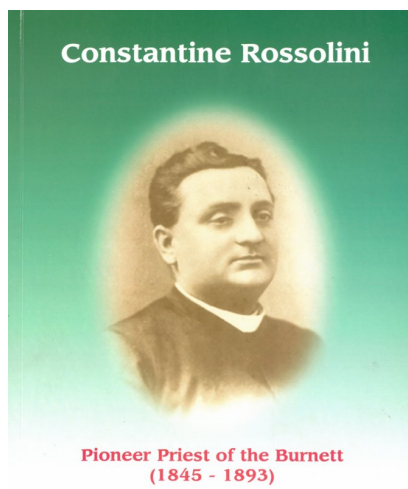


CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN BUNDABERG

Miss Cathryn King

August 2022

To start at the beginning – in the words of the song, a very good place to start. I have mapped this presentation to cover the development of Catholic Education with just a passing reference to the expansion into Secondary Education of both girls and boys. There seemed enough matter to cover in the Primary sector within the time frame of this presentation. I have also given some space to the Religious Education of children in State Schools.



The beginning goes back 146 years to the 1870s of the nineteenth century to the times of Father Rossolini and

Walter Adams. A word about these two men; Father Constantine Rossolini's date of birth is uncertain, but records show he was baptised on the 5 June 1845 in the Church of St Leonard, Cupramontana, Italy. He probably attended school locally until he went to Iesi to further his education at the Minor Seminary there. In 1867, his studies were completed at the Roman College (the seminary for diocesan clergy conducted by the Jesuits and known today as the Gregorian University, Rome.)

In that year he was ordained by Cardinal Morichini, the Cardinal Archbishop of Iesi. Soon after his ordination in 1867, Rossolini was chosen and appointed as the Secretary to Cardinal Morichini. It seems reasonable to suppose he was destined for a life's work among the hierarchy of the church and not as a pioneer priest in the Queensland Diocese in far off Australia.

Morichini was a man interested in many issues; chief among them was education. He built schools and, to me impressively, night schools for those who needed to work by day. He also reissued a simple catechism for all; it was first printed in 1851.

In 1869, Pope Pius IX convened a General Council and to it went the Bishop of Brisbane, Bishop Quinn. Of major concern to him was his need to obtain priests to work in his diocese. He approached Morichini with this request. Morichini responded by giving him three priests – his Secretary, Constantine Rossolini, Father Benedict

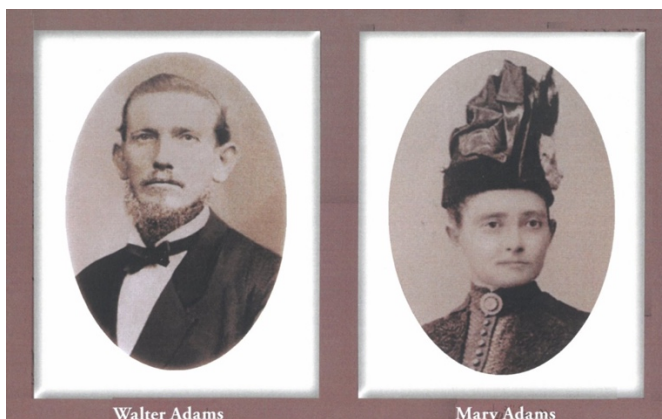
Scortichini (both from Cupramontana) and Father Jerome Davadi (from Montecarotto).

For Rossolini, the journey to Bundaberg began in 1870 on board the ship *Storm King* with English lessons along the way from an Irish Teacher, Jeremiah Long. Was it English spoken with an Irish accent - and with an Italian twist? A public welcome with Mass and Benediction awaited the three priests on their arrival in Brisbane on 5 March 1871. Within days, these priests were assigned to their workplaces. Father Rossolini drew the lot for Gayndah. This involved a journey by steamer to Maryborough followed by a two-day coach trip to Gayndah with a stopover in Dallarnil in the *Live and Let Live Hotel*! It is recorded that the date of the first baptism performed by him was 9 May 1871. The evidence suggests he was quickly seeing to his pastoral duties.

By 1876, Rossolini had permanently moved his residence to Bundaberg but on a rotational basis he still travelled to Gayndah and Mount Perry and various places and camp sites between. The *Mount Perry Mail*, 1873, chronicled ‘the erection of the Mt Perry Catholic Chapel, completed on Christmas Eve’ and in February 1874, ‘a day school in connection with the Roman Catholic Church in town was opened on Monday morning last under the supervision of Miss Bertheau We hear the number is about 50’.

