

The Parramatta Marist Story

(by BR. RUPERT KELLY, M.A., M.Ed.)

1975 is for us a year to celebrate and remember: the centenary of Parramatta Marist High School. On 14th June, 1875, three Marist Brothers first stood before their classes of 32 primary pupils in the old school in Pennant Street (now Victoria Road). A century later there are now more than a thousand pupils divided into a Junior School for primary classes (Grades 5 and 6) still at the original Victoria Road site, and a Senior School for secondary classes (Forms I to VI) in Old Windsor Road, Westmead, opposite the mammoth hospital, noisy in its birth pangs.

The Marist Brothers who came to Australia were the spiritual sons of a rugged and saintly young French priest, Marcellin Champagnat, now Blessed Marcellin, founder of the Brothers and co-founder of the Marist Fathers. Within a few months of his first appointment, to the hamlet of Lavalla, near Lyons, in 1817, Father Champagnat, appalled at the prevailing religious ignorance and illiteracy — legacies of the French Revolution and its aftermath — founded the Marist Brothers. He attracted semi-literate young peasants from their farms and within an incredibly short time, taught them, trained them, inspired them with confidence in God and his Mother, and sent them out to teach. They succeeded. When Champagnat died in 1840, there were 280 Brothers, teaching 6,000 pupils in 48 schools.

His order spread much more rapidly after his death, and in 1852 was established in Britain. From Britain, 20 years later, his Brothers were to spread to Australia.

For Parramatta Catholics about 1817, the situation, as far as religion and education were concerned, was even more grim than in France. If they were convicts, and most of them were, they were forced to attend Protestant services at the threat of the lash; their children attended the orphan school where they received instruction in the Anglican catechism. The brief ministry of Father O'Flynn made little difference: after some months he was arrested, imprisoned and deported.

The gloom was alleviated by the arrival in 1820 of Father Therry, as the first Cath-

olic chaplain appointed by the Colonial Office. One of his first acts, at the end of 1820 or the beginning of 1821, was to establish a Catholic school in Parramatta. In Hunter Street, Father Therry's teacher, George Morley, taught 31 children. He and his successors received no fixed salary from the Governor but were paid at the rate of so much per pupil, James O'Connor, for example, receiving £40 on that basis in 1828.

In 1826 the Governor dismissed the zealous but peppery Therry from his office as chaplain and appointed Father Power. Mass had been celebrated in Parramatta since 1820 in a loft above Parramatta Gaol, which was situated till the 1830s in the present Prince Alfred Park, then known as Torture Green. Denied further use of the gaol for Mass, the unpopular Power began building a stone church in Pennant Street on the site of the present school, but he did not manage to complete it. Meanwhile the first St. Patrick's Church was quickly built hard by on the corner of Pennant Street and Villiers Street (now Marist Place). When this church was already being used for Mass in 1837, Father Power's incomplete church was finished off and thereafter used as a school till 1918.



The Old School built in 1836. A picture taken before the Brothers came to Parramatta.

It seems probable, therefore, that 1837 was the date of the transfer of Father Therry's Hunter Street school to Pennant Street. It also seems probable that this school, conducted by lay teachers from

George Morley about 1820 to J. B. Doyle in 1875 when the Brothers took over, is the oldest existing school in Australia.

A not so fanciful historical parallel has it that when the Irish in the 5th century called out in distress for Christian teachers, France sent them St. Patrick; when the same cry went up from the Irish in New South Wales in the 19th century, France sent them the Marist Brothers. At all events, when Catholic education in N.S.W. in the 1870s seemed in a hopeless position and Church authorities made anguished appeals for religious orders, it was a group of four young Marist Brothers, sent by their French superiors from Britain, who at length answered the call.

They comprised a Frenchman, Br. Ludovic, at the helm, a Scot, Br. Augustine, and two Irishmen, Br. Jarlath and Br. Peter. Arriving on 26th February, 1872, they set up a school at St. Patrick's, Church Hill. In this congested area of The Rocks, they established in quick time a primary school, a high school (transferred to St. Mary's Cathedral and finally to Darlinghurst), a boarding school (transferred to Hunter's Hill and needing no introduction as St. Joseph's College) and a novitiate (transferred to Hunter's Hill and finally to Mittagong).

Since all the other Marist schools established in this early era: St. Patrick's at Church Hill, the High School at Darlinghurst, St. Francis' in the Haymarket (a victim of the underground railway), and St. Benedict's in Chippendale have since been closed, and two others, Sacred Heart in Darlinghurst and St. Mary's, both taken over by the Christian Brothers, Parramatta survives as the senior Marist school.

When the Marist Brothers arrived in Sydney in 1872 Catholic education was being slowly strangled. State schools had been first established in N.S.W. in 1848. After that, State schools and government-subsidised Church schools existed uneasily together. The State schools found their champion in Henry Parkes. His Public Schools Act of 1866 aimed at much needed educational reform and efficiency: education in this state became centralised under government control exercised through a powerful Council of Education. Another aim of the 1866 Act soon became obvious: the quiet elimination

of Church schools until the Parkesian ideal of having all the children of N.S.W. educated together in a monolithic state system divorced from Church control, was achieved. The sloppily drafted 1866 Act permitted the Council of Education, whose regulations had the force of law, to discriminate against Church schools and to enforce such stringent conditions for the granting of State aid that increasing numbers of Church schools lost their certificate and hence all government assistance.

The 1866 Act provided for general religious education and Bible study (from which Catholics could be exempted) and for frequent visits by Catholic clergy. Unhappily too, there was, from the Catholic point of view, little difference between State and Church schools. Parkes, therefore, found it easy to conduct a clever campaign aiming at persuading Catholic parents that, ecclesiastical fulminations to the contrary notwithstanding, they could in good conscience send their children to State schools. His degree of success can be inferred from the fact that in the 1870s almost 60 per cent of Catholic children in N.S.W. attended State schools.

In the 1870s, moreover, the Catholic Church was becoming increasingly isolated in its stand on education. There was a time when Bishop Broughton could voice Anglican opinion, as he did in 1839 when he said that Anglican schools were to his church as "the artery through which the life blood is conveyed from the heart to the extremities. Sever this and she dies." While the Catholic bishops were still proclaiming this vital link between religion and education, the Anglican laity and most of its clergy were satisfied with the Act of 1866.

A Catholic Association set up by Archbishop Polding in 1867 in order to raise money to pay lay teachers in independent Catholic schools, folded up in utter failure about the time of the Marist Brothers' arrival. Polding's dilemma was this: to set up independent Catholic schools which he could not finance, or to continue to accept State aid under a system he regarded as "abominable". Increasingly senile and deeply despondent, Polding could never have resolved it. He was saved by the appointment in 1873 of the dynamic, young Archbishop Vaughan as his coadjutor.

Vaughan took responsibility for Catholic education, provided rousing leadership and proclaimed the solution of the Catholic education problem, that is, by religious orders independent of State aid and control. Not that this solution was his; as Brother Ronald shows in his monumental study of Catholic education in Australia, the thinking and example were those of other men. Bishop Geoghegan and Sheil in South Australia where Father Julian Tenison Woods and Mother Mary McKillop founded the Sisters of St. Joseph for teaching working-class children. Bishop James Quinn in Brisbane and his brother Matthew in Bathurst, and the bishops of Maitland and Goulburn — these were the pioneers and instigators. Vaughan had a period of doubt and hesitation, and worried about questions of costs and the teaching competence of the Marist Brothers. Once these were dispelled, he became an enthusiastic supporter of the Brothers. As O'Farrell says in "The Catholic Church in Australia", Vaughan's "decision, in 1874, to vigorously encourage the spread of the Marist Brothers, swung Sydney's educational policy into line with that of the other dioceses".

