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FATHER JOHN CREAGH C.S.S.R.
IN THE KIMBERLEYS, WEST AUSTRALIA

1916-1923

During the first World War a Redemptorist, Father John Creagh, was appointed to administer the Vicariate Apostolic of Kimberley in Western Australia¹. It was a position that entailed some authority over the small group of Pallottines struggling to maintain missions among the Aborigines of that remote region. It was obviously a situation of some delicacy and it continued for some years after hostilities had ended.

The Pallottines in the Kimberleys were Germans; and Father Creagh's appointment followed complaints about these enemy aliens' being allowed the freedom enjoyed by the missionaries. It was only in 1916 that the Australian military authorities yielded to public opinion to the extent of warning Archbishop Clune of Perth², who was also chaplain general of the armed forces, that there were demands that the German religious be interned. The missions among the Aborigines had been a source of anxiety from the beginning, and the archbishop lost no time in alerting the Apostolic Delegate in Sydney. Negotiations were hasty, because the archbishop insisted that the missions should not be closed, even temporarily. Since at such short notice Pallottine superiors in Europe were unable to meet the crisis in the far-off Antipodes, Archbishop Clune was instructed himself to nominate a superior acceptable to the Australian Government. His choice fell on his fellow Redemptorist, who was released by his own superiors.

¹ The Vicariate embraced both East and West Kimberley. Its name was changed in 1959 to Vicariate Apostolic of the Kimberleys.

² Patrick Clune, a priest of the Goulburn diocese, had taken his vows as a Redemptorist 3rd September 1894. He had been the first superior of the house in Wellington, New Zealand, founded in 1905. As a Redemptorist missionary he won considerable renown as a preacher, which probably helped to bring his name to the fore when there was question of a successor to Bishop Gibney of Perth in 1910. He became the first Archbishop of Perth in 1913.

It was clear from the start that Father Creagh's appointment had been made principally for the sake of the missions. That implied responsibility for the German Pallottines working among the Aborigines. In order to satisfy the Government he had to exercise some authority over the missionaries, while attending as well as he could to the demands of the huge Vicariate. It was a difficult assignment as well being one of extreme delicacy. And the task was not made any easier by the fact that Father Creagh had to cope with the pastoral problems of the extraordinarily cosmopolitan pearling base of Broome. His many duties had to be performed in the relentless heat of the north west corner, at that time reluctantly yielding to settlement and civilisation of a sort.

Father Creagh remained in the Kimberleys until 1923, long after the war had ended. The difficulty of releasing him and his Pallottine associates is itself eloquent enough testimony of the problem of providing pastoral care in a region so demanding and as yet so poor in resources, but at the same time so sorely in need of the Church's ministry. It is a brief interlude in the history of the missions to the Australian Aborigines, but not without its interest. There is also something unique, if at the same time uncomfortable, in the fact that this Redemptorist was in some way superior of missionaries of another institute. The present article presents some of the information available concerning John Creagh and the men he addressed as his Pallottine « confrères »³.

THE PALLOTTINE MISSION

The troubles of the Kimberleys were suddenly brought to the notice of the Redemptorists early in May 1916. A telegram from Archbishop Clune informed Father Edmund Gleeson, the Australian superior, that the Cardinal Secretary of State had authorised himself through the Apostolic Delegate to appoint a Redemptorist to administer the Vicariate and urgently asked for suggestions⁴. It was at

³ Archives quoted in this article are identified as follows:

- A.C.A.P. = Archives of the Archdiocese of Perth,
- A.D.B. = Archives of the Diocese of Broome,
- A.G.R. = Redemptorist general archives, Rome,
- A.G.P. = Pallottine general archives, Rome,
- Battye = Battye Library, Perth, which contains W.A. Government files.

In addition to the kind assistance of the general archivist of the Pallottines I must acknowledge the generosity of Archbishop Lancelot Goody of Perth and Bishop John Jobst S.A.C. of Broome, who gave me access to their archives, and also of Sister Brigida Nailon C.S.B. who made available relevant material in the Battye Library.

⁴ Telegram, Clune to Gleeson, 6th May 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh. Edmund Gleeson's father Timothy Gleeson had become a Redemptorist Brother after Edmund, his priest son had entered the Congregation. Edmund had been ordained for the diocese of Maitland 18th June 1893 and had taken his vows as a Redemptorist 8th September 1905. He was named Visitor of the houses in Australia and New Zealand in 1912, remaining in office until 1924. He was consecrated

the time an embarrassing request. The war, which had been in progress for almost two years, had imposed a strain on the limited resources of the Australian foundations. Dependent on a major superior in Ireland, they found themselves short of personnel, especially after having provided chaplains for the forces leaving for the war zone. But, as the archbishop explained in his telegram, the matter was urgent. The danger was only too real that the Pallottines be interned; and that must be averted if the missions were to be saved.

The Aboriginal missions of the North West had always been a major preoccupation for Church authorities in Western Australia⁵. Their foundation and maintenance through many a crisis owe more to Bishop Matthew Gibney of Perth than to any other individual. As Vicar General to his predecessor, the Spanish Benedictine Martin Griver, he had travelled through the desolate region, and it was his report that led his bishop to bring the veteran missionary, Father Duncan MacNab, to the shores of King Sound in 1883. After he came to occupy the see in 1887 he did his utmost to expand the work for the Aborigines; and he was sure his efforts had been crowned with success when a community of French Cistercians was established in Beagle Bay in 1890. When the thoroughly discouraged survivors abandoned the mission ten years later, he hurried at once to Beagle Bay and worked with his own hands to keep the place in repair, while the newly appointed Bishop Kelly of Geraldton canvassed in Europe for missionaries to continue the foundation. In 1901 two Pallottine Fathers and two Brothers arrived in Beagle Bay.

The newcomers were of the Limburg province, which had already established a successful mission in the Cameroons, West Africa. In the Kimberleys Father Georg Walter, the first superior, and his companions were faced with the harsh conditions that had so disheartened the Cistercians: an inhospitable climate that seemed to alternate between searing drought and devastating cyclone, a nomadic people whom no one had been able to adapt to European ways. To make the task all the harder, the Limburg superiors understandably tended to favour the established and successful African

Coadjutor Bishop of Maitland 15th September 1929, succeeding to the See 28th March 1931. He died 4th March 1956.

⁵ An account of the missions in the Kimberleys has been ably written by Mary Durack, *The Rock and the Sand*, London, 1969. Quotations in the present article are taken from the Corgi paperback edition of 1971. Cf. also D.F. Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia*, Perth, 1979 and the important study by the first Pallottine superior of the missions, Georg Walter P.S.M., *Australian, Land, Leute, Mission*, Limburg, 1928.

mission, while the far-off Kimberleys were constantly understaffed. In spite of immense problems the Beagle Bay mission gradually made progress. Sisters of St. John of God came to work with the Germans, and they had even established small communities in Broome and Lombadina. It had been a long, hard fight for Bishop Gibney; and when he resigned his see in 1910, he had reason for satisfaction in being able to hand over to his successor a work that seemed at last to have succeeded in the face of every conceivable obstacle. But then came the war.

At first the lonely mission at Beagle Bay was most concerned at the loss of support from Europe, both in funds and personnel. By the beginning of 1916, however, rumour had become busy to such an extent that the superior, Father Joseph Bischofs, made the long journey of 1800 miles to Perth to discuss the situation with the archbishop⁶. Things had in truth become quite critical, as appeared soon after Father Bischofs returned to Beagle Bay.

In April Archbishop Clune reported the flurry of activity that had kept him busy after the superior's departure from Perth⁷. He had been informed by Captain H.A. Corbett, an officer of the Intelligence Section of the Australian General Staff, that complaints had been received from the North West that two Pallottines « had given expression to disloyal sentiments ». As a consequence, he learned, the Government was under some pressure to intern the German missionaries. The archbishop took alarm and made a hasty journey to Melbourne to interview the Minister of Defence⁸. He was assured that the Department would be satisfied if the superior of the mission should be a British subject, information which he promptly communicated to the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Bonaventura Cerretti, who at once cabled Cardinal Gasparri, Secretary of State to the Holy See, to arrange for a suitable Pallottine superior to be appointed. Archbishop Clune wrote to prepare Father Bischofs for the expected appointment, warning him to tell his companions to be « most prudent and discreet in conversation », because « I fear you have enemies who pose as friends ».

⁶ Bischofs to Gissler, 2nd January 1916, A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915. Some Australian Government correspondence concerning Father Bischofs wrote his name « Bischoffs », a spelling adopted by Mary Durack. The letter was written from the Redemptorist house in Perth, where Father Bischofs was a guest during his business with the archbishop.

⁷ Clune to Bischofs, 13th April 1916 in A.D.B.

⁸ Cf. D.F. BOURKE, *op. cit.*, 220, where it is said that the interview took place in March.

The message forwarded by the Secretariate of State to Father Gissler, Superior General of the Pallottines, stated that the reason for the Australian Government's misgivings was the fear that the mission in Beagle Bay supply provisions to German ships⁹. This was most likely the real nature of the complaints against the missionaries, as it is the only reason mentioned by Father Gleeson in his own account¹⁰. There were German ships interned in Java, where the German cause had many sympathisers, and « it was feared by the Minister of Defence that the steamers would escape and that they would be provisioned with the immense number of beef cattle the P.S.M. Fathers have, and so raid these seas again ». Australian authorities had reason enough to be anxious about raiders in the wide expanse of the Indian Ocean that had to be crossed by transports carrying their troops to the front in Europe. In the wartime atmosphere, when public opinion could so easily be aroused, the Defence Department was being generous to the missionaries, as Captain Corbett later pointed out in a courteous letter to Father Creagh, again enjoining caution. « I would respectfully ask you to influence the Fathers and Brothers of the Mission to confine their conversation to topics that are not controversial, to enter centres of white population only when you give permission, and to avoid any course of action tending to publicity of any sort »¹¹.

