as saying that by the end of the century the number of available priests will have halved.

Bishop Carroll encouraged the work of the Cursillo Movement which is a form of Lay Apostolate. In 1979 he announced a programme of 'Together in Prayer' in which he hoped all of his flock "would pray with and for the priests to hopefully bring about a general renewal, the fruits of which would be shared by all participants".

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

"The sign of the times is upon us and there is a need to look at our world". These were the words of Pope John XXIII. Acceptance of change is the challenge of the 80's. Bishop Carroll urged his people to answer the call which the Second Vatican Council made to the Church 'to renew'. The time for further commitment by priests and people had come. The 'Renew' programme which flowed from the call to prayer continued and has been emphasised during the 80's under the guidance of Bishop Brennan.

There has been change also in the method and content of religious instruction offered in the State Schools. A new concept was introduced in 1981 whereby an Ecumenical Scripture Programme is provided in the sixteen Primary Schools in the City. Under this programme all 180 classes are taught by men and women representatives of most of the religious denominations. The material used - 'Religion in Life', published by the Joint Board of Christian Education is Scripture-based. It draws on the life experience of the child and contains current teaching methods.

The diminished degree of respect shown for the property of others, in the changed society was demonstrated by the wanton and senseless theft of a bronze eagle which surmounts the pulpit in the Cathedral. It was recovered several days later. Following that episode and the theft on 2 other occasions of the contents of the 'poor box' a decision was reluctantly taken to lock the Cathedral at week-ends when Masses and marriages had concluded.

More and more parents are seeking a Catholic Education for their children especially within the secondary schools. Saint Michael's Boys' School, Mount Erin and Trinity Senior High had record enrolments in 1984.

Saint Michael's had 520, for the first time in the School's history exceeding 500.
Mount Erin, 608, with 166 in Year 7 was the highest on record.
Trinity Senior High had a record intake into Year 11 and have a waiting list.¹

There is a similar trend throughout the Diocese.

CARROLL COLLEGE

Whilst enrolments at Catholic Secondary Schools were at a high level, Bishop Carroll sought also to make available educational opportunities for those students who, for various reasons did not wish to continue to the higher level of years 11 and 12, those not aspiring to University levels, nor having the marks to do so, who did not wish to be forced into a vacuum of unemployment.

The idea was supported by Mr. Graham Kennedy, Principal of Saint Michael's Regional High School, who perceived at first hand the existing gap. A solution to the problem was at hand.

Lease of the San Isidore School from the New South Wales Department of Education was due for review at the end of the 1983 school year. The decision was taken by Archbishop Carroll not to renew the lease. Dr. Carroll had already departed from Wagga Wagga to take up his elevated position as Archbishop of Canberra-Goulburn but the appointment of his successor had not yet been made.

In place of the School, a Vocational Guidance and Trades College named Carroll College was established. Students were trained in skills which would enable them to enter the work force, as well they received tuition in English and Mathematics. The College opened in 1984 with 33 enrolled students, some of whom learnt welding from instructors at the T.A.F.E. College. All learnt to drive a tractor, the result being oat and barley crops sown nearby.²

By mid-year eleven of the students were in employment and two had transferred to full-time studies at the T.A.F.E. College. The result was encouraging.

Three years on, a need for the College no longer exists, now that such a diversity of courses in trades and skills is available at the above College which, in 1986, provided for more than 5,200 students. Currently over 100 courses are available, some full-time, others part-time.

The College, the largest single educational institution in the Riverina, also provides skills-training for unemployed youth and is involved in a joint programme with schools to provide alternative Higher School Certificate subjects.³

BISHOP CARROLL BECOMES ARCHBISHOP OF CANBERRA—GOULBURN

Whispers were being heard early in 1983 that Bishop Carroll may be moving to a higher sphere to become Archbishop of Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese. When the official announcement was made on 27 June 1983 reactions were a mixture of joy and sadness. His people rejoiced in the new honour which was his, but were sad at the thought of losing their well-loved leader.

In a leading article the *Daily Advertiser* paid tribute to the Archbishop.

"We in Wagga will miss that special care and the open door approach which has marked Bishop Carroll's period in the diocese, a period noted for a steady and significant blending of religious humanitarian and material development. To-day in Wagga, and in the diocese, there is an ecumenical spirit which is as edifying and satisfactory as is to be found in most parts of the world".

"Seldom to our knowledge within the Catholic Church has there been a bishop so accessible, so ready to listen and so patient in times of crisis".⁴

Before his departure, the Archbishop was given a civic farewell in the Civic Theatre which was attended by civic and Church dignitaries as well as a large number of friends and well-wishers. Speakers were the Mayor, Alderman Pat Brassil, the Rector of Saint John's Anglican Church, Archdeacon Ireland, and the Honourable Wal Fife, M.P. Member for Farrer.

Echoing the sentiments of many people, the Mayor said Archbishop Carroll would be remembered for both his commitment to the Ecumenical Movement and his contribution to Education. Archdeacon Ireland quoted the Forrest Centre as being proof of the climate that the Archbishop was able to create.

The last official act performed by Archbishop Carroll before his departure for Canberra was the blessing and opening of the new Holy Trinity Church and Hall in Ashmont, West Wagga Wagga, on Sunday 7 August following his celebration of Mass in the new Church. His farewell was marked by a con-celebrated Mass in Saint Michael's Cathedral. He remained Administrator of

the Diocese until his departure. The Diocese was then given into the care of the Vicar-Capitular, Father Des Lane.

History was made by Monsignor Des Lane who had been Vicar-General when he was appointed Vicar-Capitular for the Diocese, the first such appointment in the Diocese. Previously no such appointment was necessary as there was already on both occasions a Bishop at the Diocese to take over administration. Father Lane became responsible for the Diocese and for all decisions that must be made for its good and the good of the people.

Canon Law decrees that no substantial changes may be made in the Diocese during the period preceding the appointment of a new Bishop, a period of slowing down during which certain Offices and Bodies cease to exist, e.g. Vicar-General, Episcopal Vicar, Senate of Priests and the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

More than 1,000 people packed Saint Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra, on 31 August to witness the liturgical reception and installation of Archbishop Francis P. Carroll as Archbishop of the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese. Among the congregation were many Wagga Wagga parishioners. One hundred and fifty priests from Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese as well as the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Australia, Archbishop Luigi Barbarito, Cardinal Sir James Freeman, Archbishops and Bishops, twenty three in number, from all over Australia con-celebrated the Mass. Church leaders, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Lionel Bowen, other Parliamentary members, diplomats and Civic leaders were present at the ceremony.⁵

Bishop Carroll's appointments list presents an impressive picture. When absent from Wagga Wagga, be it in one of the metropolitan cities or as far afield as Rome or elsewhere overseas, his heart was always with his flock. Through the pages of 'Together' he kept in touch sometimes penning a letter balanced on his knee while winging his way in a jet. A true shepherd he was always close to his people.

CONSECRATION OF BISHOP WILLIAM BRENNAN

By far the most important happening in the parish and indeed the Diocese in 1984 was the appointment and consecration of Bishop W. Brennan. Announcement of the appointment of Father William John Brennan as fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga was made by Pope John Paul II on 25 January 1984, 5 months after the departure for Canberra of the new Archbishop Francis Patrick Carroll.

