

# THE FIRST VINCENTIAN BISHOP IN AUSTRALIA

## MICHAEL O'FARRELL CM

*Greg Cooney CM*

### **Introduction**

There have been two Vincentian Bishops in Australia: Bishop Michael O'Farrell CM, the fourth Bishop of Bathurst (1920-1928) and Bishop Richard Ryan CM. The latter was appointed the second bishop of Geraldton (1923-1926) and subsequently, the third bishop of Sale (1926-1957).

This article will give a short account of Michael O'Farrell's years in Bathurst. Most of what is presented here has already been published and so, in that sense, is not new. What this article does is to bring that information together, and to focus it.

### **Before Bathurst (1865-1920)**

Michael O'Farrell was born in Ireland at Milhow, (Milltown) near Mullingar on 7 April 1865. The family appears to have been a devout one: two of his sisters were Sisters of Mercy, Sister Cathaldus and Sister Malachy, and three of his brothers were priests. One of them, Fr P O'Farrell remained in Ireland, while the other two, Bernard and Timothy, emigrated to Australia to work in the diocese of Sydney.<sup>1</sup>

After completing his schooling at St Finian's College, Navan, he entered Maynooth Seminary. He was a fellow student of Daniel

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<sup>1</sup> *All Hallows Annual* (1927-1928): 120; and Marie Crowley, *Women of the Vale. Perthville Josephites 1872-1972*, (Richmond, Victoria: Spectrum Publications, 2002), 122, 238.

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Mannix, who later became Archbishop of Melbourne, and of Maurice O'Reilly. At the end of a distinguished course O'Farrell was ordained in 1887 and joined the Vincentians. O'Reilly also joined the Vincentians in 1888 and was ordained in 1890.

The young Father O'Farrell worked as a missionary for four years in England, based at Sheffield, from where he gave missions and retreats in England. This was followed by a period of time at All Hallows' College during which he was the Professor of Ecclesiastical History and of Higher Mathematics and Physics. There followed a period at the Irish College in Paris where he was appointed the Professor of Moral Theology. It seems that while there he took the opportunity to travel, as is evidenced by the existence in the Bathurst diocesan archives of a fifty-page diary documenting his tour of Switzerland in 1899.

In 1903 he returned to the Vincentian Parish at Phibsboro, Dublin, and for the next ten years, until his move to Australia, gave himself to the task of conducting missions and retreats in Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

O'Farrell arrived in Australia in October 1913, and took up residence at St Vincent's, Ashfield. Since he had had a long experience of missions, and was considered to be particularly skilled in this regard, he had been sent to Australia for mission work. However, he was asked to act as the Spiritual Director of the two diocesan seminaries, firstly at St Columba's College, Springwood, and later at St Patrick's College, Manly.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *All Hallows Annual* (1927-1928):119.

<sup>3</sup> *All Hallows Annual* (1927-1928):119-120. K J Walsh, *Yesterday's Seminary. A History of St Patrick's Manly*, (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1998), 141, 282, indicates that, although the Vincentians had been going to Manly and to Springwood once a month to give the seminarians their monthly day of recollection for many years, the first to be officially appointed as the Spiritual Director was O'Farrell in 1919.

It may seem surprising that a man so skilled in mission work was not appointed to that task. The answer lies in the fact that the Vincentian superiors in Sydney considered that he would better serve by taking on the role of Spiritual Director at the seminaries, a work that they had begun some years earlier at the request of Monsignor Michael Verdon, the first Rector of St Patrick's (1889-1895). Verdon had known the Vincentians since his school-days at Castleknock College in Dublin, and it was not unexpected that he would have turned to them for help.<sup>4</sup> Maurice O'Reilly CM, who had known O'Farrell from his Maynooth years as a fellow student, was clearly influential in the decision. From among the ranks of the Vincentians, O'Reilly considered him to be the most capable and experienced man for this task.<sup>5</sup>

Towards the end of 1915 O'Farrell moved from Ashfield to St John's College, within the University of Sydney, to become its Vice Rector and to form a community with Maurice O'Reilly who had been appointed as the Rector. It would have suited them both, for there was "a deep bond of sympathy and understanding between the Rector and his assistant."<sup>6</sup> He continued in his duties as Spiritual Director and in 1919, commenced monthly days of recollection for the local clergy.<sup>7</sup> O'Farrell remained at St John's College until his appointment as Bishop in 1920. His "loss to St John's and to Father O'Reilly was a grievous one."<sup>8</sup>

O'Farrell's predecessor, Bishop John Dunne, died on 22 August 1919, at the age of seventy-four. Almost a year elapsed before O'Farrell was

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<sup>4</sup> Walsh, *Yesterday's Seminary*, 93.

