

# FOREWORD

This history of the foundation of the Servite Friars in Australia was written 30 years ago. Those were pre-computer days, so it was punched out on that now obsolete machine known as a typewriter. It is presented without alteration and without apology. Except apologies for typographical errors and occasional smudges!

In 1970 the Servites in the United States were celebrating their centenary. The then prior provincial had in mind to publish a history of the province, a project that never materialised, at least in the form intended. He had asked me to write a chapter for that book, the story of the Australian foundation. When the publication failed, nothing came of my chapter. It has been resting in my file cabinet all these years, except for a few occasions when I have been called upon to refer to it for some talk or reminiscence. The opportunity to make it available, at least to a limited audience, has now arisen with the celebration in 2001 of the 50th anniversary of the Order in Australia. I offer it as one small contribution to all that has been done by us friars in the Antipodes over these years.

I would like to stress that this work is based solely on legitimate historical data. In that sense it is an accurate recording of the foundation of the Servite Order in Australia. I was able at that time, as I still am today, to access original letters, deeds and other documentation in the archives and files of the vicar provincial's office at Tuart Hill. Although I did not footnote every fact, I have indicated within the text itself many of the sources that I have called upon.

I have had the audacity to call this Part One of the history of the Australian Servites. It would be a fond hope of mine to update it some day. Part Two would be called "The Vicariate: 1970 to 2000". The material for this second part is available in archives and would be much more abundant and complex. What is not available is the time to do the painstaking work. The Australian Vicariate now been returned to the status of a Delegation and that will be another story for someone to tell.

Some readers will already be familiar with much that is said here. For others there may be some revelations. I hope that, in the spirit of this year of the 50th

Anniversary of the Servite Friars in Australia, it will be an interesting and useful tool in building our sense of pride in who we are. May it also be an inspiration to carry on courageously what the pioneers described here have planted.

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12 January 2001

# Servites in Australia - Part One

## Chapter I

We should like our history in Australia to be a permanent memory of the definition of the Dogma of the Assumption; this great Marian act of our Holy Father, Pius XII."

- Fr. Alphonse Benetti, O.S.M. (Letter dated January 6, 1951)

The earliest history, of the Servites in Australia revolves around three men. Between them there was such a bond of mutual co-operation and esteem that a good solid foundation of the Order was almost inevitable, in spite of difficulties.

These three were Fr. James Keane, O.S.M., Archbishop Prendiville of Perth and Fr. Albert Langmead.

The first of these had by that time a reputation and background of zealous work for the Order and devotion to the Blessed Virgin that needs no citation here.

Raymond Prendiville, Irish born, had been the Archbishop of one of the most far-flung dioceses of the Catholic world since 1933; always on the alert for personnel to meet the growing needs of Perth, West Australia, he took a keen and personal interest in the establishment of the Servites.

Father Langmead was the pastor of the vast parish of Osborne Park in the northern section of Perth from which the first Servite parish was excised. He worked so closely with Fr. Keane and the first Servites in Australia that it has often been said that the foundation was as much his as ours.

In late 1950 a layman from Perth, Mr. P.J. Mann, was in London, where he visited the Servite church in Fulham Road. In conversation with Fr. Francis McEnerney, Prior of this community, he spoke of the needs of Perth and the very real possibility that the Servites could establish themselves there.

On his return he reported this conversation to the Archbishop, who then

extended an official invitation to the Order to come to Perth. It had been a long standing ambition of Father Alphonse Benetti, then Prior General, that the Order spread to this sector of the English speaking world, and soon correspondence began between Fr. Benetti and Archbishop Prendiville.

Father Langmead was asked to conduct a study of the large northern end of his parish, known as Wanneroo. His conclusion was that this large area, made up mostly of market gardens run by Italian and Yugoslav migrants, would be viable as a separate parish. A small church had been built there in 1932 and there was a school of 100 children taught by the Sisters of Mercy. On July 1, 1951 the General Council in Rome accepted the offer of Archbishop Prendiville and decided to send its English speaking Councillor, Father Keane, to begin what must have seemed a bold step into the most distant corner of the globe ever ventured by the Servites.

It should be noted that the establishment of the Order in Australia was not at this time connected in any way with America. The Fathers whom the General was preparing to follow after Fr. Keane were Italian. It was only when it became apparent that the Italian priests would not be able to come that the St. Joseph Province accepted the responsibility of the Australian Foundation.

In the meantime, Father Keane arrived in Perth on November 30, 1951 and two days later was formally introduced by the Archbishop himself to the parishioners of the country parish of Wanneroo. His first Mass, surely the first ever celebrated by a Servite in this part of the world, was on the first Saturday of the month of December.

Less than a month later he was to write to Fr. Benetti his first impressions: the church was small, the territory of the parish extremely large, the flies in the Australian bush were intolerable; the hope he had had even before leaving Italy of changing the name of the church from St. Anthony to Queen of Martyrs looked bleak; the financial situation was not encouraging. Yet Fr. Keane set in this first letter a tone of optimism that has never left the Australian Servites: "This is a great opportunity for our Order. There is perhaps no other city in the whole world which is growing with the speed of Perth.... Our labors today can grow into a foundation as great as Our Lady of Sorrows in Chicago.... As I see it, this opportunity is a great grace from Our Lady. All we need do is work with industry, intelligence and vision."

He himself showed this vision right from the beginning, for he set about trying to acquire a piece of land in Wanneroo and contracting with the Archdiocese for the permanent acquisition of the Wanneroo parish to the order. Foreseeing future development, he likewise had written into contract the stipulation that the Order should "enjoy the right to erect and staff a college for the education of boys" and to "seek and accept vocations to the Order." He had also asked that Servite Sisters from England be invited by Father General.

Father Keane's life in those first months in Australia must have been so different from what he was used to in Rome and Chicago. He had become the temporary pastor of a country church, driving dusty gravel roads to acquaint a scattered catholic population with himself and the Servite order. His greatest joy was to establish his novena at the Perth Cathedral and several parishes and to share the hospitality of Father Langmead, at whose presbytery he continued to live. Plans to build a Servite house out at Wanneroo were already afoot, but did not materialize till after he was gone.

Correspondence reveals that Fr. Keane also had an ambition of eventually acquiring a place for a Marian sanctuary near Perth - originally he thought of Yanchep, a popular holiday resort, and later Gingin, a farming town further north. He could not yet have been aware that Servite development lay further into the metropolitan area rather than in the other direction.

By March it was clear that the ambition to change the name of the first Australian Servite parish was ill-fated. For years Wanneroo had been the centre of an annual St. Anthony Procession which was the pride of the Italian community. Fearing that a change of name would be detrimental to this feast celebration, the parishioners refused to accede even to the expressed wishes of the Archbishop and the attempt was allowed to drop.

The final papers which gave the order full right to the parish came from Rome in mid-May. Father Benetti was also meeting with disappointment back in Rome in getting a few Italian Servites into Australia. Frs. Norbert Balasso and Alexis Rotili were assigned to go, but an unexplained immigration difficulty arose; and so, when he attended the first Chapter of the newly formed St. Joseph Province in May of 1952, he asked them to take on the responsibility of the Australian Foundation so that Fr. Keane could move on. It would have taken considerable courage for this small Province in Chicago to accept such a task, but they did,

assigning Hildebrand Brunetti and Julius Porcellini. From that point on, the history of Servite Australia has been connected with that of the United States.