Of Walter Adams – Walter Adams landed in Sydney on 2 September 1849 with his parents and siblings. It was

stated in the ship's manifest that he was a farm labourer of the Church of England persuasion who could read and write. He married Mary Shannon in Gayndah on 20 March 1854. Mary was Catholic Irish who migrated as a 20-year-old housemaid who could neither read nor write. Most of Walter's family remained in the Hunter Valley.



Walter and Mary moved on to Maryborough but after a time they relocated to Bundaberg. In Bundaberg, they built and established the single storeyed timber Adams Hotel where, from 1873 to 1876, the first Bundaberg Masses were celebrated in the hotel's dining room. (From 1873 to 1875 these early Masses were celebrated by Father O'Brien or other priests who visited from Maryborough or Gayndah. Father Rossolini during his first visits to Bundaberg boarded at the hotel.) Walter became very active in the town's affairs and extended his interests to a variety of civic concerns. In 1888, he was

elected, unopposed, as the first member for Bundaberg to the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

In 1873, a Church Building Fund had been established, with the principal participants seeming to be Rossolini, Adams, and a Mr James Drinan. In 1874, for £1 per allotment, Lots 1, 2, and 3 of Section 8 were purchased for the church and a residence. They were the first offered for sale and received no competing bids! By October 1875, a small timber structure had been erected on the site but it was soon replaced, on the same site, by a larger timber building at a cost of £300. It was the first church raised in Bundaberg. J. Y. Walker in his book (1890) states that ‘To the Christians of the Roman Catholic persuasion belongs the honour of having been the first to erect a place of public worship in the new settlement’. Both churches were known as St Mary’s of the Holy Rosary. This building sets the scene as the forerunner of each Catholic Primary School in Bundaberg – church for Mass on Sunday and a school from Monday to Friday.

The Bundaberg Star of 6 August 1875 asserts that the Sisters of Mercy ‘were going to arrive in town to open a school’. The church was so constructed that 10 feet (approximately 3 metres) at the back of the building was to be room for the accommodation of the sisters! Instead, the Sisters of Saint Joseph arrived! From a report in *The Bundaberg Mail*, 4 August 1876, it is ascertained that ‘a school opened about six months ago with sixty on roll and with an average attendance of fifty children; there were

also many Protestant children enrolled'. It stated, 'the school was a success and two sisters were present'. Most of the time, the Bundaberg Community had at least four members – Sister Teresa Maginnis (Superior), and Sisters Francesca, Joseph Mary, and Mary Columba. *The Bundaberg and Mt Perry Mail*, 20 April 1876 reported that 'the Sisters of St Joseph were to establish a school for the moral and religious training of young females and also with the intention of visiting the sick and friendless and the giving of comfort to widows and orphans in their distress irrespective of country or creed'.

The Sisters taught school in the church which could accommodate around 200 pupils. After Masses were celebrated on Sundays, the task of stacking pews began, to be replaced by desks to be ready for school on Monday. On Fridays the reverse order, as well as additional cleaning, were the demands of the day.

The goal of Mary MacKillop's educational curriculum to give basic education to the poor was well received. Because of the system and strict adherence to its core, Sister Mary Josephine McMullen was able to write to Mary MacKillop, 'the Sisters in Bundaberg got great praise for their school in the papers only nine months after the school's opening in 1876. Sister Teresa will be quite elated over it'. However, at the heart of their work was the capacity to be able to teach the Catholic Faith. On Sundays, the Sisters gathered the children at their residence to take them to Mass and then return to the same

place for some reflection on that faith. It was a practice designed to encourage in the children regular attendance at Mass and the reception of Communion.

By 13 June 1879, *The Bundaberg Mail* was reporting the Sisters' success in education; 'The annual examination of the pupils attending the convent school on Monday under the supervision of the Mother-General of the Order of St Joseph (probably Sr. Mary of the Cross?) and Father Rossolini'. The results were quoted to be 'highly creditably (sic) to these Sisters who have the onerous employment of instructing them. The greatest progress has been made on writing, reading, arithmetic, and geography; in grammar the results were well above average'.

