USE OF THESES

This copy is supplied for purposes of private study and research only. Passages from the thesis may not be copied or closely paraphrased without the written consent of the author.

Christopher Paul Dowd, M.A.

July, 1994

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University, Canberra
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ix</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>xi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of illustrations</td>
<td>xv</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>Ultramontanism and Conflict in Colonial Australian Catholicism.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>The Sacred Congregation <em>de Propaganda Fide</em> and Australia in the Mid-Nineteenth Century</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>The Roman Rise and Fall of John Bede Polding, 1842-1855</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>The Campaign of the <em>Freeman's Journal</em>, 1856-1860</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V</td>
<td>The Fall of Abbot Henry Gregory Gregory, 1859-1866</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VI</td>
<td>The Division of the Archdiocese of Sydney, 1858-1865</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VII</td>
<td>Polding's <em>ad limina</em> Visit, 1865-1867</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VIII</td>
<td>The Sheehy Affair, 1866-1868</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IX</td>
<td>The Despondency of Polding, 1867-1870</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter X</td>
<td>The Quest for a Coadjutor and the Final Triumph of Polding, 1842-1874</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>The End of an Era, 1874</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This thesis is entirely my own original work.

Christopher Paul Dowd

Christopher Paul Dowd
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The making of this thesis has been possible only with the assistance and co-operation of a large number of people and institutions.

I should like to express my gratitude to the following prelates and ecclesiastical and religious superiors of the Catholic Church for granting me access to the archives under their jurisdictions: His Eminence Cardinal Josef Tomko, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Rome; His Eminence Cardinal Edward Clancy, Archbishop of Sydney; His Eminence Cardinal Basil Hume, OSB, Archbishop of Westminster; His Grace the Archbishop of Adelaide, Most Rev. Leonard Faulkner; His Grace the Archbishop of Birmingham, Most Rev. Maurice Couve de Murville; His Grace the former Archbishop of Brisbane, Most Rev. Francis Rush; His Grace the Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Most Rev. Francis Carroll; His Grace the Archbishop of Cardiff, Most Rev. John Ward, OFM Cap; His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev. Desmond Connell; His Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne, Most Rev. Francis Little; His Grace the Archbishop of Perth, Most Rev. Barry Hickey; His Lordship the former Bishop of Armidale, Most Rev. Henry Kennedy; His Lordship the Bishop of Bathurst, Most Rev. Patrick Dougherty; His Lordship the Bishop of Maitland, Most Rev. Leo Clarke; the Abbot President of the Subiaco Benedictine Congregation, Rome, Dom Gilbert Jones, OSB; the Abbot of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, Rome, Dom Luca Collino, OSB; the Abbot of Downside, Dom Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, OSB; the Prior Administrator of Holy Trinity Abbey, New Norcia, Very Rev. Fr. Placid Spearritt, OSB; the Rector of the Venerable English College, Rome, Mgr. John Kennedy; the Rector of the Irish College, Rome, Mgr. Sean Brady; and the Prioress of St. Dominic's Priory, Stone, Sr. M. Rupert Fitzpatrick, OP.

I am also grateful to the following archivists and archival assistants: Mgr. Sarkis Tabar, Archivist of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Rome, and his assistants, Sig. Giovanni Fosci and Sr. Mary Joachim Fernandez,
CRR; Rev. Fr. Josef Metzler, OMI, Prefect of the Secret Vatican Archive, Rome; Dom Mayeul de Breulle, OSB, Archivist General of the Subiaco Benedictine Congregation, Rome; Dom Stefano Baiocchi, OSB, Archivist of the Abbey of San Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome; Rev. Fr. Ferdinando Rojo, OSA, Archivist General of the Augustinian Order, Rome; Rev. Fr. Enrique Bernel, CP, Archivist General of the Passionist Congregation, Rome; Rev. Fr. Theo Kok, SM, Archivist General of the Marist Fathers, Rome; Br. Peter Fogarty, CFC, Archivist General of the Christian Brothers, Rome; Mgr. John Hanly, Archivist of the Irish College, Rome; Mr. Wyn Thomas, Archivist of the Venerable English College, Rome; Rev. Fr. Ian Dickie, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Westminster; the staff of the Public Record Office, London; Rev. Fr. Joseph Boardman, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Cardiff; Rev. Fr. Petroc Howell and Rev. Fr. Peter Dennison of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Birmingham; Dom Phillip Jebb, OSB, Archivist of Downside Abbey; Sr. M. Crispin Mitchell, OP, Archivist of St. Dominic's Priory, Stone, and her assistant, Sr. M. Hugh Shayler, OP; Mr. David Sheehy, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Dublin; Rev. Fr. Christopher O'Dwyer, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Cashel; Rev. Fr. Kevin Rafferty, CM, Archivist of All Hallows' College, Dublin; Sr. Francis Brigid Flannery, RSC, Archivist General of the Irish Sisters of Charity, Dublin; Mr. John Cummins, the Archivist of the Archdiocese of Sydney, his successor, Br. Alex Hall, CFC, and Ms. Chantal Celjan, the Historical Records Archivist; Sr. Marie Gerard McGlynn, SGS, and Sr. Ursula Trower, SGS, of the General Archives of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, Glebe; Sr. Genevieve Campbell, Archivist General of the Australian Sisters of Charity, Potts Point; Rev. Fr. Denis Martin, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, and Mrs. Doss Gilmour, the Archives Secretary; Sr. M. Raphael Coady, RSM, Acting Archivist of the Archdiocese of Perth, and her assistant, Sr. M. Theresa Quinlivan, RSM; Mrs. Wendy Pearce, Archivist of the Holy Trinity Abbey, New Norcia; Mrs. Tess Schmulde, Secretary to the
Bishop of Armidale; Mrs. Rosemary Dusselaar, Archivist of the Diocese of Bathurst; Mr. Michael Sternbeck, Archivist of the Diocese of Maitland; Fr. John Kearney, Chairman of the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, his successor, Rev. Fr. Ian Waters, and the museum attendant, Mr. Les McCarthy; Sr. Marie Therese Foale, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Adelaide; and Fr. Brian Maher, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Further co-operation was received from the following librarians and libraries: Rev. Fr. Willi Henkel, OMI, Librarian of the Pontifical Urban University de Propaganda Fide, Rome; Rev. Fr. Ignatius Fennesy, OFM, Librarian of the Franciscan Studies Centre, Dublin; Mr. Hans Arns, Librarian of St. Patrick's College, Manly; Mr. Paul Brunton, Manuscripts Librarian of the Mitchell Library, Sydney; the staffs of the National Library of Ireland, Dublin, the library of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas, Rome, the National Library of Australia, Canberra, the Chifley and Menzies Libraries at the Australian National University, Canberra, the Fisher Library of the University of Sydney and the library of the Columban Missiology Institute, Turramurra.

The following individuals helped me by suggesting and arranging access to archival collections, giving advice on procedural matters, discussing historical and other issues arising from my thesis topic or obtaining information about archival and bibliographical references: His Excellency the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in Australia, Archbishop Franco Brambilla; the late Prof. Eugene Kamenka, Head of the History of Ideas Unit of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, Canberra; Mr. Anthony Cahill, Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Sydney; Sr. M. Xavier Compton, SGS, of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Sydney; Sr. Mary Shanahan, RSCJ, Principal of Sancta Sophia College at the University of Sydney; Br. Terence Kavenagh, OSB, of the Benedictine Monastery at Arcadia; Rev. Dr. Neil Byrne, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the Pius XII Provincial Seminary, Banyo; Rev. Dr. Thomas Boland, Historian of the
Archdiocese of Brisbane; the staff of the Secretary's Office of the Department of History at the University of New South Wales; Rev. Prof. Michael Tavuzzi, OP, of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas, Rome; Rev. Dr. Carlo Longo, OP, Secretary of the Dominican Historical Institute, Rome; Rev. Fr. Ralph Wiltgen, SVD, of the Generalate of the Divine Word Missionaries, Rome; Br, Cyril Coonahan, OSA, of the Generalate of the Augustinian Order, Rome; Rev. Fr. Francis Xavier Martin, OSA, of the Augustinian Friars, Dublin; Rev. Fr. Hugh Fenning, OP, Historian of the Irish Dominican Province; and Rev. Fr. Vincent Leahy, OP, of St. Saviour's Priory, Dublin.

Most of the translations from original Latin, Italian and French documents used in this study were prepared by me but it was occasionally a welcome relief to find that this work had already been done. I am therefore grateful to the following translators: Sr. M. Xavier Compton, SGS; Sr. M. Peter Damian McKinley, SGS; Sr. Philomena Gallagher, SGS; Mgr. Vincent Tiggeman and Rev. Fr. Brian McBride. Thanks are also due to Rev. Fr. David Barry, OSB, of Holy Trinity Abbey, New Norcia, for Spanish translation and Ms. Micaela Vincent of the German Department of the Australian National University, Canberra, for German.

Thanks are due to Mrs Renata Stinziani and Mrs. Lisa Dalmolin of the Thesis Photocopying Service at the Australian National University, Mr. Phillip Gee of the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, and Mr. Jozef Zawartko, Director of Photo-Pol Pty. Ltd., Canberra, for advice about copying and illustrations, and to Mr. Paul Harker, an undergraduate Arts student at the Australian National University, for his assistance with proof reading, collating and other matters relating to final production.

I am grateful for much forebearance and assistance received from the staff of the Division of Historical Studies within the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, the Heads of the Division
during the years of my candidature, Prof. Ken Inglis, and his successor, Prof. Paul Bourke, and the Divisional Administrator, Mrs. Beverley Gallina. Ms. Janice Aldridge, Mrs. Anthea Bundock and Ms. Helen McNabb supplied invaluable advice about word processing, as did Miss Norma Chin of the School Services, Research Schools of Social Sciences and Pacific Studies.

I acknowledge accommodation afforded during field trips by St. Patrick's College, Manly; the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, Sydney; Benedictine communities at New Norcia, London and Downside; Dominican communities at Rome, Oxford, Dublin, Sydney, Brisbane, Armidale, Maitland, Melbourne and Perth; and by Rev. Fr. Bernard McCumiskey, Parish Priest of Dalton-Kingsland, London. I am grateful for support received from the Priors Provincial of the Australasian Dominicans during the years in which I have been engaged on this project, Very Rev. Fr. Nicholas Punch, OP, Very Rev. Dr. David Halstead, OP, and Very Rev. Dr. Mark O'Brien, OP, from the Rector of Studies at the time of its commencement, Rev. Dr. Denis Minns, OP, and from the superiors and communities of the Dominican houses in Canberra in which I have resided during its progress, Blackfriars Priory, Watson, and John XXIII College at the Australian National University.

Finally, I should like to thank my adviser, Prof. Oliver MacDonagh, formerly of the Division of Historical Studies within the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, for his advice about readings on Irish religious history and his comments on chapters of my thesis. I am conscious of a big debt of gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. Barry Smith and Rev. Dr. John Eddy, SJ, of the Division of Historical Studies, and Prof. John Molony, of the History Department of the Arts Faculty at the Australian National University. Prof. Smith has been a never-failing source of constructive criticism, advice and encouragement throughout almost the entire period of my candidature.
Any errors of fact or interpretation that might be found in this thesis are entirely my responsibility.
ABSTRACT

The centralizing trend in the government of the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century ensured that the deeply-divided Catholics of colonial Australia turned to Rome for a verdict on their many disagreements. At the centre of much of this conflict were the English Benedictine monk, the Archbishop of Sydney, John Bede Polding, and his ambitious scheme for a distinctively Australian, socially integrated Catholicism unified by a monastic administrative framework and elevated by monastic spiritual culture. This scheme collided with certain realities of Catholic life in the Australian colonies: rapid growth, a correspondingly urgent need for basic, flexible pastoral structures and a pronounced, increasingly self-conscious Irish complexion.

If Polding's vision were to be implemented, the approval of the arm of the papal bureaucracy responsible for the mission territories, the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, was vital. Polding came closest to this goal in 1842 when the Congregation accepted his proposals for a general reorganization of the Australian Church, including making St. Mary's cathedral, Sydney, a monastic cathedral. At this stage Polding enjoyed considerable prestige at Rome because of his pioneering work.

However, his doctrinaire pursuit of the total monastery-centred approach after his return to Australia generated continual friction. He alienated non-Benedictine religious orders and had to face rebellion among his own monks and fierce opposition to his policies from elements of the clergy and laity, often fired by a sense of Irish grievance.

As the Sydney Benedictine establishment disintegrated through insufficient recruiting, defections, squabbling and scandal and as complaints and alternative suggestions for the development of the Australian Church mounted up in the Propaganda Congregation, Roman officials became
increasingly sceptical about Polding's plans. Apart from occasional minor successes, all of the official decisions made by the Congregation about Australian affairs in the 1850s and 1860s went against Polding's recommendations. Most significantly, Rome rejected his submission that the Archdiocese of Sydney be committed permanently to Benedictine rule and assigned the new bishoprics carved out of the Archdiocese from 1859 onwards to assertive, independent Irishmen totally opposed to Polding's vision of the Australian Church and who, relying on the supreme influence at Rome of their mentor, Cardinal Cullen of Dublin, were able to prevail repeatedly over Polding in competition for Roman favour.

At the personal level, the difficulties that Polding encountered in his dealings with Rome were magnified by his strained relationship with Pope Pius IX and the head of the Propaganda Congregation, Cardinal Barnabò. Frustrated by continual, painful disappointments and upset by often unfair and rough Propaganda judgements, Polding steadily lost confidence in the Roman system and had become utterly embittered by the late 1860s.

Unexpectedly, by the time of his retirement in 1874 Polding won a notable final victory at Rome by securing the successor of his choice, his fellow English Benedictine, Roger Bede Vaughan. Motivated by an appreciation of the now septuagenarian Polding's pressing need for assistance and worried about domination of the Australian episcopate by the militant Cullenite Irish, Roman policy shifted towards a new balance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Adelaide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAP</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACR</td>
<td>Australasian Catholic Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acta</td>
<td>Acta Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide (CEPA fondo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Archives of the Diocese of Armidale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHCA</td>
<td>Archives of All Hallows' College, Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHR</td>
<td>American Historical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APM</td>
<td>Archivio dei Padri Maristi, Rome (Archives of the Generalate of the Marist Fathers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASV</td>
<td>Archivio Segreto Vaticano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAA</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDA</td>
<td>Archives of the Diocese of Bathurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BirmAA</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>Battye Library, Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAA</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Cardiff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>Archives of the Generalate of the Christian Brothers, Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPA</td>
<td>Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Contemporary copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Catholic Encyclopedia. C.Herbermann et al. (eds.), New York, 15 vols., 1907-1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGAA</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>Church History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHR</td>
<td>Catholic Historical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Archives of the Generalate of the Passionist Congregation, Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAA</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI</td>
<td>Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani. Rome, 42 volumes thus far, 1960-1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DownAA</td>
<td>Archives of Downside Abbey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJ</td>
<td>Freeman's Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSSA</td>
<td>Archives of the Generalate of the Good Samaritan Sisters, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Historical Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSANZ</td>
<td>Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICA</td>
<td>Archives of the Irish College, Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACHS</td>
<td>Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEH</td>
<td>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDB</td>
<td><em>Lettere e Decreti della Sacra Congregazione e Biglietti di Monsignor Segretario</em> (CEPA fondo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDA</td>
<td>Archives of the Diocese of Maitland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDHC</td>
<td>Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Microfilm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>Mitchell Library, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nd</td>
<td>no date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nf(f)</td>
<td>no folio number(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLA</td>
<td>National Library of Australia, Canberra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNA</td>
<td>Archives of New Norcia Abbey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>np(p)</td>
<td>no page number(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ny</td>
<td>no year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Photocopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>Public Record Office, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Religious Clergy (SAA section)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSCDA</td>
<td>Archives of the Generalate of the Irish Religious Sisters of Charity, Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAA</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAWA</td>
<td>State Archives of Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC-Oceania</td>
<td><em>Scritture originali riferite nei Congressi-Oceania</em> (CEPA fondo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCG</td>
<td><em>Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali</em> (CEPA fondo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPFLMA</td>
<td>Archives of the Monastery of <em>San Paolo fuori le Mura</em>, Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>Library of St. Patrick's College, Manly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPM-DownAA/MF</td>
<td>Microfilm of material from the Archives of Downside Abbey in the library of St. Patrick's College, Manly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Typescript copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udienze</td>
<td><em>Udienze del Nostro Signore</em> (CEPA fondo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAA</td>
<td>Archives of the Archdiocese of Westminster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caption</th>
<th>Following page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pope Pius IX, reigned 1846-1878.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The palace of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, Rome, headquarters of papal direction of the mission churches.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alessandro Barnabò. He was the Cardinal Prefect General of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide from 1856 to 1874.</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardinal Charles Acton, Polding’s agent in Rome</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Grant as Bishop of Southwark. He was formerly Rector of the English College, Rome, and Polding’s agent after the death of Cardinal Acton.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mgr. Tobias Kirby, Rector of the Irish College in Rome, and agent of the Cullenite Irish Australian bishops.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pope Pius IX with his Anticamera segreta. Mgr. George Talbot is standing immediately to the Pope’s left and behind the chair.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A circular letter of the Propaganda Congregation of 1868 directing missionary bishops to communicate with Rome only in Latin or Italian or, if necessary, French.</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The younger John Bede Polding, around 1840.</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardinal Castruccio Castracane degli Antelminelli, who often acted as ponente for Australian affairs in the 1840s.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pope Gregory XVI, reigned 1830-1846. This Benedictine Pope encouraged Polding’s monastic plans for the Australian Church.</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardinal Giacomo Fransoni, Prefect General of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, 1834-1856.</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fransoni’s letter to Polding of 5 May 1844 asking him to allow the Marists to establish a supply depot in Sydney.</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First page of Debreul's memorandum to Cardinal Fransoni criticizing Polding's treatment of the Sydney Marists.

Jean-Claude Colin, founder and first superior general of the Marists.

Henry Gregory states the reasons for assigning the Archdiocese of Sydney to the perpetual care of the Benedictines.

Archdeacon John McEncroe. This senior Sydney priest wrote to the Pope to urge that the only way of saving the faith of Irish Australian Catholics was the immediate division of the Archdiocese of Sydney and the importation of Irish bishops and priests.

The title page of Cardinal Patrizi's 1852 ponenza which ended Polding's hope for papal endorsement for his plan for the Australian Church.

John Brady, first Bishop of Perth. Only a personal confrontation with Polding persuaded Brady to submit to papal authority.

Pope Pius IX around 1854.

Cardinal Costantino Patrizi, ponente at the cardinals' assemblies of 10 May 1852 which decided against a perpetual Benedictine succession in Sydney and 2 April 1855 which approved experimental statutes for St. Mary's monastery.

Through articles and letters in the Freeman's Journal, William Augustine Duncan blamed the Benedictines for the problems of the Church in Sydney.

First page of Polding's letter to Cardinal Barnabò, dated 10 June 1858, asking for a papal condemnation of the Freeman's Journal.

The first Bishop of Melbourne, James Alipius Goold, OSA

Opening of the lay appeal to Pope Pius IX, dated 13 April 1859.

Writing to Polding, Cardinal Barnabò sidesteps the lay appeal by pointing out that it does not follow the correct form.


Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin, 1852-1878, and a cardinal from 1866. He became increasingly involved in Australian affairs in the 1850s and 1860s. His opinions carried great weight in Rome.

Robert Willson, Bishop of Hobart. He disliked Gregory intensely and helped to destroy Roman confidence in him.
William Bernard Ullathorne. Because of his previous Australian experience, Cardinal Barnabò asked the Bishop of Birmingham to analyse the state of the Church in Sydney at the end of the 1850s. Ullathorne recommended the recall of Gregory.

The first page of Ullathorne's report of 16 December 1859

Barnabò writes to Polding to explain the decision to remove Gregory.

Patrick Bermingham. In Rome and Dublin this Irish Australian missionary priest, a pioneer in the Yass district, was severely critical of Benedictine rule. Polding tried to neutralize his influence.

Thomas Brown, Bishop of Newport and Menevia. This English Benedictine co-ordinated the European end of the campaign to rehabilitate Gregory.

John Kenny and Richard Walsh. These two Irish Australian priests placed submissions before the Propaganda Congregation in defence of Gregory.

Mgr. George Talbot de Malahide, a member of the papal household and confidant of Pius IX. He intervened in Australian affairs. He was made a consultor of the Propaganda Congregation in 1866.

The Bishop of Adelaide, Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan, OSF, failed in his Roman mission on behalf of Gregory.

Pope Pius IX with snuff box. A photograph taken in the mid-1860s.

The first page of Bishop Goold's submission on the division of the Archdiocese of Sydney. The Roman officials followed Goold's advice closely.

Cardinal Ludovico Altieri, responsible for the presentation of the 1859 report on the creation of new dioceses in Australia.

The title page of the 1859 ponenza. It resulted in recommendations on the appointment of new bishops in Australia which tried to strike a balance, but this was overturned by the Pope.

James Quinn, appointed to the newly-established Diocese of Brisbane in 1859, was the first of the Cullenite Irish bishops to be sent to Australia. His appointment was a major setback for Polding, showing that Rome was being guided by others.
Barnabò rebukes Polding in September 1863 for appointing the 'Englishmen', Austin Sheehy and James Hanly, as administrators of the predominantly Irish dioceses of Armidale and Goulburn.

Polding explains that Sheey and Hanly are Irish.

Dr. John Forrest, Rector of St. John's College at the University of Sydney and a leading critic of the Benedictine regime.

Cardinal Karl August von Reisach.

Von Reisach's ponenza of May 1865 contained devastating criticisms of the state of the Australian Catholic Church.

Dean James Hanly. As reported to Rome by his enemies, Hanly's alleged defects, including an addiction to kangaroo hunting, cost him the Diocese of Goulburn.

Pope Pius IX dispenses Polding from the obligation of his ad limina visit, due around 1865. Polding went anyway, hoping to exercise more influence on the appointment of bishops to the sees carved out of the Archdiocese of Sydney

Annibale Capalti, Secretary General of the Propaganda Congregation, 1861-1868.

The Propaganda decree, Quum ad catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem of 19 May 1866, applies the American norms for the nomination of bishops to the Australian Church, weakening Polding's role.

The papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli, invited Polding to dinner on Holy Thursday evening, 1866.

William Lanigan, Bishop of Goulburn, 1867-1900. Recommended by Polding, he turned out to be a strong opponent of the Archbishop's policies.

The first page of Barnabò's letter to Polding, dated 30 April 1867, detailing the allegations against Bishop-elect Austin Sheehy.

Austin Sheehy, OSB, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Sydney. His consecration as Bishop of Bethsaida in partibus infidelium was cancelled as a result of a campaign in which the prime mover was James, Murray, Bishop of Maitland.
James Murray, Bishop of Maitland, the main conduit for gossip about Sheehy to Rome and entrusted by Barnabò with the principal investigation into the affair. 278

The clergy of the Archdiocese of Sydney petition the Pope not to accept Sheehy's resignation. 282

Vincenzo Colletti, private secretary and chaplain to Polding. 286

Matthew Quinn, first Bishop of Bathurst. His exuberant rejoicing over the papal victory at Mentana in November 1867, as conveyed to the Propaganda Congregation by Kirby, was meant to contrast with Barsanti's alleged sympathy for Garibaldi. 288

James Murray's report to Rome on the Sheehy affair, 24 March 1868. 292

Barnabò directs Polding in April 1868 to convene a provincial council as soon as possible. 298

Archbishop Giovanni Simeoni, Secretary General of the Propaganda Congregation, 1868-1875. One of his first acts was to present to the Pope in September 1869 the Congregation's recommendation that Timothy O'Mahony be appointed Bishop of Armidale. This portrait shows Simeoni a few years later when he had been made a cardinal and Prefect of the Congregation. 304

Cardinal Luigi Bilio praised an harassed Polding for his efforts in organizing the 1869 second Australian provincial council in Melbourne. 307

Archdeacon John Rigney. His overseas trip in 1870 provoked an outbreak of paranoia among the Australian Cullenite bishops. 309

Archbishop John Bede Polding in old age. 313

Charles Henry Davis, OSB, first Bishop of Maitland and first coadjutor to the Archbishop of Sydney. 317

On 28 July 1866 Polding wrote to Barnabò from London requesting Roger Bede Vaughan as his coadjutor. 322

Talbot writes to Capalti opposing the removal of Vaughan from England and warning against allowing the Australian Church to become either a Benedictine or an Irish preserve. 324

Henry Gregory presents arguments to Barnabò for assigning Vaughan to Australia. 332

Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Pitra, patristics scholar and a member of the Propaganda Congregation.

The title page of the 1873 ponenza which recommended the appointment of Roger Bede Vaughan as Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney with right of succession.

Polding expresses his gratitude to the Pope, Barnabò and the Propaganda cardinals for the Vaughan appointment.

First page of the Australian Cullenite bishops' May 1873 protest to the Propaganda Congregation against the appointment of Vaughan.

Roger Bede Vaughan, OSB, titular Archbishop of Nazianzen in partibus infidelium and Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney, 1873-1877. He became Archbishop in his own right on Polding's death in 1877. He himself died in 1883.

Converted by Vaughan's negative judgement against the Sydney Benedictines, Murray promises Barnabò that he will co-operate with the Coadjutor.

Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò died on 24 February 1874. He had played a decisive part in the shaping of Australian Catholicism.

The Irish College, Rome.

The palace of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide. This illustration shows the entrance to the seminary for students from missionary countries run by the Congregation, the Urban College de Propaganda Fide, facing on to the Piazza di Spagna.
INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to cast further light on the nineteenth-century origins of the Australian Catholic Church.

The factors which have shaped Catholicism in this country can be grouped into three categories. Firstly, the domestic category pertains to how Catholic migrants coped with the physical and cultural uncertainty of their adopted land and preserved and adapted their religious values. The second collection of causal factors is the British-Isles connection. Catholic Christianity in Australia was a direct import, mainly from Ireland and England, the people being largely Irish while the ecclesiastical leadership was English, at least in the upper echelons of the foundation church in Sydney for the first generation. The third category of influence revolves around the fact that the Catholic Church in Australia was the regional branch of an international religious organization with headquarters in Rome and presided over by the bishop of that city, the Pope.

This thesis is concerned with the third category. The first category, the domestic, has been well served by the upsurge of writing about Australian Catholic history over the last 30 years or so which has concentrated on national, regional, local and biographical issues, looking at more or less self-contained, internal themes. The second category, Ireland and England as the principal human and cultural sources for colonial Catholicism in this country, has been less adequately dealt with, although there has been useful work done on Irish migration and transplanted Irish culture and on the English Benedictines in Australia.

Our understanding of the Roman factor as the third level of influence on the Australian Church is slight. Because this factor was at least as important as the other two and because it has not attracted the attention of historians of religion it deserves, this thesis addresses itself to the deficiency and seeks to
contribute to filling in a gap in Australian historiography: the formulation of papal policy towards the Catholic missions in colonial times.

I investigate how Catholicism in Australia fitted into the wider, international Catholic scene, how the evolution of the Australian Church was shaped by developments in its European heartland from where it sprang and was sustained during its infancy. Australian Catholicism grew up in a century that saw a shift in the polity of the Catholic Church generally, involving a new understanding of the exercise of authority. There was an increasing centralization on Rome. The Church in Australia was drawn centripetally into the ultramontane vortex and was totally dependent on Rome as the locus of power and decision-making in all but minor local matters (and sometimes even there, too). The earliest decisions about administrative arrangements for the pastoral care of Catholics transported to the penal colony of New South Wales were made by officials at the papal court and their successors throughout the nineteenth century retained control over all subsequent significant developments.

John Molony in his *The Roman Mould of the Australian Catholic Church* (1969) showed how the embryonic Australian Catholic consciousness was thoroughly Romanized by its sympathy for Pope Pius IX in his struggles with European liberalism and Italian nationalism and by the advance of the ultramontane mentality through the Church at large. He argued that, among the Irish Australian bishops, Romanism was more significant in the long run than the Hibernian factor. The question that this thesis examines is different from Molony's focus. I analyse the processes of decision-making that were carried on at Rome itself and and their dynamic interplay with developments in Australia. To put the distinction between Molony's concern and mine simply: his concern was Australian attitudes towards Rome whereas I am interested in Roman attitudes towards Australia. Of course, there was a dynamic connection between these two levels in that the Romanization of the
outlook of Australian Catholics made them receptive to Roman direction. At the same time, I provide evidence to support the counter-thesis of Patrick O'Farrell in his *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: A History* (1977) that the Hibernianism of Irish bishops in Australia was well to the foreground in their thinking and drew them into severe criticisms, at least in private, of Roman policy when it contradicted their goals.

The purpose of this work is to describe and explain how Roman centralism operated in the ecclesiastical government of Australia. Knowledge of this phenomenon is required if we are to better understand the historical development and social influence of the Australian branch of centralized and sometimes authoritarian institution like the modern Catholic Church with its concentration of decision-making operations in the topmost level of government.

Historians working in Australian Catholic studies are, of course, aware of the chain of command that existed within the Church but have tended to assume it as background rather than to examine it as an issue in its own right. Many previous studies have referred to Roman intervention in Australian affairs, but usually only in passing. A few have looked at particular episodes in some detail, such as Margaret Pawsey's *The Demon of Discord* (1982) on Patrick Dunne's appeal to Rome in 1858 against his bishop, James Goold of Melbourne, and Mary Shanahan's *Out of Time, Out of Place* (1970) on Rome's recall of Archbishop Polding's Vicar General, Henry Gregory, in 1860. We also have Ralph Wiltgen's magisterial *The Foundation of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania 1825-1850* (1979) on the establishment of ecclesiastical structures in the South-west Pacific and Australia. My aim is to provide a systematic account of the formulation of Roman attitudes, policies and decisions towards the Catholic community in Australia over an extended period of time.
As a study in the relationship between the centre and the periphery in nineteenth-century Catholic history, my thesis will not be concerned with all types of Roman decisions about Australia in the same proportion in which they were actually made. Such an exercise would be tedious because the bulk of these decisions was about relatively routine and mundane matters. Instead, I elucidate my question by looking at the role papal authority played when conflict occurred among Australia's Catholics. Conflict throws authority into sharp relief and poses challenges to styles of government and the creation of policies. It makes people acutely conscious of where power is located and makes them desirous of acquiring the support of authority figures. It is important to keep in mind that a major role of the Roman Church within the Catholic community, then as now, was to function as a court of appeal. A remarkably disputatious people, Australian Catholics availed themselves freely of this court in the nineteenth century. In a frontier society there was wide scope for disagreement because the structures, character and identity of the national Church were still being formed.

This thesis investigates a number of disputes that broke out among colonial Catholics and were sufficiently serious to be appealed to Rome. Originally, I planned to deal with the entire Australian Church during practically the whole of the Benedictine period, from Archbishop Polding's appointment as Vicar Apostolic of New Holland in 1834 to the death of Archbishop Vaughan, in 1883. However, it proved impossible to press this immense topic into the confines of a doctoral thesis. A series of geographical and chronological modifications has reduced the scope to the relationship between Rome and the Archdiocese of Sydney from 1842 until 1874 although, since the Archbishop of Sydney was the leading churchman as Metropolitan of the Australian Province in that period, wider issues and other dioceses also enter the picture. The year 1842 is significant because it saw the foundation of the regular Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy in Australia. Before that year
Rome's role was largely one of establishing administrative structures, which topic has already been fully treated in Dr. Wiltgen's study referred to earlier and in Dr. Ian Burns' canon law thesis, 'The Foundation of the Hierarchy in Australia 1804-1854' (1954). 1874 provides a convenient cut-off point because it was the year both of Polding's retirement from public life and the termination of the metropolitan monopoly of Sydney with the creation of a new province centred on Melbourne. The focus of my study is the business dealings that conflict required Archbishop Polding to enter into with the Roman authorities. Several kinds of conflict were involved, but principally the titanic clash between, on the one hand, Polding's idealistic vision of a cosmopolitan Church formed by monastic culture and, on the other, Irish pragmatism and nationalism.

Within the papal curia decision-making about Australia was located in a bureau known as the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, one of a series of congregations whose function it was to advise the Pope on the various areas of the life of the Church, more or less equivalent to the ministries in a modern secular government. The Congregation was responsible for co-ordinating the Catholic missionary effort and for supervising the churches in those countries where ordinary ecclesiastical structures were not yet in existence or only in their infancy. Officially classified as a mission territory, Australia was under the jurisdiction of this organization throughout the period covered by this thesis. The Congregation was equipped with extensive powers. All Australian Catholics were literally at the mercy of this organization, from the meanest Irish convict to His Grace the Archbishop Metropolitan himself, as the latter was to be reminded repeatedly to his chagrin. This thesis is basically an investigation into decision-making about the Australian Church within the Congregation de Propaganda Fide.

Because the Congregation was essentially a bureaucratic institution, a sub-theme will be how bureaucracies behave in concrete historical contexts. On the
ecclesiastical plane, Australia's Catholics were in a kind of metropolitan-colonial relationship with Rome parallel to that of Australian colonial societies generally on the civil plane with London. At the ecclesiastical no less than at the civil levels, that relationship was expressed through subordination to administrative machinery and control.

I have also tried to throw light on the men who comprised the staff of the Congregation and who were responsible for making decisions about the shape and future of the Australian Church. The Propaganda cardinals during the period covered by this study were all Europeans, most of them Italians, and many of them members of aristocratic families, such as the Altieri, Barberini, Patrizi and Riario-Sforza. The officials, all of them Italians, are often shadowy figures (in true bureaucratic fashion), the more so the lower the position they occupied on the administrative ladder. The most important of them was Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò, the head of the Congregation for most of the period covered by this thesis. His death in 1874 is another reason for making that year the terminus of this study. Unfortunately there is no biography of this influential nineteenth-century churchman who was a member of Pope Pius IX's inner circle of friends and confidants, second in favour only to the Secretary of State, Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli. Barnabò was probably the single most significant individual determiner of papal policy towards the Australian missions and Polding's tortured relationship with him is a major connecting theme in my thesis. I also show how Pius IX himself was involved directly in the affairs of Australia.

The raw material for this study is correspondence between the Congregation de Propaganda Fide and Polding and other Australian bishops, priests, religious and lay people and others in England, Ireland and Europe who were concerned with Australian matters. The key repository is the vast but as yet virtually unquarried archive in Rome of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, as the Congregation de Propaganda Fide is now
called. Part of this collection, the incoming letters up to 1878, is on microfilm in the National Library of Australia in Canberra and the Mitchell Library in Sydney.

The Irish and English parties in Australia and their supporters in Ireland and England lobbied the Congregation through the Irish and English Colleges in Rome. The archive of the Irish College contains a large collection of material, mainly letters from Cullenite Australian bishops to the Rector, Tobias Kirby. The Benedictine monastery of San Paolo fuori le Mura has the papers of Bernard Smith who was Polding’s main Roman agent. The archives of the Roman generalates of religious orders active in Australia in the nineteenth century have also supplied useful information, the Benedictines, Augustinians, Passionists, Marists and Christian Brothers. The Secret Vatican Archive holds official documentation relating to the establishment of dioceses and the appointment of bishops in Australia.

English and Irish ecclesiastics also participated in debates about Australia and there are important records in dioceses, seminaries and religious houses in Britain and Ireland, the dioceses of Westminster, Birmingham, Cardiff, Dublin and Cashel, Downside Abbey near Bath and All Hallows' College and the Religious Sisters of Charity and the Franciscan Friars in Dublin. There is a small quantity of material in the Public Record Office, London.

In Australia the richest sources are the archives of dioceses founded before 1874, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Perth, Maitland, Bathurst and Armidale. Other useful collections are the archives of the Benedictine Abbey of New Norcia and of the Good Samaritan Sisters and Sisters of Charity in Sydney, the Mitchell Library, Sydney, the library of St. Patrick's College, Manly, and the manuscript collection at the National Library, Canberra.
CHAPTER I
ULTRAMONTANISM AND CONFLICT
IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICISM

The foundation and formation of the Catholic Church in Australia were the result of the interplay of a complexity of international and local forces.

I

The early growth of the Church on the southern continent was but one episode in an unparalleled global movement of Christian missionary expansion during the nineteenth century, closely associated with European colonialism. Within the Catholic Church, the intensification of missionary energy was evidence of an institutional vitality little suspected at the beginning of the century when Catholicism looked moribund. Almost 300 new ecclesiastical jurisdictions were established in the mission territories during the reigns of Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX from 1830 to 1878.¹

Sixteen of those jurisdictions were established in the Australian colonies. The beginning of the Catholic religion in New South Wales at the end of the eighteenth century had nothing to do with missionary strategy but was merely an epiphenomenon of the British government's decision to establish a penal settlement. Nevertheless, the steadily increasing flow of convicts and then free settlers from the British Isles and Europe to Australia in the nineteenth century led to the construction *ex nihilo* of an entirely new branch of the Catholic Church.²

The first attempts of the Church's central authorities in Rome to put official structures in place in response to the existence of the new Catholic community in Australia foundered on the failure to liaise with a British government nervous about sedition among the Catholics, who were mostly convicts and Irish. Past failures and the advice of the Catholic leadership in England convinced Rome that it was necessary to work within the requirements of the British authorities who preferred the Catholic missions in the territories under their jurisdiction to be run by English ecclesiastics in order to be able to monitor Catholic populations more effectively. Accordingly, in 1819 Rome assigned Australia for purposes of ecclesiastical government to a newly-created vicariate apostolic based on Mauritius which had been placed under the care of the English Benedictine Order. The desire to achieve smooth relations with the civil authorities, especially after the

Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, induced William Morris, the second Vicar Apostolic, to send his fellow Englishman and Benedictine, William Bernard Ullathorne, to Sydney as Vicar General of New South Wales to improve the ecclesiastical administration of the Australian mission because of its remoteness from Mauritius.

Ullathorne's time in Australia, beginning in 1833, was very important for laying the foundations of the future organizational development of the Catholic Church. He argued that difficulties of communication required that Australia be separated from the Vicariate Apostolic of Mauritius and constituted as a unit of ecclesiastical government in its own right. As a result, in 1834 Rome erected the Vicariate Apostolic of New Holland and Van Diemen's Land, with headquarters at Sydney. Again on the principle of cultivating good relations with the civil authorities, this Vicariate, too, was assigned to the English Benedictines. Rome constituted the Australian mission as a regular province of the Catholic Church in 1842. Sydney became an archdiocese with presiding powers and subordinate dioceses were located at Hobart and Adelaide. The administrative history of Australian Catholicism after this point is largely an account of the steady extension of the network of dioceses and mission districts in response to the rapid increase in colonies, cities, towns and settlements in the wake of free immigration taking advantage of the economic development of the continent.3

II

The kind of Catholicism that was exported to Australia bore the impress of critical developments in its European heartland. The Catholic Church

---

survived the ordeal of the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars but, as it emerged into the nineteenth century, it was surrounded by a new and unfamiliar world, both puzzling and menacing. After a thousand years and more of cultural ascendancy, the Church found itself abandoned by the bourgeois intelligentsia, alienated from the industrial proletariat and harassed by governments, even in traditionally Catholic societies. Nervous of a rapidly changing and uncongenial world, Catholicism looked to self-defence by tightening its command structures. The entire Church became increasingly centralized on Rome, looked increasingly to the Pope for moral leadership and was increasingly reliant on the papal bureaucracy. The Church's battle with revolutionary forces in the nineteenth century produced a revolution in the internal life of the Church itself.

From the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth centuries, the Catholic Church was transformed from a loose federation of national churches, each controlled by absolutist monarchies, into a unified international organization which sought to secure its independence after the humiliations received from the regalist states of the ancien régime and to marshall the forces of Catholicism to oppose the modern infidelities of liberalism and secularism. From being excluded from the practical direction of the national churches, the papacy moved to a position of dominance over the whole Church. The nineteenth century was the era of the emergence and triumph of ultramontanism, the mentality of exalting the role of the Pope within the Church and looking Rome-ward for inspiration.

Long dormant but now activated by extraordinary circumstances, the power of Rome over the rest of the Church was dramatically demonstrated when the Popes created by their own authority entire national hierarchies: the United States in 1808, Australia in 1842, England in 1850, Holland in 1851, Scotland in 1878 and so on. Individually, the selection of bishops was made more and more by Rome which tended to disregard local preferences and
customs by appointing men who had a Roman orientation. The episcopate consequently became more dependent on the papacy, a situation which many of the bishops actively cultivated as they turned to Rome for support in their struggles with anticlerical and persecuting governments. The lower clergy were often interested in emphasizing Roman authority as a lever to be used against their bishops.

To promote the aim of drawing prestige and decision-making to itself, the central leadership of the Catholic Church deployed a range of instruments and methods. There was a revival of the teaching office of the Popes, who used encyclical letters to address the whole Catholic world. A growing Catholic popular press ensured wide publicity for what they had to say. More significant than the content of this teaching was the manner in which it was uttered. In 1854 the Pope declared that it was a dogma of the Catholic faith that the Blessed Virgin Mary had been conceived without original sin. The Pope had consulted the bishops but the official declaration itself was made on the sole authority of the Pope’s own teaching office. To that extent the role of the other bishops was superfluous.

The function of the Holy See as the final court of appeal within the Church was given more and more prominence. Bishops, clergy, religious orders and laity were encouraged to have recourse to Rome for advice and legal rulings. The papal administration, divided into departments called congregations, each congregation responsible for a specific area of ecclesiastical life and made up of cardinals assisted by bureaucrats, canonists, theologians and other experts, increasingly made and announced decisions for the rest of the Church. More than at any other level, the practical growth of papalism was effected through the day-to-day exercize of the administrative functions of the Roman congregations. Improvements in transport and communication as a consequence of the industrial revolution made contact between Rome and the rest of the Church easier than ever before.
The reverse side of centralization was the diminution of scope for local initiative. Roman officials monitored provincial and diocesan synods and required the legislation of such gatherings to be submitted for approval and, where the officials deemed appropriate, modification and correction. In some situations, the holding of synods was discouraged or prohibited. Papal nuncios extended their sphere of activity from the traditional representation of the Pope at the civil level to intervention in the internal affairs of national churches in order to entrench dependence on Rome.

As ultramontane confidence grew, Roman theologians and their allies elsewhere mounted an intellectual campaign against Gallicanism and other ways of thinking which emphasized national ecclesiastical liberties and local privileges. Religious orders, especially those of an international reach with headquarters in Rome, above all the Society of Jesus, contributed enormously to a papalist mentality which consolidated Roman supremacy, dispersed ecclesiastical particularism and broke down the few pockets of resistance among the French bishops and the German universities. The theological campaign was able assisted by vocal Catholic lay leaders, newspapers and journals, committed to the triumph of the ultramontane cause. Protagonists of ultramontanism agitated for the standardization of liturgy, theology, law and discipline along Roman lines throughout the Catholic world. Roman usages of spirituality, dress, titles and practices were widely adopted by the clergy while Italian customs of piety and devotion were popularized among Catholic peoples everywhere.

The exaltation of the Roman spirit was facilitated by the character and career of the one who occupied the papal throne for one-third of the nineteenth century, from 1846 to 1878, Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti, Pius IX. A man of limited intellectual abilities, distrustful of the times he found himself in and inclined to petulance, he nevertheless possessed a charm, affability, sense of humour and unswerving loyalty to the principles of his
faith, which almost invariably disarmed those who met him. As his pontificate progressed, Pius IX became the object of increasing adulation by Catholics all around the world. Towards the end of his life, Pius had become in the eyes of many members of his Church a saint, a martyr, a mystical figure approaching semi-divine status. This is partly explicable in terms of the sympathy which he attracted because of the sufferings and defeats he experienced as the leader of Catholicism in its battle for the soul of Western civilization with liberal secularism, especially as represented by the kingdom of Piedmont which harassed the Church in Italy with aggressive anti-clerical legislation and steadily dismantled the Papal State in the name of Italian nationalism, leaving Pius 'the prisoner of the Vatican'.

In the second half of the nineteenth century papalist theologians and publicists devised a fulsome language of veneration for the person and office of the Pope which was not only given to excess but verged on an apotheosis. Accompanying this phenomenon was a change in style of papal government itself. The college of cardinals, traditionally the Pope's council of advisers, declined in real significance. Consistories, or formal meetings of the cardinals to discuss policy, were held less frequently during the reign of Pius IX, who sometimes preferred to circumvent the regular procedures, seek advice from whomsoever he chose and reserve decisions to himself. The papal court in the mid- and late-nineteenth century resembled that of an absolute monarchy in that every important decision depended on the personal view of the ruler. Individual cardinals, of course, remained very important and some of them carried great influence.

4 The journal of the Roman Jesuits, *La Civilta Cattolica*, suggested that when the Pope thinks it is God thinking in him. Bishop Gaspard Mermillod of Geneva spoke of the three incarnations of the Son of God: in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the Sacrament of the altar and in the old man living in the Vatican. Hymns in the breviary were altered so that they addressed, not 'Deus', but 'Pius'. See next footnote.
Pope Pius IX, reigned 1846-1878.

As the prestige of the papacy rose so did the city of Rome itself become more and more the focus of Catholic devotion. Bishops from all over the world were encouraged to send some of their seminarians to study for the priesthood at seminaries and colleges in Rome so that they might absorb the ecclesiastical spirit of the city. Availing themselves of the new railways and steamships, the Catholic faithful in growing numbers went on pilgrimage to the Urbs to pay homage to Christ's representative on earth and to visit the holy places, shrines and relics. There was a revival of the obligation of the visit ad limina apostolorum, under which each bishop was required to go in person regularly to pay his homage to the Pope, report on the state of his diocese and pray at the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul. During Pius IX's pontificate there was a series of great assemblies when large numbers of bishops travelled to Rome to express the unity of the Church by gathering round the Pope on special occasions: the definition of the immaculate conception in 1854, the canonization of the martyrs of Japan in 1862, the celebration of the one thousand and nine hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul in 1867 and, the grandest of them all, the general ecumenical council held in 1869-1870 which brought the whole ultramontane impulse to its apogee by proclaiming that, under certain circumstances, the teaching office of the Pope is preserved from error by the action of the Holy Spirit and that he possesses direct, immediate and universal jurisdiction over the entire Church. The papacy had achieved a mastery which it had long desired but had never before been able to attain, not even during the heyday of papal power during the high middle ages.

On the collapse of the royal patronage systems along with the old absolutist monarchies in the revolutionary-Napoleonic turmoil, complete responsibility for the Catholic Church's missionary enterprise reverted to the papacy. Rome's acquisition of unfettered control of missionary work was an important factor in the nineteenth-century drift to the centre of power within
the Church and ensured that the European ultramontane spirit was exported outside Europe. Now independent of political interference, international Catholic missionary strategy was exclusively directed by the Popes and the mission churches were subject to immediate Roman bureaucratic control. Catholics in the mission lands shared in the universal popular fervour for the person of the Pope and exaltation of his office.\(^5\)

**III**

This was as much true of Catholicism in Australia as elsewhere. The antipodean missions, too, were supervised from Rome. Australia's Catholics subscribed to the unashamedly and self-consciously papalist sentiments of practically the whole of the rest of the Catholic world. Fervour for the papacy was a marked feature of the devotional style of nineteenth-century Australian Catholics, bishops, priests and laity alike.\(^6\) Representative of this outlook among the laity was a tribute addressed to the Pope by the members of the Australian Holy Catholic Guild around 1870 which assured the Pope that 'Australian hearts beat in unison with the centre of Catholic unity and that great Pontiff King, Pius IX, whom God long preserve, has our love, our gratitude, our admiration'.\(^7\)

---


6 This point is fully developed in J.Molony, *The Roman Mould of the Australian Catholic Church*, Melbourne, 1969.

7 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 121.
The bishops were all steeped in the attitude known as Romanità, defined as
unswerving loyalty to the office, and affection for the person of the Pope, acceptance of Rome and what it stands for as the centre of Christendom, subservience to the Roman curia...as the administrative arm of the papacy, and...a willing readiness to form and foster a local institutional Church according to Roman ideas.8

Many of them had imbibed the Roman spirit by spending all or part of their student years in the Eternal City, a spirit which was periodically renewed by trips there, including ad limina visits. The attitudes of Irish bishops who occupied Australian sees after 1860 were formed at the Irish College in Rome and in a national church which had itself recently been given a pronounced Rome-ward leaning in the 1850s by the reforms of the ultramontane churchman par excellence, Paul Cullen, Rector of the Irish College in the 1840s and afterwards Archbishop of Armagh from 1849 to 1852 and then of Dublin until his death in 1878.9 Referring to his fellow Irish bishops in Australia, Matthew Quinn, the first Bishop of Bathurst, stated, 'we are the true sons of Rome'.10 And again, 'Veneration for the Holy See is...a sacred tradition in Ireland and we all suck it in with our mother's milk'.11

English Australian churchmen were no less imbued with papalism. On learning of his appointment by Pius IX as Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney in 1873, Roger Bede Vaughan, who carried out his seminary studies in Rome, replied to the Pope that he saw his new job as to 'glorificare e far benedicere il Benedetto Nome di Pio Nono in Australia', for which cause he was, moreover, prepared to shed his blood.12 Lack of Roman training seemed to make no difference. There were few Australian Catholics more committed to

---
8 Ibid., p. 168.
9 Ibid., pp. 1-5, 29-38, 67-68.
10 Quoted in O'Farrell, p. 213.
11 Quoted in ibid., p. 220.
12 To 'glorify and make blessed the Blessed Name of Pius the Ninth in Australia'. Vaughan-Pius IX, 15 Mar. 1873 (CC), SAA, Vaughan papers, file 'Personal papers 1858-1883'.
theory of ultramontanism than John Bede Polding, who occupied the first see of Australia, Sydney, from 1834 to 1877 and whose theological education took place entirely in England. The following understanding of the working of the Roman system in Australia is his:

Let us bow our heads in unqualified submission to our Most Holy Father. It is for the Supreme Head of the Church to direct and govern us, for us, Archbishops, Bishops, Pastors, Priests, and Laity to hear and obey... It is for Him to erect, suppress, to appoint, to suspend, to change as shall best seem for general and individual good. It is not for us to demand reasons: who are we, that we should summon before our ignorant and erring selves the Supreme Authority in the Church - that authority in which we recognize the authority and power to rule of Jesus Christ himself?13

This appeal was written to invoke the highest authority in the Church to dampen down a destructive conflict raging among the Catholics of Western Australia in 1852, but Polding would have subscribed to its underlying theology in any situation. Ten years later, he declared that to obey the wish of the Pope was 'a law for all loyal children of Christ'.14 For Polding's Vicar General, Henry Gregory, also an Englishman, Rome was 'a Mother, who, as she is the guarantee of the faith, is also the defender of justice'.15 Another Englishman, the Bishop of Hobart, Robert Willson, wrote simply but evocatively of Pope Pius IX in 1858, 'How I venerate that holy man!'16

Assembled in Melbourne in 1869 for a provincial synod, the Australian bishops as a body addressed Pius IX in these terms:

Though we are separated from You by great tracts of land and sea, we are nevertheless firmly bound to You by the strongest bond of faith and, as most loyal sons, we are united to the Apostolic See to

13 Polding, Pastoral Letter to the Catholics of Western Australia, ny but 1852, SPM-DownAA/MF, M 402. The text of this pastoral letter can also be found in G.Haines et al.(eds.), The Eye of Faith: The Pastoral Letters of John Bede Polding, Kilmore, 1978, pp. 228-230.
14 Polding-Barnabò, 14 Apr. 1860 (draft), SAA, Propaganda-Polding. At about the same time Polding told a member of the papal curia, 'I am intimately conscious of the most reverential deference to the slightest wish of a Pontiff who so deserves to be obeyed'. Quoted in Molony, p. 27.
15 Gregory-Barnabò, nd but c. 1862 (CC), SPM-DownAA/MF, N 413.
16 Willson-Goold, 11 Dec. 1858, MDHC, box 'Bishop Willson (Hobart). Letters and memoir'.

whose ever-constant authority it is fitting for the whole of the Church to adhere...we cannot prevent ourselves revealing the sentiments of love and veneration which we feel, nor admiring the goodness You have shown in the midst of the most grievous anxieties which for so many years now have almost torn Your heart apart.17

This reference to 'most grievous anxieties' signals another powerful reason why Australian Catholics were drawn towards Rome and especially to the person of Pope Pius IX. From afar Catholics in Australia watched with horrified fascination Pius IX's struggle with secularism and nationalism. His trials especially aroused their sorrow and indignation and kept their attention fixed continually on Rome.18 In July 1860, in the midst of a war in Italy during which the Piedmontese army invaded the northern provinces of the Papal State, Polding issued a special pastoral letter which described Pius XI as 'the object of the attack of the spirit and powers of this world'.19 When the one-thousand year-old papal kingdom was finally extinguished by the Italian military occupation of Rome in 1870 and Pius IX became a self-styled prisoner in the Vatican palace, Australian Catholics were outraged. In his pastoral letter for 1871, Polding asked his people to consider what the Pope 'suffers from the baseness and cruelty which have now their hour of temporary triumph...Yes, Peter is again in chains...20 Bishop James Murray of Maitland believed that the destruction of the Papal State would only serve to cement the bonds between the Pope and his people 'for even banishment would but increase his power

17 Address to Pope Pius IX from the Australian Bishops assembled in Melbourne, 4 May 1869, SAA, Miscellaneous.
18 Molony, pp. 2, 82-85; O'Farrell, p. 214.
19 Polding, Occasional pastoral letter for the Pope's benevolent fund, op. cit. After the papal army had been destroyed at the battle of Castelfidardo in September 1860 and the Papal State lost three-quarters of its territory as a result, a special collection was held among the people of the Archdiocese of Sydney and the huge sum of £6,000 was sent to the Pope. Polding-Barnabò, 22 Oct. 1860 (draft), SAA, RC: Polding; Molony, pp. 78-79. As soon as he heard of the defeat, Bishop Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan wrote on behalf of the clergy and laity of Adelaide to say how they had been stricken by grief on learning that the Pope had been 'ill treated by wicked men and dispossessed of his lawful patrimony'. He enclosed a donation with an apology for its delay caused by drought in South Australia. Geoghegan-Barnabò, 23 Sept. 1861 (CC), SAA, Propaganda: Geoghegan.
and our love. His throne, even then, would be secure in our hearts'.

Vaughan took the opportunity of his first pastoral letter on becoming Archbishop of Sydney in his own right after Polding's death to defend the dispossessed Pius IX and to express his outrage at the 'indignities, insults, robbery done by infidels, revolutionaries, libertines who want to destroy Catholicity as the main fortress of Christian civilization'.

The growing ideology of papal absolutism combined with emotional reactions to the misfortunes of the Pope to make Australian Catholics eagerly acquiescent with anything emanating from Rome in the doctrinal sphere. The three major theological statements issued by the leadership of the Catholic Church during the pontificate of Pius IX - the definition of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin in 1854, the Syllabus of Errors of 1864 and the definition of papal infallibility in 1870 - were all received not merely unquestioningly but rapturously by the Australian Church. Archbishop Polding was in Rome in 1854 and was present at a meeting of bishops held to endorse the doctrine of the immaculate conception. Polding is said to have cried out, 'Thou art Pius, we are thy children. Teach us, lead us, confirm our faith'.

All of the Australian bishops who attended the Vatican Council of 1869-1870 were members of the majority group which favoured the dogmatization of the infallibility of the papal teaching office. The new dogma was greeted with much satisfaction and pride among Australian Catholics. Bishop Matthew Quinn of Bathurst, who did not attend the Council, heard the 'glorious news' by telegram. His brother, James, the Bishop of Brisbane, declared that 'I believe not only in the infallibility of the Pope-King in matters

21 Quoted in Molony, p. 87.
25 Molony, p. 129; O'Farrell, p. 213.
26 Quinn prayed that God might forgive those bishops who had opposed the definition of papal infallibility. M.Quinn-Kirby, 7 Sept. 1870, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1870/159.
of Faith and Morals but, moreover, I believe in the wisdom and advantage of obeying his every spoken wish'. Bishop Murray of Maitland understood the implications of the new dogma very clearly. Papal infallibility will put an end to Gallicanism... We shall be devoted children of the Church and more attached than ever to the Holy See which will now cement us all more closely together and guide us safe through this world to our everlasting home. All scandalous discussion... will now disappear with the blessing of God and vanish like smoke.

Such submissiveness did not go unnoticed. In April 1871 Pius IX wrote to Polding:

> We have seen your signal spirit of obedience towards this Chair of Peter, and the authority of that infallible teaching declared in the dogmatic definition of the Vatican Ecumenical Council.

By this time Pius had become 'a figure of immense importance, the subject of love, pity, and veneration by Australian Catholics'. In imitation of the exaggerations of the European ultramontane apologists who increasingly spoke of the Pope as a mystical, quasi-divine, other-worldly being, Australian thinking about the Pope began to go beyond devotion to a mere man. Patrick Bermingham, an Irish Australian missionary active in Victoria and southern New South Wales in the 1850s and early 1860s, saw him as 'that Supreme Bishop whose head and heart are in heaven although his feet are on earth'. There was a tendency to blur the distinctions between the Pope and Christ himself, language conventionally used in reference to the latter being loosely applied to the former. Murray saw the Pope as 'that great High Priest of the new law'. For Polding, Christ the God-Man was suffering wrong and calumny in the person of his earthy vicar. Vaughan was convinced that Pius

---

27 J.Quinn-Kirby, 22 Feb. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/74.
28 Murray-Kirby, 6 Sept. 1870, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1870/156.
29 Pius IX-Polding, 5 Apr. 1871, SAA, RC: Polding.
30 Molony, p. 92.
31 Bermingham-Polding, nd (CC), SAA, Secular clergy: Bermingham.
33 Polding, Occasional pastoral letter for the Pope's benevolent fund, op. cit.
IX's qualities suggested 'something beyond the present world' and that his utterances were 'Divinely assisted'. For Vaughan, 'With him [Pius IX], if with anyone upon earth, are the words of Eternal Life'.\textsuperscript{34} This way of thinking had become so entrenched by Pius' death in 1878 that it was, without interruption, transferred to his successor, Leo XIII, on whose election Vaughan wrote, 'I live for His cause and that of Holy Church of which He is the head'.\textsuperscript{35} Devotion to the person of the Pope spilled over into enthusiasm for the city where he lived. In 1866, while on a visit there, Polding wrote:

Rome is a wonderful place as regards the abundance of the means of sanctification. I do think if Sydney had one tenth part, it would be a holy city.\textsuperscript{36}

\section*{IV}

We have dwelt on the theory and practice of ultramontanism both in Europe and Australia because it was the decisive factor in that process whereby the character of the nineteenth-century Catholic Church in Australia was forged - conflict and its resolution. The Australian Catholic community throughout the greater part of the colonial century was prone to internal dissension. Whether in or out of the public gaze, these disputes were often passionate, fierce, rancorous and disruptive.\textsuperscript{37}

Internal conflict was most intense and debilitating in the middle years of the century. Its commencement coincided with the clericalization of Australian Catholicism. Before 1820 an almost exclusively lay community was bonded together around the struggle to survive in a threatening environment. In that year the pressure eased as the government recognized Catholic needs by

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{34}] Vaughan, pastoral letter, 'Pius IX and the Revolution', \textit{op. cit.}
\item[\textsuperscript{35}] Note the capital letters of the personal pronouns. Vaughan-Smith, 16 Feb. 1878, SAA, OC: Smith.
\item[\textsuperscript{36}] Polding-Gibbons, 22 Mar. 1866, GSSA, Polding papers, box 4, item 9.
\item[\textsuperscript{37}] Suttor, p. 1; see also K.Inglis, 'Catholic Historiography in Australia', \textit{HSANZ}, vol. 8, no. 31, Nov. 1958, pp. 233-253.
\end{itemize}
providing an officially-sanctioned colonial chaplaincy in New South Wales. It is significant that scarcely had the first two official chaplains, John Joseph Therry and Phillip Conolly, arrived in Sydney when they had a falling-out. As they arrived at various times in the 1820s and 1830s, other chaplains were drawn into the circle of conflict. Several of these priests also fought with Ullathorne when he took up his duties as Vicar General of New South Wales in 1833. The unity of the Australian Church further deteriorated as the ecclesiastical administrative system was extended. The establishment of the episcopal hierarchy in 1842, which ended the ordinary monopoly of the diocese of Sydney, and the creation of new dioceses multiplied the possibilities for disagreement among a growing number of bishops and ushered in a phase of ecclesiastical factiousness which persisted until the mid-1880s.

At the centre of the Australian Catholic stage in the forty years from the mid-1830s until the mid-1870s and at the eye of many of the storms that swept across the colonial Church stood the figure of John Bede Polding, aptly described as the patriarch of the Catholic Church in Australia. Born in Liverpool in 1794 into an upper middle-class family of German extraction, Polding spent practically the whole of his life encompassed by the Benedictine Order. His mother was the sister of Bede Brewer, the President General of the English Benedictine Congregation in the early years of the nineteenth century, and when Polding was orphaned at an early age he passed into the care of his uncle, who had him educated with the Benedictine nuns of Woolton Much and Stanbrook and then with the monks, first at Acton Burnell and then at Downside near Bath after the relocation of the monastery. Polding himself took the habit in 1811 and was ordained to the priesthood eight years later. His first responsibilities were associated with the parochial mission and the boys' school run from Downside Abbey as well as various monastic offices including

secretary to the President General. In 1829 he was offered the missionary Vicariate Apostolic of Mauritius, but refused it. Three years later he was offered the Vicariate Apostolic of Madras. This he first accepted but then withdrew, torn by self-doubts in the midst of a profound spiritual crisis. On the recommendation of the Vicar Apostolic of London, James Bramston, and several clergy in Australia, principally Ullathorne, who were arguing that the distance from Mauritius meant that Australia needed a bishop of its own, Pope Gregory XVI created the Vicariate Apostolic of New Holland and Van Diemen's Land in 1834. Again Polding was approached and this time he accepted definitely. He was appointed on 17 May and consecrated as titular Bishop of Hiero-Caesarea on 29 June by Bramston in London. Curiously, this was the fulfilment of Polding's boyhood fascination with the overseas missions and especially for the spiritually abandoned inhabitants of the penal colony of Botany Bay. Bishop Polding and his missionary party arrived in Sydney in September 1835. For the next generation he was the leading Catholic churchman of Australia, with the titles of Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of the Province of Australia from 1842 on the re-organization of the Australian missions by Rome. Although his episcopate was filled with disappointment and sadness, his ceaseless self-giving to build up the life of the Church, especially his labour in ministering to the convicts and his extensive, exhausting and sometimes dangerous missionary circuits, won for him a warm place in the hearts of his people well before his virtual retirement from public life in 1874.39

---


The outstanding feature of Polding's episcopate was a grand design for the development of the Catholic Church in Australia, breathtaking in its scope. Polding believed passionately that the Benedictine Order could do for Australia in the nineteenth century what it had done for Europe in the dark ages, that is to say, convert and civilize a raw, primitive society. As soon as he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of New Holland, he saw monasticism providing a framework for elevating Australian Catholicism and bringing colonial life generally within the influence of the gospel. Even before sailing for Australia he petitioned Rome in March 1835 for permission to found a monastery in Sydney. On this occasion the Roman authorities judged that such an initiative was premature. Two years later he sent his Vicar General, Ullathorne, to Rome to resubmit his request and this time it was granted. Gregory XVI's rescript of 4 June 1837 allowed the establishment of a monastic foundation which would be dependent on the Vicar Apostolic of New Holland, although composed of members of the English Benedictine Congregation. In 1839 the President General of the English Benedictines, Richard Marsh, authorized Polding to recruit and train men in Australia and admit them to religious profession because of the geographical isolation of the Sydney community. This concession was renewed and confirmed by Rome in 1844. The previous year Polding had set up a seminary and placed it under Benedictine direction. His hope was that his monastery in Sydney, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, would be developed into a flourishing centre of Benedictine life where the ancient traditions of the spiritual quest, splendid liturgy, Christian humanist scholarship and cultural refinement would inspire and ennoble a new Church in a new land and make Australia's Catholics, their unprepossessing origins notwithstanding, a truly spiritual, educated and cultivated people who would find a respectable place in wider society. Sustained by a supply of monks from England and by secular seminarians and priests from the British Isles and Europe, whom Polding expected would
embrace the monastic state on their arrival in Australia, as well as by local vocations, the Benedictine tradition would spread from Sydney in the form of other communities as centres of pastoral care, prayer and learning and establish itself firmly in Australian society. Polding ensured that the monastic routine at St. Mary's, Sydney, was even more observant than at Downside Abbey. Emphasizing the inspiring solemnity and rubrical correctness of the liturgical services and influenced by the Puginesque aesthetics of the Gothic revival, he invested heavily in books, paintings, music scores, vestments, sacred vessels and sanctuary furnishings imported from Europe. Polding was convinced of the power of beauty to evoke religious commitment and moral sensibility among those under his pastoral government and to attract outsiders to the Catholic faith.

Moreover, Polding believed that efficiency and discipline would be enhanced if all of his clergy were also monks. He would thereby have at his command a tightly-knit corps of missionaries, bound to him personally by the obedience of religious profession. He expected that vows of poverty, chastity and obedience would shield the clergy from the greed, sexual misbehaviour and insubordination which so often brought scandal upon the Church in missionary countries.

Polding also expected that a common monastic regime would unify and 'Australianize' his ethnically-diverse clerical workforce. In fact, he hoped that a Benedictine framework could perform the same service for the entire Catholic community. He argued for a genuinely Australian Church which, although composed of many different races and cultures, would renounce old-world antipathies to concentrate on building a distinctive, united religious expression. Noting that the Australian colonies were a British domain, and predominantly non-Catholic, he wanted his people to harmonize with the wider society and participate in its political and cultural life. As a reflection of the diversity of the Australian Church and in the interests of the social
St. Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney.

integration and acceptability of Catholicism and of a good, businesslike working relationship with colonial and imperial governments, Polding recommended strongly to Rome that when new bishops were appointed they be chosen from several nationalities and that at least some of them be Englishmen, preferably Benedictines.

To formalize, organize and perpetuate his vision, Polding set himself the goal of persuading Rome to entrust the Archdiocese of Sydney in perpetuity to the care of the Benedictine Order by having St. Mary's monastery declared to be the cathedral chapter with the privilege of nominating future archbishops. He made this request formally in 1851, with what results we shall see later.

There was much truth and beauty in Polding's design for a monastic-inspired Church but it proved to be unworkable. There were many reasons. Chief among them was that it overlooked certain brute realities of Catholic life in colonial Australia. The explosive growth of the population generally, including the Catholic sector, mainly through immigration accelerating in the 1840s and becoming a flood in the 1850s and 1860s, simply overwhelmed Polding's delicate seedling. As he observed, the Catholic population was composed of a diversity of national and ethnic backgrounds, but the hugely predominant group was the Irish. Throughout the nineteenth century about nine-tenths of Australia's Catholics had been born in Ireland or were the children of people who had been born there, a ratio that was established at the outset, in the convict period. Although the original structures of the mission

---


41 See this thesis, pp. 116-122.
were set up by Rome in conjunction with the English Catholic Church and the British government and although English churchmen took the leading role in running those structures, Catholic Christianity in Australia in colonial times was essentially an offshoot of the Catholic Church of Ireland. The cultural, medievalizing refinements of monasticism on offer from the members of the educated gentry class who comprised the English Benedictine Congregation meant little to Australia's Irish who were drawn mainly from the often illiterate peasantry and town labouring classes and tended to occupy a relatively low position in their society of adoption. The clerical manpower of the Australian Church likewise reflected ethnic differences, but again was overwhelmingly Irish. Most of the men appointed to the episcopate were born in Ireland. Nearly 2,000 priests came to Australia in the nineteenth century. In 1857 80% of them were Irishmen. One Irish seminary, All Hallows' College in Dublin, which was founded in 1842 to train priests for the overseas missions, dominated the priesthood of the Australian Church. Perhaps one-third of the Irish Australian clergy were trained there. Its products tended to be not scholars and liturgists but men of action with a pragmatic training and bent. Very few of them showed any inclination to embrace the monastic state when they arrived in Australia.42

This Hibernian complexion notwithstanding, the most important role in the government of the Australian mission was taken by English churchmen who exercised an influence out of proportion to their own numbers and the numbers of English people among the Catholic laity. Fateful indeed was Rome's decision in 1819 to assign this mission to the care of the English

Benedictines by placing it within the territory of the Vicariate Apostolic of Mauritius and in 1834 to continue their rule in Australia by appointing one of their number to the independent Vicariate Apostolic of New Holland. The first two men to hold the original and most important see, that of Sydney, John Bede Polding and Roger Bede Vaughan, were English. Two of the other early Australian bishops were also English, the Benedictine monk, Charles Henry Davis of Maitland, and the Nottingham priest, Robert William Willson of Hobart. During Polding's episcopate the most senior ecclesiastical positions in Sydney were usually held by Englishmen, Davis and Vaughan as assistant bishops and Ullathorne and Gregory as Vicars General. Although Englishmen ceased to be a majority in the Australian episcopate as early as 1845 and nearly all subsequent appointments went to Irishmen, English ecclesiastics retained much influence through their occupancy of the prestigious see of Sydney. With the establishment by Rome of the regular episcopal hierarchy in 1842, the Archbishop of Sydney became the Metropolitan of the Australian Province, which covered the whole of the continent plus Tasmania, and thereby exercised important canonical rights over all the other bishops, at least until 1874 when a second province, based on Melbourne, was created.

Many of the Irish Australian bishops, priests and laity resented the power held by Englishmen in a predominantly Irish Church. The English-led Benedictines were seen as keeping plum ecclesiastical positions for themselves, hogging the New South Wales government grant for the support of the clergy, unfairly taxing the laity for the maintenance of St. Mary's monastery and generally failing to understand the sensibilities of the Irish. Leaders of the Irish community believed that what their people wanted was not religious refinement and high culture but down-to-earth priests who understood them, provided them with the Mass and the sacraments and encouraged the basic virtues of faith and morality among them. This was the view of influential Irish-Australian churchmen such as Archdeacon John
McEncroe, the senior priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney, and James Alipius Goold, the first Bishop of Melbourne. For these two it was clear that Australia was an Irish mission, and a fast-growing one at that, and that planning for pastoral strategies would have to acknowledge that fact.43

The contradictions between English governors and Irish governed were accentuated from the 1850s when Irish Catholicism in Australia began to echo the same new note of confidence and self-assertiveness being sounded by the parent Church in Ireland itself which was being welded into a more unified and disciplined organization under the leadership of Archbishop Paul Cullen, recently returned to his homeland after a long period of residence in Rome. Cullen reformed the ecclesiastical government of Ireland, imbued it with a strong, Rome-directed orientation and encouraged a new style of religion, clericalist, authoritarian, sentimental. All of this was reflected in Ireland's antipodean religious colony in the second half of the nineteenth century. Many of Australia's Irish also felt drawn to nationalist, democratic and liberal movements in Europe and Ireland itself where there was growing agitation to modify the centuries-old English domination. Irishmen everywhere, whether in Ireland or out of it, whether in the civil or ecclesiastical spheres, tended to dislike being ruled by Englishmen. In Australia, where the predominantly working-class Irish Catholics were a minority of one-quarter of the population, their religion typically expressed itself as a kind of aggressive Gaelic tribalism which opposed Irish nationalism to British imperialism, Catholic fidelity to the Protestant ascendancy and egalitarianism to plutocracy. In the debates carried on through the 1850s and 1860s about how to carve up the enormous Archdiocese of Sydney, Irish clergy and publicists insisted that Irish bishops be appointed to the new sees because only they could attract priests and because

the Catholic population was Irish. When the new dioceses were created and filled by Rome from 1859 onwards, they were given not only to Irishmen but to Irishmen of a self-assured, resolute, self-consciously Hibernian Cullenite stamp. They sought to reproduce among their people a militant, devotional, efficient and nationalist style of Catholicism on the modern Irish model, sealing them off from the dangers of Protestantism, secularism and indifferentism by creating tightly-controlled, inward-looking Catholic ghettos based on separate schools and social organizations and fierce disapproval of mixed marriages, together with a strong dose of sectarianism and anti-intellectualism.44

Australian Catholicism in the nineteenth century was dominated by the collision between Benedictinism and Irishism as competing approaches to the nature and needs of the colonial Church. The outcome was determined by the weakness of the former and the sheer demographic power of the latter. Polding's Benedictine vision 'failed because it lacked the essential ingredient needed to maintain it - Benedictines'.45 The originating Benedictine Order in England provided only a tiny number of the monks needed to make the dream a reality. Prefering to concentrate its resources on building up the Church in England itself, it opposed involvement in overseas missions and reluctantly accepted such commitments only under pressure from Rome and the Vicars Apostolic of London. It was hardpressed even to meet the demands on its manpower from a rapidly growing English Catholicism. The English Benedictines opposed Polding being sent to Australia in the first place and thereafter resisted his moves for continuing legal and practical connections


between the Australian operation and the home group. In 1834 the General Chapter refused his application to establish a house under the auspices of the English Congregation in Sydney. Instead, in consideration of their remoteness, the President General transferred the obedience of those monks who were going to Australia to Polding personally. In 1837 the English Benedictine authorities declined the request of Polding’s Vicar General, Ullathorne, for more monks. Five years later Polding himself renewed the request and tried to enthuse the General Chapter by invoking the example of the great missionary monks of the middle ages such as Gregory the Great, Augustine of Canterbury and Boniface who had converted whole nations in barbarian Europe. Again, the appeal was denied, as was a third in 1846. Between 1835 and 1863 Polding received only nine English monks, most of them in poor health or not wanted elsewhere.

The failure of Ullathorne and Polding to obtain recruits from the English Benedictines and the English bishops in the late 1830s and early 1840s compelled them to look further afield, to Ireland. Here they were successful. Ireland became by far the biggest source of missionaries for Australia with hundreds of priests going to work there in the nineteenth century. As early as 1838 Ullathorne foresaw the outcome: 'the Colony will become, of course, an Irish mission, and perhaps ought to be so...To do anything Benedictine in the colony is now out of the question'. Ullathorne had grave doubts about the wisdom of placing Irish clergy under English superiors and wondered whether responsibility for the Australian missions should not be transferred to the Irish Church. His English Benedictine colleague, Thomas Brown, agreed: 'The

---


clergy and people in Australia are almost all Irish, having a strong national feeling...Let Dr. Polding recommend Irishmen for bishops, and more good will be done'.

Not only could Polding not get Benedictines to come out from England in anywhere near sufficient numbers but secular priests and seminarians who volunteered for the Australian mission were by and large not interested in becoming monks. Furthermore, local recruits were very few. The rapid growth of the colonial population early outstripped the capacity of the Sydney Benedictine community to meet the need. It became impossible to contain missionary work within a monastic framework. Polding's assistant bishop from 1848 to 1854, Charles Davis, could see that St. Mary's monastery would not be in a position to satisfy Catholic demands for several years. Davis' premature death removed a common-sense voice from Polding's counsels.

The one person who failed to appreciate the obvious implications of this set of circumstances was Polding himself. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, he clung to the hope that a Benedictine-inspired Church was achievable. And yet his own routine suggested even in him an implicit recognition that this was no so. Confronted by tension between the pastoral needs of his vast diocese and the rhythm of monastic observance, Polding's long absences from St. Mary's on missionary journeys show his willingness to subordinate the latter to the former. But it was only in the late 1860s that Polding finally began to question the wisdom of combining in himself the offices of archbishop and head of the monastic establishment.

The unreality of the Benedictine vision in the concrete circumstances of the Catholic Church in colonial Australia was not the only reason for its failure. Polding was an indecisive man, given to self-doubts. He was a poor administrator whose business affairs were often in chaos. He had little sense of

50 Birt, vol. II, p. 368; Moran, p. 431; Nairn, p. 345; O'Donoghue, p. 95.
public relations and his lofty notion of the episcopal dignity drew him to an autocratic style of government in times of crisis. Polding was far more at home in the colony of the 1830s and early 1840s, with the foundation work and the convicts, than he was in that more sophisticated colony which resulted from the discovery of mineral wealth, constitutional change and growth itself. Polding's right-hand man in the running of the monastery was Henry Gregory, temperamentally unsuited to the exercise of authority. Discredited by insufficient recruiting, superficial religious formation, poor leadership, internal conflicts and a series of scandals involving drink and sex, the Sydney Benedictine establishment entered a sad period of decline from its heyday around 1850 until the 1870s when there were only 12 monks left, most of them living outside community. The whole operation was closed down in 1878 by Polding's successor, Vaughan, who, although a Benedictine himself, was able to recognize the inevitable.

V

While providing a helpful general framework for understanding conflict in the nineteenth-century Australian Church, the dichotomy between English and Irish perspectives needs to be treated with caution. Neither side was monolithic in its ideas and interests. We have already seen that Ullathorne, Davis and the Benedictines in England did not share Polding's optimism about what could be reasonably hoped for in Australia. Moreover, it is very misleading to speak of the Sydney Benedictines as being simply English. While they were founded from the English Benedictine Congregation and their superiors were English, many of the rank-and-file of these 'English' monks

were actually Irishmen, either by birth or descent. Some of these Irish Benedictines were given important responsibilities in the monastic system and the archdiocesan administration. Polding was by no means anti-Irish. In both his Downside and Sydney days he had considerable sympathy for the Irish people and their sufferings. Before sailing to Europe in 1840, he appointed an Irishman, Francis Murphy, as his Vicar General. On his return, he replaced Murphy with the Englishman, Gregory, because he felt that, under Murphy's rule, Irish feeling was getting out of hand. This was the core of Polding's concern, that a loud and aggressive Hibernianism would spill over into anti-British feeling and upset his efforts for social harmony and the wider acceptability of Catholics. But Polding appreciated the worth of his Irish priests and, in the 1850s and 1860s, recommended the best of them for bishoprics.

It is equally misleading to suggest that all the Australian Irish were against Polding. The people, mainly Irish, in whose service he spent his life, had great respect and affection for their archbishop. Several of the Irish secular priests were well disposed towards the Benedictines, could see the benefit of what the monks were trying to do, co-operated with them and were devoted to Polding personally. Among them were outstanding missionaries such as John Lynch, John Rigney, James Hanly, Timothy McCarthy, Michael Kavanagh, Richard Walsh and John Kenny.

