

LED BY THE SPIRIT



A MIGRANT PRIEST TELLS HIS STORY

John Luemmen and Brigida Nailon

Led by the Spirit

Autobiography of Father John Luebben sac

John Luebben and Brigida Nailon

Dedication

I Dedicate this book to the memory of
Edith Little and ex Students of the
Pallottine Centre Rossmoyne

Imprimi Potest
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Provincial of the Pallottines in Australia

Pilpel Print

Cover design by Jillian Porter



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¹Societas Apsotolorum Catholici means Society of the Catholic Apsotolate, a religious Community of Priests and Brothers called Pallottines.

Introduction ***In the Fullness of Time***
by Brigida Nailon csb

It has been said that Pope John Paul's 'theology of time', involves an event happening because 'the fullness of time had arrived' (Gal 4:4).

This autobiography is being written in 1999, as it were on the eve of the Jubilee Year 2000. 1950 the year of ordination for Father John Luemmen and his confreres was the last Jubilee Year. They hope to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of this event in the new millennium. Jubilee years are more than sentimental recollections of the past. They are woven into the texture of salvation history.¹

The arrival in 1951 on the overcrowded Greek migrant ship 'Cyrenia' brought something special to Australia. This was recognised 19 September 1979, when His Excellency The Governor of Western Australia, Air Chief Marshall Sir Wallace Kyle, conferred on him the Queen's Award, the British Empire Medal, in Government House, Perth, because of his work with Aborigines and migrants

In 1993 - the International Year of the World's Indigenous People - faith group leaders initiated a national week of prayer for reconciliation. It embraced the significant dates of 27 May - the anniversary of the 1967 referendum (which gave the Commonwealth the power to legislate for Aboriginal people and allowed for Aboriginal people to be counted in the census), and 3 June - the anniversary of the High Court's Mabo judgement.

Prior to these dates 'the fullness of time' for Father John had already come at a much earlier date. Almost 50 years ago, he was working towards reconciliation in the best way he knew in

¹ Avery Dulles, Catholic Update, St Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, December 1998, p.4.

Tardun and Rossmoyne. He was convinced that a way to empower Aborigines was through education.

With his Pallottine confreres, in spite of limitations as a new migrant with little knowledge of Australian history or language, he struggled against the odds, to assist students to achieve adequate standards of education in mainstream schools in Perth, in order that they would be able to get employment, own their own homes, and hold their heads high in the community. The majority of students to whom he provided educational opportunity achieved this. Students came to the Pallottine Centre in Rossmoyne from all over the State. At the same time, migrants appreciated his encouragement as they made their way in their adopted country.

Chapter 1

The Early Days 1919-1939

It is not unusual when people hear me preaching to ask me where I come from. "You guess" is my answer. One person guessed Ireland, probably because many elderly Catholic clergy in Australia come from there. Some ask, "From Holland?" "Almost right!" I was born in Germany near the Dutch border where the River Rhein flows into Holland, in Appeldorn, Germany, but not the Apeldoorn which is in Holland. My lower Rhein dialect language is similar to the official languages in Holland.

11 December 1919 was the date of my birth, as the second of three children having a brother, and a sister of middle class parents. My mother was a simple country woman from the same village as my father, a qualified gardener. He had inherited house and property from his parents, but I never had the pleasure of knowing any of my grandparents. Like many similar families we looked after our small property with two cows, pigs and poultry, and a garden which produced bread, eggs, milk, fruit and



Me and my sister Elisabeth in Primary School, Appeldorn.

vegetables sufficient to support the family. We children looked forward to special feasts when white bread and beef was bought in the shops. My father was employed by farmers whose garden and lawns had to be kept in order, as did the graves of their deceased in the village cemetery. Heinrich, my father married Elisabeth Peters before the First World War. He was conscripted for army service and served during wartime. My brother Josef was born before the war. I came along four

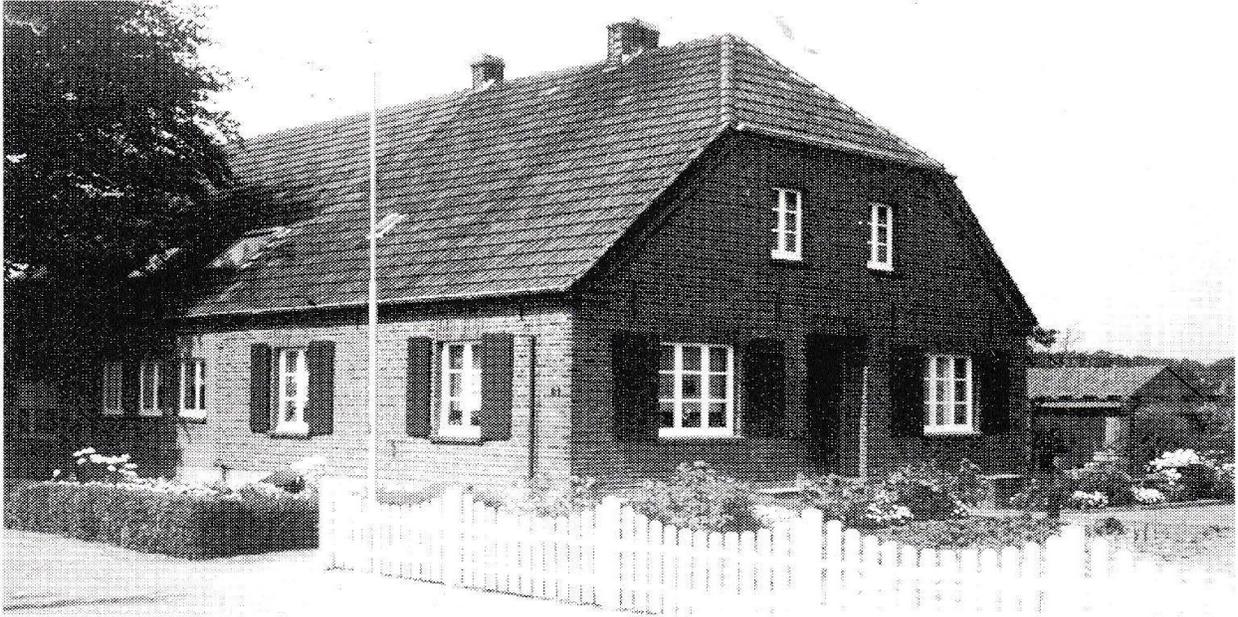
years later in 1919 and my earliest memory was the birth of my sister Elizabeth, born 1922. One evening there was a commotion in the house. Instead of mother getting the meal for us, father had served us. This time she was in her bedroom, people went in and out and there was a woman whom I later knew was the midwife of the village. Mothers had their babies at home unless they



Student Secondary School, Vallendar 1934.

feared of a difficult birth. My mother told me that she had a miscarriage later and could have no more children.

Josef was always ‘mother’s boy’ and myself ‘father’s boy’. My mother being a simple country woman without any interest in politics, sensed that as soon as her Josef was conscripted into National Service there would be war. Sure enough, he was in Hitler’s army which invaded Austria and soon after was fighting in Poland. There he was wounded by a bullet lodged in his lung. All that got too much for my mother. Her health deteriorated, she was nursed at home by my sister Elizabeth. She finally passed away in 1942. Josef recuperated in hospital and was declared unfit to serve again on the battle-front. As an experienced and decorated soldier he was appointed for duty as an instructor of



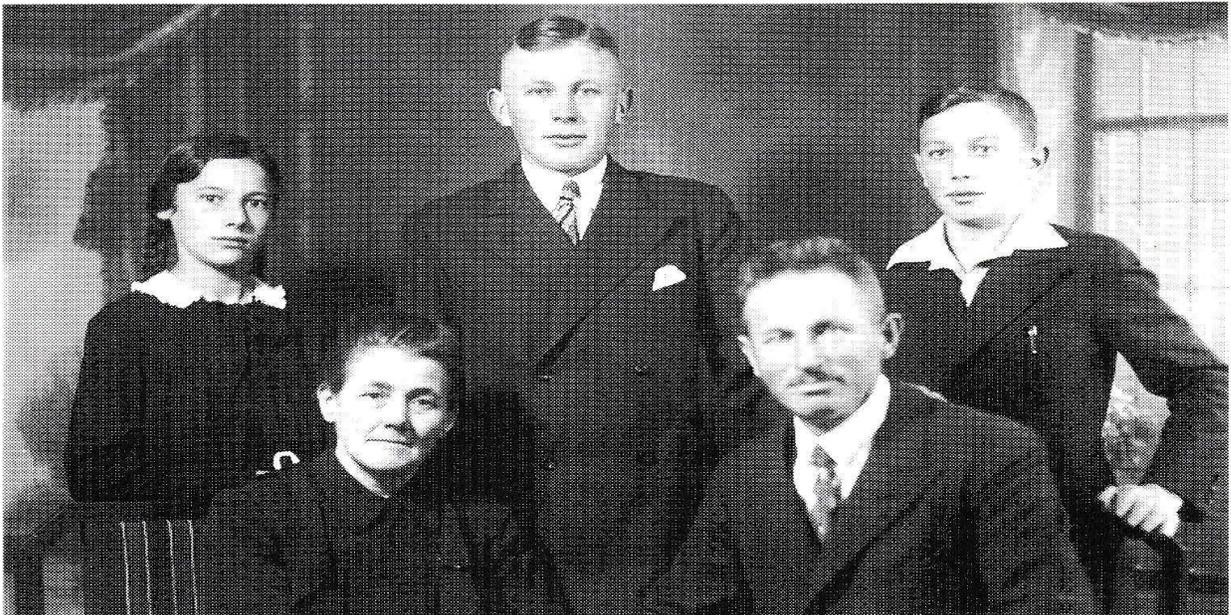
My Family home. Appeldorn.

recruits at home. Thinking the war was over for him he became engaged to Gertrud Van Gemmeren and later married her. They had a baby daughter, Henny, their first and only child. Due to heavy casualties Hitler was running short of soldiers, he was losing the war. Josef was commanded back to the front line stopping the Russian invasion into East Germany. It took almost a year before his wife Gertrud was informed by the Red Cross that Josef had been killed in action on the 5th February 1945. This was a great shock at home, especially to my father who had set all his hopes in his eldest son to continue his business as gardener.

As children, we attended the local village school from year 1 to year 7. For whatever reason after four years primary schooling, I was taken out and sent to Junior High School in Kalkar, an old Town established during the Roman occupation of Germany. The headmaster, Rector Jan op Gen Orth, was a Catholic priest.

After the graduation of Untertertia class, the first important

event of my life happened. Up to then I was a little simple country boy but now I was asked by my father what I wanted to do, carry on with high school or learn a trade. Where and how could I continue schooling? The local district high school would have been the natural choice but my concerned father ruled out this possibility as it required going by train every day to school. The sons of the big farmers used the daily train to school but never obtained the Leaving Certificate. Quite possibly my father feared that this would also happen to me. Therefore the possibility of attending the Gymnasium (high school) in Kleve was ruled out. Before I had answered his question, "Do you want to continue schooling?" he indicated he had already investigated a position to learn a trade. My answer was definite, and the wish to continue schooling was a very important decision for my future life. My father said, "You can study, but boy don't forget it means a big sacrifice for the family." My brother and sister were never given the chance to study. At that moment I could read Father's mind. Yes, schooling only if you go to Leaving Certificate. Often afterwards I wondered why I was the only



My Family.

child in the family to be sent to Junior High School, and then only on a personal wish to carry on to Senior High School. My uncle of the same name Johannes Luemmen became a priest and had gone on the same condition, having middle class parents and having to work hard as the only one of the family to study. If I chose to study instead of work I had to succeed in my studies. At no time was it mentioned that I was to become a priest but because of my uncle it looked as if it was one of the reasons. In hindsight, however, I dare to say that Father wanted me in a situation that if I ever wanted to become a priest I had the necessary educational background.

From the situation of not knowing whether to continue my studies God's Providence was at work. After my graduation at the Junior High School, during the school holidays, the Rector, made a retreat at Vallendar/ Schoenstatt. Here the Pallottines conducted a boarding school for boys. Knowing my predicament the Rector contacted the school master of the boarding school with the effect of my instant admission. With that good opportunity I had to hurry before the opening of the new school year to get things ready as a boarder. I never thought of living away from home, never heard of Schoenstatt, or of the Pallottines, a religious community of priests and brothers. But for me there was nothing more important than to have the opportunity to continue my studies.

How much I was really still a simple country boy is shown by what happened in the train on the way to the new school. Suddenly I realised I would always have to speak High German. Outside school and church my people in Appeldorn spoke the Platt Deutsch (Low German or Lower Rhein dialect which is similar to the Dutch language across the border). No doubt that is the reason why most people in Australia still regard me as being of Dutch descent.

A new world opened for me in the boarding school in Vallendar/Schoenstatt. The headmaster, a Pallottine priest, Father Alois Kaufmann was kind and concerned. It was obviously he who had admitted me on the recommendation of my previous headmaster without ever having met me. What I liked best at the Pallottine school was the system of having a priest in charge for spiritual direction of the boys as well as having another priest as headmaster. The spiritual director was there for character formation. Each class had a talk by him once a week. He had nothing to do with the running of the school but was merely to look after the character formation of the students. We could go to him at any time, or rather, we were expected to go at least for confession and for spiritual guidance. I soon developed a good relationship with him. One day with a heavy heart I went to see him with a question which had bothered me for some time. I realised that each of the two hundred boys at the school wanted to become a Pallottine priest. How could I say this when I had never heard or known of the Pallottine Order before becoming a boarder at their school. I felt I had to leave. The spiritual director then asked me one simple question, "Do you want to become a priest?" My answer was, "I have been thinking about it but honestly I cannot say I want to become a Pallottine priest." His answer was, "As long as you want to become a priest you are welcome to stay." That settled my worries. Today I regard the decision to stay as the second important step to my priesthood. There was much hard school work to be done and I found it not always easy but the system of character formation and a lot of good fun and plenty of sport enabled me to excel. Soccer was my favourite sport. I had made friends and surprisingly I never felt homesick.

Only once a year we were allowed to go home for the long summer holidays. During the holidays I remember certain happenings that indicated that mum and dad as well as friends

expected me to become a priest. I was encouraged to attend church as often as possible and not to mix with lower class friends. On one occasion when I helped with work at home, which I had always done, I was helping father clean the pig stables. The pigs enjoyed the freedom of running in the yard, I tried to get them back into the stable using swear words. My father intercepted with a clear definite voice, "Boy if you want to be a priest, I don't want to hear you using such words!" During the same summer school holidays I met a young married woman in the street who said, "Johannes, you are such a handsome boy and don't want to get married, you could make a girl very happy." So it seemed that people were taking it for granted that I was studying for the priesthood. But in my mind, becoming a Pallottine, No! I was more sure of this when I learned that the Pallottines were going into other countries for missionary work, it was practically out of the question. I never thought of ever leaving my country and working in a foreign country, but the spiritual director had said that as long as I intended to become a priest I could remain, and after all, the Pallottine Fathers were a friendly bunch and I was happy to stay with them for my education.

Hitler had come to power and with new rules and regulations started to interfere with Catholic education. He shortened high school time by one year. Students had to sit for the final examination one year earlier. My boarding school was a private church school and could no longer issue the recognised leaving certificate, it now had to be a state leaving certificate. The Nazi party took over our school and put young cadets for their party leadership there. To get out of this disappointing situation I went home to sit for the certificate which was recognised at the Gymnasium in Kleve where years back I was not allowed to go. Their school director was a fine man, a Catholic, but a member of the Nazi party. During the interview

he told me, "As you are coming from a private school you will not be a member of the Hitler Party Youth. If you want to pass your Leaving certificate you had better become a member of the Hitler Youth. Except for one student in the whole school all are members of the Hitler Youth." I knew that those of my local village would not do much harm. After a short time I could be dispensed from duty in this Hitler youth group because of preparation for the Leaving Certificate. So I joined them, and became their leader in the village where for two hours each week I had to lead them in some activity. I ran my own show.

The change of school was not easy for me. I had to catch the daily train with a long walk from the station to the school but I managed to pass my exam with the State School Certificate. That entitled me to enrol in the University and this was the first time that I publicly said I wanted to be a priest. It would still be a long way off.

Hitler obviously was preparing for a war. All fit young men had to serve first one year in a labour camp, for premilitary training, followed by two years national military service as a soldier but for students at a university the time of one year was cut short to six months. By the end of my six months of premilitary training, Hitler had declared war on Poland and since this war was over in about four weeks I was able as a student cleric to have that service postponed.

Chapter 2 Formative Years 1939-1950

Being too young to be called up for National Service I could go home. We had to report at our new domicile to the military office there. Here I was told I would not be called up straight away. I enquired if the Pallottines would take such young people in their novitiate. They said, "Yes, start!" It was November 1939. With other candidates we were received as novices in Olpe, receiving the habit, and becoming clerics. My status had changed and this affected my conscription. I had to inform the military office of my changed domicile but there was confusion with my place of residence, so I got the call up to National Service. To my great disappointment I had to put my civilian clothes on again and report as an army recruit.

My smart novice master, Father Karl Hufmann, then wrote a letter to the military authority about the error of my calling up and more important, of my new status as a cleric which meant that I could not serve in a combat unit but only in a medical corps



Pallottine Boarding School, Vallendar.

according to pre-Hitler army regulations. Although I had already received military uniform in the garrison, the letter of the novice master was acknowledged and acted upon, and I could go back to the novitiate. But after nine months I was



With brother Josef on holiday during the war.

called up with all other novices of the same age for military service. Hitler had done away with the cleric restriction to serve in combat, and we received military training to serve with heavy artillery in Czechoslovakia which was occupied by Germany. After a few months Hitler declared war on Russia. My unit crossed the German Lithuanian border which was occupied by Russia. The local population hailed us as liberators from the communist regime. They threw flowers to us as we drove the Russians back. But this did not last very long when it became known that Hitler killed many Russian prisoners of war because he had so many he could not feed them. At the beginning of the invasion we did not meet much resistance and we advanced a long way into Russia. Hitler was so convinced of his war tactics that he thought he could finish Stalin off before the Russian winter set in. He was wrong. He had not learnt from Napoleon who was also caught in a Russian winter as was Hitler's army. We suffered many casualties and lost a great deal of fighting equipment. It was the beginning of losing the second world war.

I was really a victim of the ill equipped German army fighting in the Russian winter. In the battle of Leningrad, (Petersburg), I suffered from frostbitten feet, was taken from the

battle front, and sent to a hospital in the Black Forest in Germany where I recuperated. This took a long time, and since I lost three toes from my right foot, I was not fit to be sent to the Russian battle front again. While I was doing light duties in the garrison I was given an order to attend a cadet school in East Germany to become an army officer, without being asked any questions. Hitler was looking for officers because of the great casualties on the front line. I graduated from the cadet school with the rank of Lieutenant. Although clerics were not normally allowed to become officers, I was never asked to sign anything that I did not want to be a priest. Normally I would have been only in the Reserve but the fact that I had a Leaving Certificate was sufficient to enable me to fill a position as a career officer in the German army. This cadet school was for active soldiers. I went to Mass on Sunday and saw the officer in charge of the Cadet school. His wife was with him and the altar boys were obviously his two sons. I requested an interview with him to clear up my position so that I could be a reserve officer and he said he would let me know about my situation. But he never did. I became a reserve army officer.

When the time came to be sent to the Russian Front again. I said, "I cannot serve there again according to Hitler's order." Soldiers with frostbitten feet, first and second degree are not to be sent any more on to the battle front in Russia. I had come back with my legs blue and black above the ankle. Second degree frostbite means the skin is discoloured and circulation is cut off, first degree means that the flesh turns black and will not heal. I lost three toes in the



Lieutenant in the German Army.

Russian winter, a permanent souvenir from the War. So I was sent to a new Division in Denmark. From there the Division was sent to Italy, where I was again on the battle front.

When my unit was taken out for rest I went to Mass in Italy. I was reprimanded for doing this because this was enemy territory, I could have been courtmartialled. I rang a Padre of a neighbouring battalion and asked him about this. He said, "Why do you have to go to a Mass like this, I come to all units to say Mass?" But that had never happened in my experience so far that a Padre had said Mass for us.

He also confirmed that if my commander had wished I could have been courtmartialled. Another time, further north in Italy, again taken out of the front line for a rest the Church bells were ringing for Easter. While looking for the Church to attend the Easter morning Mass, I lost my war decoration, Iron Cross First Class. Returning to the Commander's quarters I told of him of this. Next morning I went out early with the pretext of looking for the Cross, instead I sneaked into the Church to attend the Easter Mass.

