

MOUNT CARMEL THROUGH THE YEARS
There's a building of stones that are old and grey
Midst a garden's sweet wealth of roses anod;
Stones that are smoothed with the passing away
Of years made sweet with the service of God.

There's a low postern gate in a long high wall,
And a vine that creeps and climbs through the years.
There are leaves that will hear the sad autumn call
And their golden hearts will shed blood-red tears.

And there where the clustered lilac swings
'Neath a tree that is aged and darkly quaint;
Round where winding roots the lichen clings,
Lies the priestly grave of some long-dead saint.

And paths have been worn in the thrice blessed sod
By feet that have bidden earth's highways farwell
The feet of the Merciful daughters of God
Who dwell in the halls of our Southern Carmel.

—Hilda Brown

In 1900, Mother M. Alacoque was elected Superior at Yass. She had a bright manner, a vigorous character and a keen intellect, since she was enthusiastic about the welfare of the schools, her first act was to make accommodation for a limited number of boarders. With this in view she erected, in 1891, a new wing to serve as a senior school, with a dormitory above. A new chapel for the community was built upstairs in 1893-4.

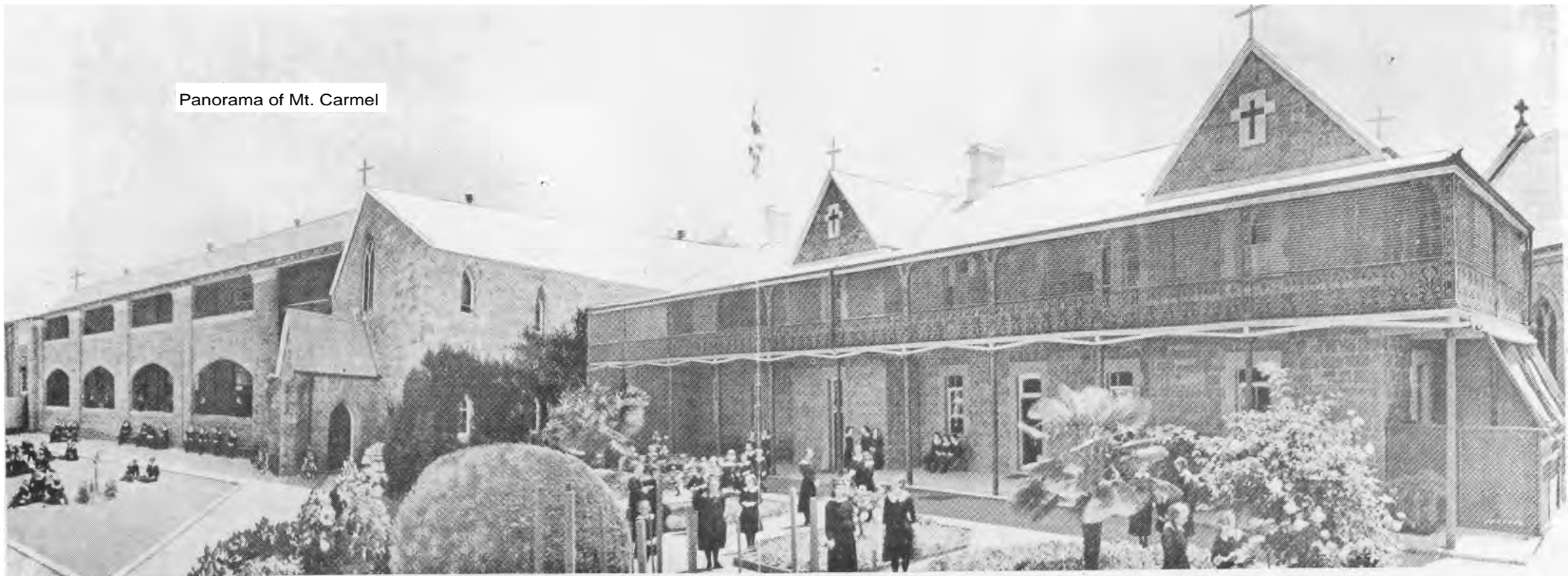
During the period 1901-01, a new Refectory and Kitchen had been added to the Yass Convent, together with a Boarders' Dormitory above, and in 1906, the Foundation stone of the Sacret Heart Primary School for girls was laid by Dr. Gallagher. In 1906-07, a new and commodious Senior school with dormitory above, was added to the Convent. This school was later adapted to a boarders' dining room.

When the Sisters began their work in St. Augustine's School in 1900, Mother M. Teresa was in charge of it. As a novice, Sr. M. Xavier Mackins was appointed to the School.

Down through the years, with the exception of one year spent at Tumut, Sr. M. Xavier stood at the helm for over forty years, and her name is inseparably connected with this school, because she guided the destinies of so many ex-pupils to whom she was a dear friend and guide.

