

## **A History of the Patrician Brothers in Australia**

### The Beginnings in Ireland

If you are about to watch this video then we can presume you have some sort of connection with the Patrician Brothers. Most likely you are a student at one of the schools which has a very close association with the Brothers.

Perhaps you are a student of one of the schools in Sydney or Papua New Guinea which was started by the Brothers. Or you could be a student of a school which was founded by someone else but in which the Brothers have been involved in some way.

Compared to the other main teaching, male congregations in Australia such as the Marist Brothers, the Christian Brothers, and the De La Salle Brothers, the Patrician Brothers is only a small group. At our peak, during the 1960s, the Brothers ran and taught in ten primary and secondary schools in Sydney, and one secondary school in Papua New Guinea. There were seventy-three Brothers, twenty-six of which had come from Ireland, forty-six were Australian-born, and one was born in Malta.

This short video is meant to give you some idea of the history of the Patrician Brothers in Australia. It's meant to give you a better appreciation of the history and legacy you share in as a member of your Patrician-linked school. Your school could have had Brothers as Principals and teachers for over forty years, maybe even as much as 110 years, and while there are few Brothers and maybe no Brothers at your school now, your school, and therefore you, benefit from what has gone on before you, from that which makes up the history of the Patrician Brothers particularly of the Patrician Brothers in Australia.

The Patrician Brothers have their **origins** nearly two hundred years ago, founded by a courageous bishop, in a small town, in a small country.

The year was 1808; the bishop was Daniel Delany; the town, Tullow; and the country, Ireland.

The late 1700s and early 1800s was a time when quite a few religious congregations began. This was especially so in France, Italy, and Ireland.

**In France** such congregations as the Sisters of St Paul of Chartes (1696), the Oblates (1816), the Marist Fathers (1816), the Marist Brothers (1817), and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (1874) began.

Italy too produced its fair share of Religious Congregations. [The Redemptorists (1732), the Canossian Sisters (1774), the Salesians Fathers and Brothers (1847), the Salesian Sisters (1872), and the Disciples of the Divine Master (c.1897).]

**In Ireland**, in the 1700s and 1800s, the Catholic faith was in disarray. In the middle to late 1600s Ireland came under the control of Protestant England, and as a result the Catholics were not able to practise or preach their faith under what were called the Penal Laws. It wasn't until the early 1800s that these laws were relaxed somewhat and while the suppression of Catholicism in Ireland became less intense in these years, much damage had been done, and many had forgotten the basic teachings of the Church and how to live as a Catholic.

It was **in this disarray**, and because of it, that quite a few religious congregations were created such as the Christian Brothers (1802), the Brigidine Sisters (1807), the Presentation Brothers (1808), the Patrician Brothers (1808), and the Sisters of Charity (1815).

All these were **started to help** people in need: to help those who were extremely poor; to help those who were sick; and to help those who were poor and uneducated in their faith and in their knowledge of the world.

**Two of these congregations were started by a Bishop Daniel Delany:** the Sisters of St Brigid (or the Brigidine Sisters) in 1807, and the Brothers of St Patrick (or the Patrician Brothers) in 1808. The ministry or work he gave them was education, primarily to educate both the adults and the children in their Catholic faith.

Bishop Delany was an extraordinary man: courageous, innovative, and visionary. But he is also extraordinary because his story has similarities to that of **Saint Patrick**, the patron of the Brothers, who lived in the 400s.

Bishop Delany was born in Ireland, but at the age of around sixteen he had to sneak away to France to become a priest because the English had closed down all Irish seminaries. We think Saint Patrick was born in Scotland, and that at the age of around sixteen he was snuck away by pirates to be a slave in Ireland.

When Saint Patrick escaped he returned to Scotland. Here he began to have dreams of the Irish people asking him to return and to preach the gospel to them. He soon went to France where he was ordained a priest and he returned to Ireland.

After fourteen years as a priest in France, Fr Delany returned to Ireland. He was so appalled by the situation of the Catholic Church in Ireland that he wanted to return to France. It was his mother's plea that persuaded him to stay.

