

AN
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY

THE ORIGINAL DREAM: 1945-1954

by
Edward A. Malloy, C.S.C.
President Emeritus, University of Notre Dame



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PREFACE

I have had a deep and abiding interest in all matters related to the possible establishment of a Catholic university in Australia since I first met Peter Tannock and Denis Horgan on a visit that they paid to our campus during my first year as President of the University of Notre Dame in 1988. These two men, an academic leader and a businessman, had spent several years discussing their common desire to establish a Catholic university in Western Australia. But the idea really began to take off only after they had a long conversation with my predecessor, Fr. Ted Hesburgh, C.S.C., and his longtime colleague, Fr. Ned Joyce, C.S.C., during a scheduled stop in Perth/Fremantle that the two priests had made as part of a world wide, post-retirement cruise.

Fathers Hesburgh and Joyce at that time recommended that the two Australians come to the United States and meet the new administration at Notre Dame. After they visited us here on campus and had solicited our assistance in bringing the idea to fruition, I agreed to reciprocate their visit with three of my administrative colleagues (Timothy O'Meara, Provost, Fr. E. William Beauchamp, C.S.C., Executive Vice President and Fr. David Tyson, C.S.C., Vice President for Student Affairs) on our way back from an international meeting of Catholic educators in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Nineteen years later, despite facing enormous challenges along the way the University of Notre Dame Australia has become a great success story. It now has campuses in Fremantle, Broome and Sydney and its reputation for academic excellence and for offering a distinctive type of Catholic education continues to grow.

Through this time I have made 11 visits to Australia and I have grown progressively more interested in all things Australian, most especially the state of education at all levels and the historical role that the Catholic Church community has undertaken in this regard.

Even in the first year of my involvement in the project that became Notre Dame Australia, I had learned of earlier efforts in the 1940s and 1950s to establish a Catholic university in Sydney and to have the Congregation of Holy Cross and the University of Notre Dame be integrally involved. But I knew nothing about the details and the only

historical description that I had read was entirely focused on the Australian side of the negotiations.

As a result, during my sabbatical year, after stepping down as president in 2005, I set out to learn as much as I could about that multi-year conversation. This brief essay is my report about what I discovered.

Special thanks are due to my assistant, Joan Bradley; to Fr. Peter Jarret, C.S.C., my former executive assistant, to my three undergraduate research assistants, Brendan Ryan, Patrick Coleman and Greg O'Donnell; to Fr. David Tyson, C.S.C., Indiana Province Provincial who gave his approval for access to the Province Archives; to the Indiana Province Archivist, Fr. Bill Simmons, C.S.C.; to Fathers Bill Beauchamp, C.S.C., Bill Miscamble, C.S.C., and Mark Poorman, C.S.C. and to Notre Dame Australia's Vice-Chancellor, Peter Tannock, who read the report and provided helpful commentary.

PART ONE

1945-1946

The whole idea for a private Catholic university in Australia began rather serendipitously when a Holy Cross priest who was serving as a Navy chaplain was assigned to a base in Sydney and began to give sermons, lectures and talks in various parishes. Through this interaction he developed a rapport with the clergy of the archdiocese and eventually was introduced to Cardinal Norman Thomas Gilroy who was the Archbishop of Sydney. It is important to remember that the Second World War had ended and Australia and the rest of the world were trying to get back to some kind of normal existence. At the same time, Australians had a great sense of appreciation for the role that the American military had played in stemming the onslaught of the Japanese forces in their direction. Both cultures were relatively informal and action-oriented and it was a commonplace of the time to say that Americans and Australians very quickly hit it off with one another.

On April 9, 1945, Father Patrick Duffy, C.S.C. wrote a letter to Father Albert Cousineau, C.S.C., the Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, in which he explained that he was ending his tour of duty as a navy chaplain in the South Pacific and had been spending three months in Sydney awaiting reassignment. He described how his relationship with Cardinal Gilroy had developed and that he was in the habit of eating with him at least once a week. During their talks over dinner they discussed the Congregation of Holy Cross and the University of Notre Dame in the United States. Whether for this reason or because of other internal influences or simply due to his entrepreneurial energy, the Cardinal decided that he wanted Holy Cross to come to Sydney and to start and conduct the first Catholic university of Australia. Father Duffy for his part offered Fr. Cousineau a set of reasons why this proposal made good sense. There were 1.5 million Catholics in Australia. It was an ideal climate and there were a large number of Catholic primary and secondary schools. The strong influence of the Irish in Australia was not dissimilar to what it was like at Notre Dame and in the Congregation. The Archdiocese was solvent and the Archbishop had committed himself to give buildings and money as the project unfolded.

Father Duffy concluded in his letter that it appeared to be a golden opportunity for Holy Cross.

Soon after, on April 13, 1945, Cardinal Gilroy wrote a letter to Father Duffy in which he expressed his admiration for what he had learned about the Apostolate that the Congregation of Holy Cross was involved in at the University of Notre Dame. He indicated that something resembling Notre Dame would be a blessing to the Church in Australia and would bring to perfection the pre-existing primary and secondary education systems. He opined that the absence of a Catholic university left the Catholic educational networks without a head and deprived it of the elite Catholic laity that had been the glory of the church in the United States. Furthermore, it seemed to him that Sydney, as the largest city in Australia and centrally located on the East coast where the bulk of the Australian population was concentrated, would be the ideal place for such a university. He expressed his gratitude to Father Duffy that he would be the go-between in initiating a conversation with the Superior General of Holy Cross. (It should be said parenthetically that this letter was obviously precipitated by Father Duffy to indicate to Father Cousineau the seriousness of Cardinal Gilroy's interest). Not too long afterward, on April 26, 1945, Father Cousineau wrote a letter to Father Thomas Steiner, C.S.C., who was Provincial of the United States Indiana Province, in which he enclosed copies of the letters from Father Duffy and Archbishop Gilroy. He solicited the opinion of Father Steiner and his council with regard to this issue. He suggested that Father Duffy could be asked to study the question and report back to the two of them. On May 11, 1945, Father Steiner wrote back to Father Cousineau expressing his opinion that indeed Father Duffy should make such a survey and investigation.