The boys were prepared for all kinds of Public Exams University, Public Service, Naval etc. Today, men from St. Augustine's are in high official positions in the Commonwealth and State Departments. They are, at all times proud to attribute their success to St. Augustine's teaching and influence. For the spiritual training of the lads, Aloysian Sodalties for Senior boys were established, and many became Knights of the Blessed Sacrament. These Catholic men never pass through Yass without paying a visit to their old school.

Sr. M. Aquinas became Principal on Sr. M. Xavier's retirement in 1945 and continued her good work until there was co-education at Mt. Carmel in 1953. Sr. M. Aquinas was then appointed to St. Joseph's School, Albury.



Panorama of Mt. Carmel

In 1907, the amalgamation of the Sisters of Goulburn, Albury and Yass took place when the Sisters of these three Head Houses realised such was the Holy Father's wish. The novices and postulants from Yass and Albury were transferred to the Central Novitiate at Goulburn. Rev. Mother Brigid was elected Mother General, and Mother M. Alacoque of Yass, Vicaress.

Later, Mother M. Teresa Murray was appointed Superior at Yass. During that time spacious balconies were added to the front of the Convent. From 1911 to 1914, Mother M. Francis Boland was appointed Superior, and during her time of office, a chemistry room and domestic science room were incorporated in the old primary school, with the best equipment. These rooms, after a few years were turned into libraries and commercial rooms.

In 1914-16, Mother M. de Sales McCormack was appointed Superior. Mother M. De Sales had been senior in charge of the high school almost from her Profession.

She was an alert and keen educationalist and kept her school abreast of the times. The subjects on the curriculum were of the professional class. From the time of its establishment the high school entered its girl students successfully for the public examinations of the Education Department. Some of the oldest women in the State High Schools today gained their entrance to the University from Mt. Carmel. Thus it was that, knowing the qualifications of Mother M. de Sales as a teacher and her influence on the character of her pupils, the late Bishop Gallagher at a meeting of the Yass Community, told Mother M. de Sales to build up a First Class Boarding School here he wished it. The answer to that request can be seen in the magnificent Boarding School "Mount Carmel College", among the finest in the State. This College became a registered secondary school in 1917, while Mother M. Michael Bowles was Superior (1917-20). Further extensions were made to the College during this period.



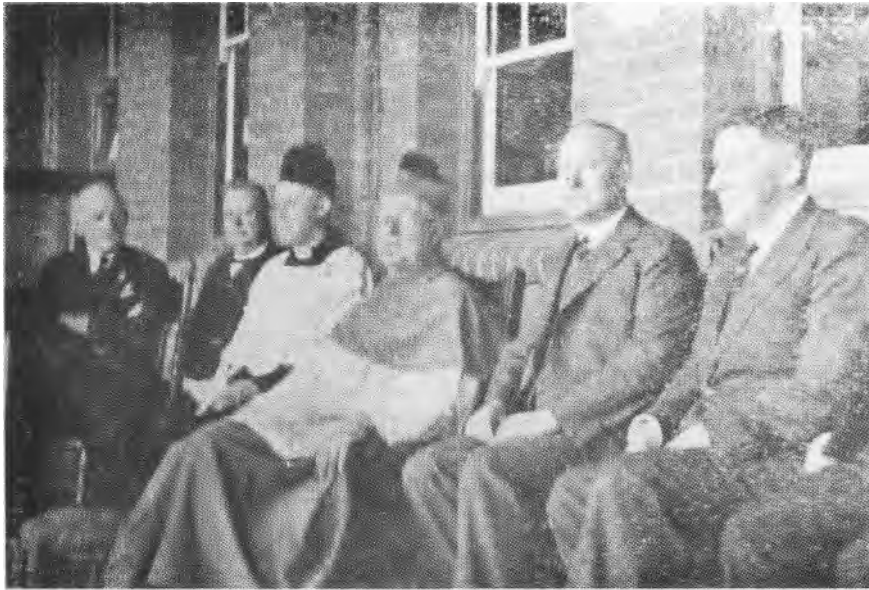
Bishop Gallagher



St. Augustine's Boys' School, 1918

Secondary Boys' School, 1951





Opening of
new study
hall, 1925

speakers at opening of New Wing at Mt. Carmel College.
 ding from to right: Mr. S on, LL. B. (Sydney); Hon. P. M. McGirr,
 C., Venerable Archdeacon Leonard, P. P.; Yass his Lor ship Most Rev. Or.
 cGui re Bi shop of Goul burn; Mr. James McGirr, M. L. A.; Jack Hennessy,
 K. S. S., archi tect (Sydney).

During the years 1920-26, Mother M. de Sales was Superior, it was she who was responsible for the erection of a beautiful study hall with a large well-ventilated dormitory above.

During the years 1926-29, Mother M. Joseph Campbell was appointed Superior. She gave constant attention and time to the schools, and arranged for the building of new music rooms.