At the same time Father General, being told that the Archbishop was offering the Order the service of St. Denis parish in Tuart Hill (an area now known as Joondanna) on a temporary basis for the sake of income, had asked the Venetian Province to release Fr. Patrick Nolan from Johannesburg, South Africa, to act as superior.

With the arrival of these three men in early August, 1952, the task of Fr. Keane was accomplished and he departed on August 26 for Melbourne where he was to remain for almost a year with the famous Archbishop Dr. Mannix at St. Patrick's Cathedral establishing the Sorrowful Mother Novena in one of Australia's largest cities. His letters show that he was immediately aware of the benefit that could come to the Australian Foundation if a community could be established in one of the eastern cities. But the work that he was leaving behind him to be taken up in Perth was to be for some 15 years the fully engrossing occupation of the Servites who followed him.

## Chapter II

The first Provincial of the St. Joseph province, Fr. Tom Ferrazzi, took an immediate interest in Australia. By the middle of August the first correspondence was passing between Fr. Nolan and his provincial. It is amusing to note that Fr. Nolan, jovial and Irish, was fascinated by Australia but insistent from his first letter that this assignment was merely temporary - to help the two Americans get on their feet, after which he would return to the Transvaal. Unbeknown to him, he was to become identified for a long time with things Servite in Australia and did not return to Africa for 12 years. In the meantime, he showed himself a very able administrator and a man capable of putting the imagination and energy needed into a new foundation.

On August 17, 1952 Archbishop Prendiville separated the parish of St. Denis from Osborne Park and committed it, at least for the time, to the Servites, with Fr. Nolan in charge. There was at the time only a quonset hut (similar to a Nissen hut) building less than a year old, which served as both school and church. It was about 1/2 mile from the mother church.

The three men were all living with Fr. Langmead, whose concern for them was so great that they called him Fr. Prior. But the need for genuine Servite-owned housing was obvious. Fr. Nolan brought into play the business acumen and gentlemanly wit that Australians were to come to expect from him. It is hard to believe how fast he moved. After several different ideas had been rejected, he was able to purchase a 99 acre tract of land in Wanneroo - in fact, adjoining the parish property. \$11,000 was sent from America. This deal, which is still looked upon as the soundest investment for future financial security ever made by the Australian Servites, was closed with its former owner, Mr. David Cohen, on 20th October. It appears that immediately after agreeing to sale, Mr. Cohen had second thoughts and wanted to re-purchase 9 acres, but was turned down by Fr. Nolan.

At the same time the Archbishop carried out his promise of giving the Servites a 4 acre plot across from the church. Subsequently, the government was seeking a portion of the large Servite tract. Fr. Nolan persuaded them to take the 4 acre piece and to compensate by giving the Order one and a half acres in Lancelin, 80 miles north of Perth. The building of a Priory on the Wanneroo land commenced

in December, 1952, which must have relieved Frs. Porcellini and Brunetti, who were commuting back and forth from Osborne Park presbytery daily. Fr. Nolan's preference would have been to build or buy in St. Denis Parish, but Fr. Ferrazzi preferred the piece of land where we had the parish in our name. 'The Priory' was built on generous proportions, to accommodate five people. It was considered that another section might eventually be added to it.

On September 20, 1953, the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, the Archbishop blessed this first Australian Servite house: close to him at the ceremony was Fr. Langmead, pleased to see the first steps of the order taken so firmly. Hundreds of people came to the much publicized dedication and open house. There was a feeling that finally the Order had arrived on a permanent basis. In the spirit in which the first Servite came to Australia, much emphasis in the traditional speeches was given to the Mother of God and the Marian aspect of the Servites. When Fr. Benetti, now no longer General, was notified of the opening, he expressed by letter to Fr. Nolan his happiness to see this fulfillment of his ambitions for the Order. There is no record of a reflection by Fr. Keane, who by this time had returned to America and was fully taken up in the work of Mission Procurator.

The first occupants of the new Wanneroo house were Frs. Brunetti, who acted as Pastor of St. Anthony's and local superior, and Fr. Porcellini, who took charge of another nearby parish called St. Theresa in Gwelup which the Archbishop had asked Servites to care for, for the time being. Fr. Nolan continued to reside at the presbytery at Osborne Park with Father Langmead, though he could see that there was an undesirable separation of himself from both the other Servites and from his own parish. But the little group was quite settled. They had even had themselves made a Corporation Sole to facilitate legal matters instead of having to go through the complicated channels of overseas signatories. This was done, with all the legal forms it requires, as early as mid-January, 1953.

To expect vocations from their apostolates seems to have eluded these early Servites. They certainly discussed the problem, as Fr. Nolan indicated to Fr. Ferrazzi in a letter dated October, 1954; but they could not see how it could be solved without some finances and personnel from America. To put young men into a non-Servite school did not seem reasonable in those pre-Vatican II days. A plan was suggested for erecting a house of studies and novitiate at Wanneroo, where young Servites could receive training in the Servite way of life and



philosophy; their theology would have to be elsewhere in America or Europe. Unfortunately, we do not have any recorded response to this suggestion from the St. Joseph province.

Fr. Ferrazzi was deeply involved in the debts contracted by his young province in opening and enlarging Riverside. There was little they could do for this small group way over in Australia. The difficulty only highlighted the isolation of the three from the rest of the Servite world. They had the comforts of western living, were in an Australian population center of considerable size, yet so far from activity and personnel centers of the other Servites that they could not even find a way of self propagation.

As the term of the first St. Joseph's Provincial was drawing to a close, Fr. Nolan called attention to this breakdown of communications and sense of isolation. In response to a request that the Australians present a report to the approaching Chapter, he spoke of the favorableness of the situation in Perth, the possibilities that were untapped, and urged that the newly elected Provincial should make a trip to Australia, preferably in company with a few Servite priests for permanent assignment.

Perhaps many people were becoming aware that a foundation so far away was beyond the resources of the young St. Joseph Province and were trying to better the situation. A month before Fr. Nolan's letter cited above, Fr. Keane was writing from Chicago to Archbishop Prendiville: 'The Provincial Chapter of our (O.L.S.) Province is opening here on May 30th. Many far reaching decisions and plans will be made at that Chapter. I should like to approach our Provincial before the Chapter and get the matter of Australia put on the agenda. Here is my plan: I should like to get our American Province to take over the foundation in your Archdiocese from the Italian-American Province. I happen to know that the Italian- American Province would have no objection to this. They would be quite willing to give it to us.'

Fr. Keane saw the possibility of assigning to Perth some of the young Irish just about to be ordained in Benburb. He suggested that the Archbishop grant St. Denis parish permanently to the Order, as Wanneroo was. This, he felt, would encourage the Our Lady of Sorrows Province to accept the responsibility of Australia. The Archbishop agreed immediately, taking note of the fact that St.

Denis was about to expand by the building of a three room school and was a most promising parish.

The transfer took place quietly and quickly in the Provincial Chapters, which followed in June, 1955. The Prior General, Fr. Alphonse Monta, determined that Fr. Nolan would remain in Perth until sufficient men could be sent. Frs. John Halloran and Joseph Fitzgerald were the first of the O.L.S. Province to be assigned. The promise was explicitly made to Fr. Nolan by Fr. Joseph Srill, new Provincial of the American Province, that "we will have all the men necessary for Australia next year and I look forward to steady growth there."

