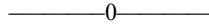


## Archbishop Duhig at Wondai

### Opening the New Church

#### AN IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY



Sunday week marked a notable event in the history of Wondai, the new Catholic Church being opened by His Grace Archbishop Duhig.

Perhaps a general description of the building would not be amiss, for it is ideally situated on the rise at the back of this promising township, and is certainly a most creditable monument to the energy and zeal of the Church Building Committee, Messrs. P.J. Burns, J. Benson, McCoy, D. McGuinness, W O'Keefe, J.F. Alexander, H. McKenna, J.J. Quinlan, J Reilly, E.F. McSweeney (treasurer), W. Wall (secretary), and J. MacMahon (assistant secretary), who were ably assisted in their work by the Rev. Father Bergin. The dimensions of the main building are 50ft. by 25ft. with a sacristy at the back measuring 10ft by 10ft. The walls are 11ft in height, and the roof has a rise of 12ft., making the height of the building 23ft. The main entrance to the building has a porch 6ft. by 4ft., of beautiful design, with steps down both sides and the main entrance doors are Gothic design, having the most up-to-date fastening for securing same. There are two side porches and the Gothic windows are painted white, having hardwood, rebated stops on the inside, and colored cathedral glass fixed in the windows, giving a great relief to the eyes. The whole of the outside of the building is sheeted with oiled weather boards, giving the building a very handsome appearance. The inside is lined vertically, and has a cove ceiling giving a height of 17ft. from the floor to the ceiling, and provision on the most approved plans has been made for excellent ventilation. The seats provided are the very acme of comfort, and on looking into the church from the entrance one is struck with the beautiful blending of the colors. The altar is painted white, picked out with gold, the background being double Gothic windows glazed with four colored cathedral glass. The communion rails are of a Gothic design, the carpet leading to the altar is of a green color with a dark green border and the altar steps are stained, lending to the whole a most handsome appearance. Mr. B. Robinson was the successful contractor, and the joinery and glazing was done by Mr. F.H. Jones, of the Machine Joinery Works, Wondai. The plumbing was carried out by the premier plumbers, Messrs. Milliner and Lawson. After the constant rain of the previous week the weather cleared off beautifully for Sunday, giving ideal weather conditions for the opening celebrations. Excursion trains from Nanango on the one side and Murgon on the other brought no less than 284 visitors, the attendance at the church being between 500 and 600.

#### **The Opening Ceremony.**

His Grace Archbishop Duhig, dressed in pontifical robes, performed the ceremony of consecration and dedication, and the first mass was celebrated by the Rev. Father Bergin, the choirs of Nanango and Kingaroy and the members of the Nanango branch of the H.A.C.B.S. assisting in the service. His Grace with his innate courtesy, was most considerate in seeing to the comfort of the ladies within the crowded church, and after mass gave a

most impressive address. He said it was good for them to be there that day, because it marked the realisation of their hopes. For some time they had hoped that a church would be built in Wondai, and that day saw the realisation of those hopes in a very fine church indeed. He felt that it was good to be amongst them that day, and he would willingly and happily have travelled ten times the distance to be present, (some words denoted by ... are missing in the next few lines) had found a real church thronged ... devout congregation. They had to ... that their churches were too few ... accommodation inadequate, and ... said of their churches could also ... of their schools. Their faith was as ... today as in the days of the persecution of their forefathers. This country was marvellously endowed by Almighty God, and it was a good thing to rejoice over that in their material prosperity they had not forgotten God. They had raised a monument to faith, piety, and generosity. The Catholics of Wondai had given expression of their faith and a more beautiful and more effective expression of faith could not be given. It was beautiful in design, beautiful in proportions, and stood upon a site that they might well be proud of, and he hoped that as the years advanced around the church would cluster other Catholic buildings that would be monuments of faith and piety. The church was a sanctuary of art, and never forgets what was due to man's mind and education, and was always working for education and the uplifting of the masses. Here in the church they had a beautiful example of Gothic architecture, and later on there would be room for paintings and decorations. They could not have a better educative factor than a church which was a house of refinement, peace, contentment, and happiness. He did not think many towns in Queensland of the infancy of Wondai had such a beautiful church, and this was due in a great measure to their good priest. He expressed thanks and felt grateful for the kindness and generosity of the visitors, and for the generosity of the fellow townspeople of Wondai who did not worship at the same altar, and their handsome contributions to the building fund were warmly appreciated and surely was an indication of the happy state of affairs which existed in their town.

The Rev. Father Bergin, before reading the statement of accounts on behalf of the committee, expressed to His Grace his gratitude for his coming to dedicate their church. He also extended their most grateful thanks for donations, and to the visitors whose names figured so prominently on the subscription list, as well as to the gentleman who had so kindly placed the use of his organ at their disposal. The first man to choose the splendid site on which the church stood was Mr. Quinlan, and they were grateful to the Lands Department for being able to secure the two acres of land. The committee were thankful that they were able to get the services of Mr. B. Robinson to build the church, and he thanked Mr. McGuinness for a confessional box and press, the Sisters of Mercy, Nanango, for a set of altar cloths, and to the ladies who had contributed. The balance showed a total cost of the church to be about £700, and £163/6/11 was collected that day, which left a debit balance of about £120.

An apology was received from Mr. R.S. Hodge, M.L.A., for his unavoidable absence, and enclosing a donation.

### **The Luncheon**

An adjournment was made to the Hotel Cecil, where luncheon was partaken of. The Rev. Father Bergin presided over the meeting, and His Grace, the Archbishop was the guest of honour. There were also present Messrs. E.F. McSweeney, J.P. McKeone, J.J. Quinlan, J.A.