Unfortunately, this sympathetic official attitude was not enough to prevent the mission's being deprived of the invaluable contribution of Father Bischofs, of whom Mary Durack has written, commending « the healthy influence of his friendly and outgoing personality »¹², and she conjectured that in his natural frankness of character « he had apparently continued his polemical observations beyond the point of discretion »¹³. It would seem, though, that it was a perfectly innocent error of judgment that led to his being excluded from the mission, as he sadly explained to his Superior General in a letter of March 1917¹⁴. He was suspect principally because a couple

⁹ Secretariate of State to Gissler, 14th April 1916 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

¹⁰ Gleeson to Patrick Murray, Superior General, 20th June 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

¹¹ Corbett to Creagh, 18th May 1916 in A.D.B.

¹² MARY DURACK, *op. cit.*, 195.

¹³ *ibid.*, 236.

¹⁴ Bischofs to Gissler, 3rd March 1917 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

of years previously he had answered an official letter from Berlin requesting what he described as « immigration information ». His letter was opened by the censor, « who thought it contained rather too much information ». Writing later about the same incident that occasioned him so much regret, he insisted: « I did no wrong in answering the information papers. Even the Department in Perth said I was not to blame. The papers were sent to many people all over Australia »¹⁵. The military authorities, he thought, appeared to trust him; but they had to obey orders from the Defence Department, which were that he was permitted to live where he pleased, provided he left the North West. Eventually he found a home with the hospitable Bishop of Armidale, some thousands of miles away on the other side of the continent, and from that distant base he kept his superiors informed as best he could of affairs in the Kimberleys.

Father Bischofs assured the Superior General that in view of the sympathetic and courteous attitude of the Government authorities he thought « there was no need for anxiety in regard to Beagle Bay ». His loss, however, was a heavy blow to the mission. During his twelve years in the North West he began that anthropological study of the Australian Aborigines that has been so ably continued by his Pallottine confrères. The improved understanding of the people and the development of the mission, especially the introduction of the Sisters, are due in large measure to his enthusiasm and tireless energy. His European superiors continued to regard him as responsible for the Kimberleys mission until 1919. On his departure he left behind him the gentle, retiring Father Thomas Bachmair and his younger companion, the hardy and zealous Father William Droste, who had been a coalminer before becoming a Pallottine. Without reinforcements these two with the Brothers had to manage as best they could, and that meant little more than struggle to maintain what had been established at the cost of so much toil and hardship.

THE PRO-VICAR APOSTOLIC

In describing to Father Bischofs his dealings with the Minister of Defence and the Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Clune said that what they were trying to arrange was for a Pallottine superior who was a British subject¹⁶. The letter from the Secretariate of State to

¹⁵ Bischofs to Gissler, 7th July 1917 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

¹⁶ Clune to Bischofs, 13th April 1916 in A.D.B.

Father Gissler had a more definite suggestion to offer. « Rev. Father White, Rector of the church of S. Silvestro in Rome, who has been on the mission would be very suitable for the position »¹⁷. The Superior General was accordingly asked to appoint Father White to the Kimberleys, as soon as possible, or some other Father of English nationality.

The Father White mentioned had been the companion of Father Walter in the first Pallottine community in Beagle Bay. He is described by Mary Durack as « an Englishman, an athlete and well up in all the sporting news of the day »¹⁸. He was clearly the very man to create a satisfactorily British image of the mission. Unfortunately, his earlier experience in the Kimberleys made it appear most unlikely that he would return. He had left Beagle Bay after two years to spend some time in Perth trying to establish a Pallottine base in the city before returning to Europe. In view of the urgency of the situation Father Gissler preferred to allow the appointment to be made by somebody closer to the scene. In the end Cardinal Gasparri had to ask Archbishop Clune of Perth to find a superior for the Vicariate.

In answer to the archbishop's telegram of 6th May Father Gleeson, naturally taken by surprise, offered Father Christopher McDermott, « the man we could most easily spare »¹⁹. To that suggestion he received the not unexpected reply by telegram: « McDermott unsuitable »²⁰. The archbishop himself proposed four names: Creagh, Lynch, Murray and Cagney; but Father Gleeson suspecting that from the beginning Father Creagh had been the man wanted, made the necessary arrangements to free him from his charge as rector of the Perth community²¹. The archbishop's nomination followed promptly, bearing the date of 9th May²².

¹⁷ Secretariate of State to Gissler, 14th April 1916 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, 3, 1915. A telegram from Rome of the same date also suggested Father White for the urgent appointment.

¹⁸ MARY DURACK, *op. cit.*, 138.

¹⁹ Gleeson to P. Hartigan, Irish provincial, 23rd May 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh. Father McDermott, an Irishman, had been sent to Australia in 1898 in the hope that the climate would cure his tuberculosis, a hope that proved so well founded that he lived until 1934, dying shortly after his return to Ireland.

²⁰ Telegram, Clune to Gleeson, 8th May 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

²¹ Gleeson to Hartigan, 23rd May 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

²² Clune to Creagh, 9th May 1916 in A.D.B.

Father Gleeson's correspondence showed that he had considerable misgivings about Father Creagh's undertaking responsibilities that seemed so vaguely defined. John Creagh was an unusually volatile and even flamboyant character. Since his ordination in 1895 he had taught Church History in the English studentate of Teignmouth; had been director of the Holy Family Confraternity in Limerick; had been one of the first Redemptorist community in the Philippines; and in 1916 was the newly appointed rector in Perth. And « wherever he was present troubles were not absent »²³. When Father Hartigan, the Irish provincial, made that unflattering comment, he had been asked his opinion as to whether Father Creagh should be formally appointed Vicar Apostolic of the Kimberleys. Father Murray in giving his view on the same occasion spoke of him as « a good and zealous priest, virtuous and fond of hard work, a man of enterprise. None the less, I would not venture to say he was sufficiently prudent for the task »²⁴.

John Creagh gave quite spectacular proof of his enterprising spirit during his time in Limerick. So much is evident from a newspaper report of his activities as director of the Confraternity. Owing to the very large membership the man appointed director became a person of considerable influence. And Father Creagh exploited his position to great effect, as *The Munster News* explained in fulsome terms in a leading article, which may safely be quoted since the undisguised anti-semitism so clearly belongs to a past age²⁵.

« Knowing how all important to the Irish race is the acquirement of habits of thrift, industry and sobriety, Father Creagh was never wearied of inculcating these virtues: to give practical effect to his words in the matter of thrift he was instrumental in founding a Savings Bank in connection with the Confraternity, and in this safe depository almost every member has now a snug little provision against a rainy day. When one considers how averse the average Irishman is to putting by anything in the way of savings, the project seems the more admirable and the results surprising. Later on Father Creagh discovered that much of the money earned by the poor people of the city was being handed over week by week to astute Hebrew harpies, who at that time swarmed over the entire county and city. For goods sold and delivered the Jews exacted payments which were not usually on the side of moderation, but the convenient

²³ Hartigan to Murray, 2nd February 1922 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia,

²⁴ Murray to Cardinal van Rossum, Prefect of Propaganda, 16th February 1922 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

²⁵ *The Munster News*, Limerick, 8th May 1906. There is a clipping in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

method of weekly instalments which the Israelites adopted had an attraction for the poor people which large numbers found it impossible to resist. Father Creagh, seeing the loss to the people and the loss to the city, resolved to change all that; and change it he did beyond question, and that in a very short time. The opening of a Workmen's Industrial Store was the first step towards removing the blighting influence of the Jewish pedlar from the homes of the people ».

That was the sort of thing that had earned John Creagh the reputation for enterprise. The trouble was that more than once he had also shown a tendency to let authority turn his head. Those consulted about his suitability to be named Vicar Apostolic were unanimous on this point. Father Creagh had described himself as director of the Confraternity as « carrying the burden of the whole city »²⁶. He did take himself seriously, and it sometimes had unfortunate consequences, as those who knew him warned. The case all remembered was his using his influence to have a relative appointed to a responsible position in the city. The resentment of disgruntled candidates became scandal when the new official was imprisoned for embezzlement²⁷.

Father Gleeson in particular knew his man thoroughly, and he spoke to the Superior General about the need of advising Father Creagh to control his love of grandiose gestures²⁸. The Apostolic Delegate, however, himself forestalled Father Murray's intervention, stressing that the appointment was merely temporary. Writing to Father Creagh in August he said: « Your position is like that of a diocesan administrator *sede vacante*. Your office is a temporary one, and good judgment requires that you should not do anything that might embarrass your successor »²⁹. By the time Father Gleeson took his Superior General's request to the Apostolic Delegate, the latter was able to assure him that there was nothing to fear, a view in which Father Gleeson readily agreed when he heard what had been written. As he reported to Father Murray, after all Father Creagh was « a good man and obedient »³⁰. The Pro-Vicar was indeed a good

²⁶ Creagh to Father M. Raus, Superior General, 31st January 1905 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

²⁷ Father E. O'Donnell to Father J. Cotter, Consultor General, 2nd August 1919 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

²⁸ Gleeson to Murray, 20th June 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

²⁹ Cerretti to Creagh, 15th August 1916. Copy in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

³⁰ Gleeson to Murray, 28th November 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

man, as he faithfully regarded himself as an administrator throughout the seven years he was in the Kimberleys.