In making arrangements for the Episcopal Consecration which took place on Thursday 1 March 1984, it was realised that Saint Michael's Cathedral would not accommodate the large numbers expected to be present for the solemn but joyful ceremony. What more appropriate setting could be chosen than the grounds of Saint Michael's Regional High School close by the hallowed ground on which once stood the first Church of Saint Michael.

On a bright summer morning amid a tranquil atmosphere, in a bend of the Murrumbidgee, Father William Brennan was elevated to the Hierarchy of Australia.

Episcopal consecration was performed by Archbishop Edward Clancy of Sydney. Co-Consecrators were Archbishop Luigi Barbarito, Apostolic Pro Nuncio; Archbishop Francis Carroll, Canberra-Goulburn (former Bishop of Wagga Wagga); Archbishop Guilford Young, Hobart; Bishops D. Warren, Wilcannia-Forbes; A. Fox (former Bishop of Sale); J. Cullinane (former Bishop of Melbourne); H. Kennedy, Armidale; R. Mulkearns, Ballarat; J. A. Morgan (Military Vicar of Australia); D. Cremin (Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney); W. Murray, Wollongong; P. Dougherty, Bathurst; P. Murphy, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney; N. Daly, Sandhurst; B. Heather, Auxiliary Bishop, Sydney; F.P. De Campo, Port Pirie, and E. D'Arcy, Sale. Present in the Sanctuary was Bishop-elect Geoffrey Robinson of Sydney. Con-celebrating also were more than 180 priests from Dioceses in all States.⁶

To witness the colourful ceremony came more than 1,500 people. Following the ceremony Bishop Brennan shared luncheon with his family and the clergy. At night in Saint Michael's Parish Centre an informal function was held to give people from surrounding parishes the opportunity to meet the new Bishop.

BISHOP WILLIAM J. BRENNAN

Bishop Brennan received his primary education from the Ursuline Nuns at Saint Xavier's School, Sydney and his secondary education from the Christian Brothers, Lewisham. He began his seminary training at Saint Columba's College, Springwood, then Saint Patrick's College, Manly. Proceeding to Propaganda College, Rome, he studied for and received a Licentiate in Theology from the Pontifical Urban University. He was ordained in Rome on 21 December 1960.

On returning to Australia he was appointed assistant priest at Forbes in August 1961. From 1962-64 he studied at Sydney University for Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Education. He received a Bachelor of Letters in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of New England.

He was appointed assistant priest at Broken Hill in 1965. In the following year he was appointed Secretary of the Diocesan Schools' Board and Director of the Catholic Education Office, a position he held until 1974. He became Vicar for Education from 1974-84 and parish priest of Nyngan from 1974-80. In 1980 until 1983 he was parish priest of Wentworth and in October 1983 became Administrator at Broken Hill.

On 25 January 1984 Father William Brennan was appointed fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.



Bishop William Brennan fourth Bishop of Wagga Wagga

Courtesy of Diocesan Archives

FORREST CENTRE

'A masterpiece in ecumenism' could well describe the Ethel Forrest Rehabilitation Centre which stands on grounds near Calvary Hospital. The dream became a reality when a bequest was made to the Anglican Church of one million dollars from the estate of a long-time resident of Wagga Wagga, the late Miss Ethel Forrest.

The Little Company of Mary had already been looking forward to the day when a Nursing Home could be established. The two Churches, Anglican and Catholic, joined forces (and resources) to create a unique ecumenical project which Anglican Archdeacon Ireland described as the greatest liaison between the two Churches since the visit of Pope Paul II to Canterbury Cathedral in 1982.



Calvary Hospital (formerly Lewisham Hospital)
Courtesy of The Riverina Leader



Forrest Centre, opened March 1985
Courtesy of The Riverina Leader

Cost of the Centre was \$3.3 million. The Little Company of Mary provided the land adjacent to Calvary Hospital valued at \$275,000 as well as monies originally destined to fund a Nursing Home. The Anglican Church provided the money bequeathed by Miss Forrest. The short-fall was obtained by a fund raising effort.⁷

On Sunday evening 27 February 1983, as daylight faded 600 people witnessed an historical ecumenical Service of Dedication held on the site, led by the Anglican Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn, Dr. Warren, and the Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Dr. F.P. Carroll, who is now Archbishop of Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese. The Anglican Primate of Australia, Sir John Grinrod, and Bishop Patrick Doherty representing Bishop Carroll who was in Rome, attended a fund-raising dinner and performed the unveiling of the foundation stone of the Centre. The target of \$800,000 was reached in the allotted time of three months.

The Centre, named the Ethel Forrest Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre helps to service the needs of the elderly and infirm in the community who require various levels of care. Care and rehabilitation is provided for 90 people on a day-to-day basis. Incorporated within the Complex is the Mary Potter Nursing Home. The venture was considered to be the most significant contribution to ecumenism in the 200 years of Australia's history. The Centre was blessed and opened by Bishop Brennan, Wagga Wagga and Bishop Owen Dowling, Anglican Bishop of the Canberra Diocese on Sunday, 3 March 1985.

The Sisters of the Little Company of Mary who have contributed much to the quality of life in Wagga Wagga through their nursing skills and loving care of the sick are, in another way, providing a service which reaches beyond the areas of regular service.

When a 740 acre property 'Overdale' at Harefield near Wagga Wagga was bequeathed to them by the late Mr. Frank Leahy, they conducted the farm for some time from 1960 and in later years enlarged the eight bedroom homestead. There they established what is now known as an Inter-denominational Retreat and Conference Centre providing a service to all denominations. Ministers of Religion and their wives from the Anglican, Presbyterian and Uniting Churches visit there for retreats. It is widely used also by Catholic Organisations and Groups of all ages for week-end seminars and other spiritual purposes.

BISHOP BRENNAN McALROY HOUSE

In line with the practice now pursued by most of the Bishops of Australia, of living away from the Cathedral Presbytery, Bishop Brennan, in 1984 purchased a home in the heights of the suburb of Koorringal where he now lives privately. Because of the demands on the Bishop's time, it is necessary for him to have a quiet atmosphere in which to reflect on decisions that need to be made regarding the Diocese.

Bishop Brennan said that the role of the Cathedral Presbytery was increasingly important for the people of the Parish and he wished to leave the Presbytery free to become a Parish House. It is no longer known as the Bishop's House.

Basically the life of a Bishop has not changed but his responsibilities have increased enormously. The added roles he is called on to assume outside his Diocese are many and require much travelling. Already after little more than three years as a member of the Hierarchy Bishop Brennan has been appointed to the following Committees on which he is serving in 1987:

Bishops' Committee for Education
 Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace
 Bishops' Committee for Social Communications
 Council of the National Pastoral Institute
 Catholic Education Commission (New South Wales)
 Interim Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

In August 1968²⁶ Bishop Brennan was appointed by the Minister for Education, Hon. Rod Cavalier, to the Council of the Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education.

It is worthy of note that a Cathedral parishioner, Mrs. Anne Brassil, was recently elected Deputy Chairperson of the Council.

How to adequately meet the administration needs of the Diocese was a subject under discussion and investigation for some years. A report carried out by Mr. T. Williams in 1982 revealed that Church premises in Baylis Street were inadequate and because of limited space did not lend themselves to development.

Bishop Brennan accepted the recommendations of the investigating committee that an office complex be constructed. An integrated Centre from which all aspects of Diocesan management could be carried out was established. It was named McAlroy House in honour of the Reverend Dr. Michael McAlroy, D. D., who built the first Church of Saint Michael in Wagga Wagga and who had earned the title of 'Apostle of the South' by building numerous Churches between Yass and Melbourne in a short space of time.

