

St Peter's Church, Eastern Hill Melbourne

Vicar's Letter. (Excerpt)

Next year is, as you all know, our Centenary Year. The foundation stone of St. Peter's was laid on Tuesday in Easter Week, 1846; but we do not propose to keep the exact date, either as determined by the secular or ecclesiastical calendar; nor do we think it a good thing to make the centenary celebrations coincide with our Patronal Festival in June. We hope to have several visitors from distant parts. This expectation, together with other reasons, led the Vestry to decide to keep the week from Sunday, October 27, to November 3, inclusive, as our Festival week. The Archbishop has approved of this, and it will not clash with any diocesan functions.

It is proposed as part of the commemoration to arrange for the first series of lectures under the Hughes-Cheong Memorial Foundation. The plan has yet to be completed, but it would be eminently fitting that this work of carrying the influence of past leaders and teachers into the future should be begun in the centenary year.

Another part of our commemoration will be the placing of a stained-glass window in the three lights over the "cook-house." (If you don't know what this means, ask a Server). The Vestry, after very careful consideration, unanimously endorsed the suggestion that this should be done; also that the window should commemorate the New Guinea martyrs. Mr Napier Waller has already been at work on the idea, and has provided us with a preliminary drawing, sufficient to show his own keen interest in the project and give promise that the window when unveiled will be recognised as a masterpiece. What better memorial could there be, when we consider the many links between this Church of St. Peter and the New Guinea Mission? It will serve to remind us perpetually of our duty to the neighbouring island, and of God's power and love already marvellously revealed in His faithful servants there.

F.E.M., December 1945.

From: **Parish Paper**; Christmas Number, 1945.

Vicar's Letter. (Excerpt)

The Centenary Window.

The other cause is the erection of a window to commemorate our centenary. I shall have more to say about this in our next issue of the paper, which should appear at the time of our Patronal Festival (June 29th). We aim at raising about £1,000. Something over £600 will be needed for the window, and the rest we want to send to the Bishop of New Guinea, as a thankoffering for all that the wonderful Mission has meant to us, and to Australia, during the war. I know the achievement of these two things [the first being the completion of the Hughes-Cheong memorial fund, (*ed.*)] will make real demands upon the generosity of the faithful. But there have not been any special appeals for some time now; and this is, you will agree, a unique occasion. Let us show our true gratitude for all that St. Peter's has meant, not only with our lips but by our gifts, this centenary year. This appeal will shortly be launched, it would not be a bad thing to make preparation for it now.

Farnham E. Maynard, April 1946.

From: **Parish Paper**; Easter Number, 1946.

Vicar's Letter. (Excerpt)

The Window.

But we are looking beyond next month, to the end of October, with much anticipation. Everyone knows, I suppose, that Mr. Napier Waller is working away hard on a great window, which we propose to place in the north transept (*sic.*) of the Church, and which we hope will be unveiled and dedicated on the last Sunday in October. I have called it a great window, not because of its size, although it is as big a window as St. Peter's will hold. It will be a great window, I believe, because it promises to be amongst the best works of a great artist in glass; and also because it will commemorate a deathless story, and speak to generations yet to come (please God!) of the work that the Church has done, is doing, and must yet do, in the neighbouring island of New Guinea.

The window will consist of three lights side by side, the centre one being the tallest. Each of these lights is divided horizontally into four panels containing each a scene from the life and work of the New Guinea Mission. The left hand light, from top to bottom, will show (a) A woman missionary with a cluster of native children in a rural setting; (b) The interior of a primitive school; (c) Hospital work going forward; (d) The flight before the Japanese foe. In the centre window, at the top will appear a beautiful representation of the Cathedral at Dogura with the Bishop and his attendants on the way to the consecration, 1939; (b) The Archbishop of Brisbane receiving the petition for consecration, in a group of priests and natives; (c) People receiving the Bread of Life from the Altar of the new Cathedral; (d) The martyrdom of three priests. In the left (*sic.*) hand window, looking from the bottom up, the story begins with (d) Martyrdom in another phase; (c) The destruction by fire and bombs of the native villages; (b) The re-planning of the devastated missions; (a) The offering to God of the Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, with a glimpse of the Eternal City in the distance beyond the altar. The whole story, told in glass, should powerfully remind us, and those who come after, of the primary work of the Church of God, namely to preach the Gospel to all nations. From the inception of the New Guinea Mission, St. Peter's has always had close associations with it. Missionaries have gone from our Parish to serve there, some are serving there now. Please God we shall not fail to make our contributions of men and women, of prayers and offerings, in the days to come. All the world knows now, what we knew all along,—the unique value of a Christian Mission to a people suddenly emerging from barbarism into contact with the developed, and not a little degenerate, civilization of the present day European. We send some of our worst to their shores; we can't help it altogether. Let us send them some of our best as well.