There was, then, a diversity of attitudes among the Irish clergy to Polding and the monks. Another line of division ran broadly between those Irish bishops who arrived before 1860 and those who arrived afterwards. The first group which included Goold, first Bishop of Melbourne, and Francis Murphy, Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan, Laurence Bonaventure Shiel and

Christopher Reynolds who succeeded one another in the Diocese of Adelaide, were inclined to co-operate with Polding, whatever individual difficulties they might have had with him, and to express their Irish identity unobtrusively. On the other hand, the second group, the militant Cullenites, Bishops James Quinn of Brisbane, his brother Matthew of Bathurst, James Murray of Maitland, William Lanigan of Goulburn, Daniel Murphy of Hobart and Timothy O'Mahony of Armidale, were strongly opposed to Benedictinism and dismissive of Polding and tended to parade their Irish nationalism ostentatiously.55

Ethnic tensions in the Australian missions were not confined to the English and Irish. In the 1840s and 1850s Polding failed to achieve smooth working relations with the Italian and French clergy present in his diocese. In the same way, Irish bishops had a bad record in their dealings with priests not of an Anglo-Saxon-Celtic background. Some of these conflicts involved considerable racial complexity. In the Diocese of Perth around 1850 an Irish bishop battled with his clergy who were mainly Spanish but included Irishmen, Italians and Frenchmen. In Brisbane in the 1860s and 1870s the authoritarianism of another Irish bishop alienated his Italian and German priests. In both cases the intervention of the English Archbishop further added to an explosive mix.56

Another important source of disharmony was the rivalry between classes in the Church. One of the most enduring themes in Catholic history, the animosity between the secular and regular clergy, was much in evidence in nineteenth-century Australia. The persistent factionalism in Sydney probably had as much, and possibly more, to do with the fact that the Archbishop and his Benedictines were members of a religious order and most of the rest of the

clergy were not. The problems of the Dioceses of Melbourne in the 1850s and Adelaide in the late 1860s and early 1870s were accentuated by the fact that the bishops were Augustinian or Franciscan friars while most of their clergy were secular priests, even though bishops and priests alike were Irish. In Perth in the late 1840s and early 1850s the roles were reversed. A secular bishop fought with his clergy who were mainly monks.57

Religious orders not only competed with the secular clergy but also with one another. Polding aroused defensiveness on the part of the Passionists, Marists, Christian Brothers and Sisters of Charity who were working in his diocese in the 1840s and 1850s when he tried at assert a Benedictine supremacy over the other orders and to interfere in their internal affairs.58

A major theme of class conflict in Australian Catholic history is disputes between bishops and lower clergy as the former struggled to assert their leadership and power while the latter tried to maximize their independence and freedom of action. Bishops battled the 'presbyterian' spirit and priests complained about episcopal authoritarianism. Sometimes the lower clergy joined forces with disgruntled members of the laity, who were influenced by rising democratic sentiment in civil society, to create a climate of open rebellion against the bishop as happened in both Sydney and Melbourne in the late 1850s.59

Much of the bickering in the Australian Catholic community in the nineteenth century revolved around divergences of perception of important issues concerning the character of the colonial Church, organizational development, pastoral strategies and so on. However, among the the means employed by the protagonists to pursue their ends were frankly sordid assaults

57 Inglis, p. 251; O'Farrell, The Catholic Church and Community, p. 65; Suttor, pp. 180, 236.
58 See this thesis, pp. 92-113.
on each other's personal reputations, often with little care to establish the facts. Bishops and priests denounced one another for failings of private morality. Allegations of sexual misbehaviour by way of concubinage and fornication were exchanged among a celibate clergy, usually for the purpose of destroying the good name of an opponent in the eyes of a higher authority. A common accusation with which the clergy sought to discredit one another concerned the consumption of alcohol. Some churchmen were vulnerable in this matter because of psychological disorders, exhaustion from overwork and a sense of inadequacy when confronted with difficult situations. Some priests looked on their missions as money-making operations, although sometimes for the extenuating reason of wanting to send money back to impoverished families at home. Polding often complained about avaricious, money-grubbing Irish priests coming to Australia only to enrich themselves. It was not unknown for a priest to amass a private fortune in money and property through commercial and real estate dealings. Some Irish missionaries brought their relatives with them who then became a burden on Catholic communities. Ecclesiastical discipline sat lightly on a young Church growing rapidly in a rough-and-tumble frontier society. At an immense distance from Europe, bishops found that rules and regulations devised for European conditions often scarcely worked in the colonies. Missionary priests, especially when living far from diocesan headquarters, followed these rules according to a rule-of-thumb interpretation, if at all. Remote from more formal society and overwhelmed by work, worries or celibate loneliness, not a few priests sought consolation in the bottle or the company of a woman.

---

60 Polding-Gregory, 2 Sept. 1861, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 336; Polding-Smith, 21 Jan. 1862, SPFLMA, Smith papers-Australia; Polding-Brown, 22 Jan. 1862, Brown papers, CAA; Barnabó-Cullen, 12 Oct. 1864, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1864-1878. In 1860 Bishop Goold of Melbourne reminded his clergy that they were forbidden to engage in commercial, financial and property transactions for personal gain. Observanda, 2 Feb. 1860, copy in ML.

Many of the Catholic clergy on the Australian mission were not well equipped for their work in the first place. The priests and religious recruited by Australian bishops for their hard-pressed dioceses while visiting the British Isles and Europe were often the inexperienced, the poorly trained, the young, wild cards, rejects, foreigners with little or no English. Some of those who volunteered had undisclosed personal reasons for escaping from their present positions because of temperament, ministerial incapacity or scandal. The reason offered by some priests for migrating, wanting to go to a warmer climate for the sake of a 'delicate constitution', was often genuine but could be a mask for alcoholism. Irish, English and European bishops and religious superiors were only too pleased to seize the opportunity to palm off on to a desperate, unsuspecting colonial bishop an incompetent, unmanageable or disreputable subject. The largest single supplier of priests for the Australian Church, All Hallows' College, was much criticized for the superficial spiritual formation, patchy theological education and social boorishness of its graduates.

VI

From the early 1840s to the mid-1880s was a period of continual strife in the Australian Catholic Church, the most spectacular episodes of which seriously disrupted the harmony of Catholic communities and vitiated the effectiveness of the Church in the wider society. The struggle for the soul of Australian Catholicism between Benedictinism and Hibernianism, the ethnic animosities, the ancient rivalries between ecclesiastical classes transferred to a new society, episcopal despotism, clerical insubordination, lay restiveness, and
professional and personal shortcoming of churchmen as leaders of their people lay, in different combinations and contexts, at the bottom of conflict in a colonial Church subject to internal tensions and strains arising from a too-rapid expansion of ecclesiastical organization in the wake of huge population growth.

How did Australia's Catholic churchmen deal with these disputes? Very rarely did they resort to calm, reasonable discussion or, indeed, to discussion of any sort. Their main tactic was the invocation of authority. We have seen how in the nineteenth century the Catholic Church as a whole the authority principle was increasingly underlined to solve problems arising from both the internal life of the Church and the Church's relationship to society at large. In the Catholic world, in Australia as elsewhere, the clergy enjoyed enormous authority and prestige in the eyes of their communities and they were not loathe to exploit their status to the full. Church law gave bishops, further up the hierarchical ladder, extensive rights and powers of government over both priests and laity. In an ecclesiastical province, a collection of dioceses, the archbishop metropolitan exercised important if limited administrative and coordinating functions over the other bishops.

Of course, there was yet another tier of authority in the Church - the Pope in Rome who exercised his universal authority over the whole Catholic world through a system of courts and administrative departments. The papacy functioned, not only as the supreme teaching organ in the Church, but also as the last court of appeal in juridical and contentious cases. In the nineteenth century Australian Catholics turned to this court persistently as a means of solving their disagreements. None of the major disputes, and very few of the minor ones as well, that erupted in this period was sorted out locally. When disputes could not be resolved in situ, the authority principle ensured that matters ended up before papal adjudication. In a highly centralized Church
with a heavy accent on authority this stage was usually reached sooner rather than later.

The local structures of ecclesiastical government failed to cope for a number of reasons. Priests, religious or lay people who had genuine grievances or, at the very least, a case to be heard, were sometimes confronted by authoritarianism and obstructionism from their bishop or superior. They then had little alternative but to appeal to the Pope, as was their right under canon law. On the other hand, there were priests, religious and lay people who hardly bothered to give their bishop or superior a chance to reply before despatching a complaint to Rome, sometimes with the deliberate intention of embarrassing the local authority. Furthermore, because of their essential equality, a dispute among bishops that was not quickly resolved was referred to Rome almost automatically. In several situations, a bishop or group of bishops declined to accept the judgement of the metropolitan and such cases, too, went to Rome without further ado. In these arguments the rivals endeavoured to outmanoeuvre and neutralize each other by invoking the supreme authority of the Church as the ultimate sanction.

Important as a dynamo driving this practice, and generating an atmosphere favourable to it, was the rapidly developing ideology surrounding the papal office. The one thing Australian Catholics did not argue about, unlike some of their European co-religionists, was the new papalism in the Church. This was embraced instantly, unquestioningly and effusively, both in its theory and practice, the theory because it gave colonial Catholics a strong sense of religious identity in a remote and hostile environment, the practice because it afforded opportunities for political advantage in the midst of ecclesiastical dissensions. Roman favour was not only a much sought-after glittering prize but absolutely essential if any general approach or strategy for the Australian missions were to be adopted. It is precisely at this point of conflict that Australian Catholicism intersected with ultramontanism.
Before examining the dealings of the leading bishop, Polding of Sydney, with the Roman system it will be helpful to look at how this system worked, especially in regard to Australia.
CHAPTER II

THE SACRED CONGREGATION DE PROPAGANDA FIDE
AND AUSTRALIA IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

When Australia's Catholic clergy in the nineteenth century referred to the highest authority in their Church they often employed vague and pious expressions, such as 'Rome', 'the Holy See', 'the Apostolic See', 'the Pope', 'the Holy Father', the 'Holy City', the 'Eternal City' and 'the Roman Court'. As far as practicalities were concerned, however, what they often had in mind was not 'Rome' in some general or mystical sense but a specific department of the papal system of ecclesiastical government. This department was the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith or, to use its Latin title, the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide.1 From the Latin the Congregation was commonly referred to in abbreviated fashion as the 'Propaganda Congregation' or simply 'Propaganda'.2

I

The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide was (and still is) one of a dozen or so congregations or curial departments, each responsible for a different sphere of activity, through which the Pope exercised his supreme authority in the Catholic Church. In his name, the Propaganda Congregation was responsible for promoting the spread of the Catholic faith and directing the life of the Church in the mission lands, those parts of the world where the regular ecclesiastical hierarchy either did not exist or was at an early stage of development.

1 After a reform of the Roman curia in 1967 it became known as the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or for the Propagation of the Faith, in Latin Sacra Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda Fide. More recently, the adjective 'Sacred' has been omitted. See N. del Re, La Curia Romana, Rome, 1970, p. 194.
2 The word 'Propaganda' has none of the dishonest, manipulative overtones of the modern English usage but is merely the gerundive from the Latin verb 'propagare': to disseminate, promote, spread around.
Suggestions for the creation of such an organization date back to the medieval period and tentative measures were taken in the sixteenth century, but it was not until 1622 that the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide was established by Pope Gregory XV. The purpose of the new body was to centralize and co-ordinate in Rome the direction of the missionary effort of the Church in those lands which had not yet been Christianized or where the people had gone over to heresy or schism. The principal motivation for the establishment of the Congregation was to strengthen Rome's hand in the formulation of missionary policy in the huge colonial territories of Spain and Portugal in order to restore the independence and spiritual character of missionary work which had become too closely identified with secular political and commercial interests and European colonialism.

Its work badly disrupted by the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the Congregation de Propaganda Fide experienced a golden age in the nineteenth century. Benefiting from the collapse of the ancien régime, to which the royal patronage systems had been attached, the papacy moved to assume responsibility for ecclesiastical affairs in the colonial and former colonial lands and thus to control the whole Catholic missionary enterprise. Not only did the Congregation preside over the greatest period of expansion in the history of the Catholic missions, it was also at last able to exercise freely the numerous and extensive powers, privileges and rights that the Popes had conferred on it from the beginning in consideration of the urgency and immensity of its responsibilities. The only limitation on Propaganda power was geographical, being confined to the mission territories. However, these territories were vast, covering most of the earth: the whole of the continents of Asia, Africa, and North America, together with Oceania, plus important countries in Europe and parts of Latin America as well. Within these zones, the Congregation was omnicompetent and ubiquitous, combining legislative, executive, judicial and administrative operations. All the functions and
prerogatives which were exercised separately and individually by the other congregations and organs of the Roman curia over dioceses under the common law of the Church were, for the missions, concentrated in this single congregation. The Propaganda Congregation was self-contained relative to the rest of the papal system.\textsuperscript{3} Canonically speaking, the authority of the Congregation within its own jurisdiction was unlimited, except by the will of the Pope himself. However, although the Pope could act on his own initiative to overturn Propaganda decisions, he rarely did so, but simply accepted the recommendations placed before him. The Pope's universal and immediate jurisdiction in the Church was defined at the Vatican Council in 1870, but in practice this had been recognized well beforehand and was exercised over the mission lands exclusively by the Propaganda Congregation.

The activities of the Propaganda Congregation included the supervision of missionary strategy and practice in general, issuing decrees and directives, giving legal judgements, establishing dioceses and other administrative jurisdictions, making appointments, adjusting boundaries, inspecting the quinquennial reports which bishops and other superiors were required to submit, revising and approving the acts of provincial synods, resolving doubts and settling disputes. It also maintained its own seminary for the training of priests for the missions, the Urban College \textit{de Propaganda Fide}, as well as a despatch office, polyglot printing press, archive, library and ethnological museum. As well as its own grandiose palace, designed by Bernini and Borromini, which occupied an entire city block in Rome, it also owned two country villas which were used as summer resorts for the College students.

\textsuperscript{3} Some canonists argued that it had the right to make decisions touching on the content of the faith itself, questions concerning the sacraments, ceremonial and rubrics and matters of conscience, otherwise handled by the Holy Office of the Roman and Universal Inquisition, the Sacred Congregation of Rites and the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary respectively. In practice, Propaganda officials routinely referred such specialized matters to the other congregations, but they were not strictly obliged to do so. See following footnote.
and, before an act of expropriation by the Italian government in 1884, extensive farmlands, city properties and investments.4

This overwhelmingly dominant position lasted until 1908 when Pope Pius X decreed a general reform of the curia in which the sweeping jurisdiction and powers of the by-then unwieldy Propaganda Congregation were reduced by reassignment to other congregations.5 However, until that year, that is to say, throughout the whole of the nineteenth century, the Congregation de Propaganda Fide enjoyed absolute supremacy within its own sphere of jurisdiction. For Catholics living in the mission countries the Congregation and the Roman papacy were practically identical. Conscious of its unquestioned authority, the Propaganda Congregation intervened in the affairs of the mission churches whenever and however it pleased and was capable of strong action, deciding definitively what was to be done,

---


5 The decree Sapienti consilio of 1908 removed extensive territories - Britain, Ireland, the United States, Canada, the Low Countries - from Propaganda oversight, transferred responsibility for Eastern-rite Catholics to a special, newly-established congregation, obliged Propaganda to refer appropriate matters to the Congregations for the Inquisition, Rites, Religious, etc. and removed strictly juridical functions to the curia tribunals. See Delacroix, vol. III, p. 115; del Re, Curia Romana, pp. 19, 37; Goyau, p. 196; Hoffman, p. 499; Song, pp. 33-37; M.Martin, The Roman Curia as it Now Exists, London, 1913, pp. 60-75.
pronouncing judgement, and handing down approbation or condemnation. The only appeal against its actions was to the person of the Pope himself.

John Henry Newman, whose own relationship with the Congregation was unhappy, spoke in trenchant terms of the authoritarianism of this department of the Roman curia.

Propaganda is a quasi military power, extraordinary for missionary countries, rough and ready. It does not understand an intellectual movement. It likes quick results - scalps from beaten foes by the hundred.6

The Congregation was vigilant for signs of independence among its subjects. Its officials were sensitive about attempts to communicate directly with the Pope and jealous and nervous if anybody succeeded.7 Newman had something to say about this, too: '...they don't like any appeal which implies that there is a power in heaven or earth greater than themselves'.8

Such was the arm of the Roman curia within the jurisdiction of which the nascent Australian Catholic Church as a mission church was placed from its beginning towards the close of the eighteenth century and under which it remained throughout the nineteenth.9 The administrative provisions that were put in place for Australia's Catholic people were all decided upon within the Propaganda Congregation. The disputes which comprise the subject matter of this study were all referred to the same body and papal policy towards their resolution was formulated there. Polding's government of the Archdiocese of Sydney and the Province of Australia were subject to direct Propaganda review

8 Newman-Bowles, 8 Jan. 1872, LDJHN, vol. XXVI, p. 8. Given his antagonism to the Propaganda Congregation, it is ironic that when Newman himself was made a cardinal in 1879 this was one of the congregations to which he was assigned. See La Gerarchia Cattolica e la Famiglia Pontificia per l'anno 1879, Rome, 1879, p. 521.
9 The Australian Church was moved from the jurisdiction of the Propaganda Congregation to the common ecclesiastical law in 1976.
The palace of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, headquarters of papal direction of the mission churches.

and judgement. Since the Congregation will be constantly at the foreground of this narrative it will be helpful to understand its organization and operations.

II

The proclaimed objective of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide was spiritual: the diffusion among the pagan, schismatic and heretical parts of the world of Catholic belief and practice. This objective meant that decrees and pronouncements were wrapped up in religious terminology, with much invocation of God. This does not disguise the fact that the Congregation was a human institution exhibiting all of the essential features of bureaucracy as defined by Max Weber's ideal type: a functional, legally-validated administrative system which seeks to realize specific aims of control through the consistent application of abstract rules and regulations to particular cases; within the system these aims are pursued through the co-ordination of a multiplicity of activities distributed in a fixed way as official duties; there is a trained, full-time workforce of officials based on the principle of the division of labour and characterized by professionalism, discipline and loyalty; the style of operation is deliberately impersonal, formal, objective and rationalistic with emphasis on routine, regular and predictable procedures and the keeping of records; the whole system is held together by a centralized, pyramidal command structure; according to the Weberian analysis, the authority served by the organization is not itself part of the organization but is outside and above it.10 The ready inclusion of the Propaganda Congregation in the category of bureaucracy shows how the activities of religious institutions closely

resemble the operations of secular organizations. Although an example of modern, rationalistic bureaucracy, the nineteenth-century government of the Catholic Church retained strong patrimonial-feudal features in that authority emanated from tradition and focussed on the person of the ruler, the Pope, and was expressed through religious ceremonial and court ritual.\footnote{Kamenka, pp. 4-5, 52, 59, 61; P.E. Hammond & B. Johnson, American Mosaic: Social Patterns of Religion in the United States, New York, 1970, p. 149; E. Troeltsch, 'The Emergence of Types of Religious Organization', in P.K. Merton et al. (eds.), Reader in Bureaucracy, Columbia, 1964, p. 83.}

The nineteenth century in Europe saw a big growth of the bureaucratic phenomenon as society became more complex\footnote{Aylmer, p. 176.} and there was a parallel movement within the central administration of the Catholic Church. The Propaganda Congregation experienced a sharp increase in its real jurisdiction and responsibilities. Around 1860 one of the Propaganda cardinals, Karl von Reisach, estimated that the previous 30 years had seen a ten-fold increase in the Congregation's daily work, caused by a quadrupling in the number of missionary jurisdictions and an improvement in mail services.\footnote{J. Metzler, 'Präfekten und Sekretäre der Kongregation im Zeitalter der neuren Missionära (1818-1918)' in Memoria Rerum, vol. III, pt. 1, p. 38.} In addition to the neutral Weberian definition given above, the term 'bureaucracy' can also connote an unflattering image of excessive concentration of power accompanied by rigidity, legalism, insensitivity, inefficiency and prevarication.\footnote{Kamenka, p. 156; R. Bendix, 'Bureaucracy' in D.L. Sills (ed.), International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Macmillan, 1968, vol. 2, p. 206.} The Propaganda Congregation was not immune from such tendencies, but let us first look at the Congregation's formal organization and procedure.

Strictly speaking, the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide was a committee of cardinals, around 25 of them, appointed by the Pope. They assembled, usually every month (although not necessarily the full membership), in a plenary meeting called a congregazione (hence the name of...
the organization) at which they deliberated on and made decisions about matters pertaining to the Church in mission lands. One of their number was appointed by the Pope to chair the _congregazioni_ and to be responsible for all day-to-day operations. He was known as the Prefect General.\(^\text{15}\)

More loosely, the Congregation was the secretariat or administrative apparatus whose function it was to facilitate the deliberations of the cardinals as the executive body. The Prefect General was ultimately responsible for the operations of the secretariat and in this he was closely assisted by the Secretary General, who directed the daily activities of the secretariat staff. Also appointed by the Pope, the Secretary General was a key _Propaganda_ official. Usually a bishop, he attended the monthly meetings of the cardinals to record the proceedings, but without a deliberative voice. Below the Secretary General were the _minutanti_ or under-secretaries who specialized in different aspects of the work of the Congregation, usually according to geographical divisions. Further down the hierarchical ladder was a variety of functionaries: archivists, scribes, protocolists, copyists, despatchers and messenger boys. The Congregation often sought the expert advice and assistance of consultors for opinions on technical questions. Every week the Prefect General had a meeting, called a _congresso_, with the Secretary General and the _minutanti_ to review the state of affairs within the department, resolve minor matters and hold preliminary discussions about major matters that would need to be referred to a _congregazione_ of the cardinals.\(^\text{16}\)

---

15 _General_ because there were two other Prefects within the organization of the Congregation, one responsible for the affairs of Eastern-rite Catholics, the other for financial matters, both responsible to the Prefect General.

Papal missionary policy as applied by the Propaganda Congregation was geared to the global diffusion of Catholic belief, the provision of pastoral and administrative structures and the maintenance of harmony and good order in the local churches, based on respect for authority, especially that of the Roman pontiff himself as the apex of the entire system. The Congregation disseminated the ultramontane spirit of devotion to and dependence on Rome among the peoples subject to it. However, these were general roles. By and large, the Congregation was not concerned to formulate in an independent way specific, detailed policies about the particular circumstances of the mission churches. At this level, Propaganda decisions nearly always took the form of replies to questions, issues and problems initially raised by bishops, clergy and laity in the local churches themselves. Roman missionary policy developed as a sequence of responses to grass-roots requests for judgement or intervention.

In the concrete, then, relations between the Church's Roman centre and missionary periphery took the form of the continual movement of vast quantities of paper in and out of the Propaganda secretariat. All letters received at the Congregation were immediately entered into a register and given protocol reference numbers on their arrival at the offices on the Piazza di Spagna. They were conveyed to the Prefect General, who every morning received the Secretary General and with him examined the mail in order to classify it according to types of question and the procedures indicated. At an appropriate time each matter was placed on the agenda of one of the weekly congressi for a more formal consideration.

Many questions of a minor or middling importance were decided at this level but more serious and weighty matters or problems were passed on to the monthly congregazione of cardinals. The Prefect selected one of the cardinals to study each matter and to present a report to the cardinals' meeting as the basis for discussion. The cardinal so deputed was called the ponente and his
report the ponenza. In the compilation of his presentation the cardinal ponente was assisted by the secretariat staff and especially by the minutante who specialized in the affairs of that part of the world affected by the question at hand. Indeed, it was the minutante who performed the substantial work of researching, accumulating and arranging the historical, geographical, legal and personal data to be presented in the ponenza. The activity of the minutanti was vital to the efficient functioning of the system.

Typically prepared in a most thorough way, the ponenza was divided into two sections. The ristretto described the background of the case, outlined the relevant points of fact and law, discussed the reasons for and against a range of options and concluded with a series of questions to be decided, the dubbi. The second section, the sommario, was an illustrative collection of copies of letters and other papers with a bearing on the case, arranged chronologically. When the ponenza had been finalized it was printed on the Congregation's own printing press and distributed to the cardinals before their meeting and also to any consultors who might be involved in the deliberations.

During the meeting itself, after the ponente’s presentation and a discussion, the cardinals voted on each of the dubbi and the decisions were recorded by the Secretary General. These were then presented to the Pope for confirmation, modification or rejection at an audience granted to either the Prefect or the Secretary. Finally, the outcome of the process was communicated to the original correspondent or inquirer or petitioner in a letter which was signed by the Prefect and countersigned by the Secretary and which included a papal brief or Propaganda decree where this was required as in the case, for example, of the establishment of a new diocese or the appointment of a bishop or some other kind of ecclesiastical superior. When papal decrees were
required, the Congregation liaised with the Secretariat of State and the Secretariat of Briefs for these documents to be issued.17

The roles of the cardinal ponente and the minutante in these proceedings were crucial. The Pope usually approved the decisions arrived at by the cardinals, decisions which were largely shaped by the line taken in the ponenza. It was the cardinal responsible for this report, assisted by the minutante, who developed the official picture of any given situation with all its possibilities for the selection and interpretation of facts and the allocation of emphasis and nuance, although the presence of the usually even-handed sommario as an appendix of copies of original documents representative of the principal opinions excluded any extravagant bias. However, in listing the dubbi the ponenza in effect decided what the issues were. A ponenza which pursued a particular line and terminated in a particular combination of dubbi often created a foregone conclusion.18 The discussions of the cardinals were nevertheless real discussions and, of course, the last word rested with the Pope.

Influential though the cardinal ponenti and minutanti were, the Prefect General remained the single most significant figure within the Propaganda system. The ponenti and minutanti changed from one congregazione to the next, from one issue to the next, but the Prefect's role as chief executive officer of the whole Congregation, chairman of the cardinals' assemblies, and Grand Chancellor of the Urban College de Propaganda Fide, as well as having the general oversight of the ongoing administration of the Congregation, was permanent. Moreover, many matters of a less formal nature, that is to say, not dealing with, for example, the creation of new territorial administrative units, the appointment of bishops and the revision of synodal enactments, but possibly still having a crucial bearing on the development of particular

---

17 Heston, pp. 33-36; Scharp, pp. 61-64; Prud'homme, Vol. I, p. 144.
missions and the political balance of forces within them, were never referred to the cardinalatial congradazioni. Policy recommendations at this level emerged from discussions within the secretariat, during the congressi, and were referred directly to the Pope. In these discussions the voice of the Prefect was decisive. Many of the conflicts described in this study were resolved in this way.\(^\text{19}\)

III

Two men occupied this centrally important position during the years covered by this study: Cardinals Giacomo Fransoni (in office 1834-1856) and Alessandro Barnabò (1856-1874). Born in Genoa in 1775 into an aristocratic family and ordained to the priesthood in 1806, Giacomo Fransoni entered the papal diplomatic corps and was appointed nuncio to Portugal in 1822 with the style of titular Archbishop of Nazianzen. Recalled to Rome as a cardinal he was made Prefect of the finance section of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide by Pope Gregory XVI in 1830 and, the following year, Prefect of the Congregation for Ecclesiastical Immunity. In 1834 he was transferred to the Prefecture General of the Propaganda Congregation which post he held until his death in 1856. A man of exceptional piety who combined modesty and simplicity of manner with nobility and grandeur of appearance, Fransoni was universally admired for his amiability, gentleness and courtesy which charmed people into feeling at ease in his presence.\(^\text{20}\)

Fransoni’s successor was Alessandro Barnabò. He was born in Foligno in 1801 of noble parents. The French administration in Italy sent him at the age of ten to the military school at La Flèche in France where Bonaparte had young

\(^{19}\) Because of his prestige and the powers exercised by the Congregation over which he presided the Prefect General was sometimes called ‘the Red Pope’. Lynskey, p. 38.

aristocrats from the occupied areas educated. Soon after his return to his homeland in 1814, Barnabò entered the seminary at Foligno and later the one at Camerino. After philosophy and law studies at the Sapienza University in Rome, he was ordained to the priesthood in 1833 and then worked in a parish and as aiutante di studio to the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Council. In 1838 he was appointed as a consultor to the Propaganda Congregation. He spent the rest of his life in the service of this curial department, working his way up the grades becoming Secretary General in 1847 and Prefect General in 1856. He was also a canon of St. Peter's Basilica. He had the oversight of the affairs of the Congregation for a few years before becoming Prefect in that Fransoni was ill and feeble from 1854 onwards and the main burden of management fell on the Secretary. When Barnabò was raised to the cardinalate shortly after the death of Fransoni it was clear that he was to succeed to the Prefecture General. He presided over the Congregation for the rest of his life which ended in 1874.

Although little known to historians, Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò was one of the most important figures in the Roman curia in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. At a time when the corporate significance of the college of cardinals was in decline, Barnabò was part of the inner group who exercised great influence during the reign of Pius IX and enjoyed the personal confidence and affection of the Pope himself. Pius trusted Barnabò


On the staff of the Propaganda Congregation for over 35 years, almost 20 as Prefect General, he was arguably the single most important person in the development of Catholic missionary policy in this period, presiding over a process not only of rapid expansion but also of centralization and bureaucratization. He modernized the operations of the Congregation. His hitherto scarcely recognized role in the shaping of Australian Catholicism will be a major theme of this study.

Energetic, confident and shrewd, Cardinal Barnabò was well known for his devotion to work and consuming sense of duty. His character was moulded by his boyhood training in a military academy. As one who occupied himself with every aspect of the running of his Congregation and never forgot anything or lost his head in any situation, he was the ideal bureaucrat. He himself claimed that he read every single letter sent out by the Congregation. He enjoyed the exercise of power and the management of affairs. Towards the end of the 1850s John Maguire, an Irish member of the British Parliament, visited Rome and wrote a defence of Pius IX and the papal government which includes the following comment on Barnabò: 'Here in this eminent personage and this distinguished post, we see realized the fond dream of the Administrative Reformers of our own day - "the right man in the right place". Maguire added that Barnabò's leisure time was not spent 'in intellectual enjoyment, or even in healthful recreation' but in a heavy round of confessions, preaching, giving retreats and visiting the schools, orphanages

---


and other institutions of which he was patron. Barnabò had a special interest in the extension of free education to poor children. He was also a member of other curial congregations.  

Barnabò was very different from his predecessor, the tall, dignified, suave Fransoni. He was a thick-set, little man with rapid, guttural speech accompanied by lively gestures. His personality was difficult. He was not only given to an abruptness surprising in the formal, mannered word of the papal court, but when provoked was capable of violent language and explosions of temper. Uncompromising and indomitable, he was inclined to bully. Just before the opening of the Vatican Council in 1869 the French liberal Catholic bishop Louis Dupanloup of Orléans complained that Barnabò wanted to drive the bishops like a herd of pigs. Barnabò’s honesty verged on the hurtful and his sense of humour on the cruel. These aspects of Barnabò’s character were balanced by a faithfulness to friends and a generosity to enemies. In the complex human situations which he encountered in his work he demonstrated perception and understanding and genuinely sought just and peaceful solutions. His hearty affability chaffed at stuffiness and ceremony. His habits of life and work were little altered by his elevation to the cardinalate. He possessed a humility which caused him to refuse two offers of a bishopric and to accept the cardinalate only at the repeated insistence of the Pope.  

Cardinal Barnabò is best known to English-language church historians through the derogatory remarks made about him by Newman. It was with Barnabò in mind that Newman asked,  

---

27 Maguire, p. 8; Trevor, p. 132.  
Alessandro Barnabò.
He was the Cardinal Prefect General of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide from 1856 to 1874.

And who is Propaganda? Virtually, one sharp man of business, who works day and night, and despatches his work quick off, to the East and the West; a high dignitary indeed...but after all little more than a clerk.\textsuperscript{30}

Continuing this theme, Newman complained that Barnabò was originally a mere clerk - to whom routine, and despatch, are everything and gentleness, courteousness, frankness, and considerateness are words without meaning.\textsuperscript{31}

Newman conceded that Barnabò was 'a good and religious man', but 'he is too much a brisk man of business to be a suitable Prefect for so great a Congregation'.\textsuperscript{32} The antagonism of Newman towards Barnabò was born of the frustration that he encountered in his own dealings with the Propaganda system.

Cardinal Barnabò talks by the half hour, not letting anyone else speak, and saying he knows all about it already, and wants no information, for Mgr. Talbot [George Talbot, an Anglo-Irishman at the papal court] has told him all about it. What chance should I have with broken Italian (they don't, can't speak Latin).\textsuperscript{33}

Turning to the post of Secretary General of the Propaganda Congregation, the incumbent when our period opens in 1842 was Archbishop Ignazio Cadolini. He was born in Cremona in 1794. After his initial seminary training he studied canon and civil law in Bologna and Rome and served as an uditore at the Madrid nunciature through the 1820s. In 1828 he was made Bishop of Cervia and was later moved to Foligno and again to Spoleto. In 1838 he was appointed Secretary of the Propaganda Congregation with the title of Archbishop of Edessa. He became a cardinal in 1843 and was sent to Ferrara as its archbishop. He died there in 1850. Roman curial officials in the nineteenth century, while pious and dedicated, were generally of a conservative cast of mind, suspicious of the modern world.\textsuperscript{34} Cadolini demonstrates that they were

\textsuperscript{31} Newman-Coleridge, 26 Apr. 1867, in LDJHN, vol. XXIII, p. 191.
\textsuperscript{32} Newman-Simeon, 22 May 1865, in LDJHN, vol. XXI, p. 436.
\textsuperscript{33} Quoted in Ward, vol. II, p. 69.
\textsuperscript{34} Aubert, Le Pontificat de Pie IX, p. 281.
not necessarily bone-headed reactionaries. A man of learning and prudence, he supported the reform of the Papal State and the cause of Italian unification. As a diocesan bishop at the time of the revolutions of 1831 and 1848 he showed a flexible attitude and tried to moderate the violence of both the revolts and the subsequent government repression.\(^{35}\)

When Cadolini went to Ferrara he was replaced at the *Propaganda* Congregation by Giovanni Brunelli. Born in Rome in 1795 and after ordination, postgraduate studies and teaching in the Roman Seminary, he entered the curial service in 1832. He worked in a variety of congregations and lectured in canon law at the *Sapienza* University. In 1843 he was consecrated titular Archbishop of Thessalonika and appointed Secretary of the *Propaganda* Congregation. Five years later he was sent to Spain as nuncio. In 1852 he was recalled to Rome as a curial cardinal and was later given the post of Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Studies. In 1856 he became Bishop of Osimo and Cingoli and died in 1861.\(^{36}\)

Brunelli was succeeded as Secretary by Alessandro Barnabò whom we have already met. When Barnabò was promoted to the *Propaganda* Prefecture in 1856 the Secretary's job went to Gaetano Bedini, titular Archbishop of Thebes, who was 50 years old at the time. Born in Senigaglia, he attended the local seminary and after ordination in 1817 he became a member of the cathedral chapter of Viterbo. On entering the papal diplomatic service he was assigned to the nunciature in Vienna as an *uditore* and in 1845 he was appointed nuncio to Brazil. Three years later he became Substitute Secretary of State and after the collapse of the revolution of 1848 in the Papal State he was


\(^{36}\) *La Gerarchia Cattolica e la Famiglia Pontificia per l'anno 1878*, Rome, 1878, p. 123; Metzler, *'Präfekten und Sekretäre'*, p. 58; *DESE*, vol. XIV, p. 204; L.Pasztor, *'Brunelli, Giovanni'*, *DBI*, vol. 14, pp. 555-556.
sent to Bologna to restore order and there pursued a reactionary policy, supported by Austrian troops. In 1852 he was sent on a special mission to the Catholic Church in the United States. He became Secretary of the *Propaganda* Congregation in 1856. George Talbot thought that Bedini was not really interested in issues but only in knowing and following the Pope's wishes in order to get himself made a cardinal. If so, Bedini was successful for he received the red hat in 1861. He was also made Bishop of Viterbo where he died three years later.37

Annibale Capalti was born in Rome in 1811. His career included a chair of ecclesiastical law at the *Sapienza* University and the secretarships of the Congregations of Rites and of Studies before succeeding Bedini in the same office at the *Propaganda* Congregation. He was made a cardinal in 1868 and Prefect of the Congregation of Studies. Capalti functioned as one of the presidents (and an irascible one) of the Vatican Council. He died in 1877.38

The next Secretary General, and the last in the period covered by this study, was Giovanni Simeoni who was born at Paliano near Palestrina in 1816, the son of a member of the household of the princely family of Colonna, under whose auspices he studied for the priesthood. Ordained in 1839, he taught philosophy and theology at the *Propaganda* College and followed this with a stint as an *uditore* in the Madrid and Vienna nunciatures. Returning to Rome, he was made Secretary for the Eastern-Churches section within the *Propaganda* Congregation in 1862 and Secretary General six years later, at which time he was also consecrated titular Archbishop of Chalcedon. In 1875 he became a cardinal and was sent as nuncio to Spain to resume the diplomatic relations broken by the 1868 revolution. The following year he succeeded


Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli as Secretary of State. In the reshuffle of the papal curia that followed the death of Pius IX in 1878 Simeoni returned to the Propaganda Congregation as Prefect and kept this position until his death in 1892.39

As suggested above, the under-secretaries or minutanti played a vital role in Propaganda operations, principally as experts on various parts of the missionary world, taking part in the discussions in congressi, organizing the ponenze and liaising with missionary bishops and clergy who were visiting Rome. Different minutanti were responsible for different territorial or linguistic divisions of labour. The Australian Church was included in the responsibilities of the minutante in charge of the Catholic affairs of the British Empire and the other English-speaking countries. The Propaganda minutanti of the nineteenth century usually share the anonymity that is often the historical fate of low- and middle-ranks bureaucrats. The best known of those who were involved in Australian affairs was Giovanni Battista Palma, who worked at the Congregation in the 1840s. His main claims to fame are as a contributor to the development of the scientific historical method, as the one whom Newman called his only friend in Rome and for being shot dead while standing at a window of the Quirinal palace during the Roman revolution of 1848.40 Filippo Vespasiani, at the Congregation in the 1840s and 1850s, was also a progressive teacher of church history. He lectured at the Propaganda College.41 The man who was minutante for the English-speaking missions throughout practically the entire period covered by this study and who appears

---


to have played an important role in decision-making about Australia, Achille Rinaldini, is unfortunately a shadowy figure. He was a professor of moral theology at the Propaganda College and a canon of the church of S. Maria in Monte Santo. Despite the paucity of details about him, it is safe to assume that after the standard seminary studies his life was more or less entirely encompassed by the papal curial service. The consultors whose advice was sought by the Propaganda administration were mainly drawn from the Roman ecclesiastical universities and courts.

This survey of the officialdom of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide indicates that the organization was a very Italian affair. During the years covered by this study, all the Prefects, all the Secretaries and all the lesser functionaries who worked in the secretariat were Italian, as was a majority of the cardinals and consultors. It was also a priestly and, therefore, a male world. It was, moreover, a world from which prolonged, first-hand experience of missionary situations was absent. One historian of the nineteenth-century Catholic missions has written that the management of the Congregation was in the hands of people who 'often lacked the most fundamental knowledge of missionary work'. Of course, they had plenty of theoretical and documentary knowledge, but the point is taken. They generally came to the Congregation from careers in the papal diplomatic service, canon law, curial administration or academia, or a combination of these backgrounds. Not surprisingly, Propaganda dealings with missionary personnel were often labyrinthine rather than forthright, with much effort being put into the balance of forces. Newman had little confidence in the Italian ecclesiastics who ran the Congregation because he saw them as double-dealing smooth operators,

---

42 Murray-Cullen, 28 Jun. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1; Kirby-Murray, 17 Feb. 1868, MDA, A.3.5. See also the directories to the papal curia published at Rome in the 1840s, '50s, '60s and '70s under various titles, Notizie per l'anno, La Gerarchia Cattolica e la Famiglia Pontificia, Annuario Pontificio, etc.
although he supposed that 'they have so much experience of tricky men, men with an object etc. that they cannot understand a person who is straightforward'.\textsuperscript{44} Propaganda thinking tended to fix itself on to the legal, bureaucratic and political aspects of any situation. Deliberations and decisions were carried out in an atmosphere detached from what was actually happening in some distant missionary field.\textsuperscript{45}

IV

Before turning to Archbishop Polding's relationship with the Sacred Congregation \textit{de Propaganda Fide}, it will be helpful to consider some of the specific and practical factors which affected the link between this organization and one particular part of its jurisdiction, the Australian Catholic Church. The first point to make is that Australia was only one of the Congregation's many responsibilities, and not a very significant one at that in terms of its population and its place in the overall missionary scheme of things, compared to the United States with its burgeoning economic power, Britain as the metropolis of a great global empire, Canada with its large French-speaking Catholic minority, the Uniate Catholic communities in the eastern Mediterranean basin steeped in antiquity and Asia with its teeming populations. In the later nineteenth century an average of a mere 5\% of the annual output of


\textsuperscript{45} All of this was evident in the proceedings of the commission established to handle missionary matters at the Vatican Council of 1869-1870, presided over by the Propaganda Prefect, Barnabò. Of all the pressing issues relating to the challenge of evangelization in the later nineteenth century that might have been examined, this body devoted much of its energies to a consideration of how to apply the rules set down by the Council of Trent to the canon law of the Eastern Uniate Churches. Aubert, \textit{The Church in an Age of Liberalism}. pp. 158, 309; Beckman, 'The Missions between 1840 and 1870', pp. 200-203; Metzler, 'Präfekten und Sekretäre', p. 39; J.Baumgartner, 'The Expansion of Catholic Missions from the time of Leo XIII until World War II', in R.Aubert et al. (eds.), \textit{History of the Church}, vol. IX, \textit{The Church in the Industrial Age}, London, 1981, p. 527; P.Chiocchetta, 'Le vicende nel secolo XIX nella prospettiva missionaria', in \textit{Memoria Rerum}, vol. III, pt. 1, pp. 20-21.
correspondence from the *Propaganda* secretariat was destined for Oceania, of which region Australia formed only a part, albeit the most important.\textsuperscript{46}

In an age of fervent papalism, Australia’s missionary churchmen exalted and idealized this section of the Roman bureaucracy, at least in their public utterances. Representative of this tendency was Mgr. George Dillon, a senior priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney, who in a book published in 1885 described the Congregation as 'that noble institution' which was 'the actual exercise of the authority of the Vicar of Christ in our regard'. Dillon depicted *Propaganda* officials as overworked and underpaid, labouring out of 'pure devotion to religion and the hope of spiritual reward...Rome serves all the world, and at *Propaganda* all the world is served'.\textsuperscript{47} From the beginning of his Australian career Archbishop Vaughan had every confidence in 'the prudence, expertise and wisdom of the *Propaganda*' and was convinced that whatever was settled by this supreme authority had to be for the best.\textsuperscript{48} The main thing was to discover its wishes.\textsuperscript{49}

Polding and his fellow Australian missionaries were fully aware of the absolute power which the *Propaganda* Congregation exercised over them. The political relationship between the Congregation and the Australian Church was abundantly clear to both sides. A Catholic who wrote to Rome from Australia or any other part of the world, whether bishop, priest or layman, adopted and was expected to adopt a florid, obsequious style of prose, flattering to the recipient and placing the sender in a servile position. Addressing the Pope, the suppliant began by describing himself as 'lying prostrate at the sacred feet of Your Holiness'. Writing to the Cardinal Prefect General of the *Propaganda* Congregation, he concluded by bending 'to kiss the hem of the Sacred Purple' (of the Cardinal's robe). If the suppliant went to Rome such

\textsuperscript{47} G. Dillon, *The Spoliation of Propaganda*, Dublin, 1885, pp. 6-9, 38-39.
\textsuperscript{48} Vaughan-Smith, 11 May 1873, *SPFLMA*, Smith papers-Australia.
\textsuperscript{49} Vaughan-Smith, 6 Mar. 1873, *SPFLMA*, Smith papers-Australia.
epistolary conventions were translated into actual bodily postures. The whole style of address was a constant reminder of superior and inferior roles.

The conflicts which required Roman intervention and which provide the subject matter for this study generally concerned important issues touching on the nature and future of Australian Catholicism and power struggles among the clergy, but Propaganda control extended well below these larger issues to the most ordinary, day-to-day concerns. Requests, applications and submissions from Australia evoked from the Congregation a constant stream of decrees, rescripts, interpretations, dispensations and permissions regulating the minutiae of administrative procedures, religious ceremonial, the liturgical calendar and books, the ecclesiastical haberdashery of vestments and church furnishings, marriage cases, monastic vows, finance and property, pious societies and confraternities, indulgences, privileges, academic and honorific titles and so on. The dependence of the Australian missions on Rome is most marked at this routine, daily level.

Because the Propaganda Congregation was clothed with the authority of the Pope himself in missionary affairs, to disobey its decisions was unthinkable. To dissent from its judgements in matters big or small, or even to question them, was a serious and risky step, which, as we shall see, Polding and other Australian bishops were prepared to take only in critical circumstances. Although in their private correspondence the bishops were often strident in their complaints about how they were treated by Rome and trenchant in their criticism of Propaganda policy, publicly they were models of docility and subservience.

50 Or almost unthinkable, as is shown by the extraordinary case of the first Bishop of Perth, the possibly mentally-unstable John Brady, who flagrantly disobeyed repeated papal and Propaganda instructions in the late 1840s and early 1850s. This study does not describe the Brady case in detail but Polding’s involvement both at Rome and Perth is looked at in Chapter III, pp. 126-133.
V

Since the relationship between the Congregation and the Australian Church was to a large degree shaped by the quality of the communications that passed between them, it will be helpful to consider the practical factors at work on this level. The ordinary medium by which the Catholic bishops of the Australian colonies communicated with Rome was the writing of letters, either personally or as dictated to a secretary, and the despatch of these letters through the civil postal service. Such letters were addressed to the Cardinal Prefect General, the Secretary General, the minutante in charge of Australian business at the Propaganda Congregation or sometimes, on occasions of the utmost formality or gravity, to the Pope himself. The bishops also maintained regular postal contact with others overseas, in Rome or elsewhere in Europe, who, while not members of the papal administration, were believed to understand it well and carry influence with it. Such contacts were utilized when, as was often the case, a more indirect means of conveying information and views to Roman officialdom, was deemed to be more effective or prudent.

Since a missionary churchman often lacked the inside knowledge and curial sophistication required to find his way through the maze of Roman bureaucracy and procedure, the Congregation preferred him to use the services of a representative or agent, resident in Rome or at least in Europe, to protect itself against the clumsy approaches of those ill-informed about the ways of the Church’s central government. On the other hand, the Congregation did not welcome too great a reliance on agents whose role, as far as it was concerned, was to facilitate communication between Rome and the principal, not to replace it.\footnote{J. Connell, The Roman Catholic Church in England 1780-1850: A Study in Internal Politics, Philadelphia, 1984, pp. 197-198; R. Schiefen, Nicholas Wiseman and the Transformation of English Catholicism, Shepherdstown, 1984, pp. 72-73.} Australian bishops maintained such agents who gave them advice about the Roman scene, promoted their interests at the Congregation and
elsewhere, passed on useful information and curial gossip and attended to routine matters such as ensuring submissions were in the correct form and arranging for documents to be translated.

Different Australian bishops used different agents. In the 1840s Polding relied on two Englishmen in Rome, Charles Acton and Thomas Grant. Born in Naples, where his father served as Prime Minister, educated in England and trained for the priesthood at the Accademia Ecclesiastica in Rome, Acton held a variety of positions in the papal court, administration, legal system and diplomatic corps. In 1842 he became a cardinal and protector of the English College in Rome. All matters concerning England and its overseas dependencies were referred to him by Gregory XVI. Acton might have played a significant role in the history of Australian Catholicism over a longer period of time had it not been for his untimely death at the age of 44 in 1847. Dr. Thomas Grant was born in France in 1816 and studied for the priesthood at St. Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, and the English College in Rome. He himself became Rector of the English College in 1844 and also served as secretary to Cardinal Acton. He had great experience in the management of business at the Roman congregations. For some reason that is not entirely clear, when Grant left the English College in 1851 to become first Bishop of Southwark in the restored English Catholic hierarchy, Polding no longer, or very rarely, availed himself of that institution for agency work although he sometimes stayed there during his visits to Rome.

Polding seems not to have kept an agent in Rome in the 1850s but around 1860 he began to use the services of an Irish Benedictine monk,


Cardinal Charles Acton, Polding's agent in Rome.


Thomas Grant as Bishop of Southwark. He was formerly Rector of the English College, Rome, and was Polding's agent after the death of Cardinal Acton.

Bernard Smith, who spent the greater part of his life in the city. He first went there to live at the Irish College as a seminarian for the Diocese of Kilmore and to study at the Jesuits' Roman College. He entered the Benedictine Order in 1847 but soon left it on account of the revolutionary troubles in Rome at the end of the 1840s and was attached to the Archdiocese of Dublin. He was elected Vice-Rector of the Irish College but resigned from this post in 1855 to re-enter the Benedictine Order and thereafter resided at the monastery of S. Callisto in Trastevere. Highly regarded academically and proficient in ancient languages, he was the Rector of the College of S. Anselmo, a consultor to various congregations, including Propaganda, and a theology and languages professor at the Propaganda College. He enjoyed the personal confidence of Cardinal Barnabò. His personality was reserved. He was made a titular abbot by Pope Leo XIII and died in 1892. Later in life Smith was more English than Irish in his sentiments which, together with his being a Benedictine monk, explains Polding's connection with him.54

The Rectors of the Irish College in Rome functioned as agents for the Irish Catholic Church and for Irish missionaries abroad. During our period, they acted constantly as intermediaries between Australia, too, and the Propaganda Congregation, firstly Mgr. Paul Cullen, before his transfer to Ireland as Archbishop of Armagh in 1850 (and as Archbishop of Dublin from 1852), and after him Mgr. (later Archbishop) Tobias Kirby, who functioned as Rector for almost 40 years. The Irish College generally enjoyed an excellent relationship with the Propaganda Congregation, both Fransoni and Barnabò being cardinal protectors of the College.55

Mgr. Tobias Kirby, Rector of the Irish College in Rome, and agent of the Cullenite Irish Australian bishops.

(Source: J. Hanly, *The Irish College Rome*, Norwich, 1989, np.)
This relationship was exploited to the full by the Irish bishops who arrived in Australia in the 1860s and were closely associated with Archbishop Cullen: James Quinn of Brisbane, Matthew Quinn of Bathurst and James Murray of Maitland and their allies, William Lanigan of Goulburn, Daniel Murphy of Hobart and Timothy O'Mahony of Armidale. Tobias Kirby offered much advice to these men on managing their affairs at the Propaganda Congregation and played a very important part in shaping Propaganda attitudes to Australia. In 1867 the Australian Cullenites asked him officially to be their Roman representative.56

Not only did Smith and Kirby represent opposing interests in the Australian Church, they disliked each other. The resignation of Smith as Vice-Rector of the Irish College in 1855 was precipitated by a report which he sent to Cardinal Fransoni severely critical of Kirby's administration, accusing it of anti-intellectualism.57

Not all Irish Australian bishops employed the Rector of the Irish College as their Roman agent. The independent-minded James Goold of Melbourne either travelled to Rome to deal with important issues in person or was represented by his uncle, James Hynes, the former Dominican Bishop of Demuera in British Guiana, who was living in retirement in Ireland in the 1850s and '60s but who was prepared to go to Rome whenever required by his nephew.58

In 1862 a meeting of Australian bishops considered the appointment of a Roman agent who would represent the episcopate generally. They agreed that such an agent general was needed, that he should represent only the bishops

56 J.Quinn-Kirby, 21 Mar. 1867, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1867/107. Kirby once received a letter from an American admirer who wrote, 'among my friends you are regarded as second only to Pius 9th. himself'. Reynolds-Kirby, 20 Feb. 1867, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1867/57. The Australian Cullenite bishops saw him in the same light.
57 Byrne, pp. 26-29.
and that one of his major duties would be to defend them from criticisms levelled by the lower clergy. After some discussion about candidates for the job, including Smith and Kirby, the establishment of an Australian College, whose rector would discharge the office, was proposed. The bishops found the idea attractive but it was never implemented because of financial doubts.59

The Australian bishops' quest for influential figures to get their points of across across at the papal court extended beyond Rome itself. Polding wrote from time to time to English Catholic leaders seeking their assistance, including the first two Archbishops of Westminster, Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman and Cardinal Henry Edward Manning, the Bishop of Southwark, Thomas Grant, and two bishops from his own Benedictine Order, Thomas Brown of Newport and Menevia and William Ullathorne of Birmingham. Polding also used the services of his cousin and friend, Thomas Heptonstall, procurator of the English Benedictine Congregation and resident in London, mainly at the level of financial and other practicalities but sometimes also at the level of contact with Rome.60

The attentions outside Rome of the Cullenite Australians were naturally fixed on their mentor, Paul Cullen himself. The bishops in Australia who enjoyed the patronage of Cullen had an ally of incomparable influence and prestige. His 30-year residence in Rome as student, professor and Rector of the Irish College before returning to Ireland gave him a deep understanding of the Roman ecclesiastical world and the intimate acquaintance of many of its powerful personages. The Propaganda officials had particular reason to be


grateful to him because during the Roman revolution in 1848 he saved the Propaganda College by having the presence of mind to raise the American flag over the building. He was a personal friend of both Cardinals Fransoni and Barnabò, enjoying an especially warm relationship with the latter. On the death of Fransoni, he hoped Barnabò would succeed to the Prefecture. His relationship with Barnabò was the basis of his immense Roman credibility. Cullen was, moreover, highly regarded by Pope Pius IX. In 1866 he was made a cardinal and appointed to, among other curial departments, the Congregation de Propaganda Fide. On this occasion he assured James Murray and the others that his heightened influence was at their service. Cullen systematically promoted at the Roman court the opinions and interests of his Australian dependents and their supporters. They in turn looked to him constantly for counsel and direction.

Closely associated with Cullen was his nephew and private secretary, Patrick Francis Moran, previously an academic and Vice-Rector at the Irish College in Rome and subsequently Bishop of Ossory in Ireland (and, of course, later Archbishop of Sydney). The Australian Cullenites regarded Moran, too, as a useful figure in their dealings with Rome. Just before going out to Australia in 1866, Murray appointed Moran as a vicar general of the Diocese of Maitland and asked him to act as an overseas agent for him. On the death of Cullen in 1878 and in the midst of a crisis in their relations with Rome, all the members of this group appointed Moran as their official representative at the Holy See.

---

62 Cullen-Murray, 2 Jul. 1866, MDA 1.11.
63 Murray-Cullen, 25 Jun. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1; J.Quinn-Cullen, 19 May 1862 (PC), SAA, Overseas clergy: Cullen.
Cullen, Moran and Kirby worked hard, and generally with much success, to foster the good standing of their Australian friends at the *Propaganda* Congregation. Their correspondence is replete with exhortations to write often to the Congregation as well as promptings about sending messages of congratulation to Roman officials on their appointments and promotions.66 The alignment of Cullen in Dublin, Kirby in Rome, Moran in both places and the Cullenite bishops in Australia was able to outmanoeuvre Polding at almost every turn in the ecclesiastical politics centring on the *Propaganda* Congregation in the 1860s, the critically important decade for the development of Australian Catholicism.

Although the normal medium whereby Australian bishops communicated with the Congregation and with their overseas agents and contacts was the letter, they sometimes travelled to Europe in person. They went to Rome to present themselves to the Pope and the Congregation on *ad limina* visits. Even when overseas, not on an official *ad limina* visit but to tour England, Ireland and Europe in search of finance and recruits, they usually spent some time in Rome. The majority of the Australian episcopate gathered in Rome for the Vatican Council of 1869-1870.

One bishop going overseas sometimes agreed to perform certain tasks on behalf of another who was staying at home. For example, Bishop Goold of Melbourne acted for Polding when he went to Rome in 1858.67 Bishop Geoghegan of Adelaide performed the same service for Polding in the early 1860s.68 Sometimes bishops sent one of their own priests overseas to represent them, as in the case of Polding's Vicar General, Henry Gregory, who went to

---


Rome on official Sydney diocesan business in the early 1850s.\(^6^9\) In this way, some of the Italian priests who worked in Australia in the 1860s and 1870s played a significant role. They were used as intermediaries with the Roman curia by their bishops because of their familiarity with the Italian language and culture, supposed understanding of curial methods and personal connections. The Sydney Franciscan friar, Ottavio Barsanti, who was thought to know well several influential people in the curia, was sent by Polding to Rome on a special mission in 1867.\(^7^0\) Polding’s private secretary, Vincenzo Coletti, kept up a frequent correspondence with his friend at the Propaganda Congregation, the Australian minutante, Achille Rinaldini.\(^7^1\) James Quinn’s, Vicar General, Giovanni Cani, was the brother of the Vice-Rector of the Roman Seminary, Dr. Antonio Cani. Giovanni was in Rome in the mid-1870s on Brisbane business before the Propaganda Congregation.\(^7^2\)

Aware of how vitally important was Rome’s role in the politics of the Australian Church, the bishops were possessive about lines of communication. They grew nervous when any of their subjects made use of these lines and they tried to restrict the practice.\(^7^3\) The Propaganda Congregation, on the other hand, welcomed direct reports from the lower clergy as a way of checking up on the higher. For example, although the Irish Australian missionary priest, Patrick Bermingham, was rebuked by the Congregation for his insubordination towards both Polding and Goold, it nevertheless invited him at the same time to supply information and views about Australia.\(^7^4\) The Congregation’s archives are full of letters sent by priests

\(^{69}\) See this thesis, pp. 116-117.  
\(^{70}\) See this thesis, pp. 283-285.  
\(^{73}\) See this thesis, pp. 125, 136, 192, 201.  
\(^{74}\) See this thesis, pp. 188-189.
and lay people complaining about their bishops, who thus failed in their attempts to monopolize communications with Rome.

Let us now turn to the Congregation's side of the Roman-Australian connection. The Congregation conveyed its decisions, information and requests to the Australian Church by means of written correspondence in the form of letters, decrees, rescripts and questionnaires. We saw that Australian churchmen from time to time had direct contact with Rome through personal visits, but there was no parallel activity on the Roman side. In other words, during the years under consideration the Congregation never sent anyone to Australia as an official representative or investigator. Such visits were called for by colonial Catholics at critical times and, on one occasion, in 1859, the Congregation actually decided to send a papal visitator to Australia to inquire into the deeply disturbed affairs of the Archdiocese of Sydney but the plan was abandoned when the one chosen for the task, Ullathorne, declined it.75 In 1864 Bernard Smith recommended the despatch of a special investigator to Australia but this was not acted upon.76 Generally speaking, as far as Australia was concerned, Roman officials believed that there was no point in sending an outsider across vast distances to a place that he did not know and where he would accordingly have difficulty understanding local problems and proposing appropriate remedies.77

Rome did appoint legates and investigators for Australia but they were always bishops already residing there, chosen from the local hierarchy. The Archbishop Metropolitan was frequently selected for this work by virtue of his supervisory role with regard to the other dioceses. Thus Polding went to Perth

75 See this thesis, pp. 173-176.
76 See this thesis, p. 236.
77 Ponente Cardinale Carlo Reisach. Ristretto con sommario sulla elezione di un Amministratore Apostolico con carattere vescovile per la Diocesi di Perth, di un Coadjutore pel Vescovo di Hobartown, dei Vescovi di Goulburn, Armidale ed Adelaide e sullo stato della religione nell'Australia in generale, CEPA, Acta, vol. 229, fols. 256 ff. A permanent papal legation to the Australian Catholic Church was established only in 1914.
in 1852 to enforce a papal sentence against the local bishop.\footnote{See this thesis, pp. 132-133.} A few years later, he was asked to find out what the dispute between Goold and some of his clergy in the Diocese of Melbourne was about. First Polding and then Vaughan were required to look into the almost permanently agitated state of affairs in the Diocese of Brisbane.\footnote{McLay, pp. 95, 197-198.} Sometimes Rome chose bishops other than the Metropolitan for these tasks. Daniel Murphy of Hobart and Matthew Quinn of Bathurst were instituted as joint papal commissioners to investigate the grave problems of the Diocese of Adelaide in the early 1870s.\footnote{M.Press, *From Our Broken Toil: South Australian Catholics 1836-1905*, Archdiocese of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 186-187.} At about the same time Quinn of Bathurst and Murray of Maitland were asked to inquire into the government of James Quinn of Brisbane.\footnote{McLay, p. 76.}

The *Propaganda* Congregation tried to ensure that its decisions about the Australian missions were based on full and accurate information. It was also aware that in circumstances of conflict the opinions and interpretations received from Australia were usually partisan. For this reason the Cardinal Prefect routinely looked beyond his Australian sources for facts, advice and views. He often approached the Australian agents in Rome, Kirby and Smith. Mgr. George Talbot de Malahide, the Anglo-Irish convert clergyman who was for almost 20 years a member of Pius IX's inner circle and who helped to shape Roman policy towards the English Catholic Church,\footnote{Aubert, *Le Pontificat de Pie IX*, p. 284; Norman, *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 257-258.} also made his considerable influence felt in Australian affairs, usually contrary to the interests of Polding. Talbot had 'a love of managing things and persons, from the Pope downwards'. He was one of Pius IX's closest confidants and favourites. He probably exaggerated his own influence over the Pope but it was
Pope Pius IX with his Anticamera segreta. Mgr. George Talbot is standing immediately to the Pope's left and behind the chair.

nevertheless real and effective. Talbot drew close to Cardinal Barnabò in the early 1860s and his position was consolidated when he was appointed consultor to the Propaganda Congregation in 1866.

Beyond Rome the Prefect looked to the leaders of the English and Irish Catholic Churches. In England Cardinals Wiseman and Manning were asked for their opinions from time to time, but it was the Bishop of Birmingham, William Ullathorne, who was regarded as the English expert on Australian Catholic affairs, presumably on the basis of his first-hand experience, even if the Australia of the 1850s, '60s and '70s was very different from the one which Ullathorne had known in the 1830s.

The churchman of the British Isles in whom the Propaganda officials placed their greatest confidence was Cullen. His strongly ultramontane outlook, acquired during many years of residence in Rome, assured them that he could always be relied upon to provide advice which corresponded to their priorities. His influence at Rome was supreme, not only as to the affairs of the Church in Ireland but also in the Irish diaspora throughout the world. In the case of Australia there was scarcely an episcopal appointment, a crisis or a question about which the Congregation, from the later 1850s onwards, did not consult Cullen before making a decision, which almost invariably - although, as we shall see, not necessarily - reflected his point of view. Ullathorne's opinions as presented at Rome were probably more impartial than those of Cullen. As an Englishman and a Benedictine, Ullathorne was not unsympathetic to Polding's cause but he was realistically aware of the

weaknesses of Polding's personality and the defects of the Benedictine enterprise in Sydney. Moreover, unlike Cullen, Ullathorne had some first-hand experience of the place, however removed in time.

VI

Many of the situations over which Polding had to negotiate with the Propaganda Congregation were drawn out over a long period of time, often several years. In large measure this was due to the perennial and complex nature of these situations, but there were other factors which made the Congregation's consideration of Australian circumstances slow and laboured.

One of these was the mentality of the Propaganda organization itself and its procedures. To their credit the officials had a conscientious attitude towards their responsibilities and wanted to make the most satisfactory arrangements for the matters that came before them. Decisions were usually arrived at only after a thorough investigation had assembled as much information and as many points of view as were required for a careful consideration of all the relevant factors and possibilities. Manning thought the Propaganda system was slow but wise and tried to proceed by way of conciliation and compromise. The negative side of this laudable process was constant bureaucratic delay.87 George Talbot, who understood well the ways of the curia, observed, 'Rome is properly called the Eternal City because they never decide on a question before they have heard all the pros and cons which sometimes occupies much time'.88

Another factor making for slowness in communication between the Congregation and mission territories such as Australia was that of language. In September 1868 the Prefect, Cardinal Barnabò, issued a circular letter to all ecclesiastical superiors in those territories reminding them that

---

87 Purcell, vol. II, p. 113; see also Keenan, p. 14.
88 Quoted in Norman, The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century, p. 27.
communications with the Holy See were to be in Latin or, at least, Italian. This circular was prompted by a growing tendency among missionaries to write to Rome using vernacular languages. Barnabò's instruction discouraged the use of such languages, specifying three of them, including English. Barnabò extolled the sound of 'ubique locorum Christi fideles quasi fratres communi patriae romanae lingua loquentes'. He exhorted all superiors to promote the study of Latin in their jurisdictions.99 This circular was issued even though English was not unknown among Propaganda personnel. At least two of the Secretaries General, Gaetano Bedini and Annibale Capalti, were acquainted with this language, as naturally was the English-language minutante, Achille Rinaldini. At least one of the cardinals who prepared reports on the ecclesiastical affairs of Australia, Karl von Reisach, spoke English as no doubt did others.90 Nevertheless, the Congregation was reluctant to receive letters written in English. In 1857 Bedini directed Polding to desist from this practice, pointing out that the use of Latin or Italian involved fewer difficulties (for himself, presumably).91

The standard clerical culture of the age meant that this requirement was not an insuperable obstacle. Irrespective of Bedini's directive, Polding seldom used English in his Roman correspondence. He usually wrote in French or Latin, less often Italian. The Propaganda circular of 1868 provided some opening to the use of French, presumably because it was the diplomatic language of the day. The first Bishop of Perth, John Brady, who had been educated in France, was more comfortable in French than in English. Lanigan of Goulburn used only Latin. Australian colonial bishops who had spent their

89 'Christ's faithful from everywhere speaking as brothers the language of their common Roman homeland'. A copy of this circular, dated 29 Sept. 1868 and sent to Matthew Quinn, Bishop of Bathurst, is in BDA, Quinn correspondence file '1868'.


91 Bedini-Polding, 10 Apr. 1857, SAA, RC: Polding.
Fuit in more positum saeculis anteaactis, ut qui cum Apostolica Sede communicare deberent ad negotia ecclesiastica (exceptis illis quae ad ritus orientales pertinebant) pertractanda, vel ad gratias postulandas, ii latina lingua aut saltem italica uterentur. Nec sane eiusmodi mos gravibus destituebatur rationum momentis, cum inter coetera exigi nullatenus posset ut in tanta linguarum varietate administri aut officiales Sanctae Sedis, quae ab omnibus terrarum orbis nationibus literas aut petitiones excipit, omnium linguarum gerent atque intelligerent. At vero nonnullis ab hinc annis usus invaluit ut ad Sacram hanc Congregationem Fidei Propagandae, passim scripta non solum gallica lingua (quod difficultatem vix ullam facesit) sed anglica, germanica, hollandica aliisque exarata linguis transmittantur; ex quo non raro contingit ut negotiorum sacrarum expeditio non parum dilationis patiatur. Quae cum ita sint, sane non possum quin Amplitudini tuae commendem etiam atque etiam, ut nedom laicos, sed praesertim ecclesiasticis viris subjicte ne praetermittas, ut quoties ad sacrum hoc Consilium literas, petitiones aut etiam acta ad causas ecclesiasticas pertinentia mittent, in eisdem idioma quantum fieri poterit, adhibendum curent. Et quoniam latinam linguam commemoravi, absque non erit admoni feri ex illius linguae neglectu gravissima per orbem Ecclesiis detrimenta obvienire. Neque enim tantum exinde difficilior evadit cum Ecclesia Romana atque aliis cum Ecclesiis variarum regionum communicatio, non solum amittitur maximum illud quo praeteritis temporibus catholici itinerantes gaudebant emolumentum, inveniendi scilicet ubique locorum Christi fideles quasi frati communi patrisae romanae lingua loquentes, verum etiam extranei christianae populo sensim sine sensu evandent ac eare impervii omnes tum sacrae tum profanae scientiae fontes, qui graecam praesertim linguam ignorantibus nonnisi per latinum idioma patere possint. Quamobrem erit sollicitudinis tuae operam impendere, ut studium latinae linguae in tua Dioecesi promoveatur, cuius rei suscipiendae opportunam Ti occasionem praebere poterit, quod praesentibus literis Amplitudini tuae censui commendandum.

Precor Deum ut Te diu sospitem servet incolumemque.

Datum Romae ex Aedibus S. C. de Prop. Fide die 29 Septembris 1868

Ampl. Tuae

R. P. D. Episcopo

Uti Frater addictissimus

(Source: BDA.)
seminary years or other lengthy periods of time in Rome or elsewhere in Italy - such as Goold, the Quinns, Murray, O'Mahony, Vaughan and the two Spanish bishops, José Maria Serra of Perth and Rosendo Salvado of Port Victoria - were proficient in Italian. On the other hand, to communicate in a foreign language is rarely as easy as one's own native language. Polding explained to Bedini that the Australians found it awkward to use another language, especially after many years in the missions.92

Some of them, Propaganda expectations notwithstanding, used English anyway when they felt hard-pressed by the burden of paper work and lacked the time to compose their letters in an officially endorse language or have them translated.93 Australians writing or receiving documents in Latin, French and Italian and the Congregation occasionally receiving them in English created scope for misunderstanding and therefore delay. To minimize this problem, Cullen advised Murray to get his letters to Rome neatly written out by a scribe 'as they find it hard to read our writing'.94 The insistence of the Propaganda officials on the use of Italian or Latin naturally gave them an important practical advantage in their dealings with their clients.

The efficiency of Roman consideration of the ecclesiastical problems of Australia was not helped by a vague or poor understanding of the nomenclature and geography of the place. Propaganda papers, even official printed documents such as ponenze, are sprinkled with mistakes in the spelling of the names of people and places, whether English, Irish or aboriginal, in some cases to the point of being unrecognizable without some knowledge of the context.

92 Polding-Bedini, 8 Feb. 1856, op. cit.
93 In January 1873 Christopher Reynolds, then Administrator of Adelaide, apologized to Cardinal Barnabò because 'I am again compelled to address you in English, as I am overpowered with duty and the festivals of the time to leave me no leisure to write in either Italian or Latin'. Reynolds-Barnabò, 3 Jan. 1873, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 1000, fol. 1295. See also Reynolds-Barnabò, 28 Mar. 1872, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 9, fols. 1320 ff., & 27 Feb. 1874, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fol. 538.
94 Cullen-Murray, 1 Jun. 1878, MDA, A.1.53.
The men who worked at the Congregation knew that Australia was far away and very big - 'remotissimo' and 'vastissimo' were their favourite adjectives to describe the southern continent - but they seem not to have appreciated just how far or how big. Towards the end of April 1862 Polding received an instruction from Cardinal Barnabò, dated 18 January, that he should present himself in Rome to participate in the ceremony for the canonization of the Christian martyrs of Japan to be held on Pentecost day, which fell in May that year. Polding replied that 'even if I left at this very hour I could not possibly reach Rome in the month of May...'  

Cardinal Fransoni arranged for Polding to go to Perth in 1852 to restore order in the Church there. Polding carried out this commission but, as part of his final report on the matter, reminded Fransoni, who was not entirely unappreciative of what was involved, that it necessitated two extremely long and difficult journeys which kept Polding away from his own diocese for the better part of a year and gave the Prefect General a polite lesson in Australian geography, explaining that Perth is on the western side of the continent, Sydney on the eastern and an enormous distance separates the two.  

In 1869 Barnabò asked Polding to investigate allegations of misconduct among the Sisters of Mercy in Melbourne, Bathurst, Brisbane and Perth. Polding replied that the vast distances between these towns made a personal investigation on his part virtually impossible and suggested that the bishops of those places be approached.  

VII

The most important reason for the protractedness of business between the Propaganda Congregation and the Australian dioceses was, of course, the state

---

95 Polding-Barnabò, 23 Apr. 1862 (draft), SAA, Propaganda-Polding.  
96 Polding-Fransoni, 8 Sept. 1852 (draft), SAA, Propaganda-Polding.  
97 Barnabò-Polding, 15 Feb., 1869, SAA, RC: Polding; Polding-Barnabò, 14 Jul. 1869 (TC of draft), SAA, Propaganda - Polding.
of communications and transport technology. The typical mid-nineteenth century office was a laborious place where clerks were absorbed in interminable and time-consuming writing and copying by hand. The absence of instantaneous communication encouraged a leisurely and lackadaisical atmosphere in the British Colonial Office and one suspects that the same mentality prevailed in the Catholic Church's 'colonial office', the Propaganda Congregation.

Before the invention of the telegraph the only way in which information and ideas could be transmitted between peoples separated by oceans was by being written down in letters or stored in the minds of passengers, both of which had to be physically transported in ships. In their relations with the papal curia Australia's Catholics were at a pronounced disadvantage, living in a part of the world that could not have been more distant from Rome, at the end of extraordinarily long and initially tenuous sea-transport routes. Shipping services between Europe and Australia were infrequent and irregular in the first half of the nineteenth century, although the general expansion of economic activity and population stimulated a more reliable and organized provision from the 1850s. Great hope was placed in the new steam technology. However, the first vessels of this type were disappointing, subject to constant, delaying technical difficulties. Sailing ships remained very important on the Australian run even in the late nineteenth century. Voyage times were steadily reduced, but were still very long compared to modern travel. An average voyage between Sydney and London took approximately four months around 1850 and an exchange of letters could not be completed in much less


99 The first Bishop of Adelaide, Francis Murphy, expressed the general lack of confidence in steam when he wrote to his newly-appointed colleague in Melbourne, James Goold, to say how relieved he was to hear of Goold's safe arrival: 'All my fears about breakdowns and snapping of poles and losing of screws has, thank God, proved groundless. Murphy-Goold, 29 Nov. 1848 (TC), AAA, 2.301, Papers of Bishop Murphy, box 1, file 2.
than a year. Twenty or so years later the same voyage took about two months, an exchange of letters taking six. Responses from the Propaganda Congregation to Australian inquiries often took the form of a request for more information or clarification and so the whole process had to be repeated and sometimes repeated again and again. It is no cause for wonder that some problems took years to resolve.

Australian bishops travelling to Rome had a variety of routes to choose from. They might sail to London around the Cape of Good Hope or across the Pacific Ocean to South America and then to Panama and across the Atlantic or to California and then journey by land over the United States to New York. The San Francisco-New York railway was completed in 1869. From London they could then travel through France by coach or train, take ship from Marseilles to Civitavecchia and finally by diligence to Rome.

However, the most common way was to take a ship to Point de Galle in Ceylon which the P & O company provided as a regular connection with its India-China trunk route. From there a ship proceeded across the Indian Ocean and along the Red Sea to Suez, followed by a land crossing to Cairo and Alexandria (before the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869) and another sea voyage, either to London (and overland through France) or to Brindisi or Malta, Naples and Civitavecchia with a land trip on the Italian peninsula. Intercontinental travel was arduous. Early in 1867, while in Liverpool to arrange for his return voyage to Australia after his *ad limina* visit of the previous year, Polding was undecided whether to risk the heat of the Red Sea or the yellow fever of the isthmus of Panama.\textsuperscript{100} En route to Rome to attend

\textsuperscript{100} Polding-Smith, 31 Mar. 1867, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 213. Bishop Goold's record of his journey along the Suez route in 1858 makes it clear why Australian churchmen seldom travelled to Europe except out of necessity. Goold describes the sufferings he endured from monsoonal storms in the Bay of Bengal (during which an officer was lost overboard), the terrible heat of the Red Sea and the fatigue and discomfort of crossing the 'burning sands of the wretched desert' of the Isthmus of Suez in a mule-drawn cart with the baggage and mail following by camel train. Goold was so exhausted when he reached Alexandria that he had to rest for some days at the residence of the local bishop. Goold-Geoghegan, 8
the Vatican Council in 1869, Polding became so ill by the time he reached Aden that he was advised by the ship's doctor not to go on. He turned around and went back to Sydney.\textsuperscript{101}

The international telegraph revolutionized communications between the Australian colonies and Europe. The landline and submarine cables from Britain were progressively extended eastwards and the Australian connection was opened for traffic in October 1872 with a transmission time of a seemingly miraculous 20 hours. The first telegram from the Roman curia to the Australian Church was sent on 11 November 1872 by Cardinal Antonelli, the papal Secretary of State, conveying a blessing from Pope Pius IX to Archbishop Polding and the priests assembled with him at a diocesan gathering.\textsuperscript{102} However, the telegraph had little impact on Roman-Australian communications. It was used only rarely and then for very brief messages of a formal or urgent character. The complexity of Australian affairs necessitated the composition of texts that typically ran to one or two or more pages. The transmission of such texts by telegraph was prohibitively expensive when, at the opening of the service in 1872, the cost of sending 20 words from Sydney to London was £10, the equivalent of a working man's wage for five weeks. Moreover, colonial churchmen were unwilling to place into the hands of the civil telegraph officials the information, even if written in Latin or some other foreign language, about the disputatious and scandalous conduct of the clergy which so often provided the subject matter of the correspondence between the

---

\textsuperscript{101} See this thesis, Chapter IX, 102 Telegram, Antonelli-Polding, 11 Nov. 1872, SAA, RC: Polding.
Australian Church and Rome. The great bulk of such correspondence continued to be despatched by mail even after the coming of the telegraph.103

The carriage of information, requests and decisions between Rome and Australia was, by modern expectations, extremely slow even under the most favourable circumstances, but sometimes the systems failed, making the delays yet longer. Shipping timetables were disrupted by bad weather. Vessels sank. Sailing ships were dismasted in storms while steamers were prone to mechanical malfunction. Cargoes (including mails) were damaged. Not always careful about geographical niceties, the Propaganda secretariat sometimes sent letters to the wrong address. Documents meant for Armidale were occasionally sent to Adelaide and vice versa. In 1880 Matthew Quinn, Bishop of Bathurst, sent back to the Congregation a document which had nothing to do with his diocese with the suggestion that it was probably in reference to one of the towns called Bathurst in West Africa or North America.104 Nor was the British-Empire postal service without its problems. In 1866 Polding's secretary, Thomas Makinson, wrote to the Archbishop, who was then in Rome, to complain that a letter he had written to Polding in 'Roma' ended up in the town of the same name in Queensland. Makinson attributed this misdirection to 'the stupidity or malice of the Post Office'.105

Despite incidents of this sort, it was not the official policy of the British authorities, either in London or in colonial administrations, to interfere with


104 M.Quinn-Simeoni, 18 Aug. 1880 (CC), BDA, Quinn letterbook.

105 Makinson-Polding, 21 Apr. 1866, DownAA-SPM/MF, O 153.
communications between Catholic bishops and the papacy. Australia's Catholic ecclesiastical leaders enjoyed complete freedom from local political hindrance in their relations with Rome. However, there were difficulties on the other side of the exchange. The status of the Pope as civil ruler of central Italy meant that it was difficult to communicate with him, even as head of the Catholic Church concerning spiritual matters, at times of political upheaval and revolutionary disturbance. The flight of Pius IX and his court from Rome in the later 1840s disrupted the usual operations of the Holy See. Australian churchmen feared that some European governments were not as relaxed towards contact with Rome as the British. They were worried by the threat which the political and military pressure exerted by the expansionary, anticlerical kingdom of Piedmont on the Papal State posed to the security of the papal postal system. In 1862 Bishop Geoghegan of Adelaide wrote to Archbishop Cullen in Dublin to express his anxiety about whether his letters were getting through to Rome: 'It is rumoured here that the Sardinian [i.e., the Piedmontese] Usurpation open all letters sent to Rome it can lay its hands on...' As well as heightening anxiety in the Catholic world about the implications for communication with the Pope, the fall of Rome and final extinction of the papal kingdom in September 1870 caused a despondent and sluggish atmosphere to descend on the curia which, as Moran explained to Murray, kept preoccupied cardinals from applying themselves diligently to their work. Six months after the event an uncharacteristically panicky Goold wrote to Rinaldini to ask what was happening as he had lately received no official letters. With the approach of the death of the octogenarian Pius

106 The Bendigo missionary, Dr. Henry Backhaus, wrote to Cardinal Fransoni in 1848 to express his concern about the effect of the Roman revolution on the mail connections. J.Hussey, Henry Backhaus: Doctor of Divinity and Pioneer Priest of Bendigo, Bendigo, 1982, p. 48. See also this thesis, pp. 129-130.