When I reported back to the Commander he asked me, "Well, did you find your Iron Cross? I said "No." He said, "I went out and found it." I could not imagine that he did not know that I went to the Church instead of looking for the Cross. Later



Newly ordained Priest 1950.



With my family as newly ordained Priest.

on, in Austria, I attended Mass locally, but that was all right because it was not enemy country.

However when the unit was called to Austria I finished up fighting against the Russians again, but it was not in Russia. When the Germans surrendered I managed to escape by leaving everything behind but myself. If I wanted to avoid being taken prisoner by the Russians I had to cross the river Ems by 12.30 midnight. We never expected that when we arrived across the river Ems and surrendered, the Americans would put up barb wire to keep us as prisoners. But how lucky we were to get to the Americans as next day, those who did not were being marched in big columns to Siberia by the Russians. The chaplain who had told me to be careful about attending Mass in Italy, was appointed by the Americans as Padre for four American prisoner of war camps. But the Americans would not allow him to drive a motor bike, he had to use a car. He had no driver licence, so he wanted me to be his chauffeur, sacristan and altar boy when

visiting the various camps for services. He said one day, "John you don't need to go twice to communion on one day when I say two Masses on the same day." It was a wonderful chance for both of us to get out of the camp to visit priests and convents which supplied us with bread and butter. This helped to make up for the deprivation in the camps. Of course, in the camp, as prisoners, markings of rank and war decorations were removed rather than have them souvenired by the Americans. I hid mine as I thought it would be good to bring them back to Germany.

After a couple of months the Americans started the orderly release of soldiers but officers had to be interrogated personally by German-speaking American Jews, intelligence officers who anticipated that we were all Nazi officers. In my case I could prove that I was not and therefore I was one of the first discharged from the camp. There were no passenger trains but only goods trains going again. On the last station where the lines were repaired, I saw an American soldier cuddling a German girl. This shocked me into the realisation that we had lost the war. Formerly highly decorated German Army officers had been great in demand with the girls but not any more, now we were defeated Army officers with no indication of rank or decorations. The winners of the war were the Americans, Russians, English and French.

When the 'big four' leaders, Truman, Stalin, Churchill and De Gaulle met in Potsdam/Berlin and in Casablanca, North Africa, about the defeated Germany, they divided it up for occupation. Physically and morally, Germany lay in ruins.

We had to start from scratch again. For me, on returning home, I found that although my brother Josef was missing, my parents house was still standing. My father had hoped that his elder son would take over his business and his property. Willi Dickerboom who was a prisoner of war in England heard of

Josef's death and after his discharge contacted the family to ask if he could see Gertrud with the intention of marrying her. They were all upset as to what would be the best thing to do. My father owned the property and my single sister lived at home. I was given time off from the Novitiate studies to see them and we made a novena of Rosaries. I saw a solicitor who could legally advise us. His solution was accepted by everyone concerned and we all went to his office and signed the documents. Our Lady must have wanted me to be a priest as I did not have to come home as the only son to look after the family. Gertrud and Willi were married and I was allowed to attend their wedding and all lived happily in my parents' house with Willi working with my father. This indicated to me that I could return to Olpe.

The Pallottines collected bits and pieces and reopened the house of novices which had been occupied by the army. Of the thirty-three novices in 1939, ten returned to continue their theological studies. One third were killed, one third returned maimed, or were unwilling to continue in their vocational calling. Ten would be ordained for our Province.

On return to the novitiate one incident I will never forget. A classmate, one of the ten, Adi Berresheim, had met me at the door already in clerical habit. With a hearty greeting, he led me to the dining room where some more confreres had gathered. We had not seen each other for the last five years. While we were engaged in a very emotional exchange of our stories, a temporarily appointed novice master stepped in, pointed to his pocket watch, and announced, "It's Rosary Time!" We looked at each other and could not believe that a returned soldier, himself with an artificial leg, would remind us in this abrupt way to observe the old time table of the novitiate which had not even been officially opened. If it had not been made known to us that our old novice master Fr Hufmann would be back, we would

have packed our bags and gone home. For me it was my first test whether to stay with the Pallottines after my original decision to become a Pallottine priest.

How different was the handling of Fr Hufmann with us returned soldiers. He led us step by step to return to the order of the day of the novitiate. The house which had been confiscated by the Nazis had hardly any furniture left, household equipment was non-existent. The Pallottine Sisters who had returned to take over the kitchen had hardly enough food to feed our hungry stomachs. As soldiers fighting in the front line of the war we were used to shortages which continued for some time after the war. We novices had to help in the farm to grow our own food, or were sent out to neighbouring villages to collect potatoes and flour (rye or wheat to make bread), the basic German food. The time was not easy, but how could we become priests if we were not trained to make sacrifices. In the course of reorganising the German Province, the house where I did my secondary studies at the Pallottine boarding school, became the Pallottine Seminary. Who could have anticipated that I would return to the same house and place and learn to know the Pallottines and the Schoenstatt Shrine, the chapel of the Schoenstatt movement, where I made my first Profession and later my final consecration for life?

In my studies I had to work hard but that was what I had promised to my father that I would do. As ordained deacons we were privileged to attend the beatification of our founder St Vincent Pallotti in Rome by Pius XII, 22 January 1950. It was a great privilege indeed and it was that day that the Provincial, Father Heinrich Schulte revealed his plan to us for the placement of the next ordained priests. I was earmarked to go with three confreres to Australia. It was to Tardun in Western Australia, to a wheat and sheep farm and a boarding school for Aboriginal

children to look after the boys and be spiritual director of the Brothers. Four young ordained priests were needed in Australia, three in Canada, and the rest to remain in Germany. My earlier problems with becoming a Pallottine priest with the possibility to work in a foreign country were no longer with me. Through the war I had been in so many countries and therefore it did not matter to me any more. The Mother of God, 'Mater Ter Admirabilis' had led me step by step and I felt called by God to go to Australia. Doors had been opened for me and with gratitude to God and His holy Mother I followed, led by the Spirit.

I was ordained 9 July 1950 in Limburg. A big busload of people, including my father and sister, had come from Appeldorn, to take part in the Ordination Mass. My first Mass in the home parish of Appeldorn was 23 July 1950. A tremendous welcome was given to me. The parish had decorated the church and many photos were taken. I had invited my spiritual director, Father Rosskothen, to be the guest speaker. He spoke well but a bit too long. He is still alive, well over 80.

However I still had to go through another test. During a personal final interview with Father Schulte, when he indicated to me that he needed me in Germany as a Prefect in a Pallottine boarding school, I was somewhat taken aback. "If you want me to stay in Germany I will but then that must be for good. I would not like after a few years to be sent to a another country when a need arises but I am happy now to go to Australia with the other three confreres." They were Fr John Jobst, Fr Walter Silvester, Fr Ludwig Muenz. I think he wanted to test me to see if I really wanted to go to Australia. He had given us a description of the situation in both Australia and Canada from a brief visit.

Through the long years of war, these countries had been deprived of Pallottine missionaries. "Australia," he told us "is the

fifth and smallest continent in the world. It is a long way away from Germany. It is a large country with a very small population but it has a great future. Sheep, kangaroos and primitive Aborigines are the hallmark of Australia. English is the spoken language from the English convicts and the first Irish settlers. Diocesan clergy are mostly Irish. They are very good priests,” he said, “but all have a national weakness. They like their drink, their whiskey.” I wanted to serve people, and felt I would do that best as a priest. People prayed for me that I would be strong enough to follow God’s call, my relations, especially my aunt Maria, my sister Elizabeth, and parishioners at home. I became a Pallottine priest apparently by accident, but believing in God’s providence. I felt I was called by God.

Chapter 3

Australia 1951

In Germany, according to the Pallottine seminary regulations, the time of ordination took place one year before the final theological examinations. We 'Australians' were already told when and where to go, hence did not take the last exams very seriously. Our travel arrangements were already made and the professors did not regard the exams as being of great importance. Our minds and hearts were now set on packing our cases and Brother Roth, the mission procurator (now 97 years old), still remembers the wooden cases all marked with the proper destination, each including a Mass kit he proudly designed for missionaries. Soon we would be on the way. At the Termini, Rome's Railway Station, we were met by a young Australian Pallottine, Father Kevin McKelson. He took great care of us 'new Australians', warning us of Rome's famous pick-pockets. He made sure our luggage would not get lost.

I had to say "Goodbye," to many people and places. We were not to return to Germany for a holiday before 10 years of work in Australia had been completed. Because of the frequent



Leaving Koblenz Railway Station for Rome.

travels during the war, not knowing if and when we would return, I didn't find it too difficult to leave 'Meine Heimat' (my homeland). At the various and many send-off celebrations we were blessed and promised prayers

so that we could leave the future in God's hands. With the final visit and blessing in the Schoenstatt Shrine we left by train from Koblenz via Switzerland to Rome. We, the four newly ordained



Farewell of four Pallottines in front of the Schoenstatt Shrine.

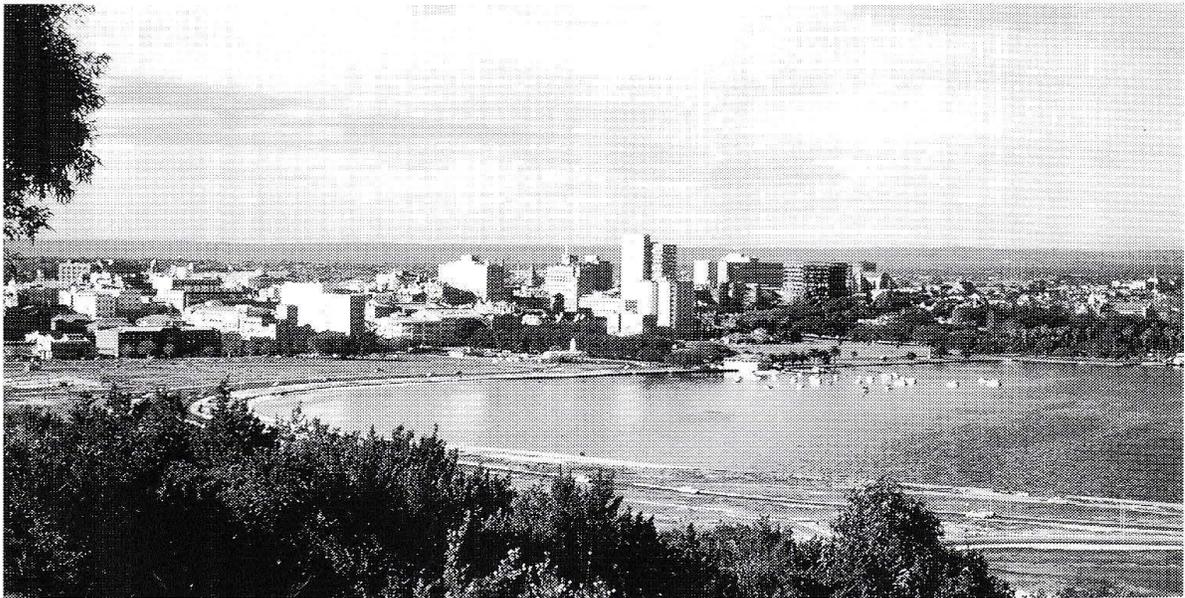
priests, two returning Australian missionaries, Father John Herold, Father Albert Scherzinger, Brother Baptist Birker and a young man, the first German lay missionary, Lorenz Liedel were the largest mission expedition ever sent to Australia.

During the short stay in Rome, at the head house of the Pallottines, our good confreres had arranged a private audience with the Holy Father, Pope Pius XII. We had another blessing, this time an Apostolic Blessing. With this he sent us on the way to Australia. In Genoa we were joined by four Schoenstatt sisters, Sr Bonitas, Sr Magdlen, Sr Aigidis, and Sr Anita to catch the migrant boat 'Cyrenia' to Australia. It was badly equipped with not enough life boats. At a later voyage it was stopped in Fremantle because of this.

We sailed 10 March 1951 to arrive in Australia 5 April 1951. It was my first travelling by sea but I managed somehow not to get too seasick. Nine of our expedition disembarked at Fremantle, West Australia. Fr Muenz and Fr Silvester continued the journey to Melbourne with Fr Scherzinger, to commence their missionary appointment in the Eastern states. Fr Jobst stayed in Perth and then went to the Beagle Bay Mission in the Kimberley. That was his first appointment. I would not have

become a migrant if I had not been a Pallottine, but then I would never have come to Australia and would have missed out on the happiest time of my life, spent at Rossmoyne and Riverton in West Australia where I have spent 48 years.

The car trip from Perth to Tardun took six and a half hours. Tardun was 'the sheep and wheat farm' with a boarding school for half caste Aborigines. It was a wide open hot country. If I use the word 'half caste' today I would get into trouble. "You are racist!" I am told. That indicates how much the situation has changed from my early time in Australia in the course of my long time working with and for Aborigines (at that time called Natives which I will come back to later). The few townships which we passed on the way to Tardun were very small but I noticed that each would have three or more small churches. My first thought was "Why so many churches for so few people?" All denominations wanted a foothold in the new country of Australia in a mission endeavour. Apart from the very brief summary about Australia by Father Provincial in Rome I knew practically



City of Perth W.A. from Kings Park.

nothing about this land.

Over a period of time I learnt more and more. Not being an academic, I was more work minded than studying books, working practically for the first five years only with German Pallottines and German Sisters but I wanted to learn the language. The only Australian priest came to me and said, "John, I want to learn German." He was not very helpful either. My learning of the English had to be picked up from Aboriginal children with their vocabulary of 200 - 300 words. My English is more or less self taught English learnt by reading the daily newspaper and listening to the news, then comparing the written word with the pronunciation. Not having a musical ear, it is hard for me to pick up the proper pronunciation of certain words. I am quite happy that the average Australian has no problem in understanding me but the Oxford educated Englishman seems to have difficulties because he is not prepared to make allowances for migrants in Australia. He still regards Australia as part of England. I may be wrong but that is my opinion.

Certainly it was not an easy start for a young missionary with so little preparation to work in such a vast young country. I soon learned that coming from a place with an old history, this country had a totally different story and language. I had to deal now with a mixture of black and white Australians, in short called 'half castes' or 'part natives'. I was to look after boys at a boarding school established by Father George Vill. Since 1948, it was called 'Pallottine Mission School Tardun'. It now has an Aboriginal name, 'Wandalgu Hostel'.

Earlier, as 'St Josephs Farm' which the Pallottine brothers and priests had cleared and established, it provided a place in the south for a change from the tropical climate of the north west. For Bishop Raible, the wheat provided bread and financial support for the missions. Two decades later compulsory

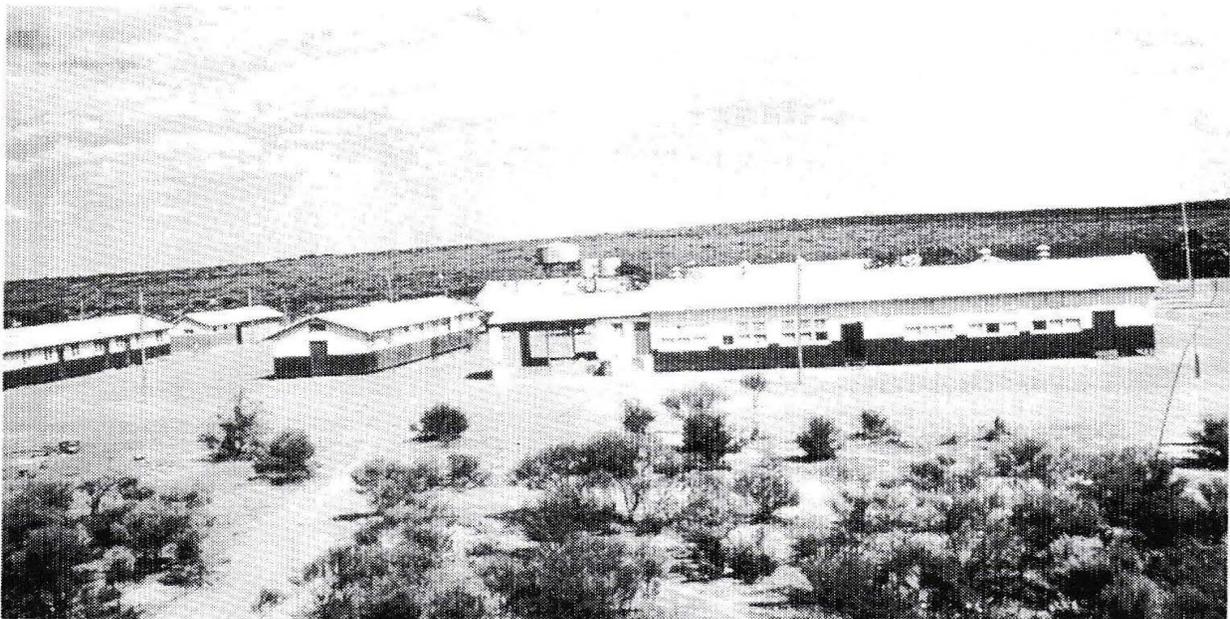
education had come in for Aboriginal children. At the time, Paul Hasluck, the Minister of the Northern Territory, proposed a policy of assimilation. Because I knew nothing else, as a newcomer, I accepted this without hesitation. It was in this atmosphere that I was placed when I took on the work of a missionary in Tardun. I found it so different from the few words of advice which I had been given at home. I had been told, "Don't worry too much about the Aborigines in Australia. First of all their number is very small. They live in different tribes. Their languages are different. They are a dying race. Make sure you baptise them before they die so that they can go straight to heaven." This was said really in ignorance but one thing was quite correct. The number of full blood Aborigines was a small and dying race, but the number of mixed blood children was large and growing. The reason the Pallottines opened a boarding school was to give them the basic health care and education to which every child in Australia had a right. Aboriginal parents were generally keen to send the children to a mission, not only Catholic missions, because they were unable to teach them themselves. I found amongst my forty boys in the dormitory fine and intelligent fellows. They were all children of God and we were as missionaries to tell them they had a loving father in heaven. Some were taken away from their parents because they were neglected. It was taken for granted that their black mother had little education or their white father ignored them. The missions accepted them out of Christian charity. As a Church organization I was helping the poor. Had we not done this we would have been damned. I did not volunteer to go to do missionary work in Australia. I was asked and was happy to go. I spent the first years at Tardun Mission. Usually I call that period my apprenticeship among the Aborigines.

Chapter 4

Tardun 1951-1955

I arrived at the Tardun mission on 11 April 1951 at 5.55 pm with my future rector, Father Francis Girke, driving, and the four new Sisters from Schoenstatt. Quite a long stretch of the rather long roads were dust roads, not yet bituminised. Yes, we had come to a new hot barren country with plenty of sheep, corrugated iron roofed houses and windmills with tanks. A few kangaroos hopped across the road in front of the car but the experienced driver did not hit them.

