

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE ILLAWARRA

150 YEARS 1838 - 1988

A Project by the Illawarra Catholic Sesquicentenary Committee, co-ordinated by Fr. P. J. Faherty and Fr. M. A. O'Keefe. (Wollongong, 1989).

One's first impression on being confronted with this massive volume is that it must be the largest, most sumptuously produced and most amply illustrated work in the local history fold that we have encountered. But the compilers would be the first to avow that this is a secondary consideration. It is not a great work of literature. Large as the book is, the number of persons demanding mention is enormous, and there is little space for personal sketches or "human interest" stories. First things must come first; but if you want to ascertain any point in the history of the Church in Illawarra, this will be the first place to which you should turn for information.

After some introductory remarks by Church dignitaries, it proceeds with a sketch of the early history of the Church in Illawarra, and the circumstances surrounding the appointment of Bishop Polding as Bishop of Australia, and of Father Rigney to the charge of the Illawarra Mission.

This is followed by an outline history of each parish and biographical notes on Illawarra priests. These in turn are followed by a series of short essays dealing with various aspects of the Church's work and its effect on Illawarra.

As mentioned earlier, the work is a fine example of book-production, and the numerous illustrations throw much light on innumerable aspects of the Church's work. Even to collect and organise the masses of material would have been a tremendous task, and all future historians of Illawarra, of any or no religious persuasion, will have cause to be grateful to those responsible for its compilation.

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