To help finance the new Centre the Baylis Street complex would be sold including the area used for a Chapel which it was hoped would be replaced by one elsewhere in Baylis Street. The Catholic Book Shop was retained.

The land on which McAlroy House was built was already owned by the Catholic Church. Joined at the rear by the Presbytery block, it had been the site of Saint Michael's Tennis Courts and Club House for almost 60 years. Originally the land, Lot 3 of Section 41 was part of a grant made to Edwin Hervey Tompson on 12 November 1856.⁸ The latter, a school-teacher was a brother of Frederick Anslow Tompson, Wagga Wagga's first Clerk of Petty Sessions. Members of the Tompson family were the first settlers north of the Murrumbidgee River, on the property "Eunonyhareenyha".

Following Edwin Tompson's death on 28 March 1893 the land passed to members of his family. On 15 September the surviving daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Minnett sold the block to local Surveyor, Constantine Bolton, for £600 who, in turn sold it on 6 October 1919 to Bishop Wilfrid Dwyer, Reverend Timothy O'Connell and James Karol O'Reilly for £1,500.⁹ The latter was a local general storekeeper and a respected Churchman. It was he who donated, in 1924, the statue of Saint Michael which graces the portico of the Cathedral.

Plans for the building of McAlroy House were drawn up by Messrs. Steven Murray and Frank Tabotta of Griffith. The design is well integrated with the existing Saint Joseph's School, although not attached to it. The builders were Peters Constructions Pty. Ltd., Wagga Wagga and Tumut.

The Wagga Wagga Diocese employs approximately 600 people and administers a budget of many millions of dollars. In 1986 there was an enrolment of 5,000 in its 26 primary Schools and well over 3,000 in 6 Secondary Schools. The wages of teachers throughout the Diocese are handled from the Central Office. Diocesan Organisations which previously were managed from several different centres, in crowded and uncomfortable situations, are now housed at McAlroy House as is the Bishop's Office.¹⁰

Wide use has been made of computers. A local area net work has been built into the building so that each of the Departments can utilize a central master computer. Organisations such as State School Apostolate, Youth Apostolate, Resources Centre, the Diocesan Provident Fund are all housed there as is the Mass Media component.

On the walls of the Entrance Foyer are two striking murals carved in wood, commissioned by Bishop Brennan from Melbourne artist Mark Weichard. One is of Saint Michael, Patron of the Wagga Wagga Diocese. In the other a blend of European and Aboriginal Cultures is depicted. A Framed photograph of Dr. Michael McAlroy, D.D., 'Apostle of the South' after whom the Centre is named, hangs nearby. On the facade of the building is emblazoned the Coat of Arms of the Diocese.

In a simple ceremony while people associated with the Centre looked on, it was blessed and opened on the feast of Saint Michael, 29 September 1986 by Bishop William Brennan.

Towards the end of 1985 Bishop Brennan was invited to be guest preacher at a special Carers' Liturgy held in Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The Carers Service is held annually in Saint Andrew's Church to recognise and pray for the work of the caring people of Wagga Wagga. Attended by people from many caring ministries, they prayed for their work with the aged, the sick, the displaced, the lonely, the poor, the homeless, the unemployed and all who need care in any situation.

At that time also the Bishop celebrated his silver jubilee of priesthood. With the priests of the Diocese around him, con-celebrated Mass of Thanksgiving was offered in Saint Michael's Cathedral on 4 December 1985. The homily was given by Bishop Warren of Wilcannia-Forbes where Bishop Brennan served before becoming Bishop. Later in the month a parish gathering was held following evening Mass.

Two former Administrators of the Cathedral parish also celebrated their silver jubilees in that year, Father Gerald Iverson at Albury and Father Robert Leaver in Leeton. Father Iverson, who undertook extensive studies overseas in recent years, was appointed to the position of President of Saint Patrick's College, Manly, a position he holds at the present time.

Recent retirees from active ministry are the Monsignori Michael Francis and John Desmond (Des) Lane. The name of Lane is synonomous with priestly service in the Wagga Wagga Diocese.

Monsignor Michael Lane is the only remaining priest in the Diocese who has served with four bishops. His preliminary studies for the priesthood began at Springwood, from where he



**McAlroy House opened by Bishop Brennan on
29 September 1987**

Courtesy of Diocesan Archives

proceeded to Saint Patrick's College, Manly and finally to the Irish College in Rome where he was ordained on 25 May 1929. On his return to Australia he was assistant at Saint Michael's Cathedral for a few months.

From 1930-1936 he was Professor of Moral Theology at Saint Patrick's College, Manly, on loan to the Archdiocese of Sydney. During part of that period, from 1934-1935, he was also Professor of Greek and Philosophy at Springwood Seminary. From 1936 to 1944 he was Inspector of Schools in the Wagga Wagga Diocese and from 1945 to 1982, Parish Priest of Corowa.

For many year he was a consultor to the Bishop, and before his retirement in 1985 was Chairman of the Diocesan Council of Priests. Even in retirement he is active in Church matters while looking back on 58 years of priesthood.

Monsignor John Desmond (Des) Lane, a younger brother, began his priestly studies at Werribee in 1934 and was ordained in Saint Michael's Cathedral on Sunday 27 July 1941. He was in Tocumwal in 1943-1948 when there were 5,000 men and women in the armed forces. An American base was established there to which planes came from the Pacific War Zone for repairs. His first parish was Jerilderie. He spent 4 years in Narrandera on two occasions. From 1956 to 1961 he was Administrator of the Cathedral Parish and was one of the main instigators of the Diocesan Provident Fund which had its beginning in 1959 at a time when the building programme came to a halt during a credit squeeze.

At the time of his retirement in 1986, he made an interesting comment that the war left its mark for a long time and from it emerged two things: people having little respect for the property of others; and the shielding of their children from the hardships that their parents had faced, to the point of giving children everything they wanted. Monsignor Des was Vicar-General of the Diocese at the time of Bishop Carroll's departure for Canberra in 1983, at which time he became Vicar-Capitular until Bishop Brennan was appointed.

He now lives in retirement at Saint Patrick's College, Manly. The two Lane Brothers can be proud of their combined 103 years of priestly service.

TOWARDS A NOBLE CENTENARY

In recent years several priests of the parish have enriched their spirituality and life experience by undertaking further studies overseas and by doing mission work in the Islands and South America. Others have attended courses at the recently established Saint Peter's Centre in Canberra. At the present time a former Wagga Wagga boy, Father A. (Tony) Loth is in charge of the Centre which offers two courses per year, each of 12 weeks duration, designed to strengthen spirituality and knowledge.

Organisations which have been in existence in the parish for varying lengths of time, continue their Christian work. The Saint Vincent de Paul Society maintains its caring mission for those in need, as well it operates two stores, one in Baylis Street and the other in South Wagga Wagga Its Edel Quin Shelter, of which Bishop Carroll was Chaplain, provides care and shelter for homeless and alcoholic men. The enormity of its work in alleviating human suffering and indignity can never be fully assessed.

Each one of the Societies and Groups fills an important role in the Christian community; the Youth Team, the Diocesan Parish Council, Cursillo, Antioch, Charismatic Group, Majellan, Family Group, Altar Society, Legion of Mary - the list is endless - all help to bind the parish and the Christian community together.