The Vicariate Apostolic of the Kimberleys grew out of the mission Father MacNab had struggled so heroically to establish on the shores of King Sound in 1883. The Plenary Council held in Sydney two years later gave some attention to the evangelisation of the Aborigines, showing some satisfaction in the fact that at least in the far North West something was being attempted. It voted accordingly that the Holy See be requested to establish a Vicariate in the region³¹. The Vicariate Apostolic of Kimberley was duly erected on 10th May 1887. Unfortunately, by that time the aging Father MacNab's health had failed so that he had to abandon the work that had cost him so much effort and eke out his remaining days in Melbourne. His departure left no one to exercise jurisdiction in the new Vicariate. It is obvious that in Roman minds the region remained for some time an insubstantial entity, as the *Gerarchia Cattolica* listed it each year as the Vicariate Apostolic of Kimberley, New Zealand. After the French Cistercians had come to Beagle Bay they were afraid they would be given charge of the Vicariate and so become tied to a mission that had soon taken its toll of them³².

It was not until 1906 that an administrator was named, and then it was Bishop William Kelly of Geraldton. His own enormous diocese provided occupation enough for him to leave the Pallottines in Beagle Bay very much to themselves. Four years later when the Benedictines of New Norcia founded their own mission on the Drysdale River, their Abbot, Fulgentius Torres, was appointed Administrator Apostolic of Kimberley³³. Once more he had more than enough to do with the flourishing mission near his abbey and the struggling foundation among hostile Aborigines, so that he could do little. After his death in 1914 the Vicariate remained without an administrator until the appointment of Father Creagh, who thus became the first resident ecclesiastical superior of the Vicariate Apostolic of the Kimberleys.

Writing to his Superior General, the new Pro-Vicar described his charge³⁴. It covered an area of some 120,000 square miles, to

³¹ *Acta et Decreta Concilii Plenarii Australasiae, 1885*, Sydney, 1887, p. 67-68.

³² Cf. MARY DURACK, *op. cit.*, 107.

³³ Cf. D.F. BOURKE, *op. cit.*, 187.

³⁴ Creagh to Murray, 20th May 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

care for which there were three Pallottine priests with nine Brothers and sixteen Sisters of St. John of God. The Drysdale River mission was not included, even though situated in the Kimberleys, because that was the responsibility of the Abbacy Nullius of New Norcia. The population of this large area was vaguely described as « about 5000, exclusive of Aborigines ». There was a busy pearling base in Broome and a freezing works in Wyndham in the far north with Derby and Hall's Creek to be visited whenever possible. It was a severe blow when the Defence authorities reluctantly required that the able and experienced Father Bischofs leave the North West, leaving only three priests to do what they could for the Vicariate.

In any case, the main purpose of the appointment, as was repeated so often during the hurried exchange of telegrams in April and May, was to save the mission to the Aborigines. That entailed a special relationship with the Pallottine community caring for Beagle Bay and Lombadina. It was a position that promised to be quite embarrassing and fraught with problems.

Announcing the appointment to Father Bachmair in Beagle Bay, the Apostolic Delegate concluded: « You yourself and the other members of the Kimberley community will, therefore, recognise Father Creagh as your superior and show him the respect and obedience due to all lawfully constituted authority »³⁵. When he wrote about his position to his own Superior General, Father Creagh spoke of himself as « constituted superior of the Pallottine Fathers with all the faculties of a Vicar Apostolic »³⁶. But he hastened to add: « Of course the superiority of the Fathers is only nominal ».

Everything had been done so hurriedly that there was a great deal of obscurity at first; and the relations of the Pallottines to the newcomer obviously called for some clarification. Father Gleeson in his correspondence spoke more than once of the discussion Father Creagh had about his post with Archbishop Clune, a personal friend of many years' standing. The Pro-Vicar was prepared as much as was possible in so short a time, and it is very much to his credit that from the start he adopted a friendly expression and manner in dealing with the community. He usually communicated with them through Father Bachmair signing himself « Your devoted servant and confrère ». On one occasion when it was his duty to hand on an order

³⁵ Cerretti to Bachmair, 11th May 1916 in A.D.B.

³⁶ Creagh to Murray, 20th May 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

from the military authorities, he signed his own comments « John Creagh C.S.S.R., Sup. Kim. Vic., P.S.M. »³⁷.

As a matter of fact, circumstances required that the superior devote himself to a sphere of activities quite distinct from that of his « confrères », as the archbishop explained to Father Murray. « To avoid friction Father John will reside in Broome and attend to the white population and the Asiatics along the coast as far north as Wyndham. The Pallottines will keep to their mission, and under the aegis of Father John they will be safe from arrest »³⁸. As it worked out, apart from an annual visit to Wyndham and necessary contact with Beagle Bay and Lombadina, Father Creagh found his hands quite full in Broome.

Mary Durack has described Broome as it was at the turn of the century, when the Cistercian, Father Nicholas Emo, came there as parish priest³⁹. It was the base for 400 vessels and 2500 men engaged in the pearling industry. Of the fifty or so European residents only half a dozen were women. The bulk of the population was made up of those the archbishop had lumped together as Asiatics, of whom the Japanese, about five hundred in number, were the most numerous; but there were also Filipinos, Chinese, Malays and the constantly changing numbers of Aborigines. In this mixture of races the Pro-Vicar naturally favoured those whose acquaintance he had made during his brief sojourn in the Philippines and whom the local jargon called Manilamen. When Father Emo, who knew the place so well, greeted the Sisters on their arrival in 1908, he warned them only half jokingly: « Broome is the mouth of hell ».

By 1916, thanks to the diligence and zeal of Father Emo and his Pallottine successors, there was a neat church and residence in the town, while the Sisters had a busy little hospital and a hostel as well as a school. The wild pioneering days were over, but Broome was as yet far from being tamed.

Poor Father Creagh had long dreaded the frontier conditions he was bound to meet sooner or later in Australia. When he had realised that ill health would soon cause him to leave the Philippines, he confided his fears to Father John Magnier, his fellow Irishman and Consultor General. « I do dread Australia: being out so much alone

³⁷ Creagh to Bachmair, 1st April 1918 in A.D.B.

³⁸ Clune to Murray, 21st May 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

³⁹ MARY DURACK, *op. cit.*, 112-113, 203.

would be my ruin. My necessity is my confrères »⁴⁰. His apprehensions were undiminished when he wrote on the eve of his departure for the Kimberleys: « Your Paternity will realise the awful responsibility and the difficult and arduous nature of the work in a tropical climate among people of every description and savage cannibals »⁴¹. Even though that foreboding owes more to his own sense of drama than to reality, he was accurate enough in his anticipation of loneliness in Broome, nearly two thousand miles from Perth. It was, therefore, with some trepidation fired by a lively imagination that he entered on his task late in May 1916.

FATHER CREAGH IN THE KIMBERLEYS

The Pallottines

If the administrator of the Vicariate had his qualms, as he set out from Perth, his new « confrères » had little difficulty about accepting him among them. They knew him already, since the Redemptorist house in Perth had become their regular base on their visits to the south. Father Bischofs was able to assure the Superior General that the mission was in safe keeping⁴².

« By the next steamer the Right Rev. Father Creagh, the superior of the Redemptorist Fathers in Western Australia, who has been nominated superior of the Kimberleys, will arrive in Broome. He is very nice, and I do not doubt all will like him. For some time I had a little hope one of our own Fathers would come to Perth, but for the time being the new arrangement is perfect. I wonder how His Grace Archbishop Clune could have spared such a grand man for us poor people of the North West. The archbishop was very good to me, especially when I was down south ».

Within a little more than a week he was able to report the favourable impression made by Father Creagh's first appearance among the people of Broome. He had evidently drawn on his consi-

⁴⁰ Creagh to Magnier, 21st September 1906 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

⁴¹ Creagh to Murray, 20th May 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

⁴² Bischofs to Gissler, 27th May 1916 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

derable gifts of oratory if we are to judge from the enthusiastic account sent off by Father Bischofs⁴³.

« The Right Rev. Father Creagh has taken charge of his new duties. God has been exceedingly kind to us in letting us have him. Last Sunday he preached his first sermon in Broome. It was a masterpiece of thought and delivery. I do not think he will surpass that sermon during his stay in the Nor-West, which I hope will last all his lifetime. Our Fathers and Brothers came in for a rather large amount of praise. Praise to us, poor bush missionaries, looks so funny. We always thought that there was not a soul in Australia to have a good word to say about the work we have been doing for the abandoned Blacks of the country of our adoption ».

Evidently the Pro-Vicar had chosen his words carefully and accurately gauged the temper of his audience. Father Bischofs went on to report reactions to that first appearance. « Talking about the sermon later on, I heard an Irishman say that Father Creagh would not be an Irishman if he would not be able to praise our missionaries to the stars ».

Father Bischofs retained that first favourable and sympathetic attitude, even though with the passing of time some of his companions may have come to resent the intruder into their mission. In 1918 he wrote from Armidale: « Our people might not like Father Creagh very much, but it was the only way to save the Pious Society, and for this Father Creagh deserves our best thanks »⁴⁴. Apart from that brief mention by Father Bischofs there is little or no evidence of the discontent one would have naturally expected. For his part, Father Bischofs himself might easily have been excused some hard thoughts at his being sent away from the mission, but he never failed to write of Father Creagh with respect and gratitude.