## Chapter III

Perhaps because of the lack of preparation and lack of communication between the two Provinces in Chicago and with Australia (The Servites in Perth did not even know a change of province was contemplated), the first serious problem arose in the young foundation. In the transfer-of-province correspondence, Fr. Srill had assured Patsy Nolan that, though Julius Porcellini was required in his province and had already been assigned to Denver, Hildebrand Brunetti was to remain back in order to serve the Italian community of Wanneroo.

When however Fr. Ferrazzi recalled both men to America, feelings were hurt. Fr. Keane felt that confidence in him was shaken; Fr. Nolan felt deserted. Letters were hurriedly sent off to the General in an effort to save the situation. On top of this, Fr. Brunetti seems to have determined that West Australia was the spot he wanted to live permanently, and that if not let stay he would have to abandon the Servite Order. Father Tom relented, but only for the time being. This personnel problem endured for a year and only concluded when Fr. Brunetti took the steps required, and in mid 1956 became a member of the diocesan clergy of Perth. Archbishop Prendiville expressed his regrets as far as the Order is concerned and assured Fr. Tom that he had tried to dissuade him from leaving the Order.

Fr. Dario Brunetti is at this writing a successful pastor of one of the rural parishes immediately south of Perth.

The two new men took up residence as soon as they arrived in Perth on October 12, 1955: John Halloran at the Wanneroo Priory as assistant to Fr. Brunetti and Joseph Fitzgerald with Patsy Nolan at St. Kieran's presbytery, serving St. Denis parish. Fr. Nolan looked upon them as a god-send and they themselves could see that there would be plenty for them to do. The Gwelup parish, which was never given to the Servites in any way, except as a place to serve temporarily, became the responsibility of John Halloran.

Any early intentions to also preach parish missions around the Archdiocese got lost in the pressure of daily parish work. Two signs of the growth calling for this work were that the church building at Wanneroo was expanded at this very time by a construction that joined the old church to the school building, easily doubling the capacity of the place (blessed and opened June 17, 1956) and a three room school was underway at St. Denis, the latter to be opened February 12, 1956 by

Auxiliary Bishop Rafferty.

It was on February 26, 1956 that Fr. Joseph Srill came for the first Provincial Visitation. The Servites had been in Australia for only slightly over four years; they had a house and enlarged church with school in Wanneroo, a parish church and small school, but no residence in Tuart Hill. Father Srill wrote to Inter Servos a few days later: he was impressed with the growth possibilities and the warm co-operation given by the Archbishop. He concluded: 'Establishing a firm foundation here will involve our investing a fair amount of money. But it will be invested, not given away, and I am sure it will pay rich dividends. In short, I am all for Australia.'

This visit was to prove a turning point. Although the commitments of the province were wide (the Stonebridge addition and Missions in Africa come to mind), Fr. Srill could see the importance of also developing Australia. The most significant decision, one which was to profoundly influence all Servite work, was the consideration of starting a boys' school.

The first public intimation of this school had come shortly before when the Archdiocese selected a site in the Tuart Hill area. But it actually had been in the mind of Fr. Langmead and Archbishop Prendiville for a long time. It had been their hope to start a school in the expanding area and they had hoped even before Fr. Keane came that the Servites would eventually be able to take it. Fr. Nolan knew of the idea and had helped in the long range planning, though he could do nothing until his money and personnel problems were bettered.

The Diet of June 5-6, 1956 was to approve the general idea of having a boys' school from Standard III to Standard XI. However, it noted that all arrangements for this school would have to be approved in detail. This was to become a major occupation for several years, made more difficult by the great distance between the mother province and the Australian foundation.

Almost immediately, more men began to appear on the scene. Bro. Gerry Martin came in May as cook for Wanneroo (apparently Fr. Srill realized that religious men, like an army, marches on its stomach); and Frs. Brian Rogan and Hugh Moffett were assigned for arrival in October, 1956. Besides this, Bro. Tim Culhane, one of the founders of the American missions in Africa, came across the Indian Ocean with his experience in both teaching and mission work. Patsy Nolan continued to live at St. Kieran's and the other six at Wanneroo (though "Gooth")

Moffett tried living in a shed-like building behind the Church at St. Denis but had to abandon it because of the summer heat and flies.) The situation at Wanneroo was overcrowded and besides, the pastor of St. Denis had been living outside his parish for too long.

A plan was devised and permission obtained, in a letter dated August 31, 1956 for a "rectory" or presbytery to be built at St. Denis. Since it would accommodate not only two priests for the parish and a cook's quarters, but four rooms for teachers, the provincial agreed that the Province would stand one-third of the cost. In November the preliminary step was taken for the building of this house: the quonset hut church of St. Denis was cut into three pieces and hauled about one quarter of a city block to the other end of the church's property in order to make room for the new house. The job took almost a month and set the parish back financially more than it could really afford.

At this point the Provincial came down again, since there were many details about the prospective school that had to be handled personally. It was clear by this time that the title to both the school and the teachers' residence that would eventually have to be built near it, would be in the hands of the Servites - a token of confidence from the Archbishop. Fr. Nolan was left with his hands full of building plans. It was only after the contract for the new St. Denis presbytery had been signed, so far had it gone, that the civil authorities refused to approve the project because of the encroachment by the planned building on the minimum of two acres required by law for a school. This was one of the few mistakes and the first real disappointment for Patsy Nolan.

The reversal had, in the last analysis however, a happy outcome. It became obvious that an additional piece of property would have to be obtained. Nearby, the Sisters of Mercy had a choice block on which was one of the oldest buildings in the area; the farmhouse of the Denis Keane family. This was rented from them beginning in April, 1957 and Frs. Nolan, Moffett, Rogan and Bro. Tim moved in. Later this and an adjoining block were purchased (the money had to be borrowed from the American Province, later to be repaid to the Australian Foundation), thus creating the beautiful location on which the new St. Denis church and presbytery were later to be built.

But any new building there had to be postponed and Patsy immediately tried to turn the attention of the American Definitorium to consider the building of a

teachers' residence near the projected St. Philip's school. This is how the personnel situation looked to him in June, 1957: "There are six of us in Australia at present, four in this house which (can) accommodate conveniently only two men and a housekeeper, and two in Wanneroo which could take two more. Before the end of this year we shall be eight. In 1958 with the addition of two more Fathers.... and in 1959 extensions to St. Philip's school must be started, and an additional two teachers arrive. What can be done to house so many men and still be able to face the school extensions you (the Provincial) alone know."

In the meantime, Brian Rogan had been giving a helping hand to Hugh Moffett in the parish of St. Denis. This he was to continue until March of 1957 when he began a program of training at the teachers' training college. He was the first priest in West Australian history to attend this type of school. Bro. Tim also attended the University of West Australia.

The first bricks arrived at the site for the school in Tuart Hill on the feast of St. Philip, 1957. The hope of Father Langmead had always been to have a school in operation by February, 1958 and all was falling into place to make it so. It was agreed that this first section was to be built by assessment of neighboring parishes. The Province, which was already lending \$22,000 to St. Denis to acquire land and to pay its parish assessment to the High School, was unable to put more finance into the Australian project at the moment.