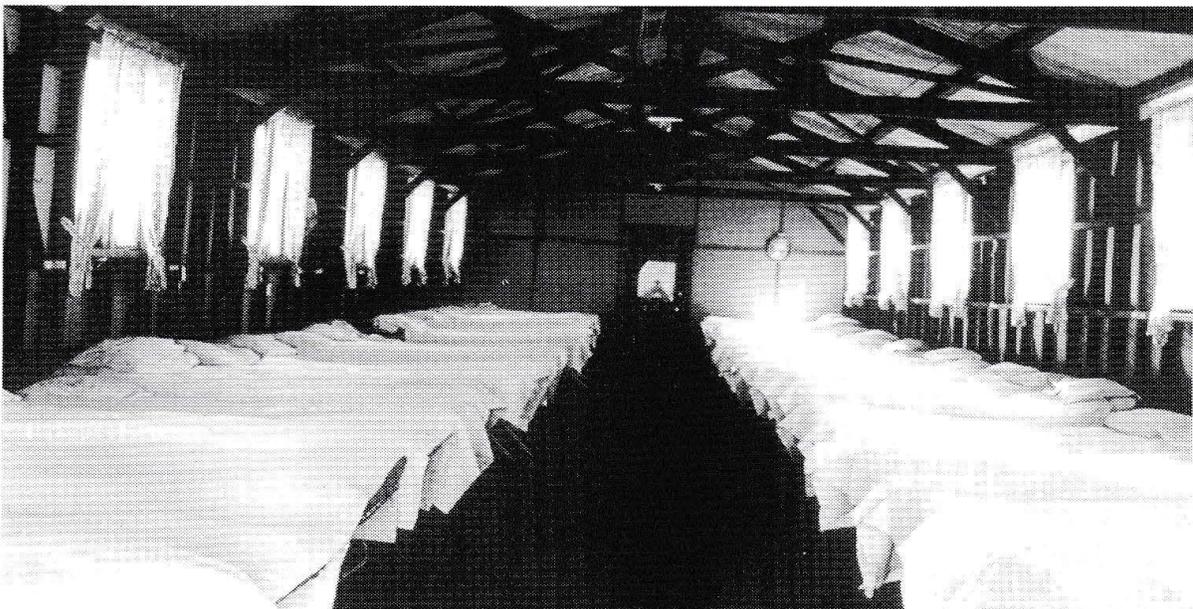
The traffic was minimal, so much different from home. Whenever we were to pass a vehicle standing on the side of the road, Fr. Girke slowed down and stopped. He asked: "Anything wrong, can I help you." "No thank you", and with a friendly wave, Father drove on. This concern and courtesy I found extraordinary. When we passed a small village, I think it was Coorow, the driver remarked: "The next half hour we drive through the waterless region, nothing much to see." Fr. Girke



Pallottine Mission School Tardun 1951.

told us a rather strange thing: “If you pass a Presbytery in a country town, you stop and say hello to the Priest. He will offer you a drink and may ask you to hear his confession.” Priests are very isolated and lonely in the ‘outback’. If it happens that the Priest is not in, the door is always left open and you are free to enter. You go to the refrigerator and help yourself to a drink. What a friendly country Australia is! Unfortunately today we no longer experience this friendliness and trust.

The trip was very tiring and we were almost asleep. Suddenly Fr Girke said, “We are now on mission property.” It had to be land of ‘St Joseph’s Farm’ but with the best of my imagination, I could not regard it as farm land. Just dry barren land with scrub here and there. Fr Kelly met us with a truck load of Aboriginal children at the mission gate to welcome the new arrivals, their future teachers and tutors. With a big smile and hello we were greeted by Brother Leonard who had only arrived six months earlier at the mission. He was sitting on a big Deutz tractor. The extraordinary welcome was expressed by a newly



Boys dormitory.

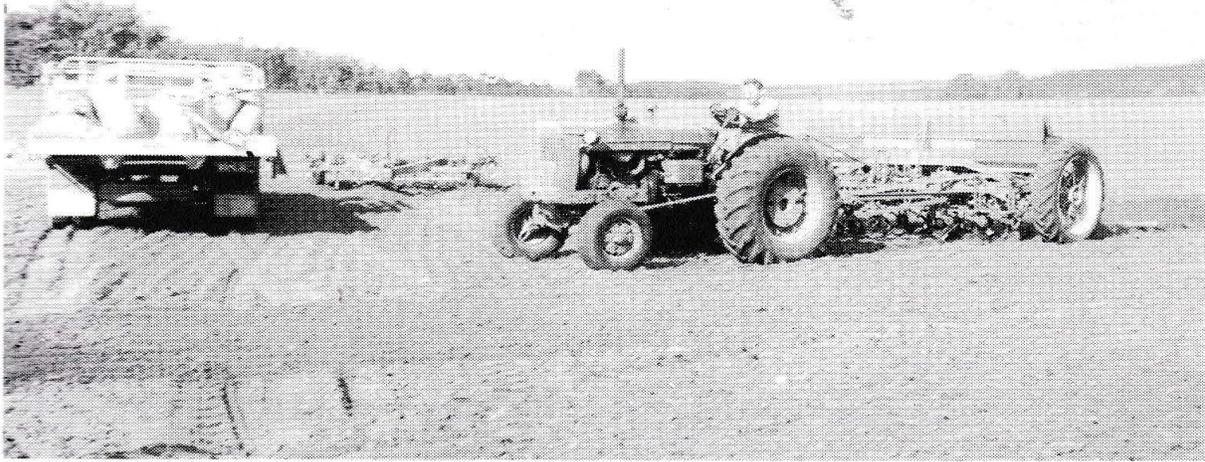
decorated gate into the mission proper.

An unforgettable first impression was seeing these blackfellows, shy, but curious to size us up. It was the boys in particular that I had to look after and the girls to be looked after by the Sisters. The youngest boy, only three years old, Robert Stack, was the youngest to be cared for and the first introduction was, "Here is the concrete trough, put Robert into it, here is a brush, scrub his bottom (he had dirtied his pants). A few days later, alarm, the drainage pipe to the septic tank was blocked. The six toilet pans were overflowing and flooding the washroom. Who had to fix it? The young missionary from Germany.

The real handicap all of us experienced was the language. For the first few weeks the only Australian born person gave us language instruction. Fr Kelly soon gave it up and then said to me, "John, speak German, I want to learn German." Somehow the language remained a certain handicap.

Fr Girke soon asked me to say the Sunday Mass for the children. It was still in Latin, but I had also to give a sermon, in English. How could I? He said, "Say a few words in your own English, that's enough." I felt thrown into the water and had to swim. But it was the best way to overcome natural shyness and gain confidence. Soon after that he put me on a weekly roster to go to our neighbours, to the Christian Brothers' Agricultural farm school, and say Mass for them, and hear their confessions. I had to learn a lot, and I had to learn fast.

For going to the Christian Brothers I needed a Driver's Licence. Father Girke took me to the Police Station in Mullewa to get one. I had already three, one from the German Army, one for Germany and an International one. All of them were not good enough for the young policeman. As soon as he heard I came from Germany, he asked me for German stamps. "I'll get you



Brother William on the tractor.

some,” I said. Without any further questions or any test drive around the block I got the Australian Driver s Licence, Class 1, 2, and 3. It was a great surprise to me that International Licences counted for nothing in Australia, the kangaroo country and to get a licence for stamps.

Looking after the boys came easy to me, having been in a German boarding school and trained for six years in a German army always in charge. There was no mucking about! Fr Girke was helpful and understanding. After bedtime for the children we newcomers put our heads together, exchanged our settling in problems and had a big laugh about the mistakes we had made, particularly about the English.

The mission was isolated. We could make only occasional contact with the rest of the world. A few Catholic farmers joined the children’s Mass on Sunday. Only once a year, could we go on a holiday to Perth, the capital of Western Australia. At that time I regarded it as only a provincial town. We stayed at Rivervale where we had the first Pallottine house. When using the public

bus going sightseeing or shopping I had to use Australian money, pounds, shillings and pence.

In many ways we had to learn and adapt our thinking. Now that I was on the other side of the globe, it is south instead of north, it is summer instead of winter, east instead of west. The time, we have to get up when others are still asleep on the other side of the globe. The biggest part of the year is dry and barren, but suddenly after the first rain the country becomes beautifully green with a great variety of wild flowers attracting visitors. Tourist buses come from all over Australia to see them now. Flies and mosquitoes are a terrible pest. Without flywire over your bed you cannot get much night rest. We had to get used to a new ploughing and seeding timetable, each paddock to be used only every third year. It was poor soil and rainfall very low, but we had plenty of land. It was so different from home. When the rain came, the Brothers had only a short time to put in the crop or they missed out. Sometimes the tractors and large machinery had to be worked day and night. I sometimes drove the tractor for them at night when the children were in bed. On one occasion I must have fallen asleep while seeding. When the crop came up it was all over the place. Brother Stephen Contempre had a good laugh.

My main duty was looking after the boys of 6-14 years of age. I called them up in the morning, I made sure that they had a good wash, cleaned their teeth, made their beds and tidied up the dormitory. Then they got ready for breakfast. I supervised boys and girls in the big dining room made for eighty kids. Getting them changed into school clothes ready for school at 9 o'clock was my next duty. I supervised them again at lunch time. After school at 3.30 they changed from school into play clothes. I lined them up at the kitchen door for 'Piece Time'. They all received a big piece of home made bread from Sister Annunciata, 'Sister

Cook'. Nowhere else have I come across it that afternoon tea time is called 'Piece Time'. It was a typical Tardun terminology. After that free time, play or work, doing the chores, then all had a shower to be ready again in the classroom for homework or religious instruction. The religious instruction I took on as soon as my English was good enough.

It was hard to keep the children occupied. They liked to go for a swim. I asked the Christian Brothers if we could use a deserted water tank in their paddock a couple of miles away. At the time the water was not needed for the sheep. The children would walk there and have a good time. Then I made a swimming pool with the help of the children and Brother William Engel, who did the cement work. It was really a paddling pool, not deep enough for swimming, because we were short of water, but the children could play in it as it was up to the waist, and they could sail their home made little toys. We did not ask to use the Christian Brothers pool because our children were coloured.

First I had to learn the most popular game for the boys before I could instruct them. Australian football had a team with 18 players, an oval ball rather than round, more handball than football, four goal posts through which the ball had to be kicked, could be kicked as high as the sky and still count points. Football at home had a net into which the goals were kicked. Australian Football is a national sport. I don't think it had anything to do with the first Australians, the Aborigines. In Australia, what I would call football, is called Soccer, and it is now gaining in popularity.

The first Australians lived in the bush as hunters and collectors, living from hand to mouth, not thinking of tomorrow, no cultivation of soil, no husbandry of cattle and animals. They are great in sharing goods with each other. In that way they

observe the Lord's commandments more than we do 'Love one another.' If one person has something all have something. They don't hoard possessions. I never found rich Aborigines. They don't have a sense of keeping something for a rainy day. They remain poor with little sense of saving.

I had free time when the children were in school. I used it to say my prayers, do repair work on what was broken, to sort clothes, to help Sister with the heavy work in the laundry, to help the Brothers with the farm work if necessary, to beautify the garden around the monastery, and to read a little. Mission work is mission work! One year, the hottest summer I experienced in Tardun, we had a good harvest but our only truck to take the bags of wheat to the siding had broken down. The temperature was 40° and above. It was too hot to touch tools or machinery. You could not sit on the seat of the tractor it was so hot. Fr Girke said, "I cannot ask the priests to help with the harvesting of the wheat." But he did ask. It was after the children had left for their holiday. To get the bags on the truck we had to bump them on the base of the spring loader up to the height of the truck. One man at the bottom and the other at the top of the truck. That year we ran late. We could not go on holiday until harvesting was finished. The Christian Brothers had finished their harvesting and came to help us to get the wheat ready before the closing of the 'bin' at the siding. We always had very good cooperation with our neighbours. We helped them spiritually by saying the Mass and they helped us physically when we needed it.

It was said that Father Vill, who had started the school on the farm, was the first missionary to let the children go home once a year for the long holidays so that they would be able to see their parents and keep up their ceremonies and spiritual life. Father Vill had been told by Protestant missionaries, "If you let them go home, they will not come back." But ours did come

back. A few had to stay because they had no home or parents to whom they could go back.

Nowadays of course, harvesting, loading and other farm duties are technically more advanced, though still hard work. I was not used to doing work of that nature in the heat. I had blisters over my hands from lifting the heavy wheat bags. Clerics in Germany were not expected to do manual work and certainly during my time as an army officer I did not do it, but on the mission such was the need that it was never questioned, we laboured with our hands as part of our missionary work.

My former rector of the Pallottine Seminary in Schoenstatt (Theologische Hochschule) Fr. Dr. William Moehler had been elected General in May 1953, how happy I was to hear that he would during his term of office come to Australia for a Canonical visitation. My confreres were very happy too but surprised because they could not remember a Rector General from Rome had ever visited the Houses in the far distant country of Australia. Did he want to check up on his four former seminarians, how they were behaving themselves? A few things which happened during his visit in 1954 I will never forget. The Pallottine Community were sitting for lunch with him on Melbourne Cup Day. Suddenly all of us hurried to the monastery to listen to the wireless for the Melbourne Cup Races. Father Moehler, deserted at the table, did not know what had happened. When he was told he was amazed how his German missionaries had become 'good Australians'. Australians love horse racing. Melbourne Cup Day is even a public holiday, the biggest gambling day in Australia.

In the course of the Canonical Visitation the Superior has to check on all the books, including the Mass Intention Book of the priests. At the recreation session with him he told us in a good humoured way, "Fr Girke, your Rector, is a very good priest, he

has even said Mass on Good Friday". He realised of course that Fr Girke had signed the intentions of the Mass just before his arrival for visitation without counting the calendar.

Shortly before Fr General returned to Rome he called all the Pallottine Priests to Riverton for a conference. He was looking for three volunteer priests to go to the Pallottine mission in Raipur in India. The Indian Government had stopped entry for people without English passports. Fr General wanted to say that priests born in Germany but not-naturalised Australians, would not be permitted to enter India. His English was limited. Instead of saying, "They must be born in Australia", he explained, "Only bloody Australians can volunteer." You should have heard our laughter. Father Regional Bruno Kupke, came to Father General's assistance, saying, "The volunteers must be blood Australians." Fr Moehler had a good laugh when he realised what he had said.

At the Pallottine Conference, Fr Moehler was very impressed with Edith Little's natural charm and efficiency. He heard that she had come down from the Tardun Mission and had taken the position as housekeeper when she was 17.

When his term as Rector General in Rome was completed, he had gone back to Germany to the home where he had been in charge of the Seminarians. In 1975 when Edith Little spent a little time away from her home country, Australia, she spent time with me in Germany. We paid a visit to Fr Moehler in Germany. His worrying period as Rector General had affected his health, he was ill in bed. We knocked at his door to see him. He invited us to come in. He was very surprised and pleased to see her. He was really touched that she had flown by herself to visit Germany. Father pointed out to me where to find a bottle in his cupboard to have a drink with her. The lovely dark lady was made to feel at home and she felt at home even without being

able to speak the language.

In all Pallottine places she was welcomed by the Rector of the House and invited to have a meal with the community, in the dining room, sitting at the top of the table next to the Superior. We also stayed with my relations in Appeldorn and Edith went with them to a dance held in the village hall on the Feast of the Patroness of the Parish. Also there she was made to feel at home when young men asked her for a dance. Edith was a good dancer.

My idea to offer Edith an overseas trip was as a well deserved reward and also to strengthen her confidence to take over the administration of the Rossmoyne Centre. I would then stay in the background.

After the Conference, I stayed on in Riverton. I had been transferred there after nearly five years in Tardun. I was to help Father Omasmeier in the Parish and to look after the Aborigines who were to come and board in the hostel. The newly-ordained Pallottine priest, Father Brian Murray was to take my place in Tardun.

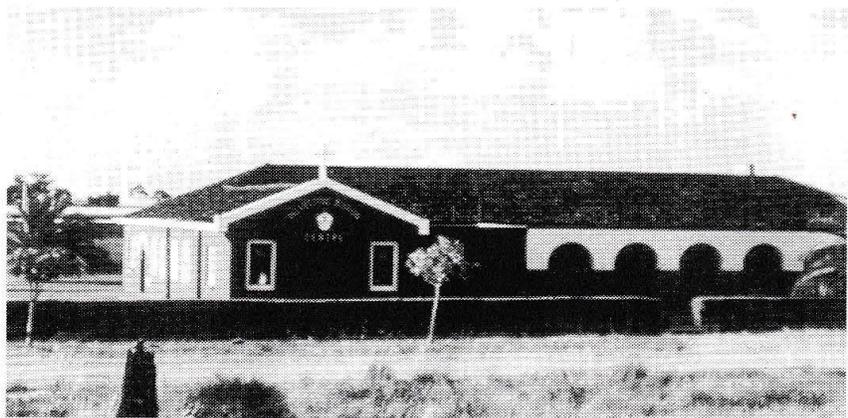
Chapter 5

The 'Pallottine Mission Centre', Rossmoyne 1956-1980

In 1948 the Pallottines bought a house in Rivervale to serve the missionaries as a base and a holiday place in Perth. Father Leo Hornung was the first resident priest with Brother Hubert Beldermann as cook. Archbishop Prendiville approached the Pallottines to establish a new Parish in Riverton, a little populated area in the bush, situated on low lying land near the Canning River. Father Leo was appointed Parish Priest but had to live in Rivervale. The new parish had no other building than a church school hall in Tribute Street built by Father Leo in 1953. Father Anthony Omasmeier succeeded Father Leo as Parish Priest in 1954.

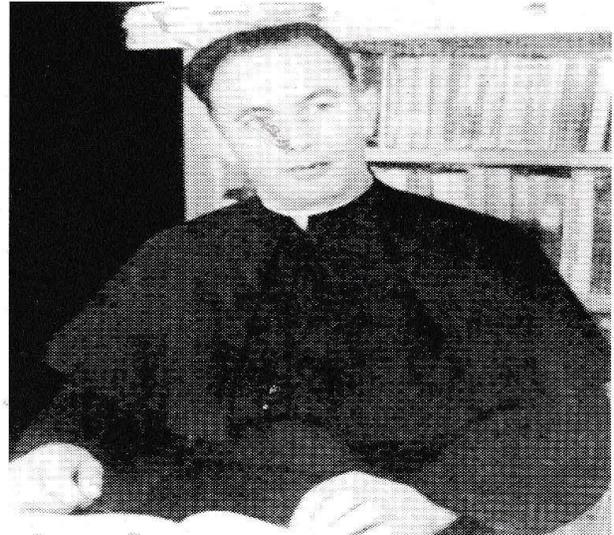
Eventually the Pallottines bought 5 acres of bush land in 5th Avenue in Riverton (later called Rossmoyne) and a new house for the Pallottines was built. It was rather a large house with a chapel and a small wing and opened in 1955. Rivervale was sold and the new place was to serve as the residence for the Parish Priest and as a stop-over place for itinerant Pallottines passing through Perth.

The small wing of the house in 5th Avenue was to be used as a hostel for Aboriginal boys from Year 7 in Tardun to learn a trade of their choice in Perth. This complex was then called the Pallottine Mission Centre. Edith Little, a



Pallottine Mission Centre, Rossmoyne.

top lady with the Sisters in Tardun had been asked by Fr Girke to come with him to Perth and clean the windows for the blessing and opening of the house in Fifth Avenue. Archbishop Prendiville blessed and opened the house 15 May 1955.



As Mission Superior and Parish Priest.

Two very promising boys Joe Shea and Gordon Coomber were keen to go there. They came with me when I was transferred from Tardun to help in the Parish work and to look after these boys. It was a great disappointment for them and for me as they were expected to have better than year 7 school education and were a little too old for a five year apprenticeship. I could not place them. Very disheartened, the boys had to go back to Tardun.

A failure, yes or no? I saw my missionary work in Australia for the descendants of black and white, in basic education, health, and housing, empowering them for employment in the white Australian society. Just yesterday, I heard the Governor General, Sir William Deane say, "The only way that we can help the Aborigines is by education." I made demands on them and regarded school work as very important and told them, "Keep yourself clean and tidy and to be reliable in dealing with other people." They must have accepted my well known discipline in Rossmoyne for I always fell short of places for boarders. In 1960 we had no vacancies and could take no new students.

I knew that Harold Little had shown an interest in continuing schooling when he left Tardun. If we wanted really to

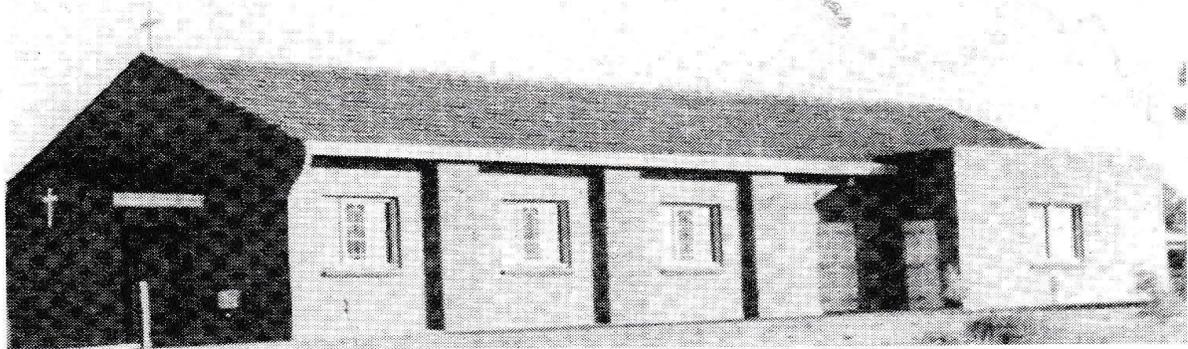


Edith Little, housekeeper.

succeed with boys learning a trade they needed a Junior Certificate, a school pass Grade 10. We had to start with him. I call it a venture because even Pallottine confreres were sceptical for

obvious reasons. They said, "The students will go walkabout. They will not stay for any length of time, in a different climate, living in the white society's way of life."

