As it Was

A Compilation
March 2009 – March 2003

If you have any photos of historical interest please send them to P.O. Box 3, Lismore NSW 2480, addressed to The Editor. With your permission to scan, they will be returned to you promptly.
... but now I must try to give you a little description of the place we are living in, hoping it will interest you. Well, dearest Mother, as opposite from London as black is from white. The place is very large – a vast country – even in what is called the town, cattle are feeding in the middle of the streets – in England we would not call them streets but country roads. When one sees the church crowded and the schools full of children, one wonders where they all come from, so few persons are seen about – but it is to be accounted for when I tell you the little wooden houses or cottages are far and wide between – the children come immense distances to school – there are some who start from their homes at 7 to be with us at 9. Where we live now is also a house (no stairs to go up being all on one flat) standing by itself – fields, country lanes and vineyards all around us – cows and horses feed right up to our verandah – it’s all so still and quiet.

(A description of the temporary convent as described in the first letter of the New Foundation in Grafton to Mother Mary Aloysius at Bermondsey. Letter is dated April 24, 1884).

Our convent will be very nice when it is finished, the chapel will be at the very top. Don’t you think it will be nice to have our Lord looking down upon us all – the chapel window faces the river. It will be a very convenient Convent – 13 cells, a nice community room, work room, noviceship, infirmary, a small room for study, Reverend Mother’s parlour, chapter room, reception parlour, refectory, kitchen, a little store room, washing and ironing room and bath room – it has been greatly enlarged from what it was first intended...

(A description of the new convent building as described in the first letter of the New Foundation in Grafton to Mother Mary Aloysius at Bermondsey. Letter is dated April 24, 1884).

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of Sister Berenice Kerr, RSM, D.Phil(Oxon.) and Sister Colleen Rhodes, RSM for the gathering of letters, images and research for The Mercy Tradition feature in this issue of “Catholic Life”. Editor.
Bishops and Clergy meeting in Lismore – (standing) at left: Father Dalton of Murwillumbah Parish. Other clergy not identified. (seated) left to right: Bishop O’Connor, Bishop of Armidale and Bishop Doyle, Bishop of Lismore.
Pictured are the St. Carthage’s Cadets. They formed part of the welcoming parade for the visit to Lismore of Earl Beauchamp, Governor of New South Wales. The picture was published in the Sydney Mail, July 7, 1900 (Image courtesy of The Richmond River Historical Society).

After Sunday Mass.
Priest, altar server and congregation assembled outside St. Patrick’s Church Goolmangar. Not dated but thought to be about the early 1900’s. (Image courtesy of Richmond River Historical Society)
The first Catholic Church built in Bellingen at the corner of Hyde (Main Street) and Church Street. It was built (circa 1880-5) by Father William Reade. (The photo was taken from land acquired by the Parish where the new church of St. William was built (now the parish hall) and later the present St. Mary’s (1919).

Father Synan McDonnell, the first Parish Priest of Dorrigo (1913). He is pictured with his “transport” at the Fahey Homestead. Father McDonnell was buried at the East Lismore Cemetery in 1940.
The laying of the foundation stone of the Bellingen Church in 1919 (from left) Father Fitzpatrick, Parish Priest, Bishop Carroll, Austen McKay (Architect) Catholic Men’s Guild, Children of Mary, Bishop, Clergy and Architect on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of Bellingen church in 1919. Back row third from left is the architect Austen McKay. Second row: At far right is Father John Durkin from Bowraville. Third from right is Father Fitzpatrick Parish Priest. Fourth from right is Bishop Carroll.
Description taken from the original prospectus: "The College is situated approximately three miles north of the town of Lismore. It stands majestically on a spur of the Pegon Ridge, towering boldly over the river, which flows past less than four hundred feet from the front entrance. The ground between the river and the building is being laid out in two terraces that are in keeping with the scale of the building.

The College itself is an imposing three-storey ferro-concrete building designed on restrained Modern-Romanesque lines and eminently suitable for Australian climatic conditions. The dark brick piers, rising with unbroken line to a height of thirty six feet, before they carry the semi-circular arches, give an impression of beauty united with strength."
Bishop Carroll blesses the foundation stone at Glenreagh with Father Ryan and Father O’Byrne. February 1, 1931.

Procession in Church Grounds – April 26, 1925

Photos supplied from the book: Catholic Parish Coffs Harbour 1906-2006. Written and researched by Rosemary Doherty; Presentation and layout by Carmel Woldseth with assistance from Agnes Castle. Used with permission.
Below: Bishop John Carroll (front row third from left) represented his Diocese at the Catholic Truth Society Congress at Kilkenny, Ireland in 1935.