In July 1879 Vaughan and the three other bishops of N.S.W. seized the initiative and quite deliberately brought the education problem to a climax by publishing a Joint Pastoral. The bishops, Vaughan explained, detesting "the old rotten system" operating since 1866, "determined to bring things to a crisis — to cause the Government to do away with their abominable system, though it should be at the expense of our share of State aid." In forthright language the Pastoral stated that, for Catholics, the secular schools stood condemned "first, because they contravene the first principles of the Christian religion, and secondly, because they are seed plots of future immorality, infidelity and lawlessness . . .". Catholic parents were exhorted to send their children to Catholic schools and support them at whatever sacrifice.

The effects of the Pastoral were immediate and dramatic. "Within a week", as O'Farrell notes, "attendance of Catholics at Sydney's State schools had dropped by about 20 per cent". It precipitated the most intensely bitter and widespread sectarian controversy in the history of N.S.W. It

alerted hitherto apathetic Catholics to the vital need of Catholic schools and disposed them to make sacrifices to maintain them. It stung Parkes, his long-term scheme ruined, to retaliate by means of his Public Instruction Act of 1880, which ended State aid to all Church schools. Hence it ruined non-Catholic Church schools, in particular the extensive system established by the Church of England. But it launched a Catholic system of education parallel to but independent of the State system and viable because of the work of religious teaching orders and the generosity of dedicated Catholics.

It was right in the middle of this educational furore, between the Acts of 1866 and 1880, that the Marist Brothers arrived in Sydney. Their immediate success at St. Patrick's may be illustrated by Bishop Quinn who was bent on securing Brothers for Bathurst. Inspecting the school on the day after its opening, he observed that a miracle would be needed to subdue the tough Rocks' youngsters. Visiting the school a few weeks later he exclaimed in admiration that "devils had been transformed into angels, wolves into lambs."

The architect of success was the charming, competent and deeply religious Frenchman, Br. Ludovic. His three confrères, as religious and teachers, left much to be desired: within a short time all three abandoned the institute, though Br. Augustine was to return. What saved the day was that Br. Ludovic, despite the archbishop's initial opposition, established a novitiate three months after opening the school. Young men were not slow to offer themselves as postulants, among the first being Br. Edwin and Br. Stanislaus, both to be members of the pioneer Parramatta staff selected by Br. Ludovic.

The pioneering work of Br. Ludovic has been aptly summed up by Br. Owen who described him as "a fearless leader who conquered exile, the slanders and defection of false brethren, the suspicions and jealousies of churchmen and opposition of all kinds: a Frenchman in an Irish setting, far from advice and guidance, practically alone under pressures that no training could have prepared him to meet, he found the solutions in the proven wisdom of the teachings of our Blessed Founder".

His burden was eased by the arrival of

two stalwart Marists: in 1873 Br. Angel, a Frenchman who never mastered English and who was soon to be first director of the Parramatta school; in 1876 the first Provincial, Br. John, an Irishman. Br. Ludovic admired Br. Angel's sterling qualities, his willingness to do any sort of work, his wise advice and loyal support. As Br. John was later to write, he became Ludovic's "right arm". Br. John took over the reins from Br. Ludovic and energetically promoted the work so well begun. In his first 17 years, 27 new establishments were begun and the number of Brothers increased from 40 to an astonishing 225. Appointed in spite of wretched health, he laboured with outstanding success for the Australian Province, as Provincial and Assistant-General, for nearly 40 years with hardly a day's illness.

The Parramatta to which the Brothers came in 1875 had developed slowly, albeit "The Cradle City of Australia". Governor Phillip had changed its name in 1791 from Rose Hill. By the end of that year, with a population of upwards of 2,000, most of them convicts, it was a more important centre than Sydney, which the locals referred to not a little patronisingly, as "that thriving seaport at the mouth of the Parramatta River". But in 1875 it was still a quiet country centre. For many years it remained the only Sydney school of ours that could be called rural. It was not less esteemed for that reason by the Marist Brothers, who had been founded to teach in rural areas.

There had been some opposition from parishioners to the coming of the Brothers. Their school was a certified Denominational School where teachers' salaries were paid by the Council of Education under the Act of 1866. The proposal to bring in Brothers who were not certified, whose teaching ability, therefore, seemed somewhat suspect and whose salaries would have to be paid by the parish, was such that the opposition had a fair case. Br. Ludovic agreed to allow Brothers to take the Council of Education's exam in order to secure certification. But the Council, in May 1875, rejected their application. The apparent injustice of this decision generated sympathy for the Brothers and won the support of parishioners who had opposed their coming to Parramatta.

In response to a request from the Parish Priest, Archdeacon Rigney, Br. Ludovic sent three Brothers who, on 14th June 1875, took over the school from John B. Doyle, the last of a long line of lay teachers in charge. They were the amiable Frenchman Br. Angel, and two young Australians, Br. Edwin and Br. Stanislaus. Though he migrated from England at eight years of age, Br. Edwin considered himself a true Australian. A fine cricketer and club-mate of Charlie Bannerman and his brother Alex, he was the first to join the order in this country. Later on he did excellent work in New Zealand and became in his mellow years identified with St. Joseph's College, where in the 1890s he launched that college into competitive cricket and rugby football in the teeth of opposition from France.

Br. Stanislaus, an ex-pupil of St. Stanislaus', Bathurst, joined the Brothers in 1873. He was a charming man of rare artistic gifts who, after three fruitful years at Parramatta, became Director of St. Joseph's and other schools, Provincial, and then Master of Novices at the new novitiate at Mittagong.

On opening day the Brothers faced 32 pupils divided into three primary classes in a large, undivided stone building that had been meant for a church, on the site of the present two-storeyed school. There must have been some chaos to cope with on that Monday, for Br. Augustine records in his diary for the 14th June that Br. Ludovic was in Sydney trying to buy furniture for the Parramatta school, "the Council of Education having taken everything away on Saturday last". By the second week the enrolment was 56, by 1876 it was 75 and a year later, 100. Soon after the day school had begun, a night school was opened. The Brothers lived for a few weeks in a rented cottage nearby. When this proved to be too small, they took up residence on "The Farm".

This was a 23 acre property at North Parramatta on the bank of the river opposite the present gaol and psychiatric centre. It was bounded on two sides by what is now Kleins Road and Briens Road, and on the eastern side by the headwaters of the Parramatta River near its junction with Toongabbie Creek. Its fourth or southern side sloped down towards Redbank Road but

ended short of it. About 1½ miles by road from the school, it could be reached by a short-cut through the asylum grounds — a route the Brothers took except in flood time.

Br. Ludovic purchased this property in June 1875 from the Desmond family at a price of £720. He had it in mind as a site for a novitiate and a boarding school. In the event, however, both were to be established not at Parramatta, but at Hunter's Hill, partly because of the proximity of the Marist Fathers at Villa Maria.

The farm comprised a dairy, pigs, poultry, bee hives, and a mixed orchard, most of it some 7 acres of orange trees. It supplied fruit to St. Joseph's College and the local market. Br. Augustine's diary records for 13th August, 1875: "Br. Angel came from Parramatta with a case of oranges"; and for 10th June, 1876: "Sold the oranges at the farm for £30."

Dominating the farm property, which was high enough to overlook the town, was a large, mainly weatherboard cottage, with a verandah round most of it and a central open courtyard. Here the Brothers resided till 1888, soon after which they rented it out till it was sold in 1916. Mrs. F. Kelly, (née Elizabeth Hill), whose husband Frank is an ex-pupil of Great War vintage, and whose son Fr. Michael Kelly, is now studying in Rome, lived in the cottage from 1910 to 1916, her father being the last renter. Her fond memories of the farm have been confirmed by those of Mrs. Kath Kearney, who played there as a girl and whose son Fr. James Kearney was ordained in 1963 and died in 1969.