It was through Father Thomas Bachmair that the Pro-Vicar had to deal with the community. Bishop Kelly of Geraldton, who for a time had responsibility for the Kimberleys, once described Father Bachmair as « a holy and timid man who would not move a finger without an order from his superior »⁴⁵. Father Creagh's correspondence breathes a uniformly friendly and sympathetic spirit. Even though it was mainly concerned with supplies for the missions and

⁴³ Bischofs to Gissler, 7th June 1916 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

⁴⁴ Bischofs to Gissler, 23rd July 1918 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

⁴⁵ Quoted by Mary Durack, *op. cit.*, 205.

sales of their produce, that did not preclude slipping in such a thoughtful gesture as « I am sending you the latest war news »⁴⁶.

Father Creagh made it his business to visit Beagle Bay and Lombadina as soon as he could. Father Bischofs reported in August: « Our new Vicar Apostolic, Right Rev. Father Creagh, has been with us for some time now and he has visited the missions. He seemed delighted with everything. Our children at the missions took his heart by storm. May God preserve him to work here for many years to come »⁴⁷. This interest in the work of the Pallottines and appreciation of what they had achieved in extremely difficult circumstances helped to break down the barrier between Father Creagh and his new « confrères ». And he brought to their affairs that vigour and enterprise he had shown in Limerick.

It was a matter of some concern that the mission property might be confiscated as belonging to enemy aliens, so that in September 1916 the Pro-Vicar asked Mr. Charles Deakin, the archbishop's secretary, for information about the condition of the holdings of the Pallottines⁴⁸. On a visit to Perth he discussed with a Government official what should be done about some shares held by the Fathers, in view of legislation of the previous year concerning investments of enemy aliens. He was advised to have the shares transferred to his own name⁴⁹. The reply of the company concerned that the shares were held in the name of the Pious Society of the Missions and not of any suspect individual was so slow in coming as to draw a sharp rebuke from the irascible Pro-Vicar, and from that point the startled chairman of the firm preferred to do his business through the more patient Mr. Deakin⁵⁰.

Contact with the missions was not easy. Beagle Bay was only eighty miles away from Broome, but in the absence of any kind of road the only means of travel was by one of the mission luggers. The *San Salvador* was one of the many bequests of the good old Cister-

⁴⁶ Creagh to Bachmair, 5th June 1918 in A.D.B.

⁴⁷ Bischofs to Gissler, 20th August 1916 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

⁴⁸ Telegram, Creagh to Deakin, 12th September 1916 in A.C.A.P. Mr. C.F. Deakin was described by Archbishop Clune as « my capable, untiring and faithful secretary ».

⁴⁹ Acting Collector of Customs to Creagh, 15th November 1917 in A.C.A.P.

⁵⁰ Catholic Church Property Insurance Co. to Deakin, 4th December 1917 in A.C.A.P.

cian, Father Emo, which kept his memory alive for so many years⁵¹; and there was the *Namban* acquired by the Pallottines with the help of a Government grant. There was always an air of romance and adventure about the frequent voyages; but it was far from satisfactory transport. Travel was so dependent on the unpredictable winds that the short journey could take anything between two and ten days, which made so many things uncertain, mail, provisions and, most serious of all, medical attention. The enterprising Pro-Vicar determined to change all this. He purchased a motor vessel which he hopefully named the *San Gerardo*. Unfortunately, it turned out to be anything but one of the Redemptorist Wonderworker's successes, as Father Creagh had to confess when he arranged its sale for his successor in Broome. Writing to the efficient Mr. Deakin he declared: « The *Gerardo* was never anything but a worry and a misery since her very launching; and now there is trouble over the sale »⁵². In spite of his plans all through his time in the Kimberleys his visits to his Pallottine « confrères » and his dealing with them depended on the vagaries of wind and weather.

The Aborigines

Shortly after his arrival in Broome Father Creagh received a letter from the Apostolic Delegate telling of the interest of the Holy See in the evangelisation of the Australian Aborigines, especially in the North West⁵³. It is quite likely that the sudden excitement over the possible internment of the missionaries had alerted Roman authorities to the remote Kimberleys. At any rate the Pro-Vicar was asked to report on the Aboriginal population of the Vicariate together with suggestions as to « making provision for their spiritual welfare ». Archbishop Cattaneo, who was Apostolic Delegate in Australia from 1917, appreciated the frequent reports that reached his office from the Kimberleys and he continued to regard Father Creagh as one of the too few people competent to speak about the Aborigines. As late as 1929 he was anxious that Father Creagh

⁵¹ MARY DURACK, *op. cit.*, 184.

⁵² Creagh to Deakin, 20th January 1925 in A.C.A.P. In fairness to the reputation of St. Gerard it should be mentioned that there was reason to suspect that the « worry and misery » were due in no small measure to the fact that the skipper was seldom sober.

⁵³ Cerretti to Creagh, 4th July 1916 in A.D.B.

be present at an important meeting in Melbourne to discuss Aboriginal affairs⁵⁴.

Pastoral care of Broome's mixed population was bound to bring the Pro-Vicar very quickly into contact with the problems of the drifting Aborigines who periodically appeared in the town and so came under his charge. In December 1916 he had occasion to apply to the Chief Protector of Aborigines for permission to marry a Filipino lugger hand to an Aboriginal woman named Mary Johanna⁵⁵. The man Father Creagh had to deal with was Mr. A.O. Neville, who had entered on the office in 1915. He was a public servant previously employed in the Immigration Department, generally regarded as a meticulous, capable administrator and a kindly man as well, genuinely interested in his numerous charges⁵⁶. He had very definite ideas as to what was best for the Aborigines; and some of them, particularly views on miscegenation, he had explained to Father Creagh during an interview in Perth.

The romance of Mary Johanna was investigated thoroughly by the police in Broome acting under instruction from the fatherly Chief Protector; and the outcome was a letter of 9th March 1917 informing Father Creagh that « Mary Johanna, known to us as Jumballa alias Lucy », was already married « according to native custom » to a man named Dingo alias Turkey. To make things worse, it was probable that the « Manilaman » in question would be obliged to leave Australia under the Alien Restriction Act. This early contact with the Department drew from the Pro-Vicar a typically sharp rejoinder, if one can judge from the short extract in the file on the case preserved in the archdiocesan archives. He stoutly declared that he had it « on the best authority that the woman Lucy in question » was not considered married to anyone at all according to Tribal Law. Moreover, the thought that the « Manilaman » in question should be deported after eighteen years with the pearling fleets in Broome was one he simply could not entertain.

In the years that followed there were other occasions for correspondence between Father Creagh and the Chief Protector, both

⁵⁴ T. Walsh, Australian provincial to Murray, 1st May 1929 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Provincialia. Barolomeo Cattaneo, Archbishop of Palmyra, was Apostolic Delegate in Australia from 1917 to 1933.

⁵⁵ Creagh to Chief Protector of Aborigines, 28th December 1916. Copies of the correspondence on the case are to be seen in A.C.A.P., possibly provided by the Department of Aborigines.

⁵⁶ MARY DURACK, *op. cit.*, 251.

men of firmly set ideas. In the end there seems to have emerged some measure of understanding. That is what one gathers from the case of Peter alias Joseph, son of Warrabul alias Andy. Peter, aged nine, had fallen into the hands of the police after stealing from the convent in Broome, his parents, Warrabul and Mary, being at the time a couple of thousand miles away in the neighbourhood of Bunbury. Mr. Neville insisted that Peter, now Joseph, should not be punished but confided to the mission in Beagle Bay. Correspondence concerning the case continued from 1919 until towards the end of 1923 with inquiries about Peter's (Joseph's) behaviour and advice as to whether he should be allowed to rejoin Warrabul and Mary, should they return to Broome. The last word in the file was of the Chief Protector that the local official « discuss the matter with Rev. Father Creagh »⁵⁷.

It has been the experience of many that the Australian Aborigine is not easy to understand. By Father Creagh's time in the Kimberleys there was very little anthropological investigation apart from the work of Father Walter, not yet published, and some fine studies of Father Bischofs before he had been obliged to leave the North West⁵⁸. The cases of Jumballa alias Lucy alias Mary Joanna and of Warrabul alias Andy were far from being untypical of a people long isolated from the rest of the world, uneasily trying to fit into ways and beliefs of Europeans. Dealing with them made demands on time and patience and understanding. One may be sure Father Creagh soon learned to appreciate the heroic endurance and wealth of compassion shown by the great pioneering missionaries, Father Duncan MacNab and Father Nicholas Emo. His own big problems were more precise and more immediate. He had been sent to the Kimberleys to safeguard the Pallottine missions, and within a year he was involved with officialdom in a struggle to retain Lombadina.

⁵⁷ The file on the case is in Battye, Acc. 652 150/20.

⁵⁸ The first writing of Father Bischofs on the Aborigines was a study of the Njul Njul tribe of Dampierland, which appeared in the Fribourg publication, *Anthropos* in 1908. The same periodical carried further contributions of his during the following years. For the writing of Daisy Bates about the Aborigines, extensive and sympathetic if not very scientific, cf. Elizabeth Salter, *Daisy Bates*, Sydney, 1971. A sounder study is that of A.P. Elton, *The Australian Aborigines. How to Understand Them*, Sydney, 1966. Cf. also F.K. Crowley, *Australia's Western Third*, London, 1960. Concerning the excellent studies of Father Ernest Worms S.A.C. cf. Mary Durack, *op. cit.*, 280-291.