Mother Mary of the Cross is believed to have visited Bundaberg on two occasions. The first visit occurred in 1878 when she visited six Josephite establishments including Bundaberg. The second occurred in 1879 when she visited all Queensland Josephite communities. Because disharmony with Bishop Quinn could not be resolved, Mother Mary withdrew all members of her congregation from schools in Queensland, but as a favour to both Father Rossolini and Walter Adams, she allowed the Bundaberg community to remain as long as possible. Finally, they left on board *Leichardt* on 12 July 1880. On 11 July, the night before their departure, Walter Adams read an address to the Sisters and presented a pleasing tribute of £37 (or 40 gold sovereigns) to them from those

who had received tuition from them or had been 'recipients of their kind sympathy and practical Christianity'. They gathered at the wharf to farewell and wish God Speed. They left in opposition to the wishes of those amongst whom they laboured.

In late August of that year (1880), four Sisters from the breakaway Josephite Order who favoured Father Tenison Wood took their place. These Sisters were not received very positively or kindly either by the community or by Father Rossolini, but over time some acceptance of them grew. This group of Sisters formed the first community of the Diocesan Congregation of the Holy Family in Queensland. They continued to teach in the school and to follow the curriculum designed by Mother Mary. In a letter written to Mother Mary by Father Rossolini in November 1880 he stated, 'With all this the school is pretty well attended'.

The impression is given that with the arrival of Sister Clare in 1881, there were six permanent members in the Bundaberg community; the school itself was also put on a more stable footing. By the end of that year too, a new convent building had been erected. Sister Clare's qualities of leadership and her personality commenced to alleviate the feelings of hostility and disappointment that all in the community had been feeling. From 1881 to 1897, these Sisters conducted a successful education facility in the town. They expanded their teaching activities into senior, mixed school, and infant school. When the boys left their

school (and some went on to attend the South State School) the Head Teacher of South State School, Mr Benbow, usually placed them in a higher grade; their standard of learning was more advanced than that of their peers from other State Schools. (South State School was established in 1891.)

Anecdotal evidence, from my family's stories, is that the older girls of the family boarded for short periods of time (probably around the time of preparation for the reception of the Sacraments) with the Sisters. The idea was also that the older girls would instruct their younger siblings in English in the tenets of their Catholic Faith. The family were farmers; their parents were immigrants from Prussian Polish Germany! They were illiterate in all languages.

Father Rossolini died in November 1893. While he lived, life for the Sisters ran quite smoothly but with the ascendancy of Father Mimmagh as the Administrator of the parish, life became more difficult for them; they received little or no support from him. After Spiritual Exercises were given to these Sisters by the Superior of the Passionist Fathers, they were advised to leave Bundaberg. Community life was modest and their number had only increased slightly. They appear to have left the town with negligible fanfare in early May 1897. Soon after their departure their place was taken by a community of Sisters from the All Hallows Congregation of the

Sisters of Mercy, under the leadership of Sister Mary Syra.

They arrived in July 1897; they were five in number. By now the 1875 timber church was used solely as a school that could accommodate 200 pupils. By the end of this year, 333 pupils were on the roll and by the end of 1898, a further 170 names had been entered on the register. Sister Mary Syra was transferred in 1901 and was replaced by Sister Mary Ignatius (she must have remained for some time as my Aunt remembered her well!) Around this time the number of Sisters was increased to eight – with two music teachers and a Lay Sister added to the original five. (I remember a Sister Carmel Mary being found either in the kitchen or in the laundry. I remember being taken with my mother on one occasion when she visited her.) The teaching workload on the original teachers was tremendous! Imagine 60 little and not so little souls in the class in front of you!

The Sisters of Mercy occupied the 1881 convent building that the diocesan Sisters had just left. In 1899, they moved to the timber convent in Bourbong Street, west of the railway line; it had been built specifically for them. It also became a boarding school for girls who came from the surrounding districts. The ages of the girls varied from the very young (5 or 6-year-olds) to girls in their late teens (18 or 19-year-olds). The emphasis for the older girls may have been academic or it may have concentrated on the arts, e.g. music, embroidery, painting etc. On Sundays it

was not unusual to see the girls (in their uniforms) walking formally to Mass in Holy Rosary with a few breaking off to enter Christ Church for the Anglican Service. The Convent High School, a building attached to the Sisters' residence and known as Loyola, began functioning in 1915.