One result of the change of residence was that the night school had to be abandoned, since six trips a day between farm and school proved too much. After four months Brs. Angel and Edwin were transferred to Sydney to be replaced by Br. Vial as Director, and Br. Canute. When Br. Vial resigned in June 1878, Br. Angel, who had worn himself out teaching a class of 100 of the youngest boys at St. Benedict's, returned as Director and cook at the farm, his motive being to help the young Brothers on the staff who were upset by the abrasive Br. Vial's sudden but short-lived outbursts of temper. Again his stay was a short four months. His health grew worse and he died happily in October that year, the first of

the Marist teachers to die in this country. He had been an admirable religious in every way. Br. Ludovic who knew him best described him as "a man of great piety, thorough devotedness, unfeigned charity and good sense — a real saint on earth". Afterwards he wrote of him "Quel beau model pour nos Frères d'Australie".

In June 1876 came the first of "the examinations and exhibitions of studies", held twice a year in those days. Widely publicised, they were well attended by Church leaders of all denominations. Each class in turn was paraded into the school before an audience of parents and visitors, and examined orally in subjects which included reading, spelling, grammar and parsing, geography, tables, arithmetic, mensuration, and book-keeping. Specimens of pupils' work were exhibited, prizes awarded, and the proceedings enlivened by recitations, plays and singing. A delighted Fr. Rigney expansively observed, according to the Freeman's Journal, that his school had the pick of the Brothers in Sydney.

Br. Vial resumed as Director and continued at Parramatta till July 1879. A strong and able teacher despite occasional bouts of depression, he worked on till his death at Mittagong in 1910. He was a worthy representative of that band of some 30 French Brothers who did yeoman service in this province of the antipodes.



Brother Paul of The Cross and Pupils. (c. 1883)

During the directorship (1882-1887) of Br. Paul of the Cross, a future Provincial, the school produced the first of many religious vocations when John Harroway entered the novitiate to begin a long, zealous and colourful career as Br. Gabriel. Soon afterwards his brothers, Andrew (Br. Andrew Mary) and Hugh (Br. Jerome) followed his

example. Br. Paul, who was born in England, was the first of Br. Ludovic's novices to be appointed Director.

Fr. Rigney built a two-storeyed monastery for the Brothers in Pennant Street on the site of the present primary school building and they occupied it in July 1888. A few Brothers stayed on for a short period at the farm where, since its purchase in 1875, four more acres had been brought under cultivation and 600 more orange trees planted. Fr. Rigney died the following year after a fine record of half a century's priestly work. This Irish priest was a loyal supporter of the Brothers. It was he who in 1886 persuaded the Cardinal not to proceed with a little scheme of his to transfer the Brothers from Parramatta to St. Peter's and replace them by Patrician Brothers, who would establish a novitiate and boarding school on the farm property.

In August 1887 the high school was transferred from St. Patrick's to St. Mary's, and to the latter Br. Paul was appointed, to be replaced as Director of Parramatta by Br. Cyril. When Br. John, after a couple of years, moved him to New Zealand late in 1889, the new parish priest, Mgr. O'Reilly, was incensed at having a Frenchman, Br. Claudius, in charge of his school. He even went to see the Cardinal about it. Fortunately the protest was dismissed. Questioned on the matter, Br. John told the Cardinal that the new man would "put some life into this school which was languishing a little".

This prediction turned out to be something of an under-statement. Under the dynamic and inspiring leadership of Br. Claudius (1889-1898), with the assistance of two outstanding young Brothers in Br. Osmund and Br. Casimir, the school was to enjoy an astonishing renaissance.

On the material side Br. Claudius was not frustrated by the financial exigencies that plagued previous Directors: rent of about £200 a year came in from the farm; and whereas annual school fees B.C. never exceeded £120, in the Claudian decade they averaged well over £300. The school building was partitioned to provide each class with its own room; new toilets and a gymnasium were built, classrooms refloored, windows replaced, and the school yard asphalted and fenced.

On the scholastic side the emphasis was



BROTHER CLAUDIUS — DIRECTOR 1889-1898

on public examinations. Candidates were provided with after-school sessions from 4.30 to 7.30, Saturday afternoon school, and sometimes special students were coached till 10 p.m. A night school for 40 students at a guinea a quarter was established "for the benefit" (to quote the Cumberland Argus of 1890) "of youths engaged at work or in business during the week, but who also desired to compete in the examinations". The school's results in the Senior and Junior exams of Sydney University and in the Cardinal's Examination were the best, after S.J.C., among Catholic schools. In the words of Br. John as early as 1892: "Br. Claudius already has a colossal reputation for success in examinations — pupils came by rail from afar. He has the gift of making them work and inspiring confidence". Nor were the "fine arts" neglected. Parramatta Marist pupils regularly carried off prizes in fine arts at the Hawkesbury, Mudgee and Singleton shows.

A cadet corps and a fife and drum band were also established by Br. Claudius. Drill and gymnastics under the eye of "Professor" Renshaw, and exercises with Indian clubs and dumb bells to musical accompaniment were a feature of the school at this period. Athletic contests and bicycle races were organised at the Parramatta Cricket Ground

(now Cumberland Oval) at which King's, Grammar and schools from near and far entered the invitation events. In addition, a regular inter-school sports competition was conducted in which the King's School became a traditional opponent at cricket and rugby football.

It is not surprising, therefore, that during this decade the enrolment increased from 120 to 250; nor that the Inspector of Schools should write in his report for 1876: "I have to express my surprise that so many boys attend this school. I have been in all the Catholic boys' schools in Sydney and I have not seen a school where there are so many good, intelligent boys. The teaching must account for the large numbers".

Nor it is surprising, perhaps, that Br. Claudius had his critics. There were complaints that prayers and the catechism were neglected for profane studies. And there were allegations (probably true) that regulations had been broken by keeping pupils back late at night and during exams, and by sometimes permitting them to sleep in the monastery. But there must have been a healthy religious atmosphere in the school at this time to produce such religious vocations as those of Fr. C. Jerger and Fr. J. Kelly and Brothers Joachim, Camillus and Ireneus, and Br. Andrew Wall, the first Australian De La Salle Brother.

After these ten strenuous years, this last of the school's French Directors was sent to open a missionary venture near Suva. Here Br. Claudius' work among the Fijians and especially the Indians was as brilliantly successful as it was at Parramatta. He died in Fiji in 1931.



Brother Claudius and Senior Pupils.

After this remarkable tour de force there was a natural decline. But it was the economic depression of the end of the century that made conditions difficult in the monastery and in the school for the subsequent Directors: Br. Adrian (1899-1903) and Br. Thomas (1903-1906). Mr. Kevin Wade writing of the early 1900s comments that about that time "Brigid and Martin Hayden had the Woolpack Hotel and every day they sent a hot dinner to the school for the Brothers". Only four classes (grades 2 to 5) remained and the enrolment declined from 250 till it was down to 110 in 1903-4. Yet the standard had not slipped. The report of the Inspector of Schools for 1905 contained this eulogy: "The School is well organised and the discipline is faultless. This is the best equipped boys' school in the archdiocese."

Br. Casimir (Director 1906-1910) maintained this standard. The religious vocations of this era included, in 1909, Gerald Bartlett, who became Mgr. Bartlett, Parish Priest of Rozelle and Forest Lodge till his death in 1952; and John Sullivan who, as Br. Arcadius, became Vice-Principal of the Marist Brothers for 10 years and then Provincial from 1941 to 1945; he died in 1964. They were soon followed by their brothers: Geoffrey Bartlett became Br. Maurus, Director of Hamilton, Broken Hill, Glenelg and Kogarah, and is now archivist at St. Joseph's College after 60 arduous and fruitful years in the schools; and Patrick Sullivan who, as Br. Celestine, taught in Australia and South Africa, where he died in 1967.