Harold arrived by train from Mt Magnet. Edith, his sister, had become the housekeeper for the small Pallottine community at Rossmoyne. Perhaps this made the difference so that Harold did not feel a total stranger in the white society. I still had to find a secondary school where he could attend. The district officer of the Native Welfare Department, Bruce McLarty came to my aid. The head master of the Midland Junction High School was a friend of his. Harold was prepared to see him for an interview which was very successful. The headmaster said, "You can stay straight away if you like or you can go back with Father and start school tomorrow." Harold promptly told him, "I stay." "But how do you get home?" "By bus." "And if you get lost?" "I go to the police." The headmaster was impressed by this little dark fellow. What did happen? Harold got lost because he changed into the wrong bus and finished up in Kalamunda instead of Rossmoyne. At home we were already worried about his return. At 7 pm the police at the Victoria Park station informed us that a dark boy wanted to be picked up.



Parish Hall, Church/School, Riverton 1953.

The first battle was won but this was only the beginning. The fact that Harold was attending a State School - I was obviously excommunicated. Catholic Parents had to send their children to Catholic Schools. What did I know of such rules in Australia? The accusation however worried me. I contacted a neighbouring Australian born parish priest, Fr O'Connor, and asked him. He told me that what I had been told was correct but it only applied to primary school kids. "But we don't tell that to parents," he said. How green I was as a migrant coming from the bush. I had to learn a great deal.

From this first contact with my neighbouring priest, Fr Frank O'Connor we made friends. He became an important contact person for me to whom I could go at any time for information on church matters in Australia. I, as a young ordained priest in a foreign country, was made a Parish Priest of Riverton. We heard each other's confessions. When he came to see me in Riverton, he entered through the backyard parking. To locate me in the house, he would sing in a loud voice "Lumen Christi". I would respond, "Deo Gratias". Then we sat down but I never needed to offer him a whiskey because he was Australian-born, not Irish. People often asked me, even now,

where does my surname come from because my name is hardly ever spelt correctly. Sometimes three mistakes in one word 'Luemmen'. 'Lumen' with one 'm' comes from the Latin word which means 'light'. Also my Christian name John has a meaning for me. John the Baptist was the fore-runner of Christ, who prepared the way for the Lord. I looked at myself as being a light to prepare the way for Aborigines to accept Jesus as their Father, Lord and Saviour.

Edith Little had been asked to stay on as housekeeper in the Rossmoyne community in which her brother later became a member. He stayed at Rossmoyne for ten years until he got



First Aboriginal Boys.

married and lived in his own house. I had succeeded in finding an apprenticeship for him as a cabinet maker in Victoria Park. That was his own wish. I did not tell him what to do. He became a very popular boy, loved playing football, and

was picked as a wing man by the Perth League Football Club. He moved around in his own transport, first on a motorbike then in a second hand Holden car, bought with a loan from the bank. For me it was important that he was treated as equal to any boy in society. Parents would help their children to reach full adulthood, so it was my job too. Harold grew into the Australian society and felt happy because he felt he was being accepted for what he was. He never denied his Aboriginality. When he was teased on the football oval as a blackfellow (which still happens today), "But I've got white teeth", he would retort.

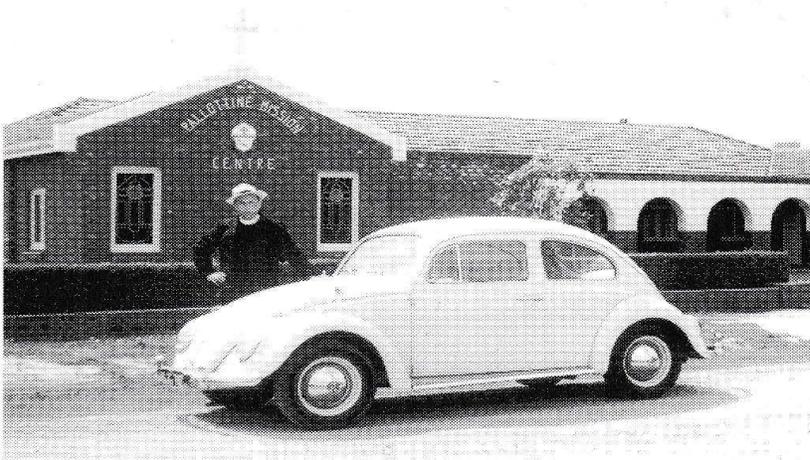
As a qualified tradesman Harold was approached at work by a salesman to take up a Life Insurance Policy. He came to me and wanted to know what that was all about. "A good idea, you are married and should care for your family. But if you enter into a contract you must keep up the monthly payments, otherwise your money is



First Aboriginal Girls 1961.

lost and you have no benefit at all." He signed up the application. A few days later the same salesman this time came to me with the bad news that Harold's application was knocked back. He apologised. I went into action and wanted to know why. He murmured something, obviously he felt embarrassed himself as he had approached Harold not the other way 'round. I asked for the phone number of his boss and made an appointment. "Come tomorrow at 11 o'clock." When I called in, the receptionist, seeing me with a white collar, became a little nervous realising who I was and she led me to her boss's office. Without much of an introduction he told me that the Aboriginal mortality rate is much higher than that of white people, therefore he could not accept him. I got a little hot under the collar, literally, and told him I regarded his refusal as an act of racial discrimination and that the story would be in tomorrow's newspaper. He reversed his decision. I had won. My charges in Rossmoyne knew that I would stick up for them as equals in society and would fight for them.

The Commissioner of the Native Welfare Department had asked me, would the Pallottines look at the possibility of setting



Imported Volkswagen.

up a hostel for Aboriginal boys in Albany. I drove to Albany to contact Mgr Cunningham, the Parish Priest, to find a suitable property. Two houses looked to be a possibility but needed extensions. So

with my architect, Frank Bradley and builder, Les Serfozo, I made another trip and we decided on the Hare Street property. The available money from the Government had to be spent quickly before the end of the financial year or else it would go back to the Government Revenue.

For the signing of the Purchase Contract, Father Joe Kearney, the Pallottine Superior and Father Roger McGinley, Parish Priest came along with me. All were one day trips to and from Albany, altogether 550 miles. After we had passed the township of Mt Barker, Father Kearney pointed out to me the speedo meter and said, "John, you are doing 110 mph." My answer, "Joe, I know the road and we have to be at the Real Estate Office at 11 am." We inspected the property and finalised the purchase.

When it was time to return to Perth, Fr Joe Kearney said to me, "If you drive back as fast as we came, I am not going back with you." So I offered to sit in the back seat and Fr Roger took the wheel. On the way home we stopped at a restaurant in Kojunup for a meal. When we were ready to continue the

journey, Fr Kearney said, "Roger, if you keep trotting along as you have, we will never make it home today." I had to take over the wheel again. I think I gave both Fathers a taste of my working style. In February, 1970, the Albany hostel was ready for the first boys.

With the success of Harold and the first two boys from Broome, Joseph Roe and Philip Albert, applications came from all over the place. The need for more hostel accommodation



Students arriving from the Kimberleys.

became urgent. Extensions to the existing boy's wing were built and the time came when we needed more land.

Permission to buy more land was generously given by my superior in Melbourne. The

money had to come from the Pallottines. We needed finance for more buildings and equipment, furniture and a large cool room for instance and more vehicles for transport. The superior had given me a free hand by stating, "John, do what you like, as long as you don't ask me for money." So I developed a system whereby I received one third granted by the Native Welfare Department, one third from the West Australian Lotteries Commission, and one third being our own Pallottine contribution. Most of the Pallottine contribution came through the Mission Office of the German Motherhouse. This was given by generous people through 'Miserior', set up by the Catholic Church in Germany to support the missions. Our successes with the students made it rather easy to find money for the much

needed building expansions.

We tried to help ourselves as much as possible. Brother Valentine had three cows in the paddock we had cleared and 50 hens in an enclosure. Meat came from Tardun farm brought down to Rossmoyne by Brother Stephen as live sheep. These were also kept in the paddock and slaughtered by Brother Valentine as needed. For several years we had our own supply of

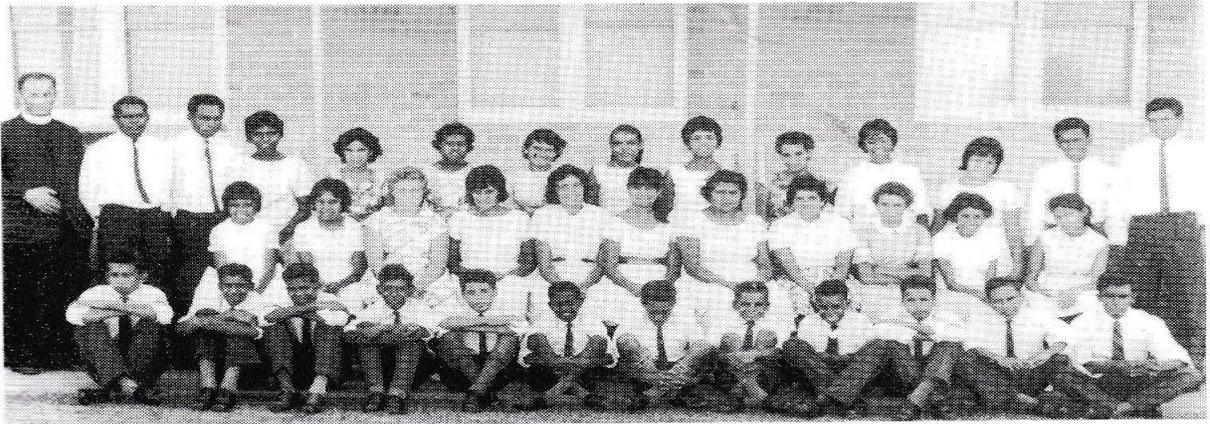
milk, butter, eggs, and meat. Vegetables came from Brother Hubert's garden. Potatoes we collected at or from the West Australian Potato Board, and also the onions, so much liked by the children, they



With Altar Boys Kevin McMahon and Damian Balakey.

even ate them raw. They were supplied free of charge like the potatoes. The Mills and Wares Biscuit Factory in Fremantle supplied us fortnightly with big boxes of biscuits so that the children could eat as many as they liked, but particularly when they came home from school. They called them 'Mission Biscuits' because they were given to us for nothing. Fruit in season was offered by generous orchard owners in the hills.

During one of the regular Sunday meeting with the boys, I told them of everything that was going on and that I was planning something special. I said, "Next year we will also have girls boarding here. Why should only you boys have the chance



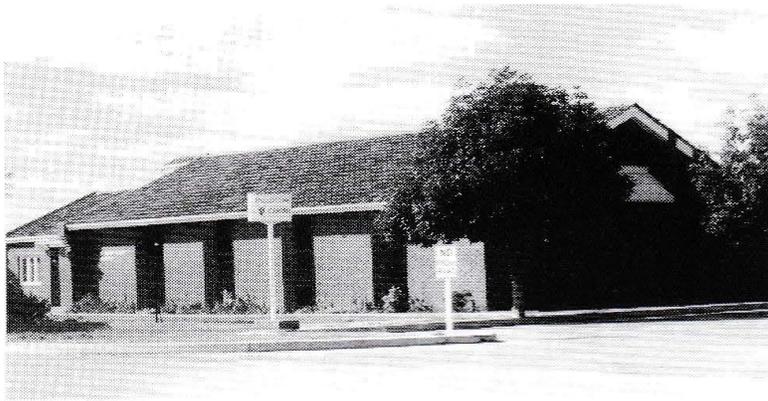
Rossmoyne Family.

of secondary school education? The girls will come from the same places that you come from.” You should have seen their faces. “I want them for you,” I said, “because the time will soon come when you will want to get married and I want you to be able to find a partner having received the same education as you.”

Everywhere I had to break new ground. An incident I remember when I had to find a Catholic High School for the first three girls who were to become boarders in Villa Maria Lodge in 1961. I went to see the Sister in Charge of St Joachims High School (now Ursula Frayne Catholic College in Victoria Park). After a few questions she said “Father, our Year 8 class next year is already booked out. I myself have no problems to admit coloured girls to our school, but what will the parents do if their daughters have to sit next to them in the classroom.” My answer was “Let the parents who object keep their daughters at home and you will have room for my girls.” She wanted first to consult her staff. She finally admitted Cecilia Nannup, Josephine Jackamarra, from Wandering Mission, and Barbara Wright, Clare Dean, Mary Dolby, and Philomena Carter from Broome were accepted at Mercedes College in Perth. The first girls must have done that well that in later years 36 girls at one time were

attending that school and all were happy.

The first Girls' Lodge called 'Villa Maria' was ready in 1961. The houses were purposely not built as institutional buildings, but were large houses with double bedrooms, self contained with their own kitchen, laundry, toilets, showers, and a large sitting room. There was a house telephone and a television. The first television was won by Edith taking first prize from a newspaper competition. The staff consisted of 'living-in' house parents. Lay missionaries, black and white cared for the students as cooks and tutors. 80% of the staff was Aboriginal. This made the children contented and want to stay.



St Vincent Pallotti Chapel, Rossmoyne.

During my first holiday in Germany in 1961, by invitation of Parish Priests, I was preaching about Australian missions and Aborigines nearly every Sunday. At that time I did not know

much about their culture. We were only taught things by anthropologists at a later time. Fr Worms and Fr Nekes had studied the languages. That was before my time, and I had never read about it, I only knew that they had done it. The collection taken up for me was always very good when I spoke of the primitive living conditions of the Aborigines. I took the money back with me to Australia to help provide white living conditions for my charges in Rossmoyne.

Not only did I take the money from the generous collections with me back to Australia, but I also took a Volkswagon car,

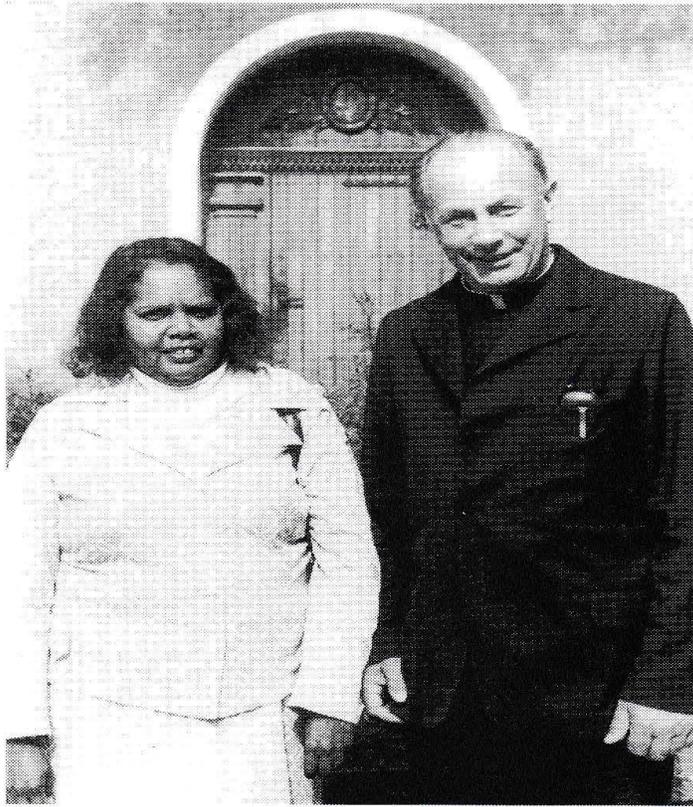
made for export in Germany. It was a donation from my relatives at home. One could import vehicles to Australia duty-free if they were donated. I had it all arranged with the Australian



Migrant Baptism of Tara Zimmermann.

Consulate in Bonn. Through the 'good' office of the German Raffaels Verein helping German migrants, I was offered the Catholic Chaplaincy position on the migrant boat, the 'Aurelia' and was able to put the Volkswagon on the ship as my personal luggage to Australia. An old friend of the Pallottines, Mr Petersen, a Customs Officer in Fremantle, who had been an Altar boy of Bishop Raible in Broome, met me on arrival at the Port of Fremantle. With his help, the unloading of the car went without trouble. Good contacts make many things possible.

At that time I found in the community at large, a very supportive atmosphere towards the Aborigines. Small business bosses would ring me up and ask if I had an Aboriginal lad who wanted to learn a trade. I did not have to look for jobs and employment for them. Many wanted to help looking and caring for students as houseparents or tutors of any kind. Irene de San Miguel (now Stokes) wanted to help for six months and stayed four years until she married. Laurel Nannup and Jenny Hart were good cooks and houseparents for many years. Alan Wilson stayed for several years. he was a popular prefect for the boys. He took them for picnics, boating, fishing and swimming, and he drove them to ovals where they played as members in their



Edith Little with Fr. John in Limburg, Germany.

school teams. High School teachers, Dick Palmer, Keith Morgan, Brendan Davies were tutoring boys and girls in English and Maths. Regina and Michael Moran taught Ballroom Dancing. The girls were taught to make their own dresses by Aggie Van Nieuwburg. All these tutors worked for the love of God, not for money. once a month, the students had the opportunity to be welcomed by host families to spend a day

with their families. Government Departments and the Lotteries Commission were very supportive in all our activities. It was the time when we changed the name of "Pallottine Mission Centre" to "Pallottine Training Centre".

When the students, most of whom came from the North West, were permitted, through their study grant, three free trips a year to visit their families, I approached Mr Kleinig, the General manager of Mac Robertson Miller Airlines for one free return flight a year for me to visit the children's parents up North. He readily agreed. These days people collect frequent flying points so that they can have a free flight. But long before frequent flyer points were heard of, I was given free flights by my students' frequent flights to and from the North.

The Pallottine work for Aborigines must have become somehow known in the State. The Parish Priest from Margaret River, Fr McGrath contacted me to ask if I had boys who would like farming. A parishioner of his, a single man wanted to employ two Aboriginal boys who would like to learn farming. I told him I would come down and have a look at the proposition. With Fr Wendelin Lorenz from Wandering Mission, and his friend, a Wandering farmer, Mr Whitley, we made a trip to Margaret River in my 'imported Volkswagon'. The owner of the farm appeared to me that he was looking for cheap labour rather than as he had indicated that he would hand over the farm one day to the boys. Our general assessment of the offer was negative. We were late returning to Wandering. Though we took a shortcut we began to feel tired when Fr Lorenz started to sing with his beautiful voice 'Nearer my God to Thee'. I got the message. I slowed down. We all arrived home safely. The intention of the farmer was good, but under the circumstances, not acceptable.

Eventually we had four groups of boarders. Each lodge was independent, for student boys, working boys, student girls, working girls. The working boys stayed in Maurice Lodge, a



Edith Little Lodge

separate house, under the guidance of Bro. Valentine. The working girls stayed in the new Villa Lodge. Because of the great demand by applicants we finished in 1980 with three residences for



First former student's marriage – Harold Little and Cecelia Nannup.

boys, students and apprentices and three large lodges for High School girls, student girls and tertiary students for nursing and teaching. Boys had their own basketball courts, girls had their netball and tennis courts. A big playing field and facilities for other outdoor games were provided.

For social functions of all kinds, like birthday parties, a fine Social Centre, a hall, was built. We had a stage there for concerts performed by our boys' music group. They were even asked to play one year at the Christ the King procession at Aquinas College, organised by the Archdiocese of Perth. Four Toyota buses transported the students to and from school and other outings for social functions and excursions. The boys had formed their own basketball teams playing against white teams and they won the premiership at Perry Lakes Stadium twice. Our girls were the best barrackers and supporters and pretty noisy ones too.

Edith Little became the inspirer in all these activities. She was the chief housemother of all the girls, the sporting coach, bus driver, their tutor in so many things. She had no trouble in getting the love and respect of all living at the centre, even when following the discipline of her tutor, myself. In the book *Legacy of Love*, written after her untimely death in 1975 a tribute is paid to her:

“Edith Little was an Aboriginal woman whose warm personality and dedication to her work led Father John Luemmen of the Pallottine Centre in Perth to describe her as “co-founder of the Centre which has become, through her efforts, a centre of hope, pride and achievement for the Aborigines in Western Australia:” Edith was able to communicate equally with uneducated members of her own race, with members of parliament and officials who visited the Centre and with academics during a visit to Germany shortly before her death.”