107 Geoghegan-Cullen, 25 Jan. 1862 (CC), SAA, Irish correspondence: Cullen.

108 Murray-Moran, 12 Nov. 1876, MDA, D.3.99; see also Aubert, Le Pontificat de Pie IX, pp. 497-498.

IX, Cullen believed that the papal court was gripped by a kind of paralysis in which the Propaganda Congregation neglected its correspondence.\textsuperscript{110}

All of these factors lengthened the already long waiting times consequent on nineteenth-century methods of transport and communication. Sometimes the situation was still worse. It is clear from the explicit statements of contemporary writers\textsuperscript{111} and from the attempt of this study to reconstruct correspondential sequences that some letters never arrived at their destinations at all, but went astray in the system for a variety of reasons. A certain proportion of Australian-European mails, albeit a very small one, was consigned to the ocean floor by maritime disasters.\textsuperscript{112}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{110} Cullen-Croke, 20 Jan. 1878 (TC), DAA, Cullen papers: correspondence with other Irish bishops.
\textsuperscript{111} See, for example, Dunne-Simeoni, 6 Jan. 1883, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 14, fol. 511.
\textsuperscript{112} Polding was agitated early in 1863 by the wreck of the steamship Colombo carrying Australian mails. Polding-Gregory, 20 Feb. 1863, DownAA-SPM/MF, N 441.
\end{flushright}
CHAPTER III
THE ROMAN RISE AND FALL OF JOHN BEDE POLDING
1842 - 1855

Early in 1842 the English Benedictine monk, John Bede Polding, was waiting with other missionary clergy in an antechamber of the palazzo of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide in Rome for an appointment with the Secretary General of the Congregation, Archbishop Ignazio Cadolini. Polding was standing near Cadolini’s office when the Secretary General came out and, seeing Polding, walked over to him and hugged and kissed him. However, much it might have jarred on his English reserve, this demonstration of affection was a cause of pride in Polding because it was a public sign of the high favour in which he was held by the Congregation.

I

Polding had voyaged from New South Wales to Europe towards the end of 1840 with two fellow Benedictines, his Vicar General, William Ullathorne, and his close friend, Henry Gregory, to recruit more priests and religious in England and Ireland and also to place before the authorities in Rome a plan for the reorganization of the Australian missions. After finishing his business in the British Isles, Polding arrived in Rome with Gregory in November 1841 and took up residence in the monastery of S. Callisto in Trastevere.

Polding’s plan, submitted to the Propaganda Congregation in February 1842, involved replacing the huge provisional Vicariate Apostolic of New Holland and Van Diemen’s Land, over which Polding presided with the artificial title of Bishop of Hiero-Caesarea, with an established province of the Catholic Church comprising three regular dioceses, a metropolitan see based

1 Polding-Heptonstall, 10 Apr. 1842, SPM-DownAA/MF, L 143.
The younger John Bede Polding, around 1840.

on Sydney and two suffragan or dependent sees at Hobart and Adelaide, headed by resident bishops who would exercise ordinary episcopal supervision in their own right and not merely as vicars of the Pope. They would bear titles which actually referred to the places where they resided and they would have jurisdiction over clearly-defined territories. Polding argued that whenever the British government established a new colony, the Holy See should respond with a new ecclesiastical division as soon as practicable. Polding adduced the vast geographical extent of his present jurisdiction, the steady advance of European settlement and the need to forestall the Anglicans as reasons for his scheme.

The proposal was remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, the Australian mission was barely 50 years old whereas the ordinary hierarchy of bishops was normally set up only when a local church was considered to be well developed. The hierarchy did not exist in England at this time. Secondly, Polding suggested that in addition to the usual episcopal powers, the new bishops be permitted to exercise the special faculties that belonged to missionary vicars apostolic to give them greater initiative and flexibility of government in consideration of the immense distance that separated Australia from Rome.

Despite its boldness, Polding's plan was approved in its entirety by the cardinals of the Propaganda Congregation at a meeting held on 28 February 1842. The apostolic letter of Pope Gregory XVI creating the Australian hierarchy was dated 5 April. The ponente on this occasion, the cardinal who

---

3 This thesis does not describe in detail the negotiations and events in Rome leading to the establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in Australia in 1842. The official papers can be found in CEPA, Acta, vol. 205, fols. 25 ff. These include a printed copy of Polding's letter to Cadolini, dated 7 Feb. 1842 (fols. 32 ff.) presenting the plan. A good deal of other documentation is contained in CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 2, including Polding's official relatio of 1842 on the state of his mission (manuscript version, fols. 64 ff., & printed version, fols. 86b ff.). The most extended accounts of the creation of the Australian hierarchy are I.B.Burns, 'The Foundation of the Hierarchy in Australia 1804-1854', DCL thesis, Pontifical University de Propaganda Fide, Rome, 1954, pp. 222-234, & R.W.Wiltgen, The Foundation of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania 1825-1850,
Cardinal Castruccio Castracane degli Antelminelli who often acted as *ponente* for Australian affairs in the 1840s.

presented the official report to his colleagues, was Castruccio Castracane degli Antelminelli, Bishop of Palestrina and Grand Apostolic Penitentiary. Himself a former Secretary General of the *Propaganda* Congregation, Castracane was closely involved with the ecclesiastical affairs of Australia and Oceania in the 1840s.4

The Roman decision was a personal victory for the now Archbishop Polding. However, the victory was not won single-handedly. The idea for the early establishment of the Australian hierarchy was not Polding’s at all but belonged to Ullathorne. Polding had to be persuaded of its correctness by Ullathorne during the voyage to Europe in 1840, but once Polding accepted it he pursued it with determination.5 He was assisted to make the right impression on Roman officialdom by Cardinal Acton. Some of the details of the new arrangements for the Australian Church were worked out to Polding’s advantage by Acton working through private audiences with the Pope.6

Polding’s correspondence from Rome in the early months of 1842 radiates a happy, even skittish, mood. He reported to Heptonstall that his business at the *Propaganda* Congregation ‘passed swimmingly’.7 He enthused

---


4 *La Gerarchia Cattolica e la Famiglia Pontificia per l’anno 1878*, Rome, 1878, p. 113; CD, col. 645; Wiltgen, p. 349.


Cardinal Castruccio Castracane degli Antelminelli who often acted as *ponente* for Australian affairs in the 1840s.

about the kindness, friendliness and co-operativeness of the Cardinal Prefect General, the Secretary General and the other officials of the Propaganda Congregation: 'I never met with persons more desirous to do well than the officials here'.

He basked in the official praise that was bestowed upon him and in the numerous compliments he received from cardinals and other dignitaries for his plan for an Australian hierarchy. As he remarked to Heptonstall, 'We are in high favour with the Propaganda'.

Acceptance of his plan was not the only sign of Roman favour towards Polding. He was honoured personally by being made a Bishop Assistant at the Pontifical Throne and Count of the Holy Roman Empire. He obtained a doctorate in theology for his friend, Gregory. The Propaganda Prefect, Cardinal Fransoni, invited him to assist at the consecration of new missionary bishops. Confident of Polding's judgement, the Congregation consulted him about a variety of matters, including the ecclesiastical affairs of England and Ireland. The Pope entrusted him with a special mission that involved travelling to Malta to resolve a delicate problem of Church-State relations.

Particularly gratifying to Polding was the rescript which he secured establishing St. Mary's cathedral in Sydney as a monastic cathedral in which the monks from the attached monastery would chant the hours of the Divine Office on an official, daily basis. This concession advanced the cause of papal recognition of Polding's passionately-held aim to make the Church of Sydney and perhaps one day the whole of the Australian mission a monastic enterprise.

Polding wrote to his Benedictine colleague, cousin and agent in England, Thomas Heptonstall, 'so just see Thomas what one obtains by coming to

---

8 Polding-Heptonstall, 10 Apr. 1842, op. cit.
11 Birt, II, p. 60; Moran, p. 431; O'Farrell, p. 63.
Rome'.\textsuperscript{12} To set the seal on his success, on 31 May, just before taking his leave of the city, Polding was received in private audience by Pope Gregory XVI. He was moved when the Pope, himself a Benedictine and supportive of the extension of Benedictinism in Australia, insisted that Polding sit near him and conversed with him informally about various matters for an hour.\textsuperscript{13} On another occasion Pope Gregory exclaimed, 'Polding è un santo, un santo'.\textsuperscript{14}

On stepping ashore in Sydney on 10 March 1843 Polding was greeted by a huge crowd of cheering well-wishers, booming guns, pealing bells, a procession to St. Mary's cathedral led by the band of the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society playing 'See, the conquering hero comes!' and, in the cathedral, the singing of a \textit{Te Deum} and speeches of welcome. Responding to the speeches, Polding gave thanks to God for the reception he had received from 'the sacred Head of the Church'. The rescript establishing St. Mary's as a monastic cathedral was read out. Monastic life itself was inaugurated when Polding gave five novices the habit on 24 August 1843.\textsuperscript{15}

Manifestations of enthusiasm and affection on the part of his own people reflected the triumph that Polding had recently won in Rome. He could not have know that his Roman reputation had reached a pinnacle which it would not occupy for long and, indeed, from which it was about to enter into an almost continuous and catastrophic decline. The rest of this chapter, and the rest of this thesis, seek to trace and explain the progressive collapse of Polding's standing at the Congregation \textit{de Propaganda Fide}. The first signs of a shift in the Roman attitude towards Polding and his policies appeared within five years of his return to Australia and were connected with Polding's handling of four religious orders, other than the Benedictines, which were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Polding-Heptonstall, 17 Feb. 1842, \textit{op. cit.}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Polding-Heptonstall, 6 Jun. 1842, SPM-DownAA/MF, L 159.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Quoted in O'Donoghue, p. 175.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Birt, vol. II, p. 53; Moran, pp. 426-431; O'Farrell, p. 65; Compton, pp. 137-138, O'Donoghue, p. 66. The quotation is from Moran, p. 428.
\end{itemize}
Pope Gregory XVI, reigned 1830-1846. This Benedictine Pope encouraged Polding's monastic plans for the Australian Church.

active in the Archdiocese of Sydney in the mid- and late 1840s. Further doubts at the Congregation were generated in the early 1850s by the debate about how best to provide for the pastoral needs of the rapidly-growing Australian missions and by internal dissensions at St. Mary's monastery.

II

When Polding travelled to Europe in 1840 one of his objectives was to secure personnel for a mission to the aboriginal people of Australia. In accordance with his overall policy, his preference was that the English Benedictines undertake this project but when they told him that they had no men to spare he was compelled to look elsewhere. After his arrival in Rome towards the end of 1841 he encountered a priest of the Passionist Order, Raimondo Vaccari, who was so excited about Polding's plan for an aboriginal mission that he volunteered for the work himself and said that he would persuade colleagues to join him. By arrangement with the Propaganda Congregation, Vaccari and three other Passionists were constituted as missionaries to the Australian aborigines, with Vaccari as superior. This last part of the plan was decided against the wishes of the Passionist Father General, Antonio Testa, who believed that the success of the venture was jeopardized by Vaccari's unstable personality. Testa finally agreed to the scheme only because he was ordered to do so, presumably by the Congregation. As a preacher and spiritual director of great renown in Rome, Vaccari had influential friends and admirers in high places, including at least one Propaganda cardinal, Francesco Orioli.

---


Very little is known about the negotiations between Polding, the Passionists and the Propaganda officials, but they seem to have been slipshod if one is to judge from the confusion that later appeared concerning the status of the aboriginal mission. On 12 June 1842 the Propaganda Secretary, Archbishop Cadolini, obtained from the Pope approval to establish the mission as a Prefecture Apostolic headed by Vaccari and independent of the immediate jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Sydney.\(^\text{18}\) Polding was later to insist that while in Rome he did not apply for such an arrangement, that there was never any talk of it at the Propaganda Congregation, that, on the contrary, he had urged that the Passionists should be subject to his authority like any other priest working in his jurisdiction and that, finally, he left Rome under the impression that his wish had been acceded to.\(^\text{19}\) On the other hand, Cardinal Fransoni maintained that not only had the question of autonomy for the Passionists been raised with Polding while he was in Rome but that Polding had acquiesced in the proposal.\(^\text{20}\) The statements of Vaccari that he did not initiate the grant of Prefecture-Apostolic status and that he did not know anything about it at the time it was conferred on him\(^\text{21}\) suggest that Polding's version is the correct one.

How can we explain the curious state of affairs in which a new ecclesiastical administrative unit was created without the two men most involved being immediately informed? Reflecting on the matter at the distance of one and a half years, Ullathorne believed that Cadolini had played a trick on Polding,\(^\text{22}\) but because of the lack of motive, the pointlessness and indeed the irresponsibility of such a move and the high prestige that Polding

\(^{18}\) Thorpe, pp. 26-27; Wiltgen, p. 359.
\(^{19}\) Polding-Brady, 12 Apr. 1843 (TC), GSSA, Polding correspondence, vol. 3; Vaccari-Fransoni, 19 Feb. 1844, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 2, fols. 630 ff; Polding-Fransoni, 10 Apr. 1845, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 2, fols. 951 ff.
\(^{20}\) Fransoni-Polding, 19 Feb. 1844, SAA, RC: Polding.
\(^{21}\) Wiltgen, p. 359.
enjoyed in Rome at the time this is an unlikely scenario. More plausible is a simple bureaucratic oversight on the part of Propaganda officials. The Prefecture Apostolic was in fact obtained for Vaccari without either his or Polding’s knowledge by Vaccari’s high-placed and well-meaning ecclesiastical patrons,\(^\text{23}\) by which time Polding had probably already left the city.

The bureaucratic oversight, if such it was, had unfortunate consequences in Australia. After a happy voyage and a very favourable impression of the new country,\(^\text{24}\) the Passionists became worried when Polding immediately assumed direction of their affairs, including their funds, and decided that they would be based on Stradbroke Island off the coast of Queensland.\(^\text{25}\) When Polding told them he was going to send an experienced English missionary, presumably a Benedictine, to accompany them,\(^\text{26}\) Vaccari, fearing a Benedictine take-over, produced the letters patent testifying to his independence as Prefect Apostolic of the aboriginal mission. Vaccari also told Polding in a vaguely menacing way that the Propaganda Congregation had charged him to inform them of everything that happened.\(^\text{27}\)

In pressing his rights under the Prefecture, Vaccari acted against the directive to submit to Polding he had received from Antonio Testa who was anxious to avoid conflict.\(^\text{28}\) Replying to the accusation that the Passionists ought therefore to have submitted to Polding, one of their number, Luigi Pesciaroli, argued that it was not their place to set aside papal dispositions, adding that if the Congregation did not want them to declare their status to Polding it should have said so before they left Italy.\(^\text{29}\)

\(^{23}\) Cenni, op. cit.
\(^{25}\) Wiltgen, p. 360.
\(^{26}\) Polding-Brady, 12 Apr. 1843, op. cit.
\(^{27}\) Vaccari-Polding, 4 May 1843 & 7 May 1843, SAA, RC:Polding.
\(^{28}\) Testa-Barberi, 26 Sept. 1846, in Thorpe, p. 200.
\(^{29}\) Pesciaroli-Testa, 2 Nov. 1848, CPA, file - Sectio Provinciae Spiritus Sancti. Documenta Fund. Primaevae. 1847-1848. 1936-
On seeing Vaccari's documents, Polding was shaken, a reaction which supports his contention that he had not hitherto even heard about the Prefecture Apostolic. Despite sighting these documents, he now moved on to dangerous ground by ignoring the Roman arrangements. His asserted that he would not accept a divided authority in his diocese. He also declared that he would not allow the Passionists to enter into direct communication with the French missionary fund-raising organization, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons, which had provided monies for the Australian aboriginal mission. Perhaps there was an implication here that he would not allow them direct communication with the Propaganda Congregation in Rome as well. He wrote to Ullathorne in England asking him to apply to Fransoni to have the Passionists' independence abolished. This Ullathorne declined to do.

In February 1844 Vaccari wrote to Cardinal Fransoni to complain about Polding's refusal to acknowledge the Passionists' autonomous status and his insistence on controlling the logistics of their mission, as well as to describe the primitive conditions of their life and work. He also complained to Testa about Polding's behaviour. Fransoni replied seven months later, in September, sympathizing with the Passionists, exhorting them to persevere and assuring them that he would ask Polding to make improvements. At about the same time he also wrote a more guarded letter to Polding asking for a report on the aboriginal mission. Towards the end of 1844 Fransoni wrote again, noting Polding's displeasure with the establishment of the Prefecture Apostolic but confirming the legality of Vaccari's status.

---

33 Bosi, p. 31.
35 Fransoni-Polding, 19 Sept. 1844 (CC), CEPA, LDB, vol 331, fol. 677.
Aware of the criticism that was being directed against him, Polding moved to defend himself by reactivating his connection with Cardinal Acton\textsuperscript{37} and by writing directly to Fransoni in April 1845. To the Prefect he expressed his surprise at Vaccari's independence, adding that he had never been told of it when in Rome. He went on to justify his management of the material provisioning for the Stradbroke enterprise and to state that, while the Passionists were enthusiastic and good priests, they were poorly prepared for missionary life in a situation very different from what one would expect to find in Europe.\textsuperscript{38}

It seems unlikely that Fransoni's letter to Vaccari ever reached its destination. In November 1845 Vaccari wrote to the Cardinal to say that he had received no communication from the Propaganda Congregation for two years.\textsuperscript{39} What happened to Fransoni's letter of September 1844? Was it intercepted by Polding in Sydney? It was perhaps a sense of his remoteness or Rome's disinterest that eventually moved Vaccari to patch up his differences with Polding locally. In his letter of November 1845 Vaccari told Fransoni that relations between the Passionists and Polding were now satisfactory. Polding recognized the Prefecture Apostolic in theory while Vaccari submitted himself to Polding's direction in practice. The work was still extremely difficult but Vaccari praised the kindness and helpfulness of Polding.\textsuperscript{40}

The Stradbroke Island mission might have continued peacefully along these lines had it not been for the appearance of another player. John Brady was a secular Irish priest who, after seminary training in Paris and missionary experience in a French colony, was recruited by Ullathorne in Rome in 1837 for New South Wales. After various jobs, Brady was despatched by Polding to


\textsuperscript{38} Polding-Fransoni, 10 Apr. 1845, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 2, fols. 951 ff.

\textsuperscript{39} Vaccari-Fransoni, 19 Nov. 1845, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 2, fols. 1014 ff.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.; Wiltgen, p. 363.
the Swan River Colony towards the end of 1843 as his Vicar General there to minister to the needs of the small Catholic community. Not long after his arrival in Perth, Brady went to Europe to obtain personnel and finance for his new mission without the knowledge or permission of Polding. During this trip he visited Rome where he persuaded the Propaganda Congregation, again without reference to Polding, to erect his mission into a new diocese with himself as bishop.41

Brady had a particular interest in the conversion of the Western Australian natives. Knowing about the difficulties between the Passionists and Polding, Brady attempted when in Rome in 1844 to have the Passionists transferred to his jurisdiction by undermining Polding’s standing with the Propaganda Congregation. He denounced Polding to Archbishop Giovanni Brunelli, Secretary General after Cadolini’s appointment as Archbishop of Ferrara, fearing that Polding was plotting to upset the administrative arrangements recently approved by Rome for Western Australia.42

This claim of Brady was supported by one of his missionaries, Angelo Confalonieri, who had been appointed Vicar Apostolic of Port Essington (Darwin) under the overall jurisdiction of Brady. Confalonieri complained to Brunelli of the treatment he had received from the Benedictine establishment as he was passing through Sydney in 1846 en route to his distant destination. In acute financial distress, Confalonieri appealed to Gregory, the Vicar General, Polding being away on another trip to Europe, for help to pay for his voyage to Port Essington and for provisions and equipment. Gregory not only refused to assist in any way but proceeded to disparage Rome for its decisions about Western Australia and said that Polding knew very well how to get these decisions changed. Confalonieri was able to continue on his way only after the senior secular priest in Sydney, Archdeacon John McEncroe, agreed to act as

41 See Section IX within this chapter.
guarantor for a bank loan. Brady ensured through letters to Fransoni and Brunelli maximum impact for Confalonieri's story.

Brady also approached the Passionist General, Testa, and persuaded him to transfer his men from Queensland to Western Australia. He told Fransoni that Polding was dissatisfied with them because of their independent status. In December 1844 Fransoni wrote to Polding ordering him to hand the Passionists over to Brady's jurisdiction. Testa, too, wrote to Polding enclosing instructions for his subjects, taking the occasion to assure Polding that Brady had not been involved in the decision, but that was probably what Brady urged Testa to say. Testa believed that Polding had broken his promises to the Passionist Order and was treating its four missionaries in Australia vindictively. He was convinced that Polding was unwilling to allow any religious order to become established in his Archdiocese except the Benedictine.

Polding knew that his reputation in Rome was under attack. In April 1845 he wrote to Fransoni to express his fears about what was being said of him in Rome, defend his dealings with the Passionists and plead that they not be withdrawn from Stradbroke Island on the grounds that much good work would be wasted and the natives would be made to feel abandoned by Christianity. When Fransoni received this letter he changed his mind and wrote back to Polding in February 1846 explaining that he had agreed to the transfer of the Passionists to Western Australia only on the understanding

---

43 Confalonieri-Brunelli, nd, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 3, fols. 26 ff.
45 Brady-Fransoni, nd, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 2, fol. 834.
46 Fransoni-Polding, 19 Dec. 1844, SAA, RC: Polding. See also Fransoni-Polding, 3 Jun. 1845, SAA, RC: Polding.
47 Testa-Polding, 1 Jun. 1845, SAA, RC: Polding.
49 Polding-Fransoni, 10 Apr. 1845, op. cit.

that Polding would consent. Fransoni tried to calm Polding by praising his zeal for religion.\footnote{Fransoni-Polding, 10 Feb. 1846, SAA, RC: Polding.}

However, news of this change of direction on the part of the Propaganda Congregation reached Australia too late. At almost the same time that Fransoni was writing to Polding to inform him of the change, Vaccari was writing to Fransoni to tell him that he was too sick either to go to Perth or to carry on as Prefect Apostolic. He resigned his office and sent all the relevant documents back to Rome.\footnote{Vaccari-Fransoni, 15 Feb. 1846, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 3, fol. 74.} Acting in obedience to Fransoni’s first decision and Testa’s instructions, all the Passionists had departed from Stradbroke Island by the end of July 1846, before Fransoni’s countermand arrived. Vaccari’s three companions made their way westwards but never reached Perth, deterred by stories of chaos there under Brady’s administration. They spent several years working as missionaries in Adelaide. Vaccari himself stayed in Sydney with Polding, whom he had come to admire greatly, before sailing for Peru where he spent the rest of his life.\footnote{Thorpe, pp. 168-171.}

The aboriginal mission on Stradbroke Island failed for many reasons,\footnote{Polding had not thought the idea through carefully enough in the first place; the Passionist missionaries were totally unprepared and untrained for their work (for which deficiency Polding must take most of the responsibility); they had great difficulty learning not only the local aboriginal language but also English; their living conditions were primitive in the extreme; among themselves there were internal dissensions caused mainly by Vaccari’s awkward character and style of leadership, as foreseen by Testa; there were disagreements between Polding and the Passionists about methods for evangelizing the natives; the Passionists were unable to cope with aboriginal nomadism; and they were badly supplied because of Polding’s insistence on controlling everything from Sydney, his lack of administrative ability and an economic depression in New South Wales in the early 1840s. See Thorpe, pp. 100-102, 126-141, & Wiltgen, pp. 363, 366.} but probably the most important factor was the affair of the Prefecture Apostolic. The failure of the Congregation at the outset to make it clear to all concerned who was in charge of the operation generated confusion and conflict. Polding’s cavalier disregard of the canonical status of the mission once it was made known to him opened him to criticism from Vaccari, Testa,
Confalonieri and above all Brady, each of whom had his own motives. This criticism was duly noted within the Congregation, especially as the collapse of the Stradbroke mission harmed the cause of the evangelization of the aborigines to which the Congregation accorded a high priority.

III

Had the Passionist affair been an isolated episode it might have had no long-term effect on Polding's Roman reputation but it turned out to be part of a pattern. During his stay in Rome in 1842 Polding obtained from the Pope a rescript which, in consideration of the distance between Australia and Europe, separated the Irish Sisters of Charity, who had been working since 1838 at the women's prison in Parramatta, from their parent organization under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Dublin and established them as a new institute subject immediately to the Archbishop of Sydney.54

This document was further evidence of Polding's Roman success but he used it in a tricky way. While in Dublin he showed it to Archbishop Daniel Murray and the Superioress General of the Sisters of Charity, Mother Mary Aikenhead, leaving them with the impression that the Australian Sisters not only knew about their new independent status but had requested it. On the other hand, the existence of the rescript was concealed from the Australian Sisters until 1846 when, Polding being overseas, his Vicar General, Gregory, dramatically produced it in order to compel compliance with his insistence that the Sisters submit themselves completely to archdiocesan authority and to a process of Benedictinization. This precipitated the break-up of the Parramatta community, one group of Sisters accusing Gregory of arbitrary interference

---

with the integrity of the Institute, another group seeing the affair as a simple matter of upholding ecclesiastical authority. The Sisters who refused to submit to Gregory’s direction eventually left Sydney and went to Tasmania to put themselves under the protection of the Bishop of Hobart, Robert Willson, who, not being Benedictine, would be unlikely to intervene in their internal government and customs. When Polding returned from overseas he endorsed Gregory’s vigorous line on the Sisters of Charity.\footnote{55}

There is no record of the Roman authorities taking any action in this affair. Perhaps they were caught between an awareness of a harsh, imprudent course of action on the part of the Benedictine regime in Sydney and an acceptance of the canonical fact that they had granted Polding authority over the Australian Sisters of Charity. In 1850 the Sisters who moved to Hobart wrote to the \textit{Propaganda} Congregation criticizing Polding and Gregory for their dissimulation about the 1842 rescript and their interference with the Sisters’ government, way of life and property rights. Willson supported their report.\footnote{56}

We do not have evidence of what Fransoni and his staff made of this, but they cannot have failed to note that, whatever the merits of the parties to the dispute, the missionary work of another religious order had been disrupted by an assertion of Benedictine supremacy.

\textbf{IV}

The affair of the Sisters of Charity had repercussions on another group of Irish religious who had been invited into the Archdiocese of Sydney by Polding in the 1840s. When Gregory publicized the rescript obtained from the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{55} O’Brien-Aikenhead, Apr. 1847, RSCDA/1/B/225; Cahill-Walshe, 6 May 1847, RSCDA, 1/B/227; Cahill-Murray, 18 May 1847, RSCDA, 1/B/228; de Lacy-Aikenhead, 11 Jul. 1847, RSCDA/B/232; de Lacy-Aikenhead, nd, enclosing a copy of de Lacy-Gregory, nd, RSCDA/1/B/231(i); de Lacy et al.-Gregory, 6 Mar. 1847 & 5 Apr. 1847, RSCDA/1/B/231(ii) & (iii); Cahill-Parramatta Sisters of Charity, 9 Apr. 1851, enclosing copies of Polding-Hobart Sisters of Charity, 24 Feb. 1851, & Cahill & O’Brien-Polding, 6 Apr. 1851, RSCDA/1/B/241; Cahill-Aikenhead, 14 Nov. 1852, RSCDA/1/B/240.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{56} Cahill-Aikenhead, 14 Nov. 1852, \textit{op. cit.}; O’Brien & Cahill-Fransoni, nd, CEPA, \textit{SC-Oceania}, vol. 4, fols. 429 ff; Birt, vol. II, pp. 117, 147-149.}
Holy See subordinating the Sisters of Charity to archdiocesan control, a community of Christian Brothers fled from Australia to avoid the same fate.57

Impressed by what he saw in the schools run by the Christian Brothers in Dublin in 1841, Polding requested the newly-established Institute to make a foundation in Sydney to attend to the educational needs of the Catholic population. The Brothers refused because they had no men to spare. Polding thereupon appealed to Cardinal Fransoni who wrote to the Brothers' Superior General, Paul Riordan, in January 1842 virtually commanding him to select some Brothers to accompany the Archbishop back to Australia.58 Riordan was able to comply with this order only in the face of both great difficulty and considerable opposition from the consultors of his Institute who foresaw the problems that were to arise in Sydney. The mission in Australia was undertaken only reluctantly and even then to conform to the wishes of the Propaganda Congregation.59 Polding, of course, was delighted and immediately entered into negotiations with Riordan on the terms and conditions of the Brothers' presence in Sydney: nothing was to be required of the Brothers that would prevent the strict observance of their rules; they were to have control over their schools; they were to be provided with their own accommodation, financial support and material provision.

The prediction of Riordan's advisers that there would be trouble in Australia proved well-founded. During their time in Sydney the three Christian Brothers who were sent out under the leadership of Stephen Carroll wrote back frequently to Riordan to complain about their treatment. They claimed that on the voyage out with Polding they were told by him that

58 Fransoni-Riordan, 21 Jan. 1842, CBA, box 0022 - Letters from and to Propaganda, file 0266.
Riordan’s authority over them had ceased and that he regarded them as entirely subject to his jurisdiction with no connection to the parent body in Ireland. They stated that on arrival in Sydney the terms that Polding had agreed to were not honoured and that, instead, they had to endure continual interference from the Archdiocese. Because of their isolation, Riordan had conferred on the Sydney Brothers the faculty to receive and train recruits to the Institute. They stated that Polding insisted that all such candidates be referred to him for approval. Representations against this policy were met with threats, including that of excommunication. In response to their complaints Riordan urged patience and perseverance on the Sydney community. However, after four years of trouble they left Australia in March 1847 to return to Ireland.60

Polding’s version was that he had never interfered with the Brothers’ domestic arrangements or educational policy. He admitted that he had monitored their recruiting but insisted that he had good reasons for doing so. He pointed out that the Christian Brothers had been brought to Australia to provide schooling for poor boys, not to found a monastery. He added that he was happy for them to found a religious community provided they did not flout episcopal authority. For Polding this was the chief issue. He accused the Brothers of claiming to be exempt from local ecclesiastical discipline. He condemned them for causing great scandal and injury to the infant Church in New South Wales by their needless abandonment of their work and demanded of Riordan full compensation for the expense incurred in bringing them out from Ireland.61

60 Riordan-Kirby, 17 Aug. 1846, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1836-1861/488; Riordan-Fransoni, 8 Nov. 1847 (PC), CBA, box 0283, Cullen correspondence, Irish College, 1843-1850; Riordan-Propaganda Fide, nd, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 3, fol. 205.

Both Riordan and Polding were anxious to secure the support of the Propaganda Congregation. The former asked for the assistance of the Rector and Vice-Rector of the Irish College in Rome, Paul Cullen and Tobias Kirby. Polding worked through Thomas Grant, Rector of the English College. On behalf of his principal, Grant approached Archbishop Brunelli to find how much, if any, exemption the Christian Brothers were entitled to, given that, as he put it, the Brothers pretended to be completely independent of local ecclesiastical authority, had no superior of their own and were seculars. Grant's picture of the case was misleading. The Australian Brothers did have a local superior, Carroll, and they were not seculars but members of a recognized religious institute who had professed public vows.

Despite these inaccuracies, Brunelli replied in Polding's favour: the Brothers were subject to the Archbishop of Sydney's jurisdiction and could not absent themselves from it. In September 1847 Cardinal Fransoni himself wrote to Riordan to express his annoyance at the withdrawal of the Brothers from Australia, especially as they had gone out by arrangement with the Propaganda Congregation. He instructed Riordan to send them back to resume their work and offered the mediation of the Congregation in the dispute.

At the same time, Fransoni laid Riordan's complaints before Polding. They reached the Archbishop in Liverpool. Fransoni urged Polding to come to an agreement with the Christian Brothers in order that the schools in Sydney might be restored. Polding had already written to Fransoni from London to put his side of the story. Riordan replied to the Prefect in November. His long, strongly-argued letter seems to have convinced Fransoni that the Sydney

---

62 Riordan-Kirby, 17 Aug. 1846, op. cit.; Riordan-Cullen, 8 Nov. 1847, ICA, Cullen correspondence 1495.
63 Grant-Propaganda Fide, nd, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 3, fol. 558.
65 Fransoni-Riordan, 30 Sept. 1847 (PC), CBA, box 0023 - photocopies of material from Propaganda Fide, file 0271.
67 Polding-Fransoni, 24 Aug. 1847, op. cit.
affair was more complicated than a simple matter of upholding ecclesiastical authority, which had been the initial Roman reaction. After listing the complaints of the former Sydney community, Riordan informed Fransoni that, on account of the notoriety of the episode throughout the Institute in Ireland, very few, if any, of its members would now be willing to go to Australia and certainly not the three who had lately departed from there. He added that he respected the Archbishop of Sydney, having no wish to fight with him, and that he was prepared to repay whatever monies Rome judged was owing from the Christian Brothers. He stated bluntly, however, that he would not tolerate the dismemberment of his Institute and implored Fransoni to resist Polding's moves against its organizational integrity.68

After receiving this letter Fransoni no longer insisted on the return of the Brothers to Australia, presumably because he believed that to do so would put them in an impossible situation. Again, we have the impression that despite some early support from the Propaganda Congregation in the affair of the Christian Brothers Polding's policies aroused concern in Rome, especially as the withdrawal of the Sydney Christian Brothers had 'a disastrous effect on Catholic education in New South Wales'.69

V

One suspects that the Propaganda Congregation's concern about the departure of the Passionist Fathers and Christian Brothers from Australia was heightened by the recollection that Roman intervention had been instrumental in providing Polding with these entities in the first place. If this were the case, the fate of yet another religious order which was established in Sydney in the 1840s would have been even more disturbing given that its

68 Riordan-Fransoni, 8 Nov. 1847, op. cit.
69 Fogarty, vol. I, p. 246; see also Keenan, p. 41.
presence in Australia was the result not merely of influence brought to bear by the Cardinal Prefect but at his direct instruction.

Early in 1844 Jean-Claude Colin, the Superior General of the French missionary institute, the Society of Mary, wrote to Cardinal Fransoni from Lyons explaining the need for a base in Sydney to supply provisions for the Marist mission stations recently established in the Western Pacific region and to function as a stopping-off place for missionaries travelling to and from these stations. Colin asked that a letter be sent to the Archbishop of Sydney urging his acceptance of such an establishment.\(^70\)

Strongly interested in the success of the Oceania missions and possibly influenced by Bishop Jean-Baptiste Epalle, the recently-appointed Marist Vicar Apostolic of Melanesia and Micronesia, who was in Rome at the time,\(^71\) Fransoni wrote to Polding on 5 May 1844 encouraging him to admit the Marists into his diocese and to accord them all co-operation. The tone of Fransoni's letter suggests doubt about Polding's willingness. The Cardinal explained carefully the necessity of the supply depot, adding that the proposal had the full approval of the Propaganda Congregation.\(^72\) Colin, too, wrote to Polding to say that the Holy See wanted the Catholic faith carried into the Pacific and to ask him to allow the establishment of the depot.\(^73\)

In his replies to these approaches, Polding stated that he understood the utility of having such a place in Sydney and consented to the Marist presence in his diocese, but only under strict conditions. He told Colin he was agreeing only to a depot for the Western-Oceania missions and not the establishment of

---

71 Hosie, 'The Marist Fathers in Australia', p. 6
72 Fransoni-Polding, 5 May 1844, SAA, RC: Polding.
73 Colin-Polding, 21 Aug. 1844 (CC), APM 232, ad Episcopos.
Fransoni’s letter to Polding of 5 May 1844 asking him to allow the Marists to establish a supply depot in Sydney.

(Source: SAA)
a religious community on an equal footing with other diocesan entities. To Fransoni he emphasized that he did not want the flourishing state of Benedictine-led Catholicism in New South Wales to be threatened by inconvenience and jealousy engendered by a multiplicity of monastic establishments. He reminded the Prefect that Britain and France were rivals in the Pacific. Accordingly, he did not want to jeopardize the excellent relationship that the Catholic Church in his jurisdiction enjoyed with the civil authorities by supporting a French enterprise too openly. Colin replied to Polding assuring him that the sole purpose of the Marists in Sydney would be to facilitate communications between Oceania and Europe and that they would defer to him in all things.

Polding's acceptance of the Marists only at the express direction of Rome and even then grudgingly did not augur well for the future, Colin's eagerness to be co-operative notwithstanding. Some of Colin's councillors in France had objected to the scheme on the grounds that difficulties might arise if Marists were placed under 'un évêque étranger'. Events proved them farsighted. When three Marists led by Antoine Freydier-Dubreul landed in Sydney in April 1845 they got a formally cordial reception from Polding but the Archbishop was openly annoyed that they had been sent without anyone waiting for his reply agreeing to the depot. Letters from Dubreul to Colin in the second half of 1845 detail the steady deterioration in the relations between the Marists and the Archdiocese, despite the former's efforts to allay Polding's anxieties about a rival religious order by constantly repeating that they had no

74 Polding-Colin, 11 Jul. 1845, APM 420, correspondence with bishops.
76 Colin-Polding, 8 Sept. 1846 (CC), APM 232, ad Episcopos.
77 Memoires Mayet, vol. 1a, p. 176, APM.
ambitions in Sydney beyond the depot and were resolved to submit to the local ecclesiastical authority.  

Colin exhorted his men in Sydney to withstand the difficulties and to be as accommodating to Polding as they could without harming the depot operations. Even so, the Marists were confronted with constant obstacles in attempting to establish themselves in Sydney. Dubreul believed that Polding was determined to keep the depot as small as possible, perhaps only one man living at the Benedictine monastery.

The accumulation and persistence of complaints from his Sydney priests eventually moved Colin to take the matter in person to Rome. Before leaving Lyons he called a special meeting of his general council. Dubreul had recently returned from Australia and was asked to present a report to this meeting. He stated that Polding was opposed to the presence of other religious institutes in his diocese and aimed to destroy the independence of the Marist Order in Sydney and Benedictinize it. Colin declared that he was not going to allow this under any circumstances. He had not sent Marists to Australia to make Benedictines out of them. He said he would appeal to Cardinal Fransoni and the Pope and that if he could not safeguard the right to govern his subjects in Oceania and Australia without episcopal interference he would withdraw them to France and close the missions. In this frame of mind he wrote to Polding, who was then in London having just arrived in Europe, to suggest negotiations. He then departed for Rome.

On reaching the city, Colin forwarded to Brunelli under cover of a letter dated 19 February 1847 a long memorandum by Dubreul on the Sydney
situation. Dubreul catalogued the obstacles that the Marists had encountered in Sydney which prevented them from acquiring a suitable property, despite numerous opportunities including offers from local Catholics, from receiving gifts for their work from the people, from saying Mass and reserving the Blessed Sacrament in their house and from applying themselves to their responsibilities without attempts to distract them into other activities. Dubreul concluded that Polding did not want two religious communities in his territory, even though the Marists had been as submissive as possible and had been careful to upset no one. He added that the local population was very sympathetic and that they had excellent relations with the civil officials, who even offered a gunboat to punish the Solomon Islanders after the murder of Bishop Epalle. He repeated a remark already made by Colin that the Marists were prepared to have themselves naturalized if that would help. Finally, he emphasized to Fransoni that the depot had been established in Sydney as the most logical location with the approval of the Propaganda Congregation and that unless it could be developed with land and buildings to a point where it could accommodate up to 25 persons it could not function effectively and the Western-Pacific missions would have to be abandoned.

After receiving the letter that Colin sent to London, Polding travelled to Lyons to see the Marist General. On being told that he had gone to Rome, Polding followed him. About the time that Colin sent Dubreul's memorandum to Brunelli, Polding submitted to the Propaganda Secretary through Thomas Grant a defence of his dealings with the Marists. He maintained that he had received and treated them well and assisted their supply depot. However, he told Brunelli that the fears he had expressed to

---

82 Colin-Fransoni, 19 Feb. 1847, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 3, fol. 518. Dubreul’s memorandum can be found at folios 512-516.
First page of Dubreuil's memorandum to Cardinal Fransonii, criticizing Polding's treatment of the Sydney Marists.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 3, fol. 512.)
Fransoni when first approached about its establishment had been well-founded. The basic question, he insisted, was one of jurisdiction. It was vital that the Marists be subject to episcopal authority in the same way as the local clergy to ensure efficiency and co-ordination in diocesan operations. Polding seems not to have understood, or accepted, that the depot was not a diocesan operation. He again raised what he saw as the delicate position of French priests residing in an English colony at a time of international tensions. Addressing himself to practicalities in a tendentious-sounding part of his letter to Brunelli, Polding explained that because of the clergy shortage in New South Wales he wanted all Masses to be public and therefore did not want the Marists saying Mass privately in their own house. Difficulties in transferring land for the depot arose not from diocesan opposition but from legal complications. The straightened circumstances of the Catholic populace did not permit them to be approached for donations.84

The Marist General and the Archbishop of Sydney both sought the support of the Propaganda Congregation. The Congregation, however, was content for the time being to allow them to conduct their own conversations. At meetings in Rome, Polding expressed his disappointment to Colin that Dubreul's memorandum, so critical of the Benedictine administration in Sydney, had been placed before the Congregation. For the sake of finding some amicable way forward, Colin agreed to withdraw the document, although, of course, he could not withdraw the unfavourable impression it created. Polding's suggestions about joint ownership of land and the Marists taking on outside pastoral work, including the aboriginal mission recently abandoned by the Passionists, were rejected by Colin as tending to undermine the freedom of his Order in Sydney and the effectiveness of the depot. Colin stated that he wanted to do nothing to displease Polding and asked him to place in writing

his conditions for the Marist presence in his diocese. This Polding declined to do, presumably not wanting to limit his freedom of action. The only practical agreement the two men came to was that Dubreul would not return to Australia.\textsuperscript{85} This was no great concession by Colin because he was dissatisfied with Dubreul whose 'volatile and impulsive' personality was not only a contributing cause of tensions between the Marists and Polding but also a source of trouble among the Sydney Marists themselves.\textsuperscript{86}

Colin pursued a strong line with Polding. He stated that unless the depot could be maintained under conditions agreed to by Polding it would be moved.\textsuperscript{87} Surrounded by difficulties in Sydney, the Marists there had contemplated the possibility of leaving and setting up elsewhere as early as February 1846. Hobart was first considered.\textsuperscript{88} In August 1847 Dubreul approached Fransoni for a recommendation to the ecclesiastical authority of Concepcion in Chile to allow the depot to be set up there as he had come to believe that its placement in Sydney was irreconcilable with the good of the Western-Pacific missions.\textsuperscript{89} The fact that Concepcion was on the other side of the Pacific Ocean shows how desperate the Marists were becoming. However, neither they nor Polding really wanted the depot moved from Sydney, the Marists because that town was the only practical place with the required port facilities and shipping connections, Polding because the withdrawal of yet another religious order from his diocese would look bad for him, especially one which was in Sydney at the initiative of Rome.\textsuperscript{90} Fransoni himself was convinced of the logistical necessity of the depot's location in Sydney.\textsuperscript{91}

\begin{multicols}{2}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{85} Memoires Mayet, vol. VII, pp. 171-172.
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Hosie, 'The Marist Fathers in Australia', p. 21.
  \item \textsuperscript{87} Memoires Mayet, vol. VII, p. 172.
  \item \textsuperscript{88} Hosie, 'Marist Fathers in Australia', p. 13.
  \item \textsuperscript{89} Dubreul-Fransoni, 31 Aug, 1847, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 3, fol. 776; Fransoni-Colin, 20 Sept. 1847, APM, 1.230 S C de Propaganda Fide, correspondence Colin-Fransoni 1845-1847.
  \item \textsuperscript{90} Hosie, Challenge, p. 59; Hosie, 'Marist Fathers in Australia', pp. 13-14.
  \item \textsuperscript{91} Fransoni-Colin, 14 Jun. 1853, CEPA, LDB, vol. 343, fol. 449.
\end{itemize}
\end{multicols}
Jean-Claude Colin, founder and first superior general of the Marists.

(Source: J.Hosie, Challenge: The Marists in Colonial Australia, Sydney, 1987, facing p. 70.)
The Roman meetings between Polding and Colin were frequent but unproductive and so the tensions in Sydney continued. In January 1848 Colin urged on Dubreul’s successor as head of the Marist community, Jean-Louis Rocher, the same accommodating attitude he had urged on Dubreul, opining that he sensed in Rome that Polding was basically benevolent towards the Marists and that things could be arranged satisfactorily.\(^{92}\) However, when the Archbishop of Sydney arrived back home he brought with him little evidence of benevolence but much resentment towards the Marists because of the complaints that they had made to the Roman authorities. Polding and Gregory accused the Marists of sending a huge letter to Rome criticizing the Benedictines and seeking to be independent of diocesan jurisdiction. This was doubtless a reference to Dubreul’s memorandum, even though that document did not contain any such claim to independence. Rocher tried to defend the Sydney Marists by pleading that they had not written to Rome but only to their Superior General, Colin, to keep him informed, as was their duty, to which Gregory retorted that to write to the Superior General was the same as to write to Rome.\(^{93}\)

Polding and Gregory were right to be worried about impressions created in Rome. It was true that the Sydney Marists had not written directly, but Colin and Dubreul had and they were not the only ones. In putting a plan to Fransoni in July 1847 for the reorganization of the Oceania missions, the Marist Vicar Apostolic of New Caledonia, Guillaume Douarre, begged that he not be placed under the metropolitan authority of the Archbishop of Sydney. This, he warned, would be fatal.\(^{94}\)

---

\(^{92}\) Poupinel-Rocher, 14 Jan. 1848 (CC), APM, Lettres du Procureur de Lyons, 1845-1856.

\(^{93}\) Rocher-Colin, 1 Aug. 1848 & 2 Nov. 1848, APM 458, Oceania Province, correspondence of the Procurators/Rocher 1845-1852.

Up until around 1850 the relationship of the Sydney Marists with the Benedictine regime remained awkward, but the passage of time eventually smoothed away most of the difficulties. The supply depot survived in precarious circumstances for two reasons. Firstly, it was absolutely vital to Marist operations in the Pacific and simply could not be evacuated. The Marists had no alternative but to hang on in Sydney whatever the problems. Secondly, the depot had explicit Roman backing. Fransoni's letter of 5 May 1844 made it impossible for Polding to refuse the Marists, but it did not prevent him from actions, some of them verging on the petty, which were calculated to confine the autonomy of the Marist community and which had the effect of hindering the work of the depot. Modern defenders of Polding point out that he did not seek the Marists, that they were virtually imposed on him by Fransoni and that at the outset he was not really given an opportunity to have his say. All this is true, but Polding's attitude of obstructing an enterprise which had direct Roman endorsement and which could therefore not be refused was both politically naive and risky.

VI

Polding's management of the non-Benedictine religious orders tarnished the prestige which he enjoyed at the Congregation de Propaganda Fide in 1842. The Congregation can hardly have failed to notice that the attempt to assert Benedictine hegemony had destroyed or disrupted a number of important pastoral initiatives: the conversion of the aboriginal people, the care of female convicts, the provision of schools for the poor and the evangelization of the islands of the Western Pacific Ocean. As early as May 1845 Polding himself felt, as he told Heptonstall, that his credit at Rome was fast being expended.

95 Hosie, Challenge, pp. 49, 66.
96 O'Donoghue, p. 90; M. Shanahan, Out of Time, Out of Place: Henry Gregory and the Benedictine Order in Colonial Australia, Canberra, 1970, p. 79.
change in Polding’s Roman fortunes began to become apparent during his second trip to Europe and Rome in 1846-1847.

In January 1846 Polding announced to Fransoni that he was coming to Europe to acquire more missionaries and negotiate for more dioceses because of the growth of the Catholic population. Polding had originally intended to send Gregory but changed his mind when rumours began to circulate that Gregory was being sent to Rome to have him made a bishop. Polding had great plans for his Vicar General and did not want to spoil them by running the risk of having Rome see Gregory as overly ambitious.98

Outwardly, Polding’s time in Rome in 1846-1847, during which he resided at the English College, was successful. His proposals for an extension of the diocesan system in Australia were accepted at the Propaganda Congregation.99 On 3 May 1847 the Oceania specialist among the cardinals, Castruccio Castracane, presented a ponenza which persuaded his colleagues, Cardinals Vincenzo Macchi, Pietro Ostini, Benedetto Barberini, Giacomo Brignole, Angelo Mai, Giuseppe Mezzofante, Francesco Orioli, Ludovico Altieri, Lorenzo Simonetti and Francesco Massimo along with the Prefect General to recommend to the Pope the erection of three new sees and the selection of bishops according to Polding’s plan: Melbourne, Maitland and Port Victoria (Darwin) to be filled, respectively, by the Irish Augustinian friar, James Alipius Goold, the English Benedictine monk, Placid Burchall, and the Spanish Benedictine monk, José Maria Serra. A supporter of the Archbishop, Castracane reminded his colleagues that Polding ‘è stato occupato con zelo e successivi mirabili in quella missione dal 1834’.100 The only practical difficulty

100 Polding ‘has been engaged with zeal and wonderful success in that mission since 1834’. Ristretto con sommario del Ponente Cardinale Castruccio Castracane sulla istanza di Monsig. Polding Arcivescovo di Sydney per l’erezione di tre vescovati nuovi nell’Australia, Apr. 1847, (hereafter Castracane ponenza 1847), CEPA, Acta, vol. 210, fols. 164 ff.
that Polding encountered was the failure to secure Burchall for the Diocese of Maitland, but he got another English Benedictine, the equally acceptable Charles Henry Davis, Prior of Downside.101

In March 1847 Polding obtained from the Pope authorization to found other houses of monks and nuns of the English Benedictine Congregation in the same way that St. Mary's monastery, Sydney, had been founded. This faculty extended to the foundations of other religious orders that Polding might deem opportune to establish in such a way that he and his successors as Archbishop would be their regular superior.102

In view of the friction between the Sydney Benedictines and other religious groups already established there, this was a singular concession from Rome. However, something mentioned at the end of this papal rescript indicates that Rome was beginning to have doubts about Polding's policies. Polding was instructed not to proceed with establishing communities of non-Benedictine religious and becoming their superior without the consent of the superiors general of the orders concerned. This clause was doubtless added to protect the rights and integrity of those orders in the light of recent problems in Sydney.

Despite the successes that Polding achieved in Rome in 1847, the atmosphere surrounding this visit was unfavourable to him personally, or, at least, so thought his contemporaries. In June 1847, after meeting Polding in England, the President General of the English Benedictines, Luke Barber, believed that Polding's prestige had disappeared and that Polding himself felt low and depressed.103 At about the same time the Passionist General, Testa, was convinced that the Propaganda Congregation was displeased with Polding who had not been as well received there as during his previous visit, in

1842.104 We have already seen how Polding in Rome in 1847 failed to secure the lasting support of the Congregation in his disputes with the Christian Brothers and the Marists. A couple of years after the visit, Charles Davis recalled that Polding had been 'sickened' by that time in Rome.105

A change of papacy might have contributed to the decline in Polding's Roman fortunes. Gregory XVI, Benedictine and well disposed towards Polding's monastery-based strategy, died in June 1846, not long before Polding arrived in Rome. Polding had been fond of Pope Gregory. He declared, 'No country can have more reason to be grateful to the memory of Gregory XVI than Australia'.106 Gregory's successor, Pius IX, was a secular priest with a pragmatic turn of mind, less susceptible to talk of monastic grandeur in the wilderness. Polding believed the new Pope was 'singularly fitted' and was confident that under his rule the Church would enjoy many blessings.107 But he felt that Pius lacked the 'fatherliness' of Gregory.108 The new Pope was generally encouraging of Polding, albeit in the stilted phraseology of formal papal utterances, but the relationship between the churchmen was not easy and, as we shall shortly see, sometimes went badly wrong, to Polding's cost.

VII

If the 1846-1847 visit had been vaguely unsatisfactory despite its gains, Polding's next encounter with Rome was disastrous. This encounter was not a direct one but occurred through the medium of Henry Gregory whom he despatched to Rome in 1851 to present a major report on the state of the Catholic Church in Australia and to mount a concerted campaign to secure definitive papal approval for a formal integration in perpetuity of the

104 Testa-Barberi, 13 Apr. 1847, in Thorpe, pp. 201-202. See also Hosie, Challenge, p. 70.
108 Quoted in Molony, p. 41.
Archdiocese of Sydney with the Benedictine Order. Polding was now making his play to realize his grand vision of an Australian Catholicism led and informed by high monastic religion and culture.\footnote{O'Donoghue, pp. 96-97.}

To justify an English presidency over the Australian Church, Gregory's report to the Pope emphasized that the colonies were now attracting large numbers of free settlers from all over the world and claimed that within a short period of time the Catholic population, hitherto almost exclusively Irish, would be diversified by an influx of English, Scottish, German and other peoples. On behalf of Polding's application that St. Mary's monastery be declared the cathedral chapter of the Archdiocese of Sydney and that the episcopal succession be reserved for Benedictines, Gregory argued that religion had made marvellous progress in Australia under the care of the monks. The present institutions of the Sydney Church existed only because of the efforts of these monks, who needed to be confident that future bishops would understand their ethos and achievements if the work of building up the Church was to continue. Gregory observed that monastic discipline was a safeguard against the clerical avarice so common in colonial situations. The future progress of religion in Australia depended on bishops who appreciated the benefits of monasticism as a framework for apostolic endeavour. He concluded by citing examples from English history and current Propaganda provision of monasteries also having the status of cathedral chapters.\footnote{Gregory's report can be found at CEPA, SOCG, vol. 975, fols. 300 ff., and his reasons for a Benedictine succession in Sydney at fol. 308.}

On 10 May 1852 Cardinals Fransoni, Barberini, Simonetti, Altieri, Raffaele Fornari and Tommaso Riario-Sforza met in congregazione to hear the cardinal ponente present his report on Gregory's submission. Cardinal Castracane, who consistently supported Polding's projects throughout the 1840s, had recently died. The cardinal who organized the present ponenza and who would act
Henry Gregory states the reasons for assigning the Archdiocese of Sydney to the perpetual care of the Benedictine Order.

(Source: CEPA, SOCG, vol. 975, fol. 308.)
regularly as *ponente* for Australian affairs in the next decade was Costantino Patrizi. Born in Siena in 1798 and ordained in 1821, this prelate entered the curial service as an *uditore* of the Sacred Roman Rota. Created a cardinal in 1834, his career included appointments as Vicar General of Rome, Archpriest of the Lateran Basilica, Bishops of Ostia and Velletri and of Albano, Secretary of the Holy Office of the Inquisition and Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites and Ceremonies before his death in 1876. A personal friend of Pius IX, he represented the Pope at the baptism in Paris of the son of the Emperor Napoleon III.  

Cardinal Patrizi presented a summary of Gregory’s report, referring to the achievements and bright prospects for the Australian missions and the reasons for the concession of Sydney to perpetual Benedictine possession. So far so good for Polding and Gregory. But at this point in the proceedings Patrizi told the assembled cardinals that he believed it opportune to take into account another submission which had recently been received in Rome.

This was a long letter which the Archdeacon of Sydney, John McEncroe, had written to the Pope, dated 7 March 1851. This Irishman with long missionary experience in the United States and Australia believed up until the late 1840s that there was a chance that Polding’s monasticism would be able to provide for the needs of the Church in New South Wales. There had even been talk of McEncroe himself becoming a monk. By 1850, however, he had developed serious doubts about the capacity of the monastery-centred approach to deal with the large numbers of Catholic settlers, mainly Irish, who were flooding into Australia to escape poverty at home and find opportunities in a new society. When he became convinced that Polding was unwilling or

---

unable to admit that there was a problem, McEncroe determined to take the matter further, indeed, to the very top,\textsuperscript{113} although not without courageously informing the Archbishop of what he proposed to do.\textsuperscript{114}

The result was McEncroe's letter to the Pope to which Patrizi drew the attention of the \textit{Propaganda} cardinals. McEncroe explained to the Pope his basic point that the spiritual welfare of Catholics in the Australian missions depended on the supply of priests. His analysis of the present state of the Australian Church and the prospects for its ethnic composition was completely at variance with Gregory's. He claimed that because of a critical shortage of clergy the faith of the Catholic people, who were 95% Irish or of Irish origin, was in danger of being extinguished. There were few local vocations to the priesthood and few volunteers from Europe. McEncroe was convinced that St. Mary's monastery would not be in a position to supply clergy in the required numbers for the colonial Church for many years. He argued that Ireland was the only reliable and natural source of priests for the strongly Irish Catholic communities in Australia. While Irish missionaries were going to dioceses such as Melbourne and Adelaide where there were Irish bishops, they were reluctant to go to Sydney because the bishop was English. McEncroe told the Pope that the Irish people had suffered too much under English rule for them to be happy even under the best English bishop. Few Englishmen knew the Irish well enough to govern them. The English and Irish characters were so different that when there was a disagreement between an English bishop and an Irish priest national antipathies inevitably rose to the surface. Moreover, Irishmen who wanted to work simply as priests without taking on the religious life as well would not volunteer for Sydney because they knew of Polding's aim to make the Archdiocese a Benedictine


\textsuperscript{114} McEncroe-Polding, nd, SAA, RC: Polding.
Archdeacon John McEncroe.
This senior Sydney priest wrote to the Pope to urge that the only way of saving the faith of Irish Australian Catholics was the immediate division of the Archdiocese of Sydney and the importation of Irish bishops and priests.

(Source: P.Hartigan, The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests, Kilmore, 1975, facing p. 112.)
preserve, with the role of the secular clergy being confined to being assistants and collectors for the monastery. Further to this point, McEncroe wrote that the domination of diocesan finances by the maintenance of St. Mary's aroused clerical and lay feeling against the Archbishop and his monks. The unattractiveness of Sydney to Irish secular missionaries undermined the morale of the existing small, overworked and discontented clerical body, threatening to consign thousands of Irish Catholics in the colony to Protestantism, indifference, irreligion and vice. McEncroe's remedy was the immediate division of the still-immense Archdiocese of Sydney into two more new dioceses, one in Goulburn and the other in Brisbane, and the appointment to both of Irishmen.\(^{115}\) In the *congregazione* of 10 May Patrizi reported that Gregory was of the opinion that further division of Sydney was inopportune for now.\(^{116}\)

Supported by Tobias Kirby, Rector of the Irish College, as well as by Bishop Goold of Melbourne and McEncroe's old mentor and bishop during his American, Bishop John England of Charleston, both of whom happened to be in Rome at the time, McEncroe's letter gained an attentive hearing at the curia.\(^{117}\) Gregory's precious references to medieval English practice and fanciful speculations about the future ethnicity of the Australian Catholic population looked anaemic alongside McEncroe's dramatic and tightly-argued case that the population was overwhelmingly Irish here and now and that urgent action was necessary to preserve its attachment to the Catholic religion.

Costantino Patrizi gave considerable prominence to McEncroe's views in his *ponenza*. Accordingly, the *Propaganda* cardinals at their meeting of 10 May decided that it was expedient neither for St. Mary's monastery to become the

\(^{115}\) For copies of McEncroe-Pius IX, 7 Mar. 1851, see CEPA, *SC-Oceania*, vol. 4, fols. 637 ff., & SOCG, vol. 975, fols. 312 ff.

\(^{116}\) Patrizi *ponenza* 1852, fols. 129 ff.

\(^{117}\) McEncroe-Kirby, 7 May 1851 (CC), SAA, Overseas clergy: Kirby; Birchley, p. 140; Birt, vol II, p. 167; Moran, p. 143; Phillips, pp. 9, 14.
cathedral chapter of Sydney nor for the episcopal succession there to be reserved for the Benedictines. They decided that future bishops should be chosen from either the regular or secular clergy on the basis of merit and that the same policy should apply to new dioceses formed in future from the Archdiocese. Furthermore, Polding and his suffragan bishops should adopt the measures prescribed by the Council of Trent to establish local seminaries for the training of diocesan priests. Pope Pius IX approved these decisions on 16 May.118

This date - 16 May 1852 - is a key date in the history of the Australian Catholic Church, marking the disappearance of the possibility of papal recognition of Polding’s great abbey-diocese vision for Sydney and, beyond it, Australia. The Benedictine presence was to continue, even as the central component in organizational terms, but any realistic hope that the Archdiocese might be conveyed officially and indefinitely to the government of the Benedictine Order as such with its monastic structures was at an end. Polding’s dream was finished.

On 4 June the Prefect General of the Propaganda Congregation wrote to Polding to announce this decision. Fransoni assured him that his letters and Gregory’s representations had been taken into account but explained that the Holy See judged it inappropriate in the circumstances of the Sydney Church to concede exclusive privileges to the Benedictines and that, on the contrary, for the sake of the extension of the faith in that region, it was preferable to encourage a diversity of apostolic enterprises. The Prefect exhorted Polding and the other Australian bishops to take all measures necessary to ensure an adequate supply of priests, including the establishment of seminaries to train secular clergy. Doubtless in an effort to soften the impact of this major setback, he assured Polding that the Congregation was well disposed towards him and

The title page of Cardinal Patrizi's 1852 ponenza which ended Polding's hope for papal endorsement of his plans for the Australian Church.

(Source: CEPA, Acta, vol. 214, fol. 129.)
Gregory and considered the Benedictines to be beneficial for Sydney and that the Pope was aware of how much Polding had laboured for the spread of Catholicism.\(^{119}\)

Following the Roman rejection of a perpetual Benedictine succession in Sydney, Gregory tried to promote the next best scenario, that at least Polding's immediate successor be a Benedictine, by suggesting that the Bishop of Maitland, Charles Davis, be thus designated. Fransoni side-stepped this move by observing that this was a matter about which all of the bishops of the Australian Province should be first consulted. He informed Polding of this decision in a letter dated 17 June.\(^{120}\)

VIII

McEncroe's was not the only intervention at Rome in 1852 which had the effect of undermining Sydney Benedictinism. In that year there arrived in the city Patrick Farrelly, a monk of St. Mary's monastery, who brought with him a list of grievances against Polding. Outwardly, St. Mary's reached its apogee of regular life around 1850 when there were approximately 45 monks,\(^{121}\) but this impressive figure could not conceal the atmosphere of low morale and poor discipline that began to upset the monastery from the late 1840s.\(^{122}\) Personality clashes, leadership problems, indiscriminate recruiting overseas and in Australia, superficial training and the frequent and prolonged absences of Polding or Gregory or both either on missionary circuits or overseas trips all contributed. The day-to-day administration of the monastery and the formation of the young monks were the responsibilities of the Prior, Gregory, who was unfitted for these tasks by either training or temperament. Farrelly


\(^{120}\) Fransoni-Polding, 17 Jun. 1852, CEPA, LDB, vol. 342, fol. 634.

\(^{121}\) Suttor, p. 81; T. Kavenagh, 'Polding and Nineteenth Century Monasticism' in Tjurunga, 1974, no. 8, p. 182.

\(^{122}\) For correspondence relating to these early problems, see SPM-DownAA/MF, M 152, M 180, M 183 & M190-200.
had been recruited as a seminarian from Ireland and arrived in Sydney in 1838 where he was ordained to the priesthood two years later. He was made President of St. Mary’s Seminary in 1841. He entered the Benedictine Order in 1844. Some years afterwards he declared that his religious profession had been made under compulsion by Polding in order to get control of his government stipend. Farrelly combined with a number of non-Benedictines, a Passionist priest, Peter Magganotto, who taught theology at St. Mary’s, and Irish secular priests, who stayed at the monastery for a while on their arrival in Sydney or took their retreats there, to promote among the young monks the feeling that monasticism in a rough-and-tumble frontier society like New South Wales was a hopeless anachronism.\textsuperscript{123}

Farrelly announced his intention to apply for an annulment of his vows. When, as he claimed, Polding and Davis attempted to control his communication with Rome, he resolved to go there in person. He left the monastery towards the end of 1851 and, contrary to Polding’s prohibition, collected the funds necessary for the voyage from his friends in Sydney. He told one of them that his purpose was to lay before the Roman authorities evidence of ‘the abuse of power and disregard of the laws of the Church in this part of the world’.\textsuperscript{124}

Before leaving Sydney, confident of a sympathetic hearing in Rome,\textsuperscript{125} Farrelly obtained from Magganotto a letter of introduction to Testa, the Passionist General, inviting him to assist Farrelly in his proceedings at the papal curia. Magganotto had encouraged Farrelly to take his grievances to a higher authority. In his submissions to the Propaganda Congregation, Farrelly depicted Polding as a vindictive cheat, dominated by the love of money and


\textsuperscript{124} Farrelly-Moore, 2 Dec. 1851, ML, papers of Sheridan Moore, Am 38-7.

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Ibid.}; Farrelly-Moore, 12 Dec. 1851, ML, papers of Sheridan Moore, Am 38-8.
the unhealthy influence of Gregory. He complained that Polding's authority at St. Mary's was arbitrary inasmuch as the modifications of the rule of St. Benedict for Australian conditions were not written down and were constantly changed by Polding as he pleased.

In letters written to Rome to defend himself, Polding stated that as a secular priest Farrelly had been so ill-disciplined and neglectful that he, Polding, suggested he adopt the religious life as a means of rehabilitation and future stability. Polding denied that he had employed force and produced statements signed by various monks at St. Mary's that Farrelly's profession had been voluntary. He pointed out that it was suspicious that Farrelly's doubts about his profession were voiced seven years after the event. Farrelly's unilateral abandonment of both his cloister and apostolate and his public collecting of money had excited grave scandal. Polding concluded that Farrelly was either motivated by bad faith or was suffering from some kind of mental hallucination. He emphasized that if Rome did not censure Farrelly severely, a blow would be struck at ecclesiastical discipline, especially among the young clergy in an unruly colonial society such as New South Wales.126

Polding also wrote to Archbishops Murray of Dublin and Cullen of Armagh to warn them of the approach of Farrelly and forestall the runaway monk obtaining Irish episcopal backing.127 Cardinal Fransoni approached Gregory and Goold, both in Europe at the time, for their view of the situation.128 Gregory, of course, wrote back from London to uphold Polding's version and to express the fear that Farrelly had been warmly received in Rome.129 Goold in Dublin stated that Polding was free from all blame and that

---

126 For the voluminous Roman documentation on the Farrelly case, see CEPA, SOCG, vol. 979, fols. 645 ff., & SC-Oceania, vol. 4, fols. 701 ff.
127 Polding-Cullen, 11 Jan. 1852, DAA, Australia box 58/1; Polding-Murray, 16 Jan. 1852, DAA, Murray papers, file 33/12, Australia & New Zealand 1830-1852.
Farrelly was in bad faith. The Bishop of Adelaide, Francis Murphy, wrote to Kirby at the Irish College in support of 'our beloved Archbishop', asking him to warn Roman officials against Farrelly whom Murphy knew from personal experience to be wilfully disobedient. On returning from overseas, Goold joined with Murphy and Davis to send an address to the Pope in which they testified that Farrelly was an unworthy monk and his allegations were false and calumnious. They warned that the consideration given in Rome to these allegations would have a detrimental effect on ecclesiastical authority in Australia.

Despite confirmation of Polding's position from Australian prelates, the Propaganda Congregation gave Farrelly what he wanted. On the recommendation of Fransoni, the Pope consented in late 1852 to release Farrelly from his vows and absolve him from the censure incurred by soliciting money against his superior's command. The Congregation made it clear that these concessions were granted not because of any doubts about the validity of Farrelly's vows or because his allegations against Polding were convincing but simply as a kindness to one who could not adapt to the monastic life.

Farrelly's portrayal of St. Mary's as a community crippled by division must have contributed to the decline of Roman confidence in Sydney Benedictinism. More damaging still were the comments that Farrelly made to Fransoni in a letter of August 1852 about the New South Wales mission. Before leaving Sydney, he had resolved to raise this wider issue at Rome, not just the matter of his own vows and relationship with Polding. Farrelly described the Archdiocese of Sydney as being in a deplorable condition.

---

131 Murphy-Kirby, 17 Apr. 1852, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1836-1861/1002.
132 Address of Murphy, Goold & Davis to Pope Pius IX, nd (CC), AAA 2,301, Murphy papers.
134 Farrelly-Moore, 12 Dec. 1851, op. cit.
requiring the immediate intervention of the Holy See. He asserted that Benedictine dominance was detrimental to the welfare of the local Church. Good men were being lost to the ministry because of the pressure to which aspirants to the priesthood were subjected to become monks as well. Farrelly argued that knowledge of this state of affairs in Ireland deterred men from volunteering for the growing Australian missions and yet Ireland was the only source of adequate numbers of clergy, neither the English nor Australian Benedictines being capable of meeting the need. Farrelly further observed that concentrating the clergy at St. Mary's monastery isolated them from the parishes they were supposed to be serving. What gave Farrelly's comments considerable credibility was that they corresponded exactly to McEncroe's analysis which the Propaganda cardinals had found so compelling.

IX

It was one of the ironies of the history of the Australian Catholic Church that at the very time in 1852, when the Pope was putting an end to Polding's grand design, Polding himself was engaged on an arduous mission to uphold papal authority. We referred earlier in this chapter to the establishment of the Diocese of Perth and the appointment of John Brady as bishop in 1845. It is significant that while Fransoni informed Polding in late 1844 that Brady was in Rome negotiating for a new ecclesiastical division on the western seaboard of Australia, he did not ask the Archbishop for an opinion about Brady's plan even though it involved slicing off one-third of Polding's ordinary jurisdiction. This is further evidence that Polding's Roman star was waning. As we have seen, Brady himself was working to lower Propaganda confidence in Polding's administration. Brady argued in a report which he submitted to the Congregation in February 1845 that Polding be excluded from the

136 Fransoni-Polding, 18 Nov. 1844, CEPA, LDB, vol. 331, fol. 833.
deliberations about Western Australia because the staffing and provisioning of
the new diocese would be carried out in Europe, not Australia, and Polding's
involvement would only cause delay.137 Cardinal Castracane's report about the
matter to a congregazione held in March 1845 was defensive about the non-
consultation of the Metropolitan of Australia but added that Polding seemed
to think well of Brady as could be seen from his appointment of Brady as Vicar
General for Western Australia.138

Early in June Fransoni informed Polding of this decision.139 Polding
could only reply that he was astonished,140 a reaction well summed up by
Bishop Murphy of Adelaide.

This event [Brady's consecration] was quite unexpected. It will
come like a thunderclap upon the ears of the Archbishop. He
thought Rome would consult him, when the consecration of a
suffragan was in contemplation.141

Polding was not necessarily opposed to the creation of a diocese in Perth.
When in Rome in 1842 negotiating for an Australian hierarchy he was unsure
as to whether Perth should be included in the scheme or not, alternating in his
thinking between the infancy of the Swan River Colony on the one hand and
its immense distance from Sydney on the other. Eventually, at the time, the
Propaganda Congregation itself decided against an early inclusion of Perth in

137 Relation de la Partie Occidentale de la Nouvelle Hollande, 22 Feb. 1845, CEPA, SOCG,
vol. 967, fols. 96 ff.
138 Ristretto con sommario di Ponente Cardinale Castruccio Castracane sulle providenze da
prendersi per il bene della Religione nell'Australia Occidentale, Mar. 1845, CEPA, Acta,
vol. 208, fols. 80 ff. For secondary accounts of the foundation and early, troubled years of
the Diocese of Perth, see Birt, vol. II, 34-35; Wiltgen, pp. 368-377; D.F.Bourke, History of
the Catholic Church in Western Australia 1829-1979, Perth, 1979, pp. 7-39; K.Garrad,
'New Norcia and the Great Schism of Perth', Journal of Religious History, vol. 8, no. 1,
June 1974, pp. 49-73; P.McCarthy, 'The Foundation of Catholicism in Western Australia
1829-1911', University Studies in History and Economics, Aug. 1956, pp. 5-36; M.Newbold,
The Turbulent Bishop Brady: An Outline of Western Australian Catholic History during
John Brady's role as priest and Bishop of Perth 1843-1971', nd, typescript of unpublished
book in ACAP, passim.
139 Fransoni-Polding, 3 Jun. 1845, SAA, RC: Polding.
141 Murphy-Geoghegan, 3 Dec. 1845, AAA, 2.301 Murphy papers, box 1, file 1.
the new hierarchy. What alarmed Polding was the prospect of Brady being made a bishop. He believed Brady was entirely lacking in discretion.

Polding's concern was entirely justified. Motivated by ambition, innocent wishful thinking, self-delusion or dishonesty, Brady had succeeded in persuading the Congregation to establish a diocese in Perth and to make him its bishop only through a wildly exaggerated and misleading account of the present circumstances and future prospects of the Catholic community in the Swan River Colony. The Propaganda Congregation had no way of knowing that the report and proposals submitted by Brady did not correspond with the reality of the social conditions and spiritual needs of the colony. Brady was the only person in Rome who had first-hand experience of the situation under consideration.

Brady's fantasy was the principal cause of the catastrophe which now overtook the Catholic Church in Western Australia. He arrived back in Perth in January 1846 with a ridiculously elaborate missionary party which could not be supported by the tiny, poor local Catholic community. The result was that the Diocese of Perth descended deeper and deeper into a debt which by 1849 had reached £10,000. Financial mismanagement combined with Brady's lack of prudence and administrative ability and the unpreparedness of his missionaries for the conditions they found in Western Australia to cause the failure or near-failure of all the components of Brady's overall missionary strategy.

It is not surprising that when in May 1847 Western Australia came before the Propaganda cardinals again as part of a general consideration of the Australian Church they paid more attention to the views of Polding who was in Rome at the time. Brady pleaded with both Fransoni and Brunelli not to

---

allow Polding to upset the arrangements that had been made in 1845,\textsuperscript{143} but unavailingly. Supported by Castracane, Polding's proposals for the tidying-up of the Western Australian mission were accepted by the \textit{Propaganda} cardinals and approved by the Pope in May 1847. These proposals included the excision of territory from Brady's jurisdiction to form a new diocese, based at Port Victoria, and the conferral of this diocese on one of Brady's missionaries, the Spanish Benedictine, José Maria Serra.\textsuperscript{144}

Meanwhile, besieged on all sides by creditors and other difficulties in Perth, Brady asked Rome for a coadjutor, or assistant, bishop.\textsuperscript{145} The \textit{Propaganda} Congregation seized on this request as a way of extricating Brady from the consequences of his incompetence. However, at this point, the Congregation's ability to deal with the problems of Western Australia or, indeed, any other missionary matters, was seriously disturbed by a revolution in the Papal State. When the excitement engendered by the minor political reforms enacted after the election of Pope Pius IX in 1846 threatened to turn into mob rule, the Pope escaped from Rome in November 1848 and took up residence at Gaeta in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Most of the cardinals also left the city to seek refuge in various other parts of Italy. The normal operations of the papal curia, including the \textit{Propaganda} Congregation, came to a halt. The Prefect General, Fransoni fled to Naples. The Secretary General, Mgr. Alessandro Barnabò - Giovanni Brunelli having been made nuncio to Spain the previous year - remained in Rome to try to keep day-to-day functions going as best he could and to defend the Congregation's buildings and property. The Australian specialist among the \textit{Propaganda} cardinals, Castracane, also stayed in Rome as a member of the council appointed by the Pope to take charge of the city during his absence. Needless to say, this council


\textsuperscript{144} Castracane ponenza 1847, fols. 164 ff.

\textsuperscript{145} Brady-Fransoni, 12 Mar. 1849, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 974, fol. 223.
was unable to function and Cardinal Castracane spent the months of the
Roman revolution hiding in the cellar of the Irish College. Bishop
Giambattista Palma, Secretary of Latin briefs but the previous year a
Propaganda minutante, was shot dead while standing at a window of the
Quirinal Palace just before the Pope's flight from Rome.¹⁴⁶

With the Pope at Gaeta, Fransoni at Naples and Barnabò in Rome, it is
not surprising that Roman consideration of the situation in Perth became
disjointed. As a result, Brady was assigned as his coadjutor somebody with
whom he was completely incompatible, Serra. A ferocious struggle broke out
between Brady and Serra for control of diocesan finances. Brady appealed to
Rome and went there in person at the beginning of 1850 (the revolution
having been suppressed). Serra was represented at Rome by two fellow
Spanish Benedictines. Alarmed at Brady's erratic behaviour, the Propaganda
Congregation handed down a judgement in favour of Serra. Rejecting this
decision and insisting that he was the victim of a monkish conspiracy, Brady
left Rome surreptitiously and returned to Australia in violation of a papal
prohibition. Back in Perth, he harassed Serra over a period of several months
with an aggressive campaign of legal action, public meetings, pamphlets, press
notices and even violence in the cathedral. Brady and his supporters used
national differences to stir up hostility against the Spanish in a predominantly
Irish Catholic community. Brady disregarded repeated communications from
Rome, including the Pope's personal command, which endeavoured to bring
him to heel. With Brady immovable and the Catholic community in Perth in
uproar, an exasperated Propaganda Congregation in early 1852 was running
out of options with which to deal with the crisis. Fransoni appealed for help to
the Archbishops of Westminster, Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, and Dublin,

¹⁴⁶ E.E.Y. Hales, Pio Nono: A Study in European Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth
Century, New York, 1962, p. 98; P. MacSuibhne, Paul Cullen and his Contemporaries,
John Brady, first Bishop of Perth.
Only a personal confrontation with Polding persuaded Brady to submit to papal authority.

(Source: P.Hartigan, *The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests*, Kilmore, 1975, facing p. 32.)
Paul Cullen, but these churchman could do nothing more than offer ineffectual moral persuasion.\textsuperscript{147} While Brady chose to ignore its enactments, Rome was powerless.

The only course of action now available was some kind of direct, personal confrontation of papal authority with Brady. The medium chosen for this intervention was the Archbishop of Sydney in his capacity as Metropolitan of Australia. Polding’s involvement had so far been minimal because of the great distance between Sydney and Perth. As early as 1846 one of Brady’s disillusioned missionaries, Peter Powell, who had fled to Singapore to escape the chaos enveloping the Western Australian Church, urged Fransoni to consult Polding about the situation.\textsuperscript{148} Polding’s own earliest action had been to write to Fransoni in June 1850 warning him that the turmoil in the west was scandalizing the whole Australian Province, but he explained that he knew little about the dispute and was reluctant to interpose his metropolitan authority.\textsuperscript{149} In February 1851, while he was in Rome, Brady was trying to convince the \textit{Propaganda} authorities that his case should go before the Metropolitan of Australia, doubtless as a delaying tactic. The following month the Congregation received a letter from Polding complaining that he had not been consulted about the affair of Perth, a letter which caused considerable annoyance among the officials. Barnabò went so far as to blame Polding for all the confusion which he said followed from the establishment of the Diocese of


\textsuperscript{148} Powell-Fransoni, 2 Sept. 1846, CEPA, \textit{SOCG}, vol. 974, fols. 151 ff.

\textsuperscript{149} Polding-Fransoni, 3 Jun. 1850, CEPA. \textit{SOCG}, vol. 974, fols. 371 ff; see also Heptonstall-Grant, 12-13 Aug. 1850 (CC), CEPA, \textit{Acta}, vol. 213, fol. 488.
Port Victoria and the conferral of that see on Serra, both of which had been recommended by Polding.\(^{150}\)

However, after the flight of Brady from Rome and the failure of the Congregation to make him submit, Fransoni wrote to Polding in mid-October 1851 to brief him and ask him to do all in his power to obviate the grave threat posed to the Church in Perth by the return of Brady.\(^{151}\) Serra himself turned more and more to Polding as his only hope against Brady and his partisans.\(^{152}\) Accordingly, Polding journeyed on horseback from Sydney to Adelaide, by ship from Adelaide to Albany and again by horse from there to Perth, arriving in June 1852. He immediately issued a pastoral letter calling for an end to all dissension and for unqualified submission to the papal decision that Brady was suspended from office and that Serra was the coadjutor Bishop of Perth with right of succession and Apostolic Administrator, entitled to the obedience, loyalty and reverence of all. Summoned before the Archbishop, Brady was required, during a special ceremony held in the cathedral on 4 July, to read out a declaration by which he finally made formal submission to the papal sentence. The following month, consumed with bitterness towards Polding, he left Perth and eventually returned to Europe where he spent the remaining twenty years of his life in semi-retirement.\(^{153}\) Polding wrote to Fransoni to report Brady's surrender and departure.\(^{154}\) The Cardinal was delighted to

\(^{150}\) Garrido sea log, pp. 29-30; Salvado diary, pp. 154-155.