After the passage of several months, on September 7, 1945, Father Duffy wrote to Cardinal Gilroy and described his trip to New York City where he had a meeting with Father Cousineau who seemed quite interested in the project. He reminded Cardinal Gilroy about various things that they had discussed in the past, namely that Holy Cross be given a parish with a mission band; that Loyola College in North Sydney would become a seminary to train men for university work; and that an annual collection be taken up for 15 years to help support the new university. On October 3, 1945 Cardinal Gilroy wrote to Father Cousineau expressing his appreciation for the information that Father Duffy had passed on to him, that Holy Cross was interested in the proposal of establishing a university in Australia. He went on to get more concrete by addressing the two matters that had to be definitively settled, that is, the obtaining of a charter equal to that of lay universities and determining the best location. His proposal was that the Congregation send a priest at the Cardinal's expense to survey the situation and to formulate a plan that could be acceptable not only to Cardinal Gilroy but to the majority of the bishops of the country. On the same day Cardinal Gilroy wrote to Father Duffy passing on a similar message.

On November 5, 1945, Father Duffy wrote to Father Steiner indicating that he was still in the Navy but willing to get out and return to Australia if the Congregation thought his service would be valuable. With this letter he also included: his report on the proposed Catholic university; the exchange of letters between himself and Cardinal Gilroy; a letter to him from the Apostolic Delegate, and a letter from Father Leger, C.S.C., about what would be needed in order to obtain a royal charter for the university.

Since Father Duffy's letter to Father Steiner included the first report by an American on the proposed project and its ramifications, it is worth giving some closer attention to the elements of this report. He began by providing a general perspective on Australia. The country had at that time a population of 7.5 million out of which 1.5 million were Catholic. Interestingly enough, 13 of the 19 members of the federal cabinet were Catholic, primarily because the Australian Labor Party was in power at that point. He went on to say that the hierarchy of Australia was made up of mostly native Australians of Irish descent. He thought that an annual collection of all the dioceses for the new university might gain their support. Archbishop Penice, the Apostolic Delegate to Australia and a pivotal figure, was enthusiastic about the proposal.

One of the best rationales in his opinion for pursuing the idea of a Catholic university was the pre-existing primary and secondary education system in Australia. The only thing comparable at the Australian universities were separate 'Catholic' residences, something equivalent to our "Newman Clubs." Sydney seemed to him to be the best place to locate a university since the Archbishop was very supportive, the climate was excellent and the city was geographically central in the largest metropolitan area in the country.

All in all, Father Duffy finished his report with a very enthusiastic recommendation that the proposal be carried to the next step of investigation.

On November 22, 1945, Father Cousineau wrote to the U.S. Navy authorities seeking to release Father Duffy out of the Navy early in order to pursue this Sydney proposal.

With all of this in mind, it still required some response from the Provincial of the United States Province in order to be able to move forward. On December 17, 1945, Father Steiner wrote to Father Cousineau indicating that he and his Council had been mulling over the possibility of such an Australian foundation. Father Steiner was not convinced that Father Duffy was necessarily the best person to make the evaluation but he was intent on sending someone to investigate all of the phases and possibilities. The main reason that Father Steiner and the Council were hesitant was the dire shortage of priests and brothers for the personnel needs in the various high schools, colleges and universities for which the Congregation had a responsibility in the United States.

At the end of the first year of discussion on December 29, 1945, Father Duffy wrote Father Chris O'Toole, C.S.C., who at the time was the Assistant Provincial thanking him for the encouraging words that he had received from Father O'Toole. He thanked him

in advance for any support that he could provide for the university project within the community and reiterated that he would be happy to go there if assigned.

Fortunately, the opportunity existed in 1946 for both Father Cousineau and Father O'Toole to travel to Sydney themselves and thereby issue a preliminary report on the Catholic university project. Both of them were better situated by background and experience than Fr. Duffy was to evaluate the possibility and to gain credibility and support for the project within the Congregation. Their 'Preliminary Report' covered most of the areas of concern as they viewed them.

They began by laying out the advantages that they saw which included the pre-existing primary and secondary Catholic education system; the need to develop Catholic intellectual leaders, the desire to cultivate an atmosphere favorable to faith and morals, and the opportunity for members of Catholic religious communities of men and women in Australia to obtain higher degrees. The main objections to the project included the perceived competition with the already existing Catholic dormitories within the Australian State university system, the relative distance in a large continent between Sydney and the rest of the country; the concern about whether State grants would be usable in such an institution, and the predictable opposition from the State universities that such an institution would isolate Catholic education.

For Fathers Cousineau and O'Toole, as with Cardinal Gilroy, obtaining the Charter was all important. This would require extensive lobbying within the government itself. They recognized that there were two potential sites, namely, Sydney and Canberra, but both of the visitors preferred Sydney for the same reasons that Father Duffy did. It was a point in favor of the project that the Apostolic Delegate was supportive. There was concern that Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne was not enthusiastic and some of the other bishops in the country were non-committal. It was hoped that the enthusiasm of Cardinal Gilroy would carry the day.

In looking through the sources of students, it was hypothesized that some would come from students who presently attended State universities, some would come from the teaching orders of sisters and brothers, and some would make a natural transition directly from Catholic secondary schools. They thought that the project would require at least 10 acres of land to start and that the property had to be non-taxable. At a minimum it would probably begin with 200 residents and 200 day students. They reasoned it would take at least two priests from the Congregation to begin the project and later an administrator and some other teachers. It would be preferable they thought, to start simply with the one faculty, i.e. arts and sciences.