There was some relief when St Joseph's became a training school within the Pupil Teachers' Training System, provided by the Department of Instruction. While it did give some relief to the teaching duties of the Sisters, another layer of duty would have been added as someone had to be responsible for their training and supervision. A District Inspector visited annually to inspect the progress of the Pupil Teachers and the supervision provided for them; 'The teachers are well placed and the supervision and training of the Junior Teachers are well carried out.... The Junior Teachers prepare the work of their grades very carefully, and each is deeply interested in her profession and very anxious to attain success'.

In 1908, Father Mimmagh arranged the building of a new school on a new site. The site chosen was a further block east away in Woongarra Street from the original church/school. In 1918, the school was on the move again. The school was relocated (actually picked up) and moved to a position in Barolin Street beside Holy Rosary Church. By now, Father Mimmagh had been replaced by Father Baldwin. The Christian Brothers were first invited to Bundaberg in 1904. At the urging and earnest work of

Father Baldwin, they finally arrived in 1919. The school and residence were blessed and opened on 2 February 1919 by Archbishop Duhig, assisted by Father Baldwin. This lessened the teaching load of the Sisters at St Joseph's as boys in the upper end of primary school transferred across to the Christian Brothers school.

In 1931, another building was purchased and picked up to be placed a little behind (just south) of the original building but within the grounds of St Joseph's School. This was the Caledonian Hall and was to function for many years as the Infants School. These venerable buildings would remain in use until well past the half century mark of the 1900s. Age certainly wearied them! The Principal of St Joseph's School, Sister Mary Catharina described the school buildings in the following manner: 'The existing school consists of two old wooden buildings. The Primary section was erected before the turn of the century (twentieth) and is in a bad state of repair, old and delapidated. The Infants section is in a very bad condition and totally unsuited to present methods of education... This building, in the writer's opinion, would be the worst school building in the Rockhampton Diocese'. Consequently, an application for a grant was made in February 1974 to the Non-Governmental School Building Project by the Principal, Sister Mary Catharina. On 3 August 1975, Bishop Bernard Wallace opened and blessed the new St Joseph's School, now facing onto Woondooma Street.

Years ending in '81 seem to be significant in the history of St Joseph's School! In 1981, the Sisters of Mercy left the running of the school in the hands of its first lay principal, Mr Denis Donovan. With fewer young women entering the religious life, the Sisters of Mercy were finding it difficult to staff their schools. Bundaberg had been transferred from the Brisbane Archdiocese to the Rockhampton Diocese in 1929. These Sisters still belonged to the Brisbane All Hallows Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy.

Since 1975, the school has undergone some refurbishments and extensions. In 1990, the first Catholic Preschool in Bundaberg was opened officially on 1 September. It adjoined the 'Junior Unit', facing onto Woondooma Street. It occupies the land on which Mr John Novakoski, a benevolent benefactor of the Catholic community, once had his home. Adjacent to this building was a childcare centre. This property was bought. A new building was erected on the site, and it became St Joseph's Catholic Kindergarten, opened and blessed on 17 February 2020 – another first for St Joseph's. It is the first and, so far, the only Catholic kindergarten in Bundaberg. Time to leave St Joseph's and progress.

To make a slight digression here – education in the Faith for State School Children. This again is mostly anecdotal from my own experience. I do not know when it began formally but Catechism Classes were conducted on Saturday mornings under the old St Joseph's School

building. Dean Bannan is the priest I remember. I also attended St Joseph's for about a fortnight leading up to the reception of First Confession / First Communion, and Confirmation.

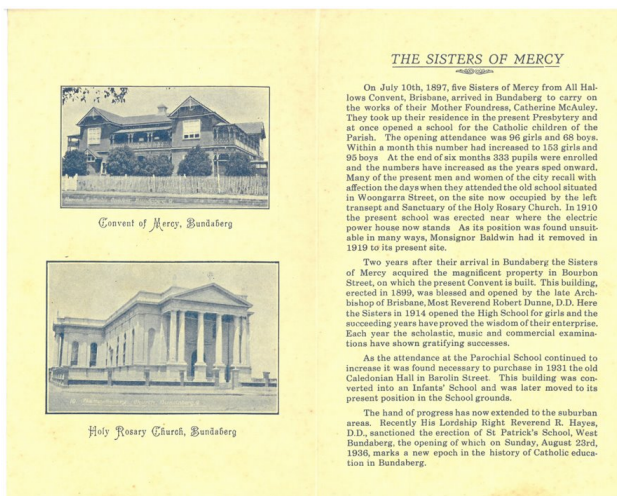
In the mid-50s to about the late-60s, before the Brisbane Sisters left to go on holidays there was a week's summer school conducted in the school and many children received the Sacraments at the end of that week. Some children boarded at the Convent. John Browning in his book *Always Mindful* mentions *Religion by Letter*, from Sister M. Bernard, Range Convent, Rockhampton and sent to children who attended State Schools. I posted many of these correspondence letters.