A children's Liturgy Group programme which began in the Cathedral in 1985 has functioned well. An average of 30 enthusiastic children are taken into a class before Mass in the Saint Vincent de Paul Room nearby where they receive instruction from a member of the Majellan Group before returning to their families at the time of the Offertory Procession.

For adult Christian people desirous of entering the fold of the Catholic Church the experience has taken on a new meaning under 'The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults', the last of the sacramental rites to be revised following Vatican Council II. It gives scope and encourages all the faithful to participate in the reception into the Church of Christian people by making them

feel welcome, giving them support by being present at the Mass and by prayer. In doing so the candidates feel they are being accepted and the parishioners in turn strengthen their own beliefs. This rite is now part of the liturgy at Saint Michael's.

A grand finale to the year 1986 was the visit to Australia of Pope John Paul II. Many Wagga Wagga parishioners, in fact people from throughout the Diocese converged on Canberra in cars and buses to see and hear the Pontiff. Of special interest to Diocesan parishioners was the fact that Archbishop Francis Carroll, former Bishop of Wagga Wagga, was host to the Pope during his Canberra visit. Bishop William Brennan was present at Canberra and at functions in Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne and Alice Springs.

Whether viewed in person or on television, the Pope made a lasting impression wherever he went by his piety and sincerity which had an elevating effect on even the most sceptical. His departure left a void. Australia will long remember his visit.

Already the 'Renew' programme which is an attempt to cope with the changed society of the modern day has had a solid beginning. "It offers a way of proclaiming the gospel and carrying out the mission of the Church in accord with the needs of our time now that there is a greater gap between religion and life".¹¹

To study the 'Renew' programmes which have been successful in other countries, Father Ralph Fitzgerald travelled overseas in 1985 and returned with the belief that they have value for the Australian Church and for the Wagga Wagga Diocese. Re-written in Melbourne for adapting to the Australian Church, the programme runs for 2½ years during which time there are five periods of intense activity each lasting six weeks.

For the Wagga Wagga Diocese, following parish preparation, the programme was launched by Bishop Brennan on Trinity Sunday afternoon 14 June 1987 when teams from participating parishes accompanied by their respective parish priests filled Saint Micheal's Cathedral for Mass, during which the Bishop commissioned members of the 'Renew' teams to return to the their parishes and through the programme to proclaim the Gospel to all. Success of the programme depends on total renewal by each individual in the parish.

'RENEW' is the hope of the future.

Since the formation of the Diocese, the Cathedral parish has had 14 Administrators, some have received high honours but whatever their status each has faced and coped with difficulties, the nature of which changed somewhat through the years - war, depression, lack of financial assistance and, more recently, a changing society and a shortage of priests to adequately staff the Presbytery.

The present Administrator, Father Peter Quinn, who has filled that position since 1984 is no stranger to service at the Cathedral. From 1967 to 1972 inclusive he was assistant when Bishop Henschke and six other priests were in residence, including Father Francis Carroll. During that period Father Carroll received episcopal consecration and succeeded Bishop Henschke to become third Bishop of Wagga Wagga.

Since returning in 1984 as Administrator, Father Quinn has worked also with Bishop William Brennan thus serving at the Cathedral with 3 of the 4 Bishops.

In the year 1859 when the first Church of Saint Michael opened there were 600 people in the town. Now in 1987, the centenary year of the Cathedral Church, as we look forward to the Nation's Bi-centenary, the population numbers almost 54,000.

Despite its set backs, Wagga Wagga has progressed strongly as early residents foretold.¹² In keeping with it the Church has done likewise. Both have followed the motto of the City's Coat-of-Arms, and have continued to go "FORWARD IN FAITH".

The hand is on the plough. There is no turning back.

NOTES

Chapter 1

- 1 John O'Brien, *The Men of '38*, p. 28. Much information regarding the early days of the Church has been drawn from *The Men of '38* with the kind permission of the Co-editors, Fathers F. Mecham and T. Linane.
- 2 James Waldersee, *A Grain of Mustard Seed*, 1983.
- 3 Richard Cox, *Recollection of a Bushy*, Number 2 Journal of the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society, 1969, p. 16 (hereinafter WWDHS), also extract from Father Charles Lovat's Diary.
- 4 B. Dowd, S. Tearle, Sr. N. Gregory Foster, *The Bishop in the Saddle*, Tjurunga, A Benedictine Review, 1977, Vol. 13, p. 98.
- 5 John O'Brien, *The Men of '38*.
- 6 *ibid*, p. 203.
- 7 *ibid*, p. 107.
- 8 *ibid*, p. 220.
- 9 *Extract from Tumut Times*, reprinted in Wagga Wagga Advertiser, Wednesday, 29 September 1875.
- 10 Fr. Paul Bateman, *The Church upon the Levels*, 1981.
- 11 Copies of these letters not previously published in their entirety were given to the writer by the late Mr Bernard Dowd who before his retirement was Research Officer with the Department of Lands, Sydney. Copies are in Diocesan Archives, *Wagga Wagga*.
- 12 *Daily Advertiser*, Saturday, 20 February 1965 (hereinafter D.A.).
- 13 *ibid*.
- 14 Morgan O'Connor, *Rise and Progress of the Yass Mission, 1861*, reprint 1984.
- 15 John O'Brien, *The Men of '38*, p. 29.
- 16 *ibid*, p. 105.
- 17 Keith Swan, Article.
- 18 Keith Swan, *D.A.*, Monday, 6 September 1971 reproduced from *Sydney Mail*, 22 October, 1864.

Chapter 2

- 1 *The Knighthood of the Golden Spur, which claims prior antiquity to all other Knighthood Orders is one of the highest honours of the Church. It was first bestowed on Saint Sylvester and became known as the Knighthood of Saint Sylvester. Installation by Bishop Lanigan took place in Saint Patrick's Church, Albury. Dr Michael McAlroy celebrated the High Mass; Wagga Wagga Advertiser 2 December 1874 (R.M.I.H.E. Archives).*
- 2 Information regarding teachers in the early School was supplied by Brother John Mahon, F.S.C., M.A., Sydney.
- 3 W. J. Garland, *The History of Wagga Wagga*; 1913, reprint 1984.
- 4 Brother John Mahon op. cit.
- 5 Diocesan Archives, Information written on the back of a photograph of Saint Michael's Church.
- 6 Sister M. Bernadette of Mount Erin Convent, *Embrace the Past with Remembrance*.
- 7 *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 6 November 1875 (hereinafter WWA).
- 8 *ibid*.
- 9 WWA, 13 December 1876.
- 10 Brother John Mahon op. cit.
- 11 Sylvia Walsh, 'In a Bend of the Murrumbidgee' No. 4 Journal of WWDHS, 1980.
- 12 Father T. J. Linane (Editor), 'Footprints', *Journal of Melbourne Historical Commission, Vols. 3, Nos. 8 and 9, 1979, Nos. 10, 11, 12, 1980*.
- 13 John O'Brien, *The Men of '38 op. cit.*, p. 223
- 14 Lanigan Papers, National Library, Canberra,

Chapter 3

- 1 WWA., 25 November 1884.
- 2 Land Title Documents, Diocesan Archives, McAlroy House.
- 3 *ibid*.
- 4 WWA., 14 April 1885.
- 5 *ibid*., Tuesday 28 April 1885.
- 6 *ibid*., 6 February 1886
- 7 *ibid*., 3 March 1885.
- 8 *Freeman's Journal*, 8 October 1887, also WWA, 4 October 1887.
- 9 WWA., 4 October 1887 letter dated 29 September 1887.
- 10 Mr Jonathon Harrison, Richmond, Victoria.
- 11 WWA., 2 August 1887.