Fathers Cousineau and O'Toole came to four conclusions in their report: (1) there was room for a Catholic university in Australia. It did not have to be large, at least initially, to be effective; (2) The Congregation of Holy Cross could undertake the project if it had the capacity to assign some priests to the apostolate; (3) The Cardinal of Sydney would support the project to the best of his capacity both by making funds and land available

and by encouraging the other bishops to get involved; (4) It would cost about \$520,000 U.S. to construct the first building in order to accommodate 200 students with classrooms. Through various funding mechanisms in Australia, it was estimated that about \$325,000 U.S. could probably be raised.

PART TWO

1947-1948

The first two years in exploring the proposal were taken up with getting the right mix of authorities informed and in trying to gain their support. The distance in travel, and even in communication compared to today, meant that there were months that passed without any significant change in the feasibility of the project. Australia was so far away from the U.S., even by the available airline travel of the day, that it took a major commitment for someone to make the passage there. If Australia had been closer to the United States, one can imagine that the nature of the conversation would have been much different. In any case by 1947, there were at least three Holy Cross priests who had seen first hand the realities of Sydney, Australia, come to know Cardinal Gilroy, and submitted at least preliminary reports that could be sifted through by others. The Congregation was growing in size with the return of many men from service in the military during the Second World War. At the same time, the pre-existing various college and university involvements of Holy Cross were gaining large numbers of new students and moving again to a financially viable condition.

The first correspondence in 1947 took place on March 5 when Father O'Toole wrote to Father Steiner from Rome. Father O'Toole had been traveling widely visiting various present or potential Holy Cross Apostolic involvements. He expressed his general enthusiasm for the Australian proposition and urged Father Steiner to continue to pursue it.

On July 2, 1947, Father Steiner wrote to Father Cousineau indicating his overall concern about personnel needs of the Province and Congregation. This would be a theme that would appear prominently in later discussions as well. Father Steiner indicated that other proposals being explored included taking on a college in Boston, establishing a high school at Royal Oak, Michigan, and establishing a college in the Holy Land. This would be in addition to the needs of the University of Notre Dame, the University of Portland and the new high school in Santiago, Chile. Father Steiner went on with regard to the university in Australia by acknowledging that a decision needed to be made but he wondered how anything could be decided within the next several years, and suggested that even five years might not be enough time. He added that he and his Council recommended

that Cardinal Gilroy be so informed. While this letter to Father Cousineau seemed less than enthusiastic, on November 14, 1947, Father Steiner wrote to Father Cousineau in a slightly different vein. He described a meeting that he had with Cardinal Gilroy in Buffalo, NY, when the latter was traveling in the United States. He quoted the Cardinal as saying that he was not in a rush to start a foundation in Australia and that it did not have to be next year or necessarily even five years from now. Cardinal Gilroy was described as particularly concerned as to what kind of Charter could be secured. The Cardinal thought the best thing to do would be to send someone from the United States to Sydney to do a more extensive study of the whole project.

About six months later, Father O'Toole wrote to Cardinal Gilroy restating some of the things that they had talked about when Father O'Toole and Father Cousineau had visited the Cardinal in Sydney in 1946. One of the things that they had discussed at that time was that Cardinal Gilroy would commit £5,000 to the project, in particular, for the purchase of land since such a property had been identified by one of the lay members whom they had met during their visit. Father O'Toole had wondered if the £5,000 could be used to purchase said property. On April 7, 1948, Cardinal Gilroy quickly wrote back to Father O'Toole and expressed his delight in learning of the latter's continued interest in the project. He described the available property, known as the French Forest property, as 99 acres within 12 miles of Sydney and said that his gift would be available once the Congregation undertook the Catholic university in Australia. He suggested again that everything hinged upon obtaining the Charter.

On July 2, 1948, Father O'Toole again wrote to Cardinal Gilroy indicating that Holy Cross would like to purchase the French Forest property and agreed to undertake the Catholic university project. Once again he asked if the Cardinal would advance the £5,000 gift to purchase the land. If the university project failed, he assured him that the gift would be returned. By July 21, 1948, in a Western Union cable, Father O'Toole authorized a Mr. Burns to pay the initial £5,000 on the French Forest property. The property was then purchased and assurance of such was provided in a Western Union cable directed to Father O'Toole on July 23, 1948. On August 3, 1948, in a letter from Father O'Toole to Cardinal Gilroy, Father O'Toole indicated that the French Forest property had been purchased on behalf of Holy Cross (although Cardinal Gilroy in later correspondence clearly thought that the land was still his until the University was formally established).

On the Holy Cross side, this was the most definitive step that had been taken up to that point. The Congregation owned land (in their eyes) that could be used as an eventual site for the Catholic university. The Charter had not yet been obtained and there were many other matters that needed to be resolved but this was the firmest symbol of the growing interest in the project from the United States perspective. Since the Cardinal provided the money for the land, one could argue that he still owned it on behalf of the Congregation. No matter how one argues the case, however, there was a deeper investment in the proposed university at this point than ever before.

On October 15, 1948, Father Steiner wrote to Father Louis M. Kelly, C.S.C., Vice Superior General, proposing sending Father Walter Higgins, C.S.C. and Father Phillip Moore, C.S.C., to formally investigate the Australian possibilities. The reason he was writing was to seek permission for the two priests to temporarily leave the Province. Once again he made reference to the critical matter of obtaining a suitable Charter.

At this point, everyone in the conversations seemed to be much more upbeat. On October 29, 1948, Cardinal Gilroy wrote to Father O'Toole describing the successful purchase of the property in French Forest and passing on various bits of scuttlebutt that he had heard along the way. One rumor that he passed on was the increasing likelihood that a Charter could be obtained. He concluded the letter with the following line, 'a providence appears to be reigning over the project by which we hope to glorify God and help Australia.' On that same day, Father O'Toole wrote to Cardinal Gilroy informing him that on November 12, Fathers Moore and Higgins would be leaving for Sydney in order to undertake a comprehensive study of all matters related to the proposed university. In the midst of the general euphoria, the next letter from Father O'Toole to Cardinal Gilroy hoped that in the conditions of the Charter there was not a commitment by the Congregation of a substantial sum of money before the university could get started. This was reasonable since neither the Congregation nor the Cardinal had such sums available at that point.