<sup>5</sup> D F Bourke, CM *The History of the Vincentian Fathers in Australasia*, (Ashfield: Congregation of the Mission, c. 1982), 104, 110, 147.

<sup>6</sup> F D King CM, *Memories of Maurice O'Reilly*, (Prahran, Victoria: Hall's Book Store, 1953), 69.

<sup>7</sup> Bourke, *The History of the Vincentian Fathers in Australasia*. 147.

<sup>8</sup> King, *Memories of Maurice O'Reilly*, 69.

nominated.<sup>9</sup> John Hall, in his *History of St Stanislaus' College*, noted that this was considered a long time.<sup>10</sup> It is not unlikely that the Australian hierarchy had some difficulties in finding a replacement for Dunne.

His appointment as Bishop of Bathurst would seem to have come as a surprise. He had never been a Parish Priest, never held the office of Superior in his own community, or, it would seem, any administrative position other than that of Vice Rector. Bourke comments that O'Farrell

was virtually unknown to the general public and it is stated that his talents were passed over by some of the undiscerning, even in his own Congregation, but that he was held in the highest estimation by the Australian Hierarchy and many of the clergy.”<sup>11</sup>

### **The fourth Bishop of Bathurst**

O'Farrell was fifty-five years of age when he was appointed the fourth Bishop of Bathurst on 16 June 1920.

Bathurst was not an under-developed diocese. Established in 1865, by 1920 it had seventeen parishes, ninety-three churches and twenty-nine diocesan priests. There were two diocesan institutes of religious women (the Sisters of St Joseph and the Sisters of Mercy); the Vincentian community had seven priests who were conducting St Stanislaus' College for the Bishop, and the Patrician Brothers ran three

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<sup>9</sup> King, *Memories of Maurice O'Reilly*, 69, incorrectly states that Dunne died in 1920.

<sup>10</sup> John Hall CM, *History of St Stanislaus' College including St Charles' Seminary*, (Bathurst: St Stanislaus' College, c. 1944), 142.

<sup>11</sup> Bourke, *The History of the Vincentian Fathers in Australasia*. 147.

schools: – one in Bathurst (founded 1884); another in Dubbo (1889-1892; 1920); and the third in Orange (founded 1890). The Brothers also had their Novitiate at Croagh Patrick in Orange which they had began in 1914. The catholic population of the diocese, according to the 1921 census, was 34,067 and there were around 4,700 children in catholic schools.

A comparison is instructive. In 2003 the Diocese of Bathurst had a catholic population of 66,759, twenty-four active diocesan priests in twenty parishes, four Vincentian priests at St Stanislaus' College, no religious Brothers, and a catholic school population of 9,975. The Sisters of St Joseph and the Mercy Sisters were still active in the diocese, but few of them were directly involved with catholic schools.

He was consecrated on 30 November 1920 in the Bathurst Cathedral of St Michael and St John by the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Cattaneo. O'Farrell himself seems not to have relished the prospect of taking on the office:

the episcopal burden has been placed on weak shoulders. ... That harmonious and, to me lovable life, was ended by my nomination to Bathurst. Public life never had any attractions for me. But I have now to share it very often, for a Bishop in Australia must travel much and preach in season and out of season ... somehow I have felt, and feel still, the publicity a Bishop gets here.<sup>12</sup>

A coat of arms can frequently indicate the charter, or personal plan, that a Bishop places before himself an assuming office. O'Farrell's coat of arms depicts, on the right hand side (generally regarded as the "family" side) a lion rampant which is the central feature of the O'Farrell family crest. The left hand side – the "personal charter" side

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<sup>12</sup> O'Farrell to Bishop Patrick Murray CSsR, Rome. 22.3.1921, cited by Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 113.