From the mid-50s, Priests also visited and conducted religion classes in the State Schools. I remember Father Punzell's lessons under the camphor laurel trees at Burnett Heads. Non-denominational classes are still organised and conducted in the schools. The organiser of these volunteers is a parishioner of Holy Rosary.

As growth in Bundaberg was extending westwards, it was soon revealed that there was potential for a second school and parish in that area. As a result, land in Powers Street was purchased from the Dunn Family for £250 by Dean Bannan (with the approval of Bishop Hayes).



On 23 August 1936, a wooden structure divided into three classrooms was opened and blessed by Bishop Hayes. Until school began in 1937 it was used only as a Mass centre. The new centre became known as St Patrick's. It followed the tradition begun by St Joseph's; School, Monday to Friday and Church on Sundays. The Sisters of Mercy from the All Hallows Congregation in Brisbane supplied the first staff of teachers; Sister Liam (Principal) with Sisters Comgill, Clarita, and Maddelena made the team. By the end of 1937 the enrolment had reached 100 pupils.



In 1946, more land (this time facing George Street) was purchased for £256 and added to the original Powers Street block. It was also the year that the 1936 building became a dedicated school. The Air Force Picture Theatre was transported to the Powers Street site and with some modifications became the church. (It remained so until it was destroyed by fire on Friday, 26 July 1963 after a Benediction service.)

The Sisters lived in the Bourbong Street Convent with the other members of their congregation in Bundaberg. Their commute to school began with the 'horse and carriage' and then by public transport, although often they were conducted by various parishioners in their cars. In 1957, it appears there were five teachers in the school with Sister Corita teaching music. Another building from the surplus at the aerodrome had been acquired for use as a hall. The

Infant Grades (I and II) were transferred to this site in 1957 and so Grades VII and VIII occupied the space vacated by them. Until this change occurred, the pupils of all grades were crammed into this 1936 building. During these years, reports given by State School Inspectors were very positive and excellent results in the Scholarship Examination show that the school was on a very sound basis.

With the 1960s came further growth and expansion. Change was in the air! More classroom accommodation was needed. A new two storey brick building came into use in the early 60s. Enrolments continued to grow and further classrooms were needed. In 1978, classes moved into two new rooms that had been added to the 1960s building. A year later, 1979 saw the addition of a third wing being occupied by classes. With the withdrawal of the Brisbane Congregation of Mercy Sisters from Bundaberg, the first lay principal of the school was appointed in 1981. Building projects to cater for the increasing needs of a changing curriculum were the name of the game in the 1990s. There were further purchases of blocks of land but this time facing on to Mulgrave Street. The rooms of these new buildings were put to many and varied purposes – way beyond the imaginations of those teachers and pupils who first occupied the three classrooms of the 1936 wooden building. Perhaps the initial innovation was the establishment of a preschool in 1992. Since then, other facilities for modern education

have been added; these include an activity room, library, technology lab, administration, unit for preparatory classes (taking the place of the preschool), art centre, and so the list grows.

The devastation and grief caused by fire have been endured by both the parish and school communities. The first of these was the fire that demolished the church in July 1963. On Friday, 8 September 1995 a fire started in the year 6 classroom and an office on the second floor of the two-storey brick building. The fire was noticed reasonably early so extensive damage was confined to the classroom and office, but in the office, the professional library and other effects that had been acquired by one of the teachers were destroyed. Later, it was further revealed that the intruders had also made unlawful entry into the library; perhaps if the fire had not been noticed so early the damage would have been greater. The original building also fell victim to fire.

Along with the buildings and what occurred within their walls, it is the stories and memories of those who inhabited the spaces that make them live. A few follow.