Father Allan Mithen, the Pallottine Superior, wrote of her in his forward to the book, “Edith Little was a remarkable woman.”

When Edith died suddenly, Margaret Park, a lay missionary who had been Edith’s friend and helper, told something of what followed the breaking of the sad news of her death to those at the Rossmoyne Centre,

“The tremendous impact of shock for Father John was shattering to see. None of us could really believe it so I rang the hospital again and spoke to a Charge Sister. There was no mistake. It was true. Edith had died of a pulmonary embolism and we were all stunned. Father went with Harold Little s wife, Cecilia and two others to the hospital. Here they were given Edith s things which included two books - *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, and *Flying Nurse*, the story of Robin Miller Dicks who died in Perth a few days later at the age of thirty five.”

Edith Little had achieved much with discipline, fairness and love.

My aim was not too high for in 1966, we celebrated in a most solemn way the first wedding between ex students, Harold Little and Cecilia Nannup. The church wedding was in the Pallottine Chapel, where the whole community of the Centre worshipped on Sundays, joined by the parishioners living close by. It was our spiritual powerhouse. The wedding reception afterwards was in the Social Centre, the Hall. One hundred and fifty relations and friends had accepted the invitation. Among the guests were the Minister of the State Native Welfare Department, Mr Edward Lewis M. L. A., and his wife. The Chairman of the Lotteries Commission was also there, Mr Alan McDonald. They were both great supporters of our mission endeavour. Friends, black and white alike were there. There was good food, and the usual toasts, cutting the cake, and dancing. At the end of the party about midnight a caravan was ready for the bride and groom to go on their honeymoon. The caravan had been generously loaned by our builder, Les Serfozo. After their return the young married couple could move into their own house, built with a bank loan on subdivided land formerly owned by the Pallottines.

The 'assimilation policy', supported by Paul Hasluck (later Sir Paul Hasluck, Governor General of Australia), was phased into an 'integration policy', and later still was replaced by the 'self determination policy' for Aboriginal People. I had to sit



Harold and Cecilia's house, 47 Ionic Street, Rossmoyne.

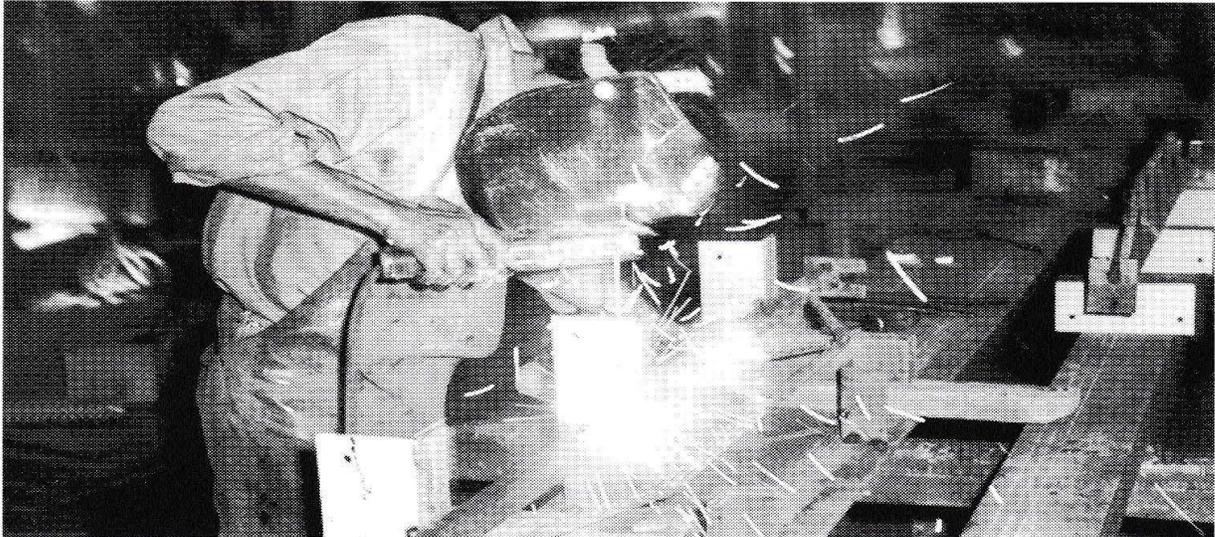
back and wonder if my policy was on the right track. I had confided in Edith Little. She summed it up saying, "Father, if we want to succeed and become equal

in the Australian society, we have no other choice than to aim for and to accept the white way of life.” It was an Aboriginal who told me this, and for me that counted a great deal.

I had also received encouragement in my educational policy from comments made by Mr Kim Beazley Senior, M.P. in a debate on education in Canberra, taken from Hansard, 26th Parliament, Second Session 1968, page 1279. He had said,

“How much do we do as parents in bridging the gap that exists after a child leaves school and before he gets a job? For the Aboriginal people there is no-one to bridge the gap between their leaving school and getting a job. Their parents are far less sophisticated than they are, and less capable of handling the problems in the white community. But one impressive fact emerges. An institution near Perth, run by Catholic clergy – I think they are Pallottine Fathers – does precisely this job of helping the Aboriginal child who has left school to make his way in society. Beyond this, the Aboriginal people encounter in the Great Southern area of Western Australia and everywhere else people who will not have Aboriginal girls as shop assistants or in any other job, although anybody who goes to Wellington Street in Perth at night will see that plenty of people are willing to degrade them as prostitutes. What assistance do they need after leaving school and how well can this assistance be organised? Can the Commonwealth learn anything from the Pallottine Fathers? This could be an important aspect of an inquiry into education.”

In 1972 with my staff, we produced a policy statement entitled “Aims and Policy of Rossmoyne Training Centre” and this is attached under Notes no. 1.



Philip Albert, Boilermaker and Welder.

An unexpected response came from Edith Little when planning the new chapel. I had contacted an artist to draw a proposal on paper for a black Madonna, similar to the picture of the black Madonna in Darwin. The artist gave me three proposals. Edith took one look and said, “This is a Chinese woman.” Then after a few seconds she said, “Father why must we have a black Madonna in our church? I don’t want to be reminded when I go to church that I am a black woman. That settled my way of thinking. A fine wooden carved Madonna was donated and is still in the chapel today.

How often did Edith tell me, “That is white man’s doing.” She believed for instance in Aboriginal bush medicine which she had learnt from her mother. Before she died, her gracious mother had moved to Perth, and wanted to be baptised to join the children in their faith. Of course I was very happy to do so. She came to me sometimes for a chat. She herself was taken away from her parents and sent to Moore River, one of the ‘Stolen Generation’. Here she met her future husband Harold Little.

In all major matters in caring for the Aboriginal people at

Rossmoyne, I was keen to hear Edith's opinion, and took her advice. I was somehow seen as authoritarian, but how could it be different when I had been a German officer, trained in a German army.

I also wanted to know what our students were thinking, so I employed a lady teacher, Mrs Beverley Mulholland, to find out from the boys and girls their ways of thinking. She set up a questionnaire to be answered on Aboriginality. She wrote about 'The Influence of the Pallottine Training Centre, Rossmoyne, on the Assimilation of People of Part Aboriginal Descent into the Total Australian Community' for her thesis for the Teachers' Higher Certificate, and presented it in December, 1972. My conclusion was, Yes, Edith Little was right, it did not bring any new light.

Still on another occasion at the usual Sunday meeting in the hall with working boys and working girls, I asked them if they wanted to know more of Aboriginal culture, if so, then I would find some of their elders to teach them but I could not do it as a



Birthday Party at the Centre Hall.

European migrant in Australia. A girl stood and said, "Father you can't turn the wheel back that we should return to our old reserve and camp life." One day, the Chairman of the Rossmoyne Centre's Council, Gabby Willoway, asked me if he could conduct the next Sunday's meeting in the hall. He wanted himself to ask particularly the older girls why they changed their black boyfriends as soon as they grew older, for white boyfriends. There was absolute silence and the heads went down. After requesting or demanding an answer, their responses were like this. "I don't like to be married to a drunkard;" "I want to live in a decent house." The chairman almost lost his cool and declared, "I will never marry a white girl." His own dark engaged girl friend yelled out, "Gabby, if you want to marry me and live in a mia mia, then forget about me." That settled that question. Both later married, Gabby, a bank teller and accountant, and Norma, a receptionist and typist. They had two children and Gabby has now passed away.

After leaving Rossmoyne, Gabby Willoway, who had become an Aboriginal leader, told me he made a survey of ex-students about what they were doing in life as adults. He had found that 72% were employed. This was a surprise result. I had not asked for that survey to be made, it was an Aboriginal who initiated it himself. I had tried very hard to strengthen their self esteem, give them goals to go for. I made demands on them. Despite their occasional grumbling, they seemed to accept me.

In the earlier times in Rossmoyne, Aborigines would only tell you what they thought you wanted to hear. This of course has changed to the contrary these days. Some of our former students have become well known for their achievements: Peter Yu is coordinator of the Kimberley Land Council; Stephen Albert served for some time as consultant for the Minister of Aborigines in Canberra with a very high salary. He later became known as

'Baamba Albert', singer and actor; Jimmy Chi is the play writer of *Bran Nue Dai & Corrogation Road*.

The Broome Pigrim boys are known as the "Scrap Metal Band" and give concerts all over the place; Frank Stack from Wandering is employed as an accountant of a fish export firm.; Jessie May (Noel) graduated as a Triple certificate nursing sister and became Director of an Aboriginal medical organisation; Kaye McGuinness of Derby is a qualified lawyer on the Bar in Adelaide. I could go on and on.

There came a time when my superior, Fr Kearney, wanted to shift me from Rossmoyne after my holiday overseas in 1969. I had been there for 14 years. Nine years was the maximum stay according to Canon Law. Edith got to know about it. She wrote a letter to him in Melbourne with 14 signatures of white and black staff members. They would quit work at Rossmoyne if I did not come back. He reversed his decision.

To deal with the high demand for places, I established another hostel in Mosman Park, on the request of the Government. It was to serve for working boys who were employed in the Fremantle area. My good friend, Fr Bryan Tiernan was prepared to be in charge of the hostel. He was then the 'Mobile Mission' Director. The houseparents would look after the boys for their daily needs.

I did not like to knock back applicants for Rossmoyne if they were recommended by their schools, parents or guardians. They had to sign a paper that they wanted their children to board and study in Perth.

Since Edith had died in 1975 I found it increasingly difficult to get staff and this eventually wore me out. Bishop Gilbert Rego from India came to Australia to visit his sister Monica in the

Riverton parish and he became aware of my problem in getting good staff. He said, "I have a young couple, both teachers, who could help you because, apart from anything else they could help the students with their homework." At the time it was not easy for people to come from India to Australia. I had to come up with a solid reason for the Immigration Department in Perth to convince them to consider my request. They finally contacted the Australian representative in New Delhi and asked him to tell Bruno and Florence George approval had been given to come to Australia. Within five weeks time they were here and I was happy to pay their fare. To their surprise they were given approval for permanent residence in Australia, although I had only asked for three years. Both being qualified teachers, they became good house parents at Rossmoyne and helped the students with their homework.

It was a great joy to be invited as an Honorary Guest to the Premiere showing of the play, '*Bran Nue Dae*' in 1990, written by Jimmy Chi who had been a Rossmoyne student, the first Aboriginal university student, 'The Pigram Boys' and other actors, also former students. After the show, Steven Albert came to me and said, "Pop, if we had not learnt discipline at Rossmoyne by you, we would never have been able to go through the training of this play."

In the Programme for the Play, the former Prime Minister of Australia, The Honourable Paul Keating was quoted as saying,

"Successful home grown musicals have been rare things in Australian theatre history, how much rarer, then, is a successful Aboriginal Australian Musical. The creators of '*Bran Nue Dae*' have already achieved what few others have managed to do, and along the way they have shown that there is a large audience waiting to see and hear the contemporary Aboriginal

story told. It is a landmark show. A landmark in Australian musical theatre. A landmark in Aboriginal theatre. And, no less significantly, a landmark on the road to a relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal which is more like it should be - one which is fair and equal, but more than that, one built on a sense of shared experience. In giving us an idea of the creative possibilities in bringing the indigenous and non-indigenous cultures of Australia together, *'Bran Nue Dae'* hints at the benefits which might flow from a general reconciliation between black and white Australia. For all those who contributed to this and previous productions have our thanks and very best wishes."

After a total of 25 years service in Rossmoyne, first as mission superior and parish priest and then as full time mission superior only, I resigned on advice from Fr Muenz, the Provincial in Germany. He said that if I did not pull out soon, after all these years working with youth, I would be too old to start in another ministry. I was almost worn out at the age of 60, but I carried on a bit longer.

During my time at Rossmoyne I have been blessed with many supportive friends in various Government Departments in particular Mr Frank Gare, the Commissioner of Native Welfare as well as many people of the general public, black and white alike. Many served as lay missionaries with great devotion and loyalty, male, female married couples and singles. May God bless them for their labour of love. In 1979, the Queen of England awarded me with the British Empire Medal for service to Aboriginal and Migrant Welfare. Many friends and people across Australia sent me telegrams of congratulation and I was overjoyed by this. There was one from the Prime Minister,

Malcolm Fraser, and eight from Commonwealth and State Government Ministers.

I left to begin a holiday in Europe, regarded today as a sabbatical. Today, years later, at the presbytery I still get very pleasant phone calls and visits from former students telling me of having obtained a triple certificate in nursing, or of becoming a teacher, or lawyer or asking me for help and advice. They sometimes come to visit, wanting me to baptise their children.

Pallottine Training Centre, Rossmoyne, W.A. : Aims and Policy, by
Principal and Staff, 1972 See Notes 1.

For lists of places from which students came See Notes 2.

Chapter 6 Sabbatical 1980-1981

Not everything went smoothly for me in Rossmoyne as perhaps for people in any other walk of life but I enjoyed and loved my work tremendously. To find good staff had become more and more difficult.

All members on the staff were voluntary workers with no payment but only keep and pocket money. This problem began soon after Edith's death. I would like to mention that about 450 people attended her funeral Mass held in Queen of Apostle's Church 8 December 1975. Amongst the mourners to pay tribute to her life were representatives of the Catholic Church in Perth, Bishop Peter Quinn, and high government native welfare officers who got

to know Edith as the lady in charge of the Pallottine Centre. Aboriginal people came even from Melbourne and Sydney. They had got to know her on the occasion of the consecration of Father Jobst as Bishop. Mum Shirl, an Aboriginal leader from Redfern was one of them.



His Excellency The Governor of Western Australia, Air Chief Marshall Sir Wallace Kyle confers Father John Leummen with the Queen's Award, the British Empire Medal in Government House, Perth, 19.9.79.

I would like to quote from a Pallottine newsletter 6 April

1976, where I expressed my feelings in this way:

“We all miss her very much, perhaps nobody more than the one who worked with her for the last twenty years at Rossmoyne, one who regards her as the co-founder, inspirator, soul and backbone of the Pallottine Centre which has become, through her a Centre of hope, pride and achievement for the Aborigines in Western Australia.

For myself it was a great privilege to work with such a fine person of Aboriginal descent, so dedicated and loyal to her calling. may her noble soul rest in peace and let us work and pray that Edith Little may become the first canonised Aboriginal saint in heaven.”

Early on I had boasted that I would not need volunteers from Melbourne who were trained as lay missionaries to be sent to mission stations in West Australia. Edith’s personality drew good people from the West to look after our houses as houseparents. That was changing. Now. I felt I was being punished for my boasting. I started to feel mentally and



Celebrating Mass with Pallottine Confreres in Via Dolorosa, Jerusalem 1980.

physically worn out. I took it as God’s providence and with prayer began to prepare my resignation as I was advised to do. Now I felt the time to do this had come. I had turned 65 years of age and had worked for

twenty-five years at the same place. I took long leave as soon as my replacement arrived, Father Eddy Wehrmaker. He was only appointed to fill in until next election time.

Margaret Park, Edith's assistant and a convert to the faith resigned as she was not needed by the new regime. Beverley Mulholland wrote of her role at Rossmoyne, in her thesis 1972, page 82:

“Miss Margaret Park is the resident housekeeper of the Centre and her duties include attending to visitors, supervision of the cooking and the laundry, the general running of the schoolboys' section, which includes driving them to school. For a while Miss Park worked as Matron at the girls' section, and she has been at the centre for five years and is a most reliable and valued staff member.”

Margaret took Edith's place when she went overseas in 1975 and she became the backbone for Rossmoyne after Edith's death 2 December 1975. She became my lifesaver when I needed her and helped me later to get on my feet in the new appointment at Riverton when she offered to be my housekeeper and secretary.

Most of my sabbatical I spent at home and stayed with my sister-in-law, Gertrude Dickerboom and her husband Willi in Appeldorn in the house where I was born. The children of the second marriage had arranged that I had a car for my own use so that I could visit relatives and friends now that I had the time for it. As a 'wounded soldier' coming out of the battlefield in Australia I had to be careful driving in Germany getting used to driving on the right side, the tremendous traffic and the high speeds on the autobahns. My chauffeur and valet from my time spent in Italy and Austria during the war Helmut Schmidt

became my driver for longer trips visiting other mutual comrades from the wartime and two families who had been living as migrants in Riverton but had returned to Germany to stay. Indeed a happy reunion, and meeting of old friends again. The best bottle out of their wine cellars put us in the right spirit.

Of course I made sure that I spent time in our mother house in Limburg meeting also old friends. The old retired and sick confreres reminded me of my own situation. They inspired me not to despair because they were still very cheerful in their retirement. I was lucky to be able to join the pilgrimage of 22 Pallottine priests to the Holy Land. I was able to follow Jesus' footsteps physically and spiritually. But I was not well. That was shown when the whole group left early in the morning from the foot of Mt Sinai led by a guide to the top to see the beautiful sunrise. Mass was said on a big rock as altar with all of us sitting on the slope around exhausted from climbing to the top. I suddenly blacked out, and fell into my neighbour's lap unconscious. Of course this was a shock for the concelebrants who wondered what had happened to the visiting missionary from Australia. What they did for me I do not know, but I was fully recovered again for the time of consecration. They all must have prayed for me and I thank God for the privilege of seeing so many famous places in the Holy Land. Coming down from the mountain caused me no trouble. Back in Jerusalem the group leader asked me to be the main celebrant for the Mass in the Via Dolorosa. Whenever I come to Limburg, confreres remind me of the scare I gave them on Mt Sinai.

Good old Father Francis Huegel, a health conscious man, had advised me to undergo a health check up each year. I had never done it. Not being in the best of health, I thought it would be best to have this done in Germany during my holiday. The top physician of the Pallottine Sisters' hospital in Bensberg near



With closest relatives, Hubert Terlinden with his wife Henny (nee Luemmen) and Henny's mother Gertrud, my sister-in-law and Martina.

Cologne diagnosed my health as nervous exhaustion. I had a growth on my head and went to see a skin specialist. She gave me a referral to another specialist at the University clinic in Cologne because she thought it needed to be removed. He did a good job cutting out the cancerous growth which then required a skin graft from my leg. A big scar is left on my head. He said, "Father, we have cut it out deep, you will have no trouble any more."

The unexpected time in hospital nearly cancelled a planned visit to England to meet Margaret Park who was visiting her relations and she had planned with me to take me around Ireland in a hired car. Being on holiday I meant to make the most of it and get back to good health. To recharge I also made sure to take part in a retreat given by Fr Muenz. My dear niece Henny (nee Luemmen) and her husband Hubert Terlinden and their family in Uedem have always been very kind and generous to me during

the holidays. And also her mother Gertrud Dickerboom in Appeldorn expecting and inviting me to come back to Germany and stay. I felt not yet led by the Spirit. I came back to Australia.

On my return to Australia I had no job because new elections were in process. Father Benno Rauch, as regional superior had declined to be re-elected but he had told me before my leave it would be wise if I would stay in West Australia for a new appointment. He asked me to come to Millgrove in Victoria until the elections were over and to wait there. But when the result came out a complaint was made to Rome about a technicality of the election which was not observed, and Father General in Rome had no other choice but to declare the election null and void and ask for a new election. That would take a few months so I had another holiday. I took the time to walk in the beautiful surroundings of Millgrove and this helped heal me spiritually.