\(^{151}\) Fransoni-Polding, 11 Oct. 1851, SAA, RC: Polding; Fransoni-Serra, 30 Aug. 1852, BL, MN 629/5, ACC 2953A/33, reports, libro I.


receive the news and commended Polding and Serra for their effective united action. Polding was especially praised. Fransoni informed him that his intervention had caused great satisfaction within the Congregation and a glowing account of all that he had achieved would be presented to the Pope.155

X

If Polding expected on his return to Sydney from restoring law and order in Perth, a demanding task that occupied him for eight months,156 that a grateful Rome would reward him by taking a more compliant attitude towards his policies for his own diocese then he would have been disappointed. Rome's release of Patrick Farrelly from his vows did not put an end to the unrest at St. Mary's monastery. Eventually, under date of 19 March 1854 and the signatures of seven monks, a lengthy appeal was sent to the cardinals of the Propaganda Congregation asking for three things.

Firstly, the seven requested an investigation into the validity of their religious vows, about which they claimed to be doubtful because of confusion in their minds about the canonical status of the Benedictine Order in Australia, its relationship to the parent English Congregation and whether it had been approved by the Holy See. They were also disturbed by the seemingly absolute character of Polding's powers in the absence of any written regulations except for the rule of St. Benedict itself. When they first voiced their concerns to Polding he assured them that Rome had given him the faculty to make and change the rules as circumstances demanded, although he declined to show them the documentary evidence for this faculty. The monks said they were sceptical about Polding's assurance and were now appealing to Rome directly.

155 Fransoni-Polding, 3 Jan. 1853 & 12 Apr. 1853, SAA, RC: Polding.
Secondly, the monks asked that, should the validity of their vows be upheld, they be released from their obligations on the grounds that they would be able to serve the mission more effectively as secular clergy than as religious. They claimed that a great injury had been caused to the infant Australian Church by the premature establishment of a religious community as the governing body. Monasticism separated the clergy from the people and inhibited the development of a native, diocesan priesthood. The Australian missions would not progress unless the initiative passed from the regular to the secular clergy.

The third and longest part of the appeal to the cardinals was a plea for the removal of the Prior of the monastery and Vicar General of Archdiocese, Gregory, on the grounds that nothing would prosper while he was influential. His aloofness made him unpopular with the people of Sydney. He was a bad influence on the Archbishop. His reputation was such that overseas priests and seminarians refused to join the Sydney mission. The most damaging charge brought against Gregory was that he was disrespectful of Rome. While searching through Polding's papers for the Roman document which Polding claimed gave him extensive personal powers over the monastic regulations, some of the monks discovered letters from Gregory when he was overseas in the early 1850s and made copies of them. These letters contained statements which, as the appellants put it to the cardinals, suggested that Gregory 'has no great reliance on, and little sympathy with your Holy Court'. The monks made much use of one particular statement of Gregory's, 'Timeo Ecclesiam Italicam' ('I fear the Italian Church'), and concluded that 'one who does not wish to receive instruction and assistance from Rome will do many things without the knowledge and approbation of Rome'. They pointed out that Gregory tried to explain himself by saying that what he meant was, 'I fear the Italian character'. However, this disclaimer, as the authors of the appeal well knew, would have done nothing to mollify the mainly Italian cardinals of the Propaganda
Congregation or its exclusively Italian secretariat. Finally, the signatories asked for a papal legate to be sent to Sydney to investigate their complaints and concluded, 'we cast ourselves on Rome our holy Mother Church, imploring her to extend the blessings of her protection and wisdom to us, at the very end of the earth'.

Exasperated by the continuing rebellion within the monastery and shaken by the criticism of his administration of the Archdiocese, Polding wrote indignantly to Fransoni on 20 March. He thanked the Cardinal for praising his exertions in Western Australia, but seized upon the leniency shown to Farrelly in 1852 as giving credibility to the story that Farrelly was putting about Sydney that he had been received kindly by cardinals and other dignitaries while in Rome, including the Propaganda Secretary, Barnabò, and that he had won a great victory over the Archbishop. Polding stated that he, Davis and Gregory never imagined that Farrelly would have been favoured by being given the secularization he desired. Episcopal authority in Sydney had been damaged. Polding tendered his resignation as Archbishop of Sydney since it was now common knowledge that Rome had declined to do what he had requested, that is, make an example of Farrelly. As soon as he had written this letter, Polding suddenly departed on a third trip to Rome, taking Gregory with him. In September two of the signatories, Melitus Corish, an Irish secular priest who had been persuaded to join the Benedictines on arrival in Australia, and Anselm Curtis, the first native-born Australian to be ordained in Sydney, also set out for Rome to place their case personally before the authorities.

---

157 Appeal from certain monks at St. Mary's Monastery, Sydney, to the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, 19 Mar. 1854, CEPA, SOCg, vol. 979, fols. 710 ff.
159 O'Donoghue, pp. 98-99; Shanahan, pp. 60-63; Birchley, pp. 149, 172.
When he arrived in Rome in June Polding was still in a belligerent mood. He remonstrated with Fransoni about the Roman practice of receiving complaints sent in against bishops by members of the lower clergy directly and therefore unaccompanied by any defence or commentary from the accused. Polding pleaded that the circulation in both Rome and Australia of suspicions, which went unanswered for lengthy periods until the accused found out about and moved to counter them, undermined the episcopal dignity and encouraged a form of ecclesiastical republicanism. He asked that a rule be established according to which all communications with Rome regarding the Australian missions be first placed before the local ecclesiastical authority for inspection and onforwarding so that accusations and replies would go to Rome together.160 There is no evidence that this suggestion was implemented.

Polding told Barnabò bluntly that, however displeasing his presence might be to the authorities, it was necessary for him to come to refute what he called the calumnies of Farrelly and the other monks. Polding pointed out that, practically speaking, the concession of secularization to Farrelly implied that his allegations had been accepted at the Propaganda Congregation and that he, Polding, had been declared publicly to be a liar.161 When Barnabò suggested to Gregory that Polding was waging a vendetta against Farrelly, Polding replied that he just wanted the harm done in Australia by Farrelly’s secularization to be repaired. He scorned the idea of a formal investigation because it would have the effect of undermining his authority. Nothing would please Farrelly and his partisans more, Polding insisted, than to be able to say that the Archbishop had been hauled before the Congregation. Polding told Barnabò that if his evidence was not considered sufficient then he would resign.162

160 Polding-Fransoni, nd but 1854 (draft), SAA, Propaganda: Polding.
He presented the Secretary with the form of a letter which he wanted the Congregation to send to Farrelly to stop him making trouble and to rectify the injury done to the Church in Sydney and its Archbishop. Barnabò departed from this draft and composed another which Polding angrily rejected as containing not a single expression exonerating him of Farrelly's accusations. Polding repeated that while nothing was done to remove the impression that Rome believed these accusations he could not continue to govern the Church in Sydney.\(^{163}\) Browbeaten by Polding, Barnabò eventually sent a strongly-worded reprimand to Farrelly in August which commanded him to desist from inciting unrest at St. Mary's monastery, impugning Polding's honour and misusing the leniency shown him by the Holy See in the form of his secularization. Barnabò informed Farrelly that his accusations were not believed at Rome and exhorted him to apply himself to the salvation of souls as a secular priest.\(^{164}\)

Polding discovered that his resignation was not taken seriously at the Propaganda Congregation. Probably Polding himself did not really want it but, in his frustration, was making a dramatic gesture to gain sympathy in Rome and Sydney.\(^{165}\) The Congregation assured Polding of their confidence in him. They declined to accept his resignation, encouraged by a public meeting organized in Sydney by a leading Catholic layman, Judge Roger Therry, and a petition sent to Rome by the Sydney clergy, both of which praised Polding and asked the Holy See not to allow him to lay down his office.\(^{166}\) The Pope was sympathetic to Polding personally, consoling him in his trials.\(^{167}\)

---


\(^{164}\) Barnabò-Farrelly, 19 Aug. 1854 (CC), CEPA, LDB, vol. 345, fols. 764. Another contemporary copy is in SAA, RC: Farrelly.

\(^{165}\) O'Donoghue, pp. 105-106.

\(^{166}\) Petition of the clergy of Sydney to Pius IX, 7 April 1854, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 979, fol.; see also O'Donoghue, p. 107; O'Farrell, p. 91; Shanahan, p. 63; Moran, p. 447.

Polding was no doubt heartened by the decision which was given about the immediate matter which had brought him and Gregory on one side and Corish and Curtis on the other to Italy. An opinion which Polding sought from Roman experts in canon law and moral theology found that there were no grounds for the nullity or dispensation of profession sought by the dissident monks. This opinion was upheld by the Propaganda Congregation.\footnote{Praetensae nullitatis professionis \textit{votum pro veritate}: opinion on petition to Holy See by Sydney Benedictine monks seeking nullity of their profession or dispensation, commissioned by J.B.Polding and given by S.Martini, G.Cipolla & A.Ruggiero, nd, SAA, Correspondence of Propaganda Fide.}

With its permission Polding sent the monks' representatives, Curtis and Corish, to the Benedictine monastery at Subiaco, presumably to do penance. While they were there, Fransoni sent a declaration to be signed by them for themselves and the others. By this declaration they apologized for their conduct towards their superiors, asked pardon of the Congregation, requested that their petition be withdrawn, accepted the validity of their vows and undertook to persevere in the monastic state in Australia.\footnote{Polding-Fransoni, 16 Dec. 1854, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 5, fol. 699; Corish & Curtis-Fransoni, nd, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 979, fol. 634. See also \textit{Ristretto con commario del Ponente Cardinale Costantino Patrizi sopra lo Statuto per la Congregazione Benedettina Australiana proposta da Monsig. Polding Arcivescovo di Sydney}, Apr. 1855 (hereafter Patrizi ponenza 1855), CEPA, Acta, vol. 219, fols. 132 ff.}

XI

Aware of his distressed indignation, the Congregation was clearly attempting to pacify Polding in the second half of 1854. Here was an opportunity for him to regain some of the ground lost over the previous decade, but his visit to Rome involved an incident which was not only acutely embarrassing in itself but would also have catastrophic long-term consequences for his policies as Archbishop of Sydney, much more so than he realized at the time.\footnote{See this thesis, pp. 177, 196-199, 219, 268-269, 321.} After arriving in Rome, he and Gregory both applied for an audience with the Pope, as was the custom. When some weeks passed
without any response, Polding realized that something was wrong. He heard that the Pope was displeased that he and Gregory had returned so soon to Rome. (Gregory had last been in Rome two years before, Polding seven.) Eventually they were each issued with a ticket of audience. Unaware that separate tickets meant separate audiences, Polding took Gregory with him, wanting the assistance of his Vicar General’s memory and practical knowledge. They stepped unwittingly into a serious breach of papal protocol. Why did the papal chamberlains not step into prevent the fiasco that now unfolded? When the two Australian churchmen entered Pius IX’s audience chamber together, the Pope became agitated at the sight of Gregory, said that he should not have come again to Rome so soon, spoke of him as disturbing the Church in Sydney and stated that he wished to see the Archbishop alone. Gregory fell to his knees and began to defend himself assertively, telling the Pope that he would have to answer at the day of judgement. Distraught, Polding went over to Gregory, knelt down and placed his hands on Gregory’s shoulders to calm him, at the same time begging the Pope not to blame Gregory and taking responsibility both for Gregory’s presence in Rome and the confusion about the audience. He asked the Pope to forgive them both, whereupon Gregory retired and the Pope ‘resumed his wonted graciousness of manner’.¹⁷¹ Polding blamed the incident on ignorance of etiquette on his part and misunderstanding of his and Gregory’s intentions on the part of the Pope, aggravated by his and Gregory’s lack of skill in Italian and the ‘bluntness and uncourtlike effusion of our northern manner’.¹⁷² He admitted that Gregory lacked self control and said


¹⁷² Polding-Talbot, Sept. 1862, op. cit.
Pope Pius IX around 1854.

things out of wounded feeling that he ought not to have said. The Pope's initial reaction to Gregory's presence suggests that he had already come to believe the negative reports about Gregory. The manner which Gregory adopted at the audience appeared to Pius to provide further evidence against him. Polding's behaviour seems to have been interpreted by the Pope as siding with Gregory. The Bishop of Hobart, Robert Willson, who disliked both Polding and Gregory, had been in Rome for some time and had handed in unfavourable reports about the two Sydney churchmen. He seems to have worked to lower Propaganda confidence in Gregory in particular. The Rector of the English College, Robert Cornthwaite, reported to Willson that the English-language minutante, Filippo Vespasiani, burst out laughing when the Secretary, Barnabò, read out passages of a letter from Gregory.

Polding never mentioned the unhappy incident to anyone, but the Pope must have talked. Unbeknown to Polding, stories were circulating in ecclesiastical circles in Rome at the time about what had happened, some of them highly embellished. According to one of these, Gregory had attempted by 'cunning tricks' to obtain from the Pope approval for 'obnoxious' parts of a draft constitution for the Sydney Benedictine monastery. The Pope was supposed to have told Polding that, as a result, his presence was forbidden to Gregory. Nevertheless, Polding 'smuggled' Gregory into the papal audience chamber and forced him on the Pope. When the Pope protested, so the story went, Polding embraced Gregory to show whose side he was taking. Even if not in this lurid and implausible form, the botched audience was an incident that none of the participants was likely to forget, but certainly not Pius IX who

---

173 Ibid.; Polding-Brown, nd, op. cit.
174 Brown-Polding, nd, op. cit.; Southerwood, p. 151. See also this thesis, pp. 170-171.
now conceived a deep and abiding prejudice against the Vicar General of Sydney.

XII

In 1854 the Congregation reprimanded Farrelly, Corish, Curtis and the others, but one of their grievances voiced against the Polding-Gregory leadership, the lack of objectivity in the government of St. Mary's monastery, did make an impression. The Congregation encouraged Polding to devise a more settled and systematic method of administration to promote better discipline by arranging for a proper, written set of rules and regulations. This he did in consultation with Pietro Casaretto, Abbot President of the Cassinese Congregation of the Benedictine Order, Angelo Pescetelli, Procurator General of the same, and the English Benedictines Thomas Heptonstall and Thomas Brown.176

On 2 April 1855 Cardinals Barberini, Altieri, Mario Mattei, Gabriele Ferretti, Giovanni Brunelli, Giusto Recanati, Roberto Roberti and Pietro Marini assembled to hear Costantino Patrizi give an account of the disturbances at St. Mary's and the measures taken for their rectification. The cardinals approved the statutes for the Australian Benedictines on an experimental basis for the duration of Polding's lifetime and this recommendation was ratified by the Pope two days later.177 The statutes provided for the establishment of an Australian Benedictine Congregation as soon as three monasteries were in existence.178 When Fransoni wrote to convey this decision to Polding he added that the Pope had also approved the suggestion of the Propaganda cardinals, made on the representation of

176 Kavenagh, 'Polding and Nineteenth Century Monasticism', p. 173.
177 Patrizi ponenza 1855, fol. 317.
178 Kavenagh, 'The 1855 Monastic Declarations of St. Mary's, Sydney', p. 72.
Cardinal Costantino Patrizi, *ponente* at the cardinals' assemblies of 10 May 1852 which decided against a perpetual Benedictine succession in Sydney and 2 April 1855 which approved experimental statutes for St. Mary's monastery.

Cardinal Marini, that Polding be declared abbot for life in view of the fact that the foundation of St. Mary's was due largely to his efforts.179

The Roman decisions of 1854-1855 - the condemnation of the appellant monks, the approval of the statutes for St. Mary's and the conferral of a life abbacy on Polding - ensured that the Benedictine establishment in Sydney would continue with papal blessing but they counted for little with the central issue as Polding saw it. He had been unable to reverse the 1852 decision against the abbey-diocese project. As far as Gregory was concerned, Rome allowed him to return to his offices in Australia, but his reputation was so damaged by the torrent of criticism from his enemies among the monks and by the impression he made on the Pope that he was doomed. A great deal had happened between Cadolini's kiss of 1842 and Pius IX's anger in 1854. Ten years after the splendid reception accorded Polding in Rome in 1842, the Propaganda Congregation buried his hopes for Australian Catholicism. Bishop Goold's uncle and agent in Europe, James Hynes, who believed that Rome was too ready to listen to stories sent in against bishops180 and who sympathized with Polding, put it succinctly in a letter to Goold in April 1855, 'He was at the top of the wheel once...'181

180 Hynes-Goold, 29 Aug. 1854, MDHC, box 'Bishop J.T.Hynes. Letters and papers'.
181 Hynes-Goold, 9 Apr. 1855, MDHC, box 'Bishop J.T.Hynes. Letters and papers'.

CHAPTER IV
THE CAMPAIGN OF THE FREEMAN'S JOURNAL
1856-1860

When he returned from Europe with Gregory in January 1856 Polding gave no publicity to Rome's ruling against his abbey-dioceese scheme but emphasized the less significant Roman decision to put the Benedictine presence in Sydney on a more regular footing. Soon after his return he formally promulgated the recently-approved constitutions for St. Mary's monastery. He continued to regard the monastery as the centrepiece of the Sydney ecclesiastical system. He continued to combine in his own person the offices of Archbishop and Abbot and retained Gregory in the offices of Vicar General and Prior.1 This policy generated increasing criticism among influential elements of the Catholic community in the late 1850s and would again lead to Roman intervention.

I

The principal platform for discontent was the Freeman's Journal, a newspaper founded by Archdeacon John McEncroe in 1850 to promote the interests of the Irish Catholics of New South Wales. McEncroe had been influenced by the vigorous tradition of Irish Catholic journalism in the United States which kept alive in the immigrant Irish population a nationalist love for their homeland and a sense of past and present wrongs committed against it.2 From the middle of the 1850s until mid-1860 this publication accused the Benedictine government of Sydney of scandalous neglect, incompetence and

---

corruption. The *Freeman’s Journal* advocated wide-ranging reforms, especially the provision of more schools, the introduction of more religious orders and equality between the Benedictines and the secular clergy. As a motif connecting all other grievances, the *Journal* demanded that the laity be given a consultative voice in the financial administration of the archdiocese.

This strident press criticism of the English-dominated ecclesiastical establishment began in 1856 when McEncroe transferred control of the *Journal* to Michael D’Arcy, his ultra-nationalist nephew. The paper mocked the 'delicate English susceptibilities' of Polding and Gregory. The criticism became so vituperative that McEncroe had to resume control of the paper. He appointed as editor the English convert, Jabez King Heydon. However, this move brought about only a temporary respite. Heydon was influenced by the Catholic liberalism of the *Rambler* type with its accent on lay criticism and action. He engaged the powerful literary assistance of another convert, from Scottish Presbyterianism, William Augustine Duncan, who later became the Collector of Customs for New South Wales. Educated, independent in his thinking and knowledgeable about overseas intellectual trends, Duncan has 'a fair claim to be the leading liberal Catholic layman in the nineteenth-century Australian church'. Duncan believed that clerical paternalism and the lack of effective institutions prevented Australia's Catholics from assuming their responsibility as citizens and thereby cramped the Church's influence in society. Both he and Heydon were convinced that progress towards Church

---

3 Quoted in Shanahan, p. 22.
Through articles and letters in the *Freeman's Journal*, William Augustine Duncan blamed the Benedictines for the problems of the Church in Sydney.

reform could only be achieved by the assertion of lay rights and open discussion in a free press.6

The controversy which gripped the Archdiocese of Sydney and other parts of the Australian Church towards the end of the 1850s was a symptom of a wider ferment in Australian colonial society at large in that restless decade of rapidly increasing population, booming economic development and vibrant political debate in the press and elsewhere surrounding the concession of self-government to five colonies. Belonging largely to the lower strata of the socio-economic order, Australia's predominantly Irish Catholics often identified with democratic, egalitarian trends in civil society and associated themselves with radical causes. Some of them carried the social reformist outlook over into their expectations of their Church. Informed Catholics were aware that the lay people of Protestant denominations generally enjoyed a higher level of participation in church government than was the case in their own. Finally, a few educated Catholics in Australia were influenced by the writings of liberal Catholics in England and Europe.7

From 1857 to 1860 the Freeman's Journal hammered the point that all the problems of the colonial Church were to be attributed to the mismanagement of the monks and their English leaders.8 In a May 1858 issue Duncan, under the pseudonym 'Isidore', wrote that 'there is an opinion prevalent in England, in Europe and if I am not misinformed, in Rome itself, that the Benedictine Order has done its work'.9

---


8 Haines thesis, pp. 10-14; Haines article, pp. 82-84; Payten, pp. 309, 332, 335-351; Shanahan, pp. 122-123.

9 Quoted in Birchley, p. 176.
The conflict in Sydney at the end of the 1850s soon degenerated into a predictable clash between Irishism and Benedictinism. However, it was never a merely national issue since Heydon was English and Duncan Scottish. Ultimately, what was at stake was divergent visions of the future of Australian Catholic culture and clashing presumptions about ecclesiastical government.10

Any possibility of real communication was destroyed by the abusive character of the Freeman's Journal's campaign. Polding's attempt to rein in the excesses of the Catholic press were denounced as authoritarianism. The Journal's handling of the important questions it raised was shallow and bombastic.

On the other side, Polding's ideas of the exalted dignity of bishops, the supreme rights of the hierarchy and the subordinate and essentially passive role of the laity prevented him from listening even to the valid concerns voiced by the Journal about religious matters and certainly not to its central contention that the lay people were entitled to a say in the temporal administration of the Archdiocese. For Polding, who saw the issue purely in disciplinary terms, this was a threat to the divinely-established ecclesiastical order and not to be countenanced. The very notion of an equal debate between a bishop and his people was ridiculous, especially one carried on through the medium of a newspaper. He had little notion of the relatively recent phenomenon of 'public opinion' and was disinclined to make frequent self-justificatory statements even in the face of misrepresentation. Polding feared that the militant and demagogic Irishism of the campaign was dividing the Catholic community.11

Polding was convinced that Archdeacon McEncroe was responsible for the Freeman's Journal's attitude and insisted that he curb the publication.

McEncroe explained to Polding that he had transferred the proprietorship to Heydon and had no legal power over the *Journal* or any formal connection with it, apart from acting as guarantor for Heydon under regulations of the New South Wales government which required the editor of every newspaper or journal to provide a surety for any seditious or libellous material. Nevertheless, McEncroe was associated with the *Journal* in the minds of the Catholic populace of Sydney and had considerable moral influence over its editorial policy. He endeavoured to moderate the offensiveness of its attacks on the monastery.\(^{12}\) McEncroe regretted the tone of the *Journal* and thought Heydon overzealous but he believed that there were real issues to be raised and legitimate grievances ventilated and that the debate should not be stifled.\(^{13}\)

That was not the view of Polding and the other bishops of Australia. In June 1858 he joined with James Goold of Melbourne and Robert Willson of Hobart - Perth was too remote to be involved and Adelaide was vacant after the death of Francis Murphy - to issue a *monitum pastorale*, or pastoral admonition, to all the clergy of the Australian Province warning against

\[
\text{insolens et teterrima licentia, quae quidquid de fide, de disciplina, de auctoritate et personis Ecclesiaisticis unusquisque sentiat foliis publicis mandare non dubitet.}
\]

The *monitum* directed the clergy to exert themselves against everything which opposed religious unity and discipline and concluded with a vague threat of excommunication against recalcitrants.\(^{14}\) The *Freeman's Journal*

\(^{12}\) Birchley, pp. 87 & 191; O'Donoghue, p. 124; Payten, p. 191; Haines thesis, p. 21; McPhillips, pp. 204-205.

\(^{13}\) McEncroe-Willson, 21 June 1858 (TC), St. Patrick's College, Manly, Eris O'Brien papers; see also Birchley, p. 193.

\(^{14}\) 'that insolent and foul liberty, which dies not hesitate to commit to public print what each may think concerning faith, discipline, authority and Ecclesiastical individuals'. There is an original Latin copy of the *monitum pastorale* of 11 June 1858 in CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 418; for an English translation, see *Documents*, pp. 160-162.
responded to the episcopal admonition and other attempts of authority to silence it with mixed indignation and defiance.\textsuperscript{15}

II

At about the same time the \textit{monitum pastorale} was being prepared a frustrated Polding decided to involve Rome in what he had now come to view as nothing less than a revolt against the Church. On 10 June 1858 he wrote to the Prefect General of the Sacred Congregation \textit{de Propaganda Fide} about 'a matter of grave importance to the interests of Religion in these countries'. After a brief account of the origins of the \textit{Freeman's Journal} Polding stated that it had become scurrilously anti-English, false, rude and mischievous in its assertions about ecclesiastical affairs and aimed 'to subjugate the Church of Sydney to the press'. Polding described the style of the \textit{Journal} as being 'Of inferior literary merit' and its editor, Heydon, as a convert who little understood Catholic discipline. (He did not add that it was he who had received Heydon into the Church and had consented to McEncroe's transfer of the paper to him.\textsuperscript{16}) Polding emphasized the paper's association with McEncroe, omitting to inform the Prefect General that McEncroe was no longer the owner. Indeed, Polding reckoned that the McEncroe connection was the most harmful aspect of the affair because it conferred a certain ecclesiastical respectability on the \textit{Journal}. He speculated that McEncroe's residence in the United States before coming to New South Wales must have inured him to 'the extravagances of a licentious Press'. Pleading that as an Englishman it was difficult for him to curb the excesses of the \textit{Journal} without exciting national feeling, Polding asked for the assistance and guidance of the \textit{Propaganda} Congregation. Specifically, he posed the following questions: Was McEncroe bound to renounce all connection with the paper and, if he refused, might he

\textsuperscript{15} Haines article, pp. 87-88.

\textsuperscript{16} Birchley, p. 198.
First page of Polding's letter to Cardinal Barnabò, dated 10 June 1858, asking for papal condemnation of the Freeman's Journal.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 290.)
be subjected to penalties? Given that the *Freeman's Journal* claimed to be Catholic, could Polding appoint a priest or competent layman to exercise censorship in religious and disciplinary matters and did he have the power to censure the paper if necessary? Finally, was McEncroe right in saying that the editor was free to publish any letter whatsoever he received provided it merely offered a private opinion and was not scandalous?\(^ {17}\) A couple of months later, on 11 August, Polding wrote again to the Congregation lamenting that he felt almost engulfed by difficulties caused by the great changes that were taking place in Australian society and which were producing a large number of ignorant people susceptible to pernicious demagoguery.\(^ {18}\)

Polding probably expected full support from the Congregation. After all, the papacy was no friend of lay independence in the Church, much less of rebellion. The standard view among Roman officialdom and most upper clergy throughout the Catholic world in the nineteenth century was well expressed by Mgr. George Talbot, the Anglo-Irishman who was a member of Pope Pius IX's inner circle, 'What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, to entertain? These matters they understand but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters they have no right at all...’\(^ {19}\) In 1832 the Holy See had rejected the liberal programme including freedom of the press, to which the *Freeman's Journal* appealed, when Pope Gregory XVI condemned the writings of Felicity de Lammenais. At the very time that Polding was complaining to Rome about the *Journal*, the papacy itself was engaged in a bitter struggle with secular states in Europe, one of whose weapons was an anti-clerical press which routinely attacked the authority of the Church.

Despite all of these considerations, the Roman response to the *Freeman's* affair in Sydney was much more nuanced than the simple condemnation of an

\(^{17}\) Polding-Barnabò, 10 June 1858, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 290 ff.

\(^{18}\) Polding-Barnabò, 11 August 1858, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 984, fols. 301 ff.

unruly newspaper that Polding sought. There were a number of reasons for this response, not the least of which was a change in the personnel of the Propaganda Congregation. The old Prefect General, Cardinal Giacomo Fransoni, had died in May 1856. There is little evidence for the quality of the relationship between Fransoni and Polding, which, in any case, in the nature of things, was carried on in a very formal way. Polding seems to have felt that Fransoni did not understand what he was trying to achieve in Australia, but Fransoni’s urbane manner made him amiable to all. Fransoni was succeeded by his abrasive, tough-minded Secretary General, Mgr. Alessandro Barnabò.20 This change did not augur well for Polding’s Roman standing. Polding had not got on with Barnabò when the latter was Secretary of the Congregation. As we have seen, Barnabò was annoyed by Polding’s early attempts at intervention in the Western Australian crisis in 1851.21 When Polding was in Rome in 1854 over the Farrelly affair, his attitude towards Barnabò was petulant,22 which he may well have come to regret two years later when the Secretary, now raised to the cardinalate, assumed the direction of the Holy See’s missionary policy.

Moreover, it could not be taken for granted that Rome would automatically support a bishop against a headstrong Catholic newspaper, whatever qualms it had about press freedom generally. Only recently there had been a widely-publicized example of this when in 1853 Rome upheld Louis Veuillot’s L’Univers in its dispute with the Archbishop of Paris. The point at issue here was ultramontanism versus Gallicanism and it suited Rome to support the papalist line of L’Univers.23 The controversy in Sydney was of a different character but that did not prevent Heydon from instancing the

20 See this thesis, pp. 54-58.
21 See this thesis, pp. 131-132.
22 See this thesis, pp. 136-137.
French case in the expectation that his paper would receive the same papal favour.\textsuperscript{24} Polding was sufficiently worried about the \textit{L'Univers} precedent to refer to it gingerly in his letter to Cardinal Barnabò of 10 June 1858. He said that McEncroe considered himself sheltered by the decision supporting \textit{L'Univers} because it showed that the Holy See would not interfere with the liberty of the press. Polding cited documents issued by Gregory XVI and the present Pope assigning a restricted role to the press in the Church and society generally to express the hope that this could not be so.\textsuperscript{25}

However, Polding's viewpoint was not the only one placed before the \textit{Propaganda} Congregation. Archdeacon McEncroe himself had departed from Sydney in mid-1858 for Europe, the specific purpose of his trip being to find a rector for the newly-established St. John's College at the University of Sydney, he having recently been elected a fellow of the College,\textsuperscript{26} but he also naturally took the opportunity to present his opinions at Rome and in the British Isles about the circumstances of the Australian missions and to defend his role in the controversy surrounding the \textit{Freeman's Journal}.

Also overseas at the same time was James Goold on the business of his own Diocese of Melbourne. When Polding's letters arrived at the \textit{Propaganda} Congregation Barnabò replied in November 1858 that he would deal with Goold in the matters raised by Polding.\textsuperscript{27} As we have seen, Goold made common cause with Polding in trying to check clerical and lay dissent wherever it might appear in Australia and he now undertook for Polding while in Rome to watch McEncroe and to do what he could to secure a condemnation of the \textit{Freeman's Journal}. Both Polding and Goold were nervous about McEncroe's presence in Rome, seeing it as an attempt to bypass

\textsuperscript{25} Polding-Barnabò, 10 June 1858, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{26} Birchley, p. 183.
\textsuperscript{27} Barnabò-Polding, 15 November 1858, SAA, RC: Polding.
their jurisdiction. Goold resolved not to budge from the city until McEncroe had left. 'How', Polding asked Goold, 'shall I ever be sufficiently grateful to God, who in his sweet Providence, has arranged that Your Lordship should be in Rome just at the right time!'  

However, already irritated with Polding because of what he regarded as the Archbishop's meddling in a dispute between him and some of his own priests, Goold became exasperated with Polding when he discovered that McEncroe had brought with him laudatory letters of recommendation from both Polding and the Vicar General of Sydney, Gregory, letters which McEncroe used to win friends in Rome. Goold complained that it was difficult to act for so contradictory and indecisive a man as Polding. He was half-inclined to withdraw from the business but felt he could not abandon Polding, especially as the cause of one of the Australian bishops was the cause of all. When he heard of Goold’s irritation Polding hastened to write to Barnabò to explain that he gave McEncroe only an *exeat*, a farewell letter and such testimonials as he would give to any priest in good standing. Polding said that he certainly had no thought of providing commendation of McEncroe, who was not authorized to act while overseas on behalf of the Archdiocese of Sydney. Polding seized the opportunity to describe McEncroe as a man of faction, the proprietor of a 'malheureux journal' which always inflamed animosity between Celt and Saxon. He also took care to write to Goold accusing McEncroe of having misused the letters of recommendation.

---

28 Birchley, p. 195; O'Donoghue, p. 122.  
29 Goold-Fitzpatrick, 26 December 1858, Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission (hereinafter 'MDHC'), box 'Goold inventory'.  
30 Polding-Goold, 14 May 1859, MDHC, box 'Bishop Murphy. Geoghegan's 1862 pastoral etc.'  
31 See this thesis, pp. 188, 227.  
32 Goold-Geoghegan, 9 January 1858, 28 Dec. 1858 & nd (but late 1858/early 1859), SAA, RC: Geoghegan, 6-16, 19 & 31.  
33 Polding-Barnabò, 27 November 1858, & 11 April 1859, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 984, fols. 264 ff. & CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 553 ff.  
34 Polding-Goold, 14 May 1859, *op. cit.*
The first Bishop of Melbourne, James Alipius Goold, OSA.

The personal relations between Bishop Goold and Archdeacon McEncroe while in Rome were cordial. They went sight-seeing, visiting and dining together, but Goold also spoke frankly to McEncroe about the Freeman's Journal. McEncroe stood his ground, replying that he was not the owner of the paper and was not party to the attack on the ecclesiastical government of Sydney but adding that the discontent was undeniable and public debate seemed to be the only way to promote the progress of the local Church.

Both Goold and McEncroe argued their respective cases vigorously before the Propaganda Congregation. Having applied formally for a condemnation of the Freeman's Journal, Goold adopted the strategy of presenting examples of the Journal's diatribes and to describe to Barnabò the consequences of press attacks on Church authority. He also underlined the connection between the rebellious newspaper and McEncroe and claimed in conversation with Archbishop Gaetano Bedini, Secretary General of the Congregation, that McEncroe had defended Duncan and the Journal's criticism of the monitum pastorale. He suggested that McEncroe be required to give proof that he had asked the government for permission to withdraw his name given as a surety for Heydon. Goold sought and received from the Propaganda officials an assurance that McEncroe would be reprimanded.35

Meanwhile, McEncroe was ably defending himself before the same officials. He carried a favourable recommendation from the Bishop of Birmingham, William Ullathorne who was highly regarded at Rome as an adviser on Australian affairs. McEncroe explained to Barnabò that he did not own the Freeman's Journal, did not have legal power over it, Heydon had been appointed editor with Polding's approval and by oral and written means he had protested against the Journal's manner of proceeding and urged it to

desist. He also pointed out that as the official guarantor for the paper, a position from which the government would not allow him to resign, he could not publicly call on Catholics to boycott it without running the risk of action in the courts. Finally, he told the Prefect that while he did not approve of everything that Heydon and Duncan wrote he believed that the legitimate grievances of Sydney's Catholics should be heard. To support his case McEncroe submitted to the Congregation a letter which Heydon had written to him testifying that he had taken no part in the publication of the offending articles and had, on the contrary, advised against their publication.36

Goold was confident that Rome would crack down on anti-episcopal agitation in Australia. On one occasion, having attended a party at the residence of the influential Mgr. Talbot, he took heart to notice that McEncroe had not been invited.37 One evening in February 1859 Barnabò and Goold were guests for dinner at the Irish College. Just before going into the dining room, the Cardinal spoke to Goold about McEncroe and a letter of Duncan's in the Freeman's Journal concerning the monitum pastorale, saying that 'they disclosed their foolish designs'.38

Despite the tone of this verbal judgement, the Propaganda Congregation's official reply to Polding's original complaint was measured. It was given in a letter dated 30 December 1858 which Barnabò wrote to McEncroe but sent to Polding with a covering letter asking him to pass it on to McEncroe with instructions in the name of the Congregation to do what it commanded.39 In his letter to McEncroe, the Cardinal observed that it was inappropriate, indeed incredible, that the Archdeacon of Sydney should permit

36 McEncroe-Barnabò, nd, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 446 ff; submission from McEncroe, nd, including an extract from a letter Heydon-McEncroe, 3 November 1858, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 283; Goold-Geoghegan, nd but late 1858/early 1859, op. cit.; Goold-Geoghegan, 20 January 1859, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 6-20; see also Birchley, pp. 197-198, 203.
37 Hynes-Goold, 10 Feb. 1859, MDHC, box 'Bishop J.T.Hynes. Letters and papers'.
38 Goold diary, 6 February 1859, in Moran, p. 761.
39 Barnabò-Polding, 30 December 1858 (CC), CEPA, LDB, vol. 349, fol. 1074.
in a newspaper owned by him articles critical of ecclesiastical discipline. (It is noteworthy that Barnabd persisted in believing that the Freeman's Journal was McEncroe's property.) He said he had no doubt that McEncroe disapproved of this activity but he wanted to be reassured on this point. Finally, he reminded McEncroe that the latter's position demanded that he prevent subversive articles from being published or, if that were not possible, sever himself from all connection with the paper and condemn its anti-authority declamations.40 Two months later Barnabd despatched another letter to McEncroe condemning the Freeman's Journal specifically for its insubordination towards the monitum and expressing the view that if Heydon and Duncan had had any problems with the bishops' statement they should have approached the bishops or the Holy See instead of publicising their criticisms in the press for laity and heretics to read.41

When Barnabd's first letter of 30 December for McEncroe arrived in Sydney Polding wanted to publish it immediately, but he did not dare because he feared that with McEncroe still overseas the Journal would accuse him of forgery.42 Actually, Polding was disappointed by the Propaganda judgement. Barnabd had addressed McEncroe mildly. The Roman promise to Goold to reprimand McEncroe personally was not forthcoming. Rome was clearly not happy about the attitude of the Journal but it had not condemned the paper itself directly or even its general editorial line but only certain articles which were disrespectful of ecclesiastical discipline and disturbed the faithful. Barnabd's chief concern seems not to have been the paper itself but the awkwardness of the Archdeacon of Sydney's connection with it. In April 1859 Polding exclaimed to the Bishop of Adelaide, Patrick Geoghegan, how he wished Rome had followed Goold's promptings and condemned the Journal

40 Barnabd-McEncroe, 30 December 1858 (CC), CEPA, LDB, vol. 349, fol. 1073.
41 Barnabd-McEncroe, 24 February 1859 (CC), CEPA, LDB, vol. 350, fols. 117 ff.
42 Polding-Barnabd, 13 April 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 562 ff.
outright. About the same time Polding wrote back to the Congregation asking for a wider repudiation of the paper, to be circulated among the clergy urging them to find some other means of broadcasting Catholic news and information. Towards the end of the year he complained to Barnabò: 'ma situation à l'égard de ce malheureux journal est assez ambarrasante'. He entreated the Prefect to order that all priests who subscribed to the paper or encouraged others to read it were to be deprived of their faculties.

III

Barnabò ignored Polding's plea for a harder line against the journal and Polding eventually gave up on this particular goal because early in the new year he was distracted by a sudden deterioration of the situation in the Sydney Church. In February 1859 the archdiocesan authorities nominated the distinguished physician, Dr. Richard Bassett, the medical officer of the Catholic Orphan School at Parramatta, to take the seat on the School's board of management recently vacated by John Hubert Plunkett, one of the leading Catholic laymen of the colony and at the time a member of the Legislative Assembly. Bassett was a Protestant. The Freeman's Journal was enfuriated by this announcement accusing the authorities of treason and the insulting suggestion that there were no competent, trustworthy Catholics available in the colony to sit on the board.

And was it to go forth to our Protestant fellow colonists, and beyond the colony - to England and to Italy - to be translated into Italian, for amazed and thunderstruck Cardinals and prelates in the Vatican and Quirinal palaces at Rome - that, out of those 90,000 Catholics - out of this most important element of the body politic -

43 Polding-Geoghegan, 15 April 1859, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 5-3; see also Birchley p. 201 & Phillips, p. 221.
44 Polding-Barnabò, 13 April 1859, op. cit.
45 'my situation in regard to this unhappy journal is very embarrassing'. Polding-Barnabò, 15 November 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 820 ff.
the Most Rev. Archbishop could not find one sufficiently respectable
to be placed at the managing board of an orphan school.46

In vain did the Archbishop point out that it was fitting to have some non-
Catholics on the board of an institution that was supported by public monies,
that Dr. Bassett would be involved only in the physical welfare of the orphans
and not their religious instruction and that Bassett’s nomination had been
approved by Plunkett.47

A furious Freeman’s Journal onslaught forced Polding to withdraw the
nomination but this back-down did not prevent the leaders of the anti-
Benedictine group from organizing a protest meeting in the Victoria Theatre
on 26 February.48 This meeting resolved in the light of the Orphanage incident
that it was ‘neither safe nor credible’ for the Catholics of New South Wales to
continue to place their confidence in an ecclesiastical management long
characterized by maladministration. The meeting established a provisional
committee to nominate suitable Catholics for membership of church
institutions funded by the government and decided to send a report of its
proceedings to the Archbishop, the Colonial Secretary and the Pope.49 The
proposal to form a lay committee to take over some of the functions of
archdiocesan administration was too much for Polding. In a special pastoral
letter he denounced the setting-up of the committee and the appeal to the
secular authority as an ‘overt schismatical act’. He defended the divine origin
of ecclesiastical authority, which was not accountable to the people, and
threatened the promoters of the public meeting with excommunication.50 All
of them, except one, submitted but not before asserting that the threat of

163.
48 For the affairs of the Parramatta Orphan School, see Haines thesis, p. 59; Haines article,
p. 93; O’Donoghue, p. 115; O’Farrell, The Catholic Church and Community in Australia, p.
117; O’Shanahan, pp. 133-135.
49 Copy of Resolutions adopted at a Public Meeting of Catholics held in the Victoria
Theatre, Sydney, in the Colony of New South Wales on Sunday, 26 February 1859, CEPA,
SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 568.
50 Polding’s pastoral letter of 1859, op. cit.
excommunication was an improper use of spiritual power and declaring their intention to take their grievances to Rome. The Freeman's Journal and its associates had for some time been hinting at an appeal to the Holy See. Now they acted. They invoked 'the source of all spiritual power' and looked to Rome to 'ultimately liberate us from our present deplorable state of bondage'.

The appeal was dated 13 April 1859 and was signed by Jabez Heydon (editor of the Freeman's Journal), Richard O'Connor (clerk of the Legislative Council of New South Wales), Ranald MacDonnell (Headmaster of Paddington High School), Walter McEvilly (New South Wales Parliamentary Librarian) and M. Reynolds (Proctor of the New South Wales Supreme Court). They invoked 'the paternal justice of the Holy See' against the threat of excommunication and explained that there were motivated by concern about various instances of ecclesiastical misgovernment culminating in the Orphanage affair which had outraged the Catholic people. They argued that it was vital for Catholic institutions to be kept under Catholic control. Attached to the appeal proper was a statement of grievances about the 'unwise', 'unjust' and 'arbitrary' administration of Polding which had provided few churches, schools and priests and no real seminary. There was no adequate accounting of the funds contributed by the laity. The Benedictine ascendancy oppressed the secular clergy, kept away other, badly-needed religious institutes and drove off talented, zealous missionaries. Everything was sacrificed to Polding's Benedictine design which 'for whatever cause has proved a complete failure in every sense, yet His Grace persists'. The appellants asked the Pope to send a

---

54 Appeal to Pope Pius IX, 13 April 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 566 ff.
Opening of the lay appeal to Pope Pius IX, dated 13 April 1859.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 583.)
delegate to inquire into 'the present state of deplorable stagnation' in the Archdiocese of Sydney.55

Heydon wrote individually to Cardinal Barnabò to inform him that the reason given by Daniel Deniehy, the one who refused to renounce the proceedings in the Victoria Theatre, for not joining in the appeal was that he felt that 'at Rome the laity are systematically ignored' and that the matter should be one for local action and colonial politics. Having inserted a vaguely menacing thought into Barnabò's mind, Heydon assured the Prefect that the main group did not agree with Deniehy 'for we have more faith in the justice of the Vicar of Our Blessed Lord, who is justice itself.56

In the months of April and May Polding was busy composing letters to the Propaganda Congregation to defend himself against the lay appeal. He also organized the clergy of the various districts of the Archdiocese to produce statements exculpating his administration and he despatched these to Rome.57 He realized that much would depend on the Congregation's treatment of the signatories of the appeal and he hoped that 'there will be no milk and water for that bunch of five'.58 Having failed to secure an outright condemnation of the Freeman's Journal, Polding was nervous about how the petition would be received in Rome. To Goold he mused

The Holy See is so gentle, so mild in its language. Moderation in language, gentleness would be quite lost on such men - or rather they would turn every kind word to their approbation.

55 To Our Most Holy Father Pope Pius IX, 13 April 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 583 ff.
56 Heydon-Barnabò, 18 April 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 591 ff.
57 See, for example, the replies of the clergy of the Sydney district and the Maitland deanery, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6 Fols. 604 & 606.
Polding was disturbed by a story that one of the petitioners had received a letter from Talbot who said that he was not worried about the *Freeman's Journal*.59

The strategy behind Polding's letters to Barnabò was to attack both the characters of the signatories, whom he described variously as an alcoholic, an ex-convict, a man of evil temper, one who never approached the sacraments and so on, and their motivation, which was to seize control of church finances. Polding claimed that the meeting of 26 February was totally unrepresentative of Sydney Catholic society.60 He explained his purpose in appointing Bassett to the Orphan School board and described the furore that had been created over this incident as 'le cimble de la méchanceté qui a déjà long temps signalé le "Freeman's Journal"'.61 Polding told Barnabò that the schism threatened by the talk of a provisional committee compelled him to take strong action. He presented an array of facts and figures purporting to show that the Church in New South Wales was flourishing under Benedictine leadership.62 He claimed that religion was being crippled by the *Journal* and the five petitioners and he expressed the fervent hope that Barnabò would avoid all mild words of disapproval, which would be interpreted by the rebels as praise, and put an end to the movement with an unequivocal condemnation.63 He appealed to the Cardinal to help him for 'Je suis presque accablé par la demagogie des riches ignorants et les médisances d'un mauvais journal'.64

59 Polding-Goold, 14 May 1859, *op. cit.*
60 Response to the Allegations in the Memorial signed by R.O'Connor and addressed to the Holy Father against the Administration of His Lordship the Archbishop of Sydney, CEPA, *SC-Oceania*, vol.6, fols. 577 ff; Polding-Barnabò, 12 April 1859 & 12 May 1859, CEPA, *SC-Oceania*, vol. 6, fols. 560 ff & 503 ff.
61 'the height of the wickedness that for a long time has characterized the "Freeman's Journal"'.Polding-Barnabò, 12 May 1859, *op. cit.*
63 Polding-Barnabò, 13 May 1859, *op. cit.*
64 'I am almost overwhelmed by the demagogy of some wealthy, ignorant people and the scandalmongerings of a bad paper'. Polding-Barnabò, 13 May 1859, CEPA, *SC-Oceania*, vol. 6, fol. 610.
Polding was convinced that it was 'time for the Holy See to curb and crush the insolence of these men'. However, the Roman response was not what Polding had in mind. Barnabò sat on the fence. He wrote to Polding on 25 June 1859 enclosing another letter of the same date for on forwarding to Richard O'Connor and explaining its contents. Barnabò had written to O'Connor because his name headed the list of signatories to the appeal. Barnabò advised O'Connor that the appeal did not conform to the canonical procedures which regulated the relations between the laity and the hierarchy. The Pope had suggested that the promoters of the appeal familiarize themselves with such procedures and, to this end, Barnabò had despatched to them copies of the relevant apostolic constitutions of Popes Pius VII, Leo XII and Gregory XVI. The Prefect stated explicitly that it was not his intention to deter a further appeal.

An examination of Barnabò's correspondence with Polding and O'Connor suggests that he was playing a double game. To Polding he indicated that he had sent the apostolic constitutions to O'Connor and company in order that they might understand the 'rights' of bishops and the 'obligations' of the faithful in matters of ecclesiastical administration and see where they had gone astray. In other words, the petitioners were in the wrong and all that they required was instruction. Therefore, a further appeal was unnecessary. Barnabò hoped the petitioners would show true submission and reverence for Polding's authority. To O'Connor himself, however, as we saw above, Barnabò's line was that he and his friends should consider using the constitutions to frame a new appeal. The Cardinal's tone was friendly. He

65 Polding-Geoghegan, 15 Apr. 1859, op. cit.
Writing to Polding, Cardinal Barnabò sidesteps the lay appeal by pointing out that it does not follow the correct form.

(Source: SAA.)
congratulated the petitioners on the respect they had shown for the Archbishop's authority and described them as good Catholics.68

It is not surprising, as Polding feared, that the Freeman's Journal interpreted Barnabò's letter to O'Connor as a vindication of the opposition to the archdiocesan establishment. After all, nothing had been rejected by Rome except the form itself of the appeal.69 O'Connor replied in a breezy style to the Cardinal thanking him and the Pope for the high opinion they had of him and his associates and the good wishes they had expressed. He advised Barnabò that the apostolic constitutions had been published in the Journal for the education of the faithful.70

Polding, of course, was profoundly disappointed at the Roman attitude. In November he wrote lugubriously to Barnabò that O'Connor and the others had, as Polding put it, misinterpreted the kindness of the language with which they had been corrected and were putting it about that the Holy See had received the appeal favourably and had found fault with its form but not its content.71 In February 1860 Barnabò replied to Polding that the petitioners were to be praised for having recourse to the Holy See because the matter in question was more fittingly judged by superior than local authority. He then repeated his position that the constitutions had been sent to the petitioners so that they could understand where they had gone wrong.72 On this letter Polding commented to Goold

The Cardinal labours to show that the answer was anything but complimentary - as indeed it was - and suggests that I should make this manifest to them by explaining and commenting on the terms used - The good man knows little of the material of which such articles are made.73

69 Haines thesis, p. 63; Shanahan, p. 140.
70 O'Connor-Barnabò, 12 September 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 736.
71 Polding-Barnabò, 15 November 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 736.
72 Barnabò-Polding, 11 February 1860, op. cit.
73 Polding-Goold, 21 April 1860, SAA, RC: Goold.
Heydon, O'Connor and their collaborators did not resubmit their appeal. The Latin constitutions sent by the Propaganda Congregation seem to have been inaccessible to them. Perhaps Barnabò had been counting on this. O'Connor told the Prefect that owing to incapacity to find the references 'we are consequently as unacquainted as we were before with the will of the Holy See as to the part the laity are expected to take in the administration of the Temporalities of the Church'. Nevertheless, O'Connor again thanked Barnabò for his kindness.74

IV

The campaign of the Freeman's Journal against the government of the Archdiocese of Sydney petered out in the first half of 1860, chiefly because of the departure of Heydon from the editorship. 'Isidore' ceased to write for the paper having been worsted in an epistolary tournament with 'Sacerdos', perhaps Polding himself.75 In July 1860 Polding reported the pacification of the paper to Barnabò,76 who rejoiced 'vehementer' to hear this news.77 To handle a lay protest movement encouragingly without repudiating the local bishop was a successful example of political tight-rope walking. Or so it doubtless appeared to Barnabò. Polding just felt let down.

The Freeman's Journal's agitation failed in its basic objective of elevating the civic standing of the mass of New South Wales Catholics and their social influence through church reform, or even to stir them from their apathy about such matters. It succeeded only in undermining the unity and harmony of the local Church.78 More concretely, however, it did achieve one spectacular result which we shall look at in the next chapter. This event, brought about through

---

74 O'Connor-Barnabò, 12 October 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 735 ff.
75 Haines thesis, p. 78; Haines article, pp. 93-94. Suttor, p. 183, & Hosie, p. 348, think 'Sacerdos' was probably Polding.
76 Polding-Barnabò, 21 July 1860, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 1117 ff.
77 Barnabò-Polding, 26 September 1860, SAA, RC: Polding.
the intervention of the *Propaganda* Congregation, delivered to Polding his most personally searing experience of Roman power from which it is doubtful if he ever recovered.
CHAPTER V
THE FALL OF ABBOT HENRY GREGORY GREGORY
1859-1866

The personal nature of its criticisms gave a barbed edge to the anti-Benedictine agitation in Sydney in the late 1850s. The chief victim of these attacks was Henry Gregory. As Abbot of St. Mary's monastery and Vicar General of the Archdiocese, Gregory was Archbishop Polding's right-hand man. As Vicar General he came into constant contact with the secular clergy and the laity as the one responsible for the day-to-day government of the Church and for implementing diocesan policy and the decisions of the Archbishop. A combination of factors made him a vulnerable figure.

I

Born in Cheltenham in 1813, probably into a family of landed gentry, converted to Catholicism at the age of 11 and educated by the Benedictines at Douai in France and at Downside, Gregory took the habit in 1833. Polding was his novice master and this was the beginning of a relationship which developed into a close friendship lasting the rest of their lives. Gregory was a member of Polding's missionary party that left for New South Wales in 1834. Polding was very fond of him and as early as 1836 he wrote back to Birsdall, the President General of the English Benedictine Congregation, that Gregory 'is a great comfort to me'.¹ Much later, looking back over his life, Polding described Gregory as having been his 'dimidium animae meae', the second half of his soul.² Gregory continued his studies in Sydney and was ordained to the priesthood in 1837. Polding took him on missionary tours and giving him a

number of important tasks, including the assistant chaplaincy on Norfolk Island. The future course of the relationship was influenced by Polding's dependent personality. Polding tended to lean on strong characters, first of all Ullathorne and then, after Ullathorne's return to England, Gregory whom he brought back from Norfolk Island. He once said that nobody understood him as Gregory did. By the late 1830s Polding's favouritism towards the young monk was arousing jealousy among the Sydney clergy. On their return from Europe in 1843 Polding conferred the offices of Vicar General and Prior of St. Mary's on the thirty-one year-old Gregory. For his part Gregory repaid Polding with an intense and affectionate loyalty. He understood the monastic vocation in terms of absolute religious obedience to superiors. He was physically strong, hard-working, fearless and conscious of his dignity and class, but inwardly he lacked confidence. Young and inexperienced, he had moved virtually straight from the novitiate at Downside to a raw colonial society, there to continue his religious formation and theological education in fragmentary fashion in the midst of early and demanding pastoral and administrative duties. Never as popular as Polding, he tried to compensate for his feelings of insecurity by adopting a manner of dealing with people that only presented itself as haughty and authoritarian. His pronounced middle-class Englishness further handicapped him in a Catholic community overwhelmingly working-class and Irish. Because of his own craving to be liked, Polding had a habit of distancing himself from awkward situations, leaving them to his immediate subordinates to cope with as best they could. Both Ullathorne and Gregory suffered from this habit. Because of his position as head of the Catholic Church in Sydney and his personal popularity, the critics of archdiocesan government in the 1850s were careful not to attack Polding himself too strongly or directly. The Vicar General was a much safer target. Those who claimed to represent

(Source: P. Hartigan, The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests, Kilmore, 1975, facing p, 33.)
popular Catholic opinion in New South Wales against Benedictinism aimed their attacks chiefly at Gregory.³

II

The Freeman's Journal had concentrated on Gregory from the beginning of its campaign but the criticism reached fever pitch after the Catholic Orphan School incident because Dr. Richard Bassett's appointment had been announced under the Vicar General's name. The criticism was sustained throughout the year 1859.⁴ The appeal of Jabez Heydon, Richard O'Connor and the others to the Pope of 13 April 1859 claimed that Gregory had been 'for the last 20 years the main cause of stagnation in our Religious and educational Institutions'.⁵ They said he lacked learning, eloquence and judgement; he was an overbearing autocrat with too much sway over the Archbishop.⁶

There was another burst of disparagement of Gregory in the Freeman's Journal after another incident, in May 1859, when what ought to have remained a minor misunderstanding about the provision of Bibles for Protestant patients at St. Vincent's Hospital, run by the Sisters of Charity, blew up into a public controversy with sectarian overtones and resulted in the

---


⁵ Appeal to Pope Pius IX, 13 Apr. 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 566 ff.

⁶ To Our Most Holy Father Pope Pius IX, 13 Apr. 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 583 ff.
resignation of the Rectress of the Hospital, Sister Mary Baptist de Lacy. Gregory pleaded that he had nothing to do with the incident and his claim was backed by Polding, but the Freeman's Journal was determined to blame him for it.

Summing up the Orphan School and Hospital affairs, the Journal insisted that

All these evils proceed from the one great cause - the absolute domineering influence of one man who literally or actually guides the Church in this colony, knowing full well, as he must do, that his blunders will fall upon the shoulder of him whose authority he personates, and whose mind he seems to rule.

The incident at St. Vincent's Hospital was particularly dangerous for Polding and Gregory in their relationship with Rome because it was the occasion on which the influential Archbishop of Dublin became involved directly for the first time in the affairs of Sydney. Through the 1850s Paul Cullen was becoming increasingly interested in Australia. Overseas in 1858-1859, McEncroe exhorted Cullen and the other Irish bishops to acquire a sense of responsibility for the largely Irish Church in Australia.

Polding was aware of the potential for Cullen to shape opinions in Rome and elsewhere. In March 1859, when the Freeman's-Journal campaign was at its height, Polding wrote to Cullen to denounce the Journal and McEncroe as destructive of ecclesiastical authority and to ask a fellow-bishop for help in putting down demagoguery. The fact that Cullen did not acknowledge Polding's letter suggests what he thought of it.

---


8 Haines thesis, p. 65; Haines article, p. 93; Shanahan, Out of Time, Out of Place, pp. 94, 99.


10 See this thesis, p. 220.

11 Polding-Cullen, 14 Mar. 1859, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin 1852-1878, and a cardinal from 1866. He became increasingly involved in Australian affairs in the 1850s and 1860s and his opinions carried great weight in Rome.

When Sister de Lacy left Australia on the grounds that she could not continue working in Sydney, she made straight for Dublin to inform Cullen that Polding was unjust, was trying to interfere with the internal affairs of the Sisters of Charity and had created a deplorable situation in the Archdiocese.\(^{12}\) The *Freeman's Journal* took the opportunity of de Lacy's departure to condemn once more 'the terrible absolutism that governs our ecclesiastical affairs'.\(^{13}\) To protect himself, Polding again wrote to Cullen giving his side of the story and asserting that the issue was basically one of ecclesiastical discipline since de Lacy had left her convent without permission.\(^{14}\)

Cullen again ignored Polding's communication. He gave de Lacy refuge\(^{15}\) and on 7 October 1859 he wrote to the Prefect of the *Propaganda* Congregation, Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò, to place the whole affair in the hands of Rome, recommending that the nun not be sent back to Australia. In this letter he reported that McEncroe blamed the disharmony in Sydney on the Vicar General.\(^{16}\) In an audience on 24 November Pope Pius IX approved Cullen's actions and ordered that Polding be required to respond to the allegation that he had changed the constitutions of the Charity Sisters in Sydney, a grave allegation as the constitutions had been approved by the Holy See and could not be altered by an inferior authority.\(^{17}\) A further round of correspondence between Barnabò, Cullen and Polding in 1860 resulted in the Roman decision to accept Cullen's view that de Lacy be left in Ireland.\(^{18}\)

Polding felt worsted in this triangular exchange. To Barnabò he lamented that it was *valde amarum mihi* to learn that Cullen was the promoter of

\(^{12}\) Campbell, pp. 119, 127.

\(^{13}\) *FJ*, 1 Jun. 1859, in *Documents*, p. 191.

\(^{14}\) Polding-Cullen, 14 Jul. 1859 (CC), RSCGA/1/B/257,

\(^{15}\) Campbell, pp. 128-132.

\(^{16}\) Cullen-Barnabò, 7 Oct. 1859 (CC), CEPA, *Udienze*, vol. 133, fol. 2386.

\(^{17}\) From an audience of the Holy Father, 24 Nov. 1859, CEPA, *SC-Oceania*, vol. 6, fol. 1028; see also Barnabò-Cullen, 15 Dec. 1859, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1858-1863.

what Polding claimed were false stories about de Lacy.\textsuperscript{19} Complaining that 'lying has become so common' in high places, he despatched a packet of documents to the Benedictine monk in Rome, Bernard Smith, asking him to refute the changes laid against his administration at the Propaganda Congregation by de Lacy via Cullen.\textsuperscript{20} To Bishop James Goold he exclaimed, 'I do not know why Archbishop Cullen should interfere so much in our affairs!'\textsuperscript{21} He feared that Gregory was being blamed in Rome for the St. Vincent's Hospital furore and was convinced that the attacks on his Vicar General were really meant for him.\textsuperscript{22}

Polding seems not to have realized at this stage that the principal threat to Gregory's Roman standing was much closer to home than Dublin. Robert Willson, the Bishop of Hobart, disliked Gregory and was convinced that he was unsuitable for high ecclesiastical office. Willson formed this opinion after Polding despatched Gregory to Tasmania in 1845 to try to arbitrate a dispute between Willson and one of his priests, J.J.Therry, over diocesan finances. Willson was offended by Gregory's demeanour on this occasion. Willson was again antagonized by comments which Gregory included in his report on the Australian Church submitted to Rome during his visit in 1851-1852 and which Willson interpreted not only as an unfair account of the dispute with Therry but also as a personal slight. He thought that Gregory was coarse, weak and overbearing and had too much influence over the Archbishop.\textsuperscript{23} Willson wrote to Goold in October 1858 while the latter was in Rome:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Polding-Barnabò, 14 Apr. 1860, \textit{op. cit.}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Polding-Smith, 16 Apr. 1860, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 256.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Polding-Goold, 21 Apr. 1860, SAA, RC: Goold.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Polding-Smith, 16 Apr. 1860, \textit{op. cit.}, & Polding-Goold, 21 Apr. 1860, \textit{op. cit.}
\end{itemize}
It is my firm opinion, and I wish it would be known in a certain quarter - even the highest [Willson’s emphases] - that all the mischief that now exists in New South Wales arises from the manner and the unwise policy of the present Vicar General or Lord Abbot.\(^\text{24}\)

Willson did not shrink from telling Polding outright that, although moral and pious, Gregory was damaging the interests of religion and the attitude of the Freeman’s Journal was not entirely unjustified. The only remedy, Willson advised, was the immediate departure of Polding’s ‘dear boy’ for Europe. He wrote to Goold in March 1859 expressing puzzlement that Rome had not required this course of action.\(^\text{25}\) Willson appears to have recruited to the anti-Gregory camp George Talbot, so important in the inner sanctum of the papal court. Willson told Talbot that Gregory was not the man to counsel Polding and was unfit for the episcopate. He urged Talbot to pass this on to Cardinal Barnabò.\(^\text{26}\) About this time Talbot was telling McEncroe that he considered Gregory to be the cause of the disturbances in Sydney.\(^\text{27}\) Rome listened carefully to Willson because he was seen as being an impartial figure. As a bishop who had co-signed the monitum pastorale of 1858, Willson was certainly not interested in fomenting lay dissatisfaction with episcopal authority; as an Englishman, he could not be accused of harbouring national feeling against Gregory.

III

The decline of Roman confidence in Gregory was highlighted in mid-1859 when news reached Sydney from a source in England that McEncroe, then overseas, was putting it about that Barnabò had told him in the presence of


\(^{25}\) Willson-Polding, 28 Jun. 1859 (TC), SPM, Eris O’Brien papers; Willson-Geoghegan, 13 Jul. 1859, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 7-2; see also Southwood, pp. 315 & 327.

\(^{26}\) Extract from a letter Willson-Talbot, nd, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 629.

\(^{27}\) Goold-Fitzpatrick, 5 Jul. 1859, MDHC, box ‘Goold inventory’.
Robert Willson, Bishop of Hobart.
He disliked Gregory intensely and helped to undermine Roman confidence in him.

others while at a dinner party that the Holy See would never consent to Gregory being made a bishop. The hand of Willson was probably behind this. Stung by this revelation, Gregory wrote to Barnabò stating that as one who had served the Church loyally for 25 years he felt disgraced by this publicly-expressed papal judgement and that, while he accepted it and had no ambition for the episcopate, it was vital for the maintenance of his authority in Sydney that he know the reasons. Polding also wrote urging Gregory's promotion to the episcopate as necessary for good order in the Church in New South Wales for only thus could it be made plain that Gregory had the support of Rome to counteract the attacks on him of disobedient lay people and bad priests. Barnabò's replies conceded nothing. They ignored Polding's and Gregory's points and simply stated that election to the episcopate was dependent upon the judgement of the Pope as a manifestation of the divine will and that it did not follow from the mere fact of a priest not being chosen that he was held in low esteem by the Holy See.

Polding worked strenuously to shore up his Vicar General's reputation in Rome. He wrote often to the Propaganda Congregation trying to convince Barnabò that the accusations against Gregory were false, that Gregory was unpopular only because it fell to him to enforce ecclesiastical discipline and that many of the priests who had left the New South Wales mission had not been driven out by the tyranny of Gregory but were unsuitable for ministry in a colonial setting. By July 1859 he was depressed by the thought that nothing he could do or say would clear Gregory's name of 'the foul calumnies and aspersions cast upon it'. He felt inclined to go to Rome personally.

28 Polding-Brown, nd, CAA, Brown papers.
30 Polding-Barnabò, 14 Jun. 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 642 ff.
32 Polding-Barnabò, 12 May 1859, nd 1859, & nd 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6 fols. 503 ff, 577 ff, & 614 ff.
33 Polding-Geoghegan, 9 Jul. 1859, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 5-6.
Polding did not go to Rome on this occasion, but perhaps he ought to have done because such a visit was probably the only move which could now save Henry Gregory from the hostile forces which were closing in. By November 1859 it was decided within the Propaganda Congregation that a special investigator should be sent to inquire into the disturbed state of the Australian Church and especially the Archdiocese of Sydney. The Congregation had adopted a proposal first mooted by the Freeman’s Journal and promoted by McEncroe when he was overseas. McEncroe discussed it with Ullathorne when he visited Birmingham in March 1859.34 The lay appeal to the Holy See of 13 April asked for an investigation and offered to pay its expenses.35 McEncroe told Cullen in Dublin and Tobias Kirby, the Rector of the Irish College in Rome, that this was the only remedy for the Sydney problems and both of them conveyed this view to Barnabò. McEncroe believed that the success of an on-the-spot papal investigation would depend upon the prudence and experience of the man chosen who would also have to be acceptable to Polding. For these reasons McEncroe thought the Benedictine Ullathorne the best man for the job. On the basis of his conversation with Ullathorne, he told Talbot that the Bishop of Birmingham would probably accept the mission if asked by the Pope.36 Polding himself concluded by July that a Roman inquiry carried out by Ullathorne was the most effective way ‘to restore the right order of things’.37

On 12 November Barnabò wrote to Ullathorne to inform him that the Congregation knew of no one more fitted than he to go to Australia as special

34 McEncroe-Kirby, 29 Sept. 1859, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1836-1861, 2427.
35 To Our Most Holy Father Pope Pius IX, 13 Apr. 1859, op. cit., fol. 584.
37 Polding-Geoghegan, 9 Jul. 1859, op. cit.
papal delegate because he knew the place from personal experience and had the confidence of Polding. Ullathorne now moved to the centre of the stage of the Roman deliberations about Sydney. He did not want to go to Australia. He had a number of reasons, which we shall look at shortly, and was doubtless confirmed in his thinking by Goold who had made several visits to Birmingham during 1859, the last one being about a month before Barnabò wrote to Ullathorne. Goold was strongly against the idea of a delegate, believing that such a move would only lead to further agitation and in this view he was backed up by Patrick Geoghegan, the Bishop of Adelaide, who passed it on to Polding.

Ullathorne was so impressed by the gravity of the situation in Sydney, or, more likely, so determined to avoid being sent there, that he decided to travel to Rome. After taking up residence at the English College, he had several conversations with Barnabò who showed him the papers relating to Sydney. Ullathorne produced a memorandum, dated 16 December 1859. A large part of this document was a description of Ullathorne's experience of the Australian mission in the 1830s, critical of Polding and highly laudatory of Ullathorne. Polding had worked with superhuman energy as a missionary and was justly venerated, wrote Ullathorne, but he was unreliable, unbusinesslike and sometimes unfair and interfering. He had alienated the secular clergy by an undue preference for the Benedictines. According to Ullathorne, Polding's worst faults were his fear of public opinion and his consequent over-reliance on Gregory. As for the Vicar General, he was a good monk but lacked learning, knowledge, judgement and prudence and could not handle opposition. Ullathorne thought Gregory's complaint to Rome about not being made a

40 Collins, p. 386; Birchley, p. 203.
William Bernard Ullathorne.
Because of his previous Australian experience, Cardinal Barnabò asked the Bishop of Birmingham to analyse the state of the Church in Sydney at the end of the 1850s. Ullathorne recommended the recall of Gregory.

bishop was typical. The premature death of the assistant bishop, Charles Davis, had been unfortunate for the Sydney mission because it made Polding turn more to Gregory. Ullathorne balanced his observations by pointing out that ecclesiastical government was difficult in New South Wales because many of the laity were ex-convicts and many of the clergy money-grubbers of doubtful value. Political developments in civil society generated a misplaced spirit of democratism in the Church. McEncroe was a worthy priest but guilty of serious imprudence by his association with the *Freeman's Journal* which created an aura of ambiguity around his attitude towards archdiocesan authority. The *Journal's* militant Irishism was inappropriate in New South Wales where the Irish suffered no wrongs. Ullathorne cautioned Barnabé against the promoters of the appeal of 13 April 1859 to the Holy See.

He then turned to the proposal that an apostolic delegate be despatched to Australia. He presented the following reasons why this course of action should not be taken: a papal inquiry would be seen as the triumph of the opposition party and would show that much could be expected from press agitation and public meetings; Polding's prestige in the sight of the civil government would be diminished and episcopal authority generally in the Australian missions would be compromised; factionalism, lay interference in ecclesiastical government and continual appeals to Rome would be encouraged; and it would be virtually impossible for an apostolic delegate to do his work peacefully and without intrigue and unwelcome journalistic attention. If, despite these reasons, the Holy See decided to proceed with a delegate, Ullathorne argued that he should not be given the task because Polding would be humiliated at being investigated by one who formerly had been subordinate to him as school boy, novice and priest. Ullathorne believed that he would find it difficult to extract explanations from Polding and to counteract the influence of Gregory. In any case, he was unwilling to be absent from his own diocese for the one and a half years that the Australian commission would
require. He told Barnabò that he wanted to help the Holy See but the more he thought about it the more convinced he became that he could not achieve the desired objectives and probably would only worsen the situation. He expressed annoyance at McEncroe's having promoted him as delegate.

Ullathorne offered several recommendations. There was a need to develop a body of priests who would be loyal to the local church and not dominated by the desire for money and the best way of achieving this goal was the establishment of a diocesan seminary for the training of locally-recruited secular clergy. Polding should be more open about the financial affairs of the Archdiocese and more willing to take the laity into his confidence at the level of temporal administration, as was the practice of the English bishops. Most importantly, as his solution to the immediate tensions in Sydney, Ullathorne proposed to Barnabò the removal of Gregory not only from the office of Vicar General but physically from Australia. He was convinced that Gregory was the principal cause of the difficulties and that his departure was the only means of securing peace.41 We have seen that Willson of Hobart had been arguing for this solution for some months. He had passed his views on to Ullathorne.42

Rome adopted this course of action. Ullathorne later maintained that the removal of Gregory had been decided before he went to Rome43 but this seems unlikely in view of the pains he took to argue for this step in his 36-page report of 16 December. Ullathorne's insistence that a papal investigation would only serve to enflame the situation persuaded Barnabò to drop the idea. Confronted with the conflict in Sydney, the Propaganda Congregation opted to solve it by simply excising one side. It was much easier to pluck a controversial individual out of a difficult situation than to grapple with a whole range of issues raised by an amorphous protest movement. Whether in the right or in

---

41 Ullathorne-Barnabò, 16 Dec. 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fols. 861 ff.
42 Southerwood, p. 328.
43 Shanahan, Out of Time, Out of Place, p. 168.
Dopo la più conciusione riflessione, mi sembra che, avendo avuto l'occasione di discutere il tema interno al proprio di mandare un delegato 8fficio in Australia, e dopo aver letto e considerato accuratamente le carte mandatemi per ordine di V. S. l'idea, e pertanto avendo richiamato in mente la mia conoscenza delle persone e degli affari di quelle colonie, vengo ora ad addurne la disposizione a V. S. l'idea e alla S. Legge le riflessioni che seguo.

Quando ricevetti la lettera di V. S. l'idea del 12 Novembre i miei primi sentimenti erano di grande misura, e tuttavia pendevo all'opinione che la misura a me prosposta potesse recare vantaggio alla religione in Australia, ma da quel tempo in poi quanto più ho pensato e cercato delle informazioni, tanto più mi senti potuto a credere che quell'azione si fosse a me offerta non potrebbe essere per i fini intesi dalla S. V. l'idea e al contrario portrebbe a nuove difficoltà e maggiori intraprese. Oggi ricalco però di aggiungere che, ancora che sappia
the wrong, the Vicar General was a liability to ecclesiastical authority. No longer able to adequately uphold the authority of the Church, he was sacrificed for the sake of peace.44

Ullathorne's argument was irresistible when combined with what appears to have been the single most significant factor of all - the personal animosity harboured against Gregory in the mind of the Pope himself. Gregory's Roman reputation was seriously damaged by the impression he had unwittingly made on Pius IX during the audience of June 1854. Pius was not the sort of man to forget a slight on his dignity.45

On 24 December Barnabò saw Ullathorne and informed him that the Pope had directed the Congregation to recall Gregory from Australia.46 The most straightforward way to give effect to the papal wish would be for Barnabò to write to Polding or Gregory commanding the latter's presence in Europe. That this did not happen but that a more meandering approach was adopted shows how those responsible for the decision taken in Rome at the end of 1859 to sack Gregory - the Pope, Barnabò, Ullathorne, Talbot - were aware of the pain that this would inflict on Polding. A direct Propaganda command would be a terrible blow to Polding's prestige in the midst of the Sydney troubles. By 1860 Polding, then 65 years of age, was becoming the grand old man of the Australian Catholic Church and Rome was loathe to act in any way that would offer a blatant affront to his standing.

At their meeting on the 24th. Barnabò asked Ullathorne for suggestions about how to proceed gently. Ullathorne observed that had Gregory still been a member of the English Benedictine Congregation the Holy See could simply

45 See this thesis, pp. 138-141; Polding-Gregory, 21 Sept. 1862, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 405; Polding-Barnabò, 22 Sept. 1862, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 7, fol. 626ff; Shanahan, Out of Time, Out of Place, p. 175; Birchley, p. 213.
have charged the President General with the recall of Gregory under obedience. However, this action was no longer possible since Gregory now belonged to the independent St. Mary's monastery in Sydney which was governed by its own constitutions approved by the Holy See four years previously. Ullathorne offered to discuss the matter with the English Benedictine authorities with a view to himself, the President General and some close friends of Polding writing to the Archbishop 'con delicatezza e amore' to point out that Gregory's return to England was prudent and would obviate the intervention of the supreme authority of the Church. Ullathorne was sure that the President would be willing to receive Gregory back into the English Congregation at the direction of the Holy See. He noted, however, that this method would take time and that Barnabò might prefer to deal directly with Polding and Gregory.47

The Prefect opted for the suggestion that Gregory be recalled by way of the English Benedictine Congregation. The Secretary of the Propaganda Congregation, Archbishop Bedini, notified Ullathorne of this decision on the last day of 1859.48 On his return to England, Ullathorne accordingly had conversations with the President, Placid Burchall, and Polding's English agent, Thomas Heptonstall, and they agreed that Gregory be invited to rejoin his original monastic family by friendly persuasion. It was agreed that Ullathorne should explain the policy of the Holy See to Polding to while Burchall would invite Gregory to return among the English Benedictines. In January 1860 Ullathorne told Barnabò he was confident that there would be a happy outcome.49

49 Ullathorne-Barnabò, 18 Jan. 1860, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 979.
The outcome was anything but happy. When Ullathorne's letter reached Sydney Polding was stunned. His first written communication on the subject, his reply to Ullathorne, dated 14 March 1860, was an artificially businesslike, almost catatonic-sounding letter in which he briefly and mechanically announced that the wish of the Holy See would be complied with and Gregory would retire at once. Ullathorne immediately relayed Polding's compliance to Rome. However, a passing intimation in Polding's letter to Ullathorne that the move back to England might kill Gregory hinted at the anguish that was about to burst forth.

Polding composed a stoically submissive but deeply aggrieved letter to Cardinal Barnabò, dated 14 April. The wish of the Pope would be obeyed but it had caused 'inexpressible sorrow'. Polding told the Prefect bluntly that a handful of bad Catholics had achieved their goal of bringing the Vicar General into disgrace, which could not be disguised by engineering the recall by way of the English Benedictine Congregation. He felt obliged to state that the consequences of the measure for ecclesiastical discipline throughout Australia would be catastrophic. Polding resented the fact that he had not even been given an explanation, let alone consulted. He felt that a serious personal injustice had been committed against one who had lived 'a most pure life' as a priest for 25 years and who had discharged the office of Vicar General faithfully and successfully. Polding could not believe that Rome was serious. He told Barnabò that Gregory would go to England on leave of absence in the first instance, to minimize the public disgrace, and beseeched Barnabò to let him know directly if Gregory's removal from office was really to be taken as permanent.

---

50 Polding-Ullathorne, 14 March 1860 (draft), SAA, RC: Overseas clergy.
52 Polding-Ullathorne, 14 March 1860, op. cit.
53 Polding-Barnabò, 14 April 1860 (draft), SAA, RC: Polding/Propaganda.
Polding’s letter to Barnabò of 14 April 1860 exists only in draft and was perhaps thought too strong to post but the ideas contained in it were to provide the constant themes of Polding’s private correspondence over the next few years as he complained about how he and Gregory had been treated in Rome and elsewhere, groped frantically for information about who was responsible and with what reasons and strove to have the decision overturned. Polding was aware that Ullathorne had played an important part in the recall and directed much of his anguish at the Bishop of Birmingham. He told Ullathorne about the lay faction in Sydney boasting of disposing of the Vicar General and preparing to follow up this success by driving out the Archbishop himself. Instead of being dismissed, Gregory should have been made a bishop. The Holy See should act to quell the spirit of nationality and assaults on ecclesiastical discipline. Polding cried out to Ullathorne, ‘The horsewhip has been waved over my head - the threat had gone forth - what more of humiliation is there to endure...[from an] infidel schismatical press’, bad, ambitious priests and the general attack on law and order in the Church? As for the convoluted manner of Gregory’s recall, Polding told Ullathorne, ‘We may be the victims - we will not render ourselves ridiculous here by being parties to the carrying out of measures under subterfuge....’ Burchall had been ‘the cat’s paw in the business’.

To Burchall himself Polding said he was grateful for the consideration which motivated those responsible for Gregory’s recall to effect the deed through the English Benedictine Congregation rather than open Roman intervention, ‘yet it is really of very little import how the object is accomplished’. Polding denied that Burchall had any jurisdiction over Gregory who was a subject of the independent Australian Benedictine administration.