Lombadina

Lombadina, some fifty miles or so north of Beagle Bay, was at last becoming a regular mission under the Pallottines after a history that had been varied and often quite uncertain⁵⁹. A regular camping place of the Bard tribe, it had been used as a pearling base by two Englishmen, Harry Hunter and his partner, Montague Sidney Hadley, who found the place admirably suited to their lucrative sideline, blackbirding, impressing native labour for the pioneers of the North West. When Hadley, touched by remorse, left to found a mission on Sunday Island, Hunter struggled on for a while, varying his interests by grazing; but was eventually glad to sell. In 1892 the lease, of about 100,000 acres, was purchased by Bishop Gibney and entrusted to the care of the Cistercians, newly established in Beagle Bay.

The new mission had an uneasy existence up to the time when the Cistercians left the Kimberleys, leaving their charges to the Pallottines. Lombadina was a worry to the new superior, Father Walter, partly due, it is to be feared, to his intransigence in dealing with Hunter, now on the neighbouring property of Pender Bay. Eventually, in 1905 Father Walter was only too glad to be free of what had become a burden and sold the lease to the Filipino, Thomas Puertollano, who had been friendly with the French missionaries and was anxious to make provision for his growing family.

Puertollano had to struggle to survive, since on account of his Asian nationality he was not permitted to employ Aborigines. Because the Bard people continued to visit the place, Hadley of Sunday Island was made responsible for them; but when he was found guilty of immoral conduct he had to be removed. At that point an old friend came in answer to Puertollano's plea in 1910. Father Nicholas Emo had remained in the Kimberleys after the departure of the other Cistercians, giving help to the Benedictines in their troubled foundation on the Drysdale River. Between 1910 and his death early in 1915 the compassion and cheerfulness that had worked wonders in Broome built up a model little mission on the land owned by his old Filipino friend. That was the position described in 1915 in a report to Mr. Rufus Underwood, Minister for the North West⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ Information about Lombadina is to be found in Mary Durack, *op. cit.*, in various places.

⁶⁰ There is a copy of the letter without signature, dated 29th July 1915 in A.C.A.P.

« Lombadina mission was formerly carried on by a very fine old man — Father Nicholas, who had lived among the natives for years, and except for the fact that he used to like to marry coloured men to Aboriginal women (which to my mind was a most objectionable thing) he had no doubt the interest of the natives at heart. This mission is on a pastoral lease owned by a Manilaman named Puertollano, who naturally gets the benefit of the native labour who are fed by the Government, whilst a poor, struggling white man on the King's Sound side is unable to get native assistance ».

This description, quoting information locally gathered, shows the vulnerability of the Lombadina mission, now at last really getting on its feet. While respecting the fine work of Father Emo, whom no one could criticise, there was some resentment that the mission with its subsidy should be on Puertollano's property. Sympathy for the poor, struggling white man was quite misplaced, for he was no other than Harry Hunter, who had fallen foul of the law. Like his old partner he had been found guilty of immorality, and his large body of Aboriginal workers had been removed to Lombadina ⁶¹.

The immediate danger came from the earnest Chief Protector, Mr. Neville, who had formed very definite ideas as to what was best for the North West ⁶². Among other cherished projects he had particular confidence in extensive reservations for the Aborigines; and an area he considered especially suitable was the Dampierland Peninsula, which included both Beagle Bay and Lombadina. Of the two missions the latter was the more liable to be assailed first. The crisis came in September 1917.

By that time Father Creagh had already crossed swords with Government officials in Perth and with mixed success. He had the meagre allowance granted to the hospital, increased, for which gain he was congratulated by the newly appointed Apostolic Delegate ⁶³. It was very different, however, when he protested about the diminution of the grant to Beagle Bay. The Colonial Secretary, Mr. H.P. Colebatch, politely but firmly explained that the policy was now to favour Government institutions for the care of the Aborigines rather than those of the Churches ⁶⁴. This was how things stood when Ne-

⁶¹ Creagh to Colonial Secretary, 28th September 1917 with comments by A.O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines in Battye, Acc. 652 60/20, 1790/17.

⁶² After long service as Chief Protector Neville published his reflections. A.O. Neville, *Australia's Coloured Minority*, Perth, 1947.

⁶³ Cattaneo to Creagh, 11th December 1917 in A.D.B. Archbishop Cattaneo was replying to an accumulation of reports that had been awaiting his arrival.

⁶⁴ Colonial Secretary to Creagh, 20th March 1917 in A.D.B.

ville submitted a report on subsidies to the missions, with particular attention to Beagle Bay and Lombadina⁶⁵.

At the beginning of the report Neville declared that Father Creagh's appeal for parity with other institutions caring for the Aborigines, if granted, « would have cost the Government an amount in excess of all the grants put together ». That statement alone speaks volumes for the work being done on the Pallottine missions. Neville went on to make a careful analysis of the missions of the State with his recommendations in view of « the inability of the Government for financial reasons to treat every institution alike ». And among the recommendations was that « Lombadina, a branch of Beagle Bay mission, established on private property, should be closed as unsuitably situated ».

Before the report had been submitted there had been an excited exchange of telegrams, which are included in the same file. On 7th September Father Creagh sent to the Colonial Secretary a characteristic wire beginning « Strongly protest against action of Chief Protector of Aborigines » and asking that all action be suspended until he had pleaded his case personally in Perth. Mr. Colebatch, unaware of what had been happening, had to ask for further information, and eventually on the 10th he was informed by Mr. Neville, on his way back to Perth from the Kimberleys, that he also would state his case in person. He had, in fact, instructed the police inspector in Broome by word of mouth confirmed in writing on the 12th that Lombadina was to be closed at the end of that month of September. Against that very peremptory verdict the Pro-Vicar, impatient enough even without provocation, had been justified in wiring: « Protest strongly against his manner of conducting affairs ». The closure was at least postponed until the two combatants had a chance to explain themselves to the Colonial Secretary. It was in these circumstances that Neville submitted his report, still insisting that Lombadina be closed.

In November Father Bischofs wrote from Armidale on the other side of the continent telling his Superior General that Father Creagh had gone to Perth to see the Minister about Lombadina⁶⁶. By that time the enterprising Pro-Vicar had lost his battle with official red tape, but had found his own way of saving the threatened mission.

⁶⁵ The report, dated 25th September 1917 is in Battye, Acc. 60/20, 1791/17.

⁶⁶ Bischofs to Gissler, 21st November 1917 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

The meeting between Father Creagh and the Colonial Secretary took place in Perth on 26th September, after which the Pro-Vicar put his case in writing⁶⁷. The fact, he said, that the mission was situated on private property was never intended to be a permanent arrangement; but plans to regularise the position as well as improve the facilities had been delayed both by the death of Father Emo and by the war. In any case, the mission was well conducted, as « even Mr. Neville has to admit »; and if it should be closed, the Aborigines would not stay in Beagle Bay, but would go to Harry Hunter, « who it is strongly rumoured still traffics with the natives ». This last point was a strong one, because an important reason for establishing the Lombadina mission in the first place had been that the Bard people had shown themselves opposed to living outside their own country.

To these arguments, expressed with typical vehemence, the Chief Protector added his rejoinder. While admitting that the mission was above reproach in its management, he concentrated on the very persuasive financial arguments, the cost to the State and the unfairness of allowing Puertollano to take advantage of labour paid out of Government funds. He argued that Aborigines had been moved in the past from one locality to another; but that hardly met the argument that experience had already shown that the Bard people would not live in Beagle Bay. He firmly repeated his advice that the mission be closed, adding that « Lombadina is condemned by public opinion ».

The Chief Protector's reply was dated 4th October, and it carried the day. A letter written by Mr. Colebatch on the 18th informed Father Creagh that Lombadina would probably be closed, because of revised Government policies regarding the Aborigines, but reassuring him that nothing would be changed before the end of the year⁶⁸. In answer to a further protest he defended himself by saying he could not lightly reverse the recommendations of a responsible Department head; but that he would make further inquiries and make a final decision after the forthcoming election in the Kimberleys⁶⁹.

What happened after the election was that the Lombadina file was passed on to another Department for the final decision. This was announced on 5th December by Mr. Rufus H. Underwood, Minister

⁶⁷ Creagh to Colonial Secretary, 28th September 1917 in Battye, Acc. 652 60/20, 1790/17.

⁶⁸ Colonial Secretary to Creagh, 18th October 1917 in A.D.B.

⁶⁹ Colonial Secretary to Creagh, 13th November 1917 in A.D.B.

for the North West, made responsible for the Department of Aborigines⁷⁰. With all the efficiency of a new broom the Minister declared: « Regarding the Lombadina mission, I have decided to close this mission as from the 31st instant. My reason for doing so is that I do not think the situation is at all suitable for an Aboriginal mission ». He made short work of the fears that the Bard people would not move and would fall under the baneful influence of Harry Hunter. « We feel that we have sufficient power under the Act and with the assistance of police officers ». Father Creagh had foreseen this outcome of the business, and had already begun to make other provision for Lombadina.

Within a few weeks of the date set for the closing of the mission he was writing in haste to inform the archbishop's secretary that Lombadina was by no means abandoned⁷¹. « The land of Thomas Puertollano, on which the Lombadina mission is situated was recently bought by Mr. Freney and my brother, and they have made over the land to me for the Vicariate of Kimberley ». He enclosed a letter from Puertollano to the Lands Department, and he begged Mr. Deakin to finalise the transfer⁷².