And, as St Patrick had played such a significant role in bringing the Catholic faith to the people of Ireland in the 400s, it was Bishop Delany who re-introduced the people of his diocese to this faith fourteen hundred years later.

So, Bishop Delany founded the Patrician Brothers primarily to re-educate the youth of his diocese in the way of the Catholic faith. And so, it was on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, 1808, that four young men presented themselves to Bishop Delany with their wish to dedicate their lives to God as Patrician Brothers. They were Patrick McMahon, Maurice Cummins, Richard Fitzpatrick, and Ambrose Dawson.

The Brothers' lives were extraordinarily difficult, and for the first few years they lived, taught, and prayed, in what was not much more than a cottage in ruin. Things became so bad at one stage that Bishop Delany suggested that they disband. But they chose to continue on, and they soon branched out to other places in Ireland, living very simple but effective lives.

In 1846, only thirty-eight years after their foundation, the Brothers were asked to **help with schools** in America, they answered by sending three Brothers. Then in 1875 three Brothers were sent to India at the request a bishop there. Brothers were sent from Ireland to Australia soon after in 1883.

Today there are Patrician Brothers in Ireland, India, Australia, the United States, Kenya, and Papua New Guinea.

**So, let's move on to the Australian scene.**

### The Australian Foundation

Like Ireland, European Australia, in its early years was under British control. When England decided to **colonise Australia** in 1788 it was only as an overflow for the English gaols. The Church of England was the dominant religion of the colony, it was the religion of the State, of the law-makers, of the wealthy, of the English majority. Catholicism was the religion of the Irish minority, of the poor, of the uneducated, of the convicts.

While Catholicism was not aggressively suppressed by the British State, there were a few laws which made being a Catholic difficult, and eventually one of these laws was to do with education, and it was because of this law that the Patrician Brothers, and other congregations of men and women like them, came to Australia.

Before this law, the **first Catholic school** in Australia was established in 1820 in Parramatta, and slowly but surely other schools followed. Not too many as the population was only small and also not everyone sent their children to school, seeing day-to-day survival more important than learning how to read, to add, and to learn a few prayers.

At first these Catholic schools were financially supported by the British government, as were all the non-government schools. But the non-Catholic majority objected to its public money being used in non-public schools, and in 1879 a law was passed which stopped all aid to church-run schools, it was called the **Public Instruction Act**, and it soon spread to all the other Australian colonies.

State money was then no longer available to pay the men and women teaching in the Catholic system, already poorly paid, and who had to support their own families.

So, to enable Catholic schools to continue, the Bishops **looked to the religious congregations** of Brothers and Sisters, those already in Australia, and those overseas, especially in France and Ireland. They would have to live off whatever meagre allowance the bishops could allow them, and whatever money they could raise from the parents of the students in their care.

**By 1879 several Religious Congregations** were already in Australia including two founded in Australia. [Good Samaritan Sisters and the Josephite Sisters; and also several congregations from overseas such as the Sisters of Charity (arrived in Australia in 1838), the Sisters of Mercy (1846), the Jesuits Fathers (1848), the Christian Brothers (1868), the Marist Brothers (1872), and the Loreto Nuns (1875)]

But **more were needed**, and from 1880 to 1908 seven other teaching congregations arrived in Australia responding to invitations from the Australian bishops to maintain existing schools and to establish new ones. [1882 the Ursuline Nuns and the Religious of the Sacred Heart; in 1883 the Brigidine Sisters and the Patrician Brothers; in 1885 the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; the De La Salle Brothers in 1906; and the Marist Sisters in 1908.]

The history of the **Patrician Brothers in Australia** could be broken up into three main overlapping eras: the country years, the Sydney years, and the outreach years.

### The Country Era

The country era deals with those first years when most of the Brothers' schools were located in country New South Wales. It **began with Bishop Murray** of the Maitland-Newcastle diocese who travelled to Ireland in late 1880 to ask the Patrician Brothers to come to teach and to maintain his boys' schools. His example was soon followed by two other New South Wales country bishops, Bishop Quinn of Bathurst and Bishop Lanigan of Goulburn who also travelled to Ireland asking for Patrician Brothers.