54 Polding-Ullathorne, nd, & 14 Apr. 1860, DownAA, Ullathorne papers.
55 Polding-Ullathorne, 14 Apr. 1860, op. cit.
56 Polding-Geoghegan, nd but c. 1862, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 5-21.
Moreover, as a cathedral prior Gregory could not be removed unless guilty of a canonical fault and then only by the authority of the one who had appointed him, that is, the Archbishop of Sydney.\(^\text{57}\)

To Thomas Brown, the Benedictine Bishop of Newport and Menevia who had played a minor part in the recall, Polding described the action against Gregory as an outrage 'disguise it as they may under the childish form of a recall on the part of the President'. His Vicar General having been ordered out without any cause stated and without opportunity to defend himself, Polding felt that no archbishop had ever been treated as he had.\(^\text{58}\) Referring to the lay petition to the Holy See of April 1859, he described Gregory's sacking to Goold as 'a triumph which Heydon and Co. can scarcely believe to be real'.\(^\text{59}\) With the group associated with the *Freeman's Journal* jubilant,\(^\text{60}\) Polding desperately needed to blame somebody, assigning the responsibility as principal mover variously to Willson, McEncroe, Goold, Cullen, and Ullathorne. To Ullathorne he lamented that Willson had pursued Gregory, that McEncroe had used the *Journal* to stir up antipathies between English and Irish and between the religious and secular clergy and that Cullen did not understand the the situation in Australia. He complained to Gregory and Geoghegan that Ullathorne had engineered Gregory's removal in order to avoid being sent out to Sydney to conduct an inquiry.\(^\text{61}\) Clutching at straws, he wondered whether advantage had not been taken of 'some expression of the Pope - dropped it may be in haste or some mistake has been made'.\(^\text{62}\)

\(^{57}\) Polding-Burchall, 14 Apr. 1860, DownAA, President-General's archive, Burchall box.

\(^{58}\) Polding-Brown, nd, CAA, Brown papers.


\(^{60}\) O'Farrell, p. 125.


\(^{62}\) Polding-Goold, 21 Jan. 1861, op. cit.
The response within the Congregation to the repercussions of Gregory's dismissal must be ranked as one of the most spectacular examples of buck-passing in the history of Australian Catholicism. The Cardinal Prefect General did his best to dodge the anguished pleas from Sydney. Sheltering behind the scheme he had worked out with Ullathorne to involve the English Benedictine authorities, Barnabò forwarded Polding's letters on to Ullathorne in mid-July 1860 so that, as he put it, the President General might provide an explanation to lessen Polding's and Gregory's sorrow. Barnabò observed that since Gregory had been recalled by his own superior general it was fitting that the Propaganda Congregation not get involved. It suited Barnabò's purpose to regard Gregory as being within the jurisdiction of the English Benedictine Congregation thereby disregarding the constitutional independence of the Australian Benedictine establishment. At the same time Barnabò wrote to Polding pointing out that all correspondence should be addressed to the President General since it was he who had recalled Gregory.

Ullathorne was uneasy about Barnabò's line, remarking to Burchall that 'the whole affair is now being thrown on us'. Polding had asked for a reconsideration of the case and Ullathorne could not see why Rome simply did not decide one way or another, adding 'Anything more vague, ambiguous and indecisive than his [Barnabò's] letter I have never read'. As to moral influence being used by their English Benedictine colleagues to soothe Polding's and Gregory's feelings, Ullathorne believed this would do more harm than good. Clearly, Ullathorne was backing away from a situation that was getting out of hand. He resolved to have nothing more to do with the affair other than to write a 'soft' reply to Barnabò.

---

63 Barnabò-Ullathorne, 13 Jul. 1860, BirmAA, B 3960.
64 Barnabò-Polding, 13 Jul. 1860, SAA, RC: Polding.
This he did on 30 July reminding the Cardinal that Burchall had not formally instructed but merely invited Gregory to return to England. It was for the Holy See to decide whether to grant Polding's application that the recall be dropped. Because Polding was complaining loudly of manipulation on the part of the English Benedictines and denying them any authority over Gregory, Ullathorne told Barnabò that he and Burchall could not see what else they could do.66

However, Barnabò was as determined as Ullathorne to run for cover. A fortnight later he told Ullathorne that it would be best for the President General to let Polding know that the Propaganda Congregation had nothing (!) to do with the recall of Gregory.67 The most unfairly treated man in all of this was surely Placid Burchall - dragged by Barnabò and Ullathorne to perform a distressing act in circumstances of which he knew little and in which he was uncertain of his legal status and then abandoned by both of them when unexpected difficulties appeared. Ullathorne advised Burchall that all he could do was to ask Rome whether Gregory's removal from Australia was definitive.68 Upset by a 'not very pleasant' letter from Polding and by Barnabò's 'most vague' attitude, Burchall found himself in an impossible situation because he had to agree with Polding that the Sydney Benedictines were distinct canonically from the English Congregation. As he asked Bernard Smith in Rome, apart from writing back to Polding to repeat what he had put in his first letter and following the instructions of the Holy See, 'Now what can I do?'69

In the second half of 1860 and into 1861 Polding was disturbed by the lack of communication from Barnabò. He was 'very much disappointed at the total absence of information on the subject [of Gregory's recall] which is studiously

---

69 Burchall-Smith, 25 Jul. 1860, SPFLMA, Smith papers/Australia.
withheld from me.'\(^{70}\) For Polding, 'the silence of the Cardinal is beyond my comprehension'.\(^{71}\) Without knowing who was responsible for this action and the reasons for it, resistance was impossible.

VII

Gregory sailed from Sydney on the *Omar Pasha* for England on 5 February 1861,\(^{72}\) leaving behind Polding depressed, lonely and inconsolable at the loss of 'my dearest child'.\(^{73}\) Polding suffered the pain and anger of what had happened for years afterwards. He resented being undermined by the secret statements and activities of others, especially overseas bishops and above all Cullen and Ullathorne.

> There are those in Ireland and England persons who really think it is their duty to meddle with our affairs. Let them look at home...they will find quite enough to do.\(^{74}\)

Above all Polding felt let down by what he saw as an uncomprehending *Propaganda* system. He bewailed to Smith that the Australian Church suffered 'incalculable mischief' when

> the chief authorities of the Church at this distance from the Centre are flouted and vilified by the triumph of the calumniator...I cannot but think that the character, the difference between a diocese in a distant country in the first years of its formation and a long established diocese in Europe has not been sufficiently considered.\(^{75}\)

Gregory's recall, he believed, could not have been carried out in 'a more ungracious and I will add offensive way' and that Barnabò should have asked for it directly.\(^{76}\) Polding hoped, he told Geoghegan, that something would

\(^{70}\) Polding-Gregory, 17 Feb. 1861, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 312; see also Polding-Gregory, 19 Apr. 1861, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 323.

\(^{71}\) Polding-Geoghegan, 17 Aug. 1860, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 5-9.

\(^{72}\) Suttor, p. 195.


\(^{74}\) Polding-Smith, 16 Apr. 1860, *op. cit.*; see also, Polding-Ullathorne, 14 Apr. 1860, & Polding-Goold, 21 Apr. 1860, *op. cit.*

\(^{75}\) Polding-Smith, 21 Jan. 1861, *SPFLMA*, Smith papers/Australia.

\(^{76}\) Polding-Brown, 20 Feb. 1862, CAA, Brown papers.
open his [Barnabò's] Italian eyes to the fact of his having been deceived, to rebuke a bishop of 29 years, an Abbot of 20 years standing in the Church for four causes each of which is grounded on a base calumny...

But he was not confident:

Again we shall be slapped and spit [sic] upon and the Cardinal will be blindfolding us by concealing what the calumniator says...Oh my dear Lord, I am sick sick sick - under such government what will become of our poor persecuted Church.77

For Polding, 'this mode of governing at this distance is most mischievous. Our confidence is shaken'.78 By late 1861 he was again talking about resigning, although whether with any more seriousness than in 185479 is hard to say. Certainly, his relations with Rome were now more strained. He confided to Gregory that the highest authority in the Church was too suspicious of him and too inclined to listen to rumours, 'to the ear rejected - but carefully remembered - and to be acted upon', for him to carry on 'for where there is an absence of mutual confidence the sooner a disruption takes place the better'.80

In January 1861, shortly before Gregory's departure, Polding wrote in hurt tones to Barnabò pointing out that Burchall had stated that the Vicar General had been recalled by the express order of the Holy See whereas Barnabò himself claimed that it was the President General who had recalled him. Polding told Barnabò that he was pained at not being judged worthy of frankness on the part of the Roman authorities. He believed that what had happened in New South Wales was part of what was happening in Europe on a grand scale - a systematic onslaught against religion, tradition and the Church. (The papal army had been defeated at the battle of Castelfidardo only four months before, consigning the greater part of the Pope's own temporal dominion to the anti-clerical policies of the Piedmontese government.) Polding claimed that in New South Wales it would take much time and

78 Polding-Brown, nd, op. cit.
79 See this thesis, pp. 135-137.
80 Polding-Gregory, 22 Sept. 1861, op. cit.
labour to re-establish respect for ecclesiastical authority. In May Polding wrote again to the Prefect to register his submission to the Holy See but also his heartfelt sorrow that Gregory should be distrusted by the Pope 'dont la voix révérée est la source d'honneur ou de découragement aux Archevêques, aux Evêques, à tous ses fils et serviteurs fidèles'.

Barnabò's attempt to palm the whole problem off on to Burchall failed, not because the latter was unco-operative but because he was at a loss as to what else he could do. And so responsibility for the Gregory case returned to where it belonged - the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide. In April 1861 an harassed-sounding Barnabò replied to Polding's letter of January. He said he was saddened by Polding's feelings and promised to speak frankly (verum ingenue dicam). He explained that prudent and trustworthy men (viros prudentes ac fide dignos) had often urged on the Propaganda Congregation the necessity of recalling Gregory. (Polding's comment on this part of Barnabò's letter was that he wished 'these pious and prudent persons would just mind their own business' [Polding's emphases].) Barnabò went on that the Congregation agreed with that opinion in the light of the special difficulties of the case 'since that is scarcely a sacrifice which seems greatly to be for the welfare of souls' (quandoquidem vix ullum sit sacrificium quod pro salute animarum nimis grave videatur). Gregory was thereupon recalled by the President General with Propaganda consent. 'And that indeed is the truth of the matter' (Atque haec quidem est rei hujus historia). Doubtless seeking to pacify Polding, Barnabò wrote that he wanted to be kind to one whose merits were of the highest renown (praeclarissima), that is, Polding himself.

82 'whose revered voice is the source of honour or discouragement for Archbishops, Bishops and all his faithful sons and servants'. Polding-Barnabò, 21 May 1861, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 7, fols. 88 ff.
83 Polding-Gregory, 17 June 1861, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 328.
84 Barnabò-Polding, 17 Apr. 1861, SAA, Propaganda/Polding, file 16.
Barnabò writes to Polding to explain the decision to remove Gregory.

(Source: SAA.)
A month later the Prefect penned another letter to Polding to point out that he had never doubted the qualities of Gregory, 'that excellent religious man' (optimis illius religiosi viri), and that the Congregation had agreed to his recall by Burchall, not because of any fault in Gregory, but because of the disturbed condition of the Archdiocese of Sydney. It was not unusual in the Church, Barnabò explained, for even an excellent priest to withdraw to prevent wicked men from creating trouble and cited the example of St. Gregory Nazianzen who renounced the episcopate itself to restore peace to Constantinople in the fourth century.85

VIII

Polding noticed inconsistencies in the accounts given him from Europe, namely, an open contradiction in the reasons assigned by Ullathorne and Barnabò for the action regarding Gregory. The former had stated that Gregory was not suited to his office, lacking judgement and learning. On the other hand, the latter, as we saw above, praised a blameless Gregory for his sterling qualities and service to the mission and had assigned the cause of his removal to the necessity of stopping trouble-makers from further disturbing the peace.86

Encouraged by this perceived weakness in the Barnabò-Ullathorne axis and buoyed up by hope for a 'softening' in Barnabò,87 Polding began to emerge a little from his psychologically prostrate state in the second half of 1861. He was determined to convince Rome of the need for Gregory's rehabilitation and return to Australia. This was demanded, he believed, not only by the preservation of ecclesiastical authority in Sydney and the good reputation of the Archdiocese but also by natural justice and simple truth.88

85 Barnabò-Polding, 25 May 1861, SAA, Propaganda/Polding, file 16.
87 Polding-Gregory, 22 Sept. 1861, op. cit.
The realization of this aim was not going to be easy. For one thing, the Roman consideration of the case was surrounded by well-nigh impenetrable obfuscation. Polding had to work hard for every scrap of information he could get. He was frustrated by the attitude of Ullathorne which was that the real reason for Gregory's sacking was known only to himself, Cardinal Barnabò and the Pope and could be revealed to nobody else, not even Burchall or Polding.\(^89\) To Polding 'this smacks of - forgive the word - humbug'.\(^90\)

Furthermore, sailing on the same ship which took Gregory back to Europe at the beginning of 1861 was another priest of the New South Wales mission, Patrick Bermingham. Born in Offaly, the thirty-three year-old Bermingham had attended Maynooth College and, after his ordination, taught humanities at the seminary in Carlow. At the invitation of Bishop Goold he went to Victoria in 1854 and was given a mission at Geelong. Bermingham was a man of ability, energy, ambition and fearlessness. These qualities put him on a collision course with Goold's inflexible sense of episcopal authority. After the inevitable row, Bermingham escaped to the Archdiocese of Sydney where, much to Goold's annoyance, Polding accepted him in 1857 and gave him work to do at Yass. However, the independent-minded Bermingham was no more able to co-operate with Polding than with Goold and by 1858 was sending criticisms of the government of the Sydney Church to Rome and Dublin. The rupture with Polding was doubtless facilitated by the official reprimand, requested by Goold, which the *Propaganda* Congregation issued against Bermingham and required Polding to administer.\(^91\) From Yass Bermingham wrote to Cullen imploring help to get a retrial in Rome and a

\(^89\) Polding-Geoghegan, nd. but c. 1862, SAA, *op. cit.*; see also Polding-Smith, 22 Dec. 1862, *SPFLMA*, Smith papers/Australia.

\(^90\) Polding-Brown, 20 Sept. 1862, CAA, Brown papers.

Patrick Bermingham.
In Rome and Dublin this Irish Australian missionary priest, a pioneer in the Yass district, was severely critical of Benedictine rule. Polding tried to neutralize his influence.

(Source: P.Hartigan, *The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests*, Kilmore, 1975, facing p. 177.)
papal investigation of the Australian Church.92 Bermingham also formally appealed to Rome93 and early in 1861 went there in person to reinforce verbally what he had written. He depicted Gregory as a tyrant. Because of Cullen's advocacy, Bermingham received a surprisingly favourable reception at the Propaganda Congregation. Far from repudiating him, Barnabò was impressed by his missionary talents and asked him to supply information about the Australian Church.94 From Italy Bermingham moved on to Ireland where he became professor of theology at Carlow and continued his campaign against the Australian ecclesiastical leadership.95 Polding was worried about the effects of Bermingham's activity. He wrote to Gregory:

We feel that we are living on a volcano - not knowing when the next explosion will be. We are never safe - we know not the day nor hour...when accusations shall be brought forward.96

Another problem was Gregory himself, upon whom the main work of convincing Rome would necessarily have to fall. Polding urged him to get to the bottom of the business, cautioning him against trusting Ullathorne.97 However, on his arrival in England and going to the Benedictine nunnery at Stanbrook to rest, Gregory fell into a torpor of passivity, solitude and silence which only encouraged the prejudice against him. Those about him who had some sympathy for him, Thomas Brown, Placid Burchall and the Abbess of Stanbrook, Dame Scholastica Gregson, told him that he could not afford merely to despise injurious reports that were circulating among those whose good opinions he needed, above all the Roman authorities. Brown noted that

92 Bermingham-Cullen, 9 May 1859, DAA, Australia box, 58/1.
94 Barnabò-Cullen, 14 Nov. 1861, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1858-1863.
97 Polding-Gregory, 17 Feb. 1861, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 312, & 21 Dec. 1861, op. cit..
he seemed indifferent to organizing his own defence and was 'a poor man of business'.\textsuperscript{98} Gregory was unwell, suffering from headaches and feeling pessimistic about the chances of clearing his name. Ullathorne would not disclose what was in the \textit{Propaganda} documents he had seen and so Gregory was in the dark, not knowing what to do. He did learn from Ullathorne that at Rome he was regarded as being a subject of the English Benedictine Congregation. (What, then, of Polding's assumption that Gregory came within the jurisdiction of the independent Sydney monastery?) Ullathorne warned Gregory he would be 'roughly treated' in Rome. Gregory realized that the Pope thought him 'a slip-shod sort of fellow'. He passed on to Polding Ullathorne's advice that correspondence with Rome on business matters should be free from all personal feeling and prolixity and that Polding had weakened his position in this regard.\textsuperscript{99}

Gregory was not completely inactive. He reminded Barnabò that he had received no communication from the 'Mistress and Mother of the Churches' concerning the charges against him. He wanted to travel to Rome to refute these charges but was deterred, so he explained to the Cardinal, by Burchall's opinion that his presence there would be unacceptable. Gregory asked that he not be condemned without a hearing and that he be allowed to go to Rome.\textsuperscript{100} Barnabò gave his permission.\textsuperscript{101}

On meeting Gregory after his arrival in England, Thomas Brown became convinced by the middle of 1861 that he had been unfairly treated and resolved to try to undo the damage. Brown wrote to Ullathorne and Smith, the agent in Rome of the English Benedictines, asking them to place his altered position

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{100} Gregory-Barnabò, nd (CC), SPM-DownAA/MF, N 413.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Barnabò-Gregory, 27 Mar. 1861, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 321.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
before the Propaganda Congregation. Polding was delighted with Brown's conversion and undertaking to work for the vindication of Gregory. Polding believed that Brown stood high in the Congregation's favour and 'knows all the ins and outs of the Holy City and of its indwellers'. He encouraged Gregory to place himself unreservedly in Brown's hands.

Brown's conversion further strengthened Polding's recovery from depression. In the second half of 1861 and into 1862 a plan of campaign was put together in England and Australia to try to overturn the Roman decision about Gregory. Brown thought Gregory should go to Rome, beg Barnabò to tell him what the charges were and respond appropriately. He also urged Gregory to write to the Archbishop of Dublin, who, Brown was sure, had gone to Rome full of anti-Benedictine stories relayed by Bermingham and other returning Irish missionaries. The archdiocesan chancery and St. Mary's monastery in Sydney were busy gathering letters, testimonials and press cuttings favourable to Gregory. Among these were copies of letters from the Australian bishops, Goold and Geoghegan, expressing alarm about the implications of the Roman decision for law and order in the colonial Church. Polding's secretary, Thomas Makinson, drew up a synopsis of allegations and replies. Copies of all these documents were despatched to Brown as the co-ordinator of the campaign at the European end and also to Burchall and Heptonstall for onforwarding to Smith who would take them to the Propaganda Palace. An Irish Benedictine

---

102 Brown-Polding, 19 Sept. 1861, SAA, RC: Polding.
104 Polding-Geoghegan, 27 Dec. 1861, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 5-12; see also Polding-Gregory, 19 May 1862, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 401.
Thomas Brown, Bishop of Newport and Menevia. This English Benedictine co-ordinated the European end of the campaign to rehabilitate Gregory.

in Sydney, Edmund Athy, wrote to Cullen in vindication of Polding and Gregory.  

Polding placed much faith in two particular documents: the flattering addresses presented by the clergy and laity of Sydney to Gregory on the occasion of his departure. Since Barnabd had maintained that the Holy See agreed to Gregory’s recall only on the advice of others who claimed that the Vicar General had been unpopular, Polding was confident that the Cardinal must order a reinstatement when confronted by the addresses which incontrovertibly showed the advice to be false. Copies of the addresses were bundled up in Sydney into packets of six and posted to the entire English and Irish hierarchies as well as to Rome.

An important component of the campaign was the neutralization of Bermingham. Polding warned Barnabd and Talbot about Bermingham and remonstrated against him or any Irish bishop interfering in Australian affairs. He complained to Barnabd about the ‘incredible vanity’ of Bermingham and admitted that he had made a mistake in receiving Bermingham into his diocese. Polding also wrote to his Roman agent, Bernard Smith:

Whilst therefore I and the Bishops of this Province will answer the accusations which the Cardinal Prefect transmits as being made against us - we do hope that His Eminence will deign to place some limits to the facility with which accusations against Bishops are to be received - else our lives will be spent as much in guarding against and replying to misrepresentations as in the proper duties of our state and vocation.

Polding explained to Smith that the prosperous Australian colonies were a magnet for nomadic, avaricious, ambitious and quarrelsome priests who had

106 Athy-Cullen, 20 Feb. 1861, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
been failures in Europe but who made sure they had the backing of overseas bishops.\textsuperscript{110}

Three Sydney priests who were in Europe in 1861-1862 also placed depositions in defence of Gregory before the \textit{Propaganda} officials - Richard Walsh, John Kenny and Michael Kavanagh.\textsuperscript{111} The testimony of these three was important because it contradicted that of their colleague, Bermingham, and as Irishmen and seculars they could not be dismissed as members of Polding's English-monastic clique. Walsh in particular exerted himself by writing a long letter to Archbishop Cullen in defence of Gregory and the much-maligned Australian mission in the expectation that Cullen would convey it to Rome. To secure maximum impact for this letter, which was critical of Bermingham, Walsh had it printed and copies sent to Cullen's secretary, Patrick Moran, the Irish bishops, Ullathorne, Talbot and Barnabò.\textsuperscript{112} Furious at Walsh's letter, Bermingham protested to Barnabò and demanded the protection of the \textit{Propaganda} Congregation.\textsuperscript{113}

Brown was aware that this documentation, vital though it was, could never be more than supplementary to a personal visit of Gregory to Rome. Polding knew this too, but was nervous about what impression Gregory might make. In the second half of 1861 he repeatedly expressed the opinion that the time was not yet ripe for a visit. As he wrote to Gregory in November, 'It is more than you could bear - and an outbreak or outburst would be a fatal explosion'.\textsuperscript{114} Doubtless reflecting his master's anxiety, Thomas Makinson

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{110}{Polding-Smith, 21 Jan. 1862, SPFLMA, Smith papers-Australia; see also Polding-Brown, 22 Jan. 1862, CAA, Brown papers.}
\footnotetext{111}{Polding-Gregory, 21 Jan. 1861 & 20 Feb. 1862, SPM-DownAA/MF, N378 & N 386; for Walsh's, Kenny's and Kavanagh's submissions to the \textit{Propaganda} Congregation, see CEPA, \textit{SC-Oceania}, vol. 7, fols. 487 ff.}
\footnotetext{113}{Walsh-Gregory, 21 Mar. 1862, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 391; Bermingham-Barnabò, 12 Jun. 1862, CEPA, \textit{SC-Oceania}, vol. 7, fol. 560.}
\end{footnotes}
advised Gregory to make 'no sharp, outright, Saxon speeches'\footnote{Makinson-Gregory, 22 Sept. 1861, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 337; see also Makinson-Gregory, 21 May, 20 Jun. & 22 Oct. 1861, SPM-DownAA?MF, N 326, 329 & 341.} when at last he got to Rome. Heptonstall thought Gregory would do well if he conducted his case 'with argument and coolness',\footnote{Heptonstall-Polding, 25 Sept. 1861, op. cit.} especially if he were to agree to a compromise whereby he would be allowed to return to Australia but as a simple priest without high ecclesiastical office, a solution which also occurred to Burchall.\footnote{Makinson-Gregory, 22 Oct. 1861, op. cit.; Burchall-Smith, 27 Mar. 1861, SPFLMA, Smith papers/Australia.} Polding, however, remained jumpy, taking Gregory to task for using nuns as subjects for his newly-acquired hobby of photography, fearful of what Rome would make of this should it find out.\footnote{Polding-Gregory, 19 Oct. 1861, op. cit.}

Polding did not trust Gregory not to spoil the crucial Roman phase of the campaign and so was relieved when Brown offered to be in the city to assist Gregory. Polding straightway undertook to pay Brown's expenses.\footnote{Polding-Brown, nd, op. cit.; Polding-Geoghegan, 27 Dec. 1861, op. cit.} He also arranged for the Bishop of Adelaide, Patrick Geoghegan, to go to Rome to team with Brown and Gregory: 'never was the presence of one of us [the Australian bishops] in the Holy City more necessary than at present'.\footnote{Polding-Geoghegan, 27 Dec. 1861, op. cit.; see also Polding-Geoghegan, 18 Jan. 1862, & Polding-Gregory, 21 Jan. 1861, op. cit.} He urged Geoghegan to counteract the influence of Bermingham and Cullen in Rome: 'Meet them, meet them, my dear Lord, and our victory is certain'.\footnote{Polding-Geoghegan, nd, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 5-8.} Polding was by now in a combative mood: '...influence in England and in influence in Ireland must be met by a stern negation...Lay influence has prevailed and lay influence must be crushed.'\footnote{Polding-Geoghegan, 27 Dec. 1861, op. cit.}

In April 1862 Brown and Gregory were finalizing their plans for Rome. Brown felt that it was important that he not be seen to be too obviously connected with Gregory and decided, therefore, that they should travel
These two Irish Australian missionaries placed submissions before the Propaganda Congregation in defence of Gregory.
separately, but meet in London and Paris for purposes of co-ordination. Gregory would reach Rome first and go immediately to the Propaganda Congregation to receive the accusations against him. Brown would help Gregory to formulate the replies and place his own independent views before the Congregation. Once in Rome around the middle of the year, Brown decided that he had been over-cautious about being seen to be closely identified with Gregory and lived in the same hotel as he, for convenience of liaison. Gregory worked hard on his defence and secured the support of three cardinals. (His surviving correspondence does not name them.) He was received kindly by Cardinal Barnabò who assured him, and Brown, that the charges received in Rome against him and Polding had not been believed by the Propaganda officials and that his recall was not a punishment.

Despite these promising signals and the huge effort that had gone into the organization of written depositions and evidence, the Brown-Gregory mission in Rome failed. The voyage of Geoghegan to Europe was disrupted by a typhoon at sea and he arrived too late to connect with Brown and Gregory. Talbot, whose influence was vital to change the Pope's mind, was too busy to see the two Benedictines from England. Despite the graciousness of his reception by various ecclesiastics, Gregory felt that he was still under suspicion in curial circles. Finally, the Propaganda Prefect himself was immovable. The hopes of Gregory for reinstatement collapsed when Barnabò, having taken cognizance of the favourable representations, nevertheless exhorted him to go back to England and work there. At about this time Gregory fell ill and had to leave the city, perhaps because of the heat of the notorious Roman summer. He moved to Florence where he succumbed to fever.123

Brown's presence in Rome did yield one important piece of information. It was not something that Polding wanted to hear. Brown reported that the underlying cause of Gregory's present odious situation was the Pope's personal displeasure incurred by the ill-fated audience of 1854. Brown was the first to enlighten Polding on this score. Neither in Barnabò's nor in Ullathorne's letters had there been any mention of this apparently key factor. The audience had, of course, been extremely embarrassing, but Polding had concluded from Pius IX's demeanour immediately afterwards that there would be no repercussions. He was shocked to discover now, eight years later, that the Pope had been harbouring over these years feelings of ill-will towards Gregory and, to a lesser extent, himself. He was resentful that the Propaganda Secretary General in 1854 - that is, the present Prefect General - had not said anything at the time about the audience. 124

Polding was now more and more convinced that the removal of Gregory was a crude Roman punishment against both of them. In September 1862, he lamented to Gregory that officials declaring it was no such thing would not prevent it being generally believed. 125 He observed to Smith that, although the Propaganda Congregation might say it had nothing against him and Gregory, 'One higher than Propaganda has judged and sentenced. And the sentence is now known to the entire ecclesiastical world.' 126

Nor was the revelation about the audience of 1854 the only bitter news that Brown had to convey to Polding. The Bishop of Newport told him that he was under a cloud at Rome because he had not attended the bishops' assembly in the city in 1862 for the solemn ceremony of the canonization of the martyrs

125 Polding-Gregory, 21 Sept. 1862, op. cit.
126 Polding-Smith, 21 Jan. 1863, SPFLMA, Smith papers/Australia.
Brown's revelations triggered one of those torrents of emotion to which Polding was inclined when under stress. He told Smith:

It seems hard, at the close of a life which, however fruitlessly, has been given with a good will to the service of the Church, to be descending towards the grave with such a practical proof of displeasure on record and in general belief...128

As for any act of disrespect to the Pope, 'I should prefer death in its most cruel form'.129 Consumed by humiliation, Polding noted that the real cause of Gregory's sacking had been divulged to the entire ecclesiastical world...at the very time when all [sic] the Bishops were congregated at Rome [for the ceremony of the canonization of the Japanese martyrs]...I blush for shame that at my time of life and in such a position I have to write these things...I now stand before the world charged with misbehaviour towards the Supreme Head of the Church and the proof is in the punishment - patent to all, the removal of the V.G. implicated in the same offence.130

In a letter to Geoghegan the tone is one of anger and sarcasm

With regard to poor dear Gregory's case it disgusts me more and more with Italian diplomacy...What was known only by Dr. Ullathorne, the Pope and the Cardinal Prefect is now known to the entire Ecclesiastical world - I was kept in happy ignorance for seven [sic - actually eight] years. When lo! at the very time when the Episcopacy was assembled around the Holy Father out came the grand Ullathornian secret and was promulgated if not with the solemnity of the canonization - at all events with the out bosoming communicativeness of Italian chit chat over the festive meat-131

Brown advised Polding to write to the Pope to offer an apology and an explanation for the 1854 incident. Polding could not bring himself to do this, but wrote instead to Talbot, Barnabò, Smith, Geoghegan and Brown beseeching...

128 Polding-Smith, 21 Sept. 1862, SPFLMA, Smith papers/Australia.
129 Polding-Smith, 22 Aug. 1862, op. cit.
130 Polding-Smith, 22 Dec. 1862, SPFLMA, Smith papers/Australia.
131 Polding-Geoghegan, nd but c. 1862, op. cit.
them to make representations on his behalf.\textsuperscript{132} The longest of these letters was to Talbot, correctly identified by Polding as being the most significant person to deal with this in this matter because of his almost daily intimacy with the Pope. In a somewhat grovelling manner, Polding besought Talbot’s help in ‘a position of such strange difficulty that none of the ordinary means of surmounting it are open to me’. Having expressed his astonishment and grief at the Pope’s reaction to the infamous audience, he gave his version of what happened, apologized, and begged pardon: ‘I dread the thought of living and dying under the suspicion that the Holy Father should suppose me capable of such a thought’. \textsuperscript{133}

On 22 September 1862 Polding wrote to Cardinal Barnabò ‘avec une très vive douleur’. Again he described his affliction over the events of 1854 and the punishment that had been imposed. As for his non-appearance at the canonization ceremony, he explained that the invitation had arrived too late for him to journey from Sydney to Rome in time. Polding had written to Barnabò earlier in the year about this matter, pointing out that Barnabò’s letter, dated 18 January 1862, reached Sydney towards the end of April, making it impossible for Polding to be in Rome in May for the canonization. As for the charge of writing in an unseemly manner about Gregory, he begged pardon and asked the Prefect to remember that he had been sorrowful when writing those letters and was worried about threats to the authority of the Church. ‘Je connais peu du monde de Rome’. He promised to be more careful in the future.\textsuperscript{134} (On this point Polding expressed his truer feelings to Geoghegan: ‘surely sincerity is preferable to wordy politeness’\textsuperscript{135}).

\textsuperscript{132} Polding-Gregory, 21 Sept. 1862, \textit{op. cit.}; Polding-Brown, 22 Sept. 1862, CAA, Brown papers; Polding-Geoghegan, 22 Aug. 1862, \& nd, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{133} Polding-Talbot, Sept. 1862, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{134} Polding-Barnabò, 22 Sept. 1862, CEPA, \textit{SC-Oceania}, vol. 7, fols. 626 ff; see also Polding-Barnabò, 23 April 1862 (draft), SAA, Polding/Propaganda.
\textsuperscript{135} Polding-Geoghegan, 22 Aug. 1862, \textit{op. cit.}
Mgr. George Talbot de Malahide, a member of the papal household and confidant of Pius IX. He intervened in Australian affairs. He was made a consultor of the Propaganda Congregation in 1866.

Talbot's and Barnabò's replies brought little solace to Polding. Talbot wrote in what Polding called 'that cold disquisitional style which leaves the mind and feelings alike discomforted'. Talbot assured Polding that he stood well with the Pope who had forgotten the audience and that all suspicions against Gregory had been removed, but that it was best for him not to return to Sydney lest the troubles flare up again. Talbot stated that he had done everything in his power to clear Polding's name and had not listened to whisperings. Polding observed that Smith's version of Talbot's role in the affair was altogether different.136

Wanting, as he put it, to unburden Polding of worry and misunderstanding, Barnabò informed him that, while people passing through Rome had said things about him, none of this had prejudiced authority against him, nor had any judgement been given against his administration. He repeated that Gregory's recall had been effected only for the sake of peace and was not to be taken as a penalty. Barnabò again cited the example of St. Gregory Nazianzen. Not only was Polding's habit of expressing himself strongly and frankly not blameworthy, said Barnabò, it was to be encouraged, for the Propaganda Congregation always welcomed missionary leaders stating their problems openly. Barnabò concluded with some words honouring Polding for his worth and piety.137

On these replies Polding commented to Gregory early in 1863:

Oh that officials had hearts as well as heads. I wonder how Talbot or Barnabò would like to be banished from Rome and sent to country parishes in Piedmont and take the thing kindly, for there was plenty of good to be done there and they were the men to do it -

137 Barnabò-Polding, 26 Nov. 1862, SAA, Propaganda/Polding, file 17.
Despite these reverses and shocks, Polding clung stubbornly to the goal of Gregory's return as the only way of re-establishing their reputations. In the second half of 1862 he pinned his hopes for success on Patrick Geoghegan's visit to Rome. Again, Brown was the co-ordinator of the action. He arranged for Geoghegan to be supplied with a copy of Polding's letter to Talbot explaining the audience as well as one written by Gregory and revised by Brown and Ullathorne for the same purpose. Geoghegan's brief was to liaise with Smith, give the documents to Talbot with the request that he present them to the Pope and use his own influence. Both verbally at Stanbrook and in writing, Gregory assured Geoghegan of his complete co-operation.

Few details have survived of Geoghegan's stay in Rome. He was suffering from advanced throat cancer which left him without speech and must have handicapped his ability to negotiate about Gregory or indeed anything else. (This ailment would kill him within two years.) In any case, he made no headway on the Gregory case. By April 1863 Brown had given up. He told Polding that

the prejudices of a good old Pope, who is however subject like the rest of our race to certain infirmities of fallen nature, are the real cause of the sacrifices imposed on you in regard to Dr. Gregory. These must now be endured - until better times may arrive.

In view of 'Roman diplomacy and trickery...I can put no reliance upon the assurances of anyone there'. Polding reluctantly agreed. With Barnabò and Talbot against Gregory's restoration there was no point in writing to the Pope, 'the most unwise thing that could be done'. After Smith, having seen

---

141 Brown-Polding, 19 Apr. 1863, SAA, RC: Polding.
142 Polding-Gregory, 21 Apr. 1863, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 447.
The Bishop of Adelaide, Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan, OSF, failed in his Roman mission on behalf of Gregory.

(Source: M.Pawsey, The Demon of Discord: Tensions in the Catholic Church in Victoria 1853-1864, Melbourne, 1982, facing p. 49.)
Barnabò, confirmed that the Pope was personally against Gregory's return, Polding opined to Brown in June 1863 that now was not the time to press the cause. At about this time Polding noted gloomily that the Propaganda Congregation had not even bothered to reply to a proposal, forwarded by the Australian bishops from a meeting held in Melbourne in November 1862, for controlling complaints sent in against them by requiring the identities of critics to be made known, proof to be given and penalties to be handed out for untrue, vexatious or frivolous allegations.

The campaign disintegrated when Polding, Brown and Geoghegan had a complicated falling-out around the middle of 1863. Polding became angry with Brown when the latter passed on to somebody in England, possibly Ullathorne, what Polding had heard from Barnabò via Smith, that Gregory would never return to Australia during Pius IX's lifetime. This 'somebody' told Talbot, then holidaying in England, who took the story back to Rome. Polding was frightenened of the effect that it would have there. It is difficult to see the basis of Polding's fear since the story began with Barnabò in the first instance and was by now a commonplace. Polding seems to have been worried that the story had been represented to Talbot in terms of he and Gregory calculating on the Pope's death. Meanwhile, Geoghegan was upset with Polding for not telling him what he had told Brown, that he - Polding - had resigned himself to Gregory's not returning during Pope Pius' reign. Geoghegan reproached Polding for not taking him into his confidence thereby putting Geoghegan at risk of making himself look foolish in Rome by working on Polding's behalf for an objective which Polding himself had abandoned, albeit temporarily.

---

143 Polding-Brown, 23 Jun. 1863, CAA, Brown papers.
144 Polding-Brown, 22 Apr. 1863, CAA, Brown papers.
Polding then proceeded to take Brown to task as the most likely person to have divulged to Geoghegan his change of attitude.\textsuperscript{146}

With his hopes for a reversal of the Roman decision about Gregory in ruins, but still longing for Gregory's presence,\textsuperscript{147} Polding became deeply depressed. In late 1862 and early 1863, even before the failure of Geoghegan's mission in Rome, he was again talking about resignation.\textsuperscript{148} A year, this feeling had deepened. To Smith he confided:

\begin{quote}
I know not what I have done to merit blame and censure - but I know that I have been severely punished - by fire and privation. The Cardinal may take his own view - but so it appears to me - and to dispassionate men.\textsuperscript{149}
\end{quote}

Polding's relationship with Rome had reached its lowest point thus far. Perhaps this is reflected in a conversation which took place between the Pope and the Abbot of New Norcia in Western Australia, Rosendo Salvado, in December 1864. The Pope inquired after Polding. When Salvado replied that he was ill, the Pope said, in a kindly way, 'Poor Dr. Polding', but then spoke of other matters as if, or so Salvado thought, to avoid further conversation about the Archbishop of Sydney.\textsuperscript{150} Almost a year later, in October 1865, Bernard Smith reported to Polding that even Cardinal Barnabd could do nothing for Gregory. The matter did not depend on the Prefect who could not even introduce the subject to the Pope. Smith considered that he had used all his influence in vain and the cause was utterly hopeless as long as Pius IX lived.\textsuperscript{151}


\textsuperscript{147} Polding-Gregory, 21 Apr. 1863, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{148} Polding-Smith, 22 Dec. 1862 & 21 Jan. 1863, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{149} Polding-Smith, 22 Jun. 1864, SPLFMA, Smith papers/Australia; see also Polding-Gregory, 20 Feb. 1864, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 14.

\textsuperscript{150} Salvado-Heptonstall, 18 Dec. 1864, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 51.

\textsuperscript{151} Smith-Polding, 21 Oct. 1865, SAA, RC: Polding.
Smith's assessment was by then the assessment of everybody - except Polding. An unexpected turn of events was to prove it wrong. In late 1865 Polding sailed to Europe. His principal object was to negotiate in Rome for the creation of new dioceses in New South Wales, but he had not forgotten Gregory. Looking forward to visiting England, Polding wrote to Gregory from Rome in April 1866, 'How I long, my dearest Child, to be once more with you...'

Barnabò remained opposed to Gregory's return to Australia. He told Polding that Gregory ought not to go back except as a bishop but, of course, he had no intention of recommending Gregory for the episcopacy. Polding, however, hung on to the last trace of hope. He thought there was still a chance that Gregory might return, without responsibilities except to assist and accompany Polding or perhaps to found a new monastery 'far from Sydney and its annoyances'.

Talbot obtained for Polding an audience with the Pope. This took place on 14 May 1866. Whether out of impetuosity or a feeling that he had nothing to lose, Polding asked the Pope directly to let Gregory return to Australia, adding that it would give him great happiness in his old age. Pius replied, 'Si, si, voi potete sperare. Si, e voi dovete continuamente pregare, come fo io - In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum.' Thereupon Polding got down on his knees and said, 'Quando il migliore dei Padri dice al suo figlio di sperare questo figlio stima già concessa la sua preghiera'. The Pope smiled and gave Polding a blessing. It had been so simple. What years of planning and

---

152 These matters are dealt with in this thesis, Chapter VII.
153 Polding-Gregory, 3 Apr. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 151.
154 Polding-Gregory, 17 Nov. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 102; see also Polding-Gregory, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 170.
156 'Yes, yes, you can hope. Yes, and you must pray continually, as I do - In thee, Lord, have I hoped, I will not be confounded forever...When the best of Fathers tells his son to hope this son considers his prayer already granted'. Polding-Barnabò, 18 May 1866, CEPA, Udienze, vol. 152, fols. 629b ff.
Pope Pius IX with snuff box. A photograph taken in the mid-1860s.

plotting, letter-writing and document-collecting had not achieved Polding achieved in a few minutes by means of a simple, personal, face-to-face request. The Pope had been taken by surprise\textsuperscript{157} and disarmed, perhaps also wanting to do Polding a kindness in his affliction and old age. On 20 May official papal confirmation of permission for Gregory to return to Australia was given, although his suitability for a bishopric was made subject to the judgement of the Propaganda Congregation.\textsuperscript{158} At the Congregation itself the officials were annoyed by the Pope's concession,\textsuperscript{159} but the Prefect had no alternative but to write to President General Burchall authorizing him to inform Gregory that he was free to go to Australia with Polding.\textsuperscript{160}

Polding had finally achieved his breakthrough but he was not permitted to enjoy its fruits. Gregory himself decided not to avail himself of the change of papal attitude. Over five years had passed since he left Australia. He was enjoying his work in his small mission at Broxwood, Herefordshire. He had friends and felt appreciated. In 1864 Brown made him a canon of Newport cathedral. Heptonstall urged him not to go back and Burchall told him that his departure would deepen the shortage of priests among the English Benedictines.\textsuperscript{161} As late as October 1866, Polding was still trying to persuade Gregory to return in some purely monastic capacity to 'attend to the one thing necessary: the establishing of the Order...This has been a very severe trial to me, my dearest Child. We will be happy together yet'.\textsuperscript{162} Considering the passion and energy he had expended, Polding took Gregory's final decision not to go back with uncharacteristic tranquillity. He did not want to disturb

\textsuperscript{157} Talbot-Brown, 27 Jul. 1866, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{158} Audience of the Holy Father, 20 May 1866, CEPA, Udienze, vol. 152, fols. 629b ff.

\textsuperscript{159} Talbot-Brown, 27 Jul. 1866, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{160} Barnabà-Burchall, 15 Sept. 1866, CEPA, LDB, vol. 357, fol. 866; see also Burchall-Gregory, 5 Oct. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 171.


\textsuperscript{162} Polding-Gregory, 2 Oct. 1866, \textit{op. cit.}
Gregory's comfortable circumstances and agreed with Smith that probably it was best for Gregory not to return without some definite purpose. In any case, Polding said the decision was Gregory's. When asked by Achille Rinaldini, the Australian minutante at the Propaganda Congregation, asked about Gregory's intentions, Polding evaded the question by saying that Gregory was doing good work in England and was being pressed to stay.\footnote{Polding-Gregory, 10 Nov, 1866 & 4-6 Dec. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 173 & O 176.}

His pliability in 1866 notwithstanding, Polding never reconciled himself to Gregory's removal which weighed heavily on him in the later 1860s and into the 1870s. As he told Smith in 1868, 'I every day feel more and more acutely the absence of Dr. Gregory'.\footnote{Polding-Smith, 20 Aug. 1868, SPFLMA, Smith papers/Australia.} To Gregory himself he wrote in March 1869, 'I want someone who loves me and in whom love goes beyond fear and reverence...I miss you sadly'.\footnote{Polding-Gregory, 27 Mar. 1869, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 319.} In 1873 Gregory was toying with the idea of accompanying the English Benedictine monk, Roger Bede Vaughan, who was being sent out to Australia to assist Polding, although he was worried about being cold-shouldered in Sydney.\footnote{Gregory-Polding, 20 Jan. 1873, SAA, RC: Polding.} Informed of Gregory's thinking by Smith, Vaughan persuaded Gregory not to take this step which, although allowed by Rome, would have been 'very imprudent' as Vaughan believed it was a mistake for a man to go back to a place where he had been a failure.\footnote{Vaughan-Smith, 6 Mar. 1873 & 25 Mar. 1873, SPFLMA, Smith papers/Australia.} Burchall supported Vaughan's determination not to take Gregory with him and wrote to Smith to suggest that Barnabd be asked to advise Gregory to remain in England.\footnote{Burchall-Smith, 13 Mar. 1873 & 2 May 1873, cited in Kavenagh, p. 152.} Henry Gregory died in 1877,\footnote{Shanahan, Out of Time, Out of Place, p. 177.} the same year as Polding.
CHAPTER VI
THE DIVISION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY
1858 - 1865

The 1840s and 1850s saw vigorous economic development in the British colonies of Australia, resulting in a spectacular increase in population, from just over 190,000 in 1840 to well over 1,000,000 in 1860. Substantial numbers of these new settlers were associated with the Catholic Church. It was generally assumed in ecclesiastical circles by the late 1850s that the Australian mission would need to be expanded to provide dioceses, clergy, churches, schools and other pastoral facilities for the large number of Catholics crowding into the colonial capitals and trekking to newly opened-up towns and districts inland.

The last readjustment of the ecclesiastical system had been in 1848 when the Dioceses of Melbourne, Maitland and Port Victoria (Darwin) had been established. However, of these, Maitland was scarcely a diocese in its own right, functioning as little more than a titular see with an Australian locality name for Polding's coadjutor resident in Sydney, Charles Davis, and Port Victoria, with its bishop, Rosendo Salvado living at New Norcia, virtually existed only on paper because of lack of European settlement on the northern coast of the continent. Even after the removal of the Port Phillip district from the Archdiocese of Sydney by the creation of the only real diocese of the 1848 three, Melbourne, Polding's territorial responsibility remained immense, stretching from the Murray River to Cape York and from the Pacific coast far into the interior. It was obvious by the late 1850s that new dioceses would have to be introduced into this vast area.

We saw that Archdeacon McEncroe had written to the Pope in 1851 urging that the survival of the Catholic faith in Australia depended on the prompt provision of extra dioceses staffed by more bishops and priests. He also argued that it was important that these bishops and priests be Irishmen because Australia's Catholics were largely Irish and, moreover, Ireland was the only source of sufficient numbers of missionaries. Rome was sufficiently impressed by McEncroe's arguments to refuse Polding's application that the Archdiocese of Sydney be assigned indefinitely to the care of the English Benedictines, but at their meeting on 10 May 1852 the cardinals of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide deferred further consideration of the reorganization of the Australian Church until they received advice from Polding and his suffragan bishops.

Disputes in Western Australia in the early 1850s and in New South Wales and Victoria in the mid-to-late 1850s distracted the Congregation from addressing itself to the matter of restructuring. But the problem was not forgotten. McEncroe was undeterred by the lack of immediate practical results from his 1851 appeal. He was determined to keep the issue alive at Rome. In May 1854 he forwarded to the then Prefect General, Cardinal Fransoni, a resolution passed by a meeting of Sydney clergy calling for more bishops and priests to minister to a growing Catholic population, who, they added, being Irish, preferred Irish to English pastors. Fransoni immediately sent a circular letter to the suffragan bishops of the Australian Province seeking their opinions about new dioceses. Four years later McEncroe sent to Fransoni's

---

2 See this thesis, pp. 118-120.
5 See, for example, Fransoni-Murphy, 23 August 1854, AAA, 2.301, Murphy papers, box 1, file 3n.
successor, Cardinal Barnabò, a copy of an address to Polding composed at a conference of priests which the Archbishop had permitted to be held at Campbelltown in September 1858 in an attempt to defuse the tensions generated by the Freeman's Journal's criticisms of archdiocesan government. This address called for the creation of four more dioceses in New South Wales as a matter of urgent necessity. McEncroe explained to Barnabò that daily experience convinced him of the correctness of the position that he had placed before the Pope seven years before.6

McEncroe activated his Irish network in support of this position. In 1856 he wrote to Archbishop Cullen of Dublin enclosing a copy of his 1851 letter to the Pope and pointing out that the rapid increase of the Catholic population in New South Wales necessitated the early provision of more dioceses, bishops and priests. He explained that, while Polding was a conscientious leader, the sheer size of his jurisdiction made it impossible for him to do everything. McEncroe claimed the adherence of Australia's Catholics to their Church was in jeopardy and emphasized the Irishness of colonial Catholicism. He asked Cullen to place the matter before Rome.7 He also asked Tobias Kirby at the Irish College keep him informed about Roman developments.8

Polding himself was aware that demographic pressures made the excision of territory from Sydney to create new dioceses inevitable. However, he was nervous about the implications of this process, fearing that an influx of bishops and priests from Ireland would upset his cherished goal of a Benedictine-led cosmopolitan Australian Catholicism able to harmonize with

---

8 McEncroe-Kirby, 21 July 1854, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1836-1861, 1445.
the rest of society because free from domination by any one ethnic group. Polding realized that the way in which the new dioceses were created, or, more to the point, the bishops who were chosen to head them, would determine the future character of the Catholic Church in Australia. After the battering Polding's vision had received in the 1850s, the following decade was to be its last chance. Everything would depend upon what was decided in Rome.

Because of declining Roman confidence in him, Polding would have to negotiate for the new dioceses from a position of weakness. He seemed to realize this and approached the problem cautiously. When he conveyed the findings of the Campbelltown conference to Rome he did so without comment, thereby passing up an opportunity to influence the Roman interpretation of them.9 Clutching at straws, Polding and Gregory tried to convince Rome - and perhaps themselves - that the migration of Catholics from England, Scotland, Germany and other places would soon give a strong multi-ethnic complexion to the Australian mission.10 Whether or not they really believed this fantasy is hard to say, but migration patterns in the 1840s and 1850s consolidated the overwhelming Irishness that had marked Australian Catholicism from the very beginning.11

At the start of 1857 a jittery Polding told Bishop Serra in Perth that he had written to the Propaganda Congregation to impress upon them the importance of consulting the Metropolitan about all appointments to dioceses within the Australian Province, not only to avoid a repetition of the Brady fiasco but also

---

9 T.Sutton, Hierarchy and Democracy in Australia, 1788-1870: The Formation of Australian Catholicism, Melbourne, 1965, p. 182. Goold believed that Polding had committed a major error in allowing the conference in the first place, running the risk of losing the initiative in the formulation of policy. Goold-Geoghegan, 25 Nov. 1858, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 6-13; Goold-Fitzpatrick, 25 Nov. 1858, MDHC, box 'Goold inventory'.


because the British Government looked to him, Polding, to guarantee the political loyalty of each bishop. Polding would have liked to be the sole adviser of Rome in these matters, but he knew that this was improbable and was worried about the influence that others would have. McEncroe knew that Polding resented his involvement in the discussions and told Cullen so. Torn between realization of the pastoral necessity of creating new administrative units and fears about what the consequences would be for his plans for the Catholic community, Polding had little real enthusiasm for the division of his diocese and procrastinated.

II

However tentative he was, two events towards the end of the 1850s made it impossible for Polding to put off approaching Rome for new bishops. In April 1858 the first Bishop of Adelaide, Francis Murphy, died. He would have to be replaced. The rapid development of the northern part of New South Wales brought a new colony, Queensland, in existence in 1859. In accordance with the principle that Polding had urged on the Propaganda Congregation in 1842, this new civil jurisdiction should be matched by another Catholic bishopric.

Polding, Goold and Willson met in Melbourne in June 1858 to discuss the affairs of the Province, including a successor for Murphy, but the meeting was dominated by the more immediately pressing matter of the composition of the monitum pastorale against lay and clerical dissent and little else was decided formally. As we have seen, Goold then proceeded to Rome on a

13 Wynne, p. 317.
14 Polding-Barnabò, 11 May 1858, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 6, fol. 106.
15 See this thesis, p. 88.
17 Polding-Barnabò, 11 May 1858, op. cit.
18 See this thesis, p. 151.
variety of matters. Polding deputed him to treat with the Propaganda Congregation about the need for new bishops and begged him not to leave Rome until everything had been settled satisfactorily.19

Meanwhile Polding and Willson returned to their own dioceses to ponder possible recommendations to Rome. Of the two, Polding as Metropolitan was, of course, the central figure, but he remained irresolute. Two months elapsed between the bishops' meeting in June 1858 and the despatch of his first proposal to Cardinal Barnabò, dated 11 August. This was that the hitherto de facto titular Diocese of Maitland be converted into a functioning diocese by the allocation of territory and that it be conferred on his Vicar General, Gregory (who, at this point, was still in Australia). Polding also recommended that the new diocese for the Moreton Bay district be based at Ipswich.20 A month later, on 10 September, Polding again wrote to Barnabò reiterating his request for Gregory. As to candidates for Ipswich, Polding’s first choice had been Dean John Lynch, born in Dublin, a student at Maynooth when he volunteered for the New South Wales mission and ordained in Sydney after his arrival in 1838. His first posting was West Maitland. However, Polding soon switched to Dean John Rigney, who had arrived in Australia with Lynch and who worked in Wollongong, Port Macquarie, Singleton and, finally, Moreton Bay. He was the dean of the Moreton Bay district when the new diocese was mooted and Polding decided that it was best to put it in the charge of the man who knew the area best.21

In his letter of 10 September Polding told Barnabò that two other new dioceses were needed, one at Yass to the south of Sydney and the other at

19 Polding-Barnabò, 11 Aug. 1858, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 984, fols. 301 ff; Polding-Willson, 20 Feb. 1859 (TC), MDHC, correspondence file 'N-P'; see also Moran, pp. 784-785.
20 Polding-Barnabò, 11 Aug. 1858, op. cit.
21 Polding-Barnabò, 10 Sept. 1858, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 984, fols. 205f; see also Martin, pp. 128, 137 & Moran, p. 597; for Lynch and Rigney, see P.Hartigan ('John O'Brien'), The Men of ’38 and other Pioneer Priests, Kilmore, 1975, pp. 6, 17, 23, 73, 80-81, 86, 94, 102, 104-105, 174.
Bathurst to the west. The reason, he explained, was not so much to meet the spiritual needs of the local populations as to curb clerical independence through closer episcopal supervision. He took the opportunity to urge that the new bishops not be chosen from Ireland whose exaggerated nationalism, he claimed, was inappropriate in a predominantly English society.  

Polding’s proposals to Rome were both late and incomplete. In his letters to Barnabò of August and September he indicated neither the territories to be assigned to the bishoprics of Yass and Bathurst nor the candidates for these appointments. There was no mention of the vacant Diocese of Adelaide, although there appears to have been an informal agreement between Polding and Goold that the latter in Rome would present his own Vicar General, Patrick Geoghegan, for this position. Having arrived in the city, Goold warned in December 1858 that without further details from the bishops back home he could do nothing, with the attendant risk of the whole matter being taken out of their hands.

To explain Polding’s irresolution, it is important to remember that at this very period the Benedictine administration in Sydney was undergoing fierce attacks from the *Freeman’s Journal*. His confidence shaken, the Archbishop was worried about the effects of the imminent ecclesiastical organization and he was frightened of making mistakes. He found it difficult to address himself to the matter. As he told Willson, ‘I did entertain most fervently the hope that the Holy See would take into its hands the entire management and completion of this most important business’. In other words, Polding seemed to prefer what Goold feared. Moreover, he was unsure how to deal with the practicalities of arranging the new dioceses and it was only when he consulted the electoral and police divisions that he was able to make any

---

22 Polding-Barnabò, 10 Sept. 1858, *op. cit.*
23 Goold-Geoghegan, 3 Dec. 1858, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 6-14.
24 Polding-Willson, 28 Feb. 1859 (TC), SPM, Eris O’Brien papers; see also Polding-Willson, 18 March 1859 (TC), SPM, Eris O’Brien papers.
progress. Problems with the overseas mails delayed the despatch of details to Goold until February 1859. It was only about this time that Polding supplied the names of the candidates for the other dioceses. Even then he had to be prompted by Barnabò. For Yass he wanted Robert Cornthwaite, a former Rector of the English College in Rome, and for Bathurst another Englishman, William Lockhart, a member of a religious order known as the Institute of Charity and a convert from Newman's Oxford circle. He also formally nominated Geoghegan to replace Murphy in Adelaide. At about the same time he changed his mind about Ipswich, dropping Rigney for a Benedictine monk of Irish origin but English birth and upbringing, Norbert Sweeney, Prior of Downside. He saw a Benedictine appointment as fitting in better with his vision for the Australian Church. It would, moreover, be taken as a sign of Roman approval of this vision against the criticisms of the *Freeman's Journal*. However, Polding dithered so long that the final version of his proposals, with its nomination of the Englishmen Cornthwaite, Lockhart and the Benedictine Sweeney, did not reach Rome until after the Propaganda Congregation had made its first decisions. This delay combined with the fact that Polding's point of view was not the only one being aired in Rome to make it highly unlikely that things would go exactly as he wished.

The (northern) winter of 1858-1859 saw Bishop Goold, Archdeacon McEncroe, Archbishop Cullen and Placid Burchall, the President General of the English Benedictine Congregation, all in Rome simultaneously. The affairs of the Australian Church were thrashed out at a series of meetings and dinners at the Propaganda palace, the Irish College and private residences involving

---

these men as well as Mgr. Talbot, the Propaganda Prefect Cardinal Barnabò, the Secretary Archbishop Bedini and the English-language minutante Achille Rinaldini and Tobias Kirby and Patrick Moran at the Irish College. William Ullathorne in England also had his say through his correspondence and meetings in Birmingham with Goold and McEncroe. To further complicate the process the Irish group in Rome, Cullen, Kirby and Moran, were in regular receipt of letters from dissident Irish-Australian missionary priests such as Patrick Bermingham, highly critical of Polding, Goold and Gregory.30

The key visitors in Rome were Goold and McEncroe. Towards the end of December 1858, Bedini wrote to Goold asking him for his opinion about Polding’s submission and enclosing relevant documents, including the ponenza which had been studied by the Propaganda cardinals in May 1852 and which resulted in the decision to reject the idea of a Benedictine monopoly in New South Wales.31 This particular document was doubtless intended as a hint as to Roman thinking about the future development of the Church in Australia. Goold dutifully presented Polding’s proposals, including Geoghegan for Adelaide and Rigney for Ipswich, but added his own independent line. Goold thought that the Moreton Bay diocese should be based, not at Ipswich, but at Brisbane, the seat of civil government. Similarly, the southern diocese should be based, not at Yass, but Goulburn, which was larger, more populous, better situated and the seat of the recently-established Anglican see. Polding had opted for Yass because it was at a greater distance from Sydney and because he believed it to be better equipped with ecclesiastical property and potential for future development.32 Goold found it difficult to comment further on the


31 Bedini-Goold, 31 December 1858, CEPA, LDB, vol. 349, fol. 112.

32 Moran, p. 357.
The first page of Bishop Goold's submission on the division of the Archdiocese of Sydney. The Roman officials followed Goold's advice closely.

(Source: CEPA, SOCG, vol. 984, fol. 219.)
Goulburn, Bathurst and Maitland proposals because as yet no word had been received from Polding about candidates or territory for Goulburn and Bathurst or territory for Maitland. Goold recommended that consideration of Goulburn and Bathurst be deferred until an Australian provincial synod could be held. As well as repeating Polding’s nomination of Rigney for Brisbane, Goold submitted a recommendation of his own, the Dublin priest, James Quinn, whom Polding had placed third on a list for Adelaide at Goold’s suggestion.33

It is not clear why Goold preferred Quinn. Presumably, the two met during one of Goold’s trips to Ireland. Born in 1819 at Rathbone, County Kildare, Quinn began his education in Dublin and was at the Irish College in Rome to study for the priesthood in the 1840s when Paul Cullen was Rector. On his return to Dublin and after a stint of parish work he was appointed Rector of St. Laurence O’Toole’s College on Cullen’s recommendation. Quinn was closely associated with Cullen as former student and protégé. There might also have been a distant family connection.34 It is not surprising, then, that when Bedini approached Cullen for an opinion about Quinn in response to Goold’s suggestion, the reply was one of high praise.35 Goold also asked the Propaganda officials to consider a priest working in the Diocese of Melbourne, his fellow Corkman and Augustinian friar, the forty-five year-old James Hayes. After studying for the priesthood in Italy, Hayes returned to Cork and in 1852 went out to Australia to work for Goold who made him, successively, Dean of Geelong and Dean of Bendigo.36

35 Bedini-Cullen, 8 Feb. 1859, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1858-1863; Cullen-Barnabó, 20 Feb. 1859, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 984, fol. 266.
The Propaganda Congregation also approached McEncroe for his views about the reorganization of the New South Wales mission. Talbot told Goold that he had received a long letter from McEncroe about Australian affairs. Although they differed over other questions while in Rome, on this particular matter McEncroe and Goold were in substantial agreement. McEncroe, too, favoured new bishoprics at Brisbane, Goulburn, Maitland and Bathurst. He repeated his line that the appointees should be Irishmen. He also submitted a report on New South Wales which, to Goold's surprise, was complimentary to Polding. In the preparation and translation of his documents McEncroe was assisted by Moran at the Irish College.

Goold and Polding were alarmed by a rumour that McEncroe might be given an Australian bishopric. Ullathorne, who got along well with McEncroe when the latter was in England, recommended him to succeed Murphy in Adelaide. Maurizio Lencioni, one of the Passionist missionaries who went to South Australia after the collapse of the Stradbroke Island venture, wrote to tell Barnabò that many of the Catholics of Adelaide wanted McEncroe as their bishop. But McEncroe's name was conspicuously absent from Polding's final list of candidates for Australian dioceses. Polding and Goold worked in Rome and Ireland to block McEncroe's elevation to the episcopate. Polding pointed out to Barnabò that the Australian bishops had no confidence in McEncroe because of the Freeman's-Journal affair. He also adverted, painfully he added, to McEncroe's past drinking problem, 'noblement expié par son zèle ardent depuis', but still publicly remembered and therefore a fatal obstacle to episcopal
promotion. Goold warned Barnabò that the damage inflicted on episcopal authority by the *Freeman's Journal*, from which McEncroe had failed to distance himself sufficiently, rendered him unfit to exercise such authority himself.

The question of the division of the Archdiocese of Sydney was of the highest formality, involving as it did the establishment of dioceses and the appointment of bishops, and so was dealt with by a plenary meeting of the *Propaganda* cardinals. This took place on 10 March 1859 and was attended by Cardinals Costantino Patrizi, Luigi Amat di San Filippo e Sorso, Gabriele Ferretti, Benedetto Barberini, Ludovico Altieri, Josef Rauscher, Karl von Reisach, Pietro Marini, Roberto Roberti and Prospero Caterini, as well as Barnabò. The *ponenza* or report and accompanying documentation was presented by Ludovico Altieri.

A member of one of the most illustrious aristocratic Roman families, Ludovico Altieri was born in 1805. Having decided on an ecclesiastical career and been called to the Roman curia by Pope Leo XII, he made rapid progress. Gregory XVI made him Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Studies. In 1836 he was consecrated titular Archbishop of Ephesus and sent as nuncio to Vienna. He became a cardinal in 1840. He was closely associated with Pius IX's reform of the Papal State. As President of Rome he inaugurated the Legislative Council. On the outbreak of revolutionary disorder in 1848 Altieri fled with the Pope to Gaeta. In 1850 he was one of a triumvirate of cardinals charged with restoring the papal government. Civil posts that he subsequently held were Governor of Rome and President of the Council of State Finance while his religious appointments included Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Index, Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church, Archchancellor of the Roman

---

42 Polding-Barnabò, 27 Nov. 1858, CEPA, SOC, vol. 984, fols. 264 ff; see also Polding-Barnabò, 11 Apr. 1859, CEPA, SC-Oceania, fols. 552 ff.
Cardinal Ludovico Altieri, responsible for the presentation of the 1859 report on the creation of new dioceses in Australia.

University, Archpriest of the Basilica of St. John Lateran and Bishop of Albano. Intelligent, moderate and popular, Altieri was highly esteemed by Pius IX and was the centre of opposition within the college of cardinals to the powerful Secretary of State, Giacomo Antonelli.\textsuperscript{44}

In the report which he presented on 10 March, Cardinal Altieri outlined Polding's plan for the division of the Sydney Archdiocese. He also alluded to Polding's nomination of Goold as the representative of the Australian bishops in this matter. Indeed, the rest of the ponenza was largely a summary of the views which Goold had placed before the Propaganda Secretariat, that is, the northern and southern dioceses should be at Brisbane and Goulburn instead of Ipswich and Yass as Polding had indicated and the establishment of the dioceses of Goulburn and Bathurst should not be proceeded with until they had been considered at an Australian synod because Polding had given no candidates or boundaries. Altieri reported Goold as saying that Polding's wishes as regards appointments to Brisbane and Maitland should be granted. Polding had nominated Rigney - his latest version with its switch to Sweeney had not yet arrived in Rome - because Rigney knew the Moreton Bay area well, but Altieri asked if that alone were sufficient to establish a priest's suitability for the episcopate. Altieri informed the cardinals that Goold had made two other suggestions, James Quinn and James Hayes, the former strongly endorsed by Archbishop Cullen, the latter by Goold himself. Regarding Gregory, Altieri reported that the Pope declined to consider him as assistant bishop in Sydney when Polding asked for this during his last visit to Rome, but added that Goold thought Gregory would suit Maitland as Polding was now proposing. Finally, Altieri conveyed Goold's views about the Adelaide vacancy. Geoghegan seemed to be the best man for the job. He referred to the

warnings that Goold and Polding had given about McEncroe. Taking his cue from Goold, who urged the Propaganda Congregation to beware of self-serving priests whenever new dioceses were in the making, Altieri wondered whether ambition had brought McEncroe to Rome.45

The official decisions made by the cardinals followed the ponenza and therefore Goold’s line closely: the establishment of a diocese at Brisbane and its conferral on James Quinn; the conversion of Maitland into a territorial diocese and its conferral on Gregory; the appointment of Geoghegan to Adelaide; the deferral of Goulburn and Bathurst. On 27 March all of these decisions were confirmed by Pius IX, with one significant exception. The Pope vetoed Gregory being made Bishop of Maitland, although, out of consideration for Polding’s feelings, he said that this position could go to another English Benedictine.46 In placing Quinn in Brisbane and Gregory in Maitland the cardinals had tried to strike a balance, but this was now upset by the Pope acting unilaterally. This was yet another example of Pius IX’s animosity towards Gregory because of the fiasco of 1854.

These decisions very largely reflected the opinions of McEncroe and Goold backed up by the influence of Cullen.47 The practicalities of the decisions were shaped chiefly by Goold, particularly the appointment of Quinn, but the theoretical framework was supplied by McEncroe. Whatever reservations the Propaganda officials had about him because of the Freeman’s-Journal affair, the appointment of Quinn and Geoghegan demonstrates that they saw sense in his argument that an Irish people needed Irish pastors even if they wanted

46 Ibid., fol. 116.
Title page of the 1859 ponenza. It resulted in recommendations on the appointment of new bishops in Australia which tried to strike a balance, but this was overturned by the Pope.

(Source: CEPA, Acta, vol. 223, fol. 106.)
to provide balance to the Australian hierarchy by assigning Maitland to the
Englishman Gregory.

The decisions of 1859 were the first results of a campaign which had been
prosecuted by McEncroe for almost ten years. He sensed his victory. While
residing at All Hallows’ College in Dublin in May 1859 he issued a major
appeal to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Ireland, the basic premise of
which was contained in the opening paragraph:

As the vast majority of the Catholics in Australia are of Irish
birth or descent, the Catholic Church of these important and
flourishing colonies may be fairly regarded as a branch of the ancient
and ever faithful Church of Ireland.

McEncroe exhorted the Irish bishops to take an interest in the spiritual welfare
of the thousands of their people now living in Australia, to provide them with
good pastors and teachers. He reminded the bishops that Ireland was the only
practical source of substantial numbers of missionaries, without whom the
Catholic faith in Australia must perish.48

Cardinal Barnabò wrote to Polding on 16 April to inform him of the
dispositions made the previous month.49 The reverse that Polding suffered in
this first round of Propaganda decisions should not be exaggerated. After all,
his English and Benedictine recommendations for Ipswich, Yass and Bathurst
had not been rejected. They had simply not been considered because Polding
failed to get them to Rome in time for the congregazione. The
recommendation of Geoghegan for Adelaide seems to have been more Goold’s
than Polding’s, but Polding agreed with it. Gregory would have been appointed
to Maitland had the cardinals’ recommendation not been overturned by papal
intervention.

Favourable Consideration of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland’, May 1859, AHCA,
correspondence file - Sydney/41; see also, R.Wynne, ‘Archdeacon John McEncroe’, ACR,
vol. XXXIII, no. 2, April 1956, pp. 118-119.
49 Barnabò-Polding, 16 April 1859, SAA, RC:Polding.
However, that intervention, together with the cardinals' adoption of a compromise arrangement, was an ominous sign for Polding that his influence was not in the ascendant at Rome in 1859 and that he would have to compete with other points of view. The see of Brisbane had gone, not to Rigney, but to Quinn, thereby contradicting Polding's advice that bishops not be appointed from Ireland. In June a disappointed Polding wrote to Barnabò pleading that it was vital for Gregory to be made a bishop somewhere in order to vindicate ecclesiastical authority in Sydney and silence the *Freeman's Journal*. He asked that if not Maitland then Bathurst be given to Gregory.\(^{50}\) In an unmistakeable reference to Quinn, Polding warned the Prefect in a draft letter (which, however, might not have been posted) that the loyalty of Australia's Catholics would be tested if bishops were imported from Ireland and England and local priests were passed over. He claimed that all the Australian bishops were agreed that bishops brought out from Ireland would not understand local conditions.\(^{51}\) Polding's arguments were tendentious. As the one most responsible for the appointment of Quinn, Goold clearly did not believe that Irish imports were unsuitable. On the contrary, like McEncroe, he believed that Irish priests and bishops were generally better for a Catholic community whose membership was mainly Irish.\(^{52}\) Polding was compelled to include England as well as Ireland in his complaint about imported bishops to avoid the charge of being anti-Irish, but he thereby opened himself to the charge of inconsistency since he himself had recommended the Englishmen Cornthwaite, Lockhart and Sweeney.

Polding was well aware that the advice of others had been powerful in Rome. He complained about Cullen's intervention in Australian affairs.\(^{53}\) In

---

50 Polding-Barnabò, 14 June 1859, CEPA, *SC-Oceania*, vol. 6, fols. 642 ff.
51 Polding-Barnabò, 13 June 1859 (CC), SAA, Polding-Propaganda.
52 Shanahan, p. 160.
53 Polding-Ullathorne, 14 April 1860, DownAA, Ullathorne papers; Polding-Goold, 21 April 1860, SAA, RC: Goold.
July 1860 he spitefully informed Barnabò that James Quinn was taking his time about coming to Australia, thereby neglecting the new Diocese of Brisbane.\(^5^4\) When Quinn finally arrived in Australia Polding feared, mistakenly as it turned out, that he brought with him a Roman commission to investigate the Archdiocese of Sydney.\(^5^5\) There was no rapport between the two. Polding found Quinn cold, uncommunicative, obstinate and unwilling to learn from the experience and knowledge of bishops long resident in Australia.\(^5^6\)

III

The appointment of Quinn together with the sacking of Gregory nine months later made it clear to Polding that Roman policy was assuming a direction inimical to his aspirations for the Australian Church. Polding had good reason to be apprehensive about the newly-appointed Bishop of Brisbane. Soon after arriving in Australia in March 1861 Quinn told Cullen he intended to keep him informed so that he could 'use with advantage to the whole Church of Australia that influence at Rome that you derive from your position, and the high opinions entertained of you there.' Quinn took the opportunity of this letter to give his first impressions of the Australian Church, which he thought was disorganized and afflicted by 'flagrant abuses' and 'scandals of gross and degrading kind'.\(^5^7\)

Quinn travelled to Australia via Rome. Before he left the city Barnabò impressed upon him the need to hold as soon as possible the Australian synod recommended by the cardinals at the congregazione of 10 March 1859 to discuss the further changes that were necessary to the structures of the local Church. At the urging of Quinn an informal meeting to prepare for this synod took


\(^{5^5}\) Polding-Geoghegan, 17 Aug. 1860, SAA, RC: Geoghegan 5-9; see also O'Donoghue, The Bishop of Botany Bay, p. 136.

\(^{5^6}\) Suttor, p. 284; O'Donoghue, 'The Benedictine Ideal and Brisbane', pp. 240-242.

\(^{5^7}\) Quinn-Cullen, 19 May 1862, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
place in Sydney in February 1862, attended by Polding, Geoghegan and Quinn.58 Goold, Willson and Serra were unable to be there. The Australian hierarchy before 1860 had scarcely been a model of unity, Polding having often annoyed Goold and Willson, and Brady having been guilty of flagrant disobedience, but the attitude of Quinn at the 1862 meeting made it clear that a new situation had arisen.

Geoghegan supported Polding’s ideas but Quinn refused to be drawn into any Polding-inspired united front on new divisions and appointments. He told the others that he knew little of the candidates they proposed and nothing of the territories. He declined to help rebut charges made against Australian bishops at Rome by Bermingham and others and supported by Irish bishops. He claimed in a letter to Cullen that Polding attempted to bribe him with the offer of a carriage and horses. He declined to sign any document, resisting a last-ditch effort by Geoghegan to induce him to do so as they waited on the wharf for the departure of the steamer taking Quinn back to Brisbane.59 Once home, Quinn wrote to Polding that he was strongly of the opinion that ‘it is desirable to leave the Holy See to make its choice from the large number of highly qualified clergymen at home’ (that is, Ireland) who would be able to secure priests to come out with them. Quinn believed that the appointment of Australian priests would be problematical.60 He forwarded copies of this letter to the Propaganda Congregation and Cullen and told the latter that the appointment of any Benedictine, especially from Polding’s own monastery, would be unwise.61

58 Quinn-Polding, 7 Jan. 1862 (CC), & Quinn-Geoghegan, 10 Jan. 1862 (CC), BAA, James Quinn letterbook, Mar. 1860-Nov. 1864; see also Moran, p. 768.
59 Quinn-Cullen, 19 May 1862, op. cit.
61 Quinn-Cullen, 19 May 1862, op. cit.; see also McLay, p. 104.
James Quinn, appointed to the newly-established Diocese of Brisbane in 1859, was the first of the Cullenite Irish bishops to be sent to Australia. His appointment was a major setback for Polding, showing that Rome was being guided by others.

(Source: A.McLay, James Quinn: First Bishop of Brisbane, Toowoomba, revised edition, 1989, front cover.)
Following this meeting, Polding posted further recommendations to Rome in July 1862. He repeated the need for a diocese at Goulburn and thought there should be another based at Armidale in the north of the colony. He indicated possible boundaries. He asked that Geoghegan be transferred from Adelaide to Goulburn as the climate and size of South Australia were injuring Geoghegan's health. This was the only part of Polding's scheme to which Quinn agreed. For Armidale his first choice was Dean James Hanly, who was born in Ireland in 1815 and who studied for the priesthood at St. John's College, Waterford, before going to Sydney where he was ordained in 1843. A first-class horseman, Hanly worked on the missions in Brisbane, Singleton and Yass. He had spent several months at Downside Abbey before sailing for Australia and, although he never became a monk, he admired the monastic ideal and was devoted to Polding. To fill the Adelaide vacancy possibly created by the removal of Geoghegan to Goulburn Polding nominated three candidates: Henry Backhaus, a missionary in the Bendigo district; William Hall, Vicar General of the Diocese of Hobart; and Laurence Bonaventure Shiel, a Franciscan friar working in Victoria as Archdeacon of Ballarat. Backhaus was German and Polding thought he would be good for the German settlers in South Australia. Hall and Shiel were Irish. In their correspondence with Rome Goold and Willson dissented from Polding's scheme, the former claiming that Adelaide would suffer from Geoghegan's transfer and that Backhaus and Shiel were unsuitable for the episcopate, the latter protesting at the possible loss of his Vicar General.

Polding was aware of these criticisms from his Australian colleagues, but he was more anxious about the threat from overseas. At the beginning of

---

62 For James Hanly, see Hartigan, pp. 20, 102, 104-105, 107, 109-111, 215-216.
63 Polding-Barnabò, 10 Jul. 1862, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 989, fols. 549 ff.
65 Polding-Barnabò, 10 Jul. 1862, op. cit.
Bermingham had sailed from Sydney for Ireland via Rome. He placed a
dismal picture of Polding's administration and the state of the Australian
missions before Moran in Rome and Cullen in Dublin and added fresh stories
of scandal, failure and incompetence which he received from friends still in
Australia. Identifying the principal threat to his scheme, Polding appealed
directly to Barnabò:

once more I must beg, with the utmost respectful insistence on my
part, and on the part of all the bishops of Australia [but presumably
not Quinn!], that no prelate, be he Bishop or Archbishop, in a
country so far away as Ireland, may interfere in the affairs of this
country, which the Most Holy Father has entrusted to the
administration of its own prelates.

Aware of the danger he faced, Polding wrote in May 1862 to the Irish
Benedictine monk, Bernard Smith, long-time resident in Rome, asking him
formally to act as his official agent at the Holy See and thereby help in
'dealing with the misrepresentations of self-seeking and vindictive priests'. Writing from Bungendore 'in the wild Bush as we call
the interior' where he was on visitation, Polding asked Smith to explain to
Barnabò that it was preferable to select bishops from Australian clergy with
local experience. Polding wrote that his observation of Quinn confirmed him
in this principle. Quinn's want of colonial experience and rigid
preconceptions, Polding claimed, had led him to more mistakes in six months
than Polding had made in 26 years. Polding hoped that the Pope would realize
that it was desirable in the interests of co-operation among the bishops that his
episcopal neighbours be missionaries who had worked with him for a long
time and whom he understood well.