Another concern falling to Patsy Nolan was that of accommodation for Servite students. Several young men were by this time interested in joining (surprisingly, all from Melbourne) and correspondence reveals that plans were discussed again for extensions to Wanneroo which would have made it possible to take in four seminarians. The plan was apparently to have them study their "philosophy" under the men assigned there; novitiate would be considered later. This development never took place because none of the four came; - recruitment is always a tenuous business. Michael Deering of St. Denis parish, the first Australian to join the Servites, did go to the local diocesan seminary as a candidate in 1959, though he did not continue past his philosophy. A full planned formation program was an amazing ten years in the future.

As the school was about to open, Fr. Amideus Wickers arrived in Perth (December 21, 1957). He was to become the man most closely linked with Fr. Nolan's work for some time. He prepared himself to divide his work load between the school

and the parish of St. Denis. He also picked up some of the threads of Marian apostolate that Father Keane had left behind him. It was due to his efforts that a Third Order Secular was established.

With the opening of the school on February 12, 1958, the Servites entered into a new phase of their Australian apostolate. It could be said, in fact, that the pattern had now been set for the future. With the exception of later growth into eastern Australia, it is a fact that all subsequent history has been a development of what existed at this date: a parish in the country area of Wanneroo, a metropolitan parish at St. Denis, Joondanna and now a boys' school at Tuart Hill.

## Chapter IV

It would be wrong to think that all Australian Servite history was bright and beautiful. There was an unremitting struggle going on to obtain funds, both from the apostolates themselves and from the overseas provincial offices. The Province still was being asked to send funds to keep the St. Denis community operating.

Everything seemed to come at once, because in the meantime the Province had obligated itself to another school and a parish in Los Angeles. Fr. Srill could justly say that, his resources were strained to the limits. And not every Servite was happy with the situation in Australia. Bro. Gerry Martin stayed less than a year; Hugh Moffett also returned home in March, 1958 after a residence of slightly less than a year and a half. We have already referred to Fr. Brunetti's departure from the Order to the diocese. But in recompense, there were eager and hard-working men coming to the Foundation. It had a strong, wise and effective leader in Fr. Patrick Nolan, and the utmost good will and co-operation from the Archbishop of Perth and the local clergy.

In spite of, or perhaps because of its isolation, Perth had an air of neighborliness and warm friendship - what Americans call the "small town atmosphere." This helped create a sense of belonging and welcome that most Servites, having traveled half way around the globe, found most endearing.

And so, St. Philip's Regional High School opened with two classes, one of fifth and one of sixth graders, staffed by Bro. Tim Culhane and Fr. Brian Rogan. The diocesan commitment was fulfilled by a third classroom, built at the same time. The rest of the school and the residence for teachers were to be financed by the Servites. Fr. Nolan continued to act as manager of the school at the very beginning.

The Perth Servites pushed an effort in early 1958 to acquire perpetual and full right over St. Denis parish, but after a year of negotiations, in which the diocese kept trying to do whatever the Order wanted, the Definitorium and new Provincial in America decided not to pursue the matter, in order to leave themselves free in future assignments, especially now that the school was starting to grow.



The disappointment must have been great when no one was assigned to Australia by the Chapter of 1958 in which Fr. Louis Cortney was elected Provincial. Before the year was out, though, he came to visit the Foundation. While in Perth he compiled the first full and official appraisal of the Australian Servites :  
Memorandum Concerning the Servite Foundation in Western Australia - Visitation Held October 17 to November 1, 1958 by Very Rev. Louis Cortney. It served as a basis for subsequent transactions between the Province and the Foundation.

Personnel at this juncture was: at Wanneroo - Frs. Halloran, Superior and acting pastor at Gwelup and Fitzgerald, pastor of Wanneroo; at St. Denis, Joondanna - Fr. Nolan, Superior of the Australian Foundation and pastor; Fr. Wickers, assistant pastor; Fr. Rogan and Bro. Culhane, teachers in the school. Fr. Cortney tried to put the administration of the Foundation on a more formal and legally acceptable basis; e.g., designating that there should be consultors to the superior. Frs. Halloran and Wickers were given this position.

As 1959, the second year for the school began, Fr. Amideus Wickers was appointed the first principal. But no one else was forthcoming from America as a teacher because of the priest shortage caused by the introduction of the "pastoral year." And Fr. Wickers was still required to assist in St. Denis parish. One gratifying change at that time was that the Archbishop relieved the Order of the responsibility of taking care of St. Theresa's church in Gwelup, and John Halloran could join the teaching staff. Patsy Nolan prepared himself for his first holiday since coming to Australia and must have been pleased to find almost simultaneously that a full time assistant had been assigned to him: a young Irish priest, Fr. Conleth Doherty. But right at this point another crisis arose because it was time to prepare for additional building at the school - the portion that the Order itself had committed itself to finance.

The architects plans presented were too expensive for the Americans who were expected to foot the bill, especially since they included two laboratories that the definitors had not realized would have to be included. The building program however had to proceed if additional room was to be available for February, 1960, the beginning of the third year of the school. The cost of this portion of the building was approximately \$45,000.

Looking back on it now, one can easily conclude that some serious mistakes were made in the revisions of the plans that were required by the definitors. Men in a

different country were making the determination of educational needs and facilities. Much of this section of the school has since had to be re-modeled and put to different uses. But at the time they were men beleaguered by financial worries and this they could not forget. Besides, they were being asked to finance a teachers' residence at the same time.

Before Fr. Nolan had even returned from his holidays (he had the opportunity to go to Chicago and present firsthand the developing situation in Australia) he was asked to ready plans for this building which was to go on a second plot of land given to the Order by the parish of St. Kieran, across the street from the school. The original intention was to have it ready for occupancy in June of 1961.

St. Denis meanwhile was holding its own. Conleth Doherty was most popular as assistant to Fr. Nolan. Amideus Wickers was somewhat free-lancing as well as being principal. He was able to inaugurate a worthwhile new apostolate: a home for frail-aged women within St. Denis parish. A private home was obtained and opened in February, 1960 around which a group of women, working voluntarily and gratis, soon gathered. It was called Villa Cordis Mariae.

Loosely connected with the Third Order (though not all workers were necessarily tertiaries), the Villa has managed to survive many difficulties, through the unremitting dedication of those involved with it. Since early 1961 it has been supervised by Mrs. Nance Charles. There were many contacts in those early days of the Villa with Miss Joan Bartlett and the incipient Servite Secular Institute in England. It was hoped that the close association of women with the work of the Order would produce a branch of the Institute in Australia.

Correspondence, especially with Margaret Walker, at that time assistant to Miss Bartlett, was quite prolific through 1960 and into 1961; but no definite-development ever took place from this. Perhaps the fact that Fr. Wickers was sent to a new Servite Foundation in Germany in August 1960 had the effect of disheartening the group of women. Fr. Nolan was much too engrossed in the building projects and the running of a parish to be able to give them the attention they would have needed to weld together as a lay group.

Just before the 1960 school year began, Fr. Nolan hired the first lay teacher of St. Philip's, Mrs. Enid Jowett. The success with which she worked alongside the

Servites set a pattern which would be followed more and more in subsequent years.