- In the early days, Dean Bannan walked from Holy Rosary to St Patrick's. St Patrick's was his baby.
- The wrestling matches on the way home that occurred almost daily in the 30s/40s under the

awning of a nearby shop between the St Pat's boys and the boys from the State School up the road.

- The boys who were sent to return a couple of the school 'waggers' back to school. The waggars were accosted but refused to return. A 'gibber fight' in the middle of George Street occurred between the two groups, but the waggars still failed to return to school. (Winner of the fight is unknown.)
- Trench practice during the days of World War II.
- Father Johnson retained his tools from his trade days as a carpenter. Two saws were borrowed by a couple of boys at the request of the Sisters and were returned with permanent kinks in them. When asked for an explanation the boys replied, 'We were cutting down a tree with the first saw and it jammed so we had to get the second to cut the first out'.

Back to the story which continues with the well-developed theme – 'potential for further growth'. The year was 1946 and with St Pat's firmly established, Dean Bannan was in the market for more land purchases. He bought land (covered in bush and trees with a poultry farm nearby) in Walkervale, at the southern end of Barolin Street. The population in Holy Rosary Parish was increasing, especially in this southern end; it was felt that

many of the Catholic children living in this area were attending the Walkervale State School rather than travelling/walking the longer distance to St Joseph's School.

It was decided to build a church/school on the site 'to catch them'. In 1951, Bishop Tynan cut off the southern section of Holy Rosary Parish to make the new Parish of South Bundaberg. Father Tim Murphy was asked to consider accepting the position of Parish Priest. He considered and accepted!

The solemn opening and blessing of St Mary's new church/school transpired on 9 December 1951. In Bishop's Tynan's speech, he declared that he considered the school 'of such importance that its opening had to be made to coincide with the formation of the new Parish. Were it not so important we should have concentrated on the erection of a permanent church, whereas we have built what you see before you – a church/school'. He also announced the school would be staffed by the Sisters of Mercy from the Rockhampton Congregation of Mercy Sisters whom he described as 'educationalists of the highest order'. He further praised 'the best of tuition according to the State Syllabus' and 'a thorough training in the knowledge and practice of their religion'. Although the Bishop declared the new school would be staffed by the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy, their Superior, Sister M. de Sales Costello did so with 'difficulty' and 'reluctance'. She 'found' four Sisters – Sisters M. Josepha

Gallagher (Principal), Kevin Mahoney, Stephanie Kennedy, and Jacinta McLean.

School began with an enrolment of 121 children from Prep Year to Grade VIII (Scholarship) at 9.00am on 30 January 1952. The school fee was 2/6 per child. However, there was a minor 'glitch'; there was no school furniture. A neighbour made an offer of a half-dozen chairs! At mid-day trucks arrived with the school desks, unloaded them at the fence, and drove off! Father Murphy and a Mr Ron Webber (the only other person available) carried in all the furniture. Father Murphy later asserted, 'It was the hardest work I ever did in my whole life'. Perhaps Day 2 was a big improvement on Day 1!

Primary School education in the 1950s was directed towards the Scholarship Public Examination held at the end of Grade 8. Successful passing of this examination allowed children in State Schools at least to attend free secondary schooling. Success in this exam also led to work opportunities as many children in that era, and before, left school at the end of this year. Sister Josepha taught three classes, so the Scholarship Class had extended hours. Their class began at 8.30am and ended at 5.00pm, Monday through to Friday! A long day for both pupils and teacher. English, Arithmetic, and Social Studies were the areas that received most concentrated attention; these were the subjects on which the Scholarship Examination was grounded. (A feature of Catholic Schooling in Scholarship year was the

attendance at school on Saturday mornings.) Catechism lessons were the first lessons each day. The basic text was the 'Penny Catechism'.



St Mary's, Grade 4, 1964

The teaching of such subjects as music, speech and drama was important to the wellbeing of the Sisters as pupils' parents paid for the lessons. The money from these lessons supplemented the income for the Sisters. Sister Kevin was noted as the one who had musical instruments in her room and soon had formed McNamara's Band. The band played drums, triangles, cymbals, and tambourines.

Concerts were frequently given as fund raising for the school and parish was a priority. The skills and talents of Sister Stephanie were in much demand here, too. After eighteen months, there were sufficient funds to purchase the material needed to make a small music room by

partitioning off a section of the play shed. (Children in classrooms nearby often found themselves humming along to a well-played rollicking tune.)