66 Polding-Brown, 22 Jan. 1862, CAA, Brown papers; Shanahan, p. 159.
67 Polding-Barnabò, 20 Dec. 1861 (CC), SAA, Polding-Propaganda.
68 See this thesis, pp. 67-68.
69 Polding-Smith, 21 May 1862, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia; see also Polding-Brown,
22 Jan. 1862, op. cit.
70 Polding-Smith, 16 Jul. 1862, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
On 30 September 1862 eight Propaganda cardinals - Barnabò, Patrizi, Barberini, von Reisach, Marini, Caterini, Teodolfo Mertel and Camillo di Pietro - met to consider the proposals that had emerged from the conference of Polding, Geoghegan and Quinn earlier that year. They approved the establishment of two new dioceses, Goulburn and Armidale, recommended by the Australian bishops to provide for the growing Catholic population in those districts and to counter the Anglicans. However, because they knew little of Polding's candidates and had noted the objections of Goold and Willson they decided to delay the appointments, including the translation of Geoghegan, pending further information. They gave permission for Polding to choose administrators for the new dioceses until bishops were appointed. All of these decisions were confirmed by the Pope on 5 October.71

The next one and half years were uneventful as to major Roman decisions about Australia, although behind-the-scenes political activity was vigorous. Polding remained anxious about the activities of Irish bishops and troublesome Irish-Australian priests at Rome. He felt that his own nominations were being blocked continually: 'it would almost seem as if obstacles were thrown in our way that the nominations might perforce come from another quarter'.72 Believing Barnabò to be under the impression that the population of Australia was made up almost entirely of Irish immigrants,73 Polding took the precaution of writing to the Prefect to inform him that half the population of Australia was native-born, English migration was bigger than Irish migration and that the native population were proud of their English affinity and were resentful of outside interference in the affairs of their country. 74 He told Smith he was convinced that freedom from a sense of

74 Polding-Brown, 22 Apr. 1863, CAA, Brown papers.
nationality was an essential prerequisite for appointment to the episcopate in a society of mixed population like New South Wales.75

Around the middle of 1863 Polding was particularly worried about reports that either Bermingham or another Irish-Australian missionary, Michael McAlroy, would be made Bishop of Goulburn. Born in 1821, McAlroy attended Navan and Maynooth seminaries and worked on the Carlow cathedral staff before accompanying his friend, Bermingham, to Victoria in 1854. Like Bermingham, he applied to join the Sydney diocese after a falling-out with Goold. Polding appointed both of them to Yass.76 Again like Bermingham, McAlroy soon became one of Polding's loudest critics and supplied Bermingham with stories against the Benedictines and the Sydney administration after his friend went overseas in 1861. McAlroy was putting it about that he had been recommended by bishops in Ireland.77 Polding commented on this to Geoghegan: 'Pretty cool is it not? Bishops in Ireland to recommend priests in Australia to the episcopacy, not to dioceses in Ireland but Australia!...This is not an Irish colony...' Polding urged Geoghegan, then in Rome, to do what he could to ensure that Bermingham's and McAlroy's doings in Victoria in the 1850s were remembered.78

Polding was dissatisfied with Roman habits of business and procedure. For one thing, he questioned the security of confidential information in the hands of Propaganda bureaucrats: 'How is it that the affairs of Propaganda are as well known as if published in the market places?'79 He also had serious doubts about the quality of this information. He took Barnabò's suggestion that one of the bishops already in Australia be made administrator of the recently-created dioceses awaiting their own bishops as evidence of how poorly the

75 Polding-Smith, 22 Jul. 1863, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
76 For McAlroy, see Hartigan, pp. 201-202.
79 Polding-Smith, 21 Jan. 1863, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
Propaganda Congregation understood Australian conditions with their great distances. He wished that Rome would send out a papal visitator who 'would give the authority some knowledge which would prevent their deplorable blundering'.

IV

A situation that developed in 1863 shows that Polding's complaint was well founded. Polding had appointed as administrators of the Dioceses of Goulburn and Armidale, respectively, James Hanly, and Gregory's replacement as Vicar General of Sydney, the Benedictine monk, Austin Sheehy. In September Cardinal Barnabò wrote to Polding stating that Smith had informed the Propaganda Congregation about these appointments and that the Catholic people of the Armidale and Goulburn districts, being mainly Irish, were upset at being subject to English pastors. Barnabò lectured Polding about the need to be sensitive to the nationality of the people. In conclusion, he chided Polding for failing to deal directly with the Congregation in so important matter, preferring instead to communicate only with his agent: 'Quemadmodum enim S. Consilium [that is, the Propaganda Congregation] directe ad Te scribit, ita aequum est ut directe pariter a Te responsa suscipiat'.

Polding was flabbergasted. Barnabò's letter was 'something astounding'. He wondered whether the Cardinal was serious. The very names of Hanly and Sheehy proclaimed them Irish, not English. Polding suspected that the Roman rebuke was proof that the Bermingham clique was 'still at its dirty work'. In a letter to Smith Polding poured out his injured feelings:

when is all this to end...Is it not a sin to calumniate and vilify? Is it respectful for the High Court of Propaganda to proffer false charges against the Bishops subject to it and therefore have a just claim to be protected by it?

80 Polding-Gregory, 21 Jul. 1863, op. cit.; see also Polding-Smith, 21 Jan. 1863, op. cit.
81 'For whenever the Holy Council writes directly to you, it is fair than you equally undertake a direct reply'. Barnabò-Polding, 1 Sept. 1863, SAA, RC: Polding.
Barnabé rebukes Polding in September 1863 for appointing the Englishmen Austin Sheehy and James Hanly as administrators of the predominantly Irish dioceses of Goulburn and Armidale.

(Source: SAA.)
He believed that common justice required Barnabò to reveal the identity of the accusers. In that way

he will save himself and the Bishops much annoyance and prevent a further diminution of respect and confidence which under the present system are fairly oozing away...

Polding believed that it was proper for Rome to receive complaints - 'one of the safety valves of canonical discipline' - but he also believed that there should be a regular and public process under which the accuser was revealed and required to give evidence, a copy of the accusation was sent to the accused and the accused's reply received before any final judgement, with penalties for groundless or mischievous accusations. Smith knew who had made the false statements about Sheehy's and Hanly's nationality but said he was not at liberty to say who they were. Annoyed because he thought that Smith as his agent had a duty to divulge the names, Polding could do no more than speculate about Bermingham, Cullen and even his old adversary of ten years before, John Brady. Polding tried to organize Smith and Geoghegan to get the names of the accusers and to correct Propaganda misunderstandings about the ethnic make-up of the Australian population and the relationship between various groups in the Church.

On 19 December 1863 Polding wrote a strong letter of his own to Cardinal Barnabò. He explained that both Sheehy and Hanly were Irishmen. The Vicar General (Sheehy), the Archdeacon (McEncroe), the Archpriest (Therry) and four out of the five deans of the Archdiocese were Irish. Apart from himself, the only Englishman exercising executive authority was the fifth dean, John Sumner, a Benedictine, who, as he put it in a letter to Smith about the same

---

82 Polding-Smith, 21 Dec. 1863, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
83 Polding-Smith, 23 Dec. 1863, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
Polding explains that Sheehy and Hanly are Irish.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 7, fol. 307.)
time 'has the misfortune like myself to be born on the wrong side of the Channel'\textsuperscript{86} (that is, the body of water separating England and Ireland). Polding told Barnabò that he had just returned from a three-month visitation of the Archdiocese during which he had received many demonstrations of love and devotion from the people. They loved him, he explained, not because he was English or Irish, but because he was their pastor and because of what his office meant to them. He informed the Prefect that, as of the census of 1861, only one-seventh of the population of New South Wales originated in Ireland and that Catholics born in the colony and therefore, he added, Australian in character, far outnumbered the Irish born. He insisted that, in the interests of peace and progress, ecclesiastical policy must foster a national spirit, neither English nor Irish, but Australian. He warned that any other policy would destroy unity and harmony and undermine respect for the Holy See. Polding claimed that Australians in general were suspicious of anything suggestive of favouritism towards one ethnic group over another and Catholics in particular were scandalized when clergymen from England or Ireland were given preference over local men. He invited the Propaganda Congregation to study these facts. He told Barnabò that he was distressed to be chastised on the issue of nationality as if he were an ignorant or negligent bishop. He asked that false accusers not be allowed to go unpunished and reminded Barnabò how places such as the Australian colonies attracted ambitious, argumentative and avaricious priests, who when their plans for self-aggrandizement were thwarted did not hesitate to carry fantastic tales to Rome, either personally or through others, even bishops. Polding complained that even when these tales were shown to be false, their repetition wore away the Holy See's confidence in local church leaders.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{86} Polding-Smith, 21 Dec. 1863, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{87} Polding-Barnabò, 22 Dec. 1861 (Polding wrote '1861' instead of '1863'), CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 7, fols. 307 ff.
Polding explains that Sheehy and Hanly are Irish.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 7, fol. 307.)
Typically, Polding experienced a great deal of emotional pain over the affair of the 'English' administrators of Armidale and Goulburn. By February 1864 he was again talking about resigning.88 One of the two direct objects of the accusation, James Hanly, brought a touch of humour to the situation: 'I am accused of being an Englishman. What will the Cardinal Prefect say when assured that I am from that celebrated place Tipperary?'89 What, indeed, of the Cardinal Prefect? Probably unable to distinguish easily between Irish and English surnames, Barnabò and his staff had been led by unreliable information into making a gaff. In his letter to Polding about the matter in September 1863 Barnabò said that Smith had told him about the appointment of the administrators and the alleged popular discontent about their nationality. But in a letter to the Archbishop of Dublin, dated 23 February 1864, Barnabò mentioned in passing that the information had come from Cullen, who presumably got it from one or other of the disaffected Irish-Australian missionaries hanging about Dublin in the early 1860s. Barnabò assured Cullen that he had not revealed the source to Polding, which suggests that Cullen was the principal source. Fortunately for Barnabò in his correspondence with Polding, he was able to protect Cullen by falling back on the fact that Smith, too, had informed him. It is surprising that Cullen had not been wary of repeating the story because, as Polding observed, the very surnames of Hanly and Sheehy were strongly indicative of Hibernity. Perhaps Cullen had been led to believe by his informants that they were Englishmen of Irish origin merely, like Sweeney. Perhaps he deliberately misled Rome. In any case, the tone of Barnabò's letter to Cullen was one of annoyance, albeit with the customary restraint of the Roman-bureaucratic epistolary style. The Prefect pointed out that Polding denied the truth of the story and had been distressed over the matter. He enclosed a copy of Polding's reply to the Propaganda Congregation

89 Hanly-Polding, 11 Dec. 1863 (CO), enclosed with Polding-Smith, 21 Dec. 1863, op. cit.
so that Cullen might savour the tone of it. At about the same time Barnabò wrote back to Polding to say he was glad to hear that what had been reported had no foundation and to explain how distasteful ("Verum molestum") it had been to communicate the rumour to him, but the Holy See, he insisted, had a duty to examine all reports. There was no apology. This letter can have brought little relief to Polding. It confirmed that false and damaging stories were being fed into Rome about Australia. If Barnabò was pleased that the news about English administrators was untrue, then the prospects for any English bishops in the future were indeed bleak.

However, the affair of the administrators seems to have given Polding's generally low reputation at the Propaganda Congregation a little boost. Polding had, for once, been vindicated and the Congregation had been caught accepting tittle-tattle. Towards the end of 1863 Polding had written to Barnabò reiterating his request for Geoghegan in Goulburn and Hanly in Armidale. On 15 February 1864 Cardinals Barnabò, Patrizi, Altieri, di Pietro, von Reisach, Caterini, Mertel, Carlo Sacconi, Antonio Panebianco and Jean-Baptiste Pitra recommended to the Pope that Geoghegan be translated to the see of Goulburn in accordance with Polding's wishes and Geoghegan's own pleadings. There was still no resolution about the Armidale appointment.

V

Whatever credit Polding might have earned in Rome over the episode of the administrators was soon expended by another of those misunderstandings that plagued his career. Towards the end of 1862 there had been a conference of Australian bishops in Melbourne to prepare for a provincial synod. Polding

---

91 Barnabò-Polding, 12 March 1864, SAA, RC: Polding.
93 Relazione verbale per la Congregazione del 15 Febbraio 1864 sulla traslazione del Vescovo di Adelaide dalla detta Sede a quella di Goulburn, CEPA, Acta, vol. 228, fols. 52 ff; see also, Barnabò-Polding, 12 Mar. 1864, op. cit.
sent the papers of this informal meeting to Smith so that he might consult curial officials informally to ascertain if there was anything objectionable in the draft decrees. Instead, Smith forwarded them to the Propaganda Congregation as the final legislation itself of a synod, at the stage of requiring papal confirmation. They were thus handed in without the customary covering letter for the Pope or the Cardinal Prefect, without the mandatory acts of the synod and without being cast in the canonically-required language, Latin. Smith translated some of the papers into Italian but most of them remained in English. Since synodal legislation required the highest level of Propaganda review, the Prefect submitted the papers to a full assembly of the cardinals. This took place on 14 March 1864 and involved, besides Barnabò and the cardinal ponente, the following eminentissimi: Patrizi, Altieri, di Pietro, von Reisach, Sacconi, Panebianco, Roberti, Caterini and Mertel.

The ponente was the French Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Pitra. Born at Champforgeuil in 1812 and ordained in 1836, Pitra entered the Benedictine Order at Solesmes in 1843 after a few years as a professor of the Autun seminary. He assisted the great patrologist, Migne, in his work, especially by travelling all over Europe to catalogue, collect and edit old manuscripts. Austere and devoted to his work, his literary production on the Fathers, Byzantine canon law and Greek chant was huge. Called to Rome in 1858 as an adviser on oriental affairs, Pitra was made a cardinal in 1863, Librarian of the Holy Roman Church in 1869 and Bishop of Frascati in 1879.94

Pitra's being a Benedictine was no help to Polding. Pitra explained to his assembled colleagues that it might be feasible to approve the 'decrees' even though the absence of acts meant that it was impossible to assess the regularity of the form of the 'synod'. The cardinals could not understand why it took the

Australian Church so long to have a provincial synod. The first synod, held in 1844, had specified that there be another three years later, but this never happened. The cardinals registered their disapproval of the neglect of the canonical forms in the presentation of the 'decrees'. These resolutions were adopted by the Pope.95

To be censured by the Cardinal Prefect was nothing unusual for Polding, but to be censured by the Propaganda cardinals assembled in solemn congregazione was unprecedented. Mortified, he wrote to Barnabò to say that he was covered with confusion and would provide an explanation.96 He was very angry with Smith whose 'incomprehensible blundering...has got me into a scrape with Propaganda'. Polding thought that after many years of experience of dealing with synodal documentation Smith ought to have known that the papers Polding sent him were not formal decrees. If he thought they were decrees, he should have warned Polding as his agent about their faulty state and waited for a reply before doing anything with them.97 However, Polding's notorious vagueness and unbusinesslike manner contributed to the confusion. Defending Smith, Barnabò told Polding that if the papers were handed in as synodal documents it was because he, Polding, had not explained properly and unambiguously what he wanted done with them. Sensing Polding's frazzlement, Barnabò assured him that the Propaganda estimation of him had not been diminished as a result of the episode.98

VI

Meanwhile, in Australia the appointment of a Benedictine monk and a Benedictine sympathizer to the administratorships of Armidale and Goulburn

96 Polding-Barnabò, 22 Sept. 1864 (CC), SAA, Polding-Propaganda.
98 Barnabò-Polding, 17 May 1865, SAA, RC: Polding.
sparked a new round of agitation against archdiocesan policies at the beginning of 1864. It was intended mainly for overseas consumption. John Forrest, the Irish Rector of St. John's College at the University of Sydney who had been recruited by McEncroe, complained to Cullen that an overwhelmingly Irish Catholic population in New South Wales were suffering through lack of clergy, religious orders and schools and through scandals among the Benedictines.99 This last theme was taken up by Polding’s old adversary during the Freeman’s-Journal crisis of the late 1850s, William Duncan, who, in concert with others, despatched an 11-page letter to Cardinal Barnabò in March 1864 cataloguing the monks’ alleged drunkenness, lust, apostasy and sacrilege and claiming that the Archbishop never intervened against such goings-on. The Benedictine Order in Sydney was ‘a perfect caricature of a religious order’. The monastery absorbed the wealth of the Archdiocese. The monks lacked discipline and learning. Their preaching was ‘the frothiest verbiage’. There was no seminary for the training of secular priests because such an institution would threaten the monks’ monopoly. Duncan and his associates appealed for a papal investigation as the only way out of ‘this horrible despotism’.100

When approached by the Propaganda Congregation for an opinion on Duncan’s letter, Smith responded in a way that was hardly calculated to serve the interests of his Australian principal. His reply began with an extended summary of the complaints that can only have reinforced their negative impression on the Congregation. Next Smith asserted that while the complaints were exaggerated they were not without foundation. It was common knowledge, he wrote, that religion was not progressing as it should in Australia and that some people were speaking against the Holy See because

99 Forrest-Cullen, 20 Feb. 1864, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
Dr. John Forrest, Rector of St. John's College at the University of Sydney and a leading critic of the Benedictine regime.

it was inactive. He thought that an investigation should be conceded because it was the only way the Congregation could acquire the information it needed.  

In his report for 1864 submitted to the Congregation Polding counter-attacked Duncan by revealing that he used to be a Calvinist and claimed that he was still inclined towards 'quella pestifera eresia' and believed that bishops should be elected by the people. Polding denied that his monks were scandalous, ignorant or useless and insisted that they were well-adapted to the New South Wales mission and were pastorally effective. He also denied that he favoured them at the expense of the secular clergy. Polding took the opportunity to repeat once more to Rome his concern about ethnic tensions in the colony getting out of control. Australia, he again emphasized, was not an appendage of Ireland and the population of Australia was not Irish but Australian. The division of his diocese was necessary but it was important to choose bishops from different nationalities overseas or from the local clergy already resident in the country and known to the people in order to avoid giving preference to any one race which would be dangerous in a mixed population such as the Australian.

In a later letter Polding branded the accusations about the Australian missions untrue or exaggerated. Barnabò assured him that Rome had full confidence in him but added that, given the weakness of human nature and the particular problems of young churches, reports of scandals and difficulties were not unusual and it was proper to investigate them.

On another occasion Polding moved on to the offensive by complaining to the Congregation about the number of missionaries, mainly Irish he said, who came to Australia to devote themselves not to the care of souls but the making of money. Polding scored a rare, minor victory, provoking Barnabò to

102 Polding relazione 1864, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 306 ff.
104 Barnabò-Polding, 1 Aug. 1865, SAA, RC: Polding.
circularize the Archbishops of Dublin, Armagh, Cashel and Tuam to prevent this evil.  

VII

The death of Geoghegan, Bishop of Goulburn, from throat cancer in Dublin in May 1864 before he could take possession of his diocese, drew attention once again to the administrative reorganization of the Australian Church. A new bishop would have to be found for Goulburn. Adelaide, Armidale and Maitland were still awaiting the appointment of bishops. The question of the need for a diocese at Bathurst was not yet finalized. The Pope had been complaining about lack of information about candidates for the Australian sees. In September 1864 Polding wrote to Barnabò proposing Sheehy to replace Geoghegan. He also restated his desire for Hanly at Armidale, although he added that perhaps it would be best if the Pope were to choose men from Europe for Armidale and Adelaide because the colonial clergy, although experienced in local conditions, often lacked the knowledge about liturgy and canon law expected of a bishop. He had already made the same point to Smith. In making this point Polding contradicted the principle that he had hitherto promoted at Rome, that overseas appointments were to be avoided because they were unfamiliar with the country, tended to aggravate national animosities and excited the resentment of Australian clergy and lay people. This switch was typical of how Polding’s lack of system and resolution tended to undermine his own strategies. It played into the hands of Quinn who was urging Barnabò to appoint outside priests who were well known at Rome.

105 Bamabd-Cullen, 12 Oct. 1864, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1864-1870; see the same text to the Archbishops of Armagh, Cashel and Tuam (CC), CEPA, LDB, vol. 335, fol. 509, also Bamabd-Polding, 12 Oct. 1864, SAA, RC: Polding.
108 Polding-Smith, 20 Feb. 1863, SFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
Polding, as usual, was anxious about influences emanating from Ireland and the ominous lack of Propaganda communication. Barnabò was indeed consulting Cullen about Australian nominations, and more extensively than he consulted Polding. Polding was still worried about the possibility of McAlroy being made a bishop and suspected that the allegations about the nationality of Hanly and Sheehy had been fabricated to bring this possibility about. Nevertheless, towards the end of 1864 Polding was sounding confident about the prospects of Hanly for Armidale and Sheehy for Goulburn.

On 22 May 1865 Cardinals Barnabò, Patrizi, Altieri, di Pietro, Sacconi, Caterini, Mertel and Antonino de Luca met to consider a report presented by Cardinal Karl August von Reisach. Born in 1800 in Eichstatt, von Reisach studied law at various German universities and then at the German College in Rome. Soon after his ordination he was made Prefect of Studies at the Propaganda College. In 1836 he was made Bishop of Eichstatt and later Archbishop of Munich. While in this latter post his strong defence of the rights of the Church led to such political difficulties with the Bavarian Government that the Pope brought him back to Rome in 1855. He was given a cardinal's hat and the Prefecture of the Sacred Congregation of Studies. In the late 1850s he helped to negotiate concordats with Württemburg and Baden. In 1862 he was appointed Minister of Education for the Papal State and in 1868 Bishop of Sabina. He presided over one of the preparatory commissions for the First Vatican Council and would have functioned as a President of the Council itself had it not been for his death in 1869.
Cardinal Karl August von Reisach.

Von Reisach’s *ristretto* was one of the longest about Australia yet produced within the *Propaganda* offices. It began with a complicated presentation of the various competing lists of candidates, with their pros and cons, submitted by Polding, Goold, Geoghegan, Quinn and Cullen, for the Dioceses of Goulburn, Adelaide and Armidale and the Apostolic Administratorship of Perth, recently vacated by the return of Serra to Spain. However, much of the report was taken up with a description of the general state of the Catholic Church in Australia as background for the discussions about episcopal appointments to this ‘*vastissima Isola*’. The description was very unflattering. Cardinal von Reisach pointed out that Australia needed a special kind of bishop, one who could overcome the disturbances and other obstacles to the progress of religion. He informed the other cardinals that problems were evident from constant reports, both written and oral, but this section of his *ristretto* was based almost exclusively on only two documents. These were composed by obscure Irish priests, named Scully and Walshe, who travelled from Australia via Ireland to Rome in 1864. The *Propaganda* Congregation invited them to put their verbal comments in writing. The resulting documents were printed in their entirety, but anonymously, in the *sommario* forming part of von Reisach’s *ponenza*.115 Von Reisach stated that the references the two missionaries brought with them made it impossible to dispute their trustworthiness. He did not say who provided these references, although Scully had been introduced to Cullen by McEncroe early in 1863 with

---


---

the recommendation that Scully be encouraged to make a report to Rome on
the deficiencies of the Church in Australia.116

Von Reisach placed before his colleagues at the congregazione of 22 May a
bleak picture of the Australian Church as depicted by Scully and Walshe. Even
after the recent division of Sydney, enormous dioceses meant that the bishops
were unable to supervise their priests adequately and huge mission districts
meant that the priests, typically unaided and travelling constantly from one
settlement to another, were in turn unable to provide stable pastoral care for
the people. Most priests lived alone and, especially when young, were thereby
exposed to dangers which often led to scandals and disorders injurious to
religion. Polding’s efforts to established the Benedictines in Sydney and entrust
the diocese there to them were futile and disastrous. Colonial society was not
yet sufficiently cultivated to support monasticism. The Benedictines flourished
neither as monks nor as missionaries. Their learning and regular observance
were slight. A superficial religious life led to concubinage, defections, apostasy
and other enormities. The monks were nevertheless influential under
Polding’s patronage, which aroused fear and jealousy among the secular clergy.
Lack of harmony between the religious and seculars was retarding the progress
of the Church. The seculars themselves were prone to immorality, drinking
and greed. One of von Reisach’s informants, Walshe, claimed, presumably
with much exaggeration, that ‘lo splendore di carrozze ed altro lusso di un
semplice sacerdote nell’Australia sorpassa d’assai lo spendore esteriore di un
Cardinale qui in Roma’.117 Without guidance and without respect for the
clergy, the lay people were drifting, sending their children to Protestant schools
and contracting mixed marriages. Some Catholic women were even living as
wives with pagan Chinese.

116 McEncroe-Cullen, 19 Feb. 1863, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
117 'the splendour of carriages and other luxuries of a simple priest in Australia rather
surpasses the exterior splendour of a Cardinal here in Rome'. Von Reisach ponenza, May 1865, op. cit., fol. 295.
Von Reisach told the cardinals that, 'Disgraziamente', Polding had failed to do what he had been told to do by the Propaganda Congregation in 1859, that is, hold a provincial synod to consider these problems. Perhaps the Archbishop of Sydney was too old or unwell, von Reisach speculated. There was no point in despatching a papal visitator to Australia, whose unfamiliarity would make it difficult for him to form accurate ideas or propose effective remedies. But Australia was destined for a great future, along the lines of the United States of America, and it was vitally important to ensure that the Church there was in a position to take advantage of the freedom it enjoyed in Australian colonial society to develop in a way that matched the spectacular civil development. What then, asked von Reisach, should be done 'a togliere nell'Australia gl'inconvenienti che vi si sono segnalati, ed a farvi trionfare la fede and la morale cattolica'?118

Von Reisach urged the further division of the Archdiocese of Sydney by turning Maitland into a territorial diocese and establishing a diocese at Bathurst, which had all the necessary conditions, even more so than Armidale, already in existence. A seminary should be established for the training of secular clergy because the Benedictine school at Lyndhurst offered only religious formation for the monks and a general education for boys. Religious orders which could easily adapt to Australian conditions, such as the Jesuits, were needed. In a major departure from the line that Polding had been pushing at Rome for years, von Reisach argued that since the Catholic population was largely Irish the bishops and priests sent out to minister to it should also be Irish. A greater effort should be put into evangelization generally, especially among the Chinese immigrants who were crowding into Australia.119

118 'to remove from Australia the obstacles that are so prominent there, and to make Catholic faith and morals triumph'. Ibid. fols. 256 ff.
119 Ibid.
Despite the negative picture that had been drawn of Australian Catholicism under the presidency of Polding, his opinions were not disregarded by the Propaganda cardinals at their meeting on 22 May 1865. Their decisions were a compromise. Polding’s candidate for Armidale, Hanly, was to be elevated to the episcopate, although not for that see but for Goulburn. Armidale was assigned to James Hayes. This last decision reflected the influence of Goold since, as we saw, Hayes was an Augustinian and a missionary in Victoria whose name had been placed before the Propaganda Congregation by Goold in 1859. Because Hayes was a local priest, who had worked in Australia for some years, he was presumably acceptable to Polding. The same can be said about Laurence Bonaventure Shiel, appointed to the Diocese of Adelaide. However, the rest of the cardinals’ decisions were ominous from Polding’s point of view. A diocese was to be established at Bathurst and to be conferred on Matthew Quinn. Maitland was assigned to James Murray. These two were Dublin priests, strongly recommended by Cullen. Matthew Quinn was a brother of James Quinn, already in Australia as Bishop of Brisbane. After his education in Dublin and Rome and his ordination in 1847, Matthew went to India as a missionary until ill-health forced him back to Ireland. In 1853 he was made Vice-President of St. Laurence O’Toole’s College in Dublin during the Presidency of his brother and when James was appointed to Brisbane in 1859 he succeeded to the Presidency. James Murray was the cousin of James and Matthew Quinn. He was also grand nephew to Cullen’s predecessor in the see of Dublin, Daniel Murray. At a very young age he was sent to Rome to study for the priesthood at the Propaganda College and was ordained in 1852. Like his Quinn cousins, he came under strong influence from Cullen during his Roman period. This continued after

120 Ibid., fol. 271.
121 Cullen-Barnabo, 24 Jan. 1865, op. cit.
122 B.J.Sweeney, ‘Quinn, Matthew (1821-1885)’, ADB, Melbourne, 1974, vol. 5, pp. 466-467;
SAGRA CONGREGAZIONE
DI
PROPAGANDA FIDE
PONENTE
L' Eminentissimo e Reverendissimo Sig. Cardinale
CARLO REISACH

RISTRETTO CON SOMMARIO
Sulla elezione di un Amministratore Apostolico con carattere vescovile per la Diocesi di Perth, di un Coadjutore pel Vescovo di Hobartown, dei Vescovi di Goulbourn, Armidale ed Adelaide e sullo stato della religione nell' Australia in generale.

22°
Maggio
1865.

Von Reisach's ponenza of May 1865 contained devastating criticisms of the state of the Australian Catholic Church.

(Source: CEPA, Acta, vol. 229, fol. 256.)
his return to Ireland for, after a short period of parochial work, he was appointed as Cullen's private secretary. In the nepotistic world of mid-nineteenth century ecclesiastical Dublin, when Murray vacated that post to go to Australia he was succeeded by Cullen's nephew, Patrick Moran, previously Vice-Rector at the Irish College. James and Matthew Quinn and James Murray were all imbued with the ultramontanism of Cullen and saw him as the patriarch of the global Irish diaspora.

The cardinals also decided that Polding was again to be instructed to convene a provincial synod to consider the grave difficulties facing the Australian missions. All of these decisions were approved by the Pope on 28 May, except that he switched Murray from Maitland to the Apostolic Administratorship of Perth. Barnabò wrote to inform Polding of these arrangements on 14 June.

VIII

The appointments of Hanly, Hayes and Shiel, on the one hand, and of Murray and Matthew Quinn, on the other, suggest an attempt at evenhandedness on the part of the cardinals. This, however, was soon to be upset, just as their compromise of 1859 had been upset. In this later instance the cause was not papal intervention as before but news from Ireland. As soon as the appointments of Hayes as Bishop of Armidale and Hanly as Bishop of Goulburn were announced a campaign of rumour was started up to destroy their reputations. On 20 July 1865 Cardinal Barnabò notified Archbishop Cullen that he had been on the verge of sending out the apostolic briefs of appointment when news reached him that the elevation of the two

---

125 Von Reisach ponencia, May 1865, fol. 271.
126 Barnabò-Polding, 14 June 1865, SAA, RC: Polding.
Australians to the episcopate was greatly criticized in Ireland. It was alleged that, while still in Cork and before going out to Australia, Hayes - in the words of a Propaganda memorandum - 'si fece rimarchevole per i balli che dava non solo a Signori ma anche a Signore'. This was a curious allegation. Presumably the objection was that it was inappropriate for a friar to organize festivities, especially when they involved women.\(^{127}\) The criticism of Hanly was that he was poorly educated, had little zeal for preaching, pastoral care or ecclesiastical discipline and was 'tutto dedito alla caccia di Kangaroo'. This last allegation appears to have made a considerable impression on the Roman officials who were probably thinking of hunting in terms of the European aristocratic pastime. Barnabò told Cullen that the allegations against Hayes and Hanly created a delicate situation because news of their appointment had already reached Ireland and was on its way to Australia. Before placing the situation before the Pope he asked Cullen to verify the charges.\(^{128}\)

The following day, 21 July, Cullen wrote to Barnabò. This must have been a spontaneous communication as Cullen could not possibly have been in receipt of Barnabò's letter. Cullen informed Barnabò that when the appointments of Hayes and Hanly were publicized two priests in Ireland with Australian experience came to warn him. One of these was named O'Donoghue, who, Cullen said, was of good repute. The other had already had much to say about Australia - Patrick Bermingham. Cullen admitted that Bermingham was 'forse un po' caldo ed imprudente' but insisted, with naïvety or, more likely, dissimulation, that 'non è capace di spacciare calunnie'.\(^{129}\) A week later, Cullen sent another letter to Rome repeating

\(^{127}\) One wonders whether the Propaganda officials would have been happier if only men had been invited to the dances Hayes was supposed to have put on.

\(^{128}\) 'made himself remarkable for the dances that he gave not only for men but also for women...entirely devoted to kangaroo hunting'. Barnabò-Cullen, 20 Jul. 1865, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1864-1870; Propaganda memorandum, nd, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 992, fol. 975.

\(^{129}\) 'perhaps a little hot and imprudent' but 'he is not capable of spreading calumnies'. Cullen-Barnabò, 21 Jul. 1865, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 992, fols. 983ff.
Dean James Hanly.
As reported to Rome by his enemies, Hanly's alleged defects, including an addiction to kangaroo hunting, cost him the Diocese of Goulburn.

(Source: P.Hartigan, *The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests*, Kilmore, 1975, facing p. 33.)
O'Donoghue's and Bermingham's allegations and adding to these the opinion of Judge Roger Therry, a former leading Sydney Catholic layman now living in retirement in England who had just passed through Dublin, that Hanly's episcopal appointment would be dishonourable for the Church in New South Wales. Cullen reported that many considered Hayes to be an 'amante delle conversazioni e delle feste' and passed on the view of Thomas Furlong, Bishop of Ferns, that it was necessary to be cautious about Augustinians in general because of recent scandals in Ireland.130

The stories about Hayes and Hanly were not the only difficulty to emerge from the Propaganda resolutions of 22 May. Cullen informed Rome that James Murray was reluctant to go to Perth because previous bishops had failed and the place was dominated by Spanish Benedictines.131 Unofficially, Murray preferred to be in a diocese nearer his cousins, the Quinn brothers. Despite Barnabò's attempt to reassure him about Perth,132 Murray remained unwilling. Not wanting to deprive Australia of what he believed was Murray's excellent potential as a bishop, Barnabò announced that he would arrange for Murray to go to another diocese so that 'si troverebbe più vicino ai Irlandesi suoi amici'.133 Cullen replied on behalf of Murray that the latter was agreeable to accepting another Australian bishopric. He observed that the colonial Church needed a capable man like Murray to compensate for the deficiencies of the existing episcopal leadership; Polding was old, Goold was imprudent and Geoghegan had been ineffective through absence and sickness.134

Because of these complications Barnabò stopped the process of the appointments of Hayes, Hanly and Murray. On 18 September a special meeting

132 Barnabò-Cullen, 5 Jul. 1865, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1864-1870.
133 'he would find himself closer to his Irish friends'. Barnabò-Cullen, 18 Jul. 1865, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1864-1870.
of those cardinals who had been at the *congregazione* of 22 May took place, with the exception of Altieri, Panebianco and de Luca and the addition of Pitra and Roberti, to reconsider the earlier decisions. Again the *ponente* was Cardinal von Reisach who explained Murray's reservations about Perth and detailed the rumours about an idle, kangaroo-hunting Hanly and a frivolous, party-giving Hayes as reported by O'Donoghue, Bermingham and Therry whose testimony, von Reisach assured the meeting, was not to be doubted. Von Reisach parrotted Cullen's view that Murray was too valuable to be lost to the Australian mission. He reminded the cardinals that at their meeting of 22 May they had chosen Murray for Maitland but that this had been set aside by the Pope who wanted him to go to Perth. Von Reisach suggested that the Pope be supplicated again to assign Maitland to Murray. Given Polding's age, von Reisach thought Murray would be a good influence on the Australian Church and might even succeed to the Archdiocese of Sydney. The cardinals accepted the *ponente*'s proposal. As for Hayes and Hanly, von Reisach asked whether their nominations should be withdrawn but added that such a measure would be awkward as the nominations had been announced in Ireland and communicated to Polding. The cardinals opted to delay their decision until more information could be obtained. Six days later the Pope confirmed these recommendations.135 Barnabò would have known that the news of the transfer of Murray to Maitland and the suspension of the appointments of Hanly and Hayes would distress Polding. He waited six weeks before writing to Polding to communicate these changes to the dispositions of 22 May and to ask him for more information about the lives and manners of Hanly and Hayes.136

---


The selection of Hanly, even if for Goulburn rather than the preferred Armidale, was a breakthrough for Polding given his collaboration with the Archbishop and his admiration for the Benedictines. Hayes, although more Goold's candidate than Polding's was presumably acceptable to the Archbishop because a local priest. But both these appointments were under serious threat from Dublin in the second half of 1865. Worse still, with three of the new bishoprics, Brisbane, Bathurst and Maitland now occupied by hyper-Hibernian Cullenite imports, Polding's nightmare was becoming a reality. If Polding wanted to salvage something from the wreckage of his hopes he would have to do something drastic.
CHAPTER VII
POLDING'S AD LIMINA VISIT
1865 - 1867

Word of the appointments of James Hayes, James Hanly and James Murray to the Dioceses of Armidale, Goulburn and Perth respectively in May 1865 reached Archbishop Polding in August. He was wary of Murray, but he was relieved that neither Michael McAlroy nor Patrick Bermingham was on the list and was encouraged by the inclusion of Hayes and, especially, Hanly.¹

However, by some kind of intuition in the later part of 1865 he became uneasy about what was happening in Europe. There were many rumours, although definite news about the suspension of Hayes' and Hanly's appointments and the transfer of Murray to Maitland, decided on in Rome in September 1865, did not arrive in Sydney until January of the following year.² Polding thought that the rumours arose from

> the shamefully easy access to the printing office of Propaganda: and the general leakiness of that venerable institution...With all due respect they do manage things strangely at Headquarters.³

Polding's disquiet turned into alarm when Hayes wrote to Cardinal Barnabò towards the end of October 1865 requesting to be released from Armidale. Hayes' official reason was that the Catholic presence in that region was too small to sustain a bishopric.⁴ Moved by anxiety that Hanly, too, might decline episcopal promotion and that whatever gains he had made would be lost, Polding decided to go to Rome to take matters in hand personally.

His last visit had been in 1854. In the intervening years he had several times contemplated going again but had held back. In July 1859 he was talking

---

¹ Polding-Goold, 26 Aug. 1865 (TC), MDHC, correspondence file 'N-P'.
² Sheehy-Polding, 22 Jan. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O142.
³ Polding-Goold, 26 Aug. 1865, op. cit.
about going to Rome to counteract the campaign against Gregory but did not act. In early 1863 he wrote to Smith that he felt 'strongly inclined to incur the expense and fatigue of a voyage to Europe' in order to be able to negotiate directly with the Congregation de Propaganda Fide about the establishment of new dioceses in New South Wales. However, he added, 'At my time of life a journey around the globe is not a trifle...'. Later in the year he wrote to Rome to ask if his presence was required to discuss Australian affairs, although as of July there was 'no reply so far - I fancy it is imagined that I shall give trouble about the past'. But it was really Polding's own unhappy memory of his last Roman visit which was the chief disincentive. He wrote to Gregory that

after our last reception and its consequences I do not feel at all inclined to encounter anything similar...What I suffered the last time has impressed a sort of horror - I shrink from the thought of going to Rome - I know it ought to be the joy of a Bishop's heart to do so - but feeling is not altogether to be repressed.

With such feelings Polding sailed from Sydney on 22 November 1865 on board the P & O steamer Bombay accompanied by the Benedictine monks, Edmund Athy and Bede Sumner.

I

While Polding was still at sea, James Murray and Matthew Quinn arrived in Rome at the end of 1865 preparatory to travelling to Australia to take possession of their dioceses. Tobias Kirby took them to the Propaganda palace where they were warmly received by Barnabò, the Secretary, Annibale Capalti, and the English-language minutante, Rinaldini. On another visit they were chatting with Rinaldini when Barnabò entered the office and directed the

---

6 Polding-Smith, 20 Feb. 1863, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
10 M.Quinn & Murray-Barnabò, 24 Apr. 1866, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 490.
minutante to give them all the ponenze relating to the Australian missions (except, of course, the one dealing with their own appointments). Barnabò told them to read the documents carefully, especially those that dealt with the Sydney Benedictines. After Rinaldini spoke about Hanly and Hayes, Murray was confident that if the Propaganda Congregation could be persuaded that they were unfit for high office it would not proceed with their appointments because it wanted 'to do what is right'. The setting aside of Hanly and Hayes was adopted by Murray and Quinn as a major goal of their time in Rome. The welcome they received gave them every grounds for optimism.

Barnabò wrote to tell Cullen that he was very pleased with the new Bishops of Maitland and Bathurst and had taken the opportunity of their presence in Rome to personally inform them of all that he, Cullen, had wisely observed for the good of religion in Australia. Murray and Quinn also secured the support of George Talbot who 'ever since we came to Rome has been most kind to both of us'. This was a crucial advantage as Talbot had daily access to the Pope.

Into this chummy world stepped Polding. He, Athy and Sumner had joined the Nyanza in Alexandria for the last stages of their voyage to Malta, Messina and Naples. After a sight-seeing land trip, which included a brief stay at the ancient Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino, they arrived in Rome in January 1866 and took up residence in the English College. The Propaganda officials, along with Murray and Quinn, were startled by the sudden appearance of the Archbishop of Sydney, unexpected and unannounced until he reached Naples, and with good reason as they had been busy about the ecclesiastical reorganization of Australia with scant reference to

12 Murray-Cullen, 10 Jan. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
13 Barnabò-Cullen, 18 Dec. 1865, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1864-1870.
14 M.Quinn-Cullen, 7 Feb. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
him. Murray informed Cullen that the latest Australian mail steamer had brought, not a letter from Polding, but Polding himself. Murray and Quinn were about to leave Rome when the news arrived that Polding was in Naples. They decided to stay to oppose any attempt by Polding to upset what they had arranged. Polding was cordially received by Barnabò and Capalti, but they manoeuvred Murray and Quinn into taking the brunt of dealing with him. Murray concluded that the officials seemed 'somewhat shy' of Polding. In September of the previous year the Congregation had dispensed Polding from his ad limina visit, which was due about this time. The reason given was Polding's age - he was now over 70 - but perhaps Roman officialdom was no more enthusiastic than Polding for another encounter. Polding found his Roman agent, Smith, kind but distant. Smith took him and Athy on an outing to the catacombs. The Rector of the English College, Dr. Frederick Neve, helped Polding to prepare documents for presentation to the Propaganda Congregation.16

The Roman discomfort at the arrival of Polding can have been no greater than that which he himself experienced when he learnt, either on Malta or in Naples or on entering Rome, probably in the first instance from Smith, about what had been done in respect to the new dioceses. He was disappointed at the suspension of Hayes' and Hanly's appointments, noting that the accusations had succeeded with Barnabò.17 He was shocked to discover that the Diocese of Bathurst had gone to James Quinn's brother, Matthew. While he believed Matthew to be better than James,18 he was disconcerted that of the seven suffragan bishops of the Australian Province there were now three who were

---

16 Polding-Brown, 20 Jan. 1866, CAA, Brown papers; Murray-Cullen, 20 Jan. 1866, DAA, Cullen papers/Roman agents and Irish College; M.Quinn-Cullen, 7 Feb. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1; Polding-Gregory, 20 Feb. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, 0 144. The quotation is from Murray-Cullen, 7 Feb. 1865 (but Murray must have meant to write '1866'), DAA, Australia box 58/1; Propaganda dispensation, 24 Sept. 1865, SAA, RC: Polding.
17 Polding-Brown, 20 Jan. 1866, op. cit.
18 Polding-Goold, 26 Aug. 1865, op. cit.
Pope Pius IX dispenses Polding from the obligation of his *ad limina* visit, due around 1865. Polding went anyway, hoping to exercise more influence on the appointment of bishops to the new sees carved out of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

(Source: SAA.)
related. To Thomas Brown he exclaimed, 'C'est fort n'est-ce pas? Too much "Quinism" for my taste'. Murray's assignation to Maitland must have been especially bitter to Polding. He had always had a special regard for this diocese, hoping that it might be given to Gregory. He had at least been led to believe that it would be reserved for an English Benedictine, perhaps as a stepping stone for his successor in Sydney. That was now out of the question. Polding believed, mistakenly, that James Quinn was responsible for the appointment of his brother and cousin to 'the finest sections of New South Wales'.

Jolted by these revelations and aware of how well James Murray and Matthew Quinn were getting on in Rome, Polding felt little confidence about his ability to influence events. On 25 January 1866, shortly after Polding's arrival in Rome, the Pope accepted Hayes' refusal of Armidale. Polding fought hard to save Hanly but, when Matthew Quinn produced a letter from his brother, James, claiming that Hanly had written to him, James, and to Goold of Melbourne imploring them to use their influence as bishops to have him released from the episcopate, the Pope decided on 25 February to leave Hanly, too, as a simple priest. Capalti told Murray and Quinn that when he set Hanly aside the Pope remarked, 'Ringraziamo Iddio che non sentiremo più di questa affare'. It is likely that Hayes and Hanly declined episcopal

19 Polding-Brown, 20 Jan. 1866, op. cit. Polding probably did not realize that it might have been worse. At the beginning of 1865 Barnabò had been considering sending another Quinn brother, Andrew, also a priest of Dublin, to Australia as a bishop until Cullen argued that Andrew was too valuable too lose. Barnabò-Cullen, 9 Jan. 1865, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1864-1870; Cullen-Barnabò, 24 Jan. 1865, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 992, fols. 628 ff.


21 Polding-Brown, 20 Jan. 1866, op. cit.


24 'Let us thank God that we shall hear no more of this business'. Murray-Cullen, 2 Mar. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
appointment, not only because of their doubts about their suitability, from modesty and the viability of Armidale as a diocese (in Hayes' case), but also because they were frightened by the accusations levelled against them.

Polding realized that nothing more could be done, but when he received from his Vicar General, Sheehy, the onforwarded letter which Barnabò had written to him detailing the accusations but which reached Sydney after he had departed for Europe, he wrote a reply for Barnabò in order to justify himself for having recommended such 'unworthy' men as Hanly and Hayes in the first place. He told the Cardinal that the testimonies about Hayes' manner of life before leaving Ireland and his accommodation arrangements after arriving in Australia made the story that he had given dances and dinner parties absurd and added, 'La insinuazione contenuta nell'accusazione è troppo grossolana per meritare altra considerazione'. As for Hanly, Polding explained that when people went out on horseback in rural Australia they were sometimes accompanied by a couple of dogs which naturally ran after any animal coming into view. He had never heard of Hanly hunting with a gun. The information given by the delators, Bermingham and O'Donoghue, contained factual errors. The pastoral zeal and personal generosity of Hanly were common knowledge. The allegations against him were inspired by jealousy.25

Murray and Quinn were jubilant about the fall of Hayes and Hanly. Quinn wrote to Cullen

we have good reason to be most thankful to Almighty God and grateful to our good friends in Ireland and Rome. Our little affairs, notwithstanding Dr. Polding's unexpected arrival, are going as well as even Your Grace could desire.26

Patrick Moran at the Irish College observed that Polding 'has been suffering a good deal since he came to Rome and probably will have more to

25 'The insinuation contained in the accusation is too coarse to deserve further consideration'. Polding-Barnabò, 23 Apr. 1866, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 487 ff.
26 M.Quinn-Cullen, 7 Feb. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
suffer'. Murray identified the principal source of Polding's sorrow: 'The old man is terribly mortified about Maitland'. Once when he was invited to dinner at the Irish College, Polding was seated between Murray and Cardinal Karl von Reisach but Murray could get little conversation out of him - 'the poor man is sorely disappointed'.

An incident which happened at the English College on 6 February was a tableau vivante of the Roman situation with respect to Australian affairs. The Pope and many dignitaries and prelates, including Polding, Murray and Quinn, gathered at the College for the laying of the foundation stone of the new chapel. According to Murray, after the ceremony, as Pius IX went up the stairs to the refreshment room accompanied by a number of bishops, he said, 'Ho detto [in his address, presumably] che l'Inghilterra era la terra di santi ma non è adesso, ci sono tanti diavoli in essa'. If not an example of the typically heavy-handed humour of Pius, the extraordinary gaucherie of this remark, considering the occasion and the place where it was uttered, leaves little doubt about his national antipathies. Some historians think that he disliked the spirit at the English College. In the refreshment room a number of bishops were presented to the Pope by Talbot, including Murray who was introduced as Bishop of Maitland and former secretary to Cullen. Quinn takes up the story:

The Pope

smiling passed his hand over his [Murray's] head caressingly and said, *Vi benedico figlio e mando anche voi in Australia*. Dr. Polding was standing by all the time and he must now at least be convinced that Dr. Murray is really Bishop of Maitland. I believe it was difficult enough to persuade the poor man of the fact. Be this as it may we cannot but feel the greatest consolation at getting our mission this

27 Moran-Cullen, 17 Feb. 1866, DAA, Cullen papers/Roman agents and Irish College.
28 Murray-Cullen, 2 Mar. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
29 Murray-Cullen, 7 Feb. 1865 (1866), op. cit.
30 'I said that England was the island of saints but now it is not so, there are many devils in it'. M. Quinn-Cullen, 7 Feb. 1866, op. cit.
31 See, for example, R. Aubert, *Le Pontificat de Pie X (1846-1878)*, vol. 21 of *Histoire de l'Eglise depuis les Origines jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris, ny, p. 289.
solemnly from the Vicar of Christ. Praise be to God for all his mercies!32

II

The Propaganda Congregation authorized Polding, Murray and Quinn to negotiate among themselves about the boundaries between their dioceses. Several meetings took place in February and March 1866. The boundary between Sydney and Bathurst was fairly easily determined but Polding's attempt to have a say in the drawing of the Bathurst-Maitland boundary was rejected as being none of his business by the other two who made their own amicable agreement. Most of the tension was generated by the Sydney-Maitland demarcation, especially the question of Newcastle. Polding insisted that this town must remain part of the territory of Sydney because the Archdiocese needed it financially and because there was a debt on the church there for which he was guarantor. Murray was sceptical that Newcastle was so important to the Archdiocese which contained many prosperous towns and districts. He offered to take over the church debt. He also pointed out that Newcastle and Maitland belonged together geographically, socially and economically. The local Anglican diocese included both centres. Quinn supported Murray's position which was obviously the more sensible. Polding's stubborn attachment to Newcastle was born of the frustration that he had experienced since arriving in Rome.33

Polding came off so badly at his meetings with Murray and Cullen that he asked for either Barnabò or Capalti to be present if there were to be any more.34 At one of them Polding moved from the topic of boundaries to criticize Cullen for interfering in Australian affairs. Murray retorted that they were not meeting to discuss that and said he would not listen. When Polding persisted Murray got up and took his hat whereupon Polding stopped and

32 'I bless you and send you too to Australia'. M.Quinn-Cullen, 7 Feb. 1866, op. cit.
33 Murray-Cullen, 7 Feb., 2 Mar. & 28 Mar. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
34 Polding-Barnabò, 28 March 1866, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 425.
apologized. Murray and Quinn informed Rinaldini what had happened. The following day Barnabò told them that they had acted well and referred to Polding's 'vera impertinanza'. Capalti took a gentler line. He said Polding was extremely irritated and every allowance should be made. In the absence of agreement about boundaries, the bishops submitted their competing proposals in writing for the judgement of the Congregation. Capalti and Rinaldini thought that the Murray-Quinn position was reasonable. Murray offered to let Sydney retain Newcastle for as long as Polding lived. Aware of how much Polding was suffering, the Prefect inclined to this solution.35

III

The next meeting of the Propaganda cardinals on Australian affairs was to be held with Cardinal von Reisach as ponente. Murray thought this would be greatly to his and Quinn's advantage. This assessment was well founded considering von Reisach's trenchantly critical line against the Sydney Benedictines as presented at the congregazioni of March and September of the previous year.36 Von Reisach's attitude is illustrated by an incident which Kirby witnessed in St. Peter's Basilica. Von Reisach was strolling about with Cardinal Barnabò when they encountered Polding who happened to be in the Basilica at the same time. According to Murray 'it appears they amused themselves at the expense of the Archbishop' through laboured humour about the district known as the Sugar Loaf which was one of the points of contention between Polding and Murray in their boundary negotiations. Von Reisach joked that Murray would need the Sugar Loaf to make punch. Barnabò joined in by observing that one of the suffragans should have the 'sugar' to make himself sweet to his Metropolitan. Polding simply found it tedious.37

35 Murray-Cullen, 7 Feb., 2 Mar. & 28 Mar. 1866, op. cit.
37 Murray-Cullen, 28 Mar. 1866, op. cit.
Annibale Capalti, Secretary General of the Propaganda Congregation, 1861-1868.

On 20 March Cardinals Patrizi, Altieri, di Pietro, Sacconi, Panebianco, de Luca, Pitra, Roberti, Caterini, Mertel and Barnabò assembled to hear and discuss von Reisach's report on the boundary discussions and the withdrawal of Hayes and Hanly. On the boundary question von Reisach emphasized the agreement between Murray and Quinn, the reasonableness of their proposals and Polding's statement that he was prepared to accept whatever was decided. The cardinals opted to take up Murray's offer that Newcastle, if recognized as part of the Diocese of Maitland, could remain under the administration of Sydney during Polding's lifetime. Barnabò remarked that if Polding had any feeling he would not retain Newcastle after such a decision.38

The withdrawal of Hayes and Hanly, which von Reisach described as 'fortunate', meant that the Dioceses of Armidale and Goulburn were again vacant. Von Reisach reported to the cardinals that Polding had told Capalti it was inexpedient to send any more bishops from Ireland to Australia because the Catholics there, although mainly of Irish origin, were locally born and wanted a native clergy. Against this position von Reisach argued that if the bishops for Armidale and Goulburn had been chosen from Ireland it would have been easier to check on them. Further Australian nominations might turn out to be like Hayes and Hanly. Von Reisach said that Murray and Quinn believed the Propaganda Congregation needed more information about candidates and urged that the matter be referred to a synod of the Australian Church. Von Reisach thought that the nomination of bishops for Australia generally needed to be made more systematic. He reminded the cardinals that five years before they had made provision to improve the selection of bishops for the Church in the United States of America and asked whether these provisions should now be applied to Australia. The cardinals adopted this suggestion and deferred filling the Armidale and Goulburn vacancies until

38 Murray-Cullen, 28 Mar. 1866, op. cit.
recommendations and information were received from the Australian bishops according to the American method. All of these measures were confirmed by the Pope on 25 March.39

IV

The American norms were applied to Australia by the Propaganda decree, Quum ad Catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem, dated 19 May 1866. This decree transformed the politics of the Australian Church by establishing a fixed, regular procedure for the nomination of bishops. Previously, names had emerged from a loose arrangement whereby the bishops sent their suggestions to Rome individually, perhaps supplemented by correspondence among themselves or informal meetings at which the names and merits of candidates were canvassed. This process assigned a decisive role in the formulation of recommendations to the Archbishop Metropolitan as the senior churchman. The norms of May 1866 stipulated that, whenever an episcopal vacancy occurred, each bishop was not only to manifest secretly to the Propaganda Congregation and the Metropolitan the names of three clerics he deemed suitable and why but also to meet with his colleagues formally to draw up a joint list of another three names. Before the meeting each bishop was to send his nominations to the Metropolitan. At the meeting itself, chaired by the Metropolitan, there was to be an open discussion about the qualities of the candidates, terminating in a secret vote. The acts and results of the meeting were to be sent by the Metropolitan to Rome. The decree emphasized that the results had the status of recommendations only, leaving the Holy See free to appoint whoever it liked.40

It is not clear where the suggestion to apply the United States procedures to Australia originated from. Was the idea first mooted by Barnabò, von

39 Von Reisach ponenza, March 1866, fols. 181 ff.
40 Decree Quum ad Catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem, 19 May 1866, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 993A, fols. 742 ff.
Quam ad catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem atque ad animarum salutem promovendam nihil magis conferre comptum sit, quam ut Dominico regi Sacrorum Antistitiae doctrinae ac prudentiae insignes praeficiantur, idcirco S. Sedes peculiariter quovis tempore studio in negotio electionis Episcoporum adhibendum curavit. Quam utique in rem sapientissimae extant canonicae sanctiones, variae quidem pro varietate temporum ac regionum, ut specialibus semper et temporum et locorum adiunctis accommodatae. Nil igitur mirum si pro regionibus, ubi novae passim efformantur civitates, novaeque proinde Dioeceses instituta sunt, atque in posterum instituenda praeventur, Sacrum Consilium Christiano Nominii Propagando, certum methodum ac peculiaribus locorum conditionibus cohaerentem servari statuerit, quae Sedes Apostolica exploratam notiam Sacerdotum ad episcopale officium ac dignitatem promovendorum assequi valeat. In hunc porro finem a Sacro Consilio Chr. Nom. Prop. sub die 24 Januarii anni 1861 ad universos Episcopos Americae Statuum Episcopos datus sunt liberae, quibus optima methodus pro commendatione candidatorum ad episcopale munus eligendorum decernitur et sancitur. Quandoquidem vero magna Australianus regio in iisdem fere versatur adiunctis, quibus Status Borealis Americae inventur, idcirco Eo Nomi Patrem laudati Sacri Consilii in comitiis generalibus diebus die 20 Martii 1866 easdem normas ad Australia extenderunt: quae quidem ad sequentia capita reducuntur.

1. Omnes ac singuli Australiae Sacrorum Antistititae tertio quotannis Metropolitanae Provinciae suae, tum S. Congregationi de Propaganda Fide nomina sacerdotum exhibebunt, quos dignos atque idoneos ad munus episcopale obsecundum existimaverint. Id vero secretissime praestabunt, ne forte cuiusvis ambitio excitetur.

2. In notulis eiusmodi conficiendis maxima pro viribus utentur cura, ut de qualitatibus eorum qui commendantur, certiores sint.

3. Quum aliqua Sedes vacaverit sive Episcopalis sive Metropolitanana, Antistitites omnes ad quos pertinentibus summo Pontifici commendationem viros ecclesiasticos, ut eorum unus vacanti Ecclesiae praeponatur, in Synodum, si intra tres menses locum habeat, ut in specialum eorum conveniunt, ut trium saltem proponentum qualitates duciantur ad tramitem Quæstionum quae hanc in rem typis impressarum praesentibus apponuntur.

4. Antequam vero praedictos conventus convocetur, ad Archiepiscopum vel Seniorem Provinciae Episcopum notos commendetur, ut eorum qui commendandos esse putaverint, certiores sint.

5. Qualitates Candidatorum publice in coetu Episcoporum discutientur, praesidente Archiepiscopo vel seniore Provinciae Antistite: sui Tractagia vero secreto in urnam immittentur.


7. Quod pertinet ad electionem Coadiutorum, excepto casu, quo Sedes Apostolica alia ratione agendum esse statuerit, Episcopus, qui Coadiutorem petit, supplicem libellum de ea re ad S. C. mittet, eiusque habituo locum, nominam trium sacerdotum Archiepiscopo et Episcopis sufraganeis significabit, qui eiusdem S. Congregationis mentem suam de Coadiutori eligendo communicabit.

8. Cum in Australia Provincias Ecclesiasticas multiplicari contigerint, de commendandis candidatis pro sedibus vacantis agitur in coetu Episcoporum comprovinciialium, aditum tantum obligatione scribendi ad Metropolitani vel Episcopum non comprovinciialium quem de candidatis a Provincia extraneis res erit.

The Propaganda decree, Quum ad catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem of 19 May 1866, applies the American norms for the nomination of bishops to the Australian Church, weakening Polding's role.

(Source: CEPA, SOC, vol. 993A, fol. 742.)
Reisach or some other Propaganda official or by Murray and Quinn? In any case, it is easy to see why Murray and Quinn were strongly in favour of such an arrangement. The focus of initiative and decision-making was shifted from the Metropolitan, whose role was now chiefly to administer and co-ordinate, to a bishops' conference at which the official combined recommendations of the Australian hierarchy would be determined by ballot. As of mid-1866 the Cullenite trio of the Bishops of Brisbane, Maitland and Bathurst were poised to take control of the joint acts of the Australian hierarchy of eight bishops, needing the appointment of only two more men of the same outlook as themselves. Before leaving Rome to return to Ireland and then set out for Australia, Murray asked Kirby to let Barnabd know that he and Quinn took it for granted that no decision about Australia would be made without consulting the bishops.41

Polding was panic-stricken. Getting the right men into Goulburn and Armidale now assumed an apocalyptic significance for him. To maximize his chances he needed to prevent the matter being referred to the bishops in Australia where Murray and Matthew Quinn were about to join forces with James Quinn to form a solid bloc in any episcopal gathering. Around the middle of May 1866 Polding begged Barnabd to finalize the appointments to Armidale and Goulburn before he returned to Sydney. It was known in Australia, he argued, that he had gone to Europe to secure bishops; if he returned without them it would be taken as a sign that he did not enjoy the Holy See's confidence. Goulburn and Armidale had been without bishops for four years; waiting for advice from Australia would only cause further delay harmful to religion. The provincial synod called for by the Propaganda Congregation should not be held before all the new bishops were in place and had spent some time in the country; otherwise they would not know what

41 Murray-Kirby, 21 Apr. 1866, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1866/86.
they were talking about. Finally, a synod dominated by three members of the same family could not command respect among the clergy and laity.42

V

Murray's and Quinn's departure for Ireland tilted the balance of forces in Rome to the advantage of Polding. After a couple of months settling in he become a little more confident. His fellow Benedictine, Cardinal Pitra, assured him that he was rising in the estimation of the Propaganda cardinals. Polding seemed to think that he might have the backing of Cardinal von Reisach and Cardinal de Luca, although that is unlikely in the case of the former, for reasons that have already been given. Cardinal Antonelli, not a member of the Propaganda Congregation but highly influential as Secretary of State, invited Polding to dinner on Maundy Thursday along with other bishops and prelates who had assisted at the Chrism Mass. Polding was seated between von Reisach and Barnabò. Polding felt that everybody had been most attentive to him; 'it is a great comfort to be in the society of real gentlemen'. (Presumably, there were no more atrocious puns about the Sugar Loaf.) He attended all the Holy Week ceremonies. He was flattered and consoled by the kind words addressed to him on several occasions by the Pope. To Gregory he wrote, 'Am I not becoming egotistical'. After Easter he joined the Rector and students of the English College at their country villa at Monte Porzio but had to return to the city after a few days for a dinner engagement with Talbot.43

However, any advances that Polding made in the curial world were offset to some extent by the announcement that the Archbishop of Dublin had been made a cardinal and had been assigned to the Propaganda among other Congregations. Cullen assured Murray and Quinn that his heightened influence was at their disposal.44 Murray looked forward to Cullen 'providing

42 Polding-Barnabò, 12 May 1866, CEPA, SOCg, vol. 993A, fols. 756 ff.
43 Polding-Gregory, 3 April 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 151.
44 Cullen-Murray, 2 July 1866, MDA, A.1.11.
The papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli, invited Polding to dinner on Holy Thursday evening, 1866.

especially for the children of St. Patrick spread throughout the world'. Later in the year, Talbot, who consistently opposed Polding’s causes, was appointed a consultor to the Propaganda Congregation.

In the summer of 1866 the chief concern of Polding was to prevent the immediate implementation of the decree Quum ad Catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem. Polding badgered the Propaganda authorities with visits and letters. The American norms would be his rule in the future but in the present circumstances the bishops’ meeting which the norms required could not be held for a considerable period of time. Barnabò was moved to refer the matter to the Pope, who, having received Polding in audience shortly before, decided on 26 July that on this one occasion the vacancies could be filled without the regular procedures, that is to say, from nominations made directly by Polding.

Polding had secured a notable success which, together with the papal approval given in May for Gregory to return to Australia, suggests that there was indeed a rise in Polding’s Roman status. The news about Gregory disturbed Murray, by then back in Dublin. He wrote to Kirby and also to Cullen, who had gone to Rome to receive his cardinal’s hat, asking them to find out if Gregory’s return had really been conceded and, if so, to oppose it. Quinn’s view was that Gregory must never be allowed to go back to Australia.

45 Murray-Cullen, 25 Jun. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
46 Polding-Gregory, 10 Nov. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 173.
48 See this thesis, pp. 203-204.
49 Murray-Kirby, 25 June 1866, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1866/149; Murray-Cullen, 16 June 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
50 M.Quinn-Kirby, 22 Jan. 1867, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1867/31.
Buoyed by his gains and aware that Cullen was coming, Polding left Rome for England where he wanted to hold discussions with the Archbishop of Westminster, Henry Edward Manning, and the Bishop of Birmingham, William Ullathorne, with a view to nominating some English ecclesiastics for Australian sees to supplement the Australian names that he had proposed and to balance the Irish candidates presented by Cullen and his followers. He had received the Pope’s permission to add Gregory’s name to his list of candidates and was heartened by Barnabò’s comment that Gregory should not go back to Australia except as a bishop. To the Australian list Polding added the name of William Lanigan, at the time pastor at Berrima. Lanigan had been educated for the priesthood at the Thurles and Maynooth seminaries and after a period working in his native Archdiocese of Cashel was persuaded by McEncroe to accompany him back to Australia in 1859 as a missionary priest. He was then appointed assistant priest at Goulburn. Lanigan appealed to Polding because he was not a Cullenite and had Australian experience. Around the middle of 1866 Polding’s hopes for Armidale and Goulburn were focused on the English Benedictine, Gregory, the Irish-Australian Benedictine, Sheehy, and the Irish-Australian secular, Lanigan. Polding reiterated to Barnabò his view that Australia’s Catholics saw themselves as Australians and wanted to be ruled by bishops who had previously worked among them and knew their character and needs. However, he did not explain how this objective could be promoted by the recruitment of Englishmen who had never been to Australia which was also part of his strategy.

---

51 Polding-Barnabò, 12 May 1866, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 993A, fol. 754.
52 Polding-Barnabò, 18 May 1866, CEPA, Udienze, vol. 152, fols. 629b ff.
53 See this thesis, Chapter V, pp.
Having arrived in England Polding fell prey to anxiety about the task before him, accentuated by the 'noisy oven' of a London hotel in which he stayed until he found more comfortable accommodation, a bad cold and feeling 'sadly out of sorts'. After travelling around England and Ireland interviewing prospective candidates and consulting Manning, Ullathorne and others, Polding submitted to the Propaganda Congregation a list of 10 priests to be considered for the Dioceses of Armidale and Goulburn and also for the office of coadjutor bishop in Sydney which he was also applying for at this time in view of his advancing years.

This list exemplifies Polding's lack of business method. It was a mixed bag of Irish-Australian and English Benedictines and Irish-Australian, English and Irish seculars. Background information about some of the people was slight. He did not always make it clear who he was proposing for which position. He stated explicitly that the order in which he listed the names was not necessarily the order of their merit. The list was a jumble which its author apparently expected the Propaganda staff to sort out. A month later Polding supplemented this letter with another one in which, as well as changing his mind about the suitability of some of the candidates, he presented an intricate series of scenarios of the type that if he was given A as his coadjutor then he wanted B or C for Goulburn and D for Armidale, but if B were to be coadjutor then he wanted C for Goulburn and D for Armidale, if E or F as coadjutor then B for Armidale and C for Goulburn, and so on. This sort have thing can only have added to the confusion in the Propaganda palace.

---

57 Polding-Gregory, 7 Jul. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 165.
58 Polding-Barnabò, 11 Jul. 1866, op. cit.
59 Polding-Barnabò, 13 Aug. 1866, op. cit.
VI

On 24 September 1866 Cardinals Patrizi, di Pietro, Sacconi, Panebianco, de Luca, Pitra, Mertel and Barnabò assembled to consider a ponenza presented by Cardinal Ludovico Altieri. In case his colleagues were wondering why they were meeting so soon after their March decision to apply the regulations governing episcopal appointments in the United States to Australia, Altieri began by explaining that the Pope had acceded to Polding's pleadings that the regulations not be implemented immediately and that his own nominations be taken as the basis for the Propaganda deliberations. He also drew the attention of the cardinals to a news item published in the Melbourne Argus on 21 June 1866, sent in by Goold to Barnabò and other cardinals, which stated that by Roman disposition the nominations for Armidale and Goulburn were to come from an Australian synod. Altieri wondered what impression would be made in Australia if this procedure, having been announced, were now set aside in favour of nominations received from Polding alone, especially after the Hayes-Hanly episode. It is significant that both Altieri at this congregazioni and von Reisach at the March meeting, together with Rinaldini and the other officials of the Propaganda secretariat who worked on the compilation of the ponenze, assumed that the charges against Hayes and Hanly were true and that, in consequence, Polding's reliability was questionable, even though those who had made the charges harboured a strong interest in the outcome.

Whatever misgivings Cardinal Altieri might have had, the Pope himself had authorized the cardinals to disregard the newspaper item and proceed on the basis of Polding's recommendations. Altieri presented Polding's complicated lists, from which the cardinals selected William Lanigan and one


of Polding's English candidates, Dr. John Crookall. Educated at St. Edmund's College, Ware, and the English College, Rome, the forty-five year-old Crookall had been ordained in 1846 and had taught philosophy at St. Edmund's. He was currently Superintendent of Diocesan Schools of the Diocese of Southwark and was himself in charge of a boys' boarding school. His missionary experience and wisdom had the endorsement of John Grant, the Bishop of Southwark.62

The cardinals directed that, after an inquiry had been made into the relative strength of the numbers of English and Irish Catholics in Goulburn and Armidale, Lanigan was to be appointed to the district where the Irish were predominant and Crookall to the district where the English were predominant.63

Two days later Capalti wrote to Polding, who by then was back in Rome, seeking the required information.64 Polding's reply was shifty. He knew perfectly well that English Catholics were a tiny minority in both districts but did not say so. Instead, he vaguely asserted that there were four main elements, the English, Irish, Scottish and Australian, and that the civil authorities were careful to avoid making ethnic distinctions. He urged the Holy See to follow their example.65 On 30 September the Pope assigned Goulburn to Lanigan and Armidale to Crookall.66 Polding attempted to have the destinations swapped, presumably because he preferred the Englishman to be closer to Sydney.67 The attempt appears to have been successful because in a letter written to Grant on 24 October Barnabò referred to Crookall as 'Vescovo di Goulburn'.68

---

63 Altieri ponenza, Sept. 1866, fols. 582 ff.
64 Capalti-Polding, 26 Sept. 1866, SAA, RC: Polding.
65 Polding-Capalti, 28 Sept. 1866, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 598.
66 Altieri ponenza, Sept. 1866, fol. 590; Rinaldini-Polding, 10 Oct. 1866, SAA, RC: Polding.
67 Polding-Capalti, 13 Oct. 1866, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 646.
68 Barnabò-Grant, 24 October 1866 (PC). The original of this letter is in the archives of the Archdiocese of Southwark, London; a photocopy is in the possession of the author.
The outcome of the selection process for Australian dioceses over the summer and early autumn of 1866 was a step forward for Polding. Both dioceses had been filled by his candidates in accordance with his criteria that bishops should be chosen from among the clergy already working in Australia and known to the people (Lanigan) and from England to balance the recent influx of Irish imports (Crookall). From Douai Polding wrote to Lanigan at Berrima imploring him to accept appointment.69

VII

James Murray and Matthew Quinn who had now arrived in Australia were disturbed by the news from Rome. Quinn wrote to Kirby that the recent appointments would diminish the confidence of New South Wales Catholics in the Holy See. He thought that Crookall might just as well have been appointed to Dublin or Cork as Goulburn as there were just as many English Catholics in all three places.70 Murray agreed that it was absurd to appoint an Englishman to an Australian bishopric: 'It is idle to speak of an English Catholic element in Australia. It exists only in the imagination of Dr. Polding and a few of his friends'.71 He was, moreover, worried about newspaper reports that Crookall was a Benedictine. Although an Irishman, Lanigan at first failed to inspire Murray and Quinn. He was an unknown quantity to them, they not having been in Australia long. Quinn thought Lanigan was lacking in intelligence and strength. Murray found him to be a diffident man of modest talents but urged him to accept the episcopate anyway. At least he was Irish. Murray told Cullen he was surprised that the Propaganda

69 Polding-Lanigan, 31 Jan. 1866 (Polding meant to write '1867'), CGAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle 'Episcopal letters and documents to and from Dr. Lanigan'.
70 M.Quinn-Kirby, 22 Jan. 1867, op. cit.
71 Murray-Cullen, 21 Jan. 1867, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
Congregation had acted merely on Polding's advice and that it had not waited to receive the opinions of the bishops in Australia as it had undertaken to do.\textsuperscript{72}

Murray and Quinn need not have worried. Towards the end of October 1866 Crookall declined his appointment as Bishop of Armidale. (He seemed unaware of his transfer to Goulburn.) He explained to Cardinal Barnabò that he was unaccustomed to the world of affairs, lacked the necessary qualities for the episcopal office and was in poor health. He had been given to understand that the Armidale district would require long journeys on horseback, but he had never been on a horse in his life and it was impossible for him to learn how to ride now. He forwarded a certificate from his doctor testifying that he was 'un homme bien gros - même gras' with a weak heart and a nervous temperament. He pointed out further that he was the sole support of his aged father.\textsuperscript{73}

The refusal of Crookall to accept Armidale raises a question about the quality of Polding's work in England. The inability of Crookall to ride a horse and his responsibility for his father did not, amazingly, come up in conversations between him and Polding\textsuperscript{74} but it is extraordinary that Polding could have recommended him without being certain that he would agree to appointment. Crookall's own reluctance was not the only problem. Talbot opposed Crookall considering him 'too hearty, too inclined to be jolly'. Polding thought that Talbot 'meddles a vast deal too much'.\textsuperscript{75}

Desperate to make Crookall change his mind, Polding deputed Gregory to explain to him that as a bishop he would have greater means with which to look after his father and that no part of the Goulburn district was inaccessible

\textsuperscript{72} Murray-Kirby, 29 Dec. 1866, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1866/361; M.Quinn-Kirby, 22 Jan. 1867, \textit{op. cit.}; Murray-Cullen, 22 Jan. 1867, DAA, Australia box 58/1; Murray-Kirby, 22 Jan. 1867, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1867/32.

\textsuperscript{73} Crookall-Barnabò, 25 Oct. 1866 & 29 Oct. 1866, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 638 & 642; for the medical certificate, see fol. 644; see also audience of 10 Nov. 1866, CEPA, Udienze, vol. 153, fol. 1183.

\textsuperscript{74} Polding-Gregory, 10 Nov. 1866, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Ibid.}
by buggy. (Polding was obviously still expecting Crookall to be transferred to Goulburn.) Anxious to return to Australia, Polding was nevertheless directed by the *Propaganda* Congregation to wait for Crookall's final reply. He found the delay burdensome and asked Gregory to remind Crookall that he was keeping everybody, including the Congregation, in suspense.\(^{76}\) It was not until November 1866 that Polding received a telegram notifying him of Crookall's definite refusal.\(^{77}\) To Barnabò Crookall insisted, 'Je n'ai jamais eu d'autre idée que cette de le refuser absolument...'.\(^{78}\) The decision was accepted by the Pope who was especially moved by the circumstances of Crookall's father.\(^{79}\) After he heard the disappointing news from Crookall, Polding wrote to Gregory that it was 'piercingly cold' and 'gloomy' in Rome.\(^{80}\) The affair had been 'very perplexing and annoyingly tedious'.\(^{81}\)

**VIII**

Polding was also frustrated in his desire to obtain a mitre for Gregory. Although the Pope had consented to Gregory's return to Australia, he left it to the *Propaganda* Congregation to decide what form this might take. As we have already seen, Barnabò told Polding that Gregory should not return except as a bishop. What the Prefect meant by this statement was that Gregory would not return at all because he would never be made a bishop. But Polding interpreted it in the opposite sense, as an invitation to add Gregory's name to his list of candidates. His hopes were raised when Cardinal Pitra spoke highly of Gregory. Consequently, he felt let down when on his return to Rome from England he discovered that the *Propaganda* authorities would not endorse Gregory for the

---


\(^{77}\) Polding-Gregory, 20 Nov. 1866, SPM-DownAA/O 174.

\(^{78}\) 'I have never had any other idea than to refuse it absolutely'. Crookall-Barnabò, 28 Nov. 1866, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 637.

\(^{79}\) Polding-Gregory, 17 Nov. 1866, *op. cit.*

\(^{80}\) Polding-Gregory, 20 Nov. 1866, *op. cit.*

\(^{81}\) Polding-Gregory, 4-6 Dec. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 176.
episcopacy. Not having heard from them, Polding went to the Piazza di Spagna to see the Prefect.

From a certain style of flattery which I have observed he indulges in whenever he has something to say he supposed not altogether consonant to my feelings, I judged that there was something he preferred another to tell me rather than himself.

Barnabò referred Polding to Capalti who had just come from an audience with the Pope, explaining that he had only seen the Secretary briefly that day and scarcely knew the outcome. Capalti told Polding that Gregory was not to be made a bishop. He noted that Polding seemed dissatisfied with the decision, to which Polding replied, 'La sainte volonté de Dieu soit faite'. He went on that he thought Gregory would have been made a bishop because he had put his name on the list only at the suggestion of Barnabò and with the approval of the Pope. Capalti replied simply that he could not advise Gregory to return to Australia. Polding attributed the refusal of the Congregation to consider Gregory for the episcopacy to the article from the Argus which Goold had sent in and which claimed that the Prefect had 'signified his intention not to appoint any more friars or members of religious orders as bishops in Australia'. Polding commented, 'Miserable, is it not, that a mere anonymous article should influence public men?' However, he did not allow sufficiently for papal and curial dislike of Gregory. When it looked as if Crookall would refuse an Australian episcopal appointment, Polding believed that Barnabò would choose Gregory, 'at least so he intimated'.

But that was a delusion, as Polding himself realized by the beginning of December. He now feared that if the question of the last remaining vacant diocese was not resolved before he left Rome, the Congregation would refer it to the Australian bishops and the chances of securing an English appointment

82 Polding-Gregory, 2 Oct. 1866, op. cit.
83 Cutting from the Argus, 21 Jun. 1866, op. cit.
84 Polding-Gregory, 2 Oct. 1866, op. cit.
85 Polding-Gregory, 17 Nov. 1866, op. cit.
would be lost forever.86 These fears were well founded. On 10 December Capalti wrote to Polding instructing him to arrange for a synod to be held in Australia to nominate candidates for the Diocese of Armidale since Crookall had refused it.87 (When Crookall declined to go to Australia the Congregation must have reverted to the original arrangement under which Lanigan was assigned to Goulburn because it was Armidale that was regarded as being still vacant.) The Cullenite party in Australia was delighted with the news about Crookall, as Murray informed Barnabò. Prompted by Moran, Murray also urged the Prefect not to trust any more recommendations made by Polding alone but to proceed strictly in accordance with the norms of 19 May 1866.88

IX

After an initial period of uncertainty, the Cullenites were also pleasantly surprised by Lanigan. Murray wrote to Barnabò to tell him how grateful the Catholics of Goulburn were to the Pope and the Propaganda Congregation for giving them such a fine bishop.89 Matthew Quinn, too, decided that Lanigan would make an excellent bishop after all.90 The attitude of the Cullenites changed when they discovered that Lanigan, a 'retiring, even colourless figure',91 was susceptible to their influence, even though his background differed from theirs. Murray, Matthew Quinn and James Quinn consecrated Lanigan in Goulburn in June 1867 before Polding got back to Australia, wanting the consecration to be an Irish demonstration rather than a Benedictine one in Sydney. They probably wanted to make Lanigan feel

86 Ibid.
90 M. Quinn-Kirby, 23 Jun. 1867, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1867/237.
William Lanigan, Bishop of Goulburn, 1867-1900. Recommended by Polding, he turned out to be strong opponent of the Archbishop's policies.

(Source: P.Hartigan, *The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests*, Kilmore, 1975, facing p. 177.)
dependent on them. Murray described the ceremony to Barnabò as ‘un gran trionfo della Chiesa nell’Australia’. Lanigan showed his compliance by appointing as his Vicar General, not Polding’s friend Hanly who, as the previous regional ecclesiastical superior under the title Dean of Yass, might have expected to receive the office, but Michael McAlroy, one of Polding’s most vociferous critics. Hanly and a number of other priests thereupon left the district and went to Sydney. The Diocese of Goulburn soon became an important centre of opposition to Sydney Benedictinism. Lanigan employed Patrick Bermingham on the latter’s return to Australia from Ireland, despite Polding asking him specifically not to do so. Polding had also attempted to keep Bermingham out of any of the newly-formed dioceses by appealing to the Propaganda Congregation through Smith.