Slater (President of the Wondai A.P. ad I. Society and Shire Councillor), R.P. Cowen (President of the Wondai Chamber of Commerce), J. Reilly, P.J. Burns, J.F. Alexander, W. O'Keefe, Myers, W.E. Bennett, P. Gallagher, B. Robinson, W. and H. Collins, J. McKenna, McCoy, A. Parcell, Wm. Hall, J.F. Reid, J. Benson, C. Kelly, J. Jerrett, L. O'Brien, M.J. Collins, Duffy, Wm. Horsfall, H.E. Wede, Mesdames Ryan, Howard, Myers, Brady and Misses McKeone, O'Brien, F. Smith, G. Betts, W. Cross, A. and M. Crimean, M. Muhling, A. Murray, O'Rourke, and M. and G. Reidy. The toasts of the Pope and the King were proposed by His Grace and duly honoured. Mr McSweeney then proposed the health of the Archbishop and expressed his pleasure upon being called to do so. All knew the good the Archbishop was doing in Queensland and good always followed him in his travels. The district was a very large one, but the Catholic population was not very large, still with the assistance of Kingaroy, Nanango, Murgon, and Wooroolin they had done excellently that day.

On rising His Grace was greeted with applause and thanked Mr. McSweeney for the kind manner in which he had proposed the toast. He knew it was well in the hands of Mr. McSweeney, because he would keep strictly within the bounds of the law. He reciprocated very heartily all the good wishes that had been expressed that day. This was his first visit to Wondai and he was very pleased they had got a fine day for the opening, and they had a great deal to be thankful for. The sum of £163 collected was very creditable indeed, and he was pleased to see people from all parts showing a good spirit of charity and goodwill, which he was very pleased to see, was so much in evidence in Wondai. There was no part of the world he could wish to spend the rest of his days more than in Queensland, and they all felt, although they were in different spheres of life and had different avocations, that they had their object of honouring their country's name. He was always happy to be with people and glad to know them. That day he had forged a new link in the chain of friendship on meeting the Wondai people and he hoped that it would be a golden one. (Applause.)

Father Bergin proposed the toast of the Building Committee and the contractor, Mr. B. Robinson. He said it was the energetic and good work, and it would be very difficult to pay due tribute to their earnest work. It was two years ago when Mr. Quinlan had picked out the site, and a committee was got together and a start made. The committee had so much confidence in the contractor, Mr Robinson, that they had handed over the building to him without competition. When he saw the building that day he could well understand the reason, for Mr. Robinson had achieved a success.

Mr. P.J. Burns, in responding on behalf of the Building Committee, said he must say from the very first they had taken the matter earnestly in hand, and with the assistance of Father Bergin they had got a building on the ground. About four years ago Father Bergin had urged upon them to have a place of worship; they had formerly used the School and then the School of Arts. They settled down to procure land for building a church when possible and secured two acres for £145. When they had the land they waited patiently, and he felt proud to say that had accomplished more than they had anticipated. After very mature consideration it was thought that they oughtn't to build a small building but one that would do justice to Wondai in 10 or 20 years. They had sold an acre of land at a very good figure, and that had given them a good start. They hadn't troubled the contractor much, and they saw they had got a good building, which was done to their entire satisfaction and was a credit to the contractor Mr. Robinson also briefly responded.

His Grace the Archbishop proposed "The Toast of Wondai," saying that it was four years since he first went to Kingaroy and then to Nanango, and he was struck with the richness of the soil and also with the spirit of the people whom he met on that occasion. Coming back last year he found in a very short period of great change for the better, and with the glorious season they were experiencing there was a promise of further advancement. He understood that this town had only celebrated its ninth birthday. The building they were assembled in (the Hotel Cecil) would do credit to a town ten times its years. The building from its appearance showed the confidence of the people, and he shared their hopes. The richness of a country was in the land, and those who tilled the soil were at the fount of the wealth of a country. It was land that was at the back of all the forward movements in Australia to-day. This country would always be rich as long as they got rain. He was pleased there was a Chamber of Commerce and progressive members of the Shire Council. There was nothing like friendly rivalry, and it was well to keep before the public men the name and resources of the district. There were certain men in Brisbane (and well educated men, too) who had no idea of the wealth of this district. It was the duty of all Queensland citizens to know the country and know its wealth, and he hoped the prominent men here would keep their district to the front. "Get it talked about," said His Grace, "and when visitors come here they will not find it exaggerated. I will talk about it and the fine people of Wondai."

Mr. A.J. Slater expressed his pleasure at being present at the function, and paid a tribute to the work done by the committee who, he said, were as good as could be found in Queensland, and were a great credit to the district.

Mr. R.P. Cowen endorsed the previous speaker's remarks, and extended congratulations to the Catholic citizens of the town. The church was a credit to the district, and the district would prove itself a credit to the church. The district spoke for itself, and the buildings in the town clearly showed the wealth of the district.

Mr. J.J. Quinlan proposed the toast of "The Visitors and the Choir," and said the singing of the choir was excellent, and the solo parts splendid, reflecting credit on the conductor. He thanked them heartily, and also the visitors for the way they assisted the opening of the church, and for helping them by putting their hands into their pockets and adding to the collection.

Messrs. M.J. Collins (Nanango), and W.E. Bennett (Kingaroy) duly responded.

Father Bergin proposed the toast of "The Press," which was responded to by Messrs. Wedde ("Wondai Times"), Horsfall, and Reid.

Mr. P.J. Burns proposed the toast of "The Chairman," who, when responding, expressed his appreciation of the work of Messrs. Wall and MacMahon, and proposed the health of "The Host, Mr. D.H. McGuinness."

On Mr. McGuinness responding, the function was brought to a conclusion.

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