It wasn't until 1883 that there were Brothers who could be sent and these were the unrelated Brothers Dominic O'Neill and Fintan O'Neill who **arrived in Maitland** on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1883, and who took charge of St John's School, Maitland. In 1884 eleven more Brothers arrived from Ireland, in 1885 another seven.

And so, by 1885 twenty Patrician Brothers had arrived in Australia, and they were **running five schools** one in Sydney and four spread out over the vast state of New South Wales. The country schools were Maitland, Bathurst, Goulburn, and Albury; the Sydney school was Redfern.

The Patrician story in Australia had begun, and had begun with great energy, zeal, selflessness and hope despite the many hardships. And **hardships** there were.

These young men, and some not so young, were coming from Ireland to provide the opportunity for a Catholic education for the youth of New South Wales. They were **thousands of kilometres** from their families with very little chance of ever returning to visit home.

The Brothers had come from Ireland at the invitation of the **Bishops** and the Bishops expected the Brothers to be under their authority. Soon after arriving in Australia the Brothers found that some Bishops wanted too much authority - not an experience unique to the Patrician Brothers. This tension did lead to the Brothers having to withdraw from several parishes such as Maitland and Bathurst.

They had come to **a land so different** to their own with its heat, dryness, insects, aridity, and vastness. They had come from the simple yet reasonable comfort of monastic living in Ireland, to being accommodated in unhealthy houses on the verge of demolition in country and city New South Wales.

Yes, there was **real poverty** for the early Brothers. Finances for running the school, providing maintenance of their monasteries, and for putting food on the table, had to come from the people they were teaching via school fees and donations. But, in the most part, the people whose children they taught were as poor, and in many cases even poorer, than they were.

And there were **tragic deaths** in these foundation years as is witnessed to by the many Brothers' gravestones to be found around the state of New South Wales. One Brother, only in the country a matter of weeks, drowned in the Murray River at Albury during the Christmas school holidays. He

was twenty years of age. But most of the Brothers who died young, mainly in their twenties, died from poor health aggravated by the difficult conditions they were living in.

Having the Brothers spread out over the **vastness of New South Wales** was also a source of hardship. No phones or cars for the Brothers in these years, and to communicate with another community took days.

And for some the difficulties were more than they could endure and they **left the Brothers**. Some returning to Ireland, if they could find the resources to do so, others remaining in Australia. The departures were a challenge to the spirit and faith of those who remained, but remain they did enabling the Patrician story to continue.

The **country era**, starting in 1883, continued through to the end of 1927. For forty-five years then, the Brothers had mainly concentrated on schools in country New South Wales. The peak during this time was probably around 1894 with six country schools (Armidale, Goulburn, Wagga Wagga, Albury, Bathurst, and Orange – the Brothers had left Maitland at the end of 1888) and two Sydney schools at Redfern and Ryde (although Ryde was pretty close to being in the country at this time). There were around thirty-five Brothers in 1894, thirty-four were Irish and one was British.

The first Australian-born to become a Patrician was in 1897. He was **Alphonsus Eviston**, a Bathurst boy. He remained a Patrician for sixty years until his death in 1957 at Holy Cross, Ryde.

The country schools produced their share of famous people, the most famous perhaps being John **Benedict Chifley**, who attended the Brothers school in Bathurst in 1899, and became Australia's Prime Minister from 1945 to 1949. He was known for his honesty and concern for the battler. He was also the "populate or perish" Prime Minister.

## The Sydney Era

### *The City Schools*

The Sydney era, we can say, began in 1928, when the Brothers only had **schools in the city**. The Brothers had withdrawn from all their schools in the country, the last being Bathurst in 1924 and Orange in 1927.

There were many reasons for the withdrawals, and politics played a part; but it was decided that the Brothers needed to consolidate by concentrating their small numbers on schools in Sydney where the need was great.

In 1928 the Brothers already had four well-established schools in the city: Redfern, which the Brothers started way back in 1886, only three years after they arrived in New South Wales; Ryde, started in 1891, Forest Lodge in 1892; and Waterloo in 1908, and it was the first Australian-born Brother, Alphonsus Eviston, who was made its first Principal.

