

Ab Austro

Newsletter of
Notre Dame Priory

December 2020 No. 41



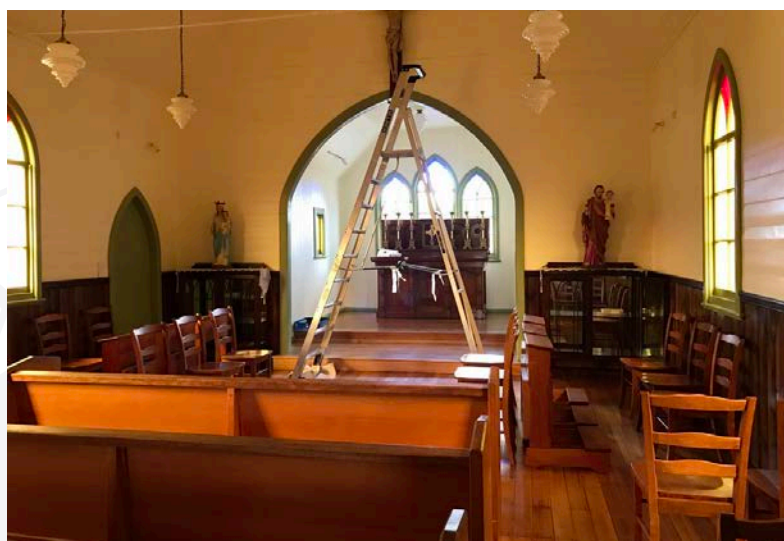
Special Edition: Thanksgiving for
Immaculate Conception Church

Priory update

Dear Friend,

Along with our best wishes for a truly Holy Christmas, we offer this edition of *Ab Austro* as a token of gratitude to Almighty God who has done great things through His humble handmaid, Mary Immaculate, and our many generous benefactors. It would take us a lot more than four pages were we to enumerate the many blessings of this year, and so we have decided to concentrate on what is the crown of them all, namely the completion of Immaculate Conception Church. A number of photos, showing the various stages of the works, will give you a look both inside and out, in the hopes that, until you are able to come and see for yourself, you will get a feel for this little gem that Divine Providence has so mercifully bestowed upon us.

As planned, on 7th December, in the afternoon, the official opening of the church took place. It was a simple blessing of a private oratory, given that His Grace the Archbishop will come on 25th March to give the solemn pontifical blessing. After the prayer and sprinkling with Holy Water, I then proceeded to transport Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament from the house chapel to the new church.



At 5 PM, the monks, accompanied on the occasion by a few local friends and guests, made their solemn entrance to the sound of the organ (digital, but excellent!), and then proceeded with Solemn First Vespers of the Immaculate Conception. It was almost surreal for us to chant the office, at last, in a church, and no longer in a simple room!



QUODCUMQUE DIXERIT VOBIS FACITE





The next day, I had the joy of celebrating the first Missa Cantata. In the homily, I mentioned the history of this little church, which has moved twice during its existence, being first built in the northeastern part of Tasmania in a mining town called Pioneer, then being relocated in 1947 to St Leonard's near Launceston. I drew attention to the symbolism of a church twice dismantled and twice reborn: even though we are

unlike Mary Immaculate in that we have all been damaged by sin, we can become like her in being restored by Divine Grace. The limpid beauty of the freshly repainted church certainly gave the impression of something new, incipient fresh life that is about to burst into full bloom.

A number of friends came for the occasion, and others watched the livestream. Since then, the monks have continued celebrating the Divine Office in the church throughout each day, with much gratitude for the path that we have travelled since the beginning.

Another significant event was the placing of a statue of Virgin and Child, donated by the Presentation Sisters from their former retreat centre in Blackmans Bay. She greets new arrivals at the church and seems to say: here He is, go inside and you will find Him!

In one of my recent chapter talks, I pointed out that this is no less than our fifth chapel since the foundation! Our first one was a nice room at the presbytery in Lindisfarne where we spent 10 months. The second was a room in the shed at Rhyndaston which only lasted two months. The third was the shipping

You are invited to attend the solemn blessing of Immaculate Conception Church, at Jerusalem Estate, Notre Dame Priory, Colebrook, Tasmania, on Thursday 25 March 2021 at 11 AM. To be followed by refreshments for all. RSVP before 1 March.



container chapel on the same property which lasted 18 months. The fourth, the house chapel here at Hardwick House, which lasted 16 months. So it's not hard to understand how grateful we are for this new step which is truly a breath of new life for us all and we hope for many guests and retreatants. God bless you and yours this Christmas and always, and thank you for your generous support!

Fr Pius Mary Noonan, Prior

Our next edition of *Ab Austro* will be for February 2021, so expect it in early March. Between now and then, we will have our first men's retreat here in Colebrook, we will celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Cana, and will conduct the two traditional retreats at Hartzler Park.



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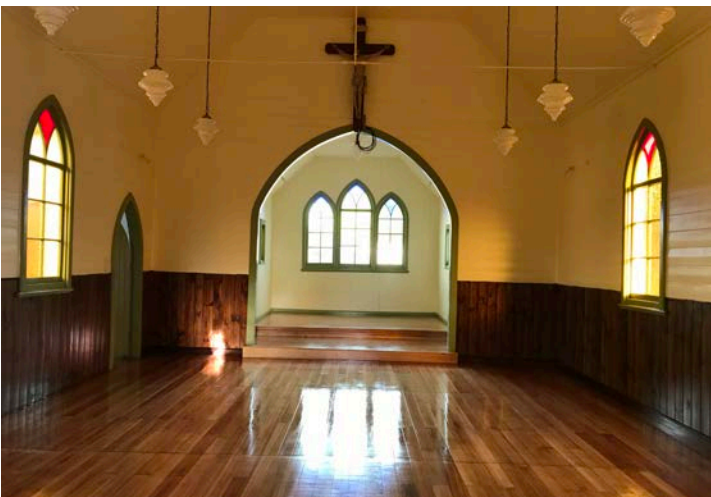
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