Now, this window, which is to be the main commemoration of our centenary, and a perpetual sermon, and a thanksgiving to God for the lives and sacrifice of the martyr missionaries, will cost some money. We need £1,000, of which two-thirds will pay the expense of the window, and the other third we want to give to the Bishop of New Guinea for his reconstruction fund. I do not think I need exhort all friends of St. Peter's to rise to the occasion and see that we are able to liquidate the debt before the dedication of the window. We have long known that this commemoration was coming, and that we must not fail to show our gratitude to God for all that St. Peter's has been to us in the past. There will never be another occasion like this in our own time. Now is the moment to show our true thankfulness, now is the time to prove that we really mean what we often say about the old Church. I do ask you all to give generously. As dear Father James used sometimes to say, "Give till it hurts." We shall all need to do that, if we are to meet the obligation before October 27th.

F.E.M., June 1946.

From: **Parish Paper**; Festival Number, 1946.

Vicar's Letter. (Excerpt)

The Window.

What a lovely window it is! We are greatly indebted to Mr. Napier Waller for the skill and care with which he has executed this magnificent work of art. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;" they say. This will be a joy, please God, for many generations; and more than a joy, an inspiration. On Sunday, October 13th, I preached two sermons on the window. I do not propose to repeat them here, but would like to recall a few points. First, the text: surely the text for this window: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." This sums up the message of the window. I suggested that the window might be read both vertically and horizontally. The vertical message is clear. It begins at the left-hand top corner, where attention is called to the beauty of nature, which rightly understood tells of God. The story then passes on through school and hospital, through building and pastoral care, through tragedy and martyrdom, through desolation and restoration, up to the right-hand corner, where the priest is seen offering the Sacrifice of Praise as he gazes beyond the earthly Altar to the glory of the eternal City of God. Earth is redeemed and sin overcome by the faith which lays hold of the beauty, the truth and the goodness of God.

The horizontal message, it seems to me, to speak rather differently of the revelation of these same great Values perceived by faith—beauty, truth and goodness. Reading across, the top panels tell of natural beauty, ecclesiastical beauty and supernatural beauty. A little lower, reading horizontally, we are introduced into spheres of work, schools, hospitals, cathedral-building, and reconstruction. But work must be based upon truth, or it will not stand. The teacher must know the truth, so must the doctor, the priest, and the architect, each in their own department of knowledge. He who said: "I am the Truth," said also, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Then, on the lowest level, the three panels speak of Goodness. In no way can goodness be so arrestingly shown as in sacrifice. What more need be said? "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." And, "They, knowing full well the risk, elected to stay with their flock."

What a window! What a message! This very day, as I write, I have received a letter from the Bishop of New Guinea; who is coming to preach, to our great happiness, on that same Sunday evening. In the letter he says: "It was a wonderful idea to join together your own thanksgiving in connection with your centenary with a thanksgiving for the New Guinea Mission, in the hope that it will develop a sense of responsibility towards the Mission as one of the fruits of your commemoration." And then he adds, in reference to a description he had received, "I had no idea that I myself was to be portrayed in the window. That certainly was rather a shock!" He also says what all St. Peter's people will be glad to hear: "Sister Rawlings has been a great boon to us since her arrival, and is doing a wonderful work here." Curiously enough, almost by the same post, came a letter from the Sister, whom we farewelled not so long ago. In it she writes: "I am very proud to be a parishioner of St. Peter's, and hope I may be looked upon as being part of St. Peter's donation to New Guinea. I certainly have no regrets. ..." That makes good reading, does it not? I think it is we who should be proud to feel that the good Sister is in some sort representing us "at the front." May the time not be far distant when a doctor also may volunteer to serve God in the New Guinea Mission! When the time comes, I do not think that he will have any regrets.

Farnham E. Maynard.

From: **Parish Paper**; October, 1946.

THE GREAT WEEK

October 27th to November 3rd

Sunday, October 27th.

10.50 a.m., High Mass, and the Dedication of the Window. Preacher: Most Rev. Lord Archbishop of Melbourne. (The Service will be broadcast).

7.30 p.m., Evensong and Procession. Preacher: The Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of New Guinea.

Monday, October 28th.

5 p.m., Children's Party.

8 p.m., Social and Dance for all the young folk of St. Peter's and St. Mary's and their friends.

Tuesday, October 29th.

8 p.m., Recital of Sacred Music in the Church. Under the direction of Mr. A. E. H. Nickson, F.R.C.O., assisted by the Rev. Howard Hollis, Mus. Bac., Th.L.

Wednesday, October 30th.

8 p.m., Confirmation by the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Geelong.