**Consolidation** took place then for the next fourteen years: the Brothers did not open another school. But they did open a house at **Wahroonga** which became the training centre for those

wishing to become Brothers. This was in 1929, and it took the place of the training house in Orange.

The **Brothers still lived** very simply and still depended more or less entirely on the parents' school fees to keep them housed, clothed, and fed. And as with the country parents, the city parents were struggling themselves to make ends meet, especially during the years of the depression. There was still no money for Catholic schools from the government.

The Brothers who taught at the schools at Forest Lodge and Waterloo, did for many years walk to their schools from Redfern. There wasn't the money to build the monasteries required. In fact from 1886 to 1904, eighteen years, the Brothers teaching in these three schools wandered from one Redfern house to another, looking for the cheapest rent, until they were able to build a monastery in Redfern in 1904.

Walking wasn't too much of a problem for the Waterloo Brothers with just a fifteen-minute walk to and from school every day, but for the Brothers teaching at Forest Lodge it was a five kilometre walk there and a five-kilometre walk back every day. And this was the way of things for thirty-three years until 1923 when a monastery was finally purchased at Forest Lodge.

What was school-life like in 1923? Very different indeed to today. They were small schools, with certainly no more than two hundred students in them, with students ages ranging from 8 to 16. Many composite classes, with students in Years 3, 4, and 5, sharing the same classroom, and the same teacher. You could have one Brother trying to teach a classroom of seventy boys, teaching them different subjects at different levels. The schools' playgrounds mostly no bigger than a basketball court.

The **staffs of these schools was next to entirely made up of Brothers**. A teacher who was not a Brother was a rarity indeed. There were no offices, no secretaries, no Year or Subject co-ordinators. The Brothers did it all: the teaching, the cleaning, the office work, the accounts, and the sport coaching, and even in these early years the Patrician schools had a formidable sporting reputation, especially in rugby league, hockey, and cricket.

That's the way it was, and that's the way it worked. It was tough but it forged a special relationship between the Brothers, their students, the parents, and the local priests. They were in it together. And it was soon to be realised that the great spirit that made the Patrician inner-Sydney schools such a success despite their lack of size and finance, was to also exist in the Patrician schools which were to be established by the Brothers in the outer-Sydney area, the western suburbs, from 1942 to 1980.

As the Brothers had followed the population from the country to the city in 1927, from 1942 to 1980 the Brothers followed the inner-Sydney population as it moved west. The inner-Sydney schools were becoming smaller and smaller, and the suburbs of the west were getting bigger and bigger.

### *Western Sydney Schools*

In 1941 the Brothers were asked to establish a school at **Granville** – now known as Delany College. The school was opened in 1942. Three Brothers made up the entire staff and since there was no accommodation for them at first, they had to live with the parish priest in his presbytery. The school was the old church hall which is all the Brothers had to accommodate 101 students.

The Brothers ran this school for the next fifty-four years until 1996 when the Principalship was passed on to a lay person. Over those fifty-four years, while the school did not grow substantially in student numbers, the school became well known for its spirit, its hospitality, and its academic and sporting successes.

Again, it was, in so many ways, the support of the parents and priests that kept the Brothers going. The parents' generosity despite their own difficult situations made them a source of friendship and inspiration. "Couldn't have done it without the parents," was a comment often made by one of the Brothers who lived through the early and more difficult years at Granville.

Today, Delany College, is a co-educational institution with over 600 students.

It is the same story of support for the foundations which were soon to follow.

Patrician Brothers, **Blacktown**, opened its classrooms on January the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1952. Again there were three Brothers, and just over 100 students; and again, being no accommodation for the Brothers at Blacktown for the first three years, the Brothers had to travel from Granville every day. But the students had proper classrooms and six hectares of land which the Brothers, parents, and students, soon turned into school and sporting facilities envied by all schools of the immediate area and beyond.

The number of Brothers at Blacktown quickly grew, and in the 1970s there were as many as ten Brothers teaching full-time in both the Primary and Secondary sections.