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– is composed of four stars enclosing a stylised shamrock, surmounting a symbol of the Sacred Heart, and, at the bottom of the crest, the letters JMJ.<sup>13</sup>

The four stars would seem to represent the Southern Cross, a symbol of Australia, and the shamrock, his native Ireland. Enclosing one within the other could represent the bond of unity between the two, or, and perhaps more likely, that the catholicity of Australia is to be found and fostered in its Irish heritage. The Sacred Heart represents compassion and love, and the letters JMJ (sometimes shown as IMI) stand for Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The crest bears the motto: *Prodesse non nocere* (be of benefit and not of harm). In distinction to many episcopal mottos there appears to be no direct link or allusion to a biblical text. Its source may be O’Farrell’s own self-knowledge, and, in particular, his tendency to be overly demanding of others.

Others who knew him would not have disagreed with the task he set himself in the motto. Maurice O’Reilly, the man who probably knew him as well as anyone else, assessed him posthumously in these words:

Though he had an element of hardness, which was one of the defects of his qualities, proceeding as it did from a wish to get everybody to be as energetic as himself, wherever there was a good priest fighting against heavy odds, or stricken by illness, or unable to do for himself what his health or circumstances seemed to need, the Bishop had for such a man all the tenderness of a woman, and all the generosity of a father.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Francis McCarthy, *An Armorial of the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Australia*, (Darlinghurst, NSW: Thylacine Press, 1998), 54. The image of the Sacred Heart in this published version of the crest does not have the encircling crown of thorns, which is seen in other versions of it held in the Bathurst diocesan archives.

<sup>14</sup> King, *Memories of Maurice O’Reilly*, 80.

Similar sentiments appear in the Funeral Homily given by Monsignor Long, the senior priest of the Bathurst diocese at the time. Long described him as “a hard worker” as one who “did not want those serving under him to be idle” and as a man who “under the spur of high ideals ... has been sometimes thought exacting.”<sup>15</sup> Marie Crowley, in the light of his dealings with the Sisters of St Joseph, described him as “reserved and ascetic, ... severe, cold and demanding.”<sup>16</sup>

Maurice O'Reilly preached on the occasion of his consecration, and if O'Farrell felt heavy on his shoulders the burden of episcopal office, O'Reilly's words may have offered some comfort. He highlighted O'Farrell's broad and varied experience and urged him to rely on it.

My Lord, as a friend of over thirty years' standing I recognise that you know what lies before you. Your experience in two hemispheres, your travels in many lands, your intellectual and spiritual gifts, all have prepared you, unconsciously to yourself, for the burden that you have assumed today.

Your time in the ecclesiastical colleges of Paris and Dublin, as well as your seven years of spiritual direction of the Australian aspirants to the Priesthood at Manly College, make the clergy feel that in a very intimate way you are one of themselves, jealous of their honour, loving the brotherhood, able to stimulate them intellectually, while guarding the spirit of the priesthood.

The religious communities will feel that your varied experience as Director of Retreats will have given you a thorough understanding of their needs, and a sympathetic appreciation of their difficulties and trials.

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<sup>15</sup> *Echoes from St Stanislaus*, (1928): 16.

<sup>16</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 129.

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The laity will soon recognise that the years devoted by you to the work of the missions have given you the human touch, that knowledge of the heart of man, which no mere academic instruction could impart.

Your five years at the University have deepened your appreciation of the supreme fact that the battle for the Faith and for Christ will be won or lost in the schools.<sup>17</sup>

### **O'Farrell the Administrator**

O'Farrell's propensity for hard work and his distaste for sloppiness were felt quickly in the diocese. As if to signal his intentions to all he quickly turned his attention to St Stanislaus' College, run for him by his fellow Vincentians.

Within five weeks of his consecration there was, on his desk, an Auditor's Report critical of the lack of proper book-keeping and administration of St Stanislaus' College. Fr John Hall, who had just been appointed as the President of the College in succession to Fr Joseph Lowe, was instructed to fix the matters. By 1924 sufficient improvement had been made for the Auditor to state that "a review of the accounts over the past three years shows a very satisfactory condition of affairs."<sup>18</sup>

O'Farrell was not content with what already being done in the Diocese and looked for needs that were not being met. Monsignor Long noted that when "people speak of the good work the late Bishop has accomplished they mention St Vincent's Hospital, the Boys'

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<sup>17</sup> King, *Memories of Maurice O'Reilly*, 69-70.; and Hall, *History of St Stanislaus' College*, 143-144.

<sup>18</sup> Bourke, *The History of the Vincentian Fathers in Australasia*, 148.