With the arrival of Fathers Higgins and Moore, a whole new phase of the conversation between the Congregation and the Cardinal began. For the first time Holy Cross had two experienced, highly respected members who had been provided enough time to really explore every dimension of the proposal. Their communication back to the United States would become a critical component for future decision making. In a series of letters in the months of November and December in 1948, Fathers Higgins and Moore, sometimes separately and sometimes together, wrote to various individuals back in the United States describing their experience and offering their evaluation. It had taken them six days to make the 9,000 mile trip to Sydney. Once they arrived and got acclimated, they discovered that there was some debate among the lawyers about whether a federal as opposed to a state Charter was necessary and/or desirable. They found a warm welcome from the religious, priests and laity.

Both priests were convinced about the need for a Catholic university in Australia, at least partially because they described the atmosphere of the State schools there as secular and pagan. They thought of the Catholic colleges at the Australian State campuses as little more than boarding houses. Most of the Catholics in the Australian system seemed to follow a strictly professional area of study, especially medicine. They reaffirmed the appropriateness of Sydney as the location, liked the purchased property site and seemed to feel that the gaining of a Charter from the government of New South Wales would

not be that difficult. Initially, they proposed for the name of the university, Maria Maris University or Mary of the Sea. Father Moore even began working on a draft of a possible Charter.

In their correspondence, Fathers Moore and Higgins felt that the upcoming consecration of a new Australian bishop would give them a chance to lobby the other bishops. In the meantime, they went to Cardinal Gilroy with two possible methods of financing. One would be a commitment of an annual sum of £100,000 over the next five years. The other would be an annual collection from all dioceses, somewhat like the annual collection in the United States on behalf of the Catholic University of America. In discussions with some of the Australian leaders, they all agreed that the proposed university had to be of high educational quality. They began to think about possible faculties over the long term which might include arts, sciences, economics, education, sociology and architecture. They had eventually decided that the word Catholic should not appear in either the title or sub-title in order to minimize opposition at the government level. The new name might be the University of St. Mary.

By the end of December in a joint letter to Father Steiner, the two priests summed up their findings. The best method of financing would be an annual collection in all the dioceses. If the Charter were obtained, it would be best to make a temporary start in the downtown and begin building on the new campus site. In general, the prospects among the native faculty did not look too bright. They were convinced that the new school should be co-educational, primarily because of the percentage of female students in the State universities who were Catholic. Once again, they suggested that the preferred new name of the University should be the University of St. Mary and that the term Catholic should not appear in the title.

PART THREE

1949-1950

With Fathers Moore and Higgins still in Australia in the beginning of 1949, in a sense everything hinged on both their own recommendations back to the United States as well as the capacity of Cardinal Gilroy and the Australians to pursue the Charter to its completion. Because Father Moore had formal responsibilities as Dean of the Graduate School at Notre Dame, he had to return to the United States in time for the beginning of the spring semester. Meanwhile, Father Higgins would stay behind to continue the evaluation of the proposal. However, before he left Father Moore wrote both a general newsletter and a letter to Father Steiner reiterating their findings. Among the more general reflections of Father Moore about what he found in Australia were some of the following: that Australians were inviting foreigners into the country because of an insufficient population; that Sydney was a beautiful city with an effective ferry system and characteristic red tiled roofs; that Americans were considered heroes because of their role in the Second World War; that the prevalence of the English language was a great asset in terms of what engaging an American religious community might entail; that it was a very sports conscious society; that the cost of living was relatively high although the quality of food was excellent; that the Ph.D. was not offered anywhere in the Australian higher education system; and that communists were fairly widely present in the union movement.

In an undated letter in early 1949 Father Higgins appeared to be writing to the Provincial when he raised some ongoing issues. It seemed that Cardinal Gilroy had been upset about his impression from a recent letter from the Provincial that the bishops of Australia would be completely responsible for raising the money for the proposed university. It was the Cardinal's idea that although the money would come from Australia, the raising of it would be under the direction and efforts of Holy Cross men involved in the project with the expressed approval of the bishops of the various dioceses. Father Higgins went on to convey what he took to be the various levels of support in the different areas of Australia. Sydney was the most enthusiastic followed by New South Wales, Brisbane and Queensland. The least supportive were Melbourne and Adelaide.

The issue of personnel was brought up again by Father Moore (having returned to Notre Dame,) in a letter to Father Steiner dated February 17, 1949. He thought that it would take four Holy Cross religious to begin the university and then one or two each year for the first several years. He mentioned in his letter several priests that he thought would be suitable.

Father Steiner remained anxious about the various pressures on him and his Council with regard to personnel and finances in the pre-existing apostolates as well as the additional needs of the proposed university in Australia. He became worried that if the Charter had Holy Cross' name in it, it would oblige the community to open the university. He suggested that the Superior General would have to make priests available for this project no matter what effect it would have on pre-existing apostolates. That is why he was seeking Cousineau's approval before sending a letter to Cardinal Gilroy authorizing the inclusion of Holy Cross in the Charter itself.

On March 11, 1949 Father Steiner wrote to Cardinal Gilroy indicating that he, with the approval of his Council, supported the Charter or the Act of Incorporation. He knew that this was a necessary step for the proposed Charter to be presented to the Parliament of New South Wales but wanted to be sure that the Cardinal knew that this did not commit the Congregation of Holy Cross to a particular time line and/or to assigning a minimum number of priests to Australia in order to open the doors of the university. He restated the point that the Indiana Province was in no position to contribute financial aid to the project and that it would be ultimately dependent upon the moral and financial support of the bishops of Australia. All of this also presupposed that the French Forest property would be presented to the Congregation of Holy Cross once the project moved forward.