The school was showing a profit and the Australian Foundation could finally justify that it was paying its own way. The cost of the school extension was less than anticipated too and though it was not ready till a month after school started, did make the school now a "secondary institution", for the first class of students now entered their first year of high school. With the departure of Fr. Wickers, the Diet of July 1960 appointed John Halloran principal of the school.

Personnel changes developed quite radically in 1960. Besides Wickers, Joseph Fitzgerald also left Australia, to be replaced on July 16, 1960 by Patrick Boyle as Pastor of Wanneroo. Liam Mackle and Anthony Vander Loop were sent for the school, the former arriving in November, 1960 and the latter in February, 1961. Both lived at Wanneroo and attended the Teachers' Training College the following year in order to attain recognition in the state of Western Australia.

First plans for the teachers' residence were submitted in July, 1960. It was obvious to all that it would no longer be wise for the teaching faculty to be housed elsewhere than this new house. The problem was: what to do with the Wanneroo house. It was Fr. Cortney who first suggested, in a letter dated May 9, 1960, that the Sisters of Mercy, who for many years had been commuting 15 miles each way each day from the center of town to 'Wanneroo, could move into 'The Priory' as soon as the Servites vacated it.

At the end of the 1960 school year Tim Culhane returned to the United States. His influence on the spirit of the new school had been profound - an atmosphere of concern for the young students combined with an insistence on firm discipline. It was a major concern of Fr. Nolan to find someone who would bring the same approach to the school - and he was found in Mr. Ron Hickey who continued in the school until his death in early 1969.

As is well known, Fr. Louis Cortney was re-elected Provincial in the Chapter of May, 1961 - a chapter which Patsy Nolan attended as an official delegate; the first time this was done. The superiors of the Order had obtained in late 1960 a rescript allowing a mission superior to be at a Chapter provided there were at least six priests resident in the mission. Australia now had seven. At Wanneroo were Halloran, Boyle, Mackle and Vander Loop; at Joondanna were Nolan, Rogan

and Doherty. This Chapter made no decisions regarding Australia, but Fr. Cortney came on visitation on his way from Africa on October 31.

By this time yet another building project was being contemplated: a second extension to the school, this last one to complete it into a full eight level institution, which would include a chapel and a library.

It appears that it was during this visitation that the question of the derelict collection of fees, which was to occupy much of the attention of subsequent principals, first came up. Fr. Cortney demanded a firm policy of collection, which was not a particularly common thing in Perth at the time. It was clear that the school needed an experienced administrator. It was all part of a strong move to stand the Foundation on its own feet.

A letter dated April 16, 1962 marks a plateau in the life of the Servites in Australia. In sending the final payments for the school and teachers' residence Fr. Cortney noted: 'I believe this completes both buildings and the entire project in Australia, and we sincerely hope that from now on it will be self-sustaining or at least as near to this as possible.'

The Our Lady of Sorrows Province had 'invested' (to use Fr. Srill's term) approximately \$200,000 in the area since it had taken over in 1955 and the St. Joseph Province had preceded this with \$12,000. To show for this were two parishes on the verge of real growth and a fully extended and equipped school for boys from fifth grade to high-school-leaving, plus a substantial new faculty house sufficient for all foreseeable growth.

## Chapter V

A Provincial Diet was held July 23 - 25, 1962, the second year of Fr. Courtney's second term. At that most unlikely time the figure of Joseph Loftus entered into the Australian history, passing through it rather briefly but affecting it deeply. He was appointed superior of the Mission, principal of the school and prior of the faculty community. Fr. Nolan, who had carried the responsibility since the day he arrived ten years earlier and had brought the Foundation from a bare nothing to a viable apostolate, was allowed to concentrate his efforts at St. Denis. He and John Halloran were to act as consultors to the new superior.

By the time Fr. Loftus arrived, the community from Wanneroo had moved into its new residence. The actual date was August 23, 1962. An agreement was signed five days later with the Sisters of Mercy allowing them to occupy the Priory as a convent. It was expected that Paddy Boyle, pastor out at Wanneroo, would now have to commute back and forth from Tuart Hill.

But now an unfortunate situation developed with Conleth Doherty. He showed symptoms which later proved to be caused by a malignant brain tumor. He returned to Ireland after investigation in Perth failed to diagnose his illness. His death followed on January 11, 1963. With that, Joe Loftus transferred Paddy Boyle to St. Denis to act as assistant to Fr. Nolan without relinquishing his duties as pastor of Wanneroo.

The Joondanna parish was now over 400 families and growing. An addition of two classrooms had been opened in March of 1962. The Villa for frail aged was enlarged in November 1962 to accommodate staff more comfortably and give better kitchen facilities.

In the meantime, the newly arrived superior conducted a very thorough visitation of all his houses and men. His lengthy report, covering interviews and observations from November 27 to December 7, 1962 serves as an excellent summary and appraisal of Australian Servites. He felt there was a need to make the men more conscious of themselves as a group, a community - and to be in charge of their own affairs and bear their own responsibilities. One of his major concerns immediately was the vocation situation. The one Servite student at the local seminary since 1959 had left in July of 1962. Fr. Loftus could see the need for a concrete recruitment program and literature adapted to Australia. He

inaugurated a series of meetings which, for the first time, studied in depth the problems of vocation recruitment and the possibilities that lay open to the Order in Australia. He promoted the printing of special vocations cards and started the St. Monica Circle, whose purpose was to pray for vocations.

Before a year was out there were four young vocations to the Servites.

One begins to see a greater order coming into the life of the small group with Fr. Loftus' arrival. .. Monthly days of recollection were organized. The school particularly benefited by his efforts. Although not yet fully acquainted with the Australian outlook on education, he launched into revisions of curricula and especially tidying up of administration.

During this time too, a small piece of undeveloped property on the other side of the continent, in Blackheath, New South Wales was given to the Order quite unexpectedly by a marian devotee. It was in the Blue Mountains, a resort area near what most closely approximates Grand Canyon scenery in Australia. To date, nothing has been developed on this land. Other eastern contacts were however developing: a Servite tertiary named Beverley Burke returned to Melbourne after having been received by Fr. Corr in England and established correspondence with Perth Servites. This association was retained and was of considerable help when Servites were expanding to Melbourne.

Fr. Loftus traveled through cities on the eastern coast, acquainting himself with a fuller picture of the situation of the Church and of religious orders in the whole country. It was here that the idea was born that it would be important for Servites to establish themselves in one of the large cities in eastern Australia. During his time too, several Perth diocesan priests were enrolled in the Servite Third Order, including Monsignor Albert Langmead, who had already been promoted to another parish.

John Halloran spent January and February of 1964 investigating more closely possibilities of openings for the Servites in Melbourne; he sent Fr. Loftus reports on parishes, high schools and seminaries.

The rest of the year 1963 and early 1964 progressed rather uneventfully - and in mid-April Joseph Loftus left for the Chapter which elected him Provincial of the Our Lady of Sorrows Province. Within days of his leaving Fr. Monta arrived for a

short visitation - the first by a Prior General. He had passed through India to visit the Servite Sisters there and was on his way to the same eventful Chapter. Though no official decrees resulted from this visit, he is reported to have been very favourably impressed.

