

June 1, 1960.

THE NEWCASTLE AND MAITLAND CATHOLIC SENTINEL

115

MONTE PIO JUBILEE

This month marks the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of the Monte Pio Orphanage and Girls' Home, Campbell's Hill.

DURING those fifty years of service this Home, under the loving care of the Sisters of Mercy, has afforded protection to many girls deprived of the care and protection of a normal home. From a small cottage it has grown to the massive building as we know it today.

The official title of the present College is "The Bishop Murray Memorial Home for Girls." Mgr. Victor Peters became Administrator of the Cathedral Parish in 1910 and due to his zeal and enthusiasm and with the blessing and support of Bishop Dwyer, the Home was commenced almost immediately.

land on which now stands the Convent, College, Church and of course the presbytery.

A BOYS' COLLEGE

Like so many other Bishops in Australia at that time (and in our time) Bishop Murray realised the great good which would accrue from the establishment of a boys' College to leaven the mass of Australian society with a well-informed and well-educated Catholic laity. With this end in view, Bishop Murray gave over his house for the establishment of the "Sacred Heart College for Boys", Campbell's Hill. The Bishop and his priests took up residence in Charles

dent of the Sacred Heart College Father Dwyer had been in charge of St. John's Primary School from 1882.

When Bishop Dwyer became Co-adjutor Bishop he went to live at St. Joseph's Presbytery, East Maitland, and the Marist Brothers assumed the responsibility for both the Sacred Heart College and St. John's Primary School. The date of the official "take-over" was January 6th 1898. The original college staff comprised Rev. Brother Gonzaga (Director) together with Brothers Eugenie, Bernardine, Finbar and Sylvester, all of whom lived at the College, those teaching at St. John's travelling down each day by buggy. This state of affairs continued until the college closed in December 1904.

MORTGAGE

Although (1909) it was thirty nine years since the original purchase and the College had closed for some five years, the property was in debt and mortgaged for £2000; only after a special appeal for funds had been made in a pastoral letter to the whole diocese by Bishop Dwyer was the mortgage repaid to Cappers.

For a time prior to 1910 the vacant property was let as a residence during the construction of the North Coast railway line.

Thus ended the various temporary institutions on the "Holy Hill". With the coming of the Sisters of Mercy and the "girls", came also permanency; to-day we can look back on fifty glorious years of their self-sacrificing service carried out for "the greater glory of God" and rendered to His homeless "little ones" whatever their creed or background.

Bishop Dwyer loved the very ground of "Monte Pio". He used to tell how, as a boy, he served Mass for Archbishop Polding when, on one of his visits to Maitland, he had said Mass in a little room which later became the pantry, off the Sisters' refectory.

He knew, too, the story—and not many others did—of his namesake Tom Dwyer; Tom Dwyer, who only died about 1940, was known as the "old gardener from the Orphanage". He was known and loved as part and parcel of the place by so many girls who lived at the home; his ready wit and myriad stories endeared him to all. He had been a Patrician Brother teaching at the old Sacred Heart College, but when the Patrician Brothers left in 1888, Tom Dwyer remained behind and lived and died at Monte Pio.

A PRIMARY SCHOOL

Before becoming a "Home" the Sisters of Mercy opened a school at Monte Pio. The Sisters, Mother M. Stanislaus, Sr. M. Mechtild, Sr. M. Evangelist and Sr. M. Borgia—the school staff—lived at the Convent of Mercy, East Maitland, and travelled daily to the "Hill". On the opening day there were the four Sisters, Bishop Dwyer, Father Peters and twenty seven pupils (boys and girls). Bishop Dwyer said the opening prayer in the school that had no desks no blackboard, no equipment—just a bare room—the teachers and the taught—a lot of faith and an energetic parochial Administrator Father V. Peters.

Soon, however, improvements began. A contract for additions and alterations



THE CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART, CAMPBELL'S HILL

EARLY HISTORY

There had already been various Catholic institutions on the "Holy Hill", as it has well been called, before 1910. Bishop Murray had, from the beginning of his pontificate, been especially interested in that particular section of the Cathedral Parish and for this reason Bishop Dwyer chose to make the new home for girls his memorial.