From the very beginning it was clear to everyone involved that obtaining the Charter from the proper unit of government would be the critical step in establishing a new university. In the first stages Cardinal Gilroy was probably more optimistic than he had a right to be. Much of the momentum for the project was a function of which party was in power in the appropriate government at the State level when the Charter was being pursued. By 1949, opposition to the project had begun to grow as it moved closer to the formal debate in the State legislature.

On November 10, 1949, an article appeared in the Catholic Weekly that suggested that a controversy was brewing about the new Catholic university. From a Catholic point of view it attributed such opposition to a sectarian campaign based upon prejudice against the Catholic Church. The source of this opposition seemed to be the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney and some non-conformist clergymen. Bishop O'Brien replied in an article on behalf of Cardinal Gilroy that there was nothing unusual about a Catholic university. It showed a proper commitment to the common good by extending opportunities for higher education to as broad a cross section of the student population as possible. In the same time frame, on November 15, 1949, Cardinal Gilroy wrote to Father Steiner suggesting that the Bill of Incorporation for the Charter should probably be introduced by

a private member of the Parliament in order to maximize potential support. He also was pleased that the most powerful daily newspaper was supporting the Bill.

By December the discussion was getting dicey. In a letter from Father Higgins to Father Steiner on December 28, 1949, he indicated that the news of the proposed university had leaked to the secular press, probably through some minor government official. The opposition was widely centered on Methodist and Anglican related groups. But a new issue had arisen when the State Solicitor felt that, in order for an act to pass, the Board of Trustees must be made up of Holy Cross priests actually residing in Australia. On the Church front, it was learned that the Co-Adjutor of Melbourne would not have anything to do with the project if it were owned and operated by a religious order.

With these problems in mind, in a letter of January 5, 1950, from Father Moore to Father O'Toole, he argued that, because of the concerns of the opposition about approving the Charter it seemed best that all members of the Board be Holy Cross priests residing in New South Wales. This matter could be tabled in implementation until the Board was actually set up once the university was ready to go. Father Moore also tried to take on the Church related issues in a letter to Cardinal Gilroy on January 6, 1950, in which he acknowledged that some Australian bishops were not supportive of the idea. This seemed to warrant the drawing up of a joint statement from the supportive Australian bishops to Holy Cross committing themselves to organize an annual fund-raising program in their dioceses and to pledge their full support at the parish level. Furthermore, a building fund should be provided at the very beginning.

As 1950 moved on, there was more hesitation on the Holy Cross part toward any kind of a definitive commitment. On June 21, 1950, in a letter from Father Steiner to Father Higgins, he returned to the matter of the Charter and expressed his misgivings about the difficulty experienced up to now. He did not think there was any good reason for Father Higgins to remain in Sydney unless there was a better possibility in the immediate future. He ended his letter by saying, 'if it (the Charter) cannot be secured the whole project must be abandoned.' This would be Father Steiner's last official comment relative to the proposed university while serving as Provincial.

With the coming of Fall in 1950, the Indiana Province had elected Fr. Theodore Mehling, C.S.C. as Provincial. He was unacquainted with the proposed university project and related conversations that had gone on between the community and the Australian authorities. In a letter of August 31, 1950, to Father Mehling, Father Higgins suggested that Father O'Toole and Father Moore would be the most helpful individuals for Father Mehling to discuss the situation with and he indicated what specific questions remained unresolved. Father Moore was generally optimistic about obtaining the Charter since the Labor Party, which was heavily Catholic, was in power in New South Wales but he was worried that to obtain the legislation and then to refuse to begin the implementation would be a terrible setback for the Congregation and for the Church in Australia. If Holy Cross reneged, it would put off the beginning of such a university for at least a generation.

The fact that Cardinal Gilroy was the one who originally generated the project from the Australian side and that he remained enthusiastic and cooperative suggested that now was the propitious moment for the Province to move forward. Father Higgins ended his letter with three questions: (1) Does the Congregation really want to move forward in establishing a Catholic university under the present conditions? (2) Would the Province prefer to get out of the whole matter if it could do so without seeming to abandon Cardinal Gilroy? (3) Should Father Higgins himself move forward in pursuing the question of a Charter?

Father Mehling was trying to get acclimated to his new responsibilities and the next communication was not from him but from Father Bernard Mullahy, Acting Provincial, to Father Higgins. Father Mullahy thanked Father Higgins for his clear picture of the state of affairs in Australia and agreed with his recognition that a critical juncture had arrived for the project. It was too bad that this helpful description of the situation should coincide with the presence of a new Provincial, a new Provincial Council and a time of transition in leadership in the Indiana Province. He suggested that perhaps the best thing would be for Father Higgins to return to the States and provide a face-to-face evaluation of the whole situation to the Provincial and his Council.

Eventually, Father Mehling, the new Provincial, wrote to Father Higgins and expressed a sense of indecision. From his perspective, it was difficult to decide what to do. The recent General Chapter in its legislation had been wary of the establishment of new foundations. Father Mehling wondered what Father Higgins' personal opinion was and what the deadline would be for a final answer back from the Province. As new Provincial, he felt pressured both about manpower and money. In other words, Father Mehling was seeking as much personalized advice as possible.

On December 8, 1950, Father Higgins wrote back to Father Mehling with a fairly extensive reply. He started by expressing his overall confidence that he knew the reality there quite well. But at the same time he found it almost impossible to explain the situation accurately and completely enough to be satisfactory. He thought it best to return for consultation in the United States. It would be a good time for him to return since Parliament was in recess until March or April 1951.