## Chapter VI

Within a month after election Fr. Loftus appointed Fr. Christopher Ross his successor. But further personnel adjustments were required; Fr. Nolan's health was making it virtually impossible for him to remain in the parish which he had guided for 12 years; Chris Ross was not qualified to be a school principal. So Fr. Stephen Ryan was assigned to join the Australian Foundation and as 1964 drew to a close personnel lined up like this: at St. Denis, Frs. Ross, Regional Superior and pastor of St. Denis and Boyle, pastor of Wanneroo: at Tuart Hill, Fr. Ryan, Prior and principal; and Rogan, Mackle, Vander Loop and several brother postulants.

Patsy Nolan departed in November for a holiday in Ireland. It had been intended that on return he would do preaching work in the eastern states; on his way back though he remained in South Africa, which he had left in 1952, and has been there since. It was then 1965. Fr. Patsy's contribution to Australia had been immense, but since he was a member of the Venetian Province and a citizen of South Africa still, and his original assignment was supposed to be only temporary, the decision is not surprising. He left behind him a parish ready for major development.

Fr. John Halloran had been destined, even before Fr. Loftus was elected Provincial, to return east to investigate Sydney as he had done earlier for Melbourne. This decision was followed through on December 1, 1964 in an obedience whose broadness Fr. Loftus described as classic - as the primitive Servites must have received:

"Your places of domicile while in the east are left to your own discretion, dependent on the pursuance of your varied commissions... the length of your stay... is at the present time indefinite...." .

In actual fact, John remained till mid December, 1965, residing mainly with the Blessed Sacrament Fathers in their city parish in Sydney. He became a familiar figure around Sydney - helping in parishes, making mission aid appeals, investigating the educational scene, both for seminarians and more especially for the possibilities of the Servites opening a school for boys there. His reports were again very thorough and showed that there would be no difficulty in taking on any one of several schools in several dioceses if the man power were available.



Several parishes were also offered in connection with these schools. The Australian Foundation however was paralysed by lack of personnel. At the end of the year Fr. Halloran went overseas for a holiday and returned to Perth for further assignment.

In the meantime, the preparations for the division of the two American provinces were starting. This was to have its repercussions on the Australian scene. When asked to express preference for Australia in the new arrangements, Fr. Ross called a meeting of all Servites of the Foundation on October 30, 1964. This meeting could be called historic, because it set the mood for all subsequent Australian development: this distant area of the Order felt that it could and should stand on its own feet.

It resolved that, if it were supplied with the number of men that an expansion program would demand, it would want to be autonomous right away; if however that were impossible, Australians agreed to be assigned to either one of the newly formed provinces. Though autonomy proved impossible at the time, the pattern was set for the independence of action that was later to be codified in the Australian Contract, and a feeling of self identification began to pervade the group.

When Christopher Ross took over St. Denis parish, he began a long series of liturgical restorations that were to move the parish and the Servites into the forefront of the movement in the Archdiocese of Perth. Chief among these was the printing of a weekly parish Sunday bulletin containing timely articles, many reprinted from Novena Notes, and the proper of the Mass laid out for congregational recitation. The Word and Worship Bulletin were sold in parishes around the city as well as in other dioceses for a period of four years (March 1965 to November 1968); for financial reasons it then had to be suspended.

The first novice to be received in Australia was Kevin Thompson. His investiture was February 28, 1965 and he was received by the new Regional Superior. Steve Ryan was to be the novice master, but only two weeks later Kevin returned home. The first ventures into local vocations were not too successful!

On that same February date, as previously arranged by Fr. Nolan, an Italian Servite named Marano Tognetti began a series of parish missions for the Italian communities in the state of Western Australia. He was brought out by the diocese

specifically for this work and remained until August, touching twelve widely scattered areas. This is done periodically in Perth, but it was the first time for a Servite.

Fr. Steve Ryan moved quickly into an expansion program for the school for which, as agreed earlier by the Archbishop, the Order would not be financially burdened. By March of 1965 proposals were brought forward for a science block of two fully furnished labs plus ancillary rooms. This was built on a grant of the Federal Government. The parishes of the area were required to finance the re-modeling of the former labs (built in 1959) into regular classrooms and also the construction of a library. The total cost of the project was about \$72,000.

On May 7 to 17, Frs. Loftus and McNamara came through Perth on visitation. They had spent a brief time on the way with Fr. Halloran in Sydney and also reviewed possibilities in Melbourne. Interestingly enough, there was little noticeable effect from this visit. Perhaps it was clear that development was just around the corner and was well in hand. Or perhaps follow-up was diverted by the fact that on leaving Perth and briefly visiting Africa, Fr. Loftus was elected Prior General and did not return to the Province.

The news of this election was a cause of great elation in Australia. After all, he had been there as superior only a year before and it was believed that his work in Perth had been the first big step in his rapid climb to the top. Negotiations regarding the extensions of the school, which began in August of 1965, were continued with Fr. Terrence O'Connor. Fr. Ryan also began a special annual award for people who made outstanding contributions towards the school. It was called the Order of the Knights of St. Philip. Needless to say, the first to receive it was Monsignor Langmead, along with Archbishop Prendiville.

Australians were disappointed that the Diet of 1965 seemed to by-pass them. There had been a hope that one of the projects offered in Sydney or other eastern diocese would be accepted, but apparently man power shortage made this impossible. This hope, originating during Fr. Loftus' time, was kept alive until the following February, at which time Frs. Ross and Ryan escorted Fr. O'Connor through Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

A thorough on-the-spot review of the situation and interviews with ecclesiastics and educationalists revealed that a large number of men would be required for a

viable school - and parishes were being offered only in connection with schools. At that time therefore it was concluded that Servites could not consider a school and would have to look into some other kind of work if any opening were to be made with limited personnel.

Fr. O'Connor, aware of investigation going-on at that very time in the U.S. regarding university chaplaincies, led an investigation in each city of possibilities for this apostolate. It is interesting to find Oke writing in his report about Melbourne, dated March 2, 1966: "There's also going to be a new university, the site of which is already laid out, but nothing definite can be determined in this regard.' This was Latrobe University - and this brief sentence hidden in a twelve page report held the secret for two years of what was to become the first Australian Servite foundation outside of Perth.

On September 6, 1965, just as the final term of that year was to begin, Liam Mackle was involved in a near tragic traffic accident, coming within a fraction of an inch of being permanently paralysed.. But some guardian angel and presence of mind were on his side and after a period of recuperation he was able to return, good as new, to teaching the next year.

Just at this time, another science teacher, Gregory Tasch was preparing to come to Australia. He arrived as the 1966 school year was about to begin. However, another tragedy struck the school almost simultaneously. Its first and most loved lay teacher, Enid Jowett, was killed on the road a few days before the new school year began. Her funeral, at St. Denis church, packed by school boys, was a tribute to a great woman. The faculty was in a state of shock.

The new science rooms were carefully built and carefully supervised. Their dedication, as well as that of the library, was held on September 25, 1966, attended by the auxiliary bishop of Perth and the Australian minister of the navy. The library was named the Enid Jowett Memorial Library at the request of the alumni.