Then the newly elected superior, Father Allan Mithen, appointed me the parish priest of Queen of Apostles Parish in Riverton. That suited me to the ground. After having gone through the mid life crisis I wanted to enter into full time pastoral work. Most of the time in Australia I had been engaged in work for Aboriginal youth, being an administrator, builder and organizer, more or less more businessman than priest. I longed to return to full time priestly work even if my mission work had been recognised and been awarded in the Queen's honour list with the British Empire Medal, BEM, for service to Aboriginal and Migrant Welfare. The investiture took place in the Government House ballroom, by the Governor of West Australia, Air Chief Marshal Sir Wallace Kyle, 9 September 1979, the last year before I packed to go overseas. Even then I did not feel very well.

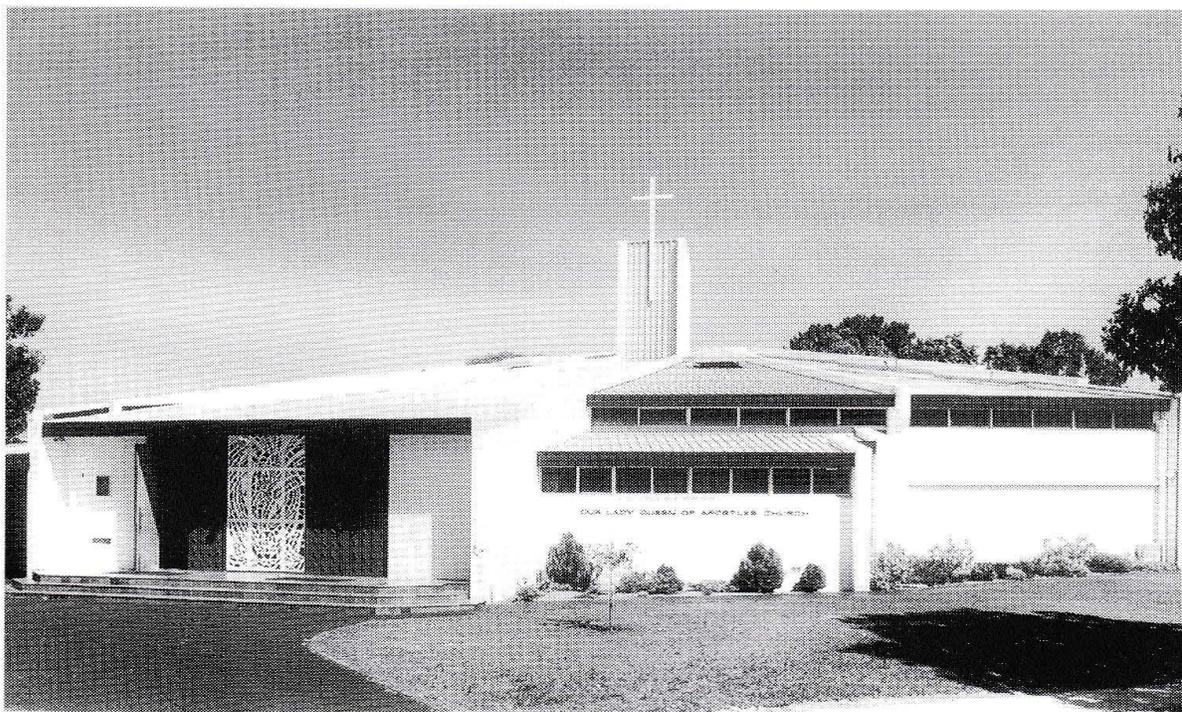
For the trust put in me by Fr Mithen, and to be replaced by

three Pallottines at Rossmoyne I will ever be very grateful. One of them said at the dinner, when Allan announced the new appointments for Riverton and Rossmoyne, "John, congratulations, three men will replace you at Rossmoyne!"

Chapter 7

Queen of the Apostles, Riverton 1956-1963; 1981-Present

Father Leo Hornung lived in our first Pallottine house in Rivervale, Perth, and voluntarily looked after German speaking migrants. Austrians, Poles, Hungarians, Swiss, Lithuanians, all spoke German. He was appointed the first parish priest of the new Riverton parish in 1951. This was a very low lying area situated on the River Canning. Most land was uncleared bush with few houses and a still small Catholic population where new migrants could buy cheap building blocks. In 1953 Fr Leo built a church hall where he could say Mass on Sundays and organise social functions to gather the people to develop a family spirit, and of course to raise money to build the Catholic Church. More people moved into the area across the Riverton bridge. It was planned to start a Catholic Primary School. A small convent was



Queen of Apostles Church, Riverton



Mary Queen of Apostles Patroness Feast

built in 1955 to house the first teacher, Sr Magdlen, one of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary who accompanied me to Australia in 1951. Her community was working in Tardun, and they had branched out to the Wandering Mission and now to the Riverton Parish.

A new parish priest, Father Anthony Omasmeir still lived in Rivervale until asked by the Archbishop to live in the parish to carry on Fr Leo Hornung's work with the migrants. He took up residence in the new Riverton Mission Centre later known as Rossmoyne. This house had served as the presbytery of the parish until the sisters built their own convent.

In December 1955 I arrived at the scene to help the parish priest and to start the venture with Aboriginal youth. A few months later I took over both positions, parish priest and mission superior.

The Riverton parish school started with 34 children in the supper room of the hall. A year later we divided the hall with

concertina doors, to be used during the week as classrooms and on Sundays as Church. Desks, and other furniture had to be taken out for Sunday, and church pews put in, vice versa on Sunday night. We needed to build a verandah to keep the furniture out of the weather. We had a good parish committee. With their drive we were able to build with self help. People had little money. They were keen to offer labour. I used this as a test knowing we would soon have to build proper classrooms as the number of children grew out of our hall. With great willingness and enthusiasm we started to build the new classrooms at the end of the 1960 school year and two classrooms were ready at the beginning of the new school year. I had to give permission to work right through the Sundays in order for the buildings to be finished in time. The Church Office had granted the money to build one classroom but we dared to build two straight away to meet the expected need of another for the following year. I found the money from good wheat farmer friends from my time in Tardun. They put extra crops in and sent the money to us after the harvest. So we could pay for both classrooms. With the good spirit in the parish, holding bazaars, fetes, and money raising functions provided funds to buy the furniture for school and church hall. The best helpers for these fund raising functions were Ray and Ena Smith, and two ladies, Mrs Kath Motchman and Mrs Lona Porter.

In 1963 when Father Paul Wagenknecht was appointed parish priest (He wanted to be called Paul to avoid having two Johns), but he still had to reside with me at the Mission.

A planned kindergarten to be conducted by the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, I reached fruition through an unexpected grant from the Lotteries Commission and the Canning Shire Council. Fr Paul with the help of parishioners erected the building. That had been my last effort in my double position as parish priest and

mission superior. I stayed on in Rossmoyne to carry on the special missionary work with Aboriginal youth which I had started there at the Centre. This work was my baby and I wanted it to grow up. I was there for many more years.

In 1981, after my sabbatical year, with a full time appointment as parish priest of Riverton I entered the second phase of my priestly life. For the first time I had an assistant priest. When the rumours went around that I would come back to the parish, some people remarked, "Father John will not like the appointment because in the parish there is nothing to build any more." They knew me from my activities at Rossmoyne more than anything else, as a builder. Amazingly the first thing I did in the Parish was not to erect a building but to demolish one. That was the first small house originally built for the sisters. Later on it was used as presbytery and 'Communicare' Headquarters. This was a joint ecumenical venture formed to help less disadvantaged in the community now the major community services centre in the South District. Fr John Flynn had built the beautiful church, 'Our Lady Queen of Apostles'. He had also added more classrooms to the school. My immediate predecessor, Father Roger McGinley built the presbytery in 1977. With that the Riverton parish seemed to be completed.

My intention when coming back was to build the parish up not physically but spiritually. I became a priest because I wanted to serve people. Now they were mostly adult Europeans, Asians and Indians rather than Aborigines. When my name was mentioned in the Queen's Honour List for service to Aboriginal and Migrant Welfare I thought to myself, for Aborigines, perhaps yes, but for migrants what have I done. I had said special Masses for German speaking people, and had arranged Christmas parties, and I had looked after migrants in the Riverton parish where we had a high percentage, but that was only a side line in

my priestly work. I tried to help anybody who needed assistance. One day I had a letter from Fr Tiernan who was on a priestly mission for five years in India. He asked me to sponsor an Indian family to migrate to Australia. He had been approached by Father D' Cruz in Nagpur. He knew that I could guarantee accommodation and employment with my many contacts in Perth. The Fernandes family arrived with three children, the youngest Tina, 6 years old. A small cottage with two bedrooms was prepared. It was Australian winter, fairly cold, and the children were lonely and shivering. For warmth they all slept in one bed. The children asked "Can we go back to India?" I was used to the difficulty of settling down lonely Aborigines from the hot north when they came to Rossmoyne, so I understood. I did not look straight away for a position for Cyril but through conversation I noticed that he was worried. He was an accountant in the Audit Department of the Indian Government. I contacted the Public Service Commissioner for an appointment. The personnel officer recognised Cyril. He had no equivalent position to that in India but Cyril was happy with what was offered. Any job as long as he could work himself up would do. His wife Noreen became the first lay teacher in the Queen of Apostles School. This family has become a great asset to the parish. The untimely and sudden death of Noreen attracted a huge crowd at her funeral. She was my consultant in family and spiritual matters in the parish and her absence along with many others is very much felt by me.

While at Rossmoyne, I had purposely kept in touch with general pastoral work. At times I said three Masses on Sundays, heard confessions, had weddings and baptisms, most of them from my work with German migrants. I still had a sharp learning curve initially. The Vatican Council II had brought a new way of thinking in matters of liturgy, ecumenism, and the church in the modern world. St Vincent Pallotti had been a forerunner of

Vatican II because of his idea of the Apostolate of lay people in the Church. However, as Pallottine, I found it easy to work in this way as his simple motto was, “All people should be Christians, all Christians should be Catholics, and all Catholics should be Apostles!”

Once a year we advertised the Brisbane Inquiry Course (20 lessons) for non-Catholics and Catholics, Sister Anita was the driving force behind that. At the end of the courses an average of seven people decided to become Catholics. The now more popular the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RICA) increases our Parish Census at Easter by about the same number.

I had great support from Sister Anne as the Sacristan in the church and being the Religious Coordinator in the schools. She introduced the Children s Liturgy of the Word at the Sunday Mass. For the Christmas and Easter Liturgies she involved many



Queen of Apostles School

children, her kind and methodical methods made these celebrations most meaningful for the whole parish. The Children's Mass for Christmas became so popular that we introduced an extra Mass for the adult youth in the parish.

Since coming to the Archdiocese of Perth I have worked under four Archbishops. Archbishop Prendiville was a great planner and builder establishing many new parishes with churches and schools, and giving them into the charge of orders, one of them was the Riverton Parish. His successor was Archbishop Dr Goody, a fine administrator and an intelligent chief pastor, followed by Archbishop Bill Foley. Some people called him a people's bishop and now we have Archbishop Hickey as our chief pastor. I got on well with all of them. Each of course had his own style of leadership. I learnt a lot following their suggestions and proposals to be a good parish priest, how to lead the flock. I embraced full time parish work, so much so that it gave me new life, I loved it as much as I loved the mission work at Tardun and Rossmoyne. Believing in God's Providence and putting myself under the Mother of God's care from my early years in Schoenstatt I feel I am fulfilling my priestly vocation.

I saw the growing of a poor Riverton area with humble dwellings change into a wealthy district with magnificent houses built along the river. Town planners created new localities, Rossmoyne, Shelley, Willetton, Ferndale, and Lynwood, but the parish boundaries remained the same, they all belonged in our parish. Wilson across the river and Lynwood under the new name of Langford became independent from the Riverton parish. Old Canning Vale belonged to us, and today people of new Canning Vale have no new proper boundaries.

Because of demands for more places in our school and lack of more available land, a second school, 'Orana' was built two

kilometres away. It was still in our Parish boundaries. This new school was to take Queen of Apostles School overflow but with 100 baptisms annually we looked for other possibilities. Orana school was transferred to the Willetton parish. We looked for more land adjacent to the church property and eventually purchased a large block which was valued at \$250,000. With the excellent cooperation of the Parish Council and School Board, the Archbishop gave permission to go ahead with a two stream primary school and a new Pre-Primary School. It was for me a great pleasure to work with so many helpful and skilful people in the parish. After all I still remained being 'John the builder!'

That was the biggest project. There were smaller projects in the parish. There was the building of a meeting room with library, a school tuckshop, extension of the parish school hall, extension of the Church foyer with piety stall, the adding to the presbytery of an office and small meeting room, and also a house built for a newly appointed 'Parish Caretaker', a misnomer because he is a 'Jack of All Trades'. All have proved very useful, and are now essential. The second term of office for the parish priest helped enthusiasm and spiritual life in the parish to grow equally. In building up the parish spirituality the assistant priests, the Schoenstatt Sisters, and the caretaker, Ernest John have been of eminent assistance. My loyal friend Margaret Park, being housekeeper and secretary for several years, put it this way, "Your success in your work is due to the good back up." To all of them I am most thankful. I pray that they will be rewarded a hundredfold.

To build up the spirit and growing faith of the Parish three Redemptorist priests gave a big Parish Mission for three weeks ending with a candle procession with a Mass in the open presided over by Bishop Healy. It was a successful mission particularly the Home Gatherings. Each person in the parish was

invited to come to one of these. In May each year in preparation for the feast of the Patroness of the Parish, we had a preached Novena. I always invited a priest from outside to speak. In 1987, Father John McCullagh, Professor of Pastoral Studies, Maynooth University, Dublin Ireland, Pastor, Broadcaster BBC TV and Radio, gave the talks for Mary Queen of Apostles feast. He was an excellent preacher. He spoke for nine days. He gave a talk early in the morning for those who had to go to work. 9 o'clock was the next session and another at 7.30 pm filled the church each time. To fly him over from Ireland was money well spent coming from generous collections of the parishioners.

A beautiful statue of the Sacred Heart from the old Church Hall had not found a place in the new church. A concerned parishioner, Jim Cole had saved and kept it in his home. But it had a broken arm. I had it mended by an artist and gave it a place in the church. This was greatly appreciated particularly by migrants from Asian countries. This led to renewing the first Friday Mass in honour of the Sacred heart. The assistant priest Father Pat Jackson with his great enthusiasm and drive, restored new life in the parish youth groups with prayer and music. He attracted a great number of parishioners to 'All Night Vigils' which ended with Mass at 6 in the morning.

In 1989 Archbishop Foley called a year of mission for the Archdiocese and the first exercise given to each parish was to work on an oral history of the parish. Our committee decided to make it a written oral history, '*Growing in Faith*' with articles written by parishioners and plenty of coloured photos. A beautiful book was published under the guidance of editor of Dom Francis Byrne, OSB, and parishioners are very proud of this and use it for reference to the 'good old days'.

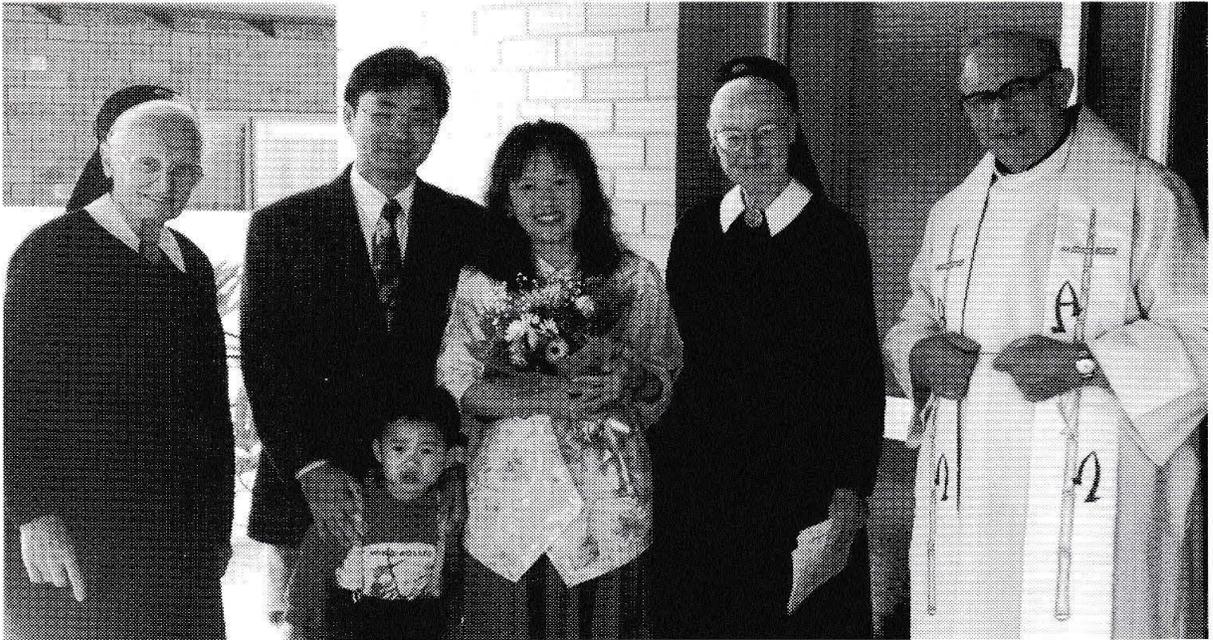
In 1994, at Mass on the first Sunday of Advent I suffered a severe heart attack after the Gospel. A parishioner attending the

Mass, Dr Elizabeth Fisher, applied first aid and rang for an ambulance on her mobile phone. Fr Dean Bradbury was called to continue the Mass. I was taken to hospital, treated for angina and later had an angiogram and angioplasty, with five days in intensive care, at the age of 75 years of age. I handed over the reins of the parish to my assistant priest, Fr Dean. I was made Pastor Emeritus and now I can carry on as assistant priest as long as I am able and am permitted to do so. I wish to remain in parish work. My superior, Fr McMahan gave me the following instructions, "John, you can stay in the same house, you can remain in the same room, and sleep in the same bed, but sometimes you have to change the bed sheets."

In my personal report for the 8th Assembly for all the Pallottines held in October 1997, I had to answer the last question, "What are your future plans, dreams and visions?" I answered, "I wish to remain in a caring and loving Pallottine community, praying to remain a happy priest and to die a happy death."



Sr. M. Mauritia with a kindergarten class in 1961.



Convert family Dennis and Bee Foo and son Alex with Sr. M Anita and Sr. M Anne.



Outing with Senior Parishioners.

Notes

- 1. Pallottine Training Centre, Rossmoyne, W.A.:
Aims and Policy, 1972** **J. Luemmen and Staff**

PREFACE

Education plays an increasing part in the vocational, cultural, economical and social development of the community today. This emphasis is important to the wider community, but even more so to those of Aboriginal descent.

In providing a full range of educational opportunity for Aboriginal youth, the Pallottine Training Centre has grown from a humble beginning to a unique Centre of Education.

This brochure is presented to familiarise students, prospective staff and interested persons with the aims and ideas of the Centre.

1. GENERAL AIM

The aim of the Pallottine Training Centre at Rossmoyne is to develop Aboriginal leaders who can not only adapt and live successfully in the environment in which they find themselves, but can teach their own people to adapt and live successful and decent lives in this changing world.

This is to be done by guiding children of Aboriginal descent through an educative system so as to develop leadership and the ability not only to be useful citizens, but to encourage others of their people to do likewise.

2. WHAT IS THE CENTRE?

Serving as a city Hostel for Aboriginal youth, the Centre provides more than board and lodging, and is not an institution.

Forming part of the normal suburban situation, the Centre encourages and educates young people in a family atmosphere. Those in residence consist of High School students of both sexes, and apprentices and vocational trainees - both boys and girls.

Applications for new admissions are received from parents as a rule, and only in exceptional cases, from Governmental agencies. Once accepted, the students live in separate houses of 9 to 18 members, where they sleep in single and double bedrooms under the care of house parents (a married couple), or a house mother. Although the boys and girls are segregated, the fully self-contained houses are situated close to each other, with a communal Chapel, a hall, and a variety of sport and recreational facilities. From the Centre, the students and workers attend schools and employment on an equal standing with members of the wider community.

3. WHERE IS IT SITUATED?

Situated on a site of approximately 25 acres at Fifth Avenue, Rossmoyne, nine miles from the centre of Perth, the Pallottine Training Centre is placed close enough to city activity and at the same time allows for an open environment. Adjacent to the Canning River, the suburb of Rossmoyne is a well appointed, fast growing district.