Father Higgins suggested that the relationship between the Congregation and the Australian church was a kind of 'quasi-commitment.' If the Charter were obtained, it would really move the Congregation to the next level of involvement because the Congregation was mentioned in the Act of Incorporation that was being considered. Holy Cross could hardly back out after the Charter was approved without putting the Cardinal and the Congregation in an embarrassing situation. The irony of the whole thing was that Father Higgins considered the Cardinal a one man show. Everything revolved around him for better or for worse. He further worried that there was not much big money in Australia, especially in Catholic circles. Father Higgins finished his reflection on an upbeat note. Australia badly needed a Catholic university as a young nation growing in prosperity. The whole project showed great promise for the future.

On a personal note, with the passage of time Father Higgins had found it difficult to continue the conversations in Australia and still guard the community interests. The whole process had given him a degree of unwelcome stress. In a sense, the geographical distance and the absence of another Holy Cross religious had exacerbated his sense of isolation.

PART FOUR

1951-1954

Six years after the original conversation about a Catholic university in Australia and after land had been purchased and many of the details had been discussed extensively, the project still hinged on obtaining an adequate Charter from the government of New South Wales. Eleven years after he had begun his service as Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Gilroy, remained enthusiastic, not only about the project but about the Holy Cross role in it. On January 25, 1951 Cardinal Gilroy wrote to Father Mehling. He indicated that the application for the Charter had been made on behalf of the Congregation since no other religious community had showed any interest in the project. "All my hopes are centered on you." He reaffirmed his intention to cooperate in every way with the Congregation if the government approval was obtained. He continued to see the establishment of a Catholic university as a 'crown jewel' in the extensive Australian Catholic education system.

On February 17, 1951, the newly elected Superior General of Holy Cross, Father Christopher O'Toole, C.S.C. wrote to Father Mullahy once again conveying his support of the university project. He recently had received a letter from Cardinal Gilroy and seemed to interpret his words as positive with regard to the feasibility of the Charter. He even brought out in his letter to Father Mullahy the papal prerogative by recalling a meeting that he and Father Cousineau had with Pope Pius XII in which the project was mentioned to the Pope who was quite enthusiastic.

Things seemed to be going in a positive direction when Father O'Toole on February 22, 1951, sent a telegram to Father Mehling indicating that the New South Wales cabinet had approved the Charter for a proposed university. All that remained was to submit it to the full Parliament for approval. On March 7, 1951, in a letter to Father Mullahy, Father Mehling acknowledged the passing of the Charter by the cabinet. He described how he and his newly formed Council had been studying the question, having started with almost no prior knowledge. He pledged that the project would continue to receive thoughtful and prayerful consideration. However, new realities were looming on the horizon including the Korean War, students being drafted to serve in the military, a shortage of priests and teachers, and an extensive building program at the University of Notre Dame.

Sometime in 1951, in a letter found in the Holy Cross Archives, Father Kernt Healy, C.S.C., a previously unheard from Holy Cross priest, spoke in the negative about the Australian university project, with a concern about: the manpower question and the financing. There was also the expression of some fear of episcopal interference if the university were run by a religious community like Holy Cross. He doubted that the project would ever materialize. He went on to suggest that Father O'Toole, despite his continued enthusiasm, had changed his mind on the subject and now was hesitant about its possibility.

In a similar negative tone, in a 1952 letter from Father Mehling as Provincial to a gentleman who had written about the possibility of seeking a job in the history department in the new university, Father Mehling wrote that at the present time it did not seem feasible to continue the negotiation for the Catholic university. There seemed to be too much opposition to the Bill in the legislature and therefore in the absence of a Charter, it did not seem possible to move forward.

As things took a turn for the worse, Cardinal Gilroy wrote to his old friend, Father Moore, at Notre Dame. Lamenting that it was hard to predict the political realities of the New South Wales Parliament, the Cardinal expressed his intention to visit Notre Dame to have a personal talk with Father Moore and the Provincial sometime in June. Father Moore wrote back indicating his pleasure at welcoming the Cardinal to Notre Dame when he could visit. This trip does not seem to have materialized.

On December 6, 1952, Cardinal Gilroy wrote to the Superior General, Father O'Toole, expressing his disappointment that the presentation of the Charter Bill had been postponed once again. The sitting government was under attack by the secular press and it seemed imprudent to introduce the Bill at that time. The Premier still hoped to secure passage the next year. As far as the Cardinal was concerned, he had no alternative but to wait and pray for a successful conclusion to the project.

The last correspondence on the proposed university took place in August of 1953 when Cardinal Gilroy wrote to Father Moore hoping that the government of New South Wales would in fact introduce the Bill for a Catholic university before the end of the year. He hoped that Father Moore would keep the interest of Father Mehling as Provincial alive and focused on the completion of the project.

PART FIVE

THE FINAL STORY

Despite the efforts of many actors over almost eight years and with all the best intentions in the world, the dream of establishing a Catholic university in Sydney was not realized during the lifetime of Cardinal Gilroy. Right from the start, there had not been unanimity of opinion about the matter in the Australian hierarchy. Furthermore, it became difficult to interpret the feasibility of obtaining a Charter at specific moments in the history of the New South Wales Parliament, depending not only on who was in power at the time but where the opposition came from and what the arguments were. In general, it could be said that Catholics were not among the movers and shakers of Australian society in the 1940s and 1950s except through their dominant presence in the Labor Party. They were relatively strong in the labor unions and in certain professions like medicine, but few had the capacity to support such a project from their own resources and the whole project was dependent upon not only gaining approbation for the Charter from the government but also in determining what the base of financing would look like in the end.

On the American side, the Indiana Province, from the period after the Second World War, was absorbing fairly large numbers of new members and was very much stretched in terms of its available personnel and its financial commitments to a number of institutions like the University of Notre Dame and the University of Portland, as well as high schools and foreign missions in several countries. Few members of the Province had any direct experience of Australia as a society or culture. At the same time, there were other parts of the United States and the world that were vying to draw upon the experience and talent base of Holy Cross in the field of education. The project from the Holy Cross and Notre Dame point of view was sustained for the 8 years because of the early enthusiasm of Fathers Duffy, Higgins, Moore, O'Toole and Cousineau. Fathers Steiner and Mehling as Provincials had no first hand experience of either Australia or the Catholic community there. They were overwhelmed at times by all the regular concerns that accrued to their office and were dependent upon the reports that they received from those who had a first hand experience of Sydney and the Church in Australia. Perhaps if Fathers Steiner and Mehling

had had the opportunity to travel to Sydney, things might have turned out differently. But even the early enthusiasm of Fathers Cousineau and O'Toole as Superior General was not sufficient to sustain the interest.