Orphanage in Orange, and other such conspicuous results of his administration.”<sup>19</sup>

He was not afraid to spend money, purchasing what was described at the time as the palatial residence, *Hatrop* and in which he founded St Vincent’s Hospital, still operating today. Opened on 13 November 1922 and placed under the administration of the Sisters of Charity, it was, in O’Farrell’s words, “to be an institution catering especially for the sick poor.”<sup>20</sup>

The Boys’ Orphanage was established by him in the house which the Patrician Brothers had used for their novitiate which they sold to him on their departure from the diocese. The Orphanage was entrusted to the Daughters of Charity, whom O’Farrell brought to the Diocese from England in 1926. It was the foundation work of the Daughters of Charity in Australia.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul flourished under O’Farrell’s administration. By 1926 the number of Conferences had grown significantly and were active in all the major centres of the diocese. The *Australasian Catholic Directory for 1926* lists Conferences at Bathurst, Portland, Orange, Wellington, Cowra, Mudgee, Canowindra, Gulgong, Coonamble and Dubbo.

The editor of the *Echoes from St Stanislaus*’ summed up O’Farrell’s ability as an administrator in these words:

Hardly had the Bishop assumed office than his alert, fertile and judicious mind was conceiving a prudent and far-reaching programme for operations in all parts of the diocese. Apart from his wonderful work in connection with the hospital, his Lordship did much for the orphans, for religion and for education in

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<sup>19</sup> *Echoes from St Stanislaus*’, (1928): 16.

<sup>20</sup> *Catholic Observer*, Vol. 6 no. 9 (12 November 1972): 1.

various parts of the diocese. While the institutions in existence at the start of his regime have been splendidly maintained and developed, the Bishop throughout his Episcopacy of over six years, spent over one hundred thousand pounds on new undertakings.<sup>21</sup>

Marie Crowley indicates where some of that rather large sum of money was spent: St Vincent's Hospital, extensions to St Joseph's Orphanage at Bathurst, a new church at Kandos, improvements to other churches, and new convents in Borenore, Forest Reefs, Millthorpe and Portland.<sup>22</sup>

Monsignor Long was not exaggerating when, at O'Farrell's funeral, he asked the congregation to thank God "for the gifted administrator that planned and calculated so wisely, that laboured so hard and unselfishly, that never had a thought of self when the salvation of a soul was in question."<sup>23</sup>

### **O'Farrell the Educationalist**

Maurice O'Reilly, at O'Farrell's consecration, had urged him to take the task of catholic education to heart. O'Farrell heeded the call.

One could argue that the most significant contribution he made to catholic education was not only to permit, but to encourage Sisters of St Joseph to gain university degrees. In an era when few women, and far fewer religious women, had university degrees this was a bold undertaking. He was prepared to cover all the costs of the first two Sisters (Teresa Maria Carey and Kevin Crowley) "as long as they succeeded."<sup>24</sup> The cost would have been considerable covering not

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<sup>21</sup> *Echoes from St Stanislaus'*, (1928): 15.

<sup>22</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 128.

<sup>23</sup> *Echoes from St Stanislaus'*, (1928): 17.

<sup>24</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 121.

only their fees but also their board and lodging at Sancta Sophia College within the Sydney University. Both succeeded, gaining an Arts degree and a Diploma of Education.

Also worthy of note were his efforts to recruit postulants for the two communities of religious sisters whose work was predominantly in education: the Sisters of St Joseph and the Sisters of Mercy.

During his voyage to Rome for the Holy Year celebrations in 1925, he took the opportunity to recruit eight prospective postulants for the Sisters of St Joseph, to whom he referred as “eight good little ornaments for Mother Killian’s new nest.” The “new nest” was the recently opened Novitiate. They sailed along with four Daughters of Charity from Tilbury on 26 September 1926. What he began continued after his death: between 1926 and 1930 eighteen postulants left Ireland for Australia.<sup>25</sup>

O’Farrell’s language, by today’s standards, is paternalistic and even sexist, but he was generous in their regard. Not only did he pay their passage to Australia, which was usual, he also gave an undertaking that he would pay for the young woman’s passage home to Ireland should she not be professed for any reason. If she wished, with her parents’ consent, to remain in Australia, he undertook to find for her suitable employment in Australia.<sup>26</sup>

He kept a close watch on the schools, probably because he, like Maurice O’Reilly, was firmly convinced that in them lay the future of the Church and the Faith. His oversight descended to details as is illustrated by his displeasure at the practice of having two divisions in one class.