For many years the school had classes from Year 5 to Year 10, but in the 1990s the primary school was closed and the secondary school expanded to include Years 11 and 12. Today there are over one thousand students, and the college can boast of excellent academic achievements and teaching and sporting facilities still the envy of neighbouring schools.

In mid-2005 the Brothers had to withdraw from the principalship of the college, but there are still two Brothers very much involved, one as a full-time teacher and the other ministering to the general needs of students and staff alike. There are five other Brothers living in the monastery on the school campus.

Around the same time as they Brothers were requested to open a school at Blacktown, the Brothers were approached by Archbishop O'Brien to open a school at **Fairfield**. Another three Brothers were found for this task, and in February of 1953 one hundred and seventy students began their lessons. The Brothers had an old weatherboard residence as a monastery, the students had new brick classrooms, and there were ten hectares of land for future development.

This was the only Catholic boys high school in the area, and its numbers and facilities grew quickly. By 1982 the student population was just over 1300 students from Years 5 to 12 which made it the largest single-campus Catholic boys' school in New South Wales.

In 2000 an amazing transformation of the entire school complex had taken place with all the original school buildings either being thoroughly renovated or completely replaced by new and state-of-the-art learning facilities.

By 2001 the Brothers were no longer able to supply a Brother to be Principal of the college, and so the school leadership was handed on to a lay Principal, an ex-student.

The response to the establishment of the Brothers' school at Fairfield was so huge, that the Sydney archdiocese decided that another boys' school was required at **Liverpool**. The Brothers were approached with this request two weeks before school began in 1954. One Brother was found to take on this difficult task, and classes began on time in a make-shift classroom with the Brother having to travel from Fairfield to Liverpool each day, a monastery wasn't available until four years later.

As with Fairfield, the students flooded in, and by 1962 classes Year 3 to Year 9 were full to overflowing. In 1962, the average size of the classes, from Year 3 to Year 9, was uncomfortably

over 60. The school was made up of eight classes, six Patrician Brothers, two lay teachers, eight classrooms, an office, a staffroom, a toilet block, and a new facility called a tuckshop. But the school did not have a generous playground with a couple of tufts of grass and a lot of dirt which became mud in the rain.

Over the years of 1965 to 1968 major extensions were made to the school to accommodate the ever-increasing number of students coming to the school and all the new subjects that were being introduced into the school curriculum.

As with Fairfield, the last Brother to be Principal at Liverpool, now called All Saints Catholic Boys College, was in 2000. The number of Patrician Brothers in Sydney was getting smaller and smaller, and there just weren't Brothers available to take on the position of Principal.

So, in a matter of a few years, 1942 to 1954, the Brothers had **opened four new schools** in the outer west at the invitation of local bishops and priests who were trying to cope with the huge increase in population in their areas.

As with the schools in country New South Wales and inner-Sydney, financially the Brothers were totally dependant on school fees and their own fund-raisers, there was still next to no money coming from the government. It was only through the generosity of the parents and priests that the schools were able to grow and provide the students with a solid Catholic and secular education.

The schools at Ryde, Granville, Blacktown, Fairfield, and Liverpool, were staffed more or less completely by Brothers, with a few extremely generous lay teachers whose wages were well below that of teachers in the State and Private systems.

The Brothers did have a short stay at **Sefton**, from 1961 to 1964. The Brothers who were there during this time remember the years with great fondness, and they remember the great support they received from the priest and parents.

But the school was too small to last, especially during these years of great educational changes. So it was decided to close the school after just four years.

The point should be made clear that despite having been involved in all these schools in the country and in Sydney, the Patrician Brothers only in fact **own one school**, and that is Holy Cross College at Ryde, all the other schools belonged to the different Catholic parishes and dioceses they were in. The Brothers simply could not afford to establish schools on their own. Even many of the monasteries in which the Brothers lived did not belong to them, they also were the property of the parishes and dioceses, and had been very generously handed over to the Brothers during their time in the parish. When the Brothers left Liverpool, for example, the school and monastery were simply handed back to the parish to whom they belonged.

In the early 1960s the cost of running a Catholic school was becoming unbearable, and with the government introduction of new subjects into the curriculum and the facilities required to teach them, there seemed little hope of keeping schools open.