- 12 Father T. J. Linane, *The Priest Who borrowed a Tent*, a series published in *The Light of Other Days* 1966 - 1968, Melbourne.
- 13 *ibid.*
- 14 *W.W.A.*, 4 October 1887.

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- 1a *Riverina Leader*, 12 August 1981.
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- 3 Keith Swan, *A History of Wagga Wagga* p. 70 quoting from *Wagga Wagga Express* 21 June 1859.
- 4 *Catholic Press*, 4 October 1902.
- 5 *D.A. Centenary issue*, 29 October 1968, mentions also that the first Victoria Cross winner of World War II was local man, Corporal John Edmondson.
- 6 *The Almanac*, 1903.
- 7 John O'Brien, *The Men of '38*, p. 186.
- 8 *Wagga Advertiser*, 19 February, 1907.
- 9 Father Paul Bateman, *the Church upon the Levels*, p. 22.
- 10 Bernard Dowd and Sheila Tearle, *Centenary, Sisters of The Presentation*, p. 45.
- 11 *Catholic Press*, 14 May 1914.
- 12 Bernard Dowd and Sheila Tearle, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
- 13 James Gormly, *Exploration and Settlement in Australia*, article printed in *Daily Advertiser*, Friday 29 November 1918.

Chapter 5

- 1 Patricia Mc Caughey, *Samuel McCaughey*, p. 102.
- 1a Sylvia Walsh, *Dr. Joseph Wilfrid Dwyer, D.D.*, p. 21, 22.
- 2 Father Harold Campbell, *Centenary of Maitland Diocese, 1866-1966*. Both Bishops are listed in Australian Dictionary of Biography.
- 3 Clonliffe College Archives, Dublin.
- 4 Sylvia Walsh, *op. cit.* p. 24.
- 5 Bernard Dowd and Sheila Tearle, *op. cit.* p. 65, also reported in newspapers of the period.
- 6 Ruvé Cropley, 40 'odd years' in a Manse, p. 21. A copy in the writer's possession was signed for her by Mrs Cropley shortly before her death in 1981.
- 7 Bernard Dowd and Sheila Tearle, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

Chapter 6

- 1 List in possession of John Mahon, grandson of P. J. Mahon, the Treasurer mentioned in the list.
- 2 *D.A.* Monday 8 May 1922.
- 3 Bishop Dwyer's Journal which he named '*Acts of the Diocese*' Diocesan Archives.
- 4 *D.A.* Thursday, 18 November 1926.
- 5 T.P. Boland, *James Duhig*, p. 38.
- 6 Sylvia Walsh, *On Foxborough Hill*, No. 7 Journal, W.W.D.H.S., 1986.

Chapter 7

- 1 *D.A.*, October 1966.
- 2 Although Father Cosgriff came after the war to relieve at Wagga Wagga he later joined the Diocesan clergy. He is now living in retirement in Tasmania.
- 3 Father T. Desmond served with Father Lacey at the Cathedral for three years .
- 5 *D.A. Centenary issue*, *op. cit.* The river reached higher levels in subsequent floods.
- 6 *Monitor*, March 1951. The Convention opened with High Mass in the Cathedral on Tuesday, 10 April 1951.
- 7 Bishop F. Carroll, *Bishop Francis Augustin Henschke*, No. 3 Journal of W.W.D.H.S., 1970.
- 8 *ibid*
- 9 *Every Catholic Canvass*, June-July 1959.

Chapter 8

- 1 Bishop F. Carroll, *Bishop Francis Augustin Henschke*, No. 3 Journal of W.W.D.H.S., 1970.
- 2 Bernard Dowd and Sheila Tearle, *Centenary, Sisters of the Presentation*, p. 126
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia*, 1977, p. 241.

- 5 Stephen J. Tazewell, *The Centenary of SS. Peter and Paul's Cathedral*, Goulburn, 1987, p. 46.
- 6 Patrick O'Farrell op. cit., 1977, p. 401.
- 7 Bishop F. Carroll, op. cit.
- 8 Father Francis Carroll received Baptism, first Confession, first Holy Communion, Confirmation and ultimately priestly Ordination in his own parish Church at Ganmain.
- 9 Bishop F. Carroll, op. cit.

Chapter 9

- 1 *Marianna*, Diocesan Monthly Magazine, May 1968.
- 2 Bernard Dowd and Sheila Tearle, *Centenary, Sisters of The Presentation*, p. 112.
- 3 *Marianna*, September 1969.
- 4 *ibid.*, March 1970.
- 5 *Together*, June 1972.
- 6 *ibid.*, December, 1971.
- 7 *D.A.*, Saturday, 23 March 1974.
- 8 An article by Father M. Burgess, *Together*, May 1976.
- 9 Sylvia Walsh, *Patrick Moran and Family* No. 5 Journal, W.W.D.H.S. 1982.

Chapter 10

- 1 *Together*, March 1984.
- 2 *D.A.*, Friday, 13 July 1984.
- 3 Annual Report, College of Technical and Further Education, 1986. Also Wagga Wagga Directory, 1986.
- 4 *D.A.*, 8 August 1983.
- 5 *Catholic Weekly*, 7 September 1983.
- 5 *D.A.* 2 March 1984 and *Catholic Weekly*.
- 7 Sylvia Walsh, *On Foxborough Hill*, No. 7 Journal W.W.D.H.S., 1986.
- 8 Land Title Documents, Diocesan Archives.
- 9 *ibid.*
- 10 *Together*, December 1986.
- 11 *Together*, March 1987.
- 12 Dr. Morgan O'Connor and Mr. Patrick Moran at meeting held 23 November 1884 regarding proposed new Church. W.W.A., 25 November 1884.