His three years at Marist Brothers' Parramatta, are still vivid in Br. Maurus' memory. Nearly 12 years old, he arrived in 1907 from St. John's, Auburn, to be enrolled in 5th class. "Welcomed by Br. Casimir, I was put in the 'top room' where I soon became acquainted with Perce and 'Ockey' Wall, 'Phitta' Clarke, Stephen Grugeon, Bert and Clem Read, Jack Weeks, Vince and Leo Kiely (these 5 also from Auburn), Sylvie and Mick Mahon, 'Splinter' Watters, Charlie Leabeater, Andy Maher, Jack Dorahy, 'Bull' Groves, Joe Clinton, Charlie Wheeler, Bert Bruchhauser, Bill Blake, Roy (Ongie) Ardill, Jack, Pat and Bill Sullivan, 'Sappy' Mason, 'Witty' Wilson, Ossie Stenmark, Jim Ferris, Tibby McCarron, Bill O'Grady, Jack

Clancy, (later Sir John, Chancellor of University of N.S.W.), Bill O'Brien, 'Spag' Nolan, Bill Schweikert, Jim and Ray Ruhan, the Gypie boy, Perce Hurley, and many others now forgotten."

He then details the subjects taught, which included Latin, French, Chip-carving and Macrame work, and above all Penmanship, for which "there was remarkable keenness and enthusiasm in developing a copper-plate hand that was but little inferior to the 'headlines'. The Angus and Robertson's Annual Handwriting Competitions were a feature of School activity. Book prizes were awarded in the various age grades, with a Gold Medal for the pupil-teacher section. Charts on classroom walls illustrated the exact position of thumb and all fingers in relation to the pen. Great were the rejoicings the day it was announced that Mick McMahon had won this Gold Medal. His writing was perfect. Prize winners for handwriting were heroes. There were monthly tests for Marist Brothers' Schools, controlled by a Committee of Brothers through 5th and 6th classes, till about 1912-13, when syllabi were overhauled and the Bursary Endowment Board came into being with its Qualifying Certificate and later, the Primary Final Exam.

We, of those far off days, 1907 onwards, could still hear echoes of the Boer War; we heard about the invention of the 'Flying Machine', while Balloonist Captain Penfold used to thrill the citizenry with his ascents from Ashfield Park; the visit of the American Fleet in 1908 is now a piece of history; The doughty deeds of Joe Darling and Victor Trumper, of Clem Hill and M. A. Noble on the Cricket Arena and the freakish performances of Dally Messenger in the newly-established Sydney winter pastime, Rugby League, and the World Heavyweight Boxing Championship, Tommy Burns vs. Jack Johnson at the Sydney Stadium — all these were on the lips of every Sydney schoolboy. Yet to come were electric light in streets and homes. Motor Cars! Oh yes. Occasionally a 'Horseless Carriage' would be an object of amazement chugging along Church Street. Radio was not yet dreamed of. There was no spot on the School Programme for weekly organised sport. At mid-day recess, marbles, tops, 'cock-a-lorum', 'egg-in-the-hat', 'prisoner's base', 'set-to-work-tailors',

'darkie-moonlight-walk' provided the means of letting off steam. Sometimes a boy would bring a football with him to school (and wasn't he popular!) and we would enjoy ourselves at dinner hour in the Park at the end of Pennant Street."

During the Directorship of Br. Hugh (1910-1915) came the first World War. In the 1950 Jubilee Magazine, Br. Elgar has this to say about Br. Hugh: "A strong disciplinarian and capable coach, he taught Parramatta youngsters, in his own phrase, to 'hit 'em hard and keep 'em low', to show sportsmanship and manliness in the game of cricket as in the game of life. The manhood of many of his boys and hundreds of old boys of the school was soon to be put to a terrible test in the first World War."

The Brothers sold their farm property at Redbank during the brief directorship of Br. Louis (1916). A few memories of a pupil of this period some sixty years ago, are those of Bernard Weir. Bernie recalls his enrolment in the lowest class about the beginning of the Great War, "Br. Hugh happily reigning". He adds: "For several winters we studied at desks in the open under the oak trees in front of the old monastery. When we felt too cold Br. Ernest would send us for a run around the old tin fence and Cumberland Oval. Them were the days!"



The Old School in 1918. Demolition had commenced.

Mgr. O'Reilly decided to demolish the original stone school, by now in a ruinous state, and replace it with a larger, two-storey, brick structure at a cost of £4,500. It is still standing. The lower floor was to serve as the parish hall and the upper floor as a school of five classrooms. Archbishop Kelly blessed the foundation stone on 11th

August, 1918. Taking over the new school, Br. Ernest (Director 1917-1922) boosted the enrolment above the 200 mark.

School attendance exceeded 300 when Br. De Sales was Director (1923-1928). He had the school raised to the Intermediate standard. In 1925, to honour the school's golden jubilee, the Old Boys' Union was inaugurated, with Mr. A. Creagh as President and Mr. O. Wall as Secretary. In the same year because the inside stairway leading to the classes above was narrow and dangerous, an imposing double flight of steps was erected in front of the school, which had the added advantage of buttressing the building.

A . M . D . C



THIS STONE WAS SOLEMNLY BLESSED & LAID

BY

✠ MICHAEL

ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY

AUG 11th 1918

J. W. HILL
ARCHITECT

G. PINFOLD
CONTRACTOR

Ted McCaffrey's memories of his school days (1917-1924) include both the old and new schools. He recalls the efforts of Br. Ernest to win State Bursaries and of Br. De Sales to achieve Intermediate status. At this period there was compulsory night-school three times a week and sometimes week-end school as well. The first successful Bursary candidates he names as Jack Simmons, Jack Connare and Noel Craddock. He was himself a member of the second Intermediate class along with Dan Mahoney (later Mayor of Parramatta and now a veteran M.L.A.). He recalls with pleasure the introduction of the school crest, hat band and badge by Br. De Sales, who thought any further move towards a school uniform would be too expensive for the parents. Ted's grandson, Trevor, is now in 5th grade at Parramatta.

While Br. Cyprian was Director (1929-1934), numbers increased to 370. This necessitated the use of the parish hall for classrooms. Intermediate passes grew in number and quality and were matched by excellence in the field of sport. In the Provincial's report after his annual inspection

we read that "the results of Athletics and Football competitions surpass those of all the metropolitan schools for 1934".

These were the years of the Great Depression. Br. Claude recalls that when, as a raw and innocent novice, he was first appointed to Parramatta, he had never heard of Parramatta or the depression. "I remember well my first lesson", he writes, "84 boys in 4th and 5th grades combined. Some were sitting on wooden boxes as there were not enough desks. My second lesson was to Intermediate lads of 16 or 17, most of them bigger than I: Christie, Allsopp, Mockler — other names elude me for the moment, but they were wonderful chaps . . . There was a lad named Keegan who played in my 6st. 7lbs. team. He raced away on the wing for a certain try. Then he fainted with nobody in sight. I said 'What's wrong, Andy?' He said 'I've had no breakfast or dinner yet, Brother.'" He also remembers his special interest in the work of Jack Radford who began his long career of teaching elocution and drama in Parramatta in 1928. From him, no doubt Br. Claude learnt some of the skills which enabled him, on his second appointment to the school in the early



FIRST L.C., 1938

Left to Right: William Byrne, Barry Carmen, Edward Shepherd.

1960s, to stage such splendid productions as "Oliver" and the passion play, "Calvary".

Further development came in time of Br. Claver (1935-1940). With the help of the Old Boys' Union, he partitioned the hall to provide four more classrooms. About this time Br. Venantius was a pupil of the primary school, as Eric Coughlin. He points out that the Brothers had recently begun missionary work in the Solomon Islands, and acknowledges that it was Br. Jude's talks on the Solomon missions which finally induced him to become a Brother.