Two other steps remained in the scheme of Fr. Ryan to complete the expansion of the school, but these were not augmented for several years. First was an arrangement with a parish north of Tuart Hill called Balga for three classrooms to be built as part of its parish plant but to be an annex or "feeder school." for St. Philip's. In other words, the intention was to have two classes of primary leading

into a single and enlarged secondary, but one set of these primary classes would be in Balga, the other at Tuart Hill. This would also necessitate the second step: acquiring a piece of property near the school that had belonged to the Sisters of Mercy. This would make possible the erection of additional classrooms at a later date when the double stream entered high school.

Vocations by the beginning of 1966 were looking more hopeful. One clerical student was concluding his first year of study at the local diocesan seminary. This was Terry Melvin, nephew of Nance Charles who was conducting the Villa for Frail Aged. There were also three non-clerical postulants. Michael Slattery, formerly a novice in the English Province before his family migrated to Australia, was writing about coming into the Australian Foundation.

Application was made to the Provincial for men as a result of this situation: someone to act as director of students and at least one solemn professed brother to act as inspiration and companion to these young men. This resulted in Fr. Myles Lynch and Bro. Cyril Walling coming to Perth in October, 1966 and Bro. Robert Lee following in January.

But fate insists on playing cruel tricks. Just as these positive signs of growth were showing, two priests decided to move from Australia. Tony Vander Loop sought a dispensation from his priesthood and left to teach in New Guinea in February of 1967. John Halloran, who had been part of the Australian group since 1955, had been helping as substitute pastor in several parishes around Perth since his holiday the previous year. Now he wanted to return to a diocese in California.

During the "Family Meeting" of December 16, 1966 Chris Ross summarized the advances and reverses. The future development of the group would depend a lot on the forthcoming Chapter, the inaugural of the Western Province, to which they were to be attached. Several preliminary contacts had been made and there was hope that personnel could be increased enough to make possible the long anticipated opening of even a small community in the east of Australia.

Building plans for the two Servite parishes were drawn up in 1966. Wanneroo was able to proceed immediately with a renovation that completely modernized the front of the old building. By this time there were strong indications that Wanneroo was soon to have a building boom. Residential and commercial

buildings were being spoken of and Paddy Boyle wisely felt that the parish church should at least look respectable.

At St. Denis, financial problems were more acute. Though the parish was now capable of taking a debt, it was impossible to obtain a loan because of a recession. In spite of this, plans were drawn up for a new church and presbytery in the expectancy that eventually funds would be forthcoming. In December of 1966 a loan was finally obtained.

## Chapter VII

In one way, when the Western Chapter elected Steve Ryan as Provincial on February 13, 1967, it was a great blow to the Australians. Everyone had come to depend a great deal on his administrative abilities; the school had been moving forward beautifully. Yet it was also a blessing to have the new Provincial, not to mention the incumbent Prior General, both from the Australian Foundation.

While only too conscious of the wider demands that were made on them now, both encouraged the growth of Australia. Fr. Ross, reappointed Regional Superior, was able to utilize his stay in the U.S. to obtain the assignment of Frs. Carlo Marchetti, Pat McNamara and Robert Zivkovic and Bro. Paul Valdez. Two members of the English Province were also interested in serving in Australia and while returning through London and Rome, Fr. Ross visited them. These were Frs. Vincent Harkins and Vincent Callaghan. Though Australia has many political and economic ties to Britain, this was the first time the Commonwealth connection was to extend to the Servites. With these men to arrive before the year was out, Christopher Ross was able to embark on a program of limited expansion.

The first problem was that of appointing a principal for St. Philip's High School to succeed Steve Ryan. An effort to get someone from one of the schools in America proved unsuccessful in spite of very open assistance from Frs. Loftus and Ryan. In a special visitation from May 2 to 6, 1967, he concluded that Liam Mackle would be the best man to take on the principal's office. Approval came on July 4 and shortly after, Fr. Mackle petitioned the changing of the name of the school to Servite College- This name has been successfully maintained.

The student program was in the hands of Myles Lynch, who was also the Prior of the Tuart Hill community. Kevin Thompson (who had sought re-admission) and Terry Melvin were vested as novices on March 26, 1967. Rod Metcalf was with the community as a non-clerical postulant. Kevin was to depart for a second time in June; Terry went on to become the first Australian to take vows in the Servite Order.

Two major developments occupied the year 1967. The first was the building of a new and long-awaited church at Joondanna. On returning from the Chapter, Chris Ross moved with Paddy Boyle into rented quarters and by July the ground was cleared of the old presbytery that Fr. Nolan had purchased ten years earlier for

this very purpose. Co-incidental to this was the inauguration of a folk or guitar Mass in June, 1967. The evening Mass was of course still in the old quonset hut at this time. But an interest was immediately created that was to carry over the following year into the new church as one of the foremost contributions of St. Denis and the Servites to the local Catholic scene in Perth. The building project was to occupy a full year because construction could not start until November due to architects delays and financial crises.

The second development was the problem of opening the new community in the east. Frs. McNamara and Harkins were assigned to Australia in the meantime and were doing university work in Los Angeles, but there was no definite place for them yet in Australia. Letters written to Sydney were meeting with rebuff. In a note dated July 6, 1967 Cardinal Gilroy made it clear that no university chaplaincies were available in his Archdiocese. Only four days later Chris Ross wrote to Melbourne, where Archbishop Knox was soon to become incumbent.

What followed was a classical example of the law of supply and demand. Latrobe University in Melbourne was in its first year, with 500 students in its starting class. The Jesuits were taking care of it temporarily, but a friend in Perth, Monsignor McMahon, had already indicated that he had heard they were not anxious to stay on there because of commitments in other universities.

Having obtained an interview with the new Archbishop on August 16, Fr. Ross found himself being offered the chaplaincy of Latrobe as well as the neighboring parish of Our Lady of the Way. Negotiations got under way immediately, Fr. Loftus enthused: 'Congratulations to you and all the Australian Servites. Latrobe University sounds like the answer to our prayers. Steve Ryan and the whole Western Province are elated. So am I and the whole Order. The more I read about Latrobe and Our Lady of the Way the better it sounds.' It was the general feeling that there was considerable advantage to being involved with this University practically from its inception.

A contract was drawn up with the Archdiocese of Melbourne, signed December 18, 1967. Fr. Patrick Boyle took up residence January 9, 1968. Frs. Harkins and McNamara followed in late February, having spent a few weeks in Perth to acquaint themselves with the Australian Servite family. They faced an immediate problem with housing; three men living in a small house that had previously accommodated but one diocesan priest. Besides this, university authorities would

only accept the presence of one chaplain of each church, a fact that had not been brought to light earlier. This meant that one man had to work with students in an unofficial capacity.

Before 1967 was over, yet another Servite was looking to Australia - this time Bro. Colin Scott, the Prior General's personal secretary. By October plans were underway for his arrival in time to pursue studies in preparation for entry into the University. As the new year got underway, the personnel situation looked particularly encouraging. At Tuart Hill were Frs. Lynch, Mackle, Rogan, Tasch, Zivkovic, Calaghan and Bros. Lee, Walling and Valdez; besides three students for the University (Bro. Melvin, Slattery and Dixon) and Colin Scott working on his matriculation.