Right: Prefect’s induction at St Mary’s College Lismore 1958

Bishop Doyle and Abbe Schurr together with the Sisters of Mercy and parishioners at parish picnic prior to the year 1900.
On 19 February 1942 mainland Australia came under attack for the first time when Japanese forces mounted two air raids on Darwin.

Sixty five years on, that event was commemorated in Darwin and recalled by Dan McAlloon in his article: Tiwi Islands Ministry – One People, Two Islands.

Though it seems very remote from world affairs, history records how on February 19, 1942, the Catholic mission on Bathurst Island was the first place in Australia to experience war when Japanese bombers, on their way to Darwin, strafed Nguiu. The priest in charge at the time notified Darwin of the incoming warplanes but his message was ignored. The impact of the war and its effects on the Tiwi people was experienced first-hand by Sr Barbara Tippolay AD. A proud Tiwi woman, Barbara is the regional leader of the Sister Handmaidens of Our Lord Congregation. In 1942, as a small child, Barbara was among a group of 30 girls in the care of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) who were evacuated to the strange environs of Melbourne and Adelaide to continue their schooling for the war’s duration.

“...My best memory is of the war finishing,” Barbara recalls. “I was ten-years-old and the news came that we were going back. You should have seen the excitement in our little faces at the joy of going home!”

Today Barbara lives on Melville Island with another AD Sister, providing a pastoral ministry that combines catechist work with drug and alcohol education programs. The cost of alcohol and marijuana abuse within Tiwi society is a subject well documented, she says. “There is violence associated with it, especially for women. We can offer them our support in times of great need. Most of our communication is with the Tiwi women. According to Tiwi culture and tradition, if you work with the women first you are speaking to the family.”

Although raised by the OLSH Sisters, Barbara has never considered herself one of the “stolen generation”. “I don’t know if my mother brought me to the convent - I never asked that question. All I remember is we were taken to Melville Island and then when war broke out in 1942 we were evacuated. All women and children were evacuated from Darwin too. The Sisters travelled with us to Melbourne where we stayed for a couple of months I believe. I was too young to remember.”

“My own coming to religious life was a process of long discernment. I grew up at the boarding school and I think my life was touched by the way the sisters were with children, how they cared for the children. So this I think was the beginning of my call to life.” Barbara was called to religious life with the AD Order and undertook her formation and teacher training in PNG.

The Tiwi Islands, comprised of Bathurst and Melville Islands, lie 80 kilometres north of Darwin across the Beagle Gulf. The Islands, separated by the narrow Apsley Strait, are home to the Tiwi people, who have lived here for thousands of years. In the late 1970s, ownership was handed back to the Tiwi people, who today administer lands through the Tiwi Land Council.
**Peter Joseph Gannon**

Councils) for the last 10 years of his life. He was an inspiration to his fellow-workers, and an example of the spirit of the best traditions of the Society.

Among the church buildings that were planned and erected to his design and under his supervision in N.S.W. were:

- St. Columba’s, Adamstown
- St. Theresa, New Lambton
- Corpus Christi, Waratah St
- The Ursuline Chapel, Armidale
- St. Joseph’s, East Maitland
- St. Mary’s, Dunrobin
- St. Mary of the Angels, Guyra
- St. Patrick’s, Ben Lomond.
- The Ursuline Chapel, Armidale

Amongst the more prominent buildings of other nature completed under his guidance were:

- St. Joseph’s Convent, Merewether
- St. Francis’ Xavier’s School (Marist Brothers), Hamilton
- Convents of Mercy at Hamilton, Tighes Hill, Lambton
- The Novitate Building, Singleton
- De La Salle College, Armidale
- The Mater Misericordiae Hospital at Waratah

Many other building activities of various natures make up a long list of outstanding achievements of a particularly talented architect. Just prior to his death at the age of 45 years, he was preparing plans for the renovation of St. Joseph’s Convent at Auburn.

His ecclesiastical architectural career spanned some 20 years.

Limited copies of the “Little Book” are available to readers. Please contact the editor by email: media@lismorediocese.org

The Church of the Sacred Heart (now the Cathedral), Hamilton.
The year is 1951 at Ballina.
Bishop of the Diocese Bishop Patrick Farrelly congratulates Monsignor Jerome O’Rourke on the occasion of his Silver Jubilee of Priesthood.

The Year 1957 in Japan. The late Father Michael Guinea of the Marist Fathers (back row at left) and parishioners. The two parishioners seated were his first converts to the Catholic Faith.
Blessing of St. Vincent’s Hospital Site, Lismore
Seated are Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane and Bishop Carroll of Lismore
Lismore St Mary’s Convent and School and St Carthage’s Church. Photo taken between 1890 and 1894 from the Bexhill Road. The Richmond River is in the foreground. The two storey building near the Convent is the Bishop’s Residence. The home of Thomas Borton with the bamboo trees is on the left.