PRIESTS WHO HAVE SERVED IN SAINT MICHAEL'S PARISH

Rev. Father	William Bermingham	1871-1874	Rev. Father	Charles Gleeson	1930 (on loan)
** "	John Dunne	1871 (5 Months)	"	Augustus Lacey	1933-1936
"	John O'Dwyer	1874-1876	"	Cyril Cochrane	1931-1933
"	Patrick Bermingham	1874-1882	"	Brian W. Hayden	1931-1938
"	T. Hanley	1875 and 1879	"	Thomas Desmond	1932, 1934-1941, 1973-75
"	Thomas Long	1876 and 1880	"	John C. Glover	1937-1938
"	William McGrath	1877-1880	"	Norman Duck	1939-1940 and 1950-1955
"	John Kennedy	1878	"	William Gilby	1939-1973
"	Patrick Dunne	1883-1887	* "	Brian Gallagher	1940-1948
* "	Michael Buckley	1880-1886 and 1901-1918	Bishop	Francis Henschke	1940-1968 (died 1968)
"	R. J. Carr	1880-1881 and 1884	* Father	John Lane	1942 and 1956-1961
"	Denis A. Walsh	1884-1887 (died 1887)	"	Richard O'Donovan	1943-1946
"	Michael Phelan	1886-1887	"	Denis Kelly, S. J.	1943-1945 (on loan)
** "	John Gallagher	1887 (October) - 1894	"	Albert Stanley	1946-1947
"	R. Kennedy	1890	"	R. J. Kunze, S.V.D.	1946
"	Thomas Carroll	1890 and 1895-1896	"	Owen Cosgriff	1949
"	Patrick Dowling	1896	"	Kevin Wright	1949-1952
"	Daniel Leahy	1896-1898	"	Henry T. Josko	1952-1954
"	Michael Dillon	1896	"	Peter O'Leary	1953-1955
"	John Campbell	1898-1899	"	Phillip Mel. Roach	1954-1955
"	Joseph Dwyer	1898-1902 and 1918-1939	"	Joseph Sammon	1955-1958
"	Patrick O'Shea	1900-1903	"	Francis Bell	1956-1959
"	Peter McAlroy	1892-93	"	Wilfred Plunkett	1957-1961
"	Patrick Cussen	1894-1895	* "	William Fulton	1958-1965 and 1968
"	John Curley	1893-95	"	John McGee	1960-1961 and 1973
"	Michael Slattery	1893-1907 (died 1907)	"	Brian McEwen	1962-1963
"	J. Fleming	1903-1907	"	James D. McGee	1962-1964
"	Joseph Ryan	1904-1905 (died 1905)	"	Bernard Edghill	1963-1964
"	Thomas Mullins	1906-1907	Dr.	Gerald Iverson, D.D.	1964-1969 and 1973-1978
"	Edward Laide	1907-1910	Rev. Father	Joseph Conway	1964-1965
"	Peter Mulligan	1910-1911	"	Francis Carroll	1965-1967
"	G.A. Shannon	1910-1911	** Bishop	Francis P. Carroll	1968-1983
"	M.D. O'Sullivan	1912-1914	(the above)	Father	Charles Holdsworth
"	P. Gahan	1912-1916	"	Brendan Dwyer	1965-1969 (died 1969)
"	A.H. Percy	1915	"	Robert Bartlett	1966-1961 (few months)
"	Edmund Ryan	1917-1918	"	Peter Quinn	1967-1972 and 1984-
"	Jeremiah Galvin	1917-1919	"	John A. McGrath	1962-1967
Bishop	Joseph Dwyer	1918-1939 (died 1939)	"	Edward P. Fitzgerald	1968-1972
* Rev. Father	Thomas Barry	1918-1925 and 1927-1940	"	Kevin J. Flanagan	1970
* "	Timothy O'Connell (first Administrator)	1918-1920	"	John Frauenfelder	1970-1975
"	Joseph Holkein,	1920-1922 (on loan)	"	Anthony Loth	1973-1976
"	Thomas Ryan	1920-1926 (died 1926)	"	B. Paul Hart	1971-1974
"	Patrick Duggan	1920 (on loan)	"	Bernard Moylan	1971
"	Mark Tyrrell	1921 "	"	Peter O'Keefe	1972-1977
"	James Walsh	1922 "	"	J. L. Edwell	1972
"	M. Hoyns	1923 "	"	Michael Lyons	1974-1977
"	William O'Neill	1924-25	"	Michael Buckdale	1975-1976
"	J.J. Condon	1924-26	"	Kevin O'Reilly	1977-1979
Dr.	John Harper, D.D.	1925-26	"	Michael Burgess	1978-1981
Rev. Father	C.J. Heffernan	1926 (on loan)	"	John Hugh McGrath	1979-1984
Dr.	Francis McEvoy, D.D.	1926 "	"	Francis X. Barry	1979
Father	Reginald Finn	1927 "	"	(Vincentian)	Bernard Thomas
"	W.E. Fitzgerald	1927 "	"	Robert Leaver	1981-1987
* "	J. H. Larkins	1927-1932 and 1940-1949	"	Warren Mossfield	1982
"	J. Skelly	1927 (on loan)	"	Edward Tyler	1983-1984
"	P. F. Cunningham	1928 "	Bishop	William J. Brennan	1984-
"	J. Henneberry	1929-1930 (on loan)	Rev. Father	Peter Quinn	1984-
* "	Michael Lane	1929-1930 (3 months)	(Administrator)		
"	James P. O'Rourke	1930-1933			

Father	John Shanahan	1985-
"	Paul Boyers	1987-

(List obtained from Cathedral Parish records)

* denotes: received the title of Monsignor

** Rev. John Dunne became first Bishop of Wilcannia in 1887
 Rev. John Gallagher became Coadjutor Bishop of Goulburn in 1895 and succeeded Bishop Lanigan in 1900
 Bishop Francis Carroll became Archbishop of Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese in 1983

Administrators:

Rev.	T. O'Connell	1918-1920
"	T. Ryan	1921-1926 (died 1926)
"	J. J. Condon	1926
"	T. I. Barry	1927-1940
"	J. H. Larkins	1940-1949
N. Duck	N. Duck	1950-1955
"	J. D. Lane	1956-1961
Rev.	J. McGrath	1962-1967
"	E. P. Fitzgerald	1968-1972
"	John F. McGee	1973 (part)
"	G. Iverson	1973-1978
"	M. Burgess	1979-1981
"	R. Leaver	1982-1984
"	P. Quinn	1984-

Vicar-General of the Diocese: Monsignor W. Fulton 1984-

20. PAROCHIAL DISTRICT OF WAGGA WAGGA.

Established as a District in 1871, the Rev. W. Bermingham being its first resident Priest; erected into a Permanent Rectorate in 1887, the Rev. John Gallagher (now Bishop of the Diocese) being its first Irremovable Rector. Wagga Wagga is situated on the Murrumbidgee River, 312 miles by rail S. W. of Sydney, and 270 miles north of Melbourne. The Parish includes the villages of Tarcutta, Humula, Uranquinty, Alfredtown, Currawanana, and Yarragundry. **CLERGY:** Very Rev. Michael Slattery, P.P., V.G. Diocesan Consultor, Rev. Joseph W. Dwyer and Rev. Patrick E. O'Shea, St. Michael's Presbytery, Wagga Wagga. **Principal Church, St. Michael's, Wagga Wagga,** built of sandstone, 1898; (the original St. Michael's was built of brick in 1859, and is now used as an Infant School). **Patron's Feast,** September 29; **Mass:** on Sundays at 9 a.m. (Children's) and 11 (Sermon); Holydays, 10 (Benediction after Mass); weekdays, 7.30; **Evening Devotions:** on Sundays at 7.30, Rosary, Sermon and Benediction; in Lent: at 7.30, Rosary and Instruction, on Mondays and Wednesdays; Rosary and Benediction, on Tuesdays and Thursdays; Stations of the Cross on Fridays: on Spy Wednesday, Tenebrae-office; on Holy Thursday and Good Friday, Tenebrae and Sermon; in