In those perilous days when a Japanese invasion seemed imminent, almost 400 ex-students enlisted in the fighting forces and more than 30 made the supreme sacrifice. One of these was Ray Allsopp who, after a very brilliant medical course at Sydney University, and a brief practice at Wollongong, joined the army and was killed in an Australian action against the Japanese near Balikpapan in Borneo. The official report states: "Capt. Allsopp was tending the wounded in the open for an hour under incessant enemy machine-gun and rifle fire . . . He had refused to return to safety . . . His action undoubtedly saved the lives of at least three badly wounded men at the cost of his own for which he showed not the slightest consideration". His O.C. wrote: "I have never known a unit medical officer to equal him, nor have I known a braver man". To keep alive for future generations of students the memory of such a man and others like him in the ranks of the ex-students of this school, a beautiful, life-size statue of Our Lady was set up in front of the school in 1950. Erected by the Old Boys' Union, it commemorated the old boys of the school who gave their lives in the two world wars.

In 1941 a cadet unit was established. It has remained an integral and invaluable asset of the school ever since. Among a distinguished line O.C.s from Lieut. Daly (Br. Geoffrey) in 1941 to Major Glass (Br. Salvius) in 1975, perhaps the best known and loved and most colourful officer was Capt. Mathieson (the late Br. Norbert). A noteworthy feature of this cadet unit over the years has been the extraordinary number from its ranks who proceeded to graduate at the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

When Br. Geoffrey was appointed Direc-

tor in 1942 he enlisted the aid of the Old Boys in constructing and equipping two science laboratories, thus satisfying requirements for full registration under the Bursary Endowment Act. This enabled Br. Eugenius (Director 1944) to retain at Parramatta students who had won scholarships.

The increased enrolment in the later 1940s when Br. Anselm (1945-1950) directed the school with masterly enthusiasm, taxed even his ingenuity and dynamism. He



BLESSED MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT
Founder of the Marist Brothers.

contrived to cope with the influx by enclosing the school verandah and subdividing rooms in the hall, thus setting up five additional classrooms. The whole interior of the school was repainted and new equipment installed in laboratories and tuckshop. Br. De Sales' tentative moves towards a school uniform were completed when the full uniform was made obligatory, thus giving a fillip to school pride and spirit.

Examination results were excellent: the numbers of State Bursaries gained in 1947 and Intermediate Bursaries in 1948 were the best in the State. In 1948 the school's first exhibition was awarded. In 1949, 4 exhibitions were won when 22 passed the Leaving Certificate, 20 of them matriculating.

In the newly formed Associated Catholic Colleges' competitions, the school's performances at this time were outstanding. In 1950, for example, Parramatta won the Juvenile, Senior and Aggregate in swimming, and in athletics the school carried off the aggregate for the fourth year in succession.

The 75th anniversary of the foundation of the school was celebrated with thanksgiving and fitting éclat. There was the blessing of two fine, life-size statues, one of Our Lady and the other of the Blessed Founder; a solemn Requiem Mass for all old boys deceased and a solemn High Mass for the students; an anniversary dinner and a jubilee ball. All this was climaxed by a general Communion of more than 600 old boys, followed by a march through Parramatta to the Rivoli Hall, where His Eminence, Cardinal Gilroy, presided at a Communion breakfast.

Towards the end of Br. Anselm's ebullient regime, when the staff had increased to 13, the need for a new monastery for the Brothers became imperative. Even as far back as 1920, when the Provincial's report described the house as being "in a very bad state", this was regarded as something of an understatement. Now in 1950, there was only one toilet and one shower (fortunately in different rooms), and the Director slept in a recess about the size of a cupboard. In one room there were four beds, so that when it rained umbrellas had to be used, since restricted space discouraged evasive action. Paradoxically perhaps (modern affluence may discern a lesson here or merely a tri-

bute to Br. Anselm's bonhomie) those communities who survived in the old house are reported to have been unusually happy men.

At all events, after the Provincial, Br. Andrew, put his foot and leg through the floor boards, preparations for a new monastery at length got under way in 1950. Mgr. O'Donnell had Mr. C. Glancy as architect and Mr. J. H. Taylor as builder, and work began in Villiers Street on the site of the parish tennis courts, hard by the King's School chapel.



THIS STATUE WAS UNVEILED
ON 8.2.1950
BY REV. FR. MGR. O'DONNELL, PONT.
IN MEMORY OF
OLD BOYS OF THE SCHOOL
WHOSE NAMES ARE IN THE MARGINS
P. 4. 1914. 1930-1945.
UNVEILED BY THE OLD BOYS' UNION.

During the next period (1951-1952) when some of the charm and erudition of the Director, Br. Ethelred, must have rubbed off on his students, the secondary enrolment for the first time exceeded that of the primary. The first day of the May holidays 1951 was saddened by the death of two 4th grade pupils, John Kearney and John Whiteoak, drowned while presumably tadpolling in the river. After holding the fort at Parramatta, Br. Ethelred became Master of Novices, first at Mittagong, and then at the Second Novitiate in Fribourg, Switzerland. He is at present attached to the Mother House in Rome.

Br. Hilary was destined to have a brief directorship at Parramatta during part of 1953. This year the new monastery, long delayed by post-war restrictions, became a magnificent reality. It was officially opened in September by Cardinal Gilroy a few months after the Brothers had taken up residence. The Cardinal congratulated the Old Boys' Union for their generosity in helping to furnish the new Monastery, and stressed the need for a new school to cope with the vast population increase in the district.

Two other achievements of 1953 should be noted. The school's cadet unit won the trophy in the Anzac Day Band Contest, awarded to the best youth band in the March. Performances in representative sport were outstanding: in the A.C.C. competitions Parramatta was the most successful school in cricket, athletics and swimming. In August Mgr. O'Donnell was transferred to Drummoyne and Mgr. McGovern was appointed parish priest. In October Br. Hilary became Provincial and in 1958 Assistant-General.

The current Assistant-General, Br. Justinian, inspected Parramatta in 1953 and wrote in his report: "The school is shockingly overcrowded. Seven hundred children have been crushed into accommodation originally provided for three hundred pupils". Mgr. McGovern took up the challenge of building a new school during the directorship of Br. Laurence (1954-1956). In February 1955 the old monastery was demolished, and on 16th June 1956 the jubilant teachers and pupils of grades 4, 5 and 6 (360 of them) occupied the new school. A fine, two-storeyed, brick structure, built at a cost of £30,000, it was blessed by

Cardinal Gilroy on 15th July under the name of Dixon House. Justifying the name at the ceremony, Mgr. McGovern repeated what he had said at the opening of the monastery, namely that the convict priest, Fr. James Dixon, had established a Catholic school at Parramatta as early as 1802. Despite lack of evidence, the claim must be taken seriously since Mgr. McGovern was Diocesan Archivist, a first-rate historian and an expert on Australian Church History.

Dixon House relieved the extreme congestion in the old school, where large classes had been taught in makeshift verandah classrooms. Now the upstairs verandah was cleared to admit light and air. At the end of 1956 Br. Laurence handed over an efficient, well disciplined school to Br. Quentin.

Like Br. Hilary's, the regime of Br. Quentin (1957) was of short duration. When the Marist Brothers' Scholasticate (Teachers' Training College) was opened at Dundas, Parramatta became its Demonstration School. Br. Quentin replaced Br. Hilary as Provincial in 1958 and in 1967 he was elected Vicar-General of the world-wide institute.

Br. Claudius (1958-1960) was a carefree primary teacher in Dixon House when the responsibilities of Director were thrust upon him. The enrolment by now exceeded 800, but the new Director managed to solve his problems with an efficiency which his quiet and unassuming manner tended to conceal. Not without reluctance Mgr. McGovern decided to demolish the complex of old stables and other venerable and grotesque relics of the colonial days and erect in their place, in 1959, a new parish hall. This became a useful adjunct to the school for examinations, concerts, dances, films; and later on it housed three classrooms.

1959 brought Parramatta victory in the senior athletics of the A.C.C. after a six years' drought. That year, too, when a swimming pool complex was built within a stone's throw of the school, the local analyst dared to write that now "we should regain supremacy in the A.C.C. swimming". Sure enough, Parramatta did just that in 1960, winning all three divisions and, of course, the aggregate.