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<sup>25</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 123.

<sup>26</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 123.

One division, generally the smaller of the two, was taught by a Sister, whereas the other, larger division was taught by a governess or monitor who was frequently untrained for the task. O'Farrell objected to this on two grounds: firstly, that it was educationally unsound and secondly, that the children of poorer families were invariably to be found in the section taught by the governess.

He also objected to practice of having a Sister as a Music Teacher. He considered that this was not a good use of resources in that it provided a luxury for those families who could afford it while the poor children had to suffer an inferior education. He ordered that the practices of dividing classes and of engaging governesses cease, and that the Music Teachers, or at least a number of them, return to class room teaching.<sup>27</sup>

The *School Report Diocese of Bathurst 1923* indicates that he was not satisfied with the standard of religious education. While the children could recite the words of the Catechism, they could not properly explain what the words meant: an ignorance which O'Farrell described as "appalling." So insistent was he on this matter, and so demanding, that he frightened the children and unnerved the Sisters.<sup>28</sup>

The clearest example of his intense oversight of catholic education is provided by the story of his squabble with the Patrician Brothers. They had arrived in the Bathurst diocese in 1884, and it would appear had had a generally good relationship with the Bishop until the arrival of O'Farrell.

Brother Paul O'Connell indicates that, in part, this could be attributed to that the fact that the Brothers did not get on well with the Vincentians at St Stanislaus' College. Claiming they had been given assurances that no new boarding schools would be opened in the diocese, the Vincentians were annoyed that the Brothers were taking in

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<sup>27</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 115.

<sup>28</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 116.

some boarders at their Novitiate in Orange, and even more displeased when the Brothers opened a secondary boarding section to their Dubbo school in 1921. The boarding section to the Dubbo school was begun, it seems, at the urging of Monsignor Brophy, the Parish Priest of Dubbo, who is quoted as saying he “did not want to let the Vincentians run the diocese.”<sup>29</sup>

O’Farrell found fault, not with the religious instruction in the Brothers’ schools but with the way in which they failed to teach the prescribed syllabus. The Bishops of New South Wales had decreed that catholic schools were to follow the same syllabus as that laid down for the state schools. O’Farrell, not satisfied with the manner in which this directive was being followed, organised for the catholic teachers of the diocese a summer school to be conducted by officers of the Department of Public Instruction.

The Sisters dutifully attended; two of the Brothers made a desultory and perfunctory appearance. It was to be the beginning of the end for them. After receiving a commissioned report on their schools, the Bishop, charging them with incompetence in their schools, and hostility to his authority, demanded in November 1924, their withdrawal from the diocese. They appealed to Rome against his decision, but without success.<sup>30</sup> Their schools were taken over by the De La Salle Brothers and their Novitiate became Croagh Patrick Orphanage.

It was an unfortunate incident. O’Farrell’s successor, Bishop John Norton, wrote to Brother Norbert Phelan many years later expressing his regrets: “I always recall with regret the severance of your Congregation’s association with this diocese, when with a little give

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<sup>29</sup> Paul O’Connell, “The Expulsion of the Patrician Brothers from the Diocese of Bathurst. 1924-1927”, *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, 6/3 (1980): 6-11, at 8.

<sup>30</sup> O’Connell, “The Expulsion of the Patrician Brothers”, 9-10.

and take it could have been avoided.”<sup>31</sup> Although not all the blame can be laid at the feet of O’Farrell, he was intransigent and even mean to the Patricians.

O’Farrell was a man who would brook no challenge to his authority, as his dealings with the Sisters of St Joseph clearly show.<sup>32</sup> One wonders whether the Brothers were expelled for their defects as educators, or rather for their lack of deference to His Lordship.

He seemed, however, quite happy with St Stanislaus’ College. At the end of 1923, he told the assembled students:

Of all the things in this Diocese, there is none that causes me less anxiety than does this College. Such confidence have I that your superiors and professors are doing their great work with a full sense of responsibility, and that you students are playing your part well, that it gives me unmixed joy, but anxiety, none.<sup>33</sup>

### **O’Farrell the Public Figure**

By his own admission O’Farrell did not enjoy public life, nor did he relish the publicity that Bishops attracted in Australia. Despite his reluctance of publicity, he did not shy away from a stoush with the Anglican Bishop of Bathurst, Dr Long, who is not to be confused with his catholic namesake, Monsignor Long.