St Carthage’s Church and St Mary’s Convent and School before the fire of 1905. On the right background is the old Temperance Hall on the hill which was blown down in 1888 and is now the site of the Chancery Office formerly the Bishop’s House.

Ruins of St Carthage’s Church and St Mary’s Convent after the fire of 2nd January 1905.

All photos for this issue of “As It Was” by courtesy of the Richmond River Historical Society.
Father Anthony Miazzi was one of 94 people who lost their lives when an Alitalia DC8 crashed into the densely jungled Western Ghats Mountains northeast of Bombay early Saturday morning (A.E.S.T.) July 7, 1962.

Father Miazzi was returning to his hometown to visit his seriously ill mother.

Before leaving North Lismore Parish to make the trip to Italy, 700 people attended a farewell function for him at the Italo-Australian Club.

Father Miazzi was born near Padova, Northern Italy on 16th February 1932. At the age of eleven he entered the College of Bassano del Grappa with the intention of becoming a missionary priest. Before he completed his training he went to a seminary in the United States for further studies. His first appointment was in the Parish of North Lismore. He arrived in Goolmangar in February 1958 where he was welcomed by about seventy families. He was the first of the Scalabrini Fathers to work in the Diocese of Lismore. The people of Goolmangar came to know Father Miazzi for his zeal and charity. He visited them at home, at work and even celebrated Mass for them in their garages.

Father Miazzi later moved to the Presbytery at North Lismore when Bishop Farrelly added this district to the parish. Father Miazzi spent nearly five years in the parish before his tragic death.

At the North Lismore Parish on 31st March 1968, Bishop Farrelly blessed a monument in honour of Father Miazzi. When the church at North Lismore was closed the monument was erected in New Italy. On the 28th April 1991 at New Italy, a Mass was celebrated for Father Miazzi by Father Francis Lovetin (a colleague of Father Miazzi) who also blessed the monument at its new home in The Park of Peace.

References:
Brief History by Joan Bortolin.
Northern Star July 9, 1962
The arrival of His Eminence Cardinal Moran at Lismore Railway Station on Saturday 17th August 1907. Cardinal Moran came to Lismore for the dedication of St. Carthage’s Cathedral.
In October 1920 Archbishop Cattaneo, the then Papal Nuncio to Australia, visited the Diocese of Lismore. He is pictured here with the Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop John Carroll.

1922 was during the Papacy of Benedict XV who succeeded Saint Pius X. It was St Pius X whose vigorous fight against modernism left the Church divided.

In his first encyclical Pope Benedict XV called on the progressives and the traditionalists to come together for the good of the Church. He also called for an end to World War I but his plea was virtually ignored.
Over the next sixty years, Cowper orphanage became an icon on the North Coast, caring for hundreds of young children. Its success and viability relied on the selfless work of the Sisters, together with the overwhelming support of the general Cowper community and Parishes throughout the Diocese.

When St Joseph’s was moved to Grafton in 1972 to provide more educational opportunities for the children, a Board was established to assist the Sisters in their work. However, until the middle of the 80’s, St Joseph’s was staffed and administered totally by the Sisters of Mercy, with the support of many volunteers who assisted with baby sitting, sewing and mending, maintenance of grounds and buildings and fundraising.

Over the last twenty years, the number of lay staff employed at St Joseph’s has increased considerably, whilst the number of Sisters employed has declined. With Sr. Barbara’s departure as Director, Sr. Jan Holahan, who is employed as a therapist, is the only Sister of Mercy remaining on Staff.

In accepting the position as Director, Sue McKimm spoke of being both humbled and excited about her appointment as the first lay Director. She praised the work of all the Sisters and lay staff who had established such a strong Mercy charism at St Joseph’s over the past ninety-two years and assured all present that the Mercy traditions and ethos will remain a strong focus for St Joseph’s in the years ahead.

In particular, Sue acknowledged the outstanding work of Sr. Barbara in her ten years as Director. In addition to the extraordinary sense of compassion and caring which she demonstrated, Sr. Barbara has developed dynamic systems of operation, which leave St Joseph’s well placed to face the increasing challenges of child care.
Pictured is a statue of Christ the King above the altar of a side chapel in St. Carthage’s Cathedral. The statue was given in memory of Michael Hurley who was killed in action in France on August 6 1916.