As a result of increasing numbers in the school and the subsequent need for more classrooms, a new timber church was built in 1955. (This church was burnt to the ground in the early hours of 11 February 2020.)

After thirty-nine years of St Mary's being in the dedicated hands of the Sisters of Mercy, the time had come when they could no longer staff the school, even with the employment of lay teachers from the mid-60s to ease the strain. Sister Margaret Dixon was the last religious Principal with Mr Denis Donovan being the 'Acting Principal' in 1991; in 1992, he was appointed the Principal of St Mary's.

Meanwhile, St Mary's Parish was experiencing growth in the Newtown area (now known as Kepnock). Once again, the proven successful option was put into place (build a church/school) and so Holy Spirit church/school was blessed and opened by Bishop Tynan on 21 September 1958. School began at the commencement of the school year in January 1959.

Once more, Father Murphy needed a community of Sisters to staff the school. Together, he and Bishop Tynan approached Mother Ursula, the Superior of the Presentation Sisters in Longreach with this request. She agreed and was able to send along three – Mother Marie

Therese Corcoran, Sister Mary Sebastian, and Sister Mary Gilbert. Their convent was to be the old 'Winchester House' in the grounds of Holy Spirit and again furniture seemed an issue. One parishioner remembers taking chairs from their home to the convent for the comfort of the Sisters.

Early furnishing for the school was the very outdated long desks where four or five children were seated on long forms that matched the length of the desks. With the assistance of other men and help from a government plan for two-seater desks with a flip lid, the men proceeded to build the required number of desks for the school in the back yard shed at Mr Dennien's house. (The original desks also supplied some of the required timber.) In this way 24 desks were built.

The opening of Holy Spirit School took the pressure off the numbers attending St Mary's. The original enrolment was 56. The Presentation Sisters remained at Holy Spirit until 1966 when they were forced to withdraw. Father Murphy felt they had come when they were 'badly needed' and he and the Holy Spirit people were 'very sorry to lose them'. An appeal to the Sisters of Mercy in Rockhampton resulted in only one Sister being available to replace the three Presentation Sisters. Sister Mary Gertrude became the Principal of Holy Spirit with the assistance of a lay teacher.

Holy Spirit always remained a small school with its future often in jeopardy. (Even by 1975, it remained the same small size.) However, in 1978 there was a growth spurt and extensions were added together with extensions made to St Mary's. 1978 also saw the first lay principal, Margaret McMahon, appointed to the school. She was followed by Mrs Millie Leard until the school amalgamated with St Mary's in 1982 under the one principal. Sister Margaret Dixon was the last principal of the combined schools. At the amalgamation, Holy Spirit became known as St Mary's Junior School and catered for the children in Grades 1-3. The original St Mary's was to be known as St Mary's Senior School catering for the children in Grades 4-7. A phase-in time of three years was established. (Grade 8 Scholarship had been abolished by the government in 1963 with those children automatically transferring to Secondary School.)

And so, life continued at St Mary's, Junior and Senior, on the two campuses for the next 11 years despite rumblings of discontent from time to time. The site of St Mary's School was at a busy intersection; traffic noise and safety were often quoted as issues. In 1982 the Christian Brothers began the phasing out of boys in primary school, so this meant the boys were being retained in the original 'convent schools'. Once more, larger enrolments were putting pressure on the available classroom space in the 'convent' primary schools.

In 1986, a report proposed a new site for St Mary's so that both campuses could be combined. (It was also recommended at the time that St Joseph's be included and closed. This was not acted upon!) A decision was finally made and the 22-acre site on McCarthy's Road was purchased; after complaints from various sources were listened to and accommodated to the satisfaction of both sides, construction commenced in 1993.

The final plan was much different from the one originally envisaged by the architect. This entirely late-20th century school consisted of ten classrooms, preschool, library, administration block with a staffroom(!), a general activities room, and a tuckshop. The incoming street was named the Frank Gilbert Drive in honour of the incumbent parish priest. Classes commenced at the start of the school year, 31 January 1994, under the principalship of Mr Denis Donovan (again!). The school buildings were blessed by Bishop Brian Heenan and opened by Senator Bryant Burns on 3 September 1994. Finances came via the Catholic community with the assistance from the Commonwealth Government.