The directorship of Br. Alman (1961-1965) was a period of rapid growth and courageous initiatives reminiscent of the eras



The School built in 1918.
Now the Junior School.

of Br. Claudius in the 1890s and of Br. Anselm in the 1940s. On the material side, obstructing camphor-laurel trees between school and presbytery were removed. The whole playground was terraced, sealed with bitumen and provided with rugged railings and steps. The old school was painted inside and out, mainly by the Men's Auxiliary and parents at week-ends, and electric wiring renewed throughout. The decrepit, brick front fence facing Victoria Road was renewed, cement rendered and surmounted by double pipe railings — and all so handsomely that even the one-eyed League fans bent on Cumberland Oval, paused to admire it. The reports of visiting Provincials had dismissed the old building with such epithets as “depressing”, “drab”, and “little can be done with it”, but now it had never looked better since 1918.

There were flourishing sodalities in the school such as those of St. Vincent de Paul, the Blue Army, the Guild of St. Joseph, Legion of Mary, Crusaders and the Apostleship of Prayer; and totals soared in the annual collections for the missions, made as a Lenten exercise.

The absence of space for a library was overcome by the purchase of some 5,000 books so that each class had its own small library.

Cramped conditions and lack of amenities seemed to act as spurs to remarkable achievement. The Cadet Band had already won the Anzac Day March competition in 1953 and the Annual Camp competition at Singleton in 1960. Under Capt. Walsh (Br. Julius) it reached its apogee by winning the

band contest in the Waratah Spring Festivals of 1961 and 1962, and the Annual Camp competition of 1962. On the occasion of the 1961 victory, Michael Kelly, son of a well known old boy, was awarded the prize for “the best dressed cadet the judge had ever seen”.

The examination results of this period were brilliant in view of the adverse conditions. There were, for example, 105 who passed the Leaving Certificate of 1963 — the first time a Marist day school had topped the century. But perhaps the most successful year was 1964 when 118 of 124 candidates passed the Leaving, winning 30 Commonwealth Scholarships, 62 Teachers' College Scholarships, and 3 University Bursaries; and the Intermediate candidates of that year won 15 Secondary Scholarships.

These scholastic achievements were matched by those in sport. Parramatta had dominated the A.C.C. Swimming Carnivals from the late 1940s to the mid 1950s, winning the Aggregate 7 years in succession in the days of John Devitt. After a lean period, they scooped the pool in 1960 as recorded above, and then continued to carry off the Aggregate Cup for a further 7 years without loss. In athletics, the school won the A.C.C. Senior, Junior and Aggregate Cups in 1961. Parramatta was particularly strong in football at this time, but the years 1961 and 1964 were probably the best. In the Parramatta District R.F.L. Knock-out Carnival in which 112 schools participated, this school won 6 of the 13 divisions in 1961 and 5 in 1964. In the A.C.C. football competition Parramatta won the A grade, B grade, the Under 14s and the Aggregate in 1961, and all divisions in 1964.

A holiday house for the Brothers at Pearl Beach was purchased in 1962 at a cost of £5,900. The Parents and Friends and the Province jointly provided the money. A fibro and brick cottage right on the beach, it looks out to sea, past Lion Island, between the heads of Broken Bay. In 1963 the open ground-floor was built in to provide a garage, three more bedrooms and a shower-room; and in 1969 the shower-room and toilets were tiled free of charge by a master of his craft, Mr. Doug Fry, father of Br. Leo.

Another Alman initiative was the establishment of the Lavalla Bowling Club at

Baulkham Hills. Associated with Brother in this enterprise was a group of old boys and fathers: Keith Bramble, Joe Keegan, Dr. George Malouf, Bernie Mullane, Jack Boyle, Jim Clough, Ron Massey-Reed, Ned Barnes and Noel Pettiford. They envisaged a place where old boys and parents and friends could get together in a club, which would also provide amenities for the school. The first games on the new green were played in January, 1967, and on 17th Sept. of that year the Club was officially opened by its President, Dr. N. George Malouf.

Two links with the past were broken in 1962. Jim Cawood, a loyal ex-student and a member of the school's first Senior Class under Br. Claudius in the 1890s, died in June. And in July, William Edmund Reilly, till then the oldest living ex-student, died in Parramatta, aged 98 years. He was the fourth boy enrolled on the opening day in 1875.

Another link with the past was severed — it would be truer to say a thousand links — with the death of Mgr. J. J. McGovern on 4th July 1964, after 42 years of priesthood. Not an academic, he treasured his immense store of history in his mind and heart; but the inspiration and guidance he gave to research students were immeasurable. The school and the Brothers lost a staunch friend and supporter. The Cardinal, three other Bishops and about 350 of the clergy, a huge throng of mourners and boys from this school and girls from those of the Sisters of Mercy, who lined the whole route from St. Patrick's to the cemetery, gave the Mons. a fitting and impressive farewell. His place as parish priest of Parramatta was taken by Mgr. F. Kerr.

The annual report had described the school in 1953 as "shockingly overcrowded". Despite the erection of the new primary school in 1956, the rapid development and population increase in these parts of the western suburbs were such that accommodation in the 1960s was much more severely taxed. The enrolment, which was 815 in 1960, had topped the 1,000 in 1963 and was to reach 1,344 in 1968, making this the largest Marist school in Australia. There were valiant attempts to contain the accommodation crisis. Two and later three classes were lodged in the parish hall, with movable partitions between them. The phy-

sics laboratory was dismantled, renovated and turned into a fine classroom. Three classes, managed by Br. Cletus, were accommodated at St. Vincent's Boys' Home.

But these were expedients, desperately contrived to contain the problem, not solve it. Meanwhile the problem became exacerbated by the implementing of the Wyndham scheme, which revolutionised secondary schooling by demanding more comprehensive courses and extending it to a sixth form.

The school and church authorities hesitated for a couple of years about acquiring the adjacent King's school property, King's having recently moved to North Parramatta. For reasons which seemed valid then (though some parishioners and Mgr. McGovern favoured the King's site) and seem more valid now, they at length decided to act on a counter proposal, namely to build twin boys' and girls' regional schools at Westmead. Br. Alman and the Sisters of Mercy helped plan the new schools in consultation with the architects, Hirst and Kennedy. The builder was A. V. Jennings, and preliminary diggings began in October, 1965.

Br. Demetrius guided the destinies of the school in 1966 and 1967, and among other things, organised the transfer of the high school to Westmead and made plans for a new monastery nearby. In November 1966 the Parramatta Council, persuaded by Br. Gervase (Vincent) and in recognition of the Brothers' 90 years' work for education, renamed the street skirting the Church and monastery, Marist Place. Precisely, it was that part of Villiers Street between Victoria Road and Market Street, facing Prince Alfred Park.

During the last year at Victoria Road the school distinguished itself by winning three divisions (including the open) in the Parramatta District R.F.L. Knock-out. In swimming Parramatta carried off the Senior (despite Michael Wenden), the Juvenile and Aggregate Trophies. The 4th Form pupils that year won 16 Commonwealth Scholarships and 20 State Bursaries.

As the new schools approached completion, working bees of hundreds of fathers, mothers and children of both schools, organised by Reg Bartley and John Rheinberger, under the general guidance of Br. Demetrius and Sr. Eugene, set to work. On two week-

ends in October they cleared up the surroundings, mowed 15 acres of grass, planted lawns and 200 shrubs, and waxed and polished 35,000 square feet of floors.



Section of the High School built in 1967.

On 6th November Archbishop Carroll opened and blessed the twin high schools: the 6th Form boys' school named Parramatta Marist High, and the 4th Form girls' school named Catherine McAuley High. This, said His Grace, was the Church's response to the rapid population increase and development in the Parramatta district, and the changes made necessary by the Wyndham Scheme.