The two benefactors whose intervention proved so opportune were a business man of Broome and Monkton Creagh, who had come to join his brother in the West after some profitable pastoral experience in Queensland. There is no doubt that the inspiration of their timely aid came from the enterprising Pro-Vicar. In a later reference to the deal he explained its suddenness to Mr. Deakin. « I am hoping through the possession of the land to have the Lombadina mission self-supporting before long »⁷³. In that way he would remove it from any dependence on Government subsidy. He explained himself more precisely to Father Bachmair, perhaps to allay possible suspicions about future ownership of the property⁷⁴.

« I can tell you truthfully that the great reason that made me enter into any negotiations with Thomas over the place was to secure the mission. I saw that Thomas would soon have to go, and there were other things that made it impossible for the P. Society to acquire it at

⁷⁰ Underwood to Creagh, 5th December 1917 in A.D.B.

⁷¹ Creagh to Deakin, 28th January 1918 in A.C.A.P.

⁷² The letter of Puertollano, dated 22nd January 1918 is in A.C.A.P.

⁷³ Creagh to Deakin, 27th February 1918 in A.C.A.P.

⁷⁴ Creagh to Bachmair, 1st April 1918 in A.D.B.

present. These reasons I cannot explain now: later on you will understand them yourself. The only course open to me was to get it through my brother, at present the lease is being made out in my name. It was and is my intention that the Society should have it as long as ever the Society remained in Kimberley, and I can if you wish give you a letter to that effect ».

When the business was finally settled to his satisfaction he explained to the archbishop's secretary the reasons he had hesitated to spell out for Father Bachmair. « I was afraid to buy it straight out for Beagle Bay for the Pious Society of the Missions on account of the German question, and I was afraid of buying it with mission money on account of Neville and the Aboriginal Department »⁷⁵. The business was handled with the haste demanded by the threat of Government closure, and more than once the patience of the Pro-Vicar was sorely tried. At one stage his irritation caused him to suspect even the worthy Puertollano, who had done so much over the years for Lombadina.

His exasperation exploded in a letter to Father Bachmair. « If ever the devil seemed anxious to destroy any place, he seems particularly anxious to ruin Lombadina. I have done all I possibly could to save it, but when I seem to have averted one danger another comes. Now the danger comes really from Thomas Puertollano »⁷⁶. What caused the outburst was some confusion over the number of cattle included in the sale. When the purchasers negotiated their resale they were found to be considerably short of the number alleged by Puertollano; and the prospective buyer was threatening trouble. The missing numbers were made up out of Beagle Bay stock. In his anxiety Father Creagh had fearful visions of seeing the sale cancelled and Lombadina falling into the merciless hands of the Chief Protector. It all proved to have been an honest error, for which the good « Manilaman » willingly accepted a lesser price for the total sale, even though poor Monkton finished up more out of pocket than he had expected⁷⁷.

The break with Puertollano had been no more than a very brief interruption of his friendly dealings with the missions. He had always been one of their most constant benefactors from the time of Father Emo until the sale of his property made it possible to rescue

⁷⁵ Creagh to Deakin, 1st July 1918 in A.C.A.P.

⁷⁶ Creagh to Bachmair, 1st April 1918 in A.D.B.

⁷⁷ Creagh to Deakin, 15th July 1918 in A.C.A.P.

Lombadina. Within a short time his excellent relations with Father Creagh had been restored, so that the latter was able to claim: « He will do anything I say, but he does not like dealing with anybody but myself »⁷⁸.

Thomas Puertollano with his wife, Agnes, and their large family came to Broome after the sale; and he was indebted to the Pro-Vicar in his efforts to set up his new home. Father Creagh enlisted once more Mr. Deakin's aid in securing a fishing lease for « Thomas Puertollano, a man to whom I am under the greatest obligations. He was the former owner of Lombadina and for years kept the mission going there. I can never repay what I owe him »⁷⁹. In Broome the family established a bakery and made themselves widely loved and esteemed. But their hard-earned position was not left undisturbed. Agnes and all except one of the children contracted leprosy. Thomas and his eldest son were left alone until the old man died early in 1942. Even then there was drama. While his body was being lowered into the grave Japanese planes suddenly appeared for yet another attack on Broome⁸⁰.

Monkton Creagh, who had appeared so providentially when Lombadina was in desperate straits, remained in the Kimberleys. He was attracted, as were so many others, to the exciting pearling industry, possibly with some intention of providing financial help to his brother's works. He did not remain long, as in 1919 he fell overboard from his lugger and was only discovered at daylight clinging to the anchor chain. He did not recover from the exhaustion and exposure, dying shortly after being admitted to the hospital in Broome⁸¹.

Broome

The care of the missions was only part of Father Creagh's responsibilities in the Kimberleys, the most urgent one to be sure, but not the one that made the most constant demands. He had been told that he should reside in Broome and attend to the European and Asian population along the coast as far as Wyndham. In

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ Creagh to Deakin, 31st January 1919 in A.C.A.P.

⁸⁰ Cf. MARY DURACK, *op. cit.*, 305.

⁸¹ There is a brief notice in the register of deaths in the parish of Broome.

this task he had been promised by the archbishop that he would be given as much help as possible. During his seven years in Broome his correspondence mentions two priests from the south, Fathers Collins and Murphy, who were with him for brief periods. No doubt there may well have been others he had no occasion to mention; but it is evident enough that for the most part he had to work alone. There is no record of his having visited either Derby or Hall's Creek, so that his activity was confined to Broome and Wyndham.

Broome itself provided occupation enough, especially in the early months of the year, the «lay-up», the stormy cyclone season, when the cosmopolitan population of the port was swelled by the idle lugger crews and racial antipathies became as violent as the weather. Among the mixture of nationalities those who claimed most of his attention, next to the Filipinos whom he always favoured, were the Japanese. As well as being numerous they were also well organised. They had their own medical centre, which was served by Sisters from the Catholic hospital. The patients were so touched by the kindness and Christian charity of their nurses that in time they began to come to the convent for lessons in English and religious instruction⁸². Before long there were Japanese names in the baptismal register, the first dozen of these successes of the Sisters becoming known as the twelve Apostles from the names under which they had been baptised. This work among the Japanese was one that appealed to the Pro Vicar. During his seven years in Broome he frequently had occasion to baptise Japanese luggermen. One that must have pleased him immensely was when on 2nd February 1919 he baptised a group of fourteen⁸³. He made no secret of his pride in the ceremony, as can still be seen by the names he gave the neophytes: Alphonsus, Clement, Gerard and naturally Patrick.

One of the most typical problems of Broome was the constantly shifting population of Aborigines. These nomads had always been welcomed by the warm hearted old pioneer, Father Emo; but it was not easy to make permanent provision for them. There was some useful progress in this direction during Father Creagh's time. While he was exchanging letters with the Colonial Secretary over the troubles of Lombadina there was one which both must have found agreeable. In November 1917 Mr. Colebatch was able to give a

⁸² Cf. MARY DURACK, *op. cit.*, 208-209.

⁸³ The Broome parish register contains the names of more than thirty Japanese baptised by Father Creagh.

favourable reply to a number of requests the Pro-Vicar had made on the occasion of his interview in Perth⁸⁴. A small native reserve near the port was declared a Catholic mission under the administration of Father Creagh, who was also nominated a Protector of Aborigines.

On the same occasion the Colonial Secretary made a very welcome grant of 125 pounds a year to the Catholic school on account of the more than thirty Aboriginal children being taught there, because otherwise the State would have had to provide for them. Mr. Colebatch courteously regretted that his budget did not permit him to give more. In addition to the grant won for the hospital this gain for the school was of considerable advantage to the Sisters, who had begun in Broome in extreme poverty⁸⁵.

For the most part, however, the pastoral work in Broome was of a more routine character. It was exacting, especially in the climate of the North West, as the suffering Pro-Vicar lamented to Mr. Deakin one torrid February. « Both my arms are as if the skin had been torn off — just an extra dose of prickly heat »⁸⁶. There he remained with plenty to keep him busy except when he had to attend to the affairs of Beagle Bay and Lombadina and during the time when the meatworks in Wyndham were in operation. Wyndham was a new growth and had claimed his attention even before he had come to the Kimberleys.

In the few weeks after his appointment he had many a discussion with the archbishop, and one of the topics was what to do for Wyndham, where two hundred Catholics were employed at the works. Archbishop Clune was emphatic that they needed a church. This information alarmed Father Gleeson, who well knew Father Creagh's love of grandiose undertakings, and he urgently counselled prudence⁸⁷. The Pro-Vicar's first experience of the place occasioned a report that made the newly arrived Apostolic Delegate even suggest a school⁸⁸. Wyndham, however, depended on casual labour, and it was not easy to arrange for the needs of the Catholic employees. On his first visit in 1917 Father Creagh had tried to secure from the works manager a site for church purposes. His request was referred to the Department of Agriculture, which informed him that the land

⁸⁴ Colonial Secretary to Creagh, 17th November 1917 in A.D.B.

⁸⁵ Cattaneo to Creagh, 11th December 1917 in A.D.B.

⁸⁶ Creagh to Deakin, 27th February 1918 in A.C.A.P.

⁸⁷ Gleeson to Murray, 20th June 1916 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

⁸⁸ Cattaneo to Creagh, 11th December 1917 in A.D.B.

he wanted was situated on the cattle track⁸⁹. A further application for an abandoned explosives dump remained unanswered, he suspected, because of the manager's hostility⁹⁰.