Perhaps, the best one can say in retrospect is that the idea was a good one but the time was not right. The early success of the University of Notre Dame Australia would suggest that indeed there has been a need for a private Catholic university in the Land Down Under. In God's Providence both Holy Cross and the University of Notre Dame have had a significant role to play in both encouraging the concept of a Catholic university in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s and in providing a measure of professional advice and moral support. I personally feel a special sense of affinity with both the Holy Cross and Australian actors in this first stage of the story. They all operated from a strong sense of the importance of Catholic higher education and the critical role that it could play in the life of both society and the Church.

In any case, the Charter was never obtained. The most likely final and important explanation was that when the Australian bishops as a group sought and gained federal aid for Catholic primary and secondary schools, they had to give up the possibility of the formal authorization of a Charter to establish a Catholic university. By the time that Rome had granted formal approval for the granting of Pontifical degrees by the theological seminary in Manly, it was clear that higher education under Catholic auspices in Australia had taken a different turn.

APPENDIX I

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Cardinal Norman Thomas Gilroy - Born in Sydney, Australia in 1896 he was educated at St. Benedict's School in Sydney and at Marist Brother's College. He participated in the Gallipoli campaign in WWI in 1915. He attended Seminary at St. Columba's and later at Propaganda Fide in Rome. He was ordained a priest in 1923 at St. John Lateran Basilica in Rome. Returning to Australia, he served as Secretary of the Apostolic Delegation and in 1931 became Chancellor of Lismore diocese. He became bishop in 1935 and coadjutor in Sydney in 1937. From 1940-1971 he served as Archbishop of Sydney. In 1946 he became Australia's first Cardinal. In 1971 he resigned. He died in 1977 at the age of 81.

Father Patrick Duffy, C.S.C. - Born in Central Falls, Rhode Island in 1908, he was ordained a Holy Cross priest in 1935. From 1937-1942 he served as Pastor of St. Ignatius Church in Austin, Texas. In 1942 he became a chaplain in the U.S. Navy where he served until 1946. In 1946 he returned to St. Ignatius and in 1948 he moved to Christ the King Parish in South Bend. He died in 1969 at the age of 61.

Father Walter Higgins, C.S.C. - Born in Lynn, Massachusetts in 1912, he was ordained a Holy Cross priest in 1940. His first two assignments were as Assistant Pastor of St. Patrick's Parish in South Bend (1940-46) and Pastor of Christ the King Parish in South Bend (1946-48). He received a special assignment from the Provincial to go and investigate the possibility of founding a Catholic college or university in Australia (1948-51). Later assignments included - Pastor of Holy Cross Parish in South Bend (1951-55); Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in New Orleans (1955-61); Pastor of Holy Cross Parish in South Bend (1961-68); Member of the Provincial Council (1962-68); Chaplain at St. Mary's College at Notre Dame (1969-76); and Assistant to the Director of the Province's Retirement Program (1976-77). He died in 1977 (ironically in the same year that Cardinal Gilroy died).

Father Phillip Moore, C.S.C. - Born in Wabash, Indiana in 1900, he was ordained as a Holy Cross priest in 1928. After completing graduate work in philosophy he served as Secretary of the Graduate Studies Committee at Notre Dame from 1934-44, as Head of the Philosophy Department from 1942-48, as Dean of the Graduate School from 1944-52, and as Vice President for Academic Affairs from 1952-58. In 1959 he became Academic Advisor to the President. In his last years, he assisted in the C.S.C. Archives. He died in 1969.

Father Christopher O'Toole, C.S.C. - Born in Alpena, Michigan, in 1906. He was ordained as a Holy Cross priest in 1923. He taught at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, from 1933-34, and at Moreau Seminary at Notre Dame in 1934-36. He then moved into administration, serving as Assistant Superior at the Community House at Notre Dame (1935-36); Master of Novices in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts (1936-38); graduate studies at the University of Louvain (1938-39), Superior at Holy Cross Seminary (1940-41), Superior at Holy Cross College in Washington, D.C. (1941-45), and Assistant Provincial (1945-50). Later, he continued his administrative service as Superior General (1950-62), Southern Province District Superior (1963-68), and Southern Province Provincial (1968-76). During the remaining ten years of his life he was involved in various academic and hospital ministries in the South.

Father Albert Cousineau, C.S.C. - Born in 1895 in St. Laurent, French Canada. He was ordained a Holy Cross priest May 25, 1918. He studied in Paris for 3 years following his ordination and became a professor of French and Greek. He became Superior of St. Laurent College in 1928, in 1936-38 he was Religious Superior of St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal and then from 1938-50, he served as Superior General of the Congregation. In 1951 he was consecrated as Bishop of Cap-Haitien, Haiti, where he remained until his death in 1974.

Father Thomas Steiner, C.S.C. - Born in Monroe, Michigan in 1897, he was ordained a Holy Cross priest in 1918. For the next ten years, having already completed his graduate education before ordination, he taught on the engineering faculty at Notre Dame. His administrative career began in 1928 when he became Dean of the College of Engineering where he served for ten years. In the community, he served as Assistant Provincial from 1932-38 and as Provincial from 1938-50. After completing his term in the Provincial's office, he returned to the faculty and lived in Corby Hall on campus until his death in 1962.