Dr Long was not unknown to the Vincentians, having had an acrimonious debate with Maurice O’Reilly some years earlier when the latter was the President of St Stanislaus’ College. In response to the Bishop’s booklet, *Papal Pretensions*, containing the texts of his

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<sup>31</sup> O’Connell, “The Expulsion of the Patrician Brothers”, 11.

<sup>32</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 114-122.

<sup>33</sup> Hall, *History of St Stanislaus’ College*, 144.

sermons against the Catholics, O'Reilly also published the text of his replies in a book, *Anglican Inventions*.<sup>34</sup>

O'Farrell's public squabble with Long was occasioned by the latter's complaints regarding the Catholic Church's demand that a catholic marry before a priest, even in those cases in which the marriage was a "mixed marriage". Failure to do so rendered that marriage invalid in the eyes of the Catholic Church. The consequence was that the Catholic Church regarded any children born of the marriage to be illegitimate, and Long was displeased at what he considered to be the sully of the members of his flock who had married a Catholic "outside the Church".

It became known as the *Ne Temere* debate, taking its name from the 1908 decree that imposed the obligation. Much to the delight of the local and Sydney papers, the acrimonious interchange went on for several months, from September 1923 until January 1924.<sup>35</sup>

O'Farrell was regarded as an excellent public speaker – an orator able to hold the attention of his audience. The reporter for *The Bathurst Times* had this to say of the Bishop's speech to the Australasian Holy Catholic Guild:

Seldom has such an earnest and thoughtful address been heard in Bathurst as was the case yesterday morning on the occasion of the annual Communion Breakfast of the Australasian Holy Catholic Guild, Immaculate Mary Branch No. 23, Bathurst.

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<sup>34</sup> M J O'Reilly, CM, *Anglican Inventions: a critical examination of the controversial methods of the Anglican Bishop of Bathurst*, (Sydney: E J Dwyer, 1913). See also King, *Memories of Maurice O'Reilly*, 19-20.

<sup>35</sup> *Bathurst National Advocate*, 11 September 1923; 7 January 1924; 21 January, 1924. *Daily Mail*, 12 September 1923; 7 January 1924; 14 January 1924; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August 1923; 23 October 1924; *Daily Telegraph*, 7 January 1924; *The Bathurst Times*, 7 January 1924; 14 January 1924; 21 January 1924.

His Lordship the Bishop, Dr O'Farrell, outlined the attitude of the Catholic Church on the vital industrial problems of Australia to-day, and dealt with the question in a clear, forceful and thoughtful manner, which held the unwavering attention of his audience for over half an hour.<sup>36</sup>

The anonymous writer of the tribute to him in the *Echoes from St Stanislaus* noted that his "every address... seemed as good as if he had spent months preparing it", and Monsignor Long complimented him for being "an earnest preacher in whose mouth the Divine Word lost none of its force, who so often enlightened our minds and stirred our hearts to noble purposes."<sup>37</sup>

## **Conclusion**

O'Farrell was a man of foresight. Aware that his health was failing, he took his Secretary and the Administrator of the Cathedral, Fr John Norton, with him for his voyage to Rome in 1925. While there he arranged to have Norton consecrated a Bishop with right of succession.<sup>38</sup> Mindful, no doubt, that the Diocese had languished without a Bishop for over a year before his appointment, he did not wish that to be repeated. It is also not unlikely that he wished, as his successor, a man whom he could trust to carry on the work he had begun.

He returned to Australia in ill-health and died in Orange Presbytery on the evening of the Wednesday of Holy Week, 4 April 1928. He was buried from his Cathedral in Bathurst on the following Monday, 9 April.

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<sup>36</sup> *Bathurst Times*, 26 March 1928.

<sup>37</sup> *Echoes from St Stanislaus*, (1928): 15, 17.

<sup>38</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 122

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His tenure as Bishop of Bathurst was a mere seven years and four months, and yet in that time he achieved much. Despite the difficulties he had had with the Sisters of St Joseph, Mother Seraphim spoke generously of him, referring to him as “their best friend”, and as one who could be considered “our Second Founder.”<sup>39</sup> His confrere, Fr John Hall, was even more effusive, likening him to a brilliant meteor that flashed across our sky.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Crowley, *Women of the Vale*, 131.

<sup>40</sup> Hall, *History of St Stanislaus' College*, 144.