Frustrations of that kind were not infrequent in the Kimberleys, still very much frontier territory. As the war dragged to its end, the Pro-Vicar began to look ahead to his release. Early in 1918 he warned his provincial in Ireland that important decisions would soon have to be made⁹¹. For himself, he declared, he was « most hopeful of being freed ». What needed to be faced, though, was that in the near future it would probably be suggested that the Redemptorists assume charge of the Vicariate. « The Sacred Heart Fathers and the Marists refused this place. The German Fathers must leave soon ». It proved, however, far from easy to make provision for the Kimberleys, and after Father Bachmair died later in the same year Father Creagh had to remain a further five years with Father Droste and the Brothers.

A SALESIAN VICAR APOSTOLIC

Father Creagh's sanguine expectation that the end of the war would mean a final decision about the Kimberleys was not to be fulfilled. The months passed without any word to justify his being « most hopeful of being freed ». It was not until March of 1919 that the Apostolic Delegate spoke of the subject, and then it was cold comfort he had to offer. He hoped that when the world had become more settled it would be possible to do something about the Vicariate⁹².

By the time he wrote that others were busying themselves about the affairs of the Kimberleys, as Father Cornelius Treacy, rector in Perth, informed his Superior General. He was writing, he said, « about the no secret express wish of the archbishop to have the Vicariate of the Kimberleys entrusted to the C.S.S.R. »⁹³. He painted the prospect in gloomy colours, quoting Father Creagh to the effect

⁸⁹ Under Secretary for Agriculture to Creagh, 25th October 1917 in A.C.A.P.

⁹⁰ Creagh to Deakin, 3rd January 1918 in A.C.A.P.

⁹¹ Creagh to Hartigan, 31st January 1918 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

⁹² Cattaneo to Creagh, 2nd March 1919 in A.D.B.

⁹³ C. Treacy to Murray, 4th April 1919 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

that Broome, « a hell on earth », could barely provide support for one man. Father Gleeson also made his own objections on better information. He had been told by the Apostolic Delegate that Archbishop Clune had made « strong recommendations » that Father Creagh be left in Broome with the Vicariate a Redemptorist responsibility⁹⁴. He left it to the Superior General to oppose the suggestion, should it reach Rome, as the Australian viceprovince was in no position to undertake the burden. It appears that the Apostolic Delegate did not give much support to the archbishop's proposal. Further communications deal with routine matters, as the Pro-Vicar and Father Droste continued to do their best for a few years more for the missions and the Vicariate.

It was not until towards the middle of 1921 that the world was considered settled enough for the Holy See to think of the Kimberleys. In May the Apostolic Delegate formally requested Archbishop Clune as Metropolitan to initiate the procedure prescribed in Australia for the nomination of candidates⁹⁵. At the same time he asked Father Creagh to see that his own recommendations and those of Father Droste were sent to Perth⁹⁶.

The outcome of the process appeared next January, when the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda asked the Redemptorist Superior General for information concerning Father John Creagh, who had been proposed along with other candidates as Vicar Apostolic of the Kimberleys⁹⁷. It did not take long to discover that the Irish provincial had not changed the unfavourable opinion he had expressed a few years earlier when he had learned of Archbishop Clune's intentions. Father Murray, accordingly, wrote to the Sacred Congregation, warmly commending Father Creagh's ability and excellent religious spirit, but not venturing to recommend his appointment⁹⁸.

It was necessary to make other provisions. Propaganda determined to entrust the Kimberleys to yet another religious institute, the Salesians. Father Ernesto Coppo, an Italian stationed in New

⁹⁴ Gleeson to Murray, 22nd April 1919 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Provincialia.

⁹⁵ Cattaneo to Clune, 7th May 1921 in A.C.A.P. The procedure prescribed by the Plenary Council held in Sydney in 1885 was to form a *terna* of three candidates designated *Dignissimus*, *Dignior* and *Dignus*.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Propaganda to Murray, 24th January 1922 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

⁹⁸ Murray to Propaganda, 16th February 1922. Copy in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

York, was summoned to Rome, where he was appointed Vicar Apostolic and received episcopal consecration 28th November 1922. He was to follow seven of his confrères, including five priests, to his distant charge⁹⁹. The first Salesians went directly to Lombadina, it being understood that the bishop would administer the Vicariate from Broome. Father Droste with the Pallottine Brothers remained, puzzled and uncomfortable, in Beagle Bay, while in Broome Father Creagh waited as patiently as he could to be replaced.

He needed patience, as he had a long wait. In April 1923 he cabled his provincial that he expected soon to return to Perth¹⁰⁰. He was still in Broome when the Superior General arrived in Australia for a canonical visitation, and he had to write in June expressing his regret at not being able to absent himself from his charge¹⁰¹. His entries in the baptismal register show that he had not been relieved as late as September.

The small Pallottine remnant continued in Beagle Bay, while the newcomers, led by their bishop, struggled with the huge empty spaces and the sparse and varied population of the Vicariate. They soon discovered, as had their predecessors from the time of the Cistercians, that it was a hard country, demanding the heroism of such great missionaries as Father MacNab or Father Emo. Before long the time came for them to relinquish the missions. Father Otto Raible, a Bavarian Pallottine, was named Apostolic Administrator of the Kimberleys on 18th January 1928. Bishop Coppo left Broome after a farewell sermon which spoke eloquently of the troubles he, like others, had experienced. He handed on to his successor the care of the port and its pearling fleets, which deserved, he declared, the wrath of God Himself.

At last the Limburg province of the Pallottines was able to spare men and resources for the Kimberleys. Under Father Raible, bishop and Vicar Apostolic from 1935, a scholarly, kindly and thoroughly zealous superior, the missions began once more to grow¹⁰². The long-awaited increase of Australian vocations made the work more independent of Europe and enabled pastoral care of the Vicari-

⁹⁹ MARY DURACK, *op. cit.* treats the Salesian period in the Kimberleys on pp. 256-263. The date of Bishop Coppo's episcopal consecration is as given in *Annuario Pontificio*.

¹⁰⁰ Hartigan to Murray, 28th April 1923 in A.G.R., Prov. Hib., Provincialia.

¹⁰¹ Creagh to Murray, June 1923 in A.G.R. Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

¹⁰² There is an account of Bishop Raible's work in the Kimberleys in Mary Durack, *op. cit.*, 266-324.

ate keep better pace with the development of the material resources of the region. In 1966 the diocese of Broome was created with John Jobst S.A.C. as first bishop. That achievement is a fitting reward for the long years of privation and discouragement the German Pallottines have devoted to one of the most difficult of mission fields. When in 1962 the Australian vice-provincial in an audience with Pope John XXIII spoke of the many problems of the Kimberleys, the Holy Father replied: « My dear Father, if you and your brothers don't look after these poor children of ours in the wilds of Western Australia, who then will? »¹⁰³.

It is quite beyond question that what has been gained for the cause of the Catholic Church in the Kimberleys is due first and foremost to the Pallottines. And it is in those terms that it is possible to do justice to Father John Creagh's contribution. It may fairly be claimed that he saved the missions in a time of danger. That was the purpose of his appointment, and that is what was so generously credited to him by Father Bischofs. Anticipating the approaching end of the war, he wrote to his Superior General: « Our people might not like Father Creagh, but it was the only way to save the Pious Society, and for this Father Creagh deserves our best thanks »¹⁰⁴.

Yes, it was a far from comfortable position for the Pro-Vicar, and it was no matter for wonder if the Pallottines, restricted for so long a time in their movements, should chafe at their being dependent on a stranger. There is little, however, if any evidence of such very natural hostility on the part of the Fathers and Brothers confined in Beagle Bay and Lombadina. For his own part, Father Creagh showed himself at all times kind and helpful to his « confrères ». Even when in 1918 he had to communicate an order for strict isolation imposed by the authorities, he softened the apparent harshness by a friendly personal word to Father Bachmair¹⁰⁵. And a little later he declared: « Believe me, dear Father Thomas, it is only a pleasure for me to do anything for the mission »¹⁰⁶. Those were very difficult days in 1918 with hard feelings, not a little vindictive, in Broome as the war drew to an end, and poor Father Bachmair ending his life in Lombadina.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, 372.

¹⁰⁴ Bischofs to Gissler, 23rd July 1918 in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

¹⁰⁵ Creagh to Bachmair, 1st April 1918 in A.D.B.

¹⁰⁶ Creagh to Bachmair, 11th April 1918 in A.D.B.

Father Creagh's efforts when Lombadina was threatened revealed that same spirit of enterprise that had produced the savings bank and cooperative store in Limerick. Even if he did not always succeed in keeping his patience in dealing with officialdom, his ingenious solution of the problem was such as to command admiration, however reluctant. Later correspondence over the affairs of individual Aborigines shows that even the Chief Protector, his determined opponent in the Lombadina case, learned in the end to write of him with respect.

His care of the Vicariate is hard to assess. It was the sort of routine work that does not normally find its way into official correspondence. One does know, however, the sort of burden even routine pastoral care imposes in a land like the Kimberleys, the long journeys by lugger at the mercy of capricious winds, the harsh climate, the lack of help in caring for centres as widely spaced as Wyndham and Broome. And Broome itself was no small task for a single priest. The polyglot population, the mercenary pearlers, the endless anxiety when the lugger crews were idle in port during the cyclone season called for endurance beyond the ordinary. Perhaps there is no more vivid testimonial to Father Creagh's work in the Vicariate than Bishop Coppo's passionate declaration that Broome deserved nothing so much as the wrath of God. Father Creagh toiled alone in Broome for seven years.

