

Wondai R.C. Church Opened by Archbishop Duhig

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About 500 persons were present at the opening of the new Roman Catholic Church at Wondai by his Grace Archbishop Duhig on Sunday last; the largest proportion being from Nanango, from which town 143 travelled. The Building Committee had guaranteed a special train from Nanango on the one side and Murgon on the other, and it is pleasing to state that not only was the guaranteed amount fully secured, but the Committee should also get a substantial cheque from the profits. The sale of tickets at Nanango alone amounted to £30 19s 2d, and the total amount received from all stations along the line was £51 18s 1d. Roman Catholic people are to be congratulated on the success of their efforts, as with an expenditure of about £700, after Sunday's collection they have a debt of only £130. The collection on Sunday yielded £163 1s 11d, included in which were £5 from Archbishop Duhig, £10 from Rev. Father Bergin, £10 10s from Mr. W. O'Keefe, £10 from E.F. McSweeney, and £10 from Mr P.J. Burns

Blessing the Church

The Archbishop in full pontificals, assisted by Rev. Father Bergin, and preceded by the choir boys carrying the Cross and attended by many members of the H.A.C.B. Society, made a full circuit outside and inside the building, blessing it and sprinkling the walls with holy water.

The First Mass

After the solemn ceremony was concluded, Mass was celebrated for the first time, the music (Bordese's No.1) being supplied by the combined choirs from Nanango, Kingaroy and Wondai. Mrs. Brady presided at the organ, while Miss A. O'Brien took the offertory solo "Alma Mater." "O Salutarus" was sung by Mrs. Brady, while Mrs. Myers, and Mr. Bennett also rendered great service with the singing.

The Sermon

Subsequently his Grace delivered an impressive sermon, taking for his text, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." He said he could not have found words more suitable to the occasion than those which he had chosen for his text. The people of Wondai felt that it was good because it marked the realisation of their hopes and aspirations for a suitable building in which to worship God, as for sometime they had hoped that the church would be ... (rest of this line is missing from the photocopy)

The visitors and members of other faiths rejoiced to be there to reciprocate the generosity and kindness that they had received at like functions in the district. The priest felt that it was good to be there, because the glorious work of building a church in that rising centre had been accomplished. And he (his Grace) felt it was good for him to be there. He would willingly have travelled ten times the distance to see what his eyes, that day beheld – a beautiful church thronged with a good congregation. It was gratifying to know that although complaints were made in some quarters about empty churches, The Roman Catholic churches were too few and the buildings too small to hold the congregations who wished to attend, and the same could be said of their schools. It was indeed a good thing

that the people were not forgetful of their duties, and he trusted that they would always praise and glorify God's holy name. They had raised a monument of their faith, piety and generosity in that beautiful church, which was beautiful in its design, in its proportions, and it stood on a site that they might be proud of. He hoped as the years advanced there would cluster round the present building other Catholic buildings as further monuments of their faith and generosity. A church in any community had a wonderful educational value, and no matter how rude and rugged a man may be outside, when he entered a church he was subdued. They had peace, contentment, and happiness in their Father's house – the home of faith, hope and charity. His Grace concluded by exhorting the people to attend regularly at the Masses and the Sacraments.

Rev. Father Bergin on behalf of the Church Building Committee, thanked the Archbishop for coming to Wondai to bless the building, his presence being largely responsible for the success of the day's proceedings.

A collection was then taken up.

The Luncheon

Luncheon was partaken of at the Hotel Cecil, those present, in addition to Rev. Father Bergin (who presided) and the Archbishop, being Messrs. P.J. Byrnes, E.E. McSweeney, W. Wall, Chas. Kelly, J.P. McKeone, M.J. Collins, J. Jarrett, J.J. Quinlan, J.A. Slater, R.P. Cowan. J. Reilly, J.F. Alexander, W O'Keefe, Myers, W.E. Bennett, P. Gallagher, B. Robinson, W. Collins, A. Purcell, J. McMahon, H. McKenna. H. Collins, McCoy, J.F. Reid, J. Benson, sen., Duffy, L O'Brien and the members of the choir as follows – Mesdames, Ryan, Howard, Myers, Brady, Misses M. McKeone, A. O'Brien, F. Smith, G. Betts, W Cross, O'Rourke, Reidy and M. and G. Duffy.

After the usual loyal toast on the... (The rest of this paragraph is missing from the photocopy)

Archbishop Duhig, in the course of a patriotic speech said, there was no part of the world where he would care to spend and end his days better than in Queensland. They should advance Queensland and honour Queensland's name. He was always happy to be with the people, and the friendships which he had formed, he hoped would last forever. (Applause)

Rev. Father Bergin, proposed the toast of the Church Committee and the Contractor, paying a very great tribute to the Wondai Building Committee.

Mr. Burns (chairman of the Church Committee) and Mr Robinson (contractor), replied.

Archbishop Duhig, proposed the toast, of the Town and District of Wondai, saying that he remembered that he was struck with the richness of the soil and the spirit of the people when he first visited the district four years ago. Wondai was only nine years old, and it was really wonderful the progress that had been made. He rejoiced in its prosperity and he trusted that still further progress would be made in the future. He commended the institutions of the town, and said they should keep the district and its resources before the people of the State. (Applause.)

Mr. Slater (President of the Wondai A.P.&I. Society) and Mr. Gowan (President Wondai Chamber of Commerce) replied, the former being the first resident of Wondai giving a brief history of the progress of the town.

Mr. Quinlan proposed the toast of the Visitors and the Choir, paying a tribute to the singing during the solemn ceremony in the church.

Mr. M.J. Collins replied on behalf of the visitors, saying that he hoped to see a Catholic school and a Convent in Wondai before many years.

Mr. Bennett replied on behalf of the combined choirs of Nanango, Kingaroy and Wondai.

Rev. Father Bergin proposed the Press, to which the representatives of the "Nanango News", "Wondai Times" and "Daily Standard" (Brisbane) responded.

Mr. Burns proposed the toast of the Chairman.

Rev. Father Bergin responded, and the proceedings terminated.

(This document was typed from a photocopy of the original newspaper article supplied by Catholic Archives, Brisbane)