

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: AWE4250

Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and Solomon Islands

(1867 -)

Born 1 January, 1867, Maitland New South Wales Australia

Summary

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland was established in 1886 with the Right Rev Dr James Murray serving as Bishop. Presiding over the spiritual well-being of Catholics residing in a geographic area that spread north all the way to the Queensland border and west as far as far as could be reached, Bishop Murray knew the task was enormous, much too big for the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, who arrived in the area two years earlier, to deal with on their own.

Recognising the tradition of the Dominicans as educators, and acknowledging Catholic education in the diocese as a priority, he called upon their Irish leaders to support a long term plan. Dominican Sisters provided a unique possibility. Not only could they continue the work of the schools for the less fortunate, as did the Josephites and Good Samaritan Sisters, but they could also educate young women who would have the financial backing and social standing to become the first of generations of Catholic teachers for the people of the Maitland Diocese.

Details

Upon the arrival of the Dominicans, the Good Samaritans left and returned to Sydney. For the next eight years, the Dominicans remained the only Congregation of women in the Maitland diocese. Within fifty years their ranks grew to include a further twenty-six Irish women and 138 Australian Sisters. They had founded communities and schools in Maitland, Newcastle, Tamworth, Sydney, Moss Vale and Mayfield and set up a school for children with impaired hearing at Waratah.

In contemporary times the range of activities of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and Solomon Islands has expanded beyond New South Wales to include ministering in the A.C.T., Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and the Solomon Islands. Australian and Solomon Islands Sisters are involved in education at all levels, administration and research; country and city parish ministry; hospital and university chaplaincy; in nursing and family planning; retreat centres and spiritual direction; pastoral care, counselling and welfare; working among aboriginal and migrant communities; with the materially poor, with those who have a physical or intellectual handicap, drug and alcohol dependency and Aids; with the homeless; with those in prison and their children and with asylum seekers.

Published resources

Resource

Website of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and Solomon Islands, Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and Solomon Islands, 2009,
<http://www.opeak.org.au/index.html>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book

Dominican pioneers in New South Wales, O'Hanlon, Mary Assumpta, 1949

Ancient tradition - new world : Dominican sisters in eastern Australia 1867-1958, MacGinley, Mary Rosa, 2009

Archival resources

Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands Archives

Archives of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands

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Created 12 August 2009

Last modified 12 August 2009