At St. Denis, still in rented quarters at 183 Eton Street were Frs. Ross and Marchetti, the latter serving now the Wanneroo parish. In Melbourne were Frs. Boyle, McNamara and Harkins. No wonder a glowing article appeared in The Record, Perth's Catholic newspaper on February 22, 1968 describing the growth of the Servites. It was a long way from the situation of only a few years earlier when a few lone men were struggling in a corner of the Australian continent, far from all other Servites.

This was the forward looking picture of things when Frs. Ryan and Herlihy arrived in Perth for visitation running from December 22, 1967 to January 13, 1968. They were on their way from the Provincials' Congress in Monte Senario and therefore filled with the spirit of renewal which was to become so evident later in the year at the General Chapter in Madrid. This visitation launched the Australians into a renewal that was to have a profound effect.

Stephen Ryan explained carefully what developments he had witnessed in religious life in America and Europe, and the directions that were in evidence for the new Constitutions. He clarified ideas on collegiality and introduced concepts of autonomy for Australia. For the first time, assignment of personnel and formulation of policy were placed in the hands of the Australian Council. Better vocation recruitment was encouraged. Probably most important was the drawing up, even while the visitation was in progress, of a policy for the education of Servite students at the University of Western Australia.



The idea of university training had previously been hinted at in correspondence and one of the features originally of the opening at Latrobe had been the possibility that students could study there while living with the Melbourne community. But it was only, at this visitation that the ideas jelled.

This was to result in a now well known Formation Program, drawn up in March, 1968 which included such features as having the students live at the Catholic university residence, Thomas More College, returning to the Priory on weekends; involving outside scholastic and psychological assistance to supplement the limited involvement that Servites could have with the training; requesting an outside evaluation during the second year of its running; and finally that the Western Province financially support the program, which would not be possible if the resources of the Foundation alone were to be used.

This Program has since been looked upon as one of Australia's chief contributions to thinking in the area of student formation in the Order. It was approved by the Diet of 1968 - after Australian Servites used their new-found autonomy to insist that certain additions advocated by the Western Definitorium were not practical in the view of the men on the scene, like making Fr. Lynch a full time Director of Formation.

Two other matters which were precipitated by Fr. Ryan's visit were the drawing up of a final and definite contract with Fr. Peter Quinn regarding the opening of the annex to the Tuart Hill school in his parish at Balga; and the obtaining of finance by bank loan, to be repaid by the regional parishes, for purchasing the sisters' property across from the school for future building. On the way back to America the visitors had a chance to stop at Kingsbury, where Fr. Boyle had by then newly taken up residence.

The personnel situation during 1968 was fairly calm. Ron Hickey, one of the finest lay teachers at Servite College had to retire from teaching because his serious illness made it impossible for him to continue; his dedication was so strong that he stayed on as long as he could.

In early August Pat McNamara had to return home for the final illness of his mother. He was to remain away till the following May. This was not without some benefit, paradoxically, since it alleviated the housing and staffing problems at Kingsbury.

Vince Harkins became full time University chaplain, a post he long retained, In the meantime, Paddy Boyle was making a strong impact on Our Lady of the Way. Most noteworthy was his inauguration of a parish council that was a model of a renewed approach to parochial administration.

The dedication of the new church and presbytery of St. Denis, Joondanna took place on 25th August, 1968. Archbishop Prendiville had died the previous June, much to the sorrow of the Servites, who would have been overjoyed to have had him share the day with them. Bishop Myles McKeon, auxiliary of Perth, presided. This church opening was important not only because it brought to maturity the parish which Servites had been administering almost since its inception, but also because its contemporary design and decoration were to make it a building of special interest to Catholics of Perth.

On September 27, within a matter of weeks of this opening, Christopher Ross left for the General Chapter in Spain, passing through Melbourne and Los Angeles. This would be the first time the Australian Foundation was represented at a General Chapter - the first contact with the Australian Servites for most of the Europeans.

On returning in early January 1969, Fr. Ross arranged for a week of study of the new Constitutions. At one of these sessions, February 4, 1969, following the pattern of the annual family meetings that had been held since 1965 and the spirit of the new Constitutions, a collegial discussion was held, involving everyone in the Foundation except Pat McNamara, who was overseas. From a series of proposals, counter-proposals and observations, suggestions relative to the assignment of personnel and specifically to the development of the Formation Program were made.

The result was that Chris Ross resigned as pastor of St. Denis and became the Director of the Formation Program, while remaining Vicar Provincial (a title now given by the Constitutions when it established Australia as a Vicariate.) Tuart Hill became exclusively the House of Formation and students ceased to live at Thomas More College. Seven students would now be in residence. Though Gregory Tasch and Robert Zivkovic continued to live at the Formation House, the other members of the school faculty moved into a residence near the school, at 140 Roberts Street, Joondanna, in order to alleviate the crowded conditions at 2

Morgans Street and also to experience life in a smaller community with an integrated apostolate.

The Vicariate now would consist of five houses. Carlo Marchetti requested to live back out at Wanneroo, closer to the parish apostolate in which he was involved. Myles Lynch took over administration of St. Denis parish and was assigned Pat McNamara as an assistant. Brian Rogan was by this time ready to start the first year of classes at the Balga annex, so he too was placed at St. Denis along with Vincent Callaghan, who was studying at the University. (Colin Scott left the Order just at this time, at the expiration of his first vows.)

An air of newness pervaded the group following this meeting. Little wonder that when it came time soon after to draw up the Contract of the Australian Vicariate with the Western Province, as required by the new Constitutions, quite a few ideas born at this meeting were incorporated. The first draft of the Australian Contract was made by Christopher Ross while he was attending the Provincials' annual conference in Sydney from March 18 to 21, 1969. It consisted of 48 articles covering personnel, the Vicariates participation in Provincial chapters and elections, the mode of election and duties of its own Vicar Provincial and Council, the Australian Formation Program and financial agreements. A meeting was held of all in the vicariate (a stop-over had been made in Melbourne), and after suggestions and corrections had been incorporated, a first official draft was submitted to the Province for its suggestions.

A second meeting on May 7 considered the recommendations of members of the Province and immediately submitted a second draft - which was approved at the Provincial Chapter of June. Subsequently it was approved by the General Council on November 8, 1969 and praised as a model for other vicariates in drawing up their own contracts.

At the end of June, 1969 Fr. Edward Penonzek came to Australia for a six week visit to study the Formation Program. He attended classes, interviewed students and faculty and acquainted himself in detail with the student set-up. On his departure, having briefly looked at the possibilities for theological training in Melbourne, he drew up a 30 page report that not only evaluated, but offered suggestions for bettering the program.

On December 24, 1969, Fr. Joseph Loftus came to Perth for several weeks on his

first visitation since having been elected Prior General. He was accompanied by Neal Planagan. In a meeting of West Australian Servites on January 5, 1970 he outlined his observations and recommendations: the formation community should be more integrated in work and outlook; there should be a board of lay advisors to help the economic matters of the Vicariate; Servites should become more fully the center of lay apostolic groups; vocation recruitment needed improvement. Behind these suggestions lay a conviction that the future of Australian Servites, after twenty years, looked brighter than ever before. In fine, he summarized with words that can well conclude this short history:

'The growth of the Vicariate is striking. Personnel has doubled; housing has mushroomed; Servites have spread across the Australian continent. Vocations are more numerous. The spirit of the men is wholesome, zealous and happy. This, of course, is christian and Servite and as it should be.'