It took a "strike" by the Catholic schools in Goulburn in 1962 to bring it all to a head, and in 1963, Prime Minister Robert Menzies, began the process of providing government aid for all private schools.

So, over the years to follow, government money – tax-payers' money, that is – became available to help Catholics to improve their existing schools and to build new ones, and everything that goes



with that. This included providing proper salaries for teachers in Catholic schools and as this situation improved more lay people took up teaching positions in the Catholic system.

The Brothers were looked after too. Where before all their school and living money came from school fees, the Brothers eventually received a government allowance as well. It was about a third of the wage received by the lay teachers, but it was enough to make life for the Brothers a little more comfortable and secure.

To help the Catholic schools better manage the many new demands placed on them by government structures and society in general, the Catholic Church evolved the **Catholic Education Office** in the late 1960s, and each school was given the option of becoming a part of the Catholic Education Office system, of becoming a systemic school. While some Catholic schools did remain independent, most, including the Patrician schools, became systemic.

It was an interesting relationship that as the number of **lay teachers increased** in the Catholic schools, the number of young men becoming Brothers decreased. This was situation with all the different congregations. In 1960, 90% of teachers in Catholic schools were Religious; today it is very rare thing to find a Catholic school with a Brother or Sister teaching in the classroom.

As mentioned earlier, in the 60s with seventy-three Patrician Brothers in Sydney, there were over sixty-five Brothers involved in twelve schools. Now out of thirty-three Brothers there are just seven involved in six schools. Many Brothers have retired from the classroom after more than forty years of teaching and have moved into other ministries.

But that's all okay. The Patrician Brothers were asked to come to Australia to teach in the schools primarily because there wasn't the money to support lay teachers. Now there is, and so that need is no longer present.

Catholic schools can now be staffed and administered by wonderfully trained and committed teachers who are not Religious. The Brothers can and have moved into other ministries where they reach out to people with other needs.

The next and final direct involvement of the Brothers with the establishment of a school in Sydney was in 1981 at **Marayong** a suburb next door to Blacktown. The school was named John Paul II, the Pope at the time.

This was to be a brand new venture for the Brothers in more ways than one. The school was to be a senior high school, just years 11 and 12, and it was to be co-educational. As well as this, it was the Brothers who initiated the building of the school, and the Brothers worked in conjunction with the local bishops, priests, and other Religious congregations to get the school established.

In contrast with all the other schools established by the Brothers from 1883 to 1962, there was now a substantial amount of government money available to the Catholic education system to help with the building of the school and its facilities.

The school was both co-educational and co-congregational in that members of four different congregations taught in the school. For the first ten years the school was under the Principalship of a Patrician Brother, but then too leadership was handed over to a lay Principal.

John Paul II Senior High is now a part of a multi-campus school called St Andrew's College.

The schools mentioned so far have all been those schools that the Brothers played a major role in establishing, but the Brothers have also been and are involved in schools in Sydney they did not establish.

The first such involvement was in 1985 when one Brother took up teaching at Freeman Catholic College at Bonnyrigg, just west of Liverpool. It was named after the then Archbishop of Sydney James Cardinal Freeman. The Patrician Brother was there during its foundation years and with the other pioneer staff and students laid the foundations which have enabled the college to grow to a student body of over 1200 and a staff of 114.

In 2000 Magdalene Catholic High School at Narellan opened its classroom doors for the first time. On the staff of this new school was a Brother who acted as a Campus Minister. He had himself been Principal of the Brothers' school at Granville for many years. It was while he was at Magdalene that he died, still really only young, and the school has dedicated its main oval to his memory.

Magdalene has an extra special connection with the Brothers as it was where young men were trained as Patrician Brothers from 1963 to 1981. Some of the buildings still used by the school were built by the Brothers.

Like Freeman College, Magdalene is a co-educational Year 7 to 12 school. It has a wonderful campus with modern facilities. The student population is well over 900.

Currently we have a Brother as Principal of St Therese Primary School at Sadleir just outside of Liverpool. He took up the position in 2004 and had been principal of Patrician Brothers Primary, Fairfield, for seven years before taking up the position.