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October: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, with Rosary and Benediction, every evening at 7.30; **Confessions,** on Saturdays, from 4 to 6 p.m., and 7½ to 9: Thursday before 1st Friday of month, 11 a.m. (Children), and 4 to 6, and 7½ to 9 p.m. (or later); **Baptisms,** on Thursdays, from 3 to 4 p.m.; **Catechism Classes,** on Sundays, for boys at 9.45 a.m. in St. Joseph's School; for girls at 2.30 p.m. at Convent (except First Sundays). **CONVENT** (brick, 1875). **Presentation Nuns,** founded from Kildare, Ireland, in 1874; No. of Sisters, 27; Superior, Mother M. Aloysius, Mt. Erin Convent, Wagga Wagga. **SCHOOLS**—Primary—all conducted by the Presentation Nuns. (a) St. Joseph's Boys', Johnston street (brick, 1885), 107 pupils. (b) St. Michael's, Girls', Church street (brick, 1875), 69 pupils. (c) St. Michael's, Infants' (brick, 1859), 37 boys, 44 girls, total 81 pupils. (d) St. Mary's School, at Convent; senior, 6 boys, 63 girls, total 69 pupils. (e) St. Mary's Infants', at Convent (brick, 1900), 18 boys, 36 girls, total 54 pupils. **High School, Girls',** at Convent, St. Eugene's (brick, 1891), boarders, 41, day pupils 32, total 73. **Societies:** (a) H.A.C.B. Society, St. Michael's (men's) branch, No. 121, meets each alternate Thursday at 8 p.m. (winter, 7.30), in St. Joseph's School, members, 129; secretary, Mr. F. McDonough, Baylis street, W. W. (b) H.A.C.B. Society, Sacred Heart (women's) branch, No. 4, meets each alternate Friday in St. Joseph's School, at 8 p.m. (winter, 7.30), members, 67; secretary, Miss B. Loughlin, Baylis street, Wagga Wagga. (c) Sacred Heart Sodality, meets on 1st Sundays at 7.30 p.m., members 510. (d) Children of Mary's Sodality, meets each Sunday at Convent, at 3 p.m., members, 70. **Other Churches** (2), **St. Eugene's Chapel, Wagga South,** (part of Convent) 1½ miles from St. Michael's, **Mass** every Sunday and holyday, at 7.30 a.m.; Benediction on Sundays (except 1st), at 3.45 p.m. **Mass** daily in Convent Oratory, at 7 a.m. **Confessions** at Convent for Children on first Thursday; at 9 a.m. (3) **Currawanana,** 16 miles W.N.W. of Wagga. **St. Peter's** (wood, 1891), **Mass** on 3rd Sundays at 11 a.m. (10 from November to May), **Confessions** before Mass, **Baptisms** and **Catechism Class** after Mass. (4) **Tarcutta,** 31 miles E.S.E. of Wagga (Church not yet built), **Mass** in Hall 2nd Sundays at 11 (10 from November to May), **Confessions** before Mass, **Baptisms** after Mass, **Catechism Class** every Sunday at 10 a.m. (5) **Yarragundry,** 14 miles W. by N. of Wagga (Church not built), **Mass** at Mr. O'Donnell's house on 4th Sundays, at 11 a.m. (10 from November to May), **Confessions** before Mass, **Baptisms** after Mass. (6) **Alfredtown,** 10 miles E.S.E. of Wagga (no Church), **Mass** at Mrs. Costello's on 1st Sundays of February, April, June, August, October and December, at 11 a.m. (10 from November to May), **Confessions** before Mass, **Baptisms** after Mass. (7) **Uranquinty,** 11 miles S.W. by W. of Wagga (no Church), **Mass** at Mr. W. Ford's on the 1st Sundays of January, March, May, July, September and November, at 11 a.m. (10 from November to May), **Confessions** before Mass, **Baptisms** after Mass, **Catechism Class,** every alternate Wednesday at 3. (8) **Humula,** 41 miles S.E. by S. of Wagga (no Church), **Mass** in Hall on 5th Sundays, at 11 a.m. (10 from November to May), **Confessions** before Mass, **Baptisms** after Mass. (9) **Lake Albert,** 5 miles S. of Wagga (no Church),

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Mass at Mr. T. Jones', on 5th Sundays, at 10 a.m., **Confessions** before Mass, **Baptisms** after Mass. **STATIONS** are held twice a year on week days at the homes of Mr. J. Cox, Mangoplah; Mrs. Clune, senr., Mangoplah; Mrs. Clune, N.E. Mangoplah; Mr. R. Cox, Livingstone Gully; Mr. E. A. Fitzpatrick, Book Book; Mr. M. Flanagan, Borambola; Mr. T. Walsh, Toole's Creek; Mr. Piper, Lower Tarcutta; Mr. F. Gannon, Gobbagumbalin; Mr. W. Clune, Eononyhareenyha.

From the 'Almanac' 1903

TABLE OF DIOCESAN INSTITUTIONS, 1902.

No.	PAROCHIAL DISTRICT.	Ecclesiastical.			Educational.				Societies.					Diocesan Collections, 1902.						
		Churches & Chapels	Presbyteries	Monasteries & Convents	Primary Schools	Boarding Schools	High Day Schools	Orphanages	Benefit.			Pious Sodalties.			Pope's Collection.			Mission Fund.		
									H.A.C.B.S. men	H.A.C.B.S. women	A.H.C. Guild.	Sacred Heart	Children of Mary	S. Vincent de Paul	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1	Goulburn	10	1	4	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	23	0	0	40	0	0
2	Albury	5	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	..	..	1	1	..	15	0	0	20	0	0
3	Berrigan	3	1	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	4	6	9	..	..	..
4	Burrowa	5	1	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	1	..	12	1	3	15	4	9
5	Cootamundra	5	1	1	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	1	..	4	9	6	12	0	0
6	Corowa	3	1	1	2	..	..	..	2	..	..	1	..	..	5	10	0	..	..	..
7	Crookwell	7	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	6	10	0	17	0	0
8	Germanton	4	2	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	3	6	0	..	..	..
9	Grenfell	5	1	1	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	1	..	4	0	0	12	0	0
10	Gundagai	7	1	1	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	1	..	13	7	9	15	1	6
11	Gunning	4	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	4	0	0	7	0	0
12	Jerilderie	2	1	1	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	6	4	6	..	..	..
13	Junee	4	2	2	3	..	..	..	2	..	..	2	1	..	10	11	6	15	0	0
14	Koorawatha	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	0	0	4	10	0
15	Lockhart	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	2	0	0	6	0	0
16	Murrumburrah	1	1	1	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	1	..	6	10	0	6	10	0
17	Narandera	3	1	1	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	6	0	0	6	0	0
18	Temora	2	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	1	..	3	10	0	..	..	..
19	Tumut	4	1	2	2	..	..	..	2	..	..	2	1	..	10	12	0	6	8	0
20	Wagga Wagga	3	1	1	5	1	1	..	1	1	..	1	1	..	18	0	0	20	0	0
21	Wyalong	2	1	1	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	5	0	0	9	6	0
22	Yass	4	1	1	3	1	1	..	..	..	1	1	1	..	10	0	0	12	0	0
23	Young	3	1	1	2	..	..	..	1	1	..	1	..	..	4	18	6	7	6	0
Totals		95	25	28	48	5	5	2	18	3	5	28	12	1	£179	17	9	£231	6	3

COPY

Vicar General - For land at Wagga Wagga
for Roman Catholic Church purposes.

Vicar General's Office
Novr 7th 1857

Sir

I have the honour by direction of His Grace the Archbishop, to request that the usual quantity of land may be granted for Roman Catholic Church purposes at Wagga Wagga. The site desired is the two acres abutting on Allotments 2 and 3 in Section 41, as shown in the inclosed tracing.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant

for the Vicar General

J. McENCROE.

The Surveyor General.

This is within the space shown on the Town plan as reserved for Church & Parsonage & was intended for the Church of England, & although probably as the area is large the whole will not be granted to that Ch: yet any portion of it is restricted from being alienated to any other body by the decision of the Govt that two grants for different denominations are not to be made in close proximity to each other so long as other sites can be obtained. Mr. McEncroe had better perhaps be asked to make another selection.