Although pleased with the manageability of Lanigan, the Cullenites would have preferred McAlroy in Goulburn. In letters to Barnabò, Cullen and Kirby they catalogued his achievements and extolled him as the finest priest in Australia and eminently suitable for the episcopate. McAlroy was given a high profile at the Lanigan consecration. He organized the ceremony and delivered the sermon. After the consecration, the four bishops - Murray, the Quinns and Lanigan - held an impromptu conference from which they forwarded to Rome the recommendation that because the Diocese of Goulburn was very extensive there would soon be a need to create a new diocese out of territory partly from

---

93 Murray-Barnabò, 22 Jun. 1867, op. cit.
94 Polding-Lanigan, 4 Jan. 1868, & Murray-Lanigan, 8 Jan. 1868, CGAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle, ‘Episcopal letters and documents to and from Dr. Lanigan; see also O’Malley, pp. 119-120; Parsons, p. 5; P.Hartigan (‘John O’Brien’), The Men of ‘38 and other Pioneer Priests, Kilmore, 1975, p. 110.
95 Polding-Lanigan, 31 Jan. 1866, op. cit.; O’Malley, p. 120.
96 Polding-Smith, 17 Oct. 1865, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
Goulburn and partly from Sydney. They proposed that this projected diocese be conferred on McAlroy.97

CHAPTER VIII
THE SHEEHY AFFAIR
1866 - 1868

During his 1866-1867 ad limina visit, Polding failed to save Hanly and Hayes, obtain a mitre for Gregory or even Gregory's return to Australia, secure a satisfactory appointment to Goulburn, prevent the application of the American norms to the selection of a bishop for Armidale or retain Newcastle in the long term for the Archdiocese of Sydney. However, he did not leave Rome empty-handed. In view of his age he asked the Propaganda Congregation for a coadjutor bishop who would assist him in Sydney and succeed him on his death. He submitted several names for this post, most of them English or Australian Benedictines. At their assembly of 24 September 1866 the cardinals recommended for appointment one of these candidates, that of Polding's Vicar General, Austin Sheehy. The appointment was confirmed by the Pope a week later. Sheehy was assigned the titular Diocese of Bethsaida in partibus infidelium. Sheehy's had not been the first name on Polding's list and he was not appointed as coadjutor cum jure successionis but merely as an auxiliary bishop. Nevertheless, Polding was relieved to secure the episcopal appointment of a Benedictine monk who, if not his successor de jure, was in an excellent position to become so. Polding's search for a coadjutor was a major concern of his episcopate and will be dealt with fully in a later chapter but it is necessary to examine the Sheehy phase here because it was inextricably linked to Catholic ecclesiastical politics in Australia in the late 1860s.


2 See Chapter X.
After finishing his business in Rome, Polding went back to England to attend to outstanding matters. He took ship for Australia and after a voyage of 94 days sailed into Sydney, and a tumultuous welcome, on 7 August 1867. Despite his reverses, he was in high spirits, looking forward to consecrating Sheehy. However, he was in for a shock. Waiting for him in Sydney were two letters from Cardinal Barnabò. The first of these, dated 30 April 1867, informed Polding that the promotion of Sheehy had caused scandal in Australia and was consequently threatening to damage ecclesiastical authority. It was reported, Barnabò explained, that when Sheehy was prior of the Benedictine community at Lyndhurst he had tolerated a variety of iniquities among the monks. However, the principal charge concerned Sheehy himself:

Traditur itaque Pater Sheehy quandoque in proprio cubiculo ad multam nocte retinuisse Monialem, hanc vero dimississe cum ebria facta esset.

The nun in question was Mother Scholastica Gibbons, an Irish Sister of Charity who was working with Polding to establish a new, Benedictine-inspired religious institute of women, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. Barnabò observed that such a report would have been treated with contempt had it not come from a 'teste de cujus probitate dubitare non licet'. He invited Polding to respond. The second letter, dated 22 May 1867, directed Polding not to proceed with Sheehy's consecration, if it had not already taken place, until the Congregation decided what to do.

Both these letters arrived in Sydney before Polding's return and were opened as business letters by the Vicar General. Sheehy was understandably...

---

4 'And so it is reported that Father Sheehy had a nun in his own room in the middle of the night, and sent her out in a drunken state...a witness whose uprightness is not to be doubted'. Barnabò-Polding, 30 Apr. 1867, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 1142.
5 Barnabò-Polding, 22 May 1867, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 1140.
[Handwritten Latin text]
upset. He had been diffident about becoming a bishop in the first place and had accepted only at Polding's insistence. Now he wrote to Barnabò declining the episcopate and returning the apostolic brief of his appointment. He felt he had been sullied by a 'calumniae turpissimae'. He asked Barnabò to reveal the identity of his accusers, not so much for his own sake but so that he might defend Gibbons' good name. Barnabò declined to reveal the accuser but expressed admiration for Sheehy's humble renunciation of the episcopate which, he said, showed Sheehy to be a man of no ordinary virtue. He assured Sheehy that the Holy See would hold an inquiry to establish his honour and urged him to trust in providence and whatever the Pope judged. Sheehy was consoled that Barnabò seemed to think him innocent but was disappointed at the withholding of the name of his delator.

There is nothing in the career of Sheehy to suggest that what was said of him and Scholastica Gibbons was likely to be true. Born in Cork in 1827, Samuel John Austin Sheehy migrated at the age of 11 with his parents to New South Wales. He studied at St. Mary's School and later the Seminary, joined the Benedictine Order and was ordained by Bishop Davis in 1852. He was placed in charge of St. Mary's School and also served as a prison chaplain. In 1861 he became President of Lyndhurst College and succeeded Gregory as Vicar General of the Archdiocese. He was made a fellow of St. John's College at the University of Sydney and parish priest of Darlinghurst in 1864. He relinquished the post of Vicar General in 1873 and spent the rest of his long life as parish priest in various localities. This 'complete Benedictine' died at

---

6 'a most pernicious calumny'. Sheehy-Barnabò, 31 Aug. 1867, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 909; see also Polding-Gregory, 24 Aug. 1867, op. cit.


Randwick in 1910. Sheehy’s life as a monk and a priest was characterized by generous service of the Christian faith. Cardinal Altieri observed at the congregazione of 24 September 1866 which appointed Sheehy auxiliary bishop of Sydney that ‘il suo buon nome non ha mai sofferto alcuno detrimento’. That, however, was about to change.

II

The allegations against the Bishop-elect of Bethsaida were part of a campaign to undermine the already fragile Roman reputation of the Benedictine Order in Sydney. After James Murray of Maitland and Matthew Quinn of Bathurst arrived in Australia towards the end of 1866 they combined with James Quinn of Brisbane and William Lanigan of Goulburn to represent the Archdiocese of Sydney as a decadent, ramshackle organization staffed by lax, pastorally-ineffective and sometimes drunken clergy led by a decrepit, contemptible, deluded bishop. They had to admit that Polding was popular, but insisted that his monks were notorious for vulgarity, quarrelling, violence, drinking, defections, concubinage and other illicit liaisons, negligence, squandering money and so on. With little evidence of thought for sorting out fact from fiction, they funnelled every scrap of nasty rumour they could get hold of into the Propaganda Congregation, either directly or via the media of Kirby in Rome and Cullen and Moran in Dublin. Matthew Quinn summed up their view, ‘The whole thing looks more like a caricature of the great Benedictine Order than anything else’.

10 ‘his good name has never suffered any damage’. Altieri ponenza, Sept. 1866, fols. 582 ff.
The Irish suffragan bishops of New South Wales and Queensland were alarmed by Rome's appointment of a Benedictine to the Sydney auxiliary bishopric, especially as they originally believed that the right of succession went with this position. It looked as if Polding's influence at Rome was in the ascendant. Murray wrote to Moran that

Dr. Polding is exposing to ridicule the Propaganda by inducing them to make appointments which are not accepted and indeed they ought to be ashamed of themselves...they are only exhibiting their weaknesses and their ignorance of the state of Australian affairs and the priests here who understand things are simply laughing at them...all the odium of it is thrown at Rome.

The lay people of Sydney, too, were 'frightfully against Rome' for allowing itself to be 'duped' by Polding. The Australian Cullenites were annoyed with the Congregation for not doing what it promised, that is, consult them before making Australian appointments. James Quinn thought 'The Australian Church is in a crisis'. His brother, Matthew, was not hopeful of improvement during Polding's lifetime but he assured Cullen that

If they [the Congregation] keep on the negative and not appoint his [Polding's] nominees when he goes the whole system will fall to pieces like a pack of cards. Your Eminence can scarcely imagine anything so rickety.

The Cullenites' difficulties with Crookall and Lanigan had been resolved when Crookall refused to go to Australia and Lanigan proved to be highly malleable, but that left the problem of Sheehy. Being informed by their Roman and Irish contacts that Sheehy had not been appointed as coadjutor but merely auxiliary to Polding hardly lessened in their eyes the menacing prospect that this appointment contained for a continuation of the Benedictine regime in Sydney. The episcopal career of Sheehy would have to be destroyed. The co-

16 M.Quinn-Cullen, 21 Mar. 1867, op. cit.
Austin Sheehy, OSB, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

His consecration as Bishop of Bethsaida *in partibus infidelium* was cancelled as a result of a campaign in which the prime mover was James Murray, Bishop of Maitland.

(Source: P.F. Moran, *History of the Catholic Church in Australasia*, Sydney, ny, facing p. 72.)
ordinator of the campaign was Murray, aided by Matthew Quinn and Lanigan. Cardinal Cullen gave them some fatherly advice:

Write frequently to Rome - give them facts and statistics - it is useless to make general complaints...unless particular grievances of a serious nature can be established, general charges will produce no effect. Dr. Mat. Quinn has made serious charges against some of the Benedictines individually - if these charges be not contradicted, they will produce the desired effect.17

The Cullenites were initially not optimistic that their objective could be achieved,18 but they underestimated the effectiveness in this case of the instrument that had been used so successfully against Hanly and Hayes, character assassination in the corridors of Roman power.

Murray and his collaborators realized that their course of action was risky. They were nervous about putting anything in writing directly before the Congregation for fear the issue might blow up in their faces, preferring Cullen to pass on their information unofficially to Barnabò.19 Murray was unsure of the facts, assuring Cullen that 'I heard a great deal more about the affairs of Australia in Dublin than I have heard since I came to Maitland'.20 He avowed that he had 'no wish to injure the character of any man'.21

However, neither of these considerations prevented the Cullenites from defaming Sheehy on the basis of second- and third-hand stories scoured from a variety of sources, principally John Forrest, Rector of St. John's College, Michael McAlroy at Goulburn and the Sydney layman, William Duncan, whom we have already encountered. Most of Sheehy's detractors, for one reason or another, had a grievance against the Benedictines in general or Sheehy or Polding in particular.

17 Cullen-Murray, 16 Jun. 1867, MDA, A.I.16.
18 Murray-Kirby, 22 Jan. 1867, op. cit.; M.Quinn-Kirby, 22 Jan. 1867, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1867/31; Murray-Kirby, 22 May 1867, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1867/186.
19 Murray-Kirby, 29 Dec. 1866, Murray-Cullen, 19 Feb. 1867, & M.Quinn-Cullen, 21 Mar. 1867, op. cit.; Murray-Cullen, 21 Mar. 1867, DAA, Australia box 58/1; M.Quinn-Kirby, 22 May 1867, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1867/186.
20 Murray-Cullen, 21 Mar. 1867, op. cit.
21 Murray-Cullen 29 Dec. 1866, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
It was alleged from these sources that when Sheehy was Prior of Lyndhurst he connived at the sexual liaison between one of his subjects, Anselm Curtis, the Headmaster of Lyndhurst College, and the College housekeeper, a liaison which lasted over eight months and which issued in the defection of Curtis and his elopement with the housekeeper to Melbourne. They reasoned that if Sheehy did not tell Polding about what was going on, he was unworthy to be Vicar General; if he did, both of them 'ought to be scourged to use a mild term'. Sheehy himself was accused of being too familiar with several Good Samaritan nuns and with Mother Gibbons. He was in the habit of driving out with her in an uncovered carriage at all hours of the day and night. Gibbons often visited the Lyndhurst monastery and on several occasions stayed for some days to attend to priests and boys who had fallen ill. The implication of all this was that Sheehy and Gibbons were violating their vows of chastity together. The closest that the accusers came to asserting this outright was the story about Gibbons emerging drunk from Sheehy’s bedroom at midnight, passed on to Polding by Barnabé. However, in reporting this story to Cullen, Murray added the statement that people believed that immoral acts took place between the monks and nuns generally. He and Matthew Quinn admitted that they themselves did not know whether these allegations were true or false but they insisted that they were made by respectable persons 'who are considered incapable of putting their names to statements which they could not prove'.

They claimed that many Sydney Catholics had no respect for Sheehy and were scandalized by the suggestion that he was to become a bishop. Murray told Cullen that the appointment would do 'more mischief than can be imagined by persons at a distance.' He was certain that these rumours were at

---

24 Murray-Cullen, 19 Feb. 1867, op. cit.
the very least sufficient to cause a delay while a thorough investigation was conducted. He urged Kirby to warn the Congregation that the Holy See would lose respect in Australia if it proceeded without clearing the matter up.\(^{25}\) At the very time when Murray was sending this material to Dublin and Rome he was also writing to congratulate Sheehy on his promotion and to wish him 'many years of happiness and useful labour in the Australian Church.'\(^{26}\)

On 19 February 1867 Murray composed a long letter to Cardinal Barnabò which brought together all the gossip about Sheehy, with the story about his midnight alcoholic debauch with Gibbons as the centrepiece. He asserted that just as Rome had been misled over Hanly so it was now being misled over Sheehy. He said that it was hard for him to write such things.\(^{27}\) However, Murray did not post this letter to Rome but to Dublin so that Cullen might read it first and send it on to Barnabò only if he thought it 'allright'. Murray explained to Cullen that what he was doing he was doing reluctantly and that he was unsure if his action was justified.\(^{28}\) Cullen looked over the letter and forwarded it to Barnabò. He wrote two letters of his own repeating the substance of Murray's correspondence about Sheehy and he resolved to discuss the matter with the Propaganda officials when he visited Rome later in the year.\(^{29}\) Barnabò thought the news about the Vicar General of Sydney would have been incredible had he not received it from Murray who was thus Barnabò's 'testé de cujus probitate dubitare non licet'. Presumably, Murray was not to be doubted because he was guaranteed by Cullen. Barnabò concurred with the Australian Cullenite argument that the alarming turn of events in Sydney demonstrated the necessity of absolute adherence in the future to the


\(^{26}\) Murray-Sheehy, 24 Jan. 1867 (draft), MDA, C.1.97.

\(^{27}\) Murray-Barnabò, 19 Feb. 1867, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 1090ff.

\(^{28}\) Murray-Cullen, 19 Feb. 1867, op. cit.

\(^{29}\) Cullen-Murray, 25 Apr. 1867, MDA, A.1.14; Barnabò-Cullen, 8 Apr. 1867, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1864-1870.
process laid down by *Quum ad Catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem*. Murray wrote to Barnabbò again in March warning that the nomination of Sheehy had caused 'più danno alla Santa Sede che ben si possa imaginare' and showed that Polding's recommendations were not to be trusted.

III

The immediate result of Murray's communication was the *Propaganda* letters of 30 April and 22 May 1867 to Polding conveying the allegations against Sheehy and ordering the delay of his episcopal consecration. In his reply, written at the end of August, Polding described his sadness at the attack on Sheehy and asked, 'N'est-ce pas vrai, Eminence, que c'est moi qu'on attaque?' He insisted that the appointment of Sheehy to the episcopate was popular and asked how Barnabbò could compare 'cette voix vrai du peuple avec la voix du delateur'. He believed that the rumours were the work of a few malcontents and implored the Prefect to let him know who they were for without this information his administration was virtually immobilized. He noted that the delator had been judged 'fide dignus' by the Holy See and he asked whether he, too, was not to be so judged after thirty years of faithful service. Finally, he suggested that if the Pope did not have confidence in him it would be better for him to step aside and allow the Archdiocese of Sydney to be placed in the hands of an administrator.

In non-official letters Polding gave more reign to his feelings. To Smith he railed at the 'vile infamous calumnies' against Sheehy. The *fide dignus*, whoever he was, had been made a channel of 'wickedness'. He insisted that Sheehy was highly respected and everyone had rejoiced in his elevation, but

---

30 Barnabbò-Murray, 30 Apr. 1867, MDA, D.1.22.
31 'more damage to the Holy See than can possibly be imagined'. Murray-Barnabbò, 21 Mar. 1867, CEPA, *SC-Oceania*, vol. 8, fols. 1098ff.
32 'Is it not true, Eminence, that it is I who am being attacked?...this true voice of the people with the voice of the accuser'. Polding-Barnabbò, 31 Aug. 1867, CEPA, *SC-Oceania*, vol. 8, fols. 1110ff.
'My own testimony in his favour is nullified by a nameless slanderer!' Again, Polding's confidence in Roman procedures was shaken: 'Where will this dreadful system lead to? I am sick at heart'.33 To Gregory Polding expressed his conviction that 'there is something infernal in all of this'.34

Having gone to Sydney to welcome Polding back after his voyage from Europe, Murray was aware of the depth of Polding's pain and was understandably nervous. The Archbishop asked Murray if he had heard anything about the charges sent to Rome against his Vicar General. Murray replied that he had heard something about the matter and that many people believed the charges to be true. He told Polding that the proper course was to hold an inquiry. He said nothing more, anxious to avoid the subject because he was frightened lest Polding discover that it was he who had written to Rome. If Polding found out he 'probably will never forgive me'.35 Polding soon realized that one or more of the suffragan bishops was implicated in the denigration of Sheehy but was unsure who precisely was responsible. He first thought it was James Quinn and saw Brisbane as the 'storehouse' of all scandalous reports.36

In the later part of 1867 Polding wearily applied himself to repairing Sheehy's reputation at Rome. He arranged for Dean John Rigney to say something about what had happened regarding the Vicar General to the clergy of the Archdiocese gathered on 24 September at a meeting to deal with the education question. As a result, a petition bearing 19 signatures (all those at the meeting except one) was despatched to the Pope beseeching him not to accept the resignation of Sheehy as auxiliary bishop-elect because he was excellently fitted for the office, the allegations against him being absolutely false.37

33 Polding-Smith, 24 Aug. 1867, SPFLMA, Smith papers-Australia.
35 Murray-Cullen, 20 Sept. 1867, SAA, Moran papers.
The clergy of the Archdiocese of Sydney petition the Pope not to accept Sheehy's resignation.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 1113.)
Furthermore, at the suggestion of the clergy, Polding sent Ottavio Barsanti to Rome with an extraordinary commission to treat with the authorities on his behalf. Born in Tuscany, Barsanti was a Franciscan friar who, after seminary studies in Siena and Brescia and teaching theology in Rome, was sent to New Zealand in 1860 as the superior of a recently-established Franciscan convent in Auckland. After a falling-out with Bishop Pompallier, he transferred to Sydney in February 1866. Polding expected that 'from his sagacity and Italian experience' Barsanti would be able to 'ferret out a great deal' from Rome. Before leaving Australia, Barsanti wrote to Barnabò expressing his admiration for Sheehy's many fine qualities and begging that Sheehy not be permitted to decline the episcopate. A churchman of much experience, Sheehy had governed the Sydney Church effectively during Polding's absence overseas and had earned the love and respect of clergy and laity alike.

On his arrival in Rome Barsanti installed himself in the Franciscan friary of San Bartolomeo all'Isola Tiburtina. Barsanti had an interview with Capalti and suggested two ways of establishing 'la santa verità': sending a fair-minded visitator to Sydney or an official, secret letter to all the priests of the Archdiocese eliciting their private and conscientious opinion of the Vicar General's character and morality. Barsanti asked the Secretary to help him to obtain an audience with the Pope, to whom he hoped to make the same suggestion, but there seems to be no evidence that the audience was granted.

41 Although he later left this establishment, on doctor's orders, because of an attack of constipation, and took up residence at Terracina, 100 kilometres south of Rome! Barsanti-Capalti, 7 Feb. 1868, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 1036.
Barsanti told the Prefect that Polding, the 'Povero vecchio', was afflicted and was deserving of consolation.43

Barsanti's principal intervention while in Rome was the composition, at the suggestion of Barnabò, of a major memorandum on the Sheehy affair, dated 25 November 1867. This document presented a careful description of Sheehy's personality, habits and manner of acting which emphasized his stability, sobriety, reserve, diligence, justice and generosity. Barsanti said that the news of Sheehy's elevation to the episcopate had been greeted with universal joy among clergy and laity, Catholics and Protestants. Barsanti claimed that the calumnies were designed more to wound the Archbishop than Sheehy himself, although a handful of priests had turned against the Vicar General because he had had occasion to apply ecclesiastical discipline against them. The key factor was a small, militant Irish faction who were bent on the total Hibernianization of the New South Wales mission, culminating in the replacement of Polding by Forrest.

Turning to the particular allegations against Sheehy, Barsanti argued, not altogether convincingly, that it was impossible for him to have known about Anselm Curtis' misbehaviour. By day, as Vicar General, Sheehy was absent from Lyndhurst working in his office at St. Mary's in the city; by night, he slept in the monastery with the other monks while Curtis as Headmaster lived with the boys (and the housekeeper!) in the College. The story about an intoxicated Mother Gibbons reeling out of Sheehy's cell was 'una calumnia atroce e diabolica', absolutely inconsistent with the character of both.44 Barsanti

43 Barsanti-Barnabò, 11 Jan. 1868, CEPA, SC-Oceania, fol. 8, fols. 998 ff.

44 'an atrocious and diabolical calumny'. Barsanti explained that the origin of the story was to be traced back to the night when, as was customary in such circumstances, Sheehy sent for Gibbons and another nun to come to Lyndhurst College to assist a boy of an Irish family who was in the last stage of a mortal illness. The boy's relatives had also come to the College and some of them were drunk. Barsanti asserted to Barnabò that the Irish always take to drink when sorrowful. Sheehy gave instructions that the relatives were not allowed to approach the dying boy's bedside in that condition. According to Barsanti, on going out again, they sought to justify themselves by saying that Sheehy and Gibbons
reckoned that no priest was more worthy of the episcopate than Sheehy and that the best way to stop the lie was to continue with his consecration. He also informed Barnabò that Polding was resolved to resign if the Propaganda Congregation persisted in humiliating him. That would be calamitous because Polding was loved by all and the Archdiocese of Sydney was a model of apostolic vitality.45

Barsanti was not the only Italian who Polding deployed to try to get through to the Italian staff of the Propaganda Congregation. During his last overseas trip Polding encountered one Vincenzo Coletti. Born in Rome, Coletti spent the greater part of his life as a priest working in missions in England, Ireland and Australia. He attended All Hallows' College, Dublin, St. Edmund's College, Ware, and was at the English College in Rome when Polding met him, by which stage he had become thoroughly English in his ways. Coletti accompanied Polding back to Sydney to serve him as chaplain and private secretary. Coletti was friends with the minutante responsible for Australian affairs at the Congregation, Rinaldini, with whom he had an arrangement to look after his family in Rome.46 Polding doubtless hoped that Coletti might be able to compensate for the excellent rapport which Murray and Matthew Quinn had established with Rinaldini when they were in Rome.
Between late 1867 and early 1868 Coletti wrote a series of letters not only to Rinaldini but also to Rinaldini’s superiors, Barnabò and Capalti. He stated that he knew Sheehy personally to be an excellent man, entirely proper (and certainly not an accomplice of Curtis), desired by the clergy as assistant bishop, respected by the people and esteemed by the Government of New South Wales. He counselled the Prefect to proceed with great caution in his dealings with the Archdiocese of Sydney, ‘non meno importante che forse quella di Londra’. While it was true, Coletti wrote, that the Catholics there were of largely Irish descent, they thought of themselves, not as Irishmen, but as Australians. They were more devoted to their Church than to Ireland. Moreover, there were Englishmen, Germans and Italians among them - ‘in una parola la diocesi è cosmopolitana’. Coletti reported that the Archdiocese and its institutions were in fine shape under the leadership of Polding who was loved by everyone except for a small but noisy, hard core of ultra-Hibernian anglophobic fanatics, ‘più o meno bandite dall’Irlanda’. Coletti complained about ambitious, turbulent, scribbling priests like McAlroy and Forrest who went from family to family drinking whiskey and playing cards and disseminating outrageous lies to undermine confidence in the ecclesiastical authorities. In this activity, he claimed, they were encouraged by three bishops, related to one another, who exported the lies to Rome, referring them first of all to Cullen so that they might acquire extra weight. Coletti said that Cullen doubtless knew Dublin well, but of Australia the Irish Cardinal was altogether ignorant. He told Barnabò that the whole process was dishonest and underhand. It disturbed the Propaganda Congregation, disheartened Polding, scandalized the faithful and deprecated local authority by giving the

---

48 ‘perhaps not less important than that of London...in a word the diocese is cosmopolitan...more or less bandits from Ireland’. Coletti-Barnabò, 28 Mar. 1868, op. cit.
Vincenzo Colletti, private secretary and chaplain to Polding.

(Source: SAA.)
impression that the Archbishop was not accepted at Rome. Coletti believed that the best way of fathoming the business was to communicate the name of the informer to Polding so that he might examine that person as well as Sheehy. Otherwise, Sheehy could do nothing but deny the charge.

IV

The attempts to rescue Sheehy had little impact at the Congregation, mainly because of the counter-measures adopted by Murray. As regards the petition sent to the Pope by the Sydney clergy on 24 September 1867 asking him not to accept Sheehy’s renunciation, Murray told Barnabò in a letter written five days later, supplemented by others to Kirby and Moran, that he had been informed by a priest who had been present at the clergy meeting - the one who did not sign the petition - that the document had been introduced without any notice and that the signatures were obtained by moral coercion. According to Murray’s source, Archdeacon McEncroe left the room indignant at the proceedings. The charges against Sheehy were not refuted or even discussed. Most of those present would not even have known what they were. Therefore, Murray suggested, the petition was worthless. For good measure, he threw in the claim that drunkenness was widespread among the Sydney diocesan clergy.49 This criticism made an impression on Barnabò who notified Polding that the effect of the petition had been weakened by the manner in which it was obtained.50 Furthermore, Barnabò was annoyed that, having involved the clergy by taking up a petition, Polding acted without the reserve appropriate to such a delicate matter, an opinion he gave to the Pope.51 As soon as Barsanti


reported the discrediting of the petition, the priests who had signed it produced a statement affirming that it was totally untrue that they had signed under duress and that, on the contrary, they had done so freely. This statement along with numerous individual declarations to the same effect was despatched to Rome, but the damage had been done.

Having neutralized the clergy petition, Murray next set his sights on Barsanti. In the late 1860s what was left of the Papal State after the war of 1859-1860 was fighting for its existence against Garibaldian insurrection, Piedmontese diplomatic manoeuvres and the ominous drift of international events. As far as the papal curia was concerned, the most damaging thing that could be said about anybody at this time was that he sympathized with Garibaldi. Towards the end of 1867 Murray informed Kirby, and Kirby relayed the information to the Propaganda Congregation in mid-February 1868, that Barsanti had spoken against the temporal power of the Pope and had sung Garibaldian songs on the ship sailing to Europe. Other than Murray’s own bald assertion no evidence was given in support of this claim. Polding commented, ‘The Cardinal laughs, but nevertheless I am sick and wearied of all this miserable childishness’.

To drive home the point by way of contrast, the Australian Cullenites assured Rome of their whole-hearted support for the Papal State. When combined papal and French forces won an important victory over Garibaldian guerrillas at Mentana in November 1867, Matthew Quinn asked Kirby to convey his congratulations to the Pope and Barnabò on providence preserving ‘Our Dear Mother Rome’. Quinn arranged for a Te Deum to be sung in Bathurst Cathedral and presided over a pontifical Requiem Mass for the soldiers who had lost their lives ‘in difesa della causa di Dio e della loro

52 For this documentation, see CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 1057, 1059 ff & 1175.
54 Polding-Gregory, 22 Apr. 1868, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 255.
Matthew Quinn, first Bishop of Bathurst. His exuberant rejoicing over the papal victory at Mentana in November 1867, as conveyed to the Propaganda Congregation by Kirby, was meant to contrast with Barsanti’s alleged sympathy for Garibaldi.

(Source: K.T. Livingstone, The Emergence of an Australian Catholic Priesthood 1835-1915, Sydney, 1977, facing p. 81.)
Chiesa'. In conveying Quinn's message, which mentioned French troops only, Kirby was careful to append a note explaining that when Quinn wrote his letter the cables gave all the credit for Mentana to the French. Ever attentive to the interests of his Australian principals, Kirby wanted to obviate possible papal pique at the achievements of the Pope's own army being overlooked.55

The Polding party in Sydney tried to gain advantage at this same level. Aware of Rome's horror of revolutionary movements everywhere and noting the papal condemnation of the Fenian uprising in Ireland of March 1867, Coletti suggested to Rinaldini that Irish clerical nationalism in Australia, which inspired the campaign against Sheehy, 'equivole ad un vero Fenianismo' and he warned Barnabò that a few Fenians had confused the Propaganda Congregation by feeding lies to Irish prelates with influence in Rome.56 As for Barsanti being a Garibaldian, Coletti advised Barnabò to take this 'cum grano salis'.57 Coletti marred his otherwise dignified defence of Sheehy by descending to Murray's level in suggesting to Barnabò that the Bishop of Maitland and some of his clergy had a drinking problem.58 Barnabò replied, however, that Murray's talents were so obvious that he could not share Coletti's concern.59

The Cardinal Prefect had unbounded confidence in Murray. This was apparent in his arrangements for the official investigation of the Sheehy affair. On 21 December 1867 he wrote to Polding expressing his sorrow at the Archbishop's distress and assuring him that no reprimand was intended against him personally and no judgement had been given against his Vicar

55 'in defence of the cause of God and of their Church'. Kirby memorandum to Propaganda, 14 Feb. 1868, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 1042 ff; see also M.Quinn-Kirby, 23 Dec. 1867 (CC), BDA, Quinn letterbook 1867-1885.
General. He explained that the Holy See could not ignore the fact of the accusation of crimes which would be grave in a bishop-elect if true and which would diminish respect for the Church's authority. As in the Gregory case seven years before, he cited the example of St. Gregory Nazianzen who renounced the episcopate for the sake of peace. The appointment of Sheehy would have to be postponed pending the results of an investigation which he asked Polding to carry out. He was confident that everything would be settled to Sheehy's honour.60

Polding did not share Barnabò's confidence. He complained to Gregory that

I am called to enter upon I know not what toil of endless investigation to prove what ought to be deemed proved until the accuser or accusers show the contrary.

He noted the extreme difficulty of establishing beyond all doubt the innocence of those who are unjustly accused. In the meantime, the investigation itself would only stir up further attention and scandal. He was particularly worried about the effect on Gibbons; ' - why, the very inquiry would break her heart and produce untold mischief'.61

What Polding did not know was that the investigation which Barnabò had entrusted to him was not the only one or even the main one. The day before he wrote to Polding, Barnabò commissioned Murray to inquire into the case by means of trustworthy persons. He exhorted Murray to avoid all humiliating publicity for Sheehy whose edifying acceptance of his trials cast doubt on his supposed personal demerits. The accusations against him, Barnabò speculated, might be the work of evil-minded people. The Murray inquiry was clearly more significant in the mind of Barnabò who told the Bishop of Maitland that it was proof of the esteem in which he was held at

60 Barnabò-Polding, 21 Dec. 1867, op. cit.
61 Polding-Gregory, 17 June 1868, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 257.
Rome. The next report to the Pope about the matter, Barnabò wrote, would depend on Murray's findings. Murray effusively thanked Barnabò for the confidence shown him and promising to do all 'per il vantaggio della Chiesa e la gloria di Dio in queste parti remotissime del mondo'.

It is a measure of Murray's growing confidence in his dealings with the Congregation that he did not first send the official report of his inquiry to Cullen for vetting. He explained to Cullen that

under the present circumstances I feel it is of the highest importance that we should be responsible for what we write and that Dublin, I swear Your Eminence, should not be dragged into our affairs unnecessarily.

Murray's report to Barnabò was dated 24 March 1868. It claimed that it was impossible for Sheehy to have been ignorant of Curtis' iniquity. Sheehy had in fact been deposed as Prior of Lyndhurst because of his handling of that situation. (Murray was wrong on this point. Sheehy was transferred from Lyndhurst to the Darlinghurst parish for reasons connected with the educational and financial viability of the College.) Murray went on that half the Benedictines had been involved in one scandal or another, mainly drunkenness and associating with women of bad fame. Many of the secular clergy of Sydney were also given to drunkenness. The best clergy and laity, headed by McEncroe, were all opposed to the administration of Polding and Sheehy. Scholastica Gibbons was guilty of imprudent fraternization with Sheehy and other monks. Those who criticized Sheehy, such as Forrest and McAlroy, were impartial, zealous and responsible, while those involved in his defence, such as Rigney and Barsanti, lacked credibility. Murray concluded that while the principal charge against Sheehy and Gibbons with its imputation of

---

63 'for the advantage of the Church and the glory of God in these remotest parts of the world'. Murray-Barnabò, 28 Feb. 1868, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols 1045 ff; see also Murray-Barnabò, 26 Aug. 1867, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 1106 ff.
64 Murray-Cullen, 19 Mar. 1868, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
65 Kavenagh, pp. 165,199.
sexual congress was untrue, Sheehy was not suitable for the episcopate either in Sydney or anywhere else and his appointment would only perpetuate an unsatisfactory state of affairs in the Archdiocese and injure the prestige of the Holy See. Murray reinforced his findings by informing Kirby that, although Polding was in anguish over the suspension of Sheehy's appointment, he, Murray, was more and more convinced by what he had heard that the complete cancellation of the appointment was essential for the good of religion. He wrote to Moran to say that 'if the Holy See is not satisfied with the statement already sent I will be happy to supply another dose'.

Murray's report was basically a repetition of all the allegations and rumours about Sheehy, the Benedictines and the Sydney administration. It provided no description of the modus procedendi of the inquiry. It adduced no evidence other than Murray's assertions about what he had been told. Murray relied heavily on the statements of Lanigan, who, he avowed, was not to be doubted. There were no signed declarations or affidavits from witnesses. There seems to have been no examination of any of Sheehy's defenders. Murray had to admit that the central charge, the one which had caused Rome to suspend Sheehy's consecration in the first place, could not be sustained.

However, all of this was good enough for the Propaganda Congregation. At an audience conducted on 7 June 1868 Cardinal Barnabò presented Murray's findings to Pius IX. Despite being told by the Prefect that Sheehy had nevertheless behaved as 'un uomo virtuoso', the Pope a week later directed that Sheehy be told that his renunciation of episcopal promotion had been accepted. Barnabò informed Sheehy of this decision exhorting him to resign himself to it and praising him for his humility. He explained that the decision

67 Murray-Kirby, 13 Jun. 1868, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1868/212.
68 Murray-Moran, 16 Jun. 1868, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
69 Audience of 7 Jun. 1868, op. cit.
70 See Propaganda note appended to the end of Murray-Barnabò, 28 Mar. 1868, op. cit.
James Murray's report to Rome on the Sheehy affair, 24 March 1868.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 1160.)
was dictated by prudence, again referring to Gregory Nazianzen. Barnabò advised Coletti that the Pope had judged 'in Domino' what was best for the Church in Sydney and that therefore the Sheehy case was closed. Murray was relieved that it was all over.

V

There seems to have been no official notification sent to Polding himself, although, of course, he learnt soon enough from Coletti and from Barsanti, who wrote to say that his efforts had been to no avail. Barsanti had detected some sympathy for Sheehy in Barnabò, but there was nothing for it now but to accept the papal will. Barsanti considered that Sheehy had made a tactical mistake in tendering his resignation.

Polding was prostrated by the news. Coletti wrote to Barnabò that the Archbishop was virtually paralyzed, which elicited from Barnabò the weak response that Polding's merits had always been highly appreciated at Rome. Polding had sensed the outcome before it was announced. The month before the papal decision he confided to Smith that, while Barnabò was maintaining that he did not believe the stories about Sheehy, 'his Eminence has acted as if he did believe them'. He predicted that the calumnies would continue as long as the accusers were never exposed or called upon to prove their assertions. After the decision was announced, a distraught Polding again wrote to Smith

Of a truth the Cardinal has had a multitude of counsellors about our Australian affairs. Whether there has been amongst them an abundance of wisdom is another affair - Quae sua sunt quae Christi.

---

73 Murray-Kirby, 3 Dec. 1868, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1868/375.
75 Coletti-Barnabò, 9 Oct. 1868, op. cit.
76 Barnabò-Coletti, 16 Dec. 1868, op. cit.
77 Polding-Smith, 1 May 1868, SPLMA, Smith papers-Australia.
78 'Whatever are the things they seek - they are not the things of Jesus Christ'. Polding-Smith, 20 Aug. 1868, SPLMA, Smith papers-Australia.
Whatever residual confidence Polding might have had in the Propaganda system was destroyed by the Sheehy affair. He lamented to Gregory that 'the state of things ecclesiastical in reference to Rome and Australia is something fearful'. He felt that he was in an impossible situation, being expected to prove a man's innocence against lying charges levelled by people who were protected by anonymity and who were not required to establish the factual basis of what they were saying. The character of the accused and the testimony of practically the entire body of the clergy of the Archdiocese counted for nothing.79 When Barsanti conveyed to Polding Barnabd's assurance that he enjoyed the confidence of the Propaganda Congregation, Polding commented, 'yet their every act goes to the contrary'.80 When the official decision arrived in Sydney, he observed

Calumny and misrepresentation have once more prevailed...The cardinal writes in the usual style of consolation not failing to bring in the stock story of Gregory Nazianzen...81

Polding was unsure who his real friends and enemies were. He was still in the dark as to who was behind the vilification of Sheehy. He knew that the campaign was headed by one or more bishops who kept up an extensive correspondence with Rome.82 Barsanti returned from his failed Roman mission with 'Plenty of soothing words' from Barnabd but not the names of the accusers.83 Polding never seemed to have realized the part taken by Murray.

What was absolutely clear to him was that the faction who threatened a disturbance every time it looked as if one of his candidates might be appointed to a bishopric had immensely more influence on the Australia policy of the

81 Polding-Gregory, 9 Sept. 1868, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 262; see also Polding-Gregory, 9 Oct. 1868, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 265.
83 Polding-Gregory, 6 Nov. 1868, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 268.
Propaganda Congregation than he did. 'It really is a humiliation to the episcopal dignity', he bemoaned to Smith, 'and a triumph of intrigue and duplicity...Those who write to Rome know how beats the pulse of Rome'.

To the Prefect himself, Polding announced stoically in November 1868: 'in haec re me ut voluntatem Dei agnoscre et venerari extemplo rescripsi'. In a draft letter, which perhaps he considered too strong to send, he noted that Barnabò had suggested that Sheehy be consoled, but how, Polding asked, was he to do that when nothing that he, Polding, had said had been of any help against the accusers?

Already tense from the outset, the relations between Polding and his New South Wales and Queensland suffragans were severely strained by the Sheehy episode. There was deep suspicion on both sides. Fresh from assisting in the destruction of the good name of a fellow priest among Roman officials, Matthew Quinn exclaimed about Polding, 'If he has misrepresented us in Rome, may God in his infinite Mercy forgive him.'

84 Polding-Smith, 9 Oct. 1868, SPLFMA, Smith papers-Australia.
85 'I write immediately that in this matter it is for me to know and venerate the will of God'. Polding-Barnabò, 6 Nov. 1868, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 1407.
86 Polding-Barnabò, nd (draft), SAA, Polding-Propaganda.
CHAPTER IX
THE DESPONDENCY OF POLDING
1867 - 1870

The ferocity of the struggle over Sheehy is to be explained in terms of the provincial synod of the Australian Church which, at the suggestion of Goold, the Propaganda Congregation had been urging since 1859 to deal with the problems facing antipodean Catholicism. The synod would have the task of helping to chart the future course of the colonial Church. Moreover, the norms of 19 May 1866 for the selection of bishops were now in force and would be implemented for the first time, either at the synod or one of the preparatory meetings, to produce recommendations for the still-vacant Diocese of Armidale and Apostolic Administratorship of the Diocese of Perth. The joint nominations would be determined by ballot. Suddenly, under these new arrangements, numbers were critical.

I

The Australian episcopal hierarchy in 1867-1868 was finely balanced. It comprised nine bishops: Polding of Sydney, Goold of Melbourne, Salvado of Port Victoria, Shiel of Adelaide, James Quinn of Brisbane, Matthew Quinn of Bathurst, Murray of Maitland, Lanigan of Goulburn and Murphy of Hobart. Daniel Murphy, who had succeeded Robert Willson in Hobart in 1866, was independent in his style, but as one whose episcopal appointment was due to Cullen’s influence and as a friend of Matthew Quinn he drifted towards the Cullenite group. The five Cullenites and their allies - the two Quinns, Murray, Lanigan and Murphy - were secular priests recently arrived in Australia. The other four - Polding, Goold, Shiel, Salvado - lacked any common strategy but were united by all being members of religious orders who had worked in Australia for many years and who wanted to contain the tightly-knit Cullenite-
dominated party. This latter group despite their lack of Australian experience, were pushing a strong line on directions for the local Church. The addition of another one or two bishops to the hierarchy would give a majority to either of the parties. The Cullenites attacked Sheehy not only to reduce the chances of a Benedictine succession in Sydney but also to keep him out of the synod. With Sheehy out of the way, the attention was now directed to who would step into Armidale and Perth.

On 22 May 1867 Cardinal Barnabò circularized the Australian bishops reminding them of the Propaganda instruction to hold a provincial synod as soon as possible.¹ Knowing that he could expect no relief from Rome and anxious about the growing power of the militant Irish party, Polding felt threatened by the synod. He sought to prevent it. He maintained that the American system would not work in Australian conditions and was not observed even in America. Murray relayed this information via Kirby and Moran to Barnabò,² who marveled that Polding could imagine that something required by the Holy See for the good of Australia might be inapplicable.³ Polding next tried to postpone the synod until those bishops who were overseas - Goold and Shiel were in Rome, Salvado in Madrid - had returned.⁴

The Cullenites kept up the pressure on Polding over the synod, invoking the clear wish of Rome. James Quinn suggested that the suffragans write a joint letter to the Archbishop about the matter, although he failed to gain

¹ See, for example, Barnabò-Polding, 22 May 1867, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 1140; M.Quinn-Barnabò, 22 Jul. 1867, & Murray-Barnabò, 23 Jul. 1867, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 863 & 865.
² Murray-Kirby, 22 Dec. 1867, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1867/469; Murray-Moran, 21 Dec. 1867, SAA, Moran papers.
⁴ Lanigan-J.Quinn, 26 Feb. 1868 (CC), GCAA, Lanigan letterbook 1867-1896; Polding-Lanigan, 17 July 1868, CGAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle 'Episcopal letters and documents to and from Dr. Lanigan'; Polding-Gregory, 9 Sept. 1868, SPM-DownAA/MF, 0 262.
sufficient support for this approach. Murray and Lanigan spoke personally to Polding on several occasions but he was evasive. Barnabò exhorted the suffragans to keep trying, but decided to write directly to Polding pointing out that if he felt unable to preside over the synod because of poor health or pressure of work then Rome would ask the senior suffragan, Goold, to do it. This letter, dated 6 April 1868, reminded Polding that an early synod was necessary to consider grave matters and was desired by the Pope himself. Polding could delay further only at the risk of disobedience.

II

A meeting to prepare for the synod took place in Sydney on 19 and 20 August, the first day at Polding’s residence at Darlinghurst, the second day - ironically - at the Lyndhurst monastery. The gathering was overshadowed by the fall-out from the Sheehy affair, contradicting the conclusion of the official record that ‘omnibus transactis cum maxima concordia ac harmonia’. Hurt and resentful, Polding indicated in his circular letter convening the preparatory conference that he wanted the agenda to include a consideration of the calumnious reports which had been recently sent to Rome. Murray observed to Barnabò that Polding was extremely agitated and that it would be difficult to avoid the subject. With Goold, Shiel and Salvado overseas, at the meeting itself Polding found himself alone with the Cullenites. He spoke

6 Murray-Moran, 13 Jul. 1868 (draft), MDA, D.2.23.
7 Barnabò-Murray, 3 Apr. 1868, op. cit.
8 Barnabò-Polding, 6 Apr. 1868, SAA, RC: Polding; see also J.Queen-Kirby, 6 Oct. 1868, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1868/299.
9 The official record of the bishops’ meeting held in Sydney, 19-20 Aug. 1868, is at CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 1360 ff.; see also notes made by Lanigan, CGAA, Lanigan papers, bundle ‘Official documents issued by Dr. Lanigan’, and M.Queen-Barnabò, 8 Sept. 1868 (CC), BDA, Queen letterbook 1867-1884.
10 ‘everything was carried out with the greatest agreement and harmony’. Official record of the bishops’ meeting held in Sydney 19-20 Aug. 1868, op. cit.
Barnabò directs Polding in April 1868 to convene a provincial council as soon as possible.

(Source: SAA.)
'cum sensibili animi affectu' that the reports directed against Sheehy were really directed against him. He added that he suspected bishops were behind these reports and virtually demanded to know who was the 'traitor' among them.12 James Quinn expressed ritualistic sympathy but stated that the subject was not a proper matter for the conference. Murray and Matthew Quinn emphasized that any bishop was free to communicate with the Holy See. James Quinn told Kirby that 'The poor old Archbishop complained bitterly of the treatment he received from Propaganda...'13

The bishops also differed over the nomination of candidates for Armidale and Perth in accordance with the regulations of 19 May 1866 which were applied for the first time at this meeting. Murray predicted to Barnabb that the conference would encounter great difficulty over this question: 'Non è necessario che dica a Vostra Eminenza che il calore del sangue irlandese e l'onore inglese difficilmente si combinano'.14 The chief point of contention was the Diocese of Armidale, still vacant six years after its erection.

On the first day of the conference, Polding wanted to sound out Murray unofficially about recommending Sheehy for Armidale, which suggests that Polding was still unaware that Murray had organized Sheehy's fall. He had already written to Barnabb about this proposal and had some support for it from Murphy. However, Murray spoke first, so strongly in favour of McAlroy, and with such backing from the Quinns and Lanigan, that Polding did not bother to mention Sheehy.15 For Perth all the suffragans wanted either Timothy O'Mahony, a priest in Ireland, or John Smyth, Vicar General of Adelaide. They also indicated some other Irishmen as possibilities for either Armidale or Perth. Murray explained to Kirby that they had recommended

13 J.Quinn-Kirby, 6 Oct. 1868 (CC), BAA, Quinn letterbook Sept. 1866-Feb. 1875.
14 'It is not necessary to say to Your Eminence that hot Irish blood and English honour are brought together with difficulty'. Murray-Barnabb,11 Aug. 1868, op. cit.
only two Australians because it was unsafe to recommend more. All the other candidates were Irish. However, their principal objective was to insert McAlroy into Armidale.\textsuperscript{16}

Intimidated by a Cullenite phalanx united by blood, friendship and policy, Polding nominated nobody at the conference. Realizing that his proposals would attract little if any support, he did not know what else he could do except remain silent. At one stage, he said he would take no part in the voting because, with the exception of McAlroy, none of the candidates was known to him. He could not in conscience support McAlroy. However, he changed his mind and cast his votes when the ballot was held.\textsuperscript{17}

As Metropolitan, Polding despatched the official record of the meeting to the \textit{Propaganda} Congregation along with the voting figures favourable to McAlroy on 2 September. Four days later he wrote to Barnabò privately to distance himself from this result and explain that it would have been futile for him to propose any candidates of his own. He reminded Barnabò that McAlroy had caused much trouble, first to Goold in Melbourne and then to himself, and he advised the Prefect to consult the Bishop of Melbourne. He also suggested that Sheehy would be a more worthy appointment than McAlroy for Armidale. McAlroy was good at money-raising and church-building but Sheehy was better qualified theologically and liturgically and had greater experience of leadership.\textsuperscript{18} A day later, Murray, too, wrote to the Prefect giving his version of the conference, reiterating that everybody - except Polding -

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{16} Murray-Barnabò, 7 Sept. 1868, \textit{op. cit.}; Murray-Kirby, 7 Sept. 1868 & 8 Oct. 1869, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1868/266 & 310; M.Quinn-Barnabò, 8 Sept. 1868 (CC), BAA, Quinn letterbook 1867-1884; M.Quinn-Cullen, 22 May 1867, ICA, Cullen correspondence 1880.
\item\textsuperscript{17} Murray-Kirby, 7 Sept. 1868, & Murray-Barnabò, 7 Sept. 1868, \textit{op. cit.}; Murphy-Cullen, 9 Oct. 1868, DAA, Australia box 58/1; Polding-Barnabò, 6 Sept. 1868, CEPA, SOC\textit{G}, vol. 996, fols. 131\textit{f}ff.; Polding-Barnabò, 25 Feb. 1869 (CC), SAA, Polding-Propaganda; Polding-Smith, 9 Oct. 1868, \textit{SPLFMA}, Smith papers-Australia.
\item\textsuperscript{18} Polding-Barnabò, 6 Sept. 1868, \textit{op. cit.}
\end{itemize}
wanted McAlroy and stating that Sheehy was unacceptable because serious charges against him were being investigated by the Holy See.19

The Australian Cullenites were anxious that their first recommendations under the American system be successful at Rome. They organized Cullen, Kirby and Moran to encourage the Propaganda Congregation to endorse these recommendations, above all that of McAlroy, and to ignore Polding.20 Cullen put it to Barnabò that Polding's opposition to McAlroy was nothing but a clash of personalities.21

Polding was profoundly pessimistic about his chances of gaining any real hearing in Rome, so much so that he was half inclined to give up. After the August conference, he wrote to Smith to say that, since all of his previous recommendations had been rejected, there was no point in making any more.22 Besides, as he observed glumly to Gregory, 'really it is dangerous for me to propose anyone. A storm of slander is sure to fall upon him'.23 He was resigned to a fresh batch of Irish appointments; 'I only hope they will not bring with them their habits of whisky drinking and billiard playing'.24

This defeatism notwithstanding, Polding felt he had to struggle on. In November 1868 he made a final effort to get Sheehy into Armidale. He wrote to Barnabò emphasizing how well Sheehy had performed as Administrator of that Diocese for the previous three years. Barsanti also wrote to Barnabò to make the same point. Polding said that Sheehy had all the qualities to be a bishop. He realized that the recent accusations against Sheehy were an obstacle.

---

19 Murray-Barnabò, 7 Sept. 1868, op. cit.
21 Cullen-Barnabò, 12 Nov. 1868, op. cit.
22 Polding-Smith, 9 Oct. 1868, SPLFMA, Smith papers-Australia.
24 Polding-Smith, 9 Oct. 1868, op. cit.
to his appointment but expressed the opinion, mistakenly, that the opposition to Sheehy was only to his becoming auxiliary in Sydney and would not apply if he were given a territorial diocese of his own. Polding further argued that assigning Armidale to Sheehy would be a way of vindicating him against the outrageous things that had been said about him.\textsuperscript{25} To bolster this move, Polding also wrote to an unnamed cardinal, possibly the Benedictine Pitra, asking him to use his influence on Sheehy's behalf.\textsuperscript{26} Predictably, these moves failed. Barnabò replied to Polding in January 1869. The Prefect said he would like to please Polding but the difficulties which had moved the Pope to accept Sheehy's resignation as Sydney auxiliary concerned not the place but the person. The Pope would not agree to the episcopal elevation of Sheehy under any circumstances 'saltem per nunc'.\textsuperscript{27}

In looking over the list of names prepared at the August conference Barnabò was puzzled by the absence of that of Martin Griver, a Spanish secular priest who had served for many years in Western Australia and who functioned successfully as acting Administrator of Perth after Serra's departure. Barnabò wrote about this to the Bishop of Maitland.\textsuperscript{28} Murray replied through Cullen, explaining that he and the other suffragans knew nothing about Perth or Griver. He added that Polding had not recommended Griver either. He took the opportunity to warn Cullen that Polding was scheming with Goold and Shiel to upset the conclusions of the conference.\textsuperscript{29} Polding explained to Barnabò that he thought Griver would be a good appointment but had not mentioned the name of this Spaniard because he felt it would have no effect on the Irish coterie of episcopal relatives and friends. He claimed that James Quinn declared that he would never recommend for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[25] Polding-Barnabò, 6 Nov. 1868, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fol. 1407; Barsanti-Barnabò, 29 Jan. 1869, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 9, fols. 60 ff.
\item[26] Polding-unnamed cardinal, 6 Nov. 1868 (CC), SAA, Polding-Propaganda.
\item[27] Barnabò-Polding, 18 Jan. 1869, CEPA, LDB, vol. 361, fol. 61.
\item[28] Barnabò-Murray, 11 Nov. 1868, CEPA, LDB, vol. 360, fol. 1219.
\item[29] Murray-Cullen, 24 Feb. 1869, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
\end{footnotes}
the episcopate anyone who had already worked as a priest in Australia.30 Of course, Quinn was backing McAlroy but it remained true that, apart from this special exception, the Cullenites were generally opposed on principle to local appointments.

Barnabò’s main interest was the suitability of McAlroy. On 10 December 1868 he took up Polding’s suggestion and wrote to Goold, who had recently arrived back in Melbourne after an ad limina visit. The previous February, while still in Rome, Goold had spoken to Rinaldini about the possibility of his fellow Augustinian, Hayes, being made Bishop of Armidale. However, Hayes had already been considered for this position and had turned it down. Rinaldini was reluctant to discuss it.31 Barnabò now advised Goold that most of the Australian suffragans were strongly in favour of McAlroy for Armidale and asked for his opinion.32 The suggestion that this approach be made was a shrewd move on Polding’s part for Goold replied that he would have kept silent but now that he had been asked he felt conscience-bound to state that McAlroy was unfit for the episcopate. He said he knew McAlroy well from personal experience as a disobedient priest and would not have him back in Melbourne much less consider him for a mitre.33

Goold’s point of view swayed the Propaganda Congregation. On 13 September 1869 Cardinals Barnabò, Patrizi, Mertel, Consolini, Luigi Bilio and Raffaele Monaco la Valletta assembled to consider the Armidale and Perth vacancies. The ponenza was presented by the Prefect himself. Barnabò described the bishops’ meeting in Sydney in August 1868, dwelling on its disunity, and he referred to the contradictory letters which Polding and Murray had sent to Rome after the meeting. Barnabò reported that the majority of the

30 Polding-Barnabò, 25 Feb. 1869 (CC), SAA, Polding-Propaganda.
33 Goold-Barnabò, nd, CEPA, SOCG, vol 996, fols. 1335 ff.
Australian bishops recommended McAlroy for Armidale and O'Mahony for Perth and in this they were backed by Cullen. He explained how Polding had warned about McAlroy and referred the Congregation to Goold who had responded in such terms as 'da togliere ogni forza alle raccomandazioni che si trovavano in favore di McAlroy'. The Prefect noted that praise for McAlroy came only from the Irish bishops who had recently arrived in Australia and was based chiefly on his external works. But Polding and Goold, the senior prelates of the Australian Church, simply refused to countenance him. John Smyth of Adelaide was deemed by Barnabò to be unsuitable because of alleged intemperance and worldliness. Most of the Irish candidates were thought too valuable to take from their dioceses. The result of these deliberations was that the cardinals decided to recommend O'Mahony for Armidale and Griver for Perth. These decisions were confirmed by the Pope on 19 September at an audience granted to the new Propaganda Secretary General, Archbishop Giovanni Simeoni, Capalti having moved on to the cardinalate and the Prefecture of the Sacred Congregation for Studies.

The rejection of McAlroy was an unaccustomed reverse for the Cullenite party in Australia. Not even the advocacy of Cullen himself could outweigh at Rome the determined opposition of Polding and Goold. The Cullenites were disappointed over the failure to secure a bishopric for McAlroy and resented Polding for it. Matthew Quinn lamented to Cullen, 'It is a pity that he [McAlroy] is not in the episcopate but Dr. Polding won't have it'. Referring to the Archbishop, Murray believed that 'A miserable jealousy has taken hold of the poor man'.

---


35 See this thesis, pp. 60-61.

36 M.Quinn-Cullen, 22 May 1867, ICA, Cullen correspondence no. 1980.

37 Murray-Cullen, 11 Jul. 1870, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
Archbishop Giovanni Simeoni, Secretary General of the Propaganda Congregation, 1868-1875. One of his first acts regarding Australia was to present to the Pope in September 1869 the Congregation's recommendation that Timothy O'Mahony be appointed Bishop of Armidale. This portrait shows Simeoni a few years later when he had been made a cardinal and Prefect of the Congregation.

Nevertheless, the Armidale result was more favourable to the Cullenites than to Polding. O'Mahony had, after all, been their second choice. James Quinn in particular hoped he would be added to the Australian hierarchy. O'Mahony was that kind of bishop dreaded by Polding - the directly imported Irishman. Born near Cork in 1825, O'Mahony studied for the priesthood at the Irish College in Rome and was ordained there in 1849. On returning to Cork he worked in various parishes and chaplaincies and held the post of diocesan director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Although neither a Dubliner nor a protégé of Cullen in the sense of Murray and the Quinns, O'Mahony had come under Cullen's influence at the Irish College. Like Lanigan and Murphy, O'Mahony was attracted into the Cullenite orbit when he arrived in Australia in 1871. Polding's candidate, Sheehy, never had a chance.

III

The meeting of bishops in Sydney in August 1868 to prepare for the provincial synod had been a painful experience for Polding. Murray considered that 'the poor old man got a lesson which I am sure will do him good'. Polding interpreted it as a foretaste of what he could expect at the synod itself. Barsanti told Barnabò that Polding feared the synod because the Cullenite Irish would operate as a bloc. Polding resumed his delaying tactics. In 1867 during the ceremonies in Rome for the eighteenth centenary of the martyrdom of Sts. Peter and Paul, Pope Pius IX announced that a general ecumenical council was to be held to deal with the modern challenges facing the Church. The bull of convocation was issued on 29 June 1868 and the council itself was to open in

38 J. Quinn-Kirby, 6 Oct. 1868, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1868/299.
40 Murray-Kirby, 3 Dec. 1868, op. cit.
41 Barsanti-Barnabò, 29 Jan. 1869, op. cit.
Rome on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 8 December 1869. This gave Polding his opportunity. In late 1868 and early 1869 he argued that it would be sensible to defer the provincial gathering until after the general council since the latter was likely to make decisions in the light of which Australian policies and practices would need to be revised. If Rome agreed to the delay, Polding could comfortably forget about the provincial council for several years while the general council was in session. The Cullenites, however, were unmoved. They reminded Polding that the Propaganda Congregation wanted the local assembly to be held as soon as possible and had repeated this wish even after the convocation of the general council. For James Quinn it was a simple matter of 'Roma locuta est'. Lanigan thought that the Congregation could attend to any modifications of the synodal legislation that might be necessary in the light of the general council. In March 1869 Murray and Matthew Quinn extracted from Polding the admission that the provincial meeting should not be deferred because of the general council. Polding prepared himself for the probability that there would be no delay. In January 1869 he spent a few days in Melbourne conferring with Goold and Shiel, no doubt to construct a strategy to counter the Cullenites. He also tried to persuade the Cullenites to agree to Sheehy taking part in the synod as Administrator of Armidale (as he then still was) but they refused on the grounds that Sheehy, unlike Griver in Perth, had not been appointed by the Pope.

The provincial synod took place in Melbourne in April 1869. As far as Polding's anxieties were concerned, it seems to have been anticlimactic. The

---

42 Polding-Smith, 9 Oct. 1868, *op. cit.*; Polding-Gregory, 16 Jul. (no year is given but internal evidence suggests 1868), SPM-DownAA/MF, N 404; Polding-Lanigan, 26 Feb. 1869, GCAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle 'Episcopal letters and documents to and from Dr. Lanigan'.

43 J. Quinn-Polding, 23 Feb. 1869, BAA, Quinn letterbook, Sept. 1866-Feb. 1875; Lanigan-Polding, 1 Mar. 1869 (CC), GCAA, Lanigan letterbook, 1867-1896; J. Quinn-Lanigan, 4 Mar. 1869, & M. Quinn-Polding, 16 Mar. 1869 (CC), GCAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle, 'Episcopal letters and documents from and to Dr. Lanigan'.

44 Barsanti-Barnabò, 29 Jan. 1869, *op. cit.*

decrees certainly reflected the thinking of the Cullenite party at the level of church organization and pastoral practice but, politically, the pressure on Polding was reduced through the participation of the non-Cullenite suffragans Goold and Shiel. Writing to Gregory after it was all over, Polding even described the synod as having been 'successful'. At a congregazione of cardinals held in February 1872 to review the decrees of the synod, Luigi Bilio praised Polding for having overcome his difficulties with 'un coraggio ed una annegazione che onorarono il già conosciuto zelo.'

IV

With the conclusion of the synod the attention of the Australian bishops shifted to the imminent general council. Eight of them attended the Vatican Council of 1869-1870 in Rome. Initially, it was assumed that Polding would attend the Council and there was speculation that he would not return but resign his office while overseas. Polding was at first resolved not to go at all. In February 1869 he wrote to Barnabò to apply for a papal dispensation from the obligation of attendance, adducing his age, the expense and difficulty of the voyage, the fact that he had been in Rome only 18 months previously and the volatility of the colonial political scene which required continual monitoring. He explained that he would have gone if there had been an auxiliary bishop in Sydney but Barnabò had made it clear the Sheehy case was closed.

---

48 Goold of Melbourne, Shiel of Adelaide, James Quinn of Brisbane, Salvado of Port Victoria, Lanigan of Goulburn, Murphy of Hobart, O’Mahony of Armidale and Griver of Perth. John Brady, technically still Bishop of Perth, was also present, as was his old adversary, Serra, who had more recently severed his connection with Australia. J.Molony, The Roman Mould of the Australian Catholic Church, Melbourne, 1969, pp. 121, 126.
49 M.Quinn-Kirby, 5 Dec. 1868, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1868/376.
Cardinal Luigi Bilio praised an harassed Polding for his efforts in organizing the 1869 second Australian provincial council in Melbourne.

also wrote to Barnabò to make the point that Polding did not want go to Rome again because he felt that he was regarded as a fool there. The Pope dispensed Polding from attendance. However, by the time the dispensation arrived in Sydney circumstances had changed. A deputation of local clergy and laity had expressed their fervent desire to Polding to see Australia represented at the general council by its Metropolitan and they raised the necessary funds. Polding felt he could not refuse.

He and his secretary, Coletti, sailed from Sydney in October 1869 in the same ship which carried the Bishops of Brisbane and Adelaide. However, Polding became ill on the voyage. At Aden the ship's medical officer feared that he might succumb to the heat of the Red Sea and, supported by the captain and Shiel, counselled him to turn back. Polding returned with Coletti to Australia via Bombay. When he heard the news, Barnabò wrote to express regret, adding that Polding had acted prudently because it was important for him to safeguard his health so that he might continue for many more years as the leader of the Australian Church. Polding's health problems on the voyage were real enough, but James Quinn believed that the Archbishop turned back from Europe because he could not face Rome again, the place of too many defeats and humiliations.

51 Barsanti-Barnabò, 29 Jan. 1869, op. cit.
52 Barnabò-Polding, 9 Jul. 1869, SAA, RC: Polding.
V

Having arrived back in Sydney, Polding, ever indecisive, began to think that perhaps he had made a mistake in not continuing his voyage.\(^{57}\) Even though the appointment of O'Mahony completed the diocesan reorganization of New South Wales there remained two outstanding issues: a projected division of the Diocese of Melbourne and Polding's need for an episcopal assistant in Sydney. According to the Cullenites, he was considering petitioning Rome for the creation of another diocese, extending along the coast south of Sydney. They believed that through this new diocese Polding hoped to increase his support in the hierarchy and perhaps groom his successor in Sydney as well. As we have seen, at their meeting after Lanigan's consecration they, too, wanted such a diocese but they hoped it would be reserved for McAlroy. When John Rigney went overseas in 1870 the Cullenites became alarmed. Rigney had become one of Polding's lieutenants among the Sydney secular clergy. He had been created Archdeacon\(^{58}\) and a Vicar General to assist Sheehy, whose good name he had defended stoutly during the recent controversy. Rigney went overseas to visit his elderly mother in Ireland but the Cullenites were certain that he also carried a commission from Polding to represent him at the Propaganda Congregation, perhaps to get Sheehy or Hanly or even Rigney himself made a bishop. Murray was annoyed by Polding's stubbornness: 'His perseverance is everlasting but what a pity it does not take a turn in the right direction even in his old days'.\(^{59}\)

The Cullenites sought to undermine Rigney by means of correspondence with Kirby, Cullen and Moran. They urged that the Propaganda Congregation allow nothing to be done apart from the May 1866 regulations which, as Matthew Quinn put it, 'breathe in every line the consummate wisdom of the

---

\(^{57}\) Birt, II, pp. 361, 363.
\(^{58}\) Polding-Gregory, 21 Feb. 1869, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 302.
\(^{59}\) Murray-Moran, 4 Nov. 1869 (CC), MDA, D.3.29.
Archdeacon John Rigney. His overseas trip in 1870 provoked an outbreak of paranoia among the Australian Cullenite bishops.

(Source: P.Hartigan, The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests, Kilmore, 1975, facing p. 97.)
Sacred Congregation'. They also used the well-tried tactic of attempting to destroy Rigney's personal credibility. Such an objective was difficult to achieve in this case because they did not know Rigney well and could not find a trace of moral dereliction, but they claimed that he lacked energy and zeal and was a 'cold, shallow, pompous diplomatist', who was disliked by the best Sydney clergy. They also claimed that he had formerly been hostile to the Benedictines and had only recently come into their favour because they thought they could use him. Polding's recommendation of Rigney for the Diocese of Brisbane back in 1858 suggests that this was probably not so. The Cullenites sought to associate Rigney with the disgraced Sheehy in the Roman mind by referring to the strong defence which he had given the Vicar General. They also claimed that he had collected funds in a scandalous way to finance his overseas trip. In short, he was unfit for the episcopacy and Rome should proceed with caution.

It may be significant for an understanding of Rigney's overseas trip in 1870 that all of the contemporary correspondence dealing with it located by this study was written by Cullenites. No documents created by Polding, such as instructions for Rigney, were discovered. Rigney appears not to have placed any submissions before the Propaganda Congregation. It is not clear that he even went to Rome. Perhaps Rigney went overseas simply for the reason publicly given, to visit his old Irish mother.

VI

The late 1860s was the gloomiest period of Polding's life. Having lost the initiative and on the defensive, he was profoundly disappointed. Try as he
might he could not secure the vital support of Rome, whose dominant attitude towards him was one of suspicion, kept alive by every mail bringing destructive reports about his administration. His relationship with Barnabò and the Propaganda Congregation had reached rock bottom.\textsuperscript{64} He feared that everything he had worked to achieve had been wrecked. His Benedictine establishment was withering away and he was pessimistic about its survival. He felt that the Australian Church at large was languishing.\textsuperscript{65} He lamented to Gregory early in 1868, 'The multiplication of Dioceses has not been to the advantage of Religion'.\textsuperscript{66} His hopes for the kind of men to be appointed to the new dioceses had been nullified. He could not win the confidence of his Cullenite suffragans. He felt surrounded by what he called Irish intrigue, hypocrisy and misrepresentation 'and such will be the case as long as an Englishman is in the position I occupy'.\textsuperscript{67} The militant Irish bishops were determined to put an end to the socially-open, easy-going style of Catholicism over which Polding had presided for three and a half decades and replace it with a tightly-disciplines, tribal Church on the modern Irish model through the imposition of strict policies on mixed marriages and mixed education.\textsuperscript{68}

Above all, Polding was terrified of the potential contained in the aggressive Irishism of the Cullenites to upset his plans for an Australian Catholicism in harmony with the rest of colonial society. He was convinced that, just as he had warned the Roman authorities, the importation of Irish bishops was causing an upsurge of sectarianism. He insisted that while


\textsuperscript{66} Polding-Gregory, 27 Mar. 1868, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 025; see also Polding-Gregory, 9 Oct. 1868, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{67} Polding-Gregory, 31 Jan. 1868, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{68} Polding-Gregory, 23 Oct. 1867, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 223; Molony, p. 37; O'Farrell, p. 215; M.Potts, 'We Never Sink: Matthew Quinn as Bishop of Bathurst 1865-1885', BAHons thesis, University of Sydney, 1971, p. 23.
Hibernianism might be acceptable in Dublin it was completely out of place in Sydney.69

He was mortified by the attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh in Sydney by an Irish-Australian Catholic, Henry O'Farrell, on 12 March 1868. The Archbishop wrote a pastoral letter defending the loyalty of Catholics, pleading for a distinctively Australian nationalism and insisting that the attempt on the Duke's life was in violation of all Catholic principle.70 Polding warned Barnabò that the mixing-up of the Catholic religion with Irish politics in New South Wales was making Catholicism look seditious, a situation accentuated by the Fenian, anti-English rhetoric of the Freeman's Journal. He told the Prefect that peace and concord in New South Wales had suffered irreparable damage.71

Polding was sliding into paranoia about everything Irish. In 1873 he applied to the Propaganda Congregation for a condemnation of the inoffensive Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society on the grounds that it was a secret society riddled with Fenianism and Freemasonry. The matter was taken up by Cardinal Luigi Bilio at an assembly of Propaganda cardinals and was referred to the Holy Office of the Inquisition, but no action was taken after the Bishop of Melbourne assured the Propaganda Secretary General, Simeoni, that the Society was neither secret, Fenian nor Masonic but was simply a mutual aid organization and entirely harmless.72

71 Polding-Barnabò, 27 Feb. 1869, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 9, fols. 94 ff; see also Compton, p. 346.
The incineration of St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney not once but twice in the 1860s, on 29 June 1865 and 5 January 1869, was a dramatic symbol of the change sweeping through Australian Catholicism. Polding suspected that the second fire was the result of arson motivated by the attack on the Duke of Edinburgh.73 On hearing of the first calamity, Pius IX and Barnabò offered Polding their condolences.74

Apart from a little comfort from Coletti, Polding felt utterly alone. He was still pining for Gregory.75 Weary, spiritless and oppressed by an immovable 'fatal depression', Polding felt his mental capability breaking down. He was in good form physically considering his age (76 in 1870), having recovered completely from the illness that caused him to cancel his trip to Europe, but psychologically he was no longer able to cope with his difficulties or even to perform the duties of his office.76 In October 1868 he cried out to Gregory, 'I am unhappy, oh, how unhappy'.77

It is little wonder that Polding was again thinking about retiring. He had begun to consider this course of action as soon as he heard the charges against Sheehy in August 1867.78 When Murray and Lanigan were in Sydney in July 1868 Polding told them he was considering retirement because bishops were combining with priests and lay people to place false reports about him before the Propaganda Congregation. Murray conveyed this information to

---

73 Polding-Gregory, 1 Feb. 1869, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 301.
74 Talbot-Polding, 27 Sept. 1865, & Barnabò-Polding, 4 Oct. 1865, SAA, RC: Polding. The second destruction of St. Mary's, coming on top of the first, was a terrible blow to Polding, who began to consider himself 'a Jonas to be flung into the sea for the well-being of others...I have been opposed in everything'. Polding-Gregory, 1 Feb. 1869, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 301.
77 Polding-Gregory, 9 Oct. 1868, op. cit.
Archbishop John Bede Polding in old age.

(Source: P.Hartigan, *The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests*, Kilmore, 1975, facing p. 97.)
Barnabò. In Rome Rinaldini passed on to Kirby the rumour that Polding had actually resigned. Kirby commented to Murray, 'It would save a great deal of trouble if the report were true'. At the bishops' meeting in Sydney in August 1868 Polding declared that he would stand down if Sheehy were not appointed. The others did not take him seriously, thinking that he was using the threat of resignation as a means of putting pressure on the Propaganda Congregation, but Barsanti told Barnabò that the only reason why Polding had not actually resigned was that he and Coletti were restraining him.

The bishops underestimated Polding's state of utter dejection. Embittered by the past, overwhelmed by present circumstances beyond his control and near despair over the future, the tone of his correspondence in 1868 and 1869 was increasingly despondent. He was desperate to get out. He wanted to retire to a monastery and fantasized about running away with Gregory to the Maneroo district of southern New South Wales to live the life of a simple missionary priest. His thoughts turned more and more to death. He longed for retirement in order 'to prepare for the great change which cannot be far distant'.

---

80 Kirby-Murray, 30 Aug. 1868, MDA, A.3.7.
81 Murray-Cullen, 9 Oct. 1868, DAA, Australia box, 58/1; Murray-Kirby, 3 Dec. 1868, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1868/375.
82 Barsanti-Barnabò, 29 Jan. 1869, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 9, fols. 60 ff.
84 Polding-Gregory, nd 1869, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 319.
85 Polding-Smith, 9 Oct. 1868, op. cit.
Growing older and feebler and preoccupied in the late 1860s by thoughts of retirement and death, Archbishop Polding thoughts turned to finding an assistant and his successor. Until 1842 Polding was directly responsible for the episcopal oversight of the entire continent of Australia together with Tasmania and Norfolk Island. The extent of his immediate jurisdiction was reduced by the creation of new dioceses in the 1840s but remained immense in European terms. When not occupied in Sydney by pastoral duties, ecclesiastical government and public affairs, Polding made missionary journeys on horseback over hundreds of kilometres to provide Catholic communities with the sacraments, preaching and instruction. He made four visits to Europe, each lasting about two years. Even after the establishment of extra dioceses, he continued to carry responsibilities as Metropolitan for the government of the Church throughout Australia. These responsibilities were looser than those of direct diocesan administration and usually consisted of co-ordinating activities but from time to time they demanded much time and energy. As Metropolitan, Polding was required to involve himself in the affairs of his suffragan bishops, sometimes by means of investigations carried out from Sydney, sometimes by means of personal visits. He expended much effort and anxiety on presiding over bishops’ conferences and provincial synods and on formulating proposals for the extension of the diocesan network over the continent.

It is therefore unsurprising that Polding early sought from Rome some relief from this morass of managerial work in the form of episcopal assistance in Sydney itself. It is equally unsurprising that his efforts in this direction
encountered frustration. Indeed, his quest for an assistant bishop, like his other dealings with Rome, assumed the proportions of a saga.

I

In seeking an assistant bishop,¹ Polding first asked Rome for a coadjutor in 1842 and proposed a list of candidates which was placed before the Propaganda cardinals by Cardinal Castracane on 28 February: two English Benedictines, William Ullathorne, his former Vicar General in Sydney and recently returned from Australia, and Francis Appleton of Liverpool; an English secular priest, Robert Willson of Nottingham; an Italian member of the Institute of Charity working on the English mission, Luigi Gentili of Leicester; and his current Vicar General in Sydney, Francis Murphy. The Propaganda Congregation was especially interested in Murphy but deferred a decision pending more information about this candidate.² Murphy was later assigned to the newly-created Diocese of Adelaide.

Polding's first proposals had included a mixed field of candidates but thereafter he almost invariably asked for an English Benedictine as coadjutor cum jure successionis, an Englishman in order to foster good relations with the British colonial authorities in Australia, a Benedictine to strengthen the monastic establishment in Sydney and cum jure successionis to guarantee Benedictine leadership of the Archdiocese after his death.

Polding's hope that Ullathorne would become his coadjutor³ was terminated by Ullathorne's decision to stay in England. In January 1846 Polding told the then Propaganda Prefect General, Fransoni, that he needed a coadjutor in order to be able to travel more extensively and asked for Henry

---

Gregory. Nothing came of it. The following year, on the suggestion of Polding then in Rome, the Propaganda Congregation established the Diocese of Maitland and decreed that the bishop of that place would function also as coadjutor to the Archbishop of Sydney. Polding's nomination for Maitland of Placid Burchall, then Prior of the English Benedictine monastery at Douai, fell through when Luke Barber, President General of the English Benedictine Congregation, insisted through his Roman agent, Thomas Grant of the English College, that the loss of Burchall would pose insuperable difficulties for the English Benedictines. Also acting through Grant, Polding turned Rome's attention to Charles Henry Davis, the Prior of Downside Abbey. Again Barber tried to block this move, but this time the intervention was unsuccessful for at the end of November 1847 Fransoni wrote to Barber to inform him that the Pope had chosen Davis as Bishop of Maitland and Coadjutor to the Archbishop of Sydney.

The Propaganda Congregation's original intention was that Davis was to make Maitland his first priority. However, on his arrival in Sydney in 1848, Davis remained there and spent the whole of his episcopal career as Polding's assistant. He never visited his own Diocese of Maitland, which functioned as little more than a titular see to give him a local title. Early in 1852 the

---

7 Polding-Fransoni, 1 Sept. 1847, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 3, fol. 778.
8 Fransoni-Barber, 30 Nov. 1847, CEPA, LDB, vol. 336, fols. 1365 ff.
10 The statement in H. Campbell, The Diocese of Maitland 1866 - 1966, Maitland, 1966, pp. 58-59 & 67, that the Diocese of Maitland was created as a merely titular see in the first place is incorrect. The Propaganda Congregation originally expected it to operate as a real territorial diocese and instructed Davis to discuss its boundaries with Polding. See Fransoni-Davis, 20 Apr. 1848, op. cit. Before the creation of the Archdiocese of Sydney, when he was still Vicar Apostolic of New Holland, Polding had had to endure Protestant
Charles Henry Davis, OSB, first Bishop of Maitland and first coadjutor to the Archbishop of Sydney.

(Source: P.F. Moran, *History of the Catholic Church in Australasia*, Sydney, ny, facing p. 88.)
Propaganda Congregation regularized the arrangement whereby Davis resided and worked in Sydney on the grounds that there were few Catholics in the Maitland district. In any event, the episcopal career of Davis was brief. Always in delicate health, he died in May 1854 at the age of 39.

II

Having lost Davis, Polding found it difficult to obtain from Rome another coadjutor. Indeed, 20 years passed before there was a replacement. At first, Polding himself was in no hurry. It was not until four years after Davis' death that, inspired by planning for new dioceses, Polding again turned his attention to securing a bishop to help him in the running of his own diocese. In August 1858 he wrote to Cardinal Barnabò adducing his age and the changes in colonial life, which made ecclesiastical government more complex, in support of his application for a coadjutor. He added that when he was in Rome in 1854 and told Pope Pius IX about the demise of Davis the Pope had consolated him by telling him that he could choose anybody he liked as a replacement, except Gregory. Accordingly, Polding now asked for either of two English Benedictine monks, Norbert Sweeney, the Prior of Downside, and Lawrence Shepherd, a missionary in Bath. Polding suggested that Ullathorne be approached for an opinion about these men. Barnabò took up this suggestion and also contacted Placid Burchall, who, by this stage, had succeeded Barber as President General. Both Ullathorne and Burchall were then in Rome. They opposed Polding's scheme. They praised Sweeney and

11 Propaganda rescript, 8 Feb. 1852, SAA, RC: Polding.
12 Brown, p. 216.
Shepherd but stated that neither of them was suitable for the episcopate because the former lacked firmness and the latter was young, inexperienced and in poor health. In any case, the English Benedictines could not afford to lose good monks like Sweeney and Shepherd. Ullathorne expressed the view to McEncroe, then overseas, that Polding’s coadjutor should not be a Benedictine. At their congregazione of 14 March 1859 Cardinal Altieri told his Propaganda colleagues that Polding desired Gregory as his coadjutor above all others. The cardinals decided to defer the question of a Sydney coadjutor because Polding had stated that, if through the subdivision of the Archdiocese he gained four extra suffragans, the immediate need for a coadjutor disappeared. At this stage Polding was relaxed about the idea of a coadjutor. He told Willson that the nomination was best left to a provincial council as the suffragans had a strong interest in the outcome. He even remarked that the coadjutor need not be a Benedictine.