The boys' school consisted of 16 classrooms, 3 science laboratories (one of them to be used temporarily as a library) and appropriate facilities. The girls' school contained 12 classrooms, 2 science laboratories, a library, administration offices and other facilities. A number of temporary classrooms were erected. But even so the boys' First Form could not be accommodated at the new school and had to remain at Victoria Road for some years. The St. Vincent de Paul Society made a gift of the property to the archdiocese, an extremely generous one of 20 acres. The building cost of the two schools was \$458,000, the bulk of which came from the Catholic Building and Finance Commission and the remainder from the Commonwealth Government, which stood the cost of the laboratories.

The opening ceremony was smoothly organised by Reg Bartley. There was seating for some 3,000 people; about as many more were standing. The Ladies' Committee, led by their president, Mrs. Ferndale, did a tremendous job in serving refreshments to this multitude.

The new schools were economy, not to say austerity, buildings, since the heavily committed diocesan authorities were never far from the end of their financial tether; but they were handsome and robust.

Lessons began in the new school for Forms II to V on Tuesday, 8th November. The teachers, even more than the boys, were delighted with the semi-rural setting, free from the maddening racket of the modern juggernauts in Victoria Road.

In a great variety of ways facilities, amenities and necessities for the new school have been provided, extended or improved. Of this, the olympic swimming pool is a striking example. Brothers Leo, Sergius, Alman, Laetus, Valentine (Matthew) and Jerome all played their part in realising it. Working bees organised by St. Vincent's, and the Parents and Friends led by Reg Bartley, helped to plant grass round the pool. Surrounded by a spacious sward of lush kikuyu, it was first used by the boys in April 1967. On 15th October it was officially opened by the Mayor of Parramatta, Ald. Barry Wilde, an old boy of the Brothers. It cost about \$88,000, half of which was met by St. Vincent's Boys' Home, for whose lads it was an even greater boon than for the boys of the school. The Parents and Friends gradually paid off the remaining \$44,000.

In 1967 Brothers Salvius, Gabriel and Hugh together with a few parents, built in the western grounds of the school a neat, brick mini-range for the use of the Cadets. A series of successful walkathons, called Parramiles, masterminded by Brothers Timothy and Salvius, provided the wherewithal for many improvements. The entire school, for instance, was equipped with adequate lighting; and on an extensive bitumened area, ten cricket wickets were enclosed with stout wire netting. This is why, maybe, the school won four of the subsequent five A grade cricket competitions.

Further parts of the school property were filled, levelled and grassed, so that five playing fields are now available and several more are in the offing.

1967 was the first year of the Higher School Certificate examination, which replaced the Leaving Certificate. 77 Parramatta candidates gained 25 Commonwealth Scholarships, 7 Advanced Education Scholarships and 47 Teacher Training Scholar-

ships. There were 114 who secured their School Certificate and won 21 Commonwealth Scholarships and 17 Senior Secondary Bursaries.

1967 was also the first year of the recently re-constituted Metropolitan Catholic Schools sports competition, which replaced the A.C.C. Parramatta's Under 15 footballers won their division of the M.C.S. and of the Junior League Competition. At the M.C.S. Swimming Carnival this school carried off the Senior and Junior trophies.

Having established the high school in its new setting and planned the new monastery, Br. Demetrius was called to step into the breach at Randwick. The reins of office were gathered into the capable hands of Br. Cyrus (1968-1970), who had already been teaching four years on the Parramatta staff.

Before school began for 1968 the Brothers had moved into their new monastery in order to allow the priests to occupy their Marist Place residence. A fine, off-white brick, two-storey structure about 80 feet from the eastern end of the school, it was designed by Bill O'Donnell of K. J. Curtin's and built by W. McNamara. The building cost of \$185,000 was met by the Catholic Building and Finance Commission. It provided accommodation for 30 Brothers with all the conveniences of a modern monastery, including central heating. The chapel seating was a gift of the Lavalla Bowling Club, and other embellishments, such as the exquisite sand-etched windows, came from the Br. Regis bequest. On 10th March 1968 the Lavalla monastery was blessed and opened by Cardinal Gilroy, an old boy of the Brothers' schools of St. Benedict's and Kogarah. His Eminence paid a special tribute to the work of Br. Alman and Br. Demetrius towards this, the fifth residence of the Brothers since their arrival in the district in 1875.

Successes in public examinations were a feature of this period. The school's performance in the exams of 1968 was very good, that of 1969, excellent. Of the 117 candidates who secured their High School Certificates, 95 matriculated. They won an impressive 34 Commonwealth Scholarships, 137 passed their School Certificate, winning 14 Commonwealth Scholarships and 17 Secondary Bursaries. Br. Hilary's report de-

scribed these 1969 results as "the best in the history of the school."

At the M.C.S. Swimming Carnival for 1968, a new system of pennants for each age group together with Junior and Juvenile Cups was introduced, and the aggregate trophy was abolished. Parramatta won the Under 11, 14 and 17 pennants. In M.C.S. football our only premiership was the 4th Form Open, but the school was victorious in 3 divisions of the Parramatta District R.F.L. Knock-out. In M.C.S. football for 1969, Parramatta were premiers in 1st grade and 2nd grade, the 1st graders being undefeated. In swimming we won the Under 14, 15 and 16 pennants and the Junior Cup.

1970 was a good year for the school in M.C.S. sport. Parramatta were undefeated premiers in A grade cricket, won the Juvenile athletics, the 1st grade and 4th Form Open football, and in swimming we won the pennants for the Under 10, 12, 13, 15 and 17, together with the Junior and Juvenile Cups, breaking 9 M.C.S. records in the process.

Parramatta has been an active member of the Catholic Schools' Debating Association, which since 1963, has been capably organised by Mr. W. Shiel. About 30 and at times 40 schools have been involved in this invaluable exercise in public speaking. Parramatta Marist won the Junior trophy in 1962 and 1973, the Senior in 1969 and 1972, and the Sub-senior in 1975.

Br. Cyrus was the last of the Directors who were at the same time headmasters of the school. Humanity and efficiency seemed to demand, after 1970, that the heavy burden should be shared by dual control.



The Brothers' Monastery,
Built in 1968.

though ironically, the school had its maximum enrolment of 1,344 (the largest of Australian Marist schools) in 1968, after which there was a levelling out to a more manageable thousand plus.

The 1970s witnessed changes of leadership at Parramatta somewhat reminiscent of the 1950s. There were no fewer than five Directors during the years 1970 to 1974. Br. Charles (Elias) was appointed Director in 1971, and Br. Cyrus, Principal. Br. Charles was then made Director of Formation at Wahroonga at the end of the year, and in the following August, Provincial. Br. Vales was Director in 1972 (when the school enjoyed a glorious renaissance in singing) with Br. Cyrus as Principal till June, when he proceeded to Fribourg for his Second Novitiate; he was replaced by Br. Salvius till the end of the year. Br. Vales then became Director of the Novitiate and also of the Marist Retreat Centre, both at Mittagong. In 1973 Br. Coman was appointed Director and Br. Laurence, Principal; but at the end of the year Parramatta again lost its Director, whose talents were needed for the urgent demands of recruiting. Over the last two years normality appears to have returned with Br. Demetrius (back from Randwick) as Director and Br. Laurence as Principal.

Meanwhile the problem of completing the school and its facilities was vigorously pursued and overcome. The library project, promoted by Br. Cyrus, came to fruition on 10th October 1971, when the magnificent Brother Ludovic Centenary Library was blessed by the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Gino Paro and opened by Senator J. L. Carrick.

The cost of the building and most of its contents, \$92,000, was met by the Commonwealth Government. The audio-visual equipment was financed by another walkathon, and the beautiful feature-wall was donated by the Lavalla Bowling Club. The Parents and Friends raised more than \$20,000 for further necessary additions. David Williams of Hirst & Kennedy was the architect and the builders, R. J. Green & Lloyd. The total cost of the library was thus well over \$100,000, but its value to the school was and is inestimable.