The school itself was established by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in 1967 with 150 students and five Sisters.

St Therese is now a Kindergarten to Year 6 school with 360 students. It's a very attractive campus with enthusiastic students and dedicated staff.

### The Outreach Era

We come then to our last era: the Outreach years. It was during this time, from 1968 till now, that the Brothers decided to get involved with needs outside their usual field of work. This resulted in working in **Papua New Guinea**, Thursday Island, and in other ministries other than teaching.

In 1968 **two Brothers** left Sydney to take up teaching positions at St Ignatius High School, Aitape, in the Papua New Guinean province of the West Sepik. This was at the invitation of the local bishop who had been a student at Holy Cross College, Ryde.

It's quite a story and we can't go into it here, but since 1968 **twenty-seven Brothers have ministered** in Papua New Guinea. Not just Brothers from Australia, but also Brothers from Ireland, Kenya, and India. The Brothers administered and taught in four high schools in the West Sepik Province. St Ignatius High School, the first school, became one of the leading schools in the country. St Francis High School at Nuku the Brothers built from scratch out of the jungle. The Brothers were invited to take over the government schools at Lumi and back at Aitape which had been struggling and the Brothers got them back on their feet.

Apart from teaching in schools, the **Brothers have also been involved** in health ministry, adult education, parish work, and in training Papua New Guineans to become Patrician Brothers. In PNG

there are now six local Patrician Brothers, two Brothers from Sydney, and five young men training to be Brothers.

It can be a tough life up there in the remote regions of Papua New Guinea. So many sacrifices and struggles to make it all happen. But there are so many rewards as well, which is why there is no Brother who has ever regretted the years he spent there - and one was there for over twenty-seven years.

The second outreach was to Australia's **Thursday Island**, one of the most northern islands of Australia. The Brothers had wanted to get involved with Australia's indigenous people, and they approached bishops about possible opportunities. Very different to all other ventures where it was the bishops who invited the Brothers.

In 1994 the Brothers were offered the Principalship of the Sacred Heart Primary School on Thursday Island, and in 1995 two Brothers moved there, one to take up the Principalship and the other to work in the parish.

Over the next eleven the Brothers worked in the schools and parish of Thursday Island. But again, due to lack of numbers, the Brothers had to be withdrawn: 2005 was the Brothers' last year on the island.

And finally, it was over these outreach years that the Brothers started to move into other ministries. With more and more lay teachers coming into the schools, some Brothers felt able to move out of the classroom to work in other ministries.

Some Brothers didn't move too far, but have remained in the school environment. There is one Brother who is a counsellor and helps students with their personal needs. Two Brothers help around the school in any way they can from helping to organise prayer services to helping with fund-raising activities to developing the musical talents of students to providing breakfast for the staff. We have one Brother who has played a leading role in the Parramatta Catholic Education Office, training school staff in Australia and overseas as educators and school leaders.

Brothers are involved in parish work where they help the priest with all the activities and committees that make up parish life. This can range from teaching altar servers how to serve at Mass to helping parishioners who have suffered a personal tragedy to organising sport competitions.

And there are three Brothers who are chaplains, all were in schools for over thirty-four years. One was the Principal at Blacktown and then at Fairfield and is now a chaplain at a Sydney gaol. The other two Brothers are hospital and nursing home chaplains.

We have a Brother involved in adult education. He teaches English to those who have recently arrived in Australia.

And finally we have three Brothers in Papua New Guinea training young local men to become Patrician Brothers.

So, there you have it, a history of the Patrician Brothers in Australia. We have taken you for a ride along our time-line to give you some idea of who the Patrician Brothers were and who they are because you are now a part of that time-line, that history, that legacy. While your time at your Patrician school may only go back a matter of months, or a handful of years, you are part of a tradition, a story, going back more than fifty years and maybe more than one hundred years to the beginnings of your school, and even going back nearly two hundred years when the Patrician Brothers started in that little Irish town of Tullow in 1808. We hope you come to be as proud of your Patrician heritage as we are, and as we are of you and your schools.