COPY

Surveyor General
Sydney

Very Reverend Sir

I beg to inform you that your application of the 7th inst for 2 acres abutting on allotments 2 and 3 of Section 41 Wagga Wagga for Roman Catholic Church purposes, cannot be acceded to, the land being situated within the space set up for the Church of England.

2. Although, as the area so set upon is large, the whole will not perhaps be granted to that Denomination, yet under the decision of the Government, two grants to different bodies cannot be made in so close proximity while other sites are obtainable.

Under these circumstances I must request that you will make another selection.

I have the honour to be,

Very Reverend Sir,

Your obedient Servt

(Signed) G. BARNEY - S.G.

Very Reverend
Dr. Gregory
Vicar General.

True copy

THOS. MAKINSON.

COPY

Vicar General's Office
Deor. 15th 1857.

Sir

I have the honour, by direction of His Grace the Archbishop, to report that on the 7th November last an application was made to the Surveyor General for the appropriation to Roman Catholic Church purposes of land at Wagga Wagga described as 2 acres abutting on allotments 2 and 3 of Section 41.

I have now the honour to inclose a copy of the Surveyor General's answer, which states that, although there is room for a grant in the situation desired, the request of His Grace cannot be acceded to, because the Government have ruled it to be inexpedient to grant to different bodies sites in close proximity, while sites apart are obtainable.

I have found, on referring this answer to the clergymen of the district, that no other site than the one applied for is suitable, because none other within practicable distance is secure from the occasional floods to which that locality is subject.

Under circumstances then I submit that the Government may perhaps be induced to relax their decision, and grant a site where the letter of the Surveyor General testifies there is ample room.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

H. G. ABBOT GREGORY V.G.

The Honourable
the Secretary for
Lands and Public Works

COPY

Further respecting land for Roman Catholic
Church purposes at Wagga Wagga.

Department of Land and Public Works
Sydney 11th February 1858.

Sir

Referring to your Blank Cover report of the 15th ultimo, with respect to a Grant of land for Roman Catholic Church purposes at Wagga Wagga, I am directed to enclose for your information a copy of a letter which has been addressed to Dr. Gregory on the subject, and to request that when the particular sites for a Church School and Parsonage shall have been intimated to you that you will cause the Land in question to be measured according to the usual division, and brought forward in abstract for final approval.

I have the honour to be
Sir
Your most Obedient Servant

M. C. FITZPATRICK

The Surveyor General

COPY

Vicer General's Office

May 4th 1858.

Sir

In reply to your letter of the 11th February last proposing for Roman Catholic Church purposes Allotments 1 and 2 of Section 41 in the township of Wagga Wagga, I have the honour, by direction of His Grace the Archbishop, to represent that the said plot of land, being low and exposed to occasional floods, is unsuited for its intended use. In Section 43, however, on the eastern side of Church St., and at its intersection with Johnston St, there is a suitable plot, and it is hoped by the Clergymen of the district and the Catholic inhabitants that the two acres may be granted there, or at any rate one acre there, and another acre on the opposite side of Church Street.

I have the honour to be Sir,

Your most obedient Servant

H. G. ABBOT GREGORY
V.G.The Honourable
the Secretary for Lands & Works.

The land indicated, in section 43 has been measured by Mr. Surveyor Fisher into two allotments of one acre each, one of which has been reserved for a burial ground, as it contains numerous graves. The other has been appropriated as a site for an Hospital and the description will shortly be submitted in abstract for formal approval.

G. W. BARING
S.G.

Sur.Genl's Office

17th June 1858.

COPYRespecting site for Roman Catholic Church
at Wagga Wagga-----
Yass Presbytery
July 2nd 1858

To The Honorable The Colonial Secretary

Sir

I have the honor, in compliance with the request of the Catholics of Wagga Wagga, to enclose for your consideration, an appeal from that body. They, being unwilling to create a public cry against your Government, deemed it but just, & reasonable to address themselves directly to The Premier of N. S. Wales in order that the inconsiderate &, perhaps I may add, one-sided acts of The Survey Department might be modified or stopped in our regard. Considerable dissatisfaction exists in the district of Wagga Wagga on account of the apparent exclusion of The Catholic Church Building from the only spot whereon, with safety, it could be erected, and it is the wish of the resident Clergymen to prevent the public manifestation of their indignation.

I am perfectly satisfied you will at once perceive that whereas sites have been granted three Denominations & also provided for an hospital & Mechanics Institute it must appear incredible that the application of The Catholics should be practically set aside although their application was made long anterior to the present division of what is commonly call Church Hill

As it is of the last importance to be able to commence building by the end of the month your gracious consideration of our grievance would be a source of great satisfaction to those interested.

I have the honour to subscribe myself - Sir

Your obedient & humble servant

O. BIRMINGHAM

Catholic Pastor

COPY

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales. &c.

Sir :

We the Catholics of Wagga Wagga and surrounding country, in Public Meeting assembled, beg most respectfully to approach you as the Premier of this important Colony, and in so doing, beg to lay before you a greivance which pressed heavily on us for some time past.

- We being a section of her most gracious Majesty's subjects, who have never yielded the Palm to any others, in the battlefield, or in defence of her Crown, and dignity -

To approach to the nature of our grievance, 1st having been led to the opinion that so soon as we could secure a certain amount of funds, a sight for our church would be granted to us by the Govt, 2nd There being on the extreme North east of South Wagga Wagga a block of land of a conical form, and out of the reach of flood, this spot having been always spoken of, as intended for the Episcopalian Presbyterian, and Catholic Churches, the two former denominations having their shares marked out for them, while our portion of the high building ground has been interfered with, by running a large street upwards of ninety feet wide thro' the only portion of the land, that would be safe in times of high floods, thus throwing the sight for the Catholic Church into a flat, which is subject to innundation at second class floods.

With reference to the large street alluded to, such street could lead to no where, as the block of land in question is in an isolated place in the form of a Horse Shoe, in one of the bends of the River, -

Without bordering on adulation, we have the fullest, and most undoubted confidence in your desire to do even handed justice to all classes, more especially from the liberal Policy enunciated by your Government.

If we be in error in not heading this in the shape of Petition, we beg to be pardoned, and trust you will be pleased to take this our appeal into your kind consideration, and cause the site for our church to be granted to us, that we may have the pleasing duty of placing under the foundation stone, in the inscription, the name of the Ruling Powers forming the Govt. of New South Wales, in the year of our Lord 1858, and shall feel ourselves in duty bound to pray, -

For and in behalf of the Catholics of Wagga Wagga, and the surrounding Country, in Public Meeting assembled, -

JAMES WALSH

Chairman, of Committee.

Box 4 (3382) (No. 58 - 2424) Arcadian.

To the Secretary of Land and Works.
31.3.58.

The Rev. P. Birmingham begs to convey to the Honorable the Chief Secretary the expression of gratitude of the clergymen and the Catholics of Wagga Wagga for the prompt ~~propt~~ and truly impartial response made to their appeal regarding church allotments at Wagga Wagga. Your kind and generous attention, in so quickly taking our petition into consideration, is the more deserving of our thanks; as even amidst the sorrows consequent on a sad domestic bereavement you forbade the ignoring of the just claims of the Catholics of the district.

Yass Presbytery

August 11, 1858.

Copies of letters given to the writer by the late Mr Bernard Dowd, F.R.A.H.A. and obtained by him when he was Research Officer in the Department of Lands.

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