It was in 1870 that Bishop Murray first purchased a small cottage from a certain Mr. Cadell. That cottage occupied the present Convent site. Dr. Murray and several of his priests lived in this cottage. A little later after some lengthy negotiation (and that word can cover a multitude of transactions) a further cottage was purchased from a Mr. Yeoman through the good offices of Thomas Goodier. This cottage No. 2 as we might call it, still stands and has in its old age grown to the dignity of a presbytery. With these cottages was acquired all the

Street, Maitland. That house is now the present Bishop's House.

After alterations, carried out by a certain Mr. Hynes "Builder and Undertaker" of Hunter Street, Maitland, the new College opened on October 3rd 1875 with Rev. Father Mathew as its first President. Father Mathew remained in control from 1875-79 and was followed by Father Thomas English 1880-1881 and Father Darcy 1882-1884. In 1904 the Patrician Brothers, coming from Ireland took over the College and remained until they departed for Armidale in 1888.

PATRICK VINCENT DWYER

It was now (1888) that the Sacred Heart College began its hour of glory, for the man whose name must always be associated with it, Patrick Vincent Dwyer, became its President. He remained in charge of the College for ten years until his appointment as Co-adjutor Bishop of Maitland (cum lre successionis) in 1897. Before becoming pres-

was let to Mr. A. Burg, the bare essentials were procured and nineteen homeless girls arrived from Singleton Convent, the name "Bishop Murray Memorial Home for Girls" was bestowed and Bishop Dwyer blessed and opened it on Trinity Sunday May 23rd 1910. Thus began the holy work; thus began our modern "Monte Pio".

Mother M. Anthony now came in charge and with her Sr. M. Madelein and Sr. M. Monica.

100 GIRLS

Quickly did the venture grow; soon there were one hundred pupils in the school and the one dormitory containing forty beds was too small. With the growth in numbers came the growth in "needs". Often the Sisters knew not where to turn, but God sent His help in the form of the many friends, both catholic and non-catholics, who have always stood behind this noble work. To mention only one couple of the early days (and the later days)—Mr. and Mrs. J. F. O'Brien. They, it was, who paid for the Communion Rail and the carpet of the little chapel; they bought the oil for the Sanctuary Lamp, and in more mundane things, they sent the groceries, and the clothing and the shoes—God makes His own recompenses—Let us not spoil it by our weak words. Other names of the first committee—Mrs. T. Hill, Misses Allsopp and McLeod.

In 1915, a wooden building—dormitory, refectory and pantry (sleeping and eating are important needs)—was erected. Next came the Church, built by Mr. A. Burg and opened by the Apostolic Delegate on August 18th, 1915. This Church was later extended to its present size and has become the last earthly resting place of both Bishop Dwyer and Bishop Gleeson. May they rest in peace.

£100,000

Various further additions came with the years—major renovations again in 1936—but it was with the end of the war that the greatest upheaval took place. Bishop Gleeson, to provide for the war-made orphans, contracted for reconstruction work at the cost of almost £100,000. The result is that to-day we have, in place of so many additions and parts, a massive and modern structure, a magnificently equipped home—a fitting memorial to the great pioneers of the past and a credit and a tribute to the generosity and self-sacrifice of our present generation.

One last word. We have not mentioned many names of the hundreds and hundreds of the benefactors of the Home since its foundation. Public figures, private individuals, priests and nuns, especially nuns, laymen and lay women, Catholic and non-Catholic, known and unknown, all have contributed much to this noble work of God—the care of homeless girls—but one name we will mention, a name that in our day is almost synonymous with Monte Pio—Mr. Peter Zifovich. As president and organiser of the men's Committee he has given yeoman service to this noble cause and we only pray that God will reward him as God knows how.

"The truth must be won, communicated and applied in all the domains of life."

—Pius XI;