It was only towards the end of 1923 that he was able to leave the Kimberleys. After a period in Perth he left for a well-earned visit to Ireland, which he had left for the Philippines some twenty years earlier. Father Thomas Walsh, who had succeeded Father Gleeson as vice-provincial, let it be known that he would be greatly disappointed if Father Creagh did not come back to Australia, « because with all his eccentricity I consider him a sound Redemptorist and scarcely second to any as a missionary »¹⁰⁷. Father Creagh ended his extraordinarily full and varied career in Wellington, New Zealand in 1947.

¹⁰⁷ Walsh to Murray, 4th September 1925 in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Provincialia.

DOCUMENTS

1. - Secretariate of State to Gissler, 14th April 1916¹⁰⁸, in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis, 3, 1915.

Reverendissimo Padre,

Per ordine dell'Emo Sgr. Cardinale Segretario di Stato di Sua Santità porto subito a cognizione della Paternità Vostra Reverendissima quanto segue:

Il Delegato Apostolico in Australia, Mgr. Cerretti, ha telegraficamente significato che il Governo, temendo che i RR.PP. Pallottini tedeschi nel Kimberley possono vettovagliare navi tedesche che tentassero fuggire, minaccia internarli. Come garanzia domanda sollecito invio di un superiore di nazionalità inglese. A tale ufficio sarebbe molto ben veduto il Reverendo P. White, rettore della chiesa di S. Silvestro in Roma, il quale fu già nella missione.

In vista di ciò il prelodato Eminentissimo mi comanda di far premure, a nome della Santa Sede, presso la Paternità Vostra, affinché voglia inviare quanto prima a Kimberley, come superiore, il detto P. White o altro Padre di nazionalità inglese.

Con sensi di ben distinta stima mi rafferma

della Paternità Vostra Rma
dmo servo
Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani

Rmo Padre Carlo Gissler,
Rettore Generale della
Pia Società delle Missioni

2. - Archbishop Clune to Creagh, 9th May 1916, in A.D.B.

Bishop's Palace, Perth,
9th May 1916

To the Very Rev. John Creagh C.S.S.R.
Dear Rev. Father,

In virtue of the powers conferred on me by the Holy See through His Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Cerretti, I hereby appoint you superior of the whole Kimberley Mission until such time as the Holy See releases you from your charge.

Wishing you every blessing, I remain

Yours very sincerely in Christ,
† Patrick F. Clune.

¹⁰⁸ The letter is dated Berna 14 aprile 1916 in a hand different from that of the writer of the letter itself.

3. - Archbishop Cerretti to Creagh, 11th May 1916, in A.D.B. Copy in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

Apostolic Delegation,
Australasia.
No. 926

May 11th 1916

Very Rev. and Dear Father Creagh,

I have heard with pleasure that Archbishop Clune by virtue of the authority delegated to him has appointed you Superior, for the time being, of the Pallottine community at Kimberley. His Grace, who thoroughly understands the state of the Mission, will be able to give you valuable advice as to the best way of dealing with the situation. With reference to faculties, I hereby give you all the faculties which the former Vicar Apostolic exercised, except of course those which require episcopal consecration. If you communicate with the Abbot of New Norcia, he will tell you the exact extent of his faculties.

If the Mission itself is not able to make suitable provision for your support, let me know and I shall attend to the matter. I need not impress on you the importance of using the greatest prudence and tact in your relations with the Pallottine Fathers.

Blessing you and the work entrusted to you,

I remain, Very Rev. and dear Father,
Yours sincerely in Christ,
† B. Cerretti,
Archbishop of Corinth, Apostolic Delegate.

Apostolic Delegation,
40 Edward St., Nth. Sydney,
11th May 1916

Very Rev. Father Creagh,
Perth.

4. - Archbishop Cerretti to Bachmair, 11th May 1916, in A.D.B. Copy in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

Very Rev. and Dear Father,

I write to inform you that your Superior General, with the approval of His Eminence, the Cardinal Secretary of State, has authorised the Archbishop of Perth to appoint a Superior to take charge of the Kimberley Mission provisionally. His Grace Archbishop Clune by virtue of such authority has nominated the Very Rev. John Creagh C.S.S.R. of Perth. You yourself and the other members of the Kimberley community

will therefore recognise Father Creagh as your Superior, and show him the respect and obedience due to lawfully constituted authority.

Blessing you, I remain, Very Rev. and dear Father,

† B. Cerretti,
Archbishop of Corinth, Apostolic Delegate

V. Rev. T. Bachmair P.S.M.

5. - Clune to Murray, 21st May 1916, in A.G.R., Prov. Aust., Personalia, Creagh.

Perth,
May 21st 1916

My Dear Fr. General,

You will have learned before this reaches you of the sudden appointment of Father Creagh as Superior of the Vicariate of Kimberley, which is the immense Nor-West portion of this State. As I was the one commissioned by the Holy See to make the appointment I think a full explanation of the circumstances is due to your reverence.

There is a Pallottine community in charge of an Aborigines Mission at Beagle Bay, eighty miles from Broome. They have done very good work there, but they are all Germans. Only two of them are naturalised. Ever since the start of the war they have been under suspicion and I believe a compromising letter written by one of the Fathers was seized by the Government¹⁰⁹. Then public feeling began to be aroused against them and for some months I have had considerable trouble to protect them and keep them from internment. Early in March some adverse reports reached the Defence Dpt. regarding them — that they were boasting of German victories etc. etc. — and the local Captain wrote me a very strong letter, insisting that unless the Church did something soon they would be interned, which letter I forwarded to the Delegate Apostolic. Then I went to Melbourne, interviewed the Acting Premier¹¹⁰ and learned from him that the Govt. would be satisfied if a Superior of British nationality were appointed in whose hands imperial interest would be safe. With that assurance I went to the Delegate and then he sent an urgent code cable to Cardinal Gasparri explaining the situation and urging the despatch of a Superior of British nationality of their own Order. I heard nothing more for nearly a month, till ten days ago when I got a wire from the Delegate stating that the Holy See had authorised me to appoint a Superior of Kimberley, either a Redemptorist Father or

¹⁰⁹ This is obviously the questionnaire filled in by Father Bischofs and dealing with emigration.

¹¹⁰ Senator Pearce, Minister of Defence, was Acting Prime Minister.

a Secular Priest. I had no Priest whom I could entrust with such delicate and responsible duties and I felt that delay would mean the internment of the community and the ruin of the Mission. Though I got full powers to make the appointment, I wired Fr. Gleeson explaining the situation and begging him to suggest a Father. After three days he wired suggesting Fr. McDermott. But Christy would not do at all. So I wired again suggesting the names of four Fathers whom I thought suitable. Then he wired suggesting Fr. Creagh but under protest and with a groan because of the terrible inconvenience. So I promptly appointed Fr. John, and he has now received the faculties etc. of a Vicar Apostolic of Kimberley and he is made Superior of the Pallottine community as well. To avoid friction with them he will reside at Broome and attend to the white population and the Asiatics along the coast as far north as Windham. The Pallottines will keep to their missions, and under the aegis of Father John they will be safe from arrest.

The whole thing is anomalous and exceptional. Ordinarily the appointment ought to have been made through Propaganda. Why their General did not send out an English or an Irish Father of their own Order, why I was chosen, I can't tell. The Holy Father, doubtless, on account of the urgency of the case set aside all canonical processes and acted as I have described.

I don't think Fr. Gleeson quite grasps the situation yet. He writes, defining and restricting Fr. Creagh's powers etc. But to my mind he has no authority to do so. The rescript from the Delegate gives Fr. John all the faculties that the previous Vicar Apostolic had. The whole thing is a bit of a tangle. Fr. John leaves tomorrow for the new sphere of work. This much is certain, viz. that on the face of God's earth I don't think you would find *more abandoned souls* than in that same Nor-West. I am satisfied Fr. John's work and residence there will be a great grace to the poor people who never had an English speaking Priest before, and that he will fulfil his duties with credit and glory.

Of course the appointment is only *while the war lasts*. I have written at length to explain my share in the transaction. I simply carried out the orders I got. [...]

Yours fraternally in Christ
† P.F. Clune C.S.S.R

6. - Clune to Gissler, 13th June 1916, in A.G.P., Regio Australiana, Regimen Missionis 3, 1915.

Very Rev. C. Gissler P.S.M.,
Rector General.

The Palace, Victoria Square,
Perth, W.A.,
June 13th 1916

Very Rev. Fr. General,

Before I received your letter of the 15th April I had already appointed the Superior of the Redemptorists here in Perth, Father John Creagh, to be Superior of the Kimberley Mission in accordance with the

powers vested in me by the Holy See through the Delegate Apostolic in Sydney. Father Creagh has already arrived in Broome, and from a telegram received I learn that he has been received very kindly and cordially by your Fathers. He will make Broome his headquarters and attend to the whites and Asiatics along the coast as far as Wyndham, thus allowing your Fathers and Brothers to attend to the work of the Missions. As his appointment has been favourably received by the Government, I have every confidence that the community will not be molested or disturbed.

I trust, of course, that they will be prudent in speech and action and not give any cause for further complaints. If I have been instrumental in saving the community from internment and the Mission from ruin, it will be more than ample compensation for whatever worry or trouble the situation has caused me. I must say the Government has been very considerate and kind in the whole matter. I sympathise deeply with Your reverence and so many other Superiors of Religious Orders whose children are so ruthlessly divided and torn from them by this terrible war.

Thanking you, Very Rev. Father, for your kind letter and begging a memento in your Holy Masses and prayers, I remain

Yours very sincerely in Christ
† Patrick F. Clune,
Archbishop of Perth.