4. UNDER WHOSE MANAGEMENT?

The Centre is owned and conducted by the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Inc.) - a religious community of Priests and Brothers (Pallottines) who first came to Australia in 1901. They came to work amongst Australian Aboriginals in the Kimberley. The Priests and Brothers are ably assisted at Rossmoyne by a fine group of volunteers, and partly by their own 'old boys and

girls’.

5. DISTANT HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From colonial times onwards, the care of Aborigines was shared by various Church bodies, although the financial obligation rested with the Government. When the Government took control of the Aboriginal Protection Board in 1897, the expenditure for the Aborigines in Western Australia dropped considerably. It was about that time that many Church bodies became involved in the plight of the coloured people. They set up Missions in the deserts and in the more populated areas of Aborigines, to meet their greatest needs. They established hospitals and schools, and the Government opened ration centres on the edge of deserts in the North-West and Eastern Goldfields. The dark race for a long time was thought to be a “dying race”, and the Government’s policy seemed to be a very uncertain one, “inclining at times towards annihilation rather than preservation of the dark race”.

The work of the Missions as a whole is summed up by Mary Durack in *The Rock and the Sand*: ... “It provided a ray of hope in the prevailing gloom of their predicament. It was for many their only means of survival, and their sole reason for regeneration.”

Since the compulsory school attendance for Aboriginal children was introduced, the existing Mission Schools could not adequately cope with the increasing number of children. The Government opened Departmental Hostels in country centres all over Western Australia, where the coloured children could be placed to board and attend Government schools. But what would happen to those who had completed primary education? At first there were not many, of course. In most country towns, no High Schools were available at that time. White parents would as a

rule, send their children to Perth to attend boarding schools. Dark children had practically no chance of Secondary education because their parents - if any - could not afford to pay for the maintenance of their children living away from home. Under these circumstances, they were practically barred from Secondary education altogether.

Christian Missions, including the Pallottines who were conducting large Mission schools in the country, had no-where to send their brighter students after completion of Primary school, for higher education.

To find ways and means, particularly after the failure of the first Governmental efforts in Perth, appeared very difficult. The problems which caused the Government to close down their first two Hostels, would have to be encountered by the Church organisations in the same way, namely: lack of finance; lack of success; home sickness; climate changes; no social acceptance; greater competition in schools; living-to-rule difficulties; and acceptance and employment problems of the few successful school leavers.

The beginning at Rossmoyne (then called Riverton) in 1956, could only be regarded as a bold venture on a trial basis.

6. IMMEDIATE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

With greater activity and more general business, the Pallottines felt they needed stop-over place in Perth for their Mission people in the North. After having first obtained such a place in Rivervale in the form of a large house, they built a Mission Centre (as it was then called) at Riverton. It was a condition laid down by Father Girke, the then Principal of the Pallottine Mission School at Tardun - who financed the new Centre - that a few of his boys from Tardun Mission could be

accommodated as Apprentices at the new Centre. It appeared, however, that the first two boys to arrive from Tardun in 1957, with the newly appointed Priest - Father John Luemmen - to look after them, were not ready academically nor otherwise to be accepted by white employers as Apprentices. It was then decided to admit younger boys who were ready for First Year High School to give them firstly the necessary background to be accepted. Harold Little, from Mt Magnet, was the first and only boy to be admitted for the scheme in that year. It seemed to be the only way to prepare Primary School leavers from the country for a potential Apprenticeship. Harold was a success: more boys were selected and were found willing to take up High School education, as preparation for becoming Tradesmen.

Before, however, the accommodation facilities for boys were extended to take the increasing demands for placements, a similar venture was started in 1961 for the girls, close to the boys' quarters - The Villa Maria Hostel. It was felt the ultimate aim would be marriages of coloured people with both partners enjoying the same standard of education in order to be more successful.

As soon as the first boys and girls had completed Secondary School (Junior Certificate), housing had to be provided for them to stay on as Vocational Trainees, Apprentices, and so on. This led to the present arrangement at the Centre of having four groups of Aboriginal youth -student boys and girls. The present total number (in 1972) of 80 Aboriginal youth is cared for in six separate houses.

7. THE STAFF

The Principal of the Pallottine Training Centre is Father John Luemmen, S.A.C.

He was appointed in 1956 by the Major Superior of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Inc.) - Pallottines, who is resident in Melbourne. The Superintendent - the title used in Governmental dealings - is assisted by a Pallottine Brother and by 11 members on the staff, of which 2 are white and 9 are of Aboriginal descent; with the Head Lady Miss Edith Little accumulating valuable experience over a period of 17 successive years. Each self-contained house has a senior member with an assistant, or a married couple taking the role of house parents. The administration is executed centrally by the Principal. He calls in or selects voluntary experts in various fields as part-time tutors or instructors. Staff meetings are held weekly with the Principal to discuss all matter of greater importance concerning the education, training and welfare of the children, the running of the Centre, the conduct and progress of the students. Wishes and suggestions of the Aboriginal House Council are considered before decisions are made.

The Principal is available to the students at any time for counselling and advising on any matters arising from school work, or their own personal problems. He arranges aptitude tests with Vocational Guidance Agencies available in Perth, interviews prospective employers and visits schools to keep abreast with the progress made by each student. With the exception of one case, all school-leavers have obtained employment through the efforts of the Principal. This is an important part of the Centre's policy to illustrate to the Trainees that they are fully under the care of a private organisation as against being controlled by the Government, as for instance, Wards of the State.

8. CENTRE'S POLICY

A firm policy could not be easily laid down for a new establishment dealing with people with so many problems in

itself, to which nobody in the community seemed to have the right answer. There were general points of view to be followed, but for the rest it was a "live and learn" policy. Naturally, a private body, such as the Pallottines constitute, had to fall somehow in line with the official policy of that body, lawfully made responsible by the constitution of the country, i.e., the State Government.

Until 1967 it was left entirely to the States to deal with the Aboriginal population. Since the Referendum of the same year, the Commonwealth is entitled to a greater say in Aboriginal matters and policy; therefore a uniform policy for Aborigines can hardly be expected before this. All the more it became necessary for Church organisations to establish their own policy, which would not be affected by changes of Governments or Party politics, but which is derived from Christian principles, and gives every human being equal rights and obligations. Considering the whole situation of the under-privileged race in Australia, our policy was designed to play a part in equipping for life those who go through our hands. **ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE** would sum up what has been the principle or policy behind the efforts made at the Pallottine Training Centre at Rossmoyne. We want to make the Aborigines able to choose for themselves at what degree and at what pace to integrate into the Australian society.

Without education, the Aborigine is unable to choose to become an integrated member in our society, for himself or as a member of a group; he is not really free, but left to live the life of his ancestors. No white man should feel entitled to push an Aboriginal in either direction: it must be left entirely to the Aboriginal himself which life he wants to live, so long as the white community has helped him to be able to choose, that is, giving him equal education. he must be given a chance to be as

fully trained and educated as the average person in the white society. Therefore, the greatest emphasis is given at this Centre to education - education understood as a whole, not only academically.

The Government policy, followed over the past 10 years or so, has been aimed at transforming an under-privileged and sub-economic minority group into a self-respecting, self-supporting, and fully participating part of the general population. Governments with such policies could hardly find more dedicated, experienced and unselfish people than those of Church organisations to carry out such a policy. They are equipped to induce spirituality and proper motivation in the process of Aboriginal advancement as a whole, so that the efforts of the Government and the private bodies, once working in harmony, should yield ultimate success. There is a conviction that Aboriginal and European stock are different ethnic groups. Of course they have basic things in common, but their cultural, social and economical backgrounds are very different, and this has to be taken into consideration when judging Aboriginal people and assisting them to find their proper place in society. It needs a considerable amount of understanding and patience; at the same time, however, demands have to be made to improve their self-confidence and their will for advancement, if they wish to live as equal alongside the white man. What they need most is Aboriginal leadership. They don't want patronage, nor superior, benevolent people who will say to the Aboriginal: "This is what You ought to do;" but rather they need leaders from amongst their own people who will say: "This is what we ought to do."

9. HOW IS THE CENTRE FINANCED?

The West Australian Government gives annually, awards, Scholarships and Bursaries to Aboriginal 7th Grade school-leavers to study at a High School of their choice. Apprentices

receive tool allowances. Since 1970, students of Aboriginal descent come under the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme when 14 years of age, if staying at school is to their advantage. Boarding Allowances are paid under the Commonwealth Employment Training Scheme for Aborigines. For tertiary education, an Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme is in operation.

The income of the Centre comes entirely from what it can collect for education from a variety of sources. There is no other income which provides for the maintenance of the children. Since the rather generous assistance by the Commonwealth, the parents of those under their scheme can hardly be expected to contribute any more. This is rather regrettable, because Aboriginal parents who have the means are deprived of the opportunity to support their children's education, by their own financial contribution, and of the responsibility of caring for their children themselves.

The Centre has no income other than public moneys in the form of subsidies: it must rely on occasional donations, and on special Grants by the Church, the Lotteries Commission, State and Commonwealth Departments when capital expenditure for new buildings and facilities is needed. On a few occasions, moneys are received from Germany to finance certain building projects. Under these circumstances, voluntary staff has to be sought. They do not receive full wages, but a small retainer. We might not, therefore, have highly qualified staff, but certainly we have people who are more dedicated and experienced in the care of Aborigines than those who work for personal gain.

10. WHO CAN BE ADMITTED?

Preference is given to students who, after completing 7th Grade, have been awarded a Bursary or Scholarship, and who promise to stay for at least 3 years at school.

Candidates who have received their Primary education in Mission Schools or who are otherwise connected with the Pallottines, are considered first. Non-Catholics are naturally not excluded so long as space is available. Due to the many applications each year, the candidates must fulfil the following general requirements:

- (1) Candidate must be of above average ability amongst his/her own people:
 - a. academically (in the old terms: with the capability of passing the Junior examination);
 - b. morally (general good behaviour)
 - c. socially (adaptable to average white person of same age).
- (2) Willing to advance himself / herself.
- (3) Parents or guardian must be keen to give higher education to child.
- (4) Parents or guardian must be content to leave child for a full course (Junior or equivalent standard).

The final selection is made by the Principal of the Centre, who prefers the application to be made by the children themselves, with a signed application form from their parents.

11. SPECIAL FEATURES

- (1) Accommodation is of a high standard. The buildings (brick and tile) are modern and up-to-date, as well as the equipment, furniture and appliances.
- (2) The living units are fully self-contained with staff on duty 24 hours a day.
- (3) 80% of staff is of Aboriginal descent, and they are fully trained to take responsibility.

- (4) Fully qualified tutors are available to students in the various areas of education.
- (5) The drop-out rate is low and the success rate is high.
- (6) Students and vocational trainees have a self-selected Aboriginal Council, represented by one member of each house.
- (7) All students have Host Families where they are welcome to go at least once a month.
- (8) Special classes are conducted on request and according to needs i.e., welding, motor maintenance, dancing, public speaking, dressmaking and deportment and others.
- (9) Aboriginal sporting teams from the "Centre are members of public associations.
- (10) Each house is mobilised to take part in outside educational and recreational activities.
- (11) Character formation receives high priority in all work at the Centre.
- (12) Personal relationship with parents and "old" students is maintained through visits and circular letters.

12. THE ACHIEVEMENTS TO 1972

The rate of success has been very pleasing. At the beginning of 1972 two entered University; one enrolled at Teacher's Training College; one commenced General Nursing; one boy entered Apprenticeship; two enrolled in a two-year Child Care Course conducted by the W. A. Kindergarten Association; three commenced Nursing Aid Training; and one is attending Business College.

Results achieved between 1956 and 1972:

Junior Certificate	56	Junior Standard	36
Leaving Certificate	5	Matriculation	3
University Enrolments	4	Teacher's Training College	1
General Nursing Certificate	2	General Nursing (in training)	2
Nursing Aid Certificate	2	Nursing Aid (in training)	5
Child Care Course (in training)	3	Office Clerks and Typists	32
Tradesmen's Certificate	14	Apprentice in training	7

Of 28 married ex-students, 17 have married people of their own race and 11 chose a white partner; 6 marriages have been between ex-students, both partners being from this Centre.

While the above results show a most satisfactory response to the Centre's methods, it must be remembered that these standards of achievement are those set by a society whose culture is vastly different from that of the Aboriginal race.

With this in mind the achievements are remarkable and show how well the children can do when given the chance. It will take more than two or three generations to bridge the 'education gap' so as to allow for comparable results with children generally. It is felt however, that results are encouraging enough for the Principal and staff to continue with their efforts towards the development of the innate capability of the children under their care, with the firm conviction that they are as able and willing to rise to full status in the community as any other future citizens.

2. Places from which students came to Rossmoyne

1956 Mt Magnet 1	1957 Tardun 1 Wandering 1	1958 Broome 2 Tardun 2	1959 Wandering 2	1960 1961 Broome 7 Derby 1 Wandering 4
1962 Broome 1 Tambellup 1	1963 Beagle Bay 1 Broome 5 Wandering 6 Yalgoo 2	1964 Beagle Bay 2 Broome 5 Derby 2 Tambellup 1 Tardun 3	1965 Broome 3 Derby 1 Tardun 3 Toodyay 1 Wanderong 2	1966 Broome 5 Derby 2 Lomdadina 2 Tardun 2 Wandering 1 Wyndham 1
1967 Broome 5 Derby 3 Tardun 2 Wandering 3 Port Hedland 2	1968 Beagle Bay 7 Broome 9 Derby 2 Lombadina 3 Quirading 1 Wandering 4	1969 Beagle Bay 1 Broome 4 Carnarvon 1 Cue 1 Derby 1 Goomalling 2 New Norcia 1 Tardun 1 Wandering 1	1970 Beagle Bay 2 Cue 1 Broome 6 Tardun 6 Toodyay 1 Wandering 1	1971 Balgo 1 Beagle Bay 6 Broome 7 Carnarvon 2 Cue 2 Darwin 2 Derby 3 Halls Creek 1 Tardun 10 Wandering 2 Wyndham 1

1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Broome 9 Carnarvon 1 Cue 4 Derby 3 Forrestfield 1 Tardun 6 Wandering 3	Beagle Bay 1 Broome 7 Carnarvon 1 Cue 1 Derby 8 Narrogin 1 New Norcia 5 Morawa 1 Mullewa 1 Wyndham 2 No place 2	Balgo 1 Beagle Bay 5 Broome 7 Derby 3 Fitzroy Crossing 1 Halls Creek 1 Kununurra 2 New Norcia 1 Mullewa 2 Meekatharra 2 Mt Magnet 2 Tardun 2 Tom Price 1 Wanering 2 Wyndham Yalgoo 13 No place 2	Beagle Bay 4 Broome 12 Cue 1 Derby 4 La Grange 2 Kununurra 1 Meekatharra 2 Medina 1 Mt Magnet 1 Norseman 1 South Hedland 2 Springvale Station via Kununurra 1 Tardun 5 Tom Price 1 Wandering 1 Wongan Hills 2 Yalgoo 3	Balgo 3 Beagle Bay 4 Beachlands 1 Brisbane 1 Broome 18 Cue 1 Derby 2 Kununurra 2 Lombadina 6 Medina 1 Meekatharra 2 Mt Magnet 4 Mullewa 2 Pt Hedland 1 Rossmoyne 1 Tambellup 1 Tardun 10 Wandering 6 Wonthella 1 Wyndham 1
1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Applecross 1 Broome 4 Carawatha 1 Carnarvon 1 Cue 1 Derby 1 Fitzroy Crossing 1 Kalumburu 3 Medina 1 Morawa 1 Pt Hedland 3 Tardun 5 Wyndham 1 No place 2	Beagle Bay 2 Broome 3 Derby 2 La Grange 1 Lombadina 1 Kununurra 1 Morawa 2 Mullewa 1 Nulungu 2 St Brigids 1 St Josephs 5 Tambellup 1 Tardun 1 Perth 2 Pt Hedland 1	Beagle Bay 1 Broome 11 Cue 2 Derby 3 Geraldton 1 Kununurra 1 La Grange Lombadina 1 Perth 1 Pt Hedland 3 Northampton 1 Morawa 3 Wyndham 1 Tambellup 1 Tardun 2 New Norcia 1 Newman 2 Nulungu 2	Beverley 1 Broome 6 Busselton 1 Derby 7 Geraldton 1 La Grange Mullewa 1 Newman 1 Nulungu 2 Pt Hedland 4 Tardun 3 Wyndham 2	Beverley 1 Broome 6 Busselton 1 Derby 7 Geraldton 1 La Grange Mullewa 1 Newman 1 Nulunga 2 Pt Hedland 4 Tardun 3 Wyndham 2

3. Tardun Brother Wim van Veen

This text is abridged from the Tardun Chronicle, 1926-1964, published by the Pallottines in 1998.

In 1926, Fr Droste, superior from Beagle Bay Mission lay in the St John of God Hospital, Subiaco. Dr Clune, Archbishop of Perth, told him of available land which had been surveyed and opened for settlement. It was 280 kms north of Perth. He suggested that the Pallottines might be interested in acquiring some of it. By 1927 the Railways Department had set up a siding called 'Indarra' on the Geraldton to Mullewa line. It became known as Tardun.

4 July 1928, Brother Henry Krallmann left Beagle Bay to set up the sheep and wheat farm at Tardun, after 25 years as stockman at Beagle Bay. While looking for water, he stayed with the Christian Brothers who had land nearby. Then he asked Fr Droste to send a brother who was an experienced water-diviner. The latter came with a mission boy Jim Wilson and they lived in tents until brother thought he had found a likely place. Then a camp was built of sheet-iron. After five weeks, still having found no water, they looked for a new place and here they had better luck though the water was too salty. Later they built a large house near the well. This was the 'Old Camp'. By the end of October the first farm machinery had arrived - a Hartparr tractor and a scrub-roller so that in November clearers could begin work on the heavy bush country. A lorry was purchased.

In February 1929, new hands came from Beagle Bay, Dick Smith, Tommy Murphy and Willie Roe. Gregory and Paula Howard. Fr Droste called in before Easter on the way to Germany. He assigned Mrs MacDermott who had worked with Br Henry in the past to be housekeeper. At this time, the property was called 'Beagle Bay Farm'.

arrival, Brother Paul Ratajski. he purchased a new farm from the Edmond brothers, which was a handier place as it was only two miles from the siding. The title deeds were made out in the name of Fr Scherzinger. £ 600 had to be paid in three instalments, plus £ 50 for the house and accessories. We were to take over all liabilities, and the crop would be ours. During this time consideration was given to establishing a Catholic School in the future. Since the crop was poor Fr Raible had to sell the wheat reserved for Beagle Bay to satisfy his obligations.

In 1930 Fr Albert Scherzinger took up office as the first Rector of St Joseph's Farm. Bishop Raible gave £ 100 collected for the Beagle Bay Mission to Tardun.

In 1931 Msgr Raible made arrangements with the firms in Perth re extended credit as he was unable to meet his promissory notes, he brought news about three new Brothers, the two for Tardun were Br Frank Nissl and Br Paul Mueller. In 1930-1932 Tardun was given the money from the Beagle Bay Mission cattle sale.

In 1935 the Mercedes diesel truck from Germany, intended for Beagle Bay went to Tardun.

In 1938 the old bough sheds which had served as the home of the priest and seven brothers were replaced by a modest building. Designed by Monsignor Hawes, it was brick and built in bungalow style with a veranda all around. It was hoped the monastery at Tardun would become a novitiate for lay brothers.

The Old Farm, from Raible Block to Kasparek Block along the Pallottine Road is 9.9 km long and 2.2 km wide, with broad valleys and low gently sloping hills to a height of 320.25 metres above sea level which are the remains of a mountain range,

probably higher than any in Australia today. Although this is known as Transitional Woodlands it is part of the Wheatbelt. *Acacia Acuaria* growing on the clays was used in circumcision rites and for making boomerangs. Red Kangaroos, Western Greys and the Euro are common but because of the few soaks and water holes, Aborigines did not frequent the place very much.

In 1945 Fr George Vill came from Our Lady of Victories Church, Camberwell Victoria to take over as rector in Tardun. For the next two years he learnt about the situation of the Aboriginal people in Mullewa (native and half-caste as they were then called). The condition of the people in town was not good, especially for the children living at the camp near the town. The parents worked on the stations and sent the children for their primary education to Mullewa, to be cared for by relatives. Many did not go to school. Health care both at the school and the camp and racism in the town were problem areas. He knew that Bishop Raible had intended to build a school in 1929 but finance was unavailable. In order to start a co-educational boarding school for boys and girls he bought from Geraldton (Moonyoonooka) the disused buildings which had been erected to house the R.A.A.F. women personnel during World War II. There were five dormitories, school, kitchen, cool-room and smaller buildings and their equipment. These buildings were erected by Fr Frank Hanke with help from Br Basil, Br Paul M. And Br Stephen. Br Joseph Schuengel helped clear the land for the buildings before he went to Kew.