Thursday, October 31st.

8 p.m., Parish Rally. Speakers: Archbishop of Brisbane, Father Bedale, S.S.M., Father John Hope, Canon Maynard.

Friday, November 1st.—All Saints' Day.

10.30 a.m., High Mass. Preacher: Rev. Father Bedale, S.S.M. (The clergy are invited to stay to the luncheon which will follow this Service).

Saturday, November 2nd.—All Souls' Day.

7 a.m., Solemn Requiem Mass, with special remembrance of departed benefactors and former worshippers at St. Peter's.

3 p.m., Missionary Exhibition by Anglican Church Schools, in St. Peter's Hall.

Sunday, November 3rd.

11 a.m., High Mass and Procession. Preacher: The Rt. Rev. Lord Bishop of Rockhampton.

7.30 p.m., Evensong, Procession, and Te Deum. Preacher: Most Rev. Lord Archbishop of Brisbane.

Tuesday, November 5th.

9.30 a.m., High Mass and Communion. (This day, being a holiday, an opportunity is afforded for parishioners and friends to make a corporate Communion at this time. Breakfast will follow).

From: **Parish Paper**; October, 1946.

Vicar's Letter. (Excerpts)

The last letter was written just before our great Centenary Week. Now we look back on it with unalloyed thanksgiving. Much was crowded into that one week. Every day something significant took place. The whole programme printed in the October number was fulfilled, [...].

The Parish Rally on the Thursday night was a truly great occasion. We were privileged to have with us the Archbishop of Brisbane, an old and much valued friend of St. Peter's. The second speaker was Father Stephen Bedale, Superior of the Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham. [...] The other visiting speaker that evening was Father Hope, of Christchurch, Sydney. [...] The speeches were separated by hymns and sacred songs. The Vicar's speech was the last of the four on the programme. And then came an interesting ceremony, when our Treasurer, supported by Mr. Harold Williams, Churchwarden, handed to the Bishop of New Guinea a cheque for £300 towards the reconstruction work in the war-devastated areas of his diocese. We did not look to the over-worked Bishop for a speech. He had given us of his best in generous measure on the previous Sunday evening at Evensong, when he kept us entranced for nearly an hour, which seemed no time at all.

The First Sunday of the Week.

Since this is a letter and not a chronicle, it does not matter if we dodge backwards and forwards. So now let me say a word about our two Sundays.

One of the great disadvantages of being situated in the heart of a city is that not many can make their Communion early on Sunday morning at St. Peter's. More are able to come at 9.30 and stay to breakfast. But most Sundays it is only at 11 that a full church is seen. How it was done I do not know, but, in spite of the transport strike, there were many communicants at 8 and 9.30, and a full church at 11 a.m. Rather should I say 10.50, for we started early. The service was broadcast from 11 on to the end at 12.15. Before the Mass there was a procession, and the dedication of the New Guinea window took place at a station made during the procession. It was just at this point that we came on the air, and Mr. Brooks—who always announces for us, and does it so excellently—was able to explain what was going forward, just before they heard the Archbishop say the prayers of dedication. The procession then moved on, and round the church, up to the Sanctuary for the Solemn Eucharist. The Archbishop preached a remarkable sermon, which is printed in the current number of the Australian Church Quarterly. [...]

It seemed at least to the writer of this letter that here we had for once everything in its right place. The emphasis right, upon the forward essential spiritual work of the Church, which includes social and personal redemption. This was proclaimed in a setting of worship from which nothing was wanting through ignorance or prejudice. All was there of beauty and art which we knew how to offer. All was in place, great music, under the hand of a master musician,—God bless him; a glorious window, just dedicated, created by a great artist in glass; incense and holy water, vestments and lights, colours and concerted movement, all expressive, however imperfectly, of the unimaginable beauty of the courts of the All Holy One. And all this was in balance and proportion, was unobtrusive, as the best art is, seemingly inevitable. [...]

The fact is, of course, that ceremonial is a form of good behaviour. It has to be learnt. Children have to learn how to behave at dinner and school. Courtiers have to learn how to behave in the Royal presence. Soldiers have to learn how to behave on parade. Dancers have to learn how to behave in the ballroom. Priests and people have to learn how to behave in the Court of the Gate of Heaven. All these patterns of behaviour having been learnt, should become second nature, and then they become vehicles of freedom and joy. Obtrusion of behaviour in speech or act is just vulgarity, from which at least the heavenly courts should be free. It is one of the great joys of St. Peter's that those who serve at its Altars do take pains to do their work well, and don't talk about it self-consciously. We have got long past that now.

Your faithful Friend and Vicar,

Farnham E. Maynard.

From: **Parish Paper**; Christmas, 1946.