Father Theodore Mehling, C.S.C. - Born in 1906 in Fremont, Ohio, he was ordained a Holy Cross priest in 1933. His early ministerial responsibilities included - Assistant Superior, Moreau seminary at Notre Dame (1933-37), Dean of Studies and Assistant Superior at the University of Portland (1937-46), and President of the University of Portland (1946-50). He was elected as Provincial in 1950 and died while still Provincial on a visit to the community in Santiago, Chile in 1961.

APPENDIX II

TIME LINE (1945-54)

1945

- Fr. Patrick Duffy, C.S.C., an American navy chaplain meets Cardinal Norman Thomas Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney, and they discuss the possibility of Notre Dame and the Congregation of Holy Cross being involved in the establishment of the first Catholic university in Australia.
- Fr. Albert Cousineau, C.S.C. (Superior General) writes to Fr. Thomas Steiner, C.S.C. (Provincial) inquiring about his opinion and that of his Council about the possibility.
- Father Steiner writes to Father Cousineau indicating that Father Duffy, who was on site, should undertake a study of the matter.
- Father Duffy goes to New York City to discuss the situation with Father Cousineau.
- Cardinal Gilroy writes to Father Cousineau conveying his excitement to learn from Father Duffy that Father Cousineau, as Superior General, is interested in the possibility.
- Father Duffy sends his 'Report on Proposed Catholic University in Australia' to Father Steiner.
- Father Cousineau writes to Father Steiner seeking his opinion.
- Father Steiner responds to Father Cousineau indicating that he will send someone to Australia to do a thorough investigation

1946

- Father Cousineau and Father O'Toole (as Assistant Provincial) travel to Australia. They issue a 'Preliminary Report on the Proposed Catholic University Project in Australia.'

1947

- Father O'Toole writes to Father Steiner from Rome urging serious consideration of the Australian project.
- Father Steiner writes to Father Cousineau indicating that personnel needs elsewhere make it unlikely that the Australian option can be pursued in less than five years.
- Father Steiner writes to Father Cousineau describing a meeting he had in Buffalo with Cardinal Gilroy who was on an American visit. The Cardinal said he was not in a rush to start a foundation university in Australia.

1948

- Father O'Toole writes an upbeat letter to Cardinal Gilroy.
- Cardinal Gilroy answers Father O'Toole and reiterates his offer of land and money.
- Father O'Toole writes to Cardinal Gilroy indicating that Holy Cross would like to purchase the designated property with a view to eventually undertaking the Catholic university project.
- Land is purchased at French Forest.
- Father Steiner writes to Father Louis Kelly, C.S.C. (Assistant Superior General) seeking permission to temporarily assign Fathers Walter Higgins and Phillip Moore to Australia to investigate the possibilities.
- Father O'Toole writes to Cardinal Gilroy informing him of the visit of Fathers Higgins and Moore.
- Father Higgins writes to Father Steiner describing their trip to Sydney. Father Moore writes to Father Steiner offering early impressions.
- Fathers Higgins and Moore write to Father Steiner with some early detailed analysis.

1949

- Father Moore writes to Father Steiner before he returns from Australia summarizing the most important points. He also produces a bulletin with a general description of Australia.
- Father Higgins, who remained behind when Moore left, writes to Father Steiner with an update.
- Father Moore, back at Notre Dame, writes to Father Steiner with a list of Holy Cross priests who might be considered to go to Australia if the University is opened in 1951.
- Father Steiner writes to Father Cousineau fearful of a premature commitment.

- Father Steiner writes to Cardinal Gilroy informing him that the Provincial Council has approved the proposed charter without thereby committing themselves to a particular date. Financing would have to come from the Australian side.
- An article appears in *The Catholic Weekly* suggesting that a controversy has arisen over possible Government recognition of the proposed Catholic university.
- Father Higgins writes to Father Steiner informing him that a new issue has arisen whether all members of the Board of Trustees who are C.S.C. must reside in Australia.

1950

- Father Moore writes to Cardinal Gilroy worried about the lack of support for the project by some Australian bishops. He proposes a joint statement assuring commitment to the means of financing.
- Father Higgins writes to the new Provincial Father Mehling urging that a definitive decision be made. He says that a number of important questions remain unanswered.
- Father Bernard Mullahy (as Acting Provincial) writes to Father Higgins suggesting that the time for a definitive decision is not now since there is a new Provincial, a new Council and all are in a process of transition. He urges him to return to the United States to give his report in person.
- Father Mehling (as new Provincial) writes to Father Higgins and informs him that he feels a sense of indecision. He asks a series of hard questions.
- Father Higgins writes to Father Mehling and reveals his latest opinions on the matter. He thinks it would be easier to explain in person.

1951

- Cardinal Gilroy writes to Father Mehling suggesting that all of his hopes are centered on Holy Cross.
- Father O'Toole (as Superior General) writes to Father Mullahy (the Acting Provincial) giving his opinion that the project should be accepted sometime in the future.
- The New South Wales cabinet approves the Charter for the proposed university.
- Father Mehling writes to Cardinal Gilroy acknowledging the passage of the charter by the cabinet which would now go to the full legislature but laying out his concrete concerns and that of his Council including the reality of the Korean War.

1952

- Letters from Cardinal Gilroy to Father Moore suggest his desire to visit Notre Dame to discuss the matter.
- Cardinal Gilroy writes to Father O'Toole to inform him that the Charter passage has been delayed and the proposal is under attack.

1953

- Cardinal Gilroy writes to Father Moore optimistic about the passage of a Bill of Charter by the new government of New South Wales by the end of the year. He urges him to keep the Provincial's interest alive.
- The Australian bishops seek Federal aid for Catholic primary and secondary schools. This eventually becomes one of the contributing factors to the demise of the university project. Other factors include:
 - (i) anti-Catholic sentiment
 - (ii) the inability of the Australian Catholic Church to develop a unified front
 - (iii) rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne
 - (iv) the suspicion of religious orders

1954

- Rome approves the granting of Pontifical degrees by the Theological Seminary at Manly.