The next initiative was the building of a double block of eight classrooms for 5th and 6th Forms, together with a large, senior staff-room and other facilities. When the senior students occupied their new rooms, 1st Form, which for six years had been left behind at Victoria Road, was transferred on 26th March 1973 to Westmead, and so the high school was complete. The Catholic Building and Finance Commission paid for the new buildings which, minus furniture, cost \$95,000. The architect was David Williams and the builder, G. E. Hurst. The contribution of the Parents and Friends was \$12,000, mainly for the staff-room.

At the same time, the original tuck-shop having proved inadequate, a new tuck-shop, at once attractive and functional, was constructed on the southern side of the school. Its builder was Bert Thomas, who also drew up the plans. The cost, \$16,500, was borne by the indefatigable Parents and Friends.

Both these buildings, classrooms and tuck-shop, were blessed and officially opened by Cardinal Freeman on 12th June 1973.

Finally a much needed, two-storey building was constructed at the western end of the school, linking the two wings of the 5th and 6th Form classrooms and lending some symmetry and finish to the whole complex. On the upper floor were two science laboratories, while the ground floor was entirely taken up by a spacious auditorium. The architect once again was David Williams of Hirst & Kennedy, and the builders, R. J. Green & Lloyd. The total cost was \$118,000 of which \$58,000 was contributed by the Commonwealth Government for the laboratories, \$40,000 by the Parents and Friends for the hall, and \$20,000 by the Catholic Building and Finance Commission. As a centenary gift to the school, the Old Boys' Union financed the parquet and venetian blinds for the hall. On 17th April 1974 Bishop Clancy, an old boy of the school, blessed and opened the building.

The story of the Marist Brothers at Parramatta, as outlined here, may well seem to be dominated by an exaggerated emphasis on Directors, competitive sport, public examinations and on buildings and material achievements. This is in some degree inevitable, because the school records are rich in

These eye-catching areas, while the humble, humdrum achievement of rank and file teachers and students, however worthy, tend to go unrecorded.

If the story seems to read like a litany of Directors, that may be due to the simple chronological method of its telling, to the self-effacement of the other Brothers, to the ignorance of the writer or to the limitations of space. The records available are, in any case, uneven: a very few sin by excess, but most sin by defect — they are either meagre or missing altogether.

This latter point is illustrated by the Provincial, Br. Felix's note in the Parramatta report book for 1895: "The old book of annals containing the Br. Provincial's remarks, etc. has been unwisely destroyed by the Brother Director". Br. Alban comments in his "Story of the Marist Brothers in Australia" that "Parramatta seemed to be omitted regularly from the detailed reports kept".

As for the records' sinning by defect: when Archbishop Vaughan opened the new novitiate at Hunter's Hill in May 1878, the analyst merely noted: "The Parramatta Brothers arrived by cart, but Br. Vial came on Archdeacon Rigney's horse. Having been thrown on the way, he was rescued by the local parson". One may regard that as a gem of compression, but another view is that posterity has been deprived of a good story by the damnable reticence of a laconic scribe.

As for the emphasis on competitive, inter-school sport, it should be said that this school has come a long way since the days when all pupils were compelled to participate in rugby league and cricket, with occasional bouts of athletics and swimming. The individual preferences of the pupils are now catered for by a bewildering variety of sports such as rugby league, cricket, swimming, athletics, soccer, tennis, golf, squash, basketball, softball, volley-ball, canoeing, orienteering, abseiling, wrestling and weight lifting.

No apology is offered for the emphasis on examination results recorded here. Not that anyone ever really regarded them as the sole criterion of the quality of education imparted in the school, but they were regarded

as a useful stimulus to solid study and a gateway to tertiary institutions and to various trades and professions. Moreover, they were regarded as important because Catholic schools needed to re-assure themselves and the people who supported them that, judged by the only readily measurable means of comparison, they were equal to, or rather better than, State schools.

It should be added, perhaps, that this school now includes "activities" in its curriculum, which gives even 6th Formers the opportunity to indulge their special interests in anything from cooking and farming to electronics and aeronautics.

The vitally important aspects of the school, its cultural, spiritual and religious values, its school spirit and morale — these are the things which receive short shrift in the school's story because they are by nature intangible, imponderable. The same is true of the school's alumni. To say that a school stands or falls by the quality of its ex-students is a truism, but nothing definitive or even useful on this point can be presented here. However, as a matter of interest as well as of pride, there is included elsewhere in this publication a list of the religious and priestly vocations produced by the school, as well as a brief list of old boys of some distinction in the community.

A word of thanks is due to the numerous members of the clergy who from time to time visited the classes or provided Confession and Mass for the students. Our gratitude is expressed to the Marist Fathers from Toongabbie, who in 1956 and for more than a decade thereafter, provided Confession and Benediction for the Brothers every Sunday afternoon. After the transfer of the monastery to Westmead, Fr. O. Shelley, S.V.D., became resident chaplain for 1968. During the early part of 1969 we had as chaplain Fr. A. Murphy, who was later joined by Fr. Coolen. When these two White Fathers took over the parish of Erskineville in June, the spiritual needs of the Brothers and the school were met first by Divine Word Fathers such as Fr. Romanus, and then by the Capuchin Fathers from Plump-ton, especially by Fr. Roland. Since the beginning of 1972, Fr. De Theye, S.M., has been our resident chaplain.



The Heart of the School. Chapel built for use of Brothers and Students.

Naming names is an invidious task, but a few must be mentioned at the risk of blatant omission. Incidental reference has been made to Frank Kelly. It should be added that in the generation after the war, Frank was a tireless and highly successful fundraiser for his old school. The work of Reg Bartley and others has been indicated in the course of the narrative. We remember with gratitude the long and faithful service of Mrs. Audrey Meehan in promoting the Golden Holdens, the chief source of revenue for the Parents and Friends over recent years. Our thanks are offered to the Malouf brothers, Doctors George, Phil and Joe, who for many years have devoted cheerful and gratuitous care to Brothers in medical need. We are also grateful to Tom Walden, an old boy of 1933-1938 vintage, who travelled regularly over a long period from Leichhardt to give the Brothers the free benefit of his tonsorial skill.

All those Brothers and lay-teachers of the rank and file, clergy, parents and friends, old boys, coaches and team managers, those called on in emergencies, and others who made their valuable contributions so unobtrusively as to be anonymous in this chronicle — to all these unsung benefactors of the school we offer our sincere thanks. And our gratitude goes out to all those willingly and generously involved in the Men's Auxiliary, the Ladies' Auxiliary, the Parents and Friends, the Tuck Shop and the Old Boys' Union, in fetes and raffles innumerable, in Golden Holdens, bottle drives and car drives, gymkhanas and walkathons. May all these

good people enjoy the satisfaction that comes from help given unselfishly, and the approval that Champagnat extended to those who remain "hidden and unknown" in their good work, not to mention the blessing of one greater than Champagnat.

Lay teachers, who were the backbone of Catholic education in this country during much of the 19th century, have now come back into their own. Of the teachers at Marist Brothers' School Parramatta over these hundred years, the two who gave longest service have both been lay teachers. Noel Pettiford, who was engaged by Br. Anselm in 1950 and died only last year, gave a quarter of a century of his life to the school. Bill Shiel has laboured for 19 years in the same cause. To say nothing of the subtle, day-to-day influence for good of these men, many old boys will remember Noel for his science lessons, his versatile expertise in sport and his annual Snowy excursions; and Bill for his religion lessons, his devotion to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and his promotion of debating and economics in the school.

To be realistic about the future of the school as it faces another century, one must recognise the need not only of more zealous sons of Champagnat but also of more equally zealous lay teachers, co-operating with the Brothers and the Brothers with them, in the great work of Christian education.

