

GOOMERI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OPENED FREE OF DEBT

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The opening and blessing of the Roman Catholic Church in Goomeri, by his grace Archbishop Duhig, took place on Sunday last under the happiest of circumstances. The day was beautifully fine and clear, the attendance was very large, and so generous were the donations that the whole of the expenditure has been met.

A special train ran from Nanango, carrying 650 passengers 218 of whom were from Nanango. The earnings of the train were £126 and the church people will get a return of about £25 from the Railway Department.

The Archbishop, in full pontifical robes, assisted by Fathers Masterson and Murphy, solemnly blessed and formally declared the building open. Mass was celebrated by Father Murphy. The church was crowded, many being unable to gain admission. A combined choir from the district churches sang the Mass, which was *Battman in F* and the offertory was *Veni Jesu*. Mr F Wallace Landy acted as conductor, and Miss Healy presided at the organ.

Rev. Father Masterson said that the people of the district had been working for the church for six years, and had undertaken an expenditure of £1020. Of that amount £205 was expended on the site and the balance was made up of payments to the contractor for the removal of the church from Nanango and its re-erection, the ornaments, furnishings, etc. He was glad to pay a tribute to their non Catholic neighbours, who had subscribed a lot of money, and he was most grateful for their display of Christian charity. The committee had money in hand and other assets to a total of £529, leaving a debt of £480, which he trusted would be liquidated that day.

In his address from the altar, the Archbishop took as his text "I rejoice in the things that were said unto me. We shall go into the House of the Lord." He said that the people that day were rewarded for their six years of working and waiting, by the completion of a beautiful and a substantial Church, at what he would call a low figure. The people of Nanango had been very good to them in allowing them to have the church at such a low figure and they had shown their further practical interest by coming to the opening in hundreds. They were members of the Great Catholic Church, and they were able to accomplish great things because of their unanimity of faith. It certainly showed that the Church was not declining. His Grace said that when he came into the district for the first time some years ago, there was only one church between Kilkivin and Nanango, and since then he had the pleasure of opening new ones at Murgon, Wondai, Wooroolin, Kumbia, Nanango and Blackbutt, as well as a Convent in Nanango. The parish was out of debt, and there was a large sum of money available for a school at Nanango. The driving power behind the people who had accomplished those things was faith. In worldly matters, they differed in all kinds of things, but as Catholics there was no difference of opinion amongst them. Father Masterson had chosen an excellent site, and had given them a good building. He had always acted wisely and prudently and had been cautious in everything that he did. As this would be Father Masterson's last public function in the parish, he trusted that there would be a generous response to the appeal to wipe off the debt. They had hitherto been

housed in a public hall and they would be cold hearted people who would be content to continue to worship under those conditions.

His Grace then made an appeal for funds, and it was subsequently stated that a sum of £428 had been obtained.

Included, were the following amounts:

Father Masterson	£50
Mr JD Cronin	£10/10/-
Mr E Jones	£10
Mr M McGrath	£10
J.P. O'Keefe	£10

The Luncheon

Several hundred persons sat down to an excellent luncheon, provided by the ladies of the district in Boonara Hall, Father Masterson presided and proposed the toast of the Pope and the King.

Rev. Father Murphy proposed the health of the Archbishop, extending to that gentleman a cordial welcome to the Parish of Nanango. That was the eighth occasion that his Grace had visited the parish to bless and open churches and that spoke well for the Catholic faith. He paid a tribute to the great work and zeal that that gentleman had displayed in the whole of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. His public utterances showed a desire for the uplifting and improvement of society, not only for the spiritual life, but also in the material life. The toast was drunk with enthusiasm.

Archbishop Duhig, in reply, said that he most sincerely congratulated Fathers Masterson and Murphy on having opened the church free of debt, and except at Nanango he had never seen such a large congregation of people. He thanked Father Murphy for so eloquently proposing the toast and the large gathering for the way that they had received it.

Mr Landy stated that as Father Masterson was about to leave the parish, it had been decided to make him a presentation.

Tributes of praise were offered by Messrs. M.J. Collins (Nanango) Lyons (Kingaory) McSweeney (Wondai) Oberlie (Kumbia) and others.

The Archbishop, in handing a wallet containing £153/4/6d to Father Masterson, said that the gentleman no doubt valued the prayers and good wishes more than the contents of the wallet. With pleasure he handed the gift over and thanked Father Masterson for all the good work that he had done in the Nanango parish. (Applause)

Father Masterson, in the course of his reply, said that he was glad of the opportunity of saying goodbye to all the good people that he had so long been associated with, after the successful function that had taken place that day. He was leaving the parish to allow the work to be better done, as he felt that his work was too heavy for him. He would be false to himself, if he remained and did the work no better than it had been done during the past few months. The job was too big for him and his Grace was kind enough to relieve him and hand the work over to younger men. Six years ago he had come amongst a most devoted people, and he gave his life whole heartedly to the work, and he was delighted with the results. He has been amongst true friends, and he bade them goodbye as their

priest, and he was very much afraid that he would not be able to return as their priest. He had received the greatest assistance from his own people, and they had been backed up by people of other faiths. He thanked God, there was no sectarianism in this district, and the only thing that separated the people was the places they worshipped in. There was a lot of work to be done in the parish, and he had pleasure in handing the wallet to the Sisters of Mercy in Nanango, who had been for years teaching 120 children gratuitously and who required a new school.

In conclusion, he thanked Father Murphy, who had been to him more than a brother, in the work of the parish. He felt that the work of the district was going into very capable hands and he was sure that the loyalty of the people will be extended to him. He bade them goodbye and every blessing from Almighty God.

The Archbishop proposed Prosperity to the Goomeri District, paying a tribute to the quality of the land and to the people.

Other toasts were honoured, and the return journey was completed at 7.30pm.

(This document was typed from a photocopy of the original newspaper article and given to Fr Dan Redhead of St Joseph's Murgon)