In 1948 two Presentation Sisters came. The girls' dormitory was finished with 30 beds, and the boys' dormitory was finished with 20 beds. Fr George and the Sisters went to Mullewa to interview the parents of children for the Mission. They visited the native quarters at the hospital, where the response from the

mothers of the children on outback stations was co-operative.

Dean Lynch arrived with the first enrolments for the Mission school. He arrived about 6 pm with his car full of seven little ones from Mullewa, Don Flanagan (15), Harry Mithamarra (14), Ray Underwood (11), John Comeagain (5), Peter Jackson (5), Gladys Papertalk (10), Ruby Jackson (7). When Fr George took Don and Gladys to Mullewa they returned with Phil (9), Chris (8), and Glennis (5). Ryan from Yalalong station had never been to school. Children who drifted into the Mission from the bush had heads full of lice, sore eyes, and streaming noses. When necessary Fr George was not above delousing a head or wiping a 'green lantern nose'.

There was a quantity of prisoner of war and army gear in the shed. Army tunics provided a pair of pants for small boys from the sleeves, the body a tunic for girls. Newcomers arrived bringing just themselves, no wardrobe at all. One boy actually arrived sewn into his coat which was attached to his pants, to keep him from losing his best clothes - his only ones. Girls' clothing was just as meagre, what they stood up in. The Catholic Women's League in Perth sent boxes of assorted clothing. The first holiday, 17 May, was celebrated by a picnic 20 miles away at Wongoondy, in the cool bed of a creek under tall shady gum trees with the children spending the afternoon at waterfalls higher up the creek.

The school was officially opened 12 September. Fr Vill said that the aim was to conduct the school like similar institutions for white children in cities and towns throughout Australia. Generous support from Victoria supplied most of the funds. The Lotteries Commission had aided the work on the recommendation of the Department of Native Affairs. Fr Vill appealed to the people to accept these young people when they had completed their training at the school either as farm hands,

carpenters, butchers or in whatever line they had been instructed. Only in this way would those trained at the mission school be able to take their places among their fellow citizens in the community. The children would return to their parents for the Christmas vacation since an institution could not provide as a family could. The school would aim to provide the children with all that was enjoyed by children growing up in more fortunate white communities. It was proposed to increase accommodation as a number of applicants had already been refused because it was found impractical to commence the kindergarten which would eventually be an important adjunct to the main school. Many things were needed such as a playground and equipment, and a swimming pool. The district extending from Geraldton to Morowa would provide the students. The same day, Kyanga (7), Olive (8), and Alan Egan(6) arrived from Billabalong Station.

In 1949 two Dominican Sisters arrived to take up duty at the Mission as the other sisters were leaving. When Bishop Raible came to visit 19 May, he gave a half holiday.

4. Notes on Context of Catholic Missions in Western Australia by Brigida Nailon

Some information about Aboriginal legislation, employment and education in West Australia from 1829 to 1951 is provided here to put Pallottine educational involvement with Aborigines into context,.

Legislation

The first Pallottine missionaries came to Australia in 1901 to maintain Beagle Bay Mission in the Kimberley and to begin their role in Aboriginal missionary work. In the Kimberley of the North West, from 1895 until 1915, the Catholic Cistercian missionary, Father Nicholas Emo had “happily tended his mixed flock of Asians, Aborigines and a few white people, baptising and marrying without worrying about racial or cultural distinctions.” But the majority of the population accepted the place allocated to Aboriginal peoples because if they admitted a prior ownership of land, their rights to land title were threatened.

A political decision which was to cause great suffering and deprivation was made when the Australian Constitution of 1901 specified that Aborigines were not to be counted as part of the population. Then, in West Australia, in 1905, more ‘protective’ legislation tightened around Aborigines, imprisoning them in a separate category ‘under the Act’.

For many years social attitudes were reinforced by this and other legislation. The framers of the 1936 Native Administration Act had two precepts for the solution of the part-Aboriginal problem. ‘Tutored assimilation’ was to be applied to part-Aborigines, to uplift them to the level of civilisation, and ‘breeding out of colour’, also known as ‘assimilation by

organised breeding'. This idea was called physical or ethnic assimilation, absorption or amalgamation, and was based on the assumption that there were 'no strictly biological reasons for the non-acceptance in the white community of a people with a dilute strain of Australian Aboriginal blood. The popular catch-phrase was 'black blood breeds out in three generations'. Only in the early fifties were the ideas 'uplift by force' and absorption replaced by a policy of 'assimilation into the general community on the basis of reasonable equality in all facets of community life'.

Many cases of abuse occurred. In 1926 'a protector of Aborigines' contributed to the costs of a punitive expedition consisting of two police constables, four other whites, and seven 'blacks', with 400 to 500 rounds of ammunition and 42 horses and mules. In 'revenge' for a white man having been speared 20 Aborigines or more were killed and their bodies burned. It had been the victim's negative behaviour towards Aborigines and their customs that had provoked his sudden death. The two constables were charged with murder but freed. The 'protector of Aborigines' justified his actions by saying, "Aborigines had to be given a lesson from time to time."

Elkin, an anthropologist and Anglican priest, made a survey of the Aborigines of the Kimberley Division in 1928. His work exposed the weaknesses of government policies to keep Aborigines in their allocated place. He became aware of the racist and exploitive attitudes of many settlers, pastoralists and other 'employers' of Aboriginal labour.

In the 1930's Aboriginal peoples were in the majority in the Kimberley, in the north west of the state. Approximately 15,000, including 2000 workers, still lived tribally on stations or in Aboriginal bush camps. In the outback usually two or three white men or a single man, lived on a cattle station, a settlement, a

police station or an outcamp. There were only about 2000 whites living in Broome, Derby and Wyndham, and about 100 living inland. Fewer than a dozen white women were resident between Wyndham and Derby. Hall's Creek had a white population of 14, and Fitzroy Crossing only the hotel keeper, policeman, postmaster and staff.

The biggest issue facing Australia was the status of persons in what was supposed to be a classless society. Elkin pointed out that Aborigines of mixed descent were expected to conform to the general community's economic, legal and social requirements and had been, with few exceptions, thus forced to be 'fringe-dwellers' in that community.

There was an urgent need for policies to be designed to ensure Aboriginal welfare and development. By 1932 the Aboriginal situation was so bad that the Perth Chief Protector of Aborigines reported a deterioration in the physical well being of Aborigines particularly that of children. Government rations which were to be an aid when bush foods had been available, were now almost the sole diet of Aboriginal peoples who could no longer hunt where land had been taken up. Neville was also concerned about escapees from Moore River native settlement. He reported that clothing was inadequate and issued only at the beginning of winter. There was an increase of deaths due to influenza. Hospital accommodation was urgently needed especially at Wyndham."

In the 1933 report from the Aborigines Department a significant increase in numbers of children of mixed descent was noted. Despite the relatively small number of white residents in the Kimberley, (about 2000) there were 666 children of mixed descent of whom 327 were under 14 years of age. More than 50% of these were located in the Broome district. About one third living in the town of Broome, another third at Beagle Bay

and Lombadina to which children had been gathered over 20 years or more, and the remaining third made up of various twos and threes scattered at stations or living in bush camps.

In the other districts, Derby had 72 children of mixed descent; Wyndham had a total of 124 children of mixed descent and about one-third of these had been gathered into the Forrest River Mission; Halls Creek had a total of 34, nearly half of whom had been sent to the Government station at Moola Bulla; Fitzroy Crossing had 42, and Turkey Creek had six. It was not known how many were in the bush.

A prevailing opinion about the future of peoples of mixed descent was that they should merge into the white majority. This favoured their separation from Aborigines of full descent.

In 1934 the West Australian Government set up a Royal Commission under a magistrate, H. D. Moseley, partly in response to media reports of maltreatment of Aborigines during the 1930s, and in anticipation of the general need for legislative reform.

An Inspector of Aborigines said, "The great mistake made with the half-castes was to have made them outcasts. When the first half-caste child was born in this State it should have been given the full rights of white citizenship, and these rights should have been maintained for all half-castes born thenceforward. The forcible removal of Natives from their own country to territory which they regarded as a foreign country should not be permitted, and the provision of the Act which permitted such removals was an unjust one."

Some pleaded that persons of mixed descent be given a chance to be classed as other than Aborigines. To be able to 'live like whites' was the ambition of some who were associating with

the white community. A woman spoke up for her rights as a person of mixed descent, "Native girls, if they had any white blood in their veins should have the right to vote, should be allowed to seek employment through the licensed registry offices, should not be hunted by the police if they take a position outside the knowledge of the department, should be the 'owners of their own person' and of their children, if these were born out of wedlock, should have control of their own financial affairs after the age of 21 years, and should be free to marry a white man 'without supervision'."

The Resident Medical Officer at Wyndham pointed out the prevalence of venereal disease. He could see little hope of any real benefit arising from measures directed primarily at the black population.

What gripped the popular imagination was the contrast between white and Aboriginal societies. H. D. Moseley had noticed at La Grange feeding station, a fair-haired light skinned girl of about eleven with pleasant English features who looked more like a sunburnt Perth schoolgirl than a native. She been allotted by Aboriginal marriage laws to an old man who already had two wives, and she was near the age when he would be able to claim her. She had passed all her life on the Government station, but no attempt had been made to educate her or separate her or her mother from the Blacks.

Aboriginal women educated at Beagle Bay Mission, gave explicit examples of discrimination to the Royal Commission. They worked for white people in Broome but being classed as natives restricted employment. To enable them to work employers obtained from the police a 12 month permit costing 5/-. Because of this they could not char (work) for different people, only for the one who had purchased the permit.

With regard to marriage, white men or educated Asiatics who asked permission were usually refused by the Chief Protector in Perth. This resulted in fatherless children. Most children were 'three quarter caste' classed as octoroons. As such they were not under the Act. But a halfcaste mother under the Act was treated as a native and her octoroon children too. This was another reason for asking for freedom. A paid Lady Aboriginal Protector would mean protection could be taken out of the hands of the police. The women asked for a better shelter at the ration camp for their old and infirm natives.

They pleaded, "We are educated halfcastes who have been sent to the Missions. We have been taken from either our fathers or our mothers when we were children by the advice of the Department and by so doing that has been the end of father and mother for us. Do you not realise the cruelty of this. Would you white people like to think when you send your children to school that you would never see them again? That is one more reason why we want our freedom. We are told we could be granted a Certificate of Citizenship, on the recommendation of the police. Some of us have no hope of getting those papers because we have refused favours to some of those police. Sir, we the half-caste-population of Broome ask you to give us our freedom and release us from the stigma of a native and make us happy subjects of this our country." For these women jobs were always lower paying, and they gave examples of the sexual harassment they had experienced to keep work.

When the Moseley Report was presented in 1935, a major issue of concern was the increase in the number of people of mixed descent. In 1905 there were 900, in 1934 there were 3,891. An article in the West Australian July 1935 stated that the State needed to plan for a large body of coloured people, many of whom had grown up with little education or training. The first

question was whether these people were to be assimilated by the white community or segregated from it forever. It was decided that any attempt to remove the 2000 Aborigines employed on 70 or 80 stations in the Kimberley for more thorough training would be not only cruel but productive of no good result. The Native Administration Act of 1936 gave the commissioner of Native Affairs more right to object to the celebration of marriages involving a 'native', and widened the grounds on which consent could be withheld.

An attempt was made to ameliorate legislative effects through the Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act of 1944. A magistrate could provide a certificate of citizenship to an Aboriginal applicant, 'deemed to be no longer an Aborigine for the purpose of the Native Administration Act, or any other Act' and thereby forbidden to associate with his own people. One could be an Aboriginal or a citizen, but not both. Without a certificate, an Aboriginal person was debarred from voting in both state and federal elections. This was the context within which the Catholic missions operated and it is obvious that their room for manoeuvre was limited by law, by administrative practice, and by endemic racism.

In July 1947 came the first increase in subsidy for approved missions since 1917. It rose from 26 cents a week to 30 cents in addition to free drugs, clothing, and blankets. By 1951 the infrastructure of "Development and Services for Aborigines" was almost in place. The Department promised an annual review of subsidies based on the variation in the cost of living. In 1948, S. G. Middleton, the new Commissioner of Native Affairs, made a determined effort to have the Native Administration Acts, 1905-1947, drastically amended to reduce more than 70 restrictions on personal freedom. Except for the Departments of Health and Education, government departments were unenthusiastic. Some

police were openly hostile. Middleton decided to work initially through missions catering for Aboriginal children.

After 1936, with regard to legislation, some Aborigines exempted from the Act found it humiliating to be harassed to produce proof of citizenship upon demand. They called the paper 'dog licences'. There were tightened provisions regarding employment permits, which made Aborigines an economically underprivileged group, eking out a precarious existence on casual work and government rations. There was racial prejudice in the field of education.

In 1951, 1958, and 1964 the Native Administration Acts of 1905-1947 were amended. At last there was some chance of a 'fair go' for Aborigines. Migrants had a hard time making their way in Australia, but they were not legislated against in this way.

Employment

In the Kimberley, Bishop Otto Raible fought for the right of Aborigines of mixed descent to have paid employment. Opportunities were blocked by the Unions. Bishop Raible wrote to A. Coverley, MLA, that if those of mixed descent were to have any self respect, it was necessary that they be enabled to attain to a certain social status which was bound up with employment. In February 1940 he pointed out that for the coming season there was a great deal of contract work on hand, extension of the aerodrome, and road building. This was an opportunity to give local Aborigines paid employment, if the Minister were to exert his influence to secure a share in the work. There were about a dozen able young men, single and married, who would be only too glad to take on a job. Coverley replied that he had given instructions that where they were financial members of any Union, they were to be employed on jobs whenever it was possible to fit them in. But the local secretary of the Australian

Workers Union said that half castes and quadroons could not get a union ticket. They were advised to write south to headquarters if they were not satisfied.

In one case, a quadroon, named Willie Roe, after having been refused a ticket locally, wrote for one and headquarters advised the local Union to give him a ticket. But local branch members were afraid that too many Aborigines might apply. They created difficulties to induce him to give up the idea of joining. Bishop Raible argued that this was unjust and asked the Minister to investigate the situation. Local Aboriginal men of mixed descent were still refused union tickets and strangers who had come up from south with tickets were given the jobs. Coverley explained that he was unable to pursue the matter of Government employment for half castes any further. Union rules were registered with the Arbitration Courts of Australia, and their Constitution debarred persons of Asiatic or Aboriginal descent from becoming members.

The Aboriginal person was entangled in a network of legislation. Wages paid to them in the pastoral industry fell well below unemployment or sickness benefits which would not be paid to an Aborigine who refused to work for well below the award wage, or to an Aborigine who moved into a town or settled area and needed the benefit while seeking employment.

Education

In Western Australia, from 1829, when the Swan River was settled, until 1897, control of Aborigines was nominally under the Imperial British Government. The 1897 Act gave responsibility of Aboriginal education to the Chief Protector of Aborigines. The small amount of money allocated to him from the Treasury went on rations and Lock Hospitals for venereal disease. Aboriginal education in the West was not compulsory

and usually not available. The Education Department had strengthened its opposition to the enrolment of Aboriginal children in state schools. An amendment to the Education Act in 1928 reiterated the right of the Minister to expel any child whose presence was injurious to the health, welfare and morality of other children. According to the Chief Protector, A. O. Neville, only 1% of Aboriginal children in the state received a state school education. The Minister in charge of the Education Department, W. H. Kitson, stated that it was out of the question to compel admission of half-castes to State schools and education would be given in schools especially provided for that purpose, but financially this was a problem.

In 1948 F. E. Bateman was appointed to make recommendations to the Government. Appalled by the conditions prevailing in the settlements and on the reserves, he recommended major changes in administration, and called on the State to abandon the negative measures of the past. From 1948 onwards the role of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs moved away from total responsibility to that of a supportive agent. Since that date the Education Department has had full control of Aboriginal primary and secondary education in Western Australia.

Endnotes

- ⁱ Pat Jacobs, *Mister Neville, A Biography*, Perth, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1990. p.76.
- ⁱⁱ Peter Biskup *Not Slaves not Citizens: The Aboriginal Problem in Western Australia 1898 - 1954*, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1979.pp. 187 - 191. Refer also to A. O. Neville, *Australia's Coloured Minority: Its Place in the Community*, Sydney, Currawong, 1947, p. 75, "And so it was that we began to breed white natives, because the grandchildren of the full-blood women were often nearly white and, in most cases, separated from their relations, could be taken as European."
- ⁱⁱⁱ cf. Neville J. Green, *Forest River Massacres*, Fremantle Arts Press, Fremantle, 1995.
- ^{iv} Paul Hasluck, *Mucking About: An Autobiography*, (Original edition MUP Carlton, 1977), University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1994, p. 265.
- ^v A.P.Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, West Melbourne, Angus and Robertson, 1938, 1974. p. 379.
- ^{vi} A. O. Neville, *Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines*, West Australia, 30 June 1932.
- ^{vii} 'The Half-Caste Problem' Royal Commission re Aborigines, *West Australian*, 25 July 1934. ADB.
- ^{viii} Elkin, 'Aboriginal-European Relations', in Berndt, R.M., Berndt, Catherine (eds), *Aborigines of the West, Their Past and Present*, Nedlands, Univ. W.A., 1979.pp. 304-5.
- ^{ix} Susan Tod Woenne, 'The True State of Affairs': Commissions of Inquiry, in Berndt, *Aborigines of the West*. p. 337.
- ^x Hasluck, *Mucking About*, p. 255.
- ^{xi} Mitchell, Landon and Webster to Moseley, Royal Commission, 6 April 1934, 14 July 1934 and 31 July 1934. Battye Library.
- ^{xii} "Natives at La Grange-The Half Caste Problem", Royal Commission, *West Australian*, 14 July 1934, Archives Diocese Broome.
- ^{xiii} Submission to the Moseley Royal Commission from the half-castes of Broome, January 1935. PRO, Aboriginal Affairs, AN 1/7 Acc 993 55/35: Petition by Half-castes and Quadroons in Broome Regarding Exempting Them from the Aborigines Act.

- ^{xiv} Joan Chittester, *Beyond Beijing: The Next Step for Women*, Sheed & Ward, Kansas, 1996, p. 145. Many of the needs listed by the Aboriginal Women of Broome were similar to those outlined in 1995 by other indigenous women. "The Beijing Document requires governments provide shelters for battered women, punishment for perpetrators, research and therapy to curb that kind of disorder, and strict penalties for sexual harassment." p. 146.
- ^{xv} Extracts from a series of articles in the *West Australian*, July 1935.
- ^{xvi} T. Long, 'The development of Government Aboriginal policy: the effect of Administrative Changes, 1829-1977' *Aborigines of the West*. pp. 357 ff.
- ^{xvii} Biskup, *Not Slaves Not Citizens*, p.41.
- ^{xviii} Regulations enforced by Circular no. 135, 10 June 1935 were under the Aborigines Act, 1905.
- ^{xix} Raible to Coverley, 2 February 1940. Archives Diocese Broome.
- ^{xx} Coverley to Raible, 14 February 1940. Archives Diocese Broome.
- ^{xxi} Raible to Coverley, 18 February 1940, Archives Diocese Broome.
- ^{xxii} Raible to Coverley, 20 March 1940, Archives Diocese Broome.
- ^{xxiii} Coverley to Raible, 29 March 1940. Archives Diocese Broome.
- ^{xxiv} Annual Report, West Australia, 1972. ADB, and Biskup, *Not Slaves not Citizens*, pp.230-2, 236-37, 340.
- ^{xxv} Paul Hasluck, *Black Australians: A Survey of Native Policy in West Australia, 1829-1897*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1942.
- ^{xxvi} Anna Haebich, *For Their Own Good, Aborigines and Government in the Southwest of Western Australia, 1900 - 1940*, Nedlands, Charles and Jay Staples South West Region Publication Fund Committee, 1988, pp. 260 - 61.
- ^{xxvii} 'Annual Report of the Department', 1972. Archives Diocese Broome.