

WEE JASPER CHURCH DISCUSSION PAPER, **PPC MEETING MARCH 17TH.**

Further discussions about the selling of the Wee Jasper Our Lady of the Rosary church I don't think are necessary at this time as the Archdiocese hasn't give us the necessary way forward to carry the sale out.

I do think that whoever talked to the Canberra Times about the possible sale had no right to do so without permission from the Yass Parish and having the proper information to speak about.

The whole incident has caused much friction between many parties, not just between the Wee Jasper community and Yass, but between many of the local parishioners as well, once again not knowing the full facts about the church history.

Fact 1. The land on which the church was not provided by the community of Wee Jasper, the land in question was gazetted to the *Roman Catholic Church from a portion of crown land from the Portion No 64,163 for Cemetery at Wee Jasper and notified 29th September 1933 and set apart for Roman Catholic Burial Ground:- The Right Reverend John Barry, D.D., the Venerable Archdeacon John Francis Leonard PP and George Albert Sykes, Esq. P. Log 33-8,899.*

In the early days of the Wee Jasper settlement there were a number of Catholics in the area, mainly from the Carey families. It is said that one of the families there were 12 children in that one family, and collectively there would have been around 50 odd Catholics in the Wee Jasper valley.

The area was not in any particular parish, at some stages a priest from Tumut, Adalong, Gundagai and Yass would travel out there over what was at the time only a track for a road and say Mass in the home of one of the Catholic homes. When Monsignor Leonard arrived in Yass in 1906 he decided to bring Wee Jasper into the fold of Yass Parish. Mass was said only once a month at the homes of various Catholics.

In early 1947 Fr. Cecil Patterson arrived in Yass and was indeed starting to work on ways that Wee Jasper could have a place of worship for their own. In 1953 he had the land that was to be a burial ground transferred to a dual purpose if required, by that time most of the Catholics were buried in the Yass cemetery and have been ever since. Fr. Cecil rounded up lots of physical workers to carry out the manual work of making cement blocks for the walls. The Wee Jasper as a community, both Catholics and other faiths bonded together to build the church we see today with Fr. Patterson leading the charge. Mather's, a catholic family, timber cutting mill up the Doctors Flat Road supplied and cut all the timber for the floor and roof and several carters from Yass and as far as Binalong delivered it to the sit free of charge.

The church cost about £2000 to be raised and with large donations at the time of £500 plus donations of £300 and several £50 the church was well under way. With a rodeo being held a further £700 was raised for the project. With Fr. Patterson acting as concreter, carpenter and labour he soon had the building erected. He alone sourced all that was required to fit the church out, from finding the cedar pews and altar in an old shed at Boorowa which at that time were over a 100yrs old, with the confessional found under the boarding school in the boiler room which came from the old St. Augustine's Church (Lovat Chapel) and the altar rails from a bank in Cowra.

As far as the ownership there is no doubt that even though some of the materials were partly supplied by the community, most of the work was carried out by the Catholics of Wee Jasper in conjunction with Mr. George Hall of Yass the principal builder.

Being supported by the people of Wee Jasper the use was given to the other denominations for their use as they required, which they did for the first one or two years, after which they went back to their services at people's homes.

There have been no services from the other denominations to our knowledge for the past 60 odd years as the key was only held by the Carey Family. No Mass has been said since Christmas 2019. Also Mass's were only said on the Fifth Sunday of the month and sometimes that wasn't the case if the Sunday clashed with something in town. No money has been invested by the community of Wee Jasper for any of the church up keep, that is maintenance electricity or insurance all of which has been from the Yass parish community. The place has only been kept neat and tidy of late by the generosity of Michael Carey.

I do think that the communities of Wee Jasper are over reacting, what will they do when the school closes with only 3 students? What about the old original store and garage? There didn't seem any objection for those historical buildings to come tumbling down with an unused modern building erected in its place.

No with sentiments aside I do think that the church should be sold to lessen the burden from our shoulders and to use the money wisely in this community. We could as a suggestion, providing we get what we would like from the sale, donate a small portion to the Wee Jasper Community for use on some special project they might have in hand.

BOB NASH.