There were no ad hoc arrangements for future developments. A master plan was developed for the guidance of future progress, e.g. tree planting for shade and playing fields, sand pit etc. The oval bears the name of the founding principal, Denis Donovan. A couple of memory asides that bring the human touch to buildings and big decisions:

- One treasurer gave his annual report from the back of a match box (figures written) and a box, full of invoices lying loose.
- Some fathers complained the Italian men ran with barrows of cement and overworked them on ‘working bees’.

Since 1994, new classroom additions have been constructed, and a reflection area for staff and children erected as well as facilities to cater for the teaching of the modern curriculum.

As was outlined in my opening statement, concentration has been on the three primary schools conducted first by the Sisters of St Joseph, the Mercy Sisters, a short interlude by the Presentation Sisters, and finally handing over the teaching staffing to lay teachers.

The Christian Brothers ultimately appeared on the scene in 1919, after their presence had been first mooted around twenty years before. Archbishop Duhig purchased land in Woongarra Street, a half block from Holy Rosary Church, on which was Oakhampton House (a two-storey timber building) that became the residence for the Brothers. The total cost of the location and the new school building was £7,400 with a debt on opening day of £5,540. Archbishop Duhig, assisted by Father Baldwin, officiated at the blessing and opening on 2 February 1919. On this day, several considerable donations and a collection reduced

the debt by £1,100. Brothers Hogan and McCarthy also addressed the assembly.

Secondary education until 1985 was conducted on two campuses: the girls until Year 10 at Loyola College in the grounds of the old Convent High School and the boys to Year 12 in the original Christian Brothers School. The girls were disadvantaged in the scope of subjects offered for study and by the fact that another school had to be chosen if they wished to go on for Years 11 and 12. With the withdrawal of the Brisbane Sisters of Mercy in 1981, Mr Gerard Madden was appointed Principal of Loyola College.

The recommendation of the Redhead Report was that a single co-ed college should be established on two campuses: Years 8-10 on the Christian Brothers site and Years 11-12 on the Loyola site. Relocation to the one site was discounted because of the financial investments that had been made to both places. Sporting fields were on Fitzgerald Street.

However, the closure of both Loyola College and the Christian Brothers College did occur. In 1982, the Bundaberg City Council purchased the Christian Brothers site for \$1.4 million. A new Catholic Co-educational College could be established on Fitzgerald Street. It was to be known as Shalom Catholic College. Stage 1 of Shalom College opened in 1984 with a Christian Brother as Principal. It catered for girls and boys in Years 11 and

12 and for boys in Years 8-10. The Stage 2 intake in 1985 saw girls enter the college from Years 8-10. The Christian Brothers continued to provide principals until 1996. Before closing, mention must be made of Brother Rochford, known affectionately to the student body as Brother Rocky. Until the number of students grew too big, he knew each student by name, and had congratulations for birthdays and individual achievements; he was also the school's official photographer! Brother Rocky continued his daily morning greetings until he was eventually forced to retire elsewhere because of age and ill health.

There is much more that could be said of Catholic Education in Bundaberg. Indeed, the land at the Shalom College site was purchased back in the days of Rossolini, Adams, *et al* for educational purposes or similar. Airconditioning of classrooms, Outside School Hours Care, Music Programs, Learning Support Services, Sport, School P&F Associations, School Boards, various Reports commissioned by the Diocese, Technology Resources and so the list grows on. All have been left for another time and another speaker.

Sources

1. Patrick Tynan, *Constantine Rossolini – Pioneer Priest of the Burnett (1845 – 1893)*.
2. *Mt Perry Mail*, 1873.

3. Richard Laurance Connor and John Kingsley Connor, *Bundaberg's Beginnings – The Endeavours of Its Very Early Pioneers with Reference to Walter Adams MLA*.
4. *The Bundaberg Star*, 6 August 1875.
5. *The Bundaberg Mail*, 13 June 1879.
6. John Browning, *Always Mindful: a History of Catholic Education in Central Queensland 1867 -1990*.
7. *St Patrick's – a School and Parish Story*.
8. *St Mary's / Holy Spirit – 40 Years Reunion, 1993*.
9. *St Mary's Catholic Primary School – Holy Spirit / St Mary's. 50 Year Reunion Golden Jubilee 1952 – 2002*.
10. Poster of unknown origin and undated.