Mother M. de Sales was again Superior from 1929 to 1935, and was followed by Mother M. Ignatius Hartigan during the years 1935 to 1938. Mother M. de Sales' latest period in office as Superior was from 1938-1943. Dressing rooms were added to the study hall wing, with large blocks to the left and right, comprising boarders' Infirmary and Dispensary, with two commodious music rooms below. On the left, upper and lower junior classrooms, spacious cloistered balconies above and verandahs below were added. Central heating was installed throughout the whole, making it

one of the finest and completely equipped Colleges in the State.

Mother M. Joseph was the successor of Mother M. de Sales. Her term of office extended from 1943-49

During this period, a new kitchen with modern equipment was added to the Convent, as well as laundry, folding room, drying room with modern machinery were installed, making a firm, up-to-date block.

With Co-education came more schools; addition to High School, Infants and Junior Primary.

GOLDEN JUBILEE-1875-1925

The Jubilee celebrations were held in January as this enabled the Branch House Sisters to be present. A banquet was held in the boarders' present dining room which, at the time, was the study hall.

Amongst the many clergy who were entertained were Bishop Dwyer and Father Hartigan. In the evening a Concert was the entertainment. One of the Sisters composed very appropriate lines to suit the various Branch Houses. These were spoken by individual girls representing the particular houses. They held a long golden chain with large links. Standing centre back on a high pedestal was a beautifully dressed young girl, Eileen Dawes, representing "Our Lady of Mercy".

Molly Bawn (Mary Roche) wrote a very fitting Ode, "Blazing The Trail" describing the work done over the completed fifty years.



Fine lace work cast iron balconies in Yass



THE CHAPEL

"This is none other than the House of God" — the hub of our existence. In Mount Carmel, the Chapel was upstairs, reached by climbing the spiral stairs of black wrought iron. This pilgrimage was rewarded by the vision splendid, from the Angelic Water-font along the Stations of the Cross and the cedar stalls of the Sisters to the glorious marble Altar with its background of the Crucifixion in stained glass. This bears the inscription "A Tribute of Gratitude to Very Rev. Dean O'Keefe from the Sisters."

The Irish tradition of the Sisters of Mercy is seen in the beautiful stained glass windows of St. Brigid, St. Patrick, St. Bernard and St. Stanislaus. The Statues of Our Lady, St. Joseph, St. Margaret Mary and St. Philomena are reminders of devotional love. This hallowed shrine, built in 1893, has meant to the Sisters and many ex-Students a place of prayer and quite reflection. Many a vocation has been fostered within its sacred walls.

Time passes however, and now this Chapel has become the Junior dormitory. The stained glass Saints keep gentle guard and smile down with the rising sun, bidding the girls arise to the day.

When the Parish of Yass outgrew its beloved St. Augustine's the foundation stones were laid for the new. With its opening, Archbishop Eris O'Brien entrusted the historic old Church to the loving care of the Sisters of Mercy.

The Main Altar of Sicilian marble, made in Cork by Daly & Co., to the order of Dean O'Keefe, costing 116 pounds 4 shilling and 6 pence, the chandeliers, Stations of the Cross, Sanctuary Lamp, candle sticks, and Missal were from many benefactors and included among them were the names of Coen, Grogan, Dawes, Roche, McReynolds, Julian, Garry and Duff, all pioneer Catholic families.

The Chapel windows, the centre light of which depicts the Crucifix with Our Lady and St. John on either side, was the gift of Mrs. Henry O'Brien of Duoro, in memory of her husband.

Bishop Lanigan of Goulburn, assisted by Dean O'Keefe, solemnly blessed and opened St. Augustine's

"the most beautiful Church outside the Metropolis" on Sunday, 20th January, 1889, with a congregation of 600. To mark the beautiful opening, the Passionist Fathers conducted a mission and erected the Mission Cross (still to be seen in the grounds) of February 3rd, 1889.

To Rev. Mother John Superior fell the task of embodying the original Chapel with the Restoration of the old Church, to make Mt. Carmel Chapel.

Down came the unsound spire and the gallery, and the slates, to be cleaned, turned, and replaced in the roof. A new parquet floor and an oak gallery, reached by a continental stair, were added. The main Altar of marble remains. The Chapel Altar became two side altars and Our Lady, Queen of Heaven, with St. Joseph adorn the front of the cedar stalls. Stations of the Cross, in white figures on blue, hang on pale yellow walls between the stained glass windows depicting the Calendar of the Saints. A madonna in stained glass, brought from Austria by Catherine Macey, is in the door to the Convent. In this passage is the Statue of St. Margaret Mary given to Mother Mary Alacoque in 1894, by her pupils, to mark her Silver Jubilee. Here, too, is the Head of Limpias, a representation of the Miraculous Crucifix in Spain, a gift of Father Carson, of Gunning.

Fitting, indeed, that this Church, vested in the Confraternity of the Rosary, of Mary the Virgin Mother, by Dean O'Keefe in 1903, on the feast of the Epiphany, enriched by countless Masses and the prayers of our pioneers, should become the beautiful Chapel of Mt. Carmel, Yass.

Library opened 1966

Geraldine Andrews,
Peter Burgess,
Anne Kelleher