The Year: 1960
The Event: Catholic Small Schools Combined Sports Day
L-R: Fr. Vincent Doyle (extreme left), Fr. Tom O’Reagan (3rd from left)
Others in the group not identified. Winner of the March Past was OLHC Parish School, South Lismore
Visit of Cardinal Gilroy (formerly a Priest of the Lismore Diocese) to Lismore. The Cardinal is pictured planting and watering a tree in the grounds of St. Mary’s College (now Trinity Catholic College) to commemorate his visit. Present at the planting were members of the Presentation Sisters, Bishop Patrick Farrelly (then Bishop of the Lismore Diocese) and students of St. Mary’s.
The closure on the 17th May this year of the XPT service between Casino and Murwillumbah has caused much disquiet and renewed debates about transport services on the Northern Rivers.

Concerned citizens have questioned the decision to replace the rail service with coaches. Claimed as part of a cost-cutting exercise by the Government, it is not the first time that rail transport has come in for close scrutiny.

In 1903, Joseph Jeremiah Doyle, first Bishop of Lismore, was called to give evidence at a railway proposal hearing conducted by a Government appointed Committee.

In the second half of the 19th Century, debates over matters affecting early settlers on the Northern Rivers district of New South Wales attracted much interest. Often those involved were the grandparents and great-grandparents of people in their fifties or more today. They were not the celebrated pioneers but the ones who took the batten – members of fledgling isolated settlements. The suitable conveyance of such people for their needs as well as for their services or products was essential.

There were strong arguments over various proposals to do with the location and development of coastal ports, roads, and society’s forging newcomer, rail. Local concerns did not exclude wider thinking, for example the idea of linking the Northern Tablelands (from Tenterfield) by rail to Byron Bay. While individuals and pressure groups debated which areas, villages or towns should be connected, and by which means, and for what purpose; one thing emerged that was as Doyle recommended them during his lifetime. His passion was for the line from Lismore to the Tweed, and he worked tirelessly to have its construction approved by the NSW Parliament. Its passage through the various stages is recorded in his 1890 diary: June 19th: First Section of the North Coast railway passed Parliament without division – “Nowhere to Nowhere” I see. “Again on July 16, the Bill passed the Assembly, and on September 18 there was a “Great Banquet in Lismore over passage of N.C. Railway thro’ Parliament.”

The line “Nowhere to Nowhere” was completed to Murwillumbah in 1894; from Lismore, it was taken to Casino by 1903 and to Grafton, 1905; but not until 1923 was a rail connection established from Sydney to Grafton.

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"Catholic Life" began publication in the month of October 1945.

The first Editor was Father Thomas Mahon of Wardell.
The Co-editor was Very Rev. Dean V. Ryan, D.D. of Lismore.
The paper was due to begin production before the war prior to 1939. The excessive price and lack of newsprint at that time prevented the first production.
The "Catholic Life" office was blessed and opened by the then Coadjutor Bishop Dr. P.J. Farrelly on 15th December 1946.
The first issue of the paper was printed at Westmead in Sydney. In March 1947 this changed to production at Richmond River Express at Casino.

At this time the direction of the paper was given to Father W. Nicol and the first editor Father T. Mahon. And the history of "Catholic Life" continues........
Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne Archdiocese (left) and Bishop Carroll on a visit to Mullumbimby Parish.

Rosary Priest Father Patrick Peyton with Bishop Farrelly. The occasion was the visit of Father Peyton and the Rosary Crusade to the Diocese.

The Consecration of Bishop Patrick Farrelly at St Carthage’s Cathedral on the 31st August 1931. Clergy from left: Father Nicol, Father Hennessy, Bishop Gleeson, Bishop Farrelly, Bishop McGuire.
Bishop Farrelly meets Pope John XXIII on his visit to Rome for the second Vatican Council. Pope John XXIII has recently been beatified and is soon to be canonised a Saint.

The late Bishop Farrelly meets Pope Paul VI on his visit to Australia. Pictured also is Cardinal Gilroy and the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Gino Paro.
Rev. Fr. Daniel McGrath, Diocesan Chaplain to the Legion of Mary together with Legion members in St Carthage’s Cathedral Lismore 1954.

Outside St. Carthage’s Cathedral Lismore at the time of Bishop John Carroll’s Funeral Mass. The year was 1949 and the photo was taken by Darcy McFadden from the bell tower of the Cathedral.
Seated in centre of front row from left; Chaplain Father Claude Bradley, Bishop Patrick Farrelly, and a Priest of the Dominican Order who preached during the Mass.

**St Carthage’s Cathedral Choir - Christmas 1929**

Third Row: J. Connah, J. Navin, Mrs. Phelan, A. Davis, Father McGrath, G. Riley, M. Kelly, M. Stuart, Mrs. Lohan