However, Polding did not at that juncture get four suffragans but only one, James Quinn of Brisbane. Another seven years would elapse before the other three sees - Maitland, Goulburn and Bathurst - would receive resident bishops. Accordingly, at the end of 1862 Polding wrote to his Roman agent, Bernard Smith, pointing out his continuing need for an assistant and relaying the story about the Pope undertaking to be guided by him as to who this might be. One and a half years later, in July 1864, Polding wrote directly to Barnabò reminding him of the Pope’s promise. Polding veered back to his preference for a Benedictine and in this letter reiterated his desire for Sweeney. Doubtless moved by Barnabò’s recent displeasure over the appointment of the allegedly

19 Polding-Willson, 18 Mar. 1859 (TC), SPM, O’Brien papers.
20 Polding-Smith, 21 Dec. 1862, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
English Hanly and Hayes as administrators of Goulburn and Armidale, Polding emphasized Sweeney's Irish ancestry. About the same time, Polding suggested the possibility of another Benedictine with Irish connections, his Vicar General, Austin Sheehy. Again, Burchall opposed the removal of Sweeney for the same reasons given in 1858. He warned Smith that Sweeney would stir up feeling against the Benedictine Order in Sydney, which in any case, he reckoned, had a bleak future because of the mismanagement of Polding and Gregory. He thought the coadjutor should be a secular priest. Barnabò's reply to Polding asserted that Sweeney was a weak man, poor at administration and inept in his own Order in the office of prior. The Prefect sought other names from Polding, reminding him that it was not sufficient to make only one nomination; three names were required, with a description of the qualities of the people referred to.

III

We saw how Polding in Europe in 1866-1867 tried to influence Roman appointments to new bishoprics in New South Wales. We must now consider the parallel efforts that he made during the same trip to obtain a coadjutor. At the congregazione of 18 September 1865 Cardinal von Reisach suggested that perhaps James Murray, about to be appointed Bishop of Maitland, could function also as coadjutor in Sydney as Charles Davis had done. Such a solution was not likely to satisfy Polding. In Rome in the

---

21 See this thesis, pp. 228-230.
26 See this thesis, Chapter VII.
27 Cardinale Ponente Carlo Reisach. Appendice con sommario della Ponenza di Maggio 1865 sulla elezione di un Amministratore Apostolico con carattere vescovile per la Diocesi di Perth, di un Coadjutore per Vescovo di Hobartown, dei Vescovi di Goulburn, Armidale ed
middle of May 1866 he announced to Barnabò that he was going to England to explore possibilities of an appointment from there and to consult the Benedictine authorities and the bishops.\textsuperscript{28} Gregory had just been given permission to return to Australia and Polding would have been delighted to have him in the office of coadjutor,\textsuperscript{29} but that was out of the question as far as Pius IX and Barnabò were concerned.

Polding's reports back to the Propaganda Congregation were typically disjointed and shifting. From London he suggested the name of one of those on his general list for Australian sees, John Crookall, as being particularly suitable for the coadjutorship and recommended by Thomas Grant, Bishop of Southwark.\textsuperscript{30} However, while travelling around England, Polding noticed two brothers, Herbert and Roger Bede Vaughan, members of an old Catholic gentry family.\textsuperscript{31} Herbert was a Roman-trained secular priest of the Archdiocese of Westminster, Vice-President of St. Edmund's Seminary, Ware, and a member of the Oblates of St. Charles, recently introduced into England by Archbishop Henry Manning. He would go on to become Bishop of Salford and Manning's successor as Archbishop of Westminster and a cardinal.\textsuperscript{32} Roger was a Benedictine, Prior of Belmont monastery in Hertfordshire, the novitiate house of the English Benedictine Congregation, and professor of philosophy there.\textsuperscript{33} At first, Polding concentrated on Herbert Vaughan and claimed to have the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Polding-Barnabò, 14 May 1866, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 993A, fol. 754.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Polding-Barnabò, 12 Jun. 1866, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 993A, fols. 719 ff; Polding-Gregory, 18 Jul. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MA, O 166.
\item \textsuperscript{31} For the Vaughan family, see M.Vaughan, \textit{Courtfield and the Vaughts: An English Catholic Inheritance}, London, 1989.
\item \textsuperscript{33} See this thesis, pp. 337-338.
\end{itemize}
support of Ullathorne. Indeed, he stated that Ullathorne suggested Herbert for Sydney. Herbert asked Ullathorne not to promote him but rather to point out to Polding and Barnabò that he was too young and inexperienced and had important work to do in England.

Ullathorne's alleged advocacy of Herbert Vaughan sounds unlikely. The leadership of the English Catholic Church and Benedictine Order was alarmed by Polding's interest in the Vaughan brothers, two young, promising, talented men for whom great things were planned in England. Polding also claimed that Manning supported his bid for the elder of the two Vaughan brothers. This was definitely not so. On the contrary, Manning informed Barnabò that he, Manning, had told Polding that he was totally opposed to the removal of Herbert, who had founded a college for training foreign missionaries, the St. Joseph's Missionary Society at Mill Hill. Manning argued that the continuation of this work, and also of the Oblates of St. Charles, depended on Vaughan. Moreover, coming from a distinguished family, Vaughan was exceptionally well placed to represent Catholicism before the English elite. Manning was prepared to allow Polding to take some other priest of the Archdiocese of Westminster. Vaughan himself told Polding that he was not prepared to go to Sydney.

Reluctant to press his claim on Herbert Vaughan in the face of Manning's opposition, Polding shifted his attention to the younger brother, Roger. In July he communicated this change to Barnabò in a letter written from London. He first met Roger at Belmont, was most favourably impressed by

36 Polding-Smith, 19 Jun. 1866, op. cit.
39 Polding-Smith, 9 Jul. 1866, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
On 28 July 1866 Polding wrote to Barnabò from London requesting Roger Bede Vaughan as his coadjutor.

(Source: CEPA, SOCG, vol. 933A, fol. 730.)
him and asked Gregory to sound him out about the Sydney position.  

He had earlier resolved not to seek Roger Vaughan on the grounds that his removal would harm the English Benedictine Congregation. However, he now set this resolve aside.

The Benedictines offered stout resistance. The President, Burchall, told Polding personally that it was impossible for him to allow Roger Vaughan to leave his present, vital work. He entreated Barnabò not to grant Polding's application. 

Belmont priory was within the territory of the Diocese of Newport and Menevia, whose bishop, Thomas Brown, also a Benedictine, was hoping that Roger Vaughan would be groomed as his successor. Brown resented Polding for going back on his undertaking not to try to obtain Vaughan. He thought Polding was 'underhand' and had 'no scruples whatsoever'. At this stage, Vaughan himself had no wish to go to Australia.

The Benedictine authorities sought the assistance of Manning and Ullathorne to block Polding's moves. Manning told Barnabò that Roger Vaughan was the 'spes gregis' of the English Benedictines. He tried to divert Roman attention to Crookall. Manning and Brown enlisted the powerful backing of George Talbot at the Roman curia to oppose the appointment to Sydney of either of the Vaughans. Talbot's view was that 'What we must try to do, is not make so vast a continent either a Benedictine or an Irish monopoly...The former has failed, now they are trying to do the latter'.

Around the middle of August Talbot forwarded to Barnabò translated copies of correspondence that he had received from Manning and Herbert Vaughan stating their reasons why Herbert was more useful in England than

---

41 Polding-Gregory, 12 Sept. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 168; see also Birt, II, p. 318, & Kavenagh, p. 149.
42 Polding-Smith, 19 Jun. 1866, op. cit.; see also Ullathorne-Brown, 18 Sept. 1866, CAA, Brown papers.
43 Burchall-Polding, 9 Sept. 1866, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 993A, no folio number.
44 Quoted in Kavenagh, p. 149; see also O'Donoghue, p. 151.
46 Talbot-Brown, 27 Jul. 1866, CAA, Brown papers.
in a colony. Shortly afterwards, he wrote to Capalti, the Propaganda Secretary General, urging that Roger Vaughan was needed for the future development of the English Benedictines and the Diocese of Newport. He expounded his theory of the danger of two ecclesiastical monopolies in Australia and how this danger could be avoided by choosing neither a Benedictine nor an Irishman for the factionalized Archdiocese of Sydney but a non-Benedictine English priest from a respectable family. Talbot suggested Mgr. Charles Eyre, a canon of Hexham Cathedral and an able administrator with a good reputation and the endorsement of Manning.

However, Polding rejected Eyre after finding that they were too different in character and views. Having arrived back in Rome, Polding placed his definitive position before Barnabá ‘e come se questo fosse il mio ultimo testamento’; he wanted Roger Vaughan, Herbert Vaughan, Austin Sheehy or John Crookall, in that order. He was convinced that Roger Vaughan was ideal for Australia and pleaded with the Prefect to concede him.

Early in September Polding was enjoying a rest at the summer villa of the English College at Monte Porzio in the Alban Hills. On the day of this return to Rome he went to the Propaganda palace to see what he could find out. He saw Capalti and Rinaldini, who informed Polding that Manning had directed Talbot to oppose the appointment of Herbert Vaughan and that Brown was very angry at Polding's designs on Roger Vaughan. Polding felt confident that both Herbert and Roger would accept the job if appointed and asked Gregory to do what he could at the English end.

The cardinals of the Propaganda Congregation met on 24 September 1866. The ponenza was delivered by Cardinal Altieri. The Sydney coadjutorship, he

47 Talbot-Barnabá, 14 Aug. 1866, CEPA, SOCG, fols. 744 ff, enclosing copies of Manning-Talbot, 8 Jul. 1866, fol. 744, & H.Vaughan-Talbot, 12 Jul. 1866, op. cit.
49 'and as if this were my last will and testament'. Polding-Barnabá, 13 Aug. 1866, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 993A, fols. 732 ff.
50 Polding-Gregory, 12 Sept. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 168.
Talbot writes to Capalti opposing the removal of Vaughan from England and warning against allowing the Australian Church to become either a Benedictine or an Irish preserve.

(Source: CEPA, SOCG, vol. 993A, fol. 734.)
observed, was an important matter 'avendo per oggetto un elezione alla quale può dipendere in gran parte l'avvenire della Chiesa Cattolica nell'Australia'. He reminded the gathering that in 1852 the Congregation had decided against a perpetual Benedictine succession in Sydney but had also ruled that such a policy did not exclude the appointment of a monk if it were deemed opportune. He then listed the candidates, including the Vaughan brothers, Sheehy, Crookall and Eyre, and indicated that the man whom Polding wanted more than any other was Roger Vaughan. Altieri emphasized the claim of Manning and other English Catholic leaders that the loss of either of the Vaughans would damage the Church in England and gave prominence to Talbot's warning about allowing Australia to fall under either Benedictine or Irish domination. Since Polding was now doubtful about Crookall as coadjutor and reluctant to take Eyre, the cardinals were in a quandary as what to do about Sydney. Altieri suggested that on account of the difficulties of the present situation they defer the appointment of a coadjutor with right of succession and give Polding a simple auxiliary for now to help him with his existing workload. The cardinals opted for this course of action and decided to recommend Austin Sheehy. This solution was confirmed by the Pope.51

In the course of an interview with Polding after this decision, Capalti said there could be no doubt that Roger Vaughan was the best man for the Sydney job but referred to the determined opposition made by Manning and Burchall. He spoke well of Sheehy.52 Polding was convinced that Talbot was responsible for his failure to secure the younger Vaughan.53 Talbot could not in conscience support the departure of Roger Vaughan from England. He advised

51 'having as its object a choice upon which can depend to a large degree the future of the Catholic Church in Australia'. Cardinale Ponente Ludovico Altieri. Sulla elezione dei nuovi vescovi di Armidale e Goulburn e sulla nomina del Coadjutore di Sydney nell'Australia, Sept. 1866, CEPA, Acta, vol. 231, fols. 582 ff.
52 Birt, II, p. 320.
53 Polding-Gregory, 10 Nov. 1866, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 173.
Brown to move speedily to apply for Vaughan as coadjutor in Newport. Burchall, of course, was relieved by the Roman decision: 'I do trust we shall be left unmolested...'

IV

We saw how Austin Sheehy’s appointment as auxiliary bishop in Sydney was never put into effect. As a result, around the middle of 1868 Polding had to start all over again to obtain help with the government of his diocese. Spurred on by his advancing years and receding confidence, he poured whatever energy remained to him into this goal. He now set a narrow objective for himself and pursued it with his characteristic doggedness. When reminded again by the Congregation that the official procedure required him to list three nominations he listed priests such as Sweeney, Crookall and Lockhart (one of his early recommendations for Bathurst), but only for the sake of form. He wanted only one man as his coadjutor and successor: Roger Bede Vaughan of Belmont. In the midst of a sea of troubles, Polding told Gregory that the thought of getting Vaughan was his only comfort.

As early as May 1868, even before Pope Pius IX’s decision in June not to proceed with Sheehy’s consecration, Polding wrote to Barnabò to renew his application for Vaughan and repeated this plea over the following five years. He emphasized the Pope’s promise in 1854 to give him a coadjutor of his own choice. He stated that there was no suitable man for the job in Australia. Above all, he argued that while the Irish element was important, Australian Catholicism was ethnically diverse and was consequently best served by an ecclesiastical hierarchy which reflected that diversity. Since, Polding maintained, all the suffragans were Irish - that statement was not strictly

54 Talbot-Brown, 4 Jan. 1867, CAA, Brown papers.
56 See this thesis, Chapter VIII.
57 See this thesis, p. 213.
correct although nearly so - it would provide balance if the Sydney coadjutor and future Metropolitan were of another nationality. Such an arrangement would also help to minimize political and sectarian animosities provoked by the equation of the Catholic religion with Hibernian nationalism, as well as ensuring that the ecclesiastical leadership remained above internecine strife within the Irish communities, Gaelic and Orange. While disowning any personal sense of nationality, Polding argued that the coadjutor should be an Englishman because New South Wales, as with the other Australian colonies, was British in government and largely British in culture.59

Polding was supported by his faithful secretary, Vincenzo Coletti, who told Barnabò and Rinaldini that an Englishman was preferable because 'di mente più calma e fredda' and likely to have more influence with the government and non-Catholic society.60 Polding also wanted Vaughan because he was a Benedictine and could be expected to strengthen the Sydney Benedictine presence but Polding never referred to this factor in his correspondence with Barnabò.

At first, the prospects for Polding's renewed campaign for Vaughan were not bright. As he observed to Gregory, if Burchall or Brown objected, 'I am done for'.61 And yet through the late 1860s he was aware that the chief opposition in England to Vaughan's removal to Australia came from Burchall, backed up by Talbot in Rome.62 Heptonstall told Polding not to think of Vaughan as his coadjutor.63 Early in 1869 Polding was depressed by the

---

60 'a more tranquil and cool mind'. Coletti-Barnabò, 9 Oct. 1868, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 8, fols. 1338 ff; see also Coletti-Rinaldini, 8 Sept. 1868, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 9, fols. 329 ff, & Coletti-Barnabò, 8 Sept. 1869, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 9, fols 329 ff.
61 Polding-Gregory, 19 May 1868, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 256.
63 Polding-Gregory, 1 Feb. 1869, SPM-DownAA/MF, O 301.
intelligence that Vaughan had been assigned to Newport. He feared that he would never obtain assistance in Sydney and mused dejectedly that Barnabò would not be sorry to see him in such a predicament.\(^{64}\) The early response of the Propaganda Congregation was indeed to remind Polding that the English Benedictines saw the retention of Roger Vaughan as necessary and were proposing him for a bishopric in England. It instructed him to make further nominations of candidates who were not only suitable but also, in practice, available and to do so in accordance with the 1866 regulations.\(^ {65}\)

This last instruction was, of course, ominous for Polding because it threatened to involve in the selection process that group which was absolutely opposed to his plans, the Australian Cullenite Irish bishops. Having disposed of Sheehy, they were not likely to welcome another Benedictine candidate, least of all an English one. In mid-1870 James Murray advised Patrick Moran in Dublin that Polding was straining every nerve to get an Englishman appointed, which would be a 'calamity and might perpetuate the evils that have so long afflicted this Australian Church'.\(^ {66}\) Moran intimated to Tobias Kirby that Murray wanted them to use their influence with the Propaganda officials to ensure that nothing was decided about Australia apart from the 1866 norms, adding that a Benedictine appointment 'would only perpetuate the decay of religion in that quarter'.\(^ {67}\)

At this stage the Irish bishops in Australia seem to have been unaware that Polding was pressing for one particular English Benedictine. Vaughan's name does not appear in their correspondence about the Sydney coadjutorship. Their Irish and Roman friends did not alert them to what exactly Polding was up to, as on previous occasions, because they themselves did not know. This

---

66 Murray-Moran, 6 Jul. 1870 (draft), MDA, D.3.51.
67 Moran-Kirby, 6 Dec. 1870, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1870/213A.
time the Propaganda officials kept the matter secret. The Cullenites would be disadvantaged by this lack of information. Perhaps lulled by their victory over Sheehy, they wrote little to the Congregation in the late 1860s and early 1870s about the coadjutorship. In the dark, what efforts they did make were misdirected. Murray warned Moran and Matthew Quinn warned Kirby, who promptly relayed the intelligence to the Congregation, that Archdeacon Rigney's visit to Europe was part of a plan to have a new diocese created on the coast south of Sydney, with Rigney's participation a stepping stone for his becoming coadjutor.68 As we have seen,69 Polding's intentions as regards Rigney are unclear. When Timothy O'Mahony arrived in Australia in 1871 to take charge of the Diocese of Armidale he received such kindness from Polding that the rumour started among the other New South Wales-Queensland suffragans that Polding wanted O'Mahony to be his coadjutor and that O'Mahony had accepted. Murray, Quinn and Lanigan were strongly opposed to such an arrangement and reported the matter to Kirby who dutifully informed the Congregation. Perhaps concerned about their lack of direct correspondence with the Congregation about the coadjutorship, Kirby exhorted them to write often to keep up Roman confidence in Irish bishops.70 It is possible that Polding deliberately encouraged the speculation about Rigney and O'Mahony in order to distract his suffragans from his real intentions and to sow disunity among them.

Moved by Polding's increasingly shrill pleas for help, Barnabò realized that practical measures would soon have to be taken. In July 1871 and again in September he wrote to Archbishop Manning seeking suggestions about a

---

68 Kirby memorandum to Propaganda, nd, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 9, fol. 709; Murray-Moran, 24 Sept. 1870 (draft), MDA, D.3.52.
69 See this thesis, pp. 308-310.
70 O'Mahony-Lanigan, 1 Apr. 1871, & Kirby-Lanigan, 15 Oct. 1871, CGAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle 'Episcopal letters and correspondence to and from Dr. Lanigan'; Lanigan-Kirby, 8 Apr. 1871, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1871/178; Kirby memorandum to Propaganda, nd, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 9, fols. 1112 ff; G.Dillon-Vaughan, 22 May 1878 (CC), CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 12, fol. 702.
Sydney appointment and nominations from among the Westminster clergy. It is significant that the Prefect wrote to London and not Dublin. He was clearly coming around to Polding's view that the coadjutor should be English. Given the fierce opposition of the suffragans to a Benedictine, Barnabô suggested to Manning the compromise first mooted by Talbot, the appointment of a non-Benedictine English priest.71

Towards the end of 1871 the Bishop of Maitland voyaged to Rome for an ad limina visit. When he arrived early the following year he was disconcerted to discover that Polding was continuing to insist that his coadjutor be both Benedictine and English. In his discussions with Murray, Barnabô tried to maintain a balance between Polding's determined line and the suffragans' objections to it. Murray claimed that it was Barnabô's view that since the Archdiocese of Sydney was mainly Irish in complexion the man chosen should also be Irish, but that was not the view the Prefect had put to Manning a few months before. Murray argued that Catholicism in Sydney would flourish under an Irish Archbishop and urged the Propaganda Congregation to decide nothing without consulting the suffragans in accordance with the 1866 procedures since it was vital that the coadjutor be acceptable to them. He told Barnabô that Polding had never recognized the value of these procedures. Murray was worried that the Cardinal seemed inclined to compromise. Barnabô did not refer to the suggestion he had made to Manning, that is to say, a non-Benedictine English appointment, but he did mention the possibility of returning to the arrangement that had been adopted in September 1866 under which Polding was granted a merely auxiliary bishop without right of succession. This solution had the advantage of meeting Polding's need for help without having to make any immediate policy decisions about the future of the Church in Sydney. Murray, however, opposed even this pragmatic

solution. It was hard, he told Barnabò, for a not-well-informed outsider to understand the major difficulties that would be created even by an auxiliary in what he claimed was a deeply-divided Catholic community. One wonders if Barnabò thought that Murray was implying that he, Barnabò, was not well informed. Murray alluded to the Sheehy affair, doubtless trying to scare Barnabò away from the auxiliary option. Murray's hard line did his cause little good. In effect, he was proposing that a man approaching 80 be left without help to manage the most important diocese in Australian during difficult times. Murray asked Cullen's support in prising the initiative away from Polding by persuading the Congregation to order that a bishops' meeting be held to come up with other names.

Around Easter 1872 Murray received a visit at the Irish College from the Australian *minutante*, Rinaldini, who raised the possibility of Roger Vaughan's appointment. This appears to be the first occasion on which an Australian suffragan bishop heard Vaughan's name in connection with Sydney. Murray was taken aback and told Rinaldini what he thought about the Benedictine presence in Sydney and the likely effect of its continuation on the progress of religion. The *minutante* asked him to put his views in writing, which Murray assured Cullen, 'I shall take care not to do'. Murray also saw Barnabò and the Secretary, Simeoni, 'but our visit was one of *buoni auguri* and *felicissime feste*'.

Hearing that Rome was consulting Manning, Polding himself canvassed the Archbishop of Westminster even though he realized that Manning was opposed to the release of Vaughan to Sydney. Citing age and sickness, Polding begged Manning to help him find a coadjutor from a list

73 Murray-Cullen, 5 Apr. 1872, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
74 Murray-Cullen, Easter Monday 1872, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
comprising Vaughan, Lockhart and a priest named Bamfield. He authorized Manning to make the choice and place it before the Pope as if it were his own. Despite listing three names, Polding made it plain that he was really only interested in Vaughan because Vaughan was a Benedictine and the Order is Sydney 'is as yet in its early infancy'.

Polding also recruited Gregory to his campaign, asking him to make representations to the Propaganda officials and other influential figures at Rome. Gregory accordingly wrote to Barnabò, Rinaldini and the Benedictine Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Pitra. Speaking from his knowledge of Polding and experience of Australia, he said that the appointment of Vaughan would immeasurably console Polding and allow him to live out his last years in tranquillity after a long and arduous life. Vaughan was ideal for Australia and his energy and wisdom would benefit the local Church. He claimed that Vaughan got along very well with Polding and wanted to go to Sydney. Moreover, Australia belonged to England and needed English bishops. To counter the rival claim of Brown, Gregory pointed out that Polding had asked for Vaughan more often than Brown and had started earlier. He noted, too, that three dioceses in England - Salford, Portsmouth and Clifton - were already occupied by members of the Vaughan family; to confer a fourth on it might expose the English Catholic hierarchy to an unhealthy domination by one family. Barnabò undertook to place Gregory's views before the Propaganda cardinals. Gregory had claimed that Vaughan wanted to go to Sydney but in November 1872 Vaughan announced to his Benedictine superiors that he proposed to resign the priorship of Belmont to take up the Newport position.

---

76 Polding-Manning, 31 Dec. 1872 (CC), SAA, OC: Manning.
80 Vaughan-Murphy, 15 Nov. 1872, DownAA, Abbot's Archives, 1872 file.
Henry Gregory presents arguments to Barnabò for sending Vaughan to Australia.

(Source: CEPA, SOCG, vol. 1000, fol. 72.)
However, the steady movement of Roman policy towards a position favourable to Polding's pleadings was accelerated by a shift in the politics of the English Benedictine Congregation. The late 1860s and early 1870s witnessed mounting tension between President General Burchall and Vaughan over the future of the Order in England. Vaughan wished to reform it in a more explicitly monastic direction by building up the communities and to reorganize its mission and administration to facilitate this development. He had been hoping to use the novitiate house at Belmont as a means of spreading a more monastic consciousness around the Congregation through the young, recently-formed monks. Burchall saw this policy as a threat to existing pastoral endeavours and changed his attitude towards the prospect of Vaughan becoming Bishop of Newport as Manning and Brown were still advocating strongly. Burchall now began to see the Sydney option as a way of getting rid of Vaughan. For his part, Vaughan felt that Belmont was not being sufficiently supported by the other Benedictine communities in England. Burchall wrote to Polding to tell him that if he were to ask for Vaughan again he, Burchall, would not object. In October 1871 he asked Polding's Roman agent, Smith, not to oppose any future moves to transfer Vaughan to Australia. Actually, Polding had heard as early as 1868 that Burchall's attitude was changing and passed this news on to Barnabò at the time.

Polding informed Barnabò of the alteration in Burchall's thinking even though Burchall himself had asked him to say nothing of it. Burchall was anxious lest his manoeuvres come to the ears of Brown who, in that event, would denounce him as a traitor to the English Benedictines. Despite these fears, Burchall instructed his Roman agent, Smith, to place his latest views before the Propaganda Congregation if asked.

81 Burchall-Smith, 16 Oct. 1871, cited in Kavenagh, p. 150; see also O'Donoghue, p. 162.
82 Polding-Barnabò, nd 1868, op. cit.; see also Polding-Gregory, 4 Nov. 1871, op. cit.
83 Burchall-Smith, 5 Dec. 1872, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Propaganda/S.Ufficio.
Around the middle of November 1872 Barnabò wrote directly to Burchall asking him for his conscientious opinion about Vaughan's future. Burchall replied that while he preferred Vaughan to remain in England - doubtless a qualification inserted with a view to Brown's reaction - he was convinced that Vaughan's talents would be best deployed in the Sydney coadjutorship.84

This reply was decisive. Barnabò immediately sent a letter to Manning, explaining that each passing year rendered a coadjutor in Sydney more necessary and for reasons that he appreciated Polding wanted an Englishman. Since Burchall's opposition to Vaughan's transfer to Sydney had ceased and in view of the move to make Vaughan an assistant to Brown, the Propaganda authorities could not overlook the fact of Polding's earlier and often-repeated claim. Barnabò suggested that Sydney as the first city of a vast continent with a rapidly growing colonial society might present Vaughan with a field more proportionate to his talents than a small Welsh diocese. This reason does not appear in Polding's correspondence. It seems to have been first thought of within the Propaganda Congregation. Barnabò asked Manning to supply alternatives for Newport should Vaughan be assigned to Sydney. He indicated that it was still possible that Vaughan would go to Newport but the tenor of his letter was strongly inclined to Sydney.85

Manning realized that the Congregation, urged on by Polding and influenced by the change in Burchall, was leaning towards Vaughan for Sydney. The Archbishop of Westminster agreed that Polding's successor should be an Englishman and a Benedictine but he was still opposed to the appointment of Vaughan whom he wanted to see in the English hierarchy. He asked Brown whether there was some other English Benedictine monk

---

84 Burchall-Barnabò, 24 Nov. 1872, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 1000, fol. 70.
85 Barnabò-Manning, 4 Dec. 1872, WAA, Roman letters, vol. 1, 246.

who was suitable and free to go to Australia. He feared that Rome had forgotten about his former objections.86

Panicked by the drift of events, Brown sent a major letter to Barnabò in mid-December 1872 imploring 'caldissamente' that he be given Vaughan who, he wrote, was perfect for Newport where he was already well known and esteemed by the clergy. He explained that he worked very well with Vaughan who would be displeased to be separated from him and Newport. Furthermore, Vaughan's role among the English Benedictines was irreplaceable. Brown warned that Vaughan was unknown in Sydney and that the importation of an outsider would cause jealousy among the local clergy. He marvelled that after an episcopate of 40 years Polding could not find somebody from within his own diocese to assist and succeed him.87

As 1873 opened there was little doubt about what the Propaganda decision would be. Barnabò assured Brown that his weighty views would be placed before the imminent congregazione but stated that Polding had been asking for Vaughan for a long time and his needs could not be ignored.88 An optimistic Gregory informed Polding that the Roman attitude augured well. He again claimed that Vaughan was keen to go to Sydney.89 The feelings of James Murray, who was still overseas, were the reverse. From Dublin he wrote to Kirby with foreboding that an English Benedictine coadjutor would be 'nothing less than a calamity' and hoped that Rome would not go through with it.90

Even as Murray wrote it was too late. On 28 January ten cardinals assembled in the Propaganda palace to deliberate on the Sydney coadjutorship. The report was presented by Cardinal Pitra. He began by advising that the

---

90 Murray-Kirby, 1 Feb. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/47.
Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Pitra, patristics scholar and a member of the *Propaganda* Congregation.

principal reason why Vaughan had not been conceded to Polding had now entirely ceased and so the question was: Should Vaughan be assigned to Sydney or Newport? He gave a history of Polding's quest for Vaughan, dwelling on its length and persistence. There had been several obstacles but 'Mons. Polding però non si è mai dato per vinto'. Pitra noted two major continuing objections. Firstly, if Polding's application were granted it might be thought that the Archdiocese of Sydney were being consigned to Benedictine proprietorship, against which the Holy See had been warned some years before. Secondly, the Australian suffragan bishops, almost all Irishmen, did not want an English successor to Polding given the 'nota freddezza' between Irish and English. (Pitra failed to distinguish between the Cullenite and non-Cullenite Irish bishops. There is no evidence for what the leading non-Cullenite suffragan, Goold of Melbourne, thought about the possibility of Vaughan in Sydney.) These objections notwithstanding, Pitra tilted the debate in Polding's favour at the outset by describing the Archdiocese of Sydney as 'un campo assai più vasto e più proporzionato [than Newport] alle ottime qualità di cui è [Vaughan] dotato per testimonianza commune'. This factor was given considerable prominence in Pitra's presentation. Pitra predicted that Vaughan's conciliatoriness would help to overcome long-standing divisions in Australia. An English Archbishop, especially a high-born one like Vaughan, could exercise influence with the civil authorities in Sydney and London to benefit the Australian Catholic Church. The development of religion in 'Nuova Olanda' - as the Propaganda officials still sometimes called Australia - needed somebody with Vaughan's qualities in the premier see. The other reasons for assigning Vaughan to Sydney were extracted from the correspondence of Polding and Gregory. Cardinal Pitra concluded that nobody could succeed more worthily than Vaughan to Polding 'che può dirsi con verità il fondatore delle Chiese tutte d’Australia'. After a discussion, the cardinals - Pitra, Barnabò, Patrizi, di Pietro, Sacconi, de Luca, Monaco, Mertel,
SULLA NOMINA DEL COADIUTORE CON FUTURA SUCCESSIONE RICHIESTO PIU VOLTE DALL'ARCIVESCOVO DI SYDNEY NELL'AUSTRALIA.
Consolini and Capalti - voted to recommend that Vaughan be assigned to Sydney. Five days later, Pius IX accepted this recommendation. 91

The Propaganda secretariat was busy in the first week of February sending out communications to those affected by the decision. On the 5th a telegram was sent to Vaughan and the Prefect also wrote to him exhorting him to accept. From Belmont Vaughan sent an official submission to the Pope. 92 The following day the Prefect wrote to Polding and Brown. To the latter he expressed his regrets, explained the reasons for the decision and directed him to submit a new list for Newport. 93 On the same day Simeoni wrote to Manning informing him that a letter which Manning wrote on 24 January had arrived in Rome too late to be considered at the congregazione held on the 28th. Simeoni remarked that England's loss was Australia's gain. 94

At this point it will be useful to look at Roger Bede Vaughan's career thus far. He went to school at Downside Abbey and became a novice there. He took his first vows in 1854 and was sent to Italy where he continued his studies at the monasteries of S. Paolo fuori le Mura and S. Callisto in Rome and at Monte Cassino. During this period he was favourably noticed by Pope Pius IX. He was ordained in the Lateran Basilica by Cardinal Patrizi in 1859. On his return to England he undertook parish work and taught at Downside. He was then transferred to Belmont where he stayed until 1872 as prior and professor of philosophy. He also held the position of Provost of the cathedral chapter of

91 'Mons. Polding, however, never gives up...marked coldness...a field rather bigger and more proportionate to the excellent qualities which are Vaughan's by common testimony...who can be said with truth to be the founder of all the Churches of Australia'. Ponente Cardinale Giovanni Battista Pitra. Ristretto con sommario sulla nomina del Coadiutore con futura successione richiesto più volte dall'Arcivescovo di Sydney nell'Australia, Jan. 1873, CEPA, Acta, vol. 239, fols. 16 ff.
92 Vaughan-Pius IX, 15 Mar. 1873 (CC), SAA, Vaughan papers, file 'Personal papers 1858-1868', no. 6.
94 Simeoni-Manning, 6 Feb. 1873, WAA, Roman letters, vol. 1, 250.
the Diocese of Newport, all the canons being Benedictine monks. On 19 March 1873, in St. Vincent de Paul's church, Liverpool, the 39 year-old Vaughan was consecrated by Manning as Titular Archbishop of Nazianzen in partibus infidelium and Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney cum jure successionis. The co-consecrators were Ullathorne and, ironically, Brown.

Polding had won a spectacular victory, particularly in the context of almost 30 years of unrelieved frustration in his relations with Rome. There were two important immediate reasons. One was the unavoidable factor of age. The Propaganda Congregation simply could not leave a man approaching his 80th. year to run a large and complex diocese like Sydney single-handedly. The other was Burchall's change of mind. Had the President not abandoned his opposition it is doubtful if Vaughan would have gone to Sydney. Polding's tenacious attachment to his causes against all odds, upon which Pitra had remarked at the congregazione of 28 January 1873, did not always serve him well. On this occasion it did. The Cullenite party, as we shall see in the next section, began to organize itself against Vaughan only after the appointment was announced, but by then it was too late. Only Murray, who happened to be overseas at the time, realized the danger, but his hard-line intervention looked unreasonable at the Propaganda Congregation. Kirby and Moran appear not to have placed submissions before the Congregation. Cardinal Cullen himself hardly figures in the narrative at all. The Irish party seems not to have been aware what was going on and the Congregation seems not to have told them. They did urge the Congregation to take no action apart from the 1866 procedures but these were not put into effect over the Sydney issue. Barnabò

---


96 Birt, II, p. 416; Donovan, p. 26; P.F. Moran, History of the Catholic Church in Australasia, Sydney, ny, pp. 491 & 656; for official documentation on Vaughan's appointment, see ASV, Sec. Brev. 5528 (1873-Pius IX), fols. 324 ff.
Polding expresses his gratitude to the Pope, Barnabò and the Propaganda cardinals for the Vaughan appointment.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fol 115.)
told the Australian bishops that it would have been difficult for them to meet in conference, but that reason sounds specious. In the 1860s and early 1870s the Australian bishops, or some of them, met on several occasions at Barnabò's direction to consider episcopal appointments and other important matters. There had been a full provincial synod as recently as 1869.

It appears that Barnabò had already made up his mind about Vaughan and Sydney. Explicit Roman documentary evidence is slight, but it is likely that by the beginning of the 1870s the Propaganda Congregation was taking account of Polding's endlessly repeated line that the social and political acceptability of Catholicism in Australia was being compromised by too close an association with rowdy Irish nationalism. One wonders how Barnabò reacted to the news that an Irish-Australian Catholic had shot the heir to the British throne in Sydney. Sir Henry Clarke Jervoise, the diplomatic agent of the British government in Rome, took a close interest in the matter of the Sydney coadjutorship and supported Vaughan's appointment. At the congregazione of 28 January Pitra emphasized the expectation that Vaughan would be able to maintain good relations with the British authorities.

V

As was to be expected, the announcement of the appointment of Vaughan elicited diverse and strong reactions from the interested parties. Polding was ecstatic. He conveyed his boundless joy and gratitude to the Pope, the Prefect and the Propaganda cardinals for giving him the coadjutor of his choice. The news, he said, had caused universal satisfaction and he was now awaiting with alacrity Vaughan's arrival in Australia. He heaped praise on

97 Barnabò-Murray, 14 Feb. 1873, MDA, D.1.94; Barnabò-M. Quinn, 14 Feb. 1873, BDA, Quinn correspondence file '1873'; Barnabò-Salvado, 14 Feb. 1873, NNA, O 1832.
Pius IX who had treated him in a somewhat special manner, with 'his usual most thoughtful, most gracious kindness'. A disgruntled Matthew Quinn observed that everybody was remarking that Polding had not looked younger for 20 years and that 'The poor old man appears to be frantic with joy'. At least two of Polding's suffragan bishops, the Spaniards in Western Australia, Griver and the Benedictine Salvado, welcomed the appointment of Vaughan. Salvado thought it would promote good relations between the Catholic and civil authorities in New South Wales.

Completely different was the reaction of those who had campaigned to keep Vaughan in England. Brown was ill-tempered and particularly resentful of Burchall. Caught unaware, the Cullenite party was stunned. Moran could not believe the press announcement about the Roman decision: 'This is a serious matter if true', he wrote to Murray, but I think it cannot be correct'. Nevertheless, he feared that Murray's extreme position of opposing even an auxiliary for Polding might have been counter-productive. In Rome Kirby spoke to Rinaldini about what he diplomatically termed the unease generated by a decision which had not followed the process laid down in 1866. Rinaldini replied that the Sydney coadjutorship was a special case in that it had commenced years before the adoption of that process and that at the Propaganda Congregation they could disregard Polding's age and implorations no longer.

The Australian Cullenites were furious. The first to hear about the Roman decision was Murray, still overseas. From Dublin early in March 1873

---

100 Polding-Lanigan 17 Apr. 1873, CGAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle 'Episcopal letters and Documents to and from Dr. Lanigan'.
101 M.Quinn-Kirby, 18 Apr. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/161; see also M.Quinn-Murray, 25 Feb. 1873, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
103 Burchall-Smith, 13 Mar. 1873 & 2 May 1873, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Propaganda/S.Ufficio.
104 Moran-Murray, 7 Feb. 1873, MDA, D.3.78.
he wrote to Barnabò. He agreed that Vaughan had many fine qualities but asserted that the appointment was inexpedient because it would perpetuate the scandal-ridden Benedictine administration in Sydney and because the suffragans had not been consulted. However, Murray sounded a conciliatory note. If Vaughan reformed the Benedictines and promoted the true interests of religion in Australia then all the bishops would co-operate with him. Murray concluded by stating that he made these comments in the same spirit as what he had said some years before about Sheehy. Was this an attempt to sow in the Cardinal's mind a seed of doubt about Vaughan's personal probity? Writing to Kirby about his letter to Barnabò, Murray said that he had stated the truth 'respectfully and I hope without giving offence. God grant that our poor Australian Church may be saved from the intrigues of Friars and Monks'.

In Australia itself the Cullenite bishops, writing among themselves and to Kirby, gave vent to their wounded Hibernian pride, anger at the possible resurgence of the Sydney Benedictines and concern about politically-damaging disunity in the leadership of the Church. Matthew Quinn demanded to know why the Propaganda Congregation had not been told about the consequences of such an appointment, which suggests a degree of irritation with Kirby. He told Lanigan that he believed the appointment was calculated to damage the Australian Church. Lanigan himself was incensed about the slight to Ireland.

Somehow English feeling, which is as hostile to Irish among Catholics as any Protestant English, is represented at Rome and faithful Ireland is but poorly represented there, owing to Irish sacrifices for the faith. This sways even Rome, and leads to the calumny and insult to Ireland, that her sons cannot govern themselves.

107 Murray-Kirby, 4 Mar. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/88.
108 M.Quinn-Kirby, 18 Apr. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/61; see also M.Quinn-Kirby, 17 May 1873 & 13 Jun. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/201 & 235.
109 M.Quinn-Lanigan, 24 Apr. 1873, CGAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle 'Episcopal letters and documents to and from Dr. Lanigan'.
Lanigan warned Kirby that Vaughan would not be received with the enthusiasm with which an Irishman would have been greeted.\textsuperscript{110} O'Mahony believed the appointment imposed a stigma on Irish bishops and priests.\textsuperscript{111}

Cullenite anger boiled over at a meeting of the Australian bishops called by Polding to take place in Sydney in mid-May. The ostensible purpose of this gathering was to receive formally and verify the Roman-approved acts and decrees of the 1869 provincial synod. Suspecting that Polding was up to something, Matthew Quinn was initially of the opinion that his group should ignore the meeting, although he and the others, James Quinn, William Lanigan and Timothy O'Mahony did go to Sydney. (Murray was still in Europe.) They discovered that not only were the acts and decrees not even printed but that a \textit{Propaganda} letter had authorized the Metropolitan to verify them by himself. Polding kept his suffragans waiting around with nothing to do. He was luxuriating in the enjoyment of securing an English Benedictine coadjutor with right of succession and watching the Cullenites squirm. He would have revenge for the humiliation over Sheehy inflicted on him at the bishops' meeting of August 1868.\textsuperscript{112} The Quinns, Lanigan and O'Mahony felt that Polding was trifling with them. While in Sydney they composed two joint protests to the \textit{Propaganda} Congregation, one complaining about Polding's 'mysterious' and 'underhand' behaviour at the bishops' meeting, the other criticizing the Vaughan appointment as obstructing the good of religion and afflicting the Catholic people and suffragan bishops of Australia.\textsuperscript{113} At the same time they beseeched Cullen as a member of the Congregation to use his influence to show that the appointment had caused general dissatisfaction.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[110] Lanigan-Kirby, 18 Apr. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/160.
\item[111] O'Mahony-Kirby, 17 Apr. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/158.
\item[112] See Chapter, 298-300.
\end{footnotes}
Eminentissime Principi.

Nos praescripte Romanae
Spondi in Epspis Anglicae
ministri, Archiepiscopali
congregati, signis
minus ad eruditionem
Anglicae, Benedicto
huius, ab E. P. commissis
venerem persuasum, quae super
saepe haer anti Rhein.

10. Senex bee, puri deis, qvas
qui placuerunt oere creatos
predicti, Auditorio, de Benedicto
etiam. Cum jure succession
et executione manerat.

20. Portu, deis eniuperis, qui
plebeis, praei: 

30. Mutor, non sunt honesta

First page of the Australian Cullenite bishops' May 1873 protest to the Propaganda Congregation against the appointment of Vaughan.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fol. 132.)
'British statesmen, it seems are more fortunate in finding Irish Governors for British colonies than Propaganda in finding Irish bishops'.

In addition to their joint letters, the Cullenites communicated individually with the Congregation. Matthew Quinn insisted that the appointment of Vaughan or any other English Benedictine would have the opposite effect intended by Rome. O'Mahony concurred. Quinn cautiously sent his letter to Barnabò in the first instance to Kirby asking him to hand it in only if it would do not harm. He asked Kirby to explain prudently to the Prefect the determination of the Australian bishops to resist. Kirby did pass on Quinn's letter together with other letters sent to him by Quinn and O'Mahony. He commented in an accompanying memorandum that these bishops would be prepared to shed their blood for the Holy See and that they were disappointed in the manner by which the Sydney position had been filled. On 25 May the bishops sent a telegram instructing Kirby to implore the Congregation on their behalf to suspend its action regarding the Sydney coadjutorship. Matthew Quinn supposed that this petition 'will cause some noise within the quiet walls of Propaganda' but was convinced that he and his colleagues had only done their duty.

The Cullenites suspected that Polding's private secretary, Coletti, was implicated in the manoeuvres against them. Matthew Quinn told Kirby that Coletti was the *de facto* Archbishop of Sydney. Murray reckoned that there was no 'more artful and deceitful priest' in the whole of Australia than Coletti, who, together with his fellow Italian, Ottavio Barsanti, was managing the old

---

114 M.Quinn, J.Quinn, Lanigan and O'Mahony-Cullen, 17 May 1873, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
116 Telegram, M.Quinn, J.Quinn, Lanigan, O'Mahony-Kirby, 25 May 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/211.
117 M.Quinn-Kirby, 13 Jun. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/235.
118 M.Quinn-Kirby, 18 Apr. 1873, *op. cit.*
Archbishop by 'great cunning and duplicity'. Coletti was indeed writing to the Propaganda Congregation to advise the officials not to listen to the protests of the Irish bishops, who, he said, were interfering, incapable of running their own dioceses properly and guilty of imprudent nationalist rhetoric. He assured Rinaldini that everyone in Sydney was praising the Pope for choosing Vaughan and suggested that the Prefect be approached to write a letter telling the suffragans to mind their own business and visit other dioceses less frequently.

Aware of how disturbing the Roman decision about Sydney would be to the Cullenites in Australia, Barnabò's spontaneous explanations early in 1873 were mild and even apologetic in tone. He asked that Vaughan be welcomed as this choice was the result of a deliberate determination by the Pope and everybody must conform themselves to the divine will. However, as the Cullenite protests and complaints accumulated in the Propaganda offices, the Prefect's hackles began to rise. The Congregation was characteristically happy to receive all points of view about any particular matter in the lead-up to a decision and to explain the decision itself, but it became annoyed with persistent criticism of a decision that had already been finalized. On 21 June 1873 Barnabò signed long letters to Matthew and James Quinn, Lanigan and O'Mahony. He noted that each of the bishops had entered 'un sentimento che trovarsi in diretta opposizione con quello di Sua Santità e di questa Sacra Congregazione'. Their protest had made a 'dolorosa impressione'. He told them that he had withheld their protest from the Pope to protect them from papal displeasure. He explained that Vaughan had been appointed because of his personal gifts, his ability to reform the Sydney Benedictines and the

119 Murray-Kirby, 13 Jun. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/237.
120 Coletti-Rinaldini, 12 Jul. 1873, CEPA, SC-Óceania, vol. 10, fol. 244; Coletti-Rinaldini, 6 Nov. 1873, CEPA, SOCQ, vol. 1002, fols. 554 ff.
121 Barnabò-M.Quinn, 14 Feb. 1873, BDA, Quinn correspondence file '1873'; Barnabò-Murray, 14 Feb. 1873 & 11 Mar. 1873, MDA, D.1.94 & 97.
salutary influence of an English prelate in a British territory such as New South Wales. He said that in the government of the Church the question of nationality ought not to suppress other factors. Did St. Paul distinguish between Jew and Greek? He exhorted the bishops to 'accogliere con fraterna fiducia ed affezione Mons. Arcivescovo di Nazianzo' for the sake of the good of religion in Australia which depended on reciprocal trust within the Catholic hierarchy. A couple of months later Barnabò wrote to Murray urging him to do the right thing by Vaughan who had been chosen by the Pope. James Quinn thought it extraordinary that Barnabò should keep their letter from the Pope, oblivious to the fact that it was done to protect them. Matthew Quinn considered Barnabò's reply to be 'a little severe' but mild considering that Rome had rejected their petition.

Worried by the recalcitrance of the Australian suffragans, Barnabò enlisted Cullen's assistance in the second half of 1873 to persuade them to submit to the papal decision and receive Vaughan fittingly as their colleague and future Metropolitan. This appears to have been the first instance of Propaganda recourse to the Archbishop of Dublin in the matter of the Sydney coadjutorship. Cullen promised to write to his Australian protégés personally to calm them and advise them to give Vaughan a good welcome. However, he took the opportunity of his reply to Barnabò to criticize Polding for having been provocative.

Cullen was nevertheless aware that the Quinn brothers, Murray, Lanigan and O'Mahony were damaging their standing at Rome by an opposition to

---

122 'an opinion that is in direct opposition with that of His Holiness and of this Sacred Congregation...a a lamentable impression...welcome the Archbishop of Nazianzen with brotherly trust and affection'. Barnabò-M.Quinn, 21 Jun. 1873, BDA, Quinn correspondence file '1873'; Barnabò-J.Quinn, Lanigan & O'Mahony, 21 Jun. 1873 (CC), CEPA, LDB, vol. 369, fol. 284.
124 J.Quinn-Murray, 29 Sept. 1873, MDA, A.4.4.
125 M.Quinn-Kirby, 10 Oct. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/388.
126 Barnabò-Cullen, 22 Sept. 1873 & 20 Nov. 1873, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1871-1878.
Vaughan that was both persistent and futile. In an atmosphere of defeat and resignation, he wrote repeatedly to Murray urging the necessity of receiving Vaughan well as the Coadjutor had been chosen by the Vicar of Christ guided by heaven. Besides, Vaughan was evidently a man of talent and learning who could be expected to do some good. Cullen recommended to Murray that he restrain his fellow suffragans.128 Close to the Propaganda bureaucracy and realizing that resistance was pointless, Kirby had been promoting an attitude of compliance as soon as Vaughan's appointment was published. He advised Murray to make the best of an unalterable situation and to allow 'a certain latitude and freedom of action to the Holy See'.129 In their endeavour to bring their Australian friends into line, Cullen and Kirby concentrated on Murray, who, having lately been in Rome, had a better understanding of the politics of the situation than the bishops in Australia. Accordingly, when Murray returned home, he adopted a more conciliatory stance, even if he accepted the verdict of his group that the Vaughan appointment was catastrophic. To Kirby he wrote, 'However, let him [Vaughan] have a trial in which he will either stand or fall'.130 Gradually, the other suffragans came around, persuaded by Murray, albeit reluctantly. Taken by surprise, they had never been optimistic about getting the appointment overturned and had maintained that they would respect the decision of the Holy See and ultimately submit to it.131 They could hardly do otherwise. Matthew Quinn admitted to Kirby that continued opposition was useless and dangerous. He believed Rome had made a mistake but the matter was settled.132 By the end of 1873 only O'Mahony was still in a

129 Kirby-Murray, 18 Feb. 1873, op. cit.
130 Murray-Kirby, 13 Jun. 1873, op. cit.; see also Murray-Cullen, 13 Jun. 1873, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
131 O'Mahony-Kirby, 17 Apr. 1873, & Lanigan-Kirby, 18 Apr. 1873 & 15 May 1873, op. cit.; J.Quinn, M.Quinn, Lanigan, & O'Mahony-Barnabó, 17 May 1873, op. cit.; O'Mahony-Murray, 17 Dec. 1873, MDA, A.2.8; Murray-Cullen, 18 Dec. 1873, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
132 M.Quinn-Kirby, 27 Nov. 1873, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1873/431.
belligerent mood. He opined, mistakenly, to Murray that Vaughan had been forced onto Rome by a few English bishops and resolved to give 'the Propaganda a bit of my mind'.

VI

Before seeing Vaughan in Sydney, Polding had one more ordeal to face. At the end of June 1873 Bamabd instructed him to meet in conference with his suffragans to discuss further diocesan divisions and appointments. By the late 1860s the colony of Victoria, with only one diocese (Melbourne), contained a larger Catholic population than New South Wales which had five (Sydney, Maitland, Goulburn, Armidale and Bathurst). Clearly, the populous and wealthy Diocese of Melbourne was ripe for subdivision. Moreover, the rapid economic development of the northern part of Queensland similarly necessitated special ecclesiastical provision for that region.

The Cullenites took a strong interest in these matters, no doubt hoping to bolster their weakened position within the Province by the addition of new bishops who shared their outlook. They wanted to see Melbourne carved up into an extra four jurisdictions, a policy which put them on a collision course with James Goold who was adamant that there would be only two, Ballarat and Sandhurst (Bendigo). The Cullenites alienated Goold who resented what he saw as their interference with his affairs. Goold did not go to the bishops' meeting which was held in Sydney between 11 and 16 September 1873.

As a result, Polding again found himself alone with the Cullenite faction. Matthew Quinn reported to the Propaganda Congregation that the Archbishop disliked these meetings because he was English and the other bishops were

133 O'Mahony-Murray, 17 Dec. 1873, op. cit.
Irish.136 Just before the meeting began Polding appealed to Barnabò to send Vaughan as soon as possible, taking the opportunity to remind the Prefect once again that to send out only Irish bishops would militate against the good of religion and the unity of a mixed people.137 At the meeting itself, Polding tried to limit the discussion to arranging the Dioceses of Ballarat and Sandhurst and the Vicariate Apostolic of North Queensland and to planning for another provincial synod at which all the suffragans would be present and he could introduce his Coadjutor. But the Cullenites insisted on dealing with other Victorian divisions. Overwhelmed, Polding signed the report drawn up by O’Mahony for despatch to Rome recommending four new dioceses.138

In a later, personal letter, Polding informed Barnabò that he had signed the report only to avoid animosity and the party spirit and that his views were really identical with those of Goold who best understood conditions in Victoria.139 Shortly after the meeting Polding asked Coletti to write to Rinaldini to explain that the business of the Victorian dioceses had been transacted by him unwillingly. Coletti did so and added that Polding’s signature on the document was an act of weakness caused by old age and confrontation with a ‘tronco genealogico’140. At an assembly of Propaganda cardinals held on 16 March 1874 Cardinal Bilio gave an account of these proceedings which was sympathetic both to Polding’s difficulties at the bishops’ meeting and to his warnings about the dangers attendant on an excessive Hibernicization of the Australian Catholic leadership.141

---

140 ‘a family bloc’. Coletti-Rinaldini, 1 Oct. 1873, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fols. 337 ff; see also Coletti-Rinaldini, 6 Nov. 1873, op. cit.
VII

At about the time, early in September 1873, that Polding was bracing himself for another encounter with his militant Irish suffragans, Vaughan was preparing to leave England for Australia. On his way out he paused in Rome for six weeks, residing at the S. Callisto monastery.¹⁴² His objective was to find out as much as he could about the ecclesiastical state of Australia and obtain guarantees of Propaganda backing in what would be a difficult task. He wrote to his sister-in-law, Mary

there is a multitude of things one learns in Rome which cannot be picked up elsewhere. Besides that, I have made the acquaintance of the cleverest Cardinals and others, and shall not want in friends to write to in case there is any particular thing I want for pushing for the good of the Australian Church.¹⁴³

Rinaldini assured Vaughan that he had the confidence of the Holy See and told him all there was to know.¹⁴⁴ Vaughan was received in audience by the Pope who was ‘very kind and nice’.¹⁴⁵ He was, of course, aware of the voices of protest raised vociferously in Australia against his appointment. Burchall though he would manage if strengthened by Roman support.¹⁴⁶ Confident of this support, Vaughan himself sounded a conciliatory note at the outset: ‘I only look to the good of religion and of the Church and condescend to no low or party view or spirit’.¹⁴⁷ Barnabò informed Cullen that Vaughan was grateful for the Archbishop of Dublin’s intercession with the Irish in Australia.¹⁴⁸

After completing his business in Rome, Vaughan travelled overland to Brindisi where he took ship for Australia. On 16 December 1873 the Nubia

¹⁴³ Vaughan-Mary Vaughan, 18 Oct. 1873 (TC), SPM, Eris O’Brien papers.
¹⁴⁵ Vaughan-Mrs. Herbert, 2 Oct. 1873 (TC), SPM, Eris O’Brien papers.
¹⁴⁶ Burchall-Smith, 10 Sept. 1873, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Propaganda/S.Ufficio.
¹⁴⁷ Vaughan-Smith, 31 Jul. 1873, op. cit.
¹⁴⁸ Barnabò-Cullen, 20 Nov. 1873, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1871-1878.
arrived in Sydney. Vaughan's reception negated the Cullenites' assertion that the appointment had engendered near-universal dissatisfaction. The Nubia was met at sea and escorted into Sydney Harbour by six crowded steamers. 20,000 people greeted Vaughan at the wharf. Among them was Archbishop Polding who kissed him 'ardentemente' as he stepped ashore. A Te Deum was sung in St. Mary's Cathedral and addresses of welcome were read. For Polding it was, of course, 'un giorno di consolazione e di santa gioia', as he described it to Barnabò. He hoped that Vaughan would 'proseguire la gran carriera missionaria che io nella mia umiltà incomminci in questo vasto emisfero'. Vaughan aptly described the old Archbishop as 'contentissimo'. The Cullenite bishops were conspicuously absent from the welcome. Six months before they had been trying to invent excuses to avoid meeting him. However, with Barnabò's and Cullen's exhortations to receive him cordially fresh in their minds, some of them sent him letters of welcome and best wishes for his career in Australia.

Vaughan's resolution to pursue an irenic policy was apparent on his very first day in Australia. In his reply to the addresses of welcome presented in the Cathedral he offered 'my hand of brotherhood' to the Irish. He emphasized this point in his account to Barnabò. By now already inclined to be cooperative, the Cullenites were encouraged by this line. Murray was pleased to

---

149 Kavenagh, p. 151; Hedley, p. 17; Donovon, p. 28.
150 Vaughan-Barnabò, 29 Dec. 1873, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fols. 808 ff; see also Compton, p. 364, O'Donoghue, p. 166 & Donovon, p. 28.
151 'a day of consolation and holy joy...follow the great missionary career which I in my humility began in this huge hemisphere'. Polding-Barnabò, 29 Dec. 1873, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fol. 807.
152 Vaughan-Barnabò, 29 Dec. 1873, op. cit. Vaughan was very favourably impressed by Sydney: 'Newport and Menevia, indeed, is nowhere!' Vaughan-his father, 29 Dec. 1873 (TC), SPM, Eris O'Brien papers.
153 M.Quinn-Lanigan, 6 May 1873, CGAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle 'Episcopal letters and documents to and from Dr. Lanigan'.
154 Murray-Vaughan, 16 Dec. 1873 (draft), MDA, C.1.39; Lanigan-Vaughan, 17 Dec. 1873 (draft), CGAA, Lanigan correspondence, bundle 'Episcopal letters and documents to and from Dr. Lanigan'.
155 Vaughan-Barnabò, 29 Dec. 1873, op. cit.
Roger Bede Vaughan, OSB, titular Archbishop of Nazianzen in partibus infidelium and Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney, 1873-1877. He became Archbishop in his right on Polding's death in 1877. He himself died in 1883.

(Source: K.Livingston, *The Emergence of an Australian Catholic Priesthood*, Sydney, 1977, facing p. 81.)
note that during the formalities of welcome neither Vaughan nor anybody else mentioned the Benedictines. In any case, bishops must submit to the Pope or 'they will go fearfully astray'. Matthew Quinn agreed that Vaughan had considerable potential.

The key factor in the Cullenites' conversion was Vaughan's policy towards the Sydney Benedictines. Polding, of course, hoped that Vaughan would breathe new life into the Benedictine vision. Early in 1873, before Vaughan's arrival, Polding asked the Propaganda Congregation to give Vaughan special faculties to reorganize the monastic establishment in Sydney. Barnabo recommended reform to Vaughan but told Polding that this should proceed only after Vaughan had acquainted himself with the actual situation of the monks.

Benedictinism in Sydney had been in steady decline since the early 1850s and numbered only 12 monks in 1874. They had already been largely demonasticed, most living out of community, virtually as secular priests. Four monks lived together at Lyndhurst but with little conventual observance. On his arrival, Vaughan immediately concluded that a restoration of monasticism was impossible in the present circumstances and that the Benedictine Order in Sydney should be extinguished, at least for the time being. Early in 1874 he communicated these views to the Propaganda Congregation and to Smith. Noting that there was no longer an abbey as such, that there was no one fit for the offices of abbot and novice master and that there was a general disinclination among the surviving monks to live the...
regular life, Vaughan recommended that on the death of Polding the monks should not be permitted to elect an abbot but should be placed under the ordinary jurisdiction of Polding's successor as Archbishop.\textsuperscript{163}

These recommendations were presented to Pius IX at the end of September 1874. The result was a \textit{Propaganda} decree, dated 5 November, appointing Vaughan as Apostolic Visitator to the Sydney Benedictines and authorizing him to proceed with a formal investigation leading to their suppression at an opportune time. In order to avoid upsetting Polding, the Congregation instructed Vaughan to keep the decree secret until after the old Archbishop's demise.\textsuperscript{164} It is not clear to what extent Polding himself was aware of Vaughan's plans regarding the Benedictines. Coletti, who was very close to Polding, certainly knew of these plans. He told Rinaldini that Vaughan did not want to offend Polding.\textsuperscript{165}

In February 1874 at Goulburn, where the bishops had gathered for the opening of Lanigan's new seminary, Polding introduced Vaughan to the Cullenite suffragans for the first time.\textsuperscript{166} Vaughan revealed to the Cullenites his judgement that Sydney Benedictinism had failed and that it should be closed down as soon as practicable. This revelation caused an instantaneous change in the Cullenite attitude from a grudging acceptance of Vaughan under pressure from Rome and Dublin to fulsome praise.\textsuperscript{167} Writing to Kirby, Murray showed how the Cullenite view of Vaughan underwent a complete \textit{volte-face}: 'He is in our opinion the right man in the right place. Probably if the Pope had travelled all over the world, he would not have found a more

\begin{footnotes}
\item[163] Notes made by Vaughan on the state of the Sydney Benedictines, nd, CEPA, \textit{SC-Oceania}, vol. 10, fol. 699.
\item[164] Audience of 27 Sept. 1874, \textit{op. cit.}; Propaganda decree, 5 Nov. 1874, & Franchi-Vaughan, 11 Nov. 1874, both in SAA, Vaughan papers, file 'Letters received from Propaganda Fide, 1874-1878'.
\item[167] Murray-Cullen, 7 Feb., 10 Apr. & 15 Apr. 1874, DAA, Australia box 58/1.
\end{footnotes}
suitable person for this important position'. 168 Kirby relayed Murray's new position on Vaughan to the Congregation. 169 Murray himself informed Barnabò that he and the other bishops had assured Vaughan that they were resolved to give him every assistance. 170 'Now that Dr. Vaughan takes the right view of things', Kirby replied to Murray, 'there is much to hope for the Church'. 171

Vaughan, too, was pleased with the co-operative demeanour of the Cullenites. He reported this to Barnabò, even if he could not resist drawing attention to their lack of consistency.

*Essendo Irlandesi, sono più portato [sic] per l'impulso del cuore, che freddo principio; e perciò avendo gridati [sic] contro di me a piena gola, prima di conoscermi, adesso che me hanno reduto, danno altrettanto grido nel mio favore.* 172

To Smith he wrote, 'I get along first class with the Suffragan Bishops'. 173 He decided that the original Irish objection to his appointment had not been to his being English but Benedictine, 174 an objection which was now defused by his substantial agreement with the Cullenite assessment of Sydney Benedictinism.

Cullen expressed his satisfaction to Murray that his Australian protégés had given Vaughan a warm welcome and predicted that Barnabò would be proud of them. 175 The *Propaganda* officials were indeed pleased with Vaughan's early success and the cordial reception he had received from the Irish episcopate. They were grateful to Cullen for being instrumental in

---

168 Murray-Kirby, 12 Jun. 1874, ICA, Kirby correspondence 1874/283.
170 Murray-Barnabò, 5 May 1874, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fols. 615 ff.
171 Kirby-Murray, 14 Aug. 1874, MDA, A.3.27.
172 'Being Irish they are moved more by impulsive feeling than cool principle; and therefore having shouted against me at the top of their voices, before getting to know me, now that they have met me, they shout as much in my favour'. Vaughan-Barnabò, 12 Feb. 1874, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fols. 534 ff.
173 Vaughan-Smith, 27 Sept. 1874, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
174 Vaughan-Smith, 8 May 1874, SPFLMA, Smith papers - Australia.
175 Cullen-Murray, 19 Feb. 1874, MDA, A.1.44.
Converted by Vaughan's negative judgement against the Sydney Benedictines, Murray promises Barnabò that he will co-operate with the Coadjutor.

(Source: CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fol. 615.)
bringing about this state of affairs. The year 1874 witnessed an uncharacteristic peace settle over the Australian Catholic Church.

---

176 Simeoni-Vaughan, 23 Feb. 1874 & Franchi-Vaughan, 2 May 1874, SAA, Vaughan papers, file 'Letters received from Propaganda Fide, 1874-1878'; Antonelli-Cullen, 9 Mar. 1874, & Franchi-Cullen, 28 Apr. 1874, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1871-1878.
EPILOGUE
THE END OF AN ERA
1874

The advent of Vaughan marks the end of the Polding era in Australian Catholic history. Polding lived for another three years.1 An ultramontane to the end, he directed his thoughts during his final illness 'to Rome and he asked pardon of the Father of Christendom for his errors and imperfections in the performance of the duties of his office'.2 At the end he beseeched Pius IX for a blessing, which was promptly given, although the telegram arrived after Polding's death which occurred on 16 March 1877. Polding was 83.3 Pius IX survived him by one year.

Polding's role as Archbishop of Sydney during the last years of his life was largely nominal. By a circular of 13 January 1874, Polding announced that Vaughan would have the functions of Vicar General and Administrator of Temporalities as well as of Coadjutor, and that all future communications should be directed to Vaughan,4 who thereby had effective sole responsibility for the government of the Archdiocese virtually from the time of his landing. He became Archbishop in his own right automatically on Polding's death.

The year 1874 also saw the cessation of the monopoly of the metropolitan authority of Sydney over the Australian Church. The Holy See erected a

---
1 'His remaining time was spent in prayer, visits to the sick and house-bound and to the poor of the city. His hearing was impaired, he was enfeebled by dropsy, and years weighed him down. With his chaplain by his side in the carriage, he was a familiar and welcome sight in the streets with his long silver hair trailing over his shoulders'. F.O'Donoghue, The Bishop of Botany Bay: The Life of John Bede Polding, Australia's First Catholic Archbishop, London, 1982, p. 171.
4 Official circular, 13 Jan. 1874, SAA, Vaughan papers, file 'Personal papers, 1858-1883', no. 9.
second province, based on Melbourne, and raised James Alipius Goold to the archiepiscopal dignity.5

Another significant change at this time was the death of the 73 year-old Alessandro Barnabò on 24 February 1874. He was infirm during the last years of his life. Visiting him early in 1870, Moran thought he showed 'the weight of years and the _sollicitudo Ecclesiarum_.'6 When Vaughan was in Rome in 1873 he was struck by the image of a practically-blind Barnabò unable to find his snuff box. The Prefect's eye-sight was so poor that his staff had to read official papers to him.7 Nevertheless, the Cardinal remained in possession of his mental capacity and kept to the end his customary iron-clad control over the operations of the Sacred Congregation _de Propaganda Fide_. Pius IX tried to make him slow down by suggesting that he take on the less-demanding Prefecture of the Apostolic Datary but Barnabò pleaded not to be separated from his beloved _Propaganda_ Congregation, which he had served for 36 years.8 The solemn _Requiem_ Mass for the repose of Barnabò's soul was sung by Goold, who happened to be in Rome at the time on the business of the Victorian Church.9 A pamphlet published on the occasion of Barnabò's death commented

---

5 The Dioceses of Hobart, Adelaide, Perth, Port Victoria, Ballarat and Sandhurst were suffragan to Melbourne while Sydney retained Maitland, Brisbane, Goulburn, Armidale and Bathurst. _Cardinale Ponente Luigi Bilio. Ristretto con sommario sulla proposte erezione di alcune nuove Diocesi nell'Australia, sulla elevazione della Chiesa di Melbourne al grado di Metropolitana e sulla conversione degli indigeni Australiani_, CEPA, _Acta_, vol. 241, fols. 123 ff.

6 Moran-Murray, 14 Feb. 1870, MDA, D.3.41; see also Moran-Murray, 5 May 1871 & 9 Jun. 1871, MDA, D.3.62.


Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò died on 24 February 1874. He had played a decisive part in the shaping of Australian Catholicism.

The Australian bishops rushed to express their condolences. Murray told the Propaganda Secretary, Simeoni, that the news of Barnabò’s death caused him ‘sommo dolore che parole non possono esprimere’.

La morte di quel grande e zelantissimo Principe di Santa Chiesa è un avvenimento che tutti i buoni dell’orbe cattolico deploraranno come un immensa perdita alla Santa Sede ed alle missioni in queste rimote contrade che furono assignate alla sua cura dal Sommo Pontefice.11

Writing to Barnabò’s successor as Prefect General, Cardinal Alessandro Franchi, formerly extraordinary papal ambassador to the Ottoman Empire,12 Polding was less effusive:

le sue fatiche e la sua santa anzietà che mostrava per il ben’essere di queste missioni non verranno già mai scordate da me e dal mio clero.13

Was the ambivalence deliberate?

---

10 ‘it was, as several people remarked, a happy coincidence, to see the funeral of the Prefect of Propaganda presided over by the Pastor of the city furthest away from Rome’. Le Cardinal Barnabò. op. cit., CEPA, SC, la seconda serie, vol. 3, fol. 255.

11 ‘the greatest sadness that words cannot express. The death of that great and most zealous Prince of the Holy Church is an event that all good people around the Catholic world will deplore as a huge loss to the Holy See and to the missions in these remote regions that were consigned to his care by the Supreme Pontiff’. Murray-Simeoni, 9 Jun. 1874, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fol. 627.


13 ‘his labours and his holy concern that he showed for the well-being of these missions will never be forgotten by me and my clergy’. Polding-Franchi, 11 Jun. 1874, CEPA, SC-Oceania, vol. 10, fol. 636.
In his depressed state around 1870 Archbishop Polding blamed the English Benedictines for the failure of his hopes for the Australian Catholic Church. This judgement encapsulates the central flaw of Polding's plan: its unreality. Confronted with rapidly expanding demands of their own, the English Benedictines were simply incapable of affording Polding the support he craved. Without this support, or its equivalent from another quarter, Benedictinism as a total approach to the development of the Australian Church was doomed. Polding also misread the situation in Australia itself. He failed to understand that rapid social change in the 1840s, '50s and '60s ensured that a cultivated, elitist, paternalistic English-led monastic-style spirituality and organization could not satisfy the basic needs of a burgeoning, unsophisticated, overwhelmingly Irish Catholic population, egalitarian and populist in its aspirations. The tragedy of the failure of Benedictinism was not that Polding's hope for a Church served by monks never materialized but rather that the English Benedictine tradition as one spiritual and cultural expression alongside others did not survive and flourish precisely as a monastery to enrich and diversify Australian Catholicism. Polding only succeeded in discrediting and destroying his beloved Order in Sydney by persisting with an overly-ambitious abbey-diocese scheme well after its futility has become obvious to everyone else.

The impracticality of Polding provides the key to understanding his relationship with the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide. Papal policy as

---


applied to the Australian missions by this organization during the foundation century is best summed up as a thoroughgoing pragmatism. We saw in Chapter II that the Propaganda Congregation’s basic objectives for the churches under its jurisdiction were broad: progress, success, growth, efficiency, order, harmony and obedience. Newman remarked that the Propaganda officials wanted good news and quick results. Like any bureaucracy, it wanted things to run smoothly. We also saw that at the practical level, the Congregation did not seek to formulate and impose preconceived, detailed programmes on particular churches. Instead, it dealt reactively with problems placed before it by missionary personnel on a case-by-case basis. At this level, too, pragmatism was the order of the day. The Congregation favoured whatever strategy or solution it was persuaded was likely to work.

Thus the outcome of the encounter between the impracticality of a suppliant individual and the utilitarianism of an all-powerful bureaucratic machine was a foregone conclusion. Rome had been willing to let Benedictinism in Australia have a trial. Polding seems to have been so bedazzled by his Roman triumph of 1842 in securing an Australian hierarchy and other privileges that he assumed nothing could threaten its continuation. This was a capital mistake. Polding should have accorded the highest priority to the retention of Roman confidence, which would involve managing with the utmost prudence the reorganized ecclesiastical polity which he had asked for and been given. He seems not be have been aware of the demands of his new situation. He stepped into a series of mistakes which stripped him of his high Roman standing and projected him into an almost unrelieved 30-year period of defeat, disaster, frustration and bitterness in his relations with the Propaganda Congregation.

---

Rome began to worry about Polding's powers of judgement when his push for Benedictine ascendancy drove away, or at least disrupted the ministries, of other religious institutes which settled in his diocese in the 1840s at either the Prefect General's influence or direction. Initially, Rome was inclined to take Polding's side or at least to reconcile the parties to preserve the pastoral contributions to the Church of Sydney of the institutes involved. But it could not avoid noticing the emergence of a pattern of complaint and frustration with archdiocesan policy leading to the disruption or suspension of services.

The possibility of Roman endorsement of the great Australian Benedictine project itself was destroyed by the failure of the monastic establishment to quickly become the most effective provider of pastoral personnel and structures. Benedictinism needed time to consolidate itself but, faced with the explosive growth of the Catholic population, time was something it lacked. Polding's Roman credibility declined with the inexorable decay of the Benedictine presence in Sydney through bickering, defections, poor recruiting and scandals among the monks.

This decline began around 1845 and was sufficiently advanced by the early 1850s to become an important factor in Roman consideration of the Australian missions in general and of the viability of the Sydney abbey-diocese proposal in particular. The Propaganda Congregation continued to see Polding as the central figure on the Australian ecclesiastical landscape - he was, after all, the metropolitan of a vast, continent-wide province of the Catholic Church - and it respected his personal dedication, spirit of sacrifice and pioneering labours. But never again would the Congregation accord him the privilege of single-handedly setting the agenda for the Australian Church as it had in 1842. Propaganda officials continued to consult him as the senior Australian churchman, but now they consulted others as well, others whose opinions gained increasing weight in the formulation of papal policy. By the early 1850s
John McEncroe had displaced his Archbishop as the main voice that Rome listened to.

The Propaganda cardinals judged in 1852 that McEncroe's clear, persuasive practical submission on the necessity for the immediate carve-up of the Archdiocese of Sydney to create new dioceses and the importation of large numbers of Irish missionaries was a more realistic response to the urgent needs of the mainly Irish Catholic communities than the Polding-Gregory line that a division of the Sydney was premature and that the Archdiocese should be consigned in perpetuity to Benedictine administration.

By approving the constitutions of St. Mary's monastery in 1855 the Congregation signalled to Polding that the Benedictines had an important role to play even if a monopoly was now out of the question. However, as Cardinal Pitra was to observe in 1872, Polding was not one to give up. He continued to operate on the assumption of de facto Benedictinism, regardless of what Rome had decided. This provoked a barrage of local criticism. The Freeman's Journal episode is a striking demonstration of the inability of Polding to secure the support of Rome even in the face of what he fairly described as an open rebellion against ecclesiastical authority. Furthermore, Rome sacked his Vicar General as a practical way to defuse the crisis. At a time when ideas of authority, order and hierarchy were extremely important at Rome it is noteworthy that the Propaganda Congregation declined to accept the view, which Polding tried to press on it, that ecclesiastical authority figures ought to support one another fully and automatically. Generally seen as an authoritarian organization, the Congregation maintained in the Sydney crisis of the late 1850s that lay people were entitled to express their concerns, grievances and expectations to ecclesiastical superiors and to be supported in this by the Holy See. Less idealistically, grass-roots discontent always presented

the Congregation with an opportunity to keep the episcopal middle-management level of the missionary system in line, in Australia as elsewhere.

The real significance of the constant criticism, dissension and disturbances of the 1850s was that Polding's influence at Rome was fatally weakened when the papacy, moved by irresistible colonial demographic forces, transformed the ecclesiastical structures of Australia in the decade from the late 1850s to the late 1860s. The period from May 1865 to September 1866 saw unusually intensive activity by the Propaganda cardinals relative to the antipodean Church with four congregazioni in one and a half years. The decree Quum ad catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem deprived Polding of the initiative for making episcopal nominations. Roman decision-making about administrative reorganization not only increased the number of dioceses and therefore of bishops but also brought about a great shift in the centre of gravity of the Australian hierarchy.

It was not the case that Archbishop Polding was unable to influence these decisions. Indeed, in the first instance many of them were favourable to his position but, of these, most were soon nullified by a variety of causes: the later and more convincing advice of others, the superior tactics and connections of his opponents, the personal attitude of Pope Pius IX, Polding's own incompetence, death and plain bad luck. The Propaganda cardinals assented to Polding's application for more dioceses, although not always where he wanted them. Geoghegan was appointed to Adelaide but he was more Goold's candidate than Polding's. He was transferred to Goulburn, but died before he could get there. Shiel was appointed to succeed him in Adelaide but was an unknown quantity as far as Polding was concerned. The cardinals recommended Gregory for Maitland but were overruled by the Pope. Polding failed to secure any bishopric for Gregory or even, despite obtaining papal permission, to persuade him to return to Australia as a simple priest. The appointments of Hanly, Hayes and Sheehy were secured only to be
immediately cancelled after muck-raking campaigns. Polding persuaded the Pope to suspend temporarily the norms of *Quum ad catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem* but promptly spoiled his opportunity by recommending for Goulburn someone who passed into the Cullenite orbit and for Armidale someone who was determined not to go there. Polding failed to get Sheehy or Rigney into Armidale which eventually went to O'Mahony, a willing collaborator with the Cullenites. The only unambiguous gain for Polding in these years was a negative one, the non-appointment of McAlroy, and even that was more due to Goold than to Polding. In the appointments of James Quinn, Matthew Quinn, James Murray, Daniel Murphy and Timothy O'Mahony Polding's pleadings about not conferring Australian bishoprics on clergymen in Ireland were repeatedly disregarded at the Propaganda Congregation. The Congregation accepted the line that Australian bishops and priests should be Irish because Australia's Catholics were Irish and tended to give this line a strict interpretation, that is to say, the bishops should be Irishmen preferably imported direct from Ireland. By the mid-1860s the Propaganda bureaucracy was sufficiently persuaded by the picture of an Australian Catholic Church paralyzed by disarray and inefficiency that it was more and more inclined to appoint outsiders who, uncontaminated by association with the existing unsatisfactory circumstances, could more effectively promote reform.

Whatever individual, ephemeral successes he might have had, the overall result of the papal programme for the restructuring of Australia, as it was in place by the end of the 1860s, was a catastrophe for Polding. The Australian hierarchy had been revolutionized. The pre-1860 bishops were all either Englishmen (Polding, Willson, Davis), Benedictines (Polding, Davis, Serra, Salvado), appointed on Polding's recommendation (Willson, Davis, Murphy, Serra, Goold, Geoghegan) or previously associated with him in the New South Wales mission (Murphy, Brady, Goold, Geoghegan). Polding had
had his differences with some of these men but he knew most of them personally and felt relatively comfortable with them. Furthermore, the pre-1860 episcopate resembled that ethnic mix which Polding held to be vital for the harmony of the Australian Church, both internally and externally. There were four Irishmen (Murphy, Brady, Goold, Geoghegan), three Englishmen (Polding, Willson, Davis) and two Spaniards (Serra, Salvado). All of the episcopal arrivals in the 1860s would be Irishmen with the sole exception of the Spaniard Griver. None had hitherto worked with Polding. All of the Irish appointees came straight from Ireland, with the exception of Shiel and Lanigan. None was recommended by Polding, with the same two exceptions. None was a Benedictine. The largest single group were all members of the same Dublin family, had been trained at the Irish College or some other Roman institution, were protégés of Paul Cullen, espoused a muscular, militant Hibernian nationalism which they promoted vigorously among their Australian flocks and were contemptuous of Polding and what they saw as a decadent Sydney Benedictinism. This group attracted other Irish bishops to their cause. They were strangers to Polding who did not understand them and felt intimidated by them. Roman policy in the 1860s involved the transfer of more and more territory and initiative from the Archdiocese of Sydney to control of the Cullenite party. The Congregation had not been unwilling to arrange compromises but the Hibernian push had clearly won the day at the Piazza di Spagna.

Underlying the pragmatism of the Propaganda Congregation was a desire on the part of its generally conscientious and responsible cardinals and officials to make helpful, realistic arrangements for the young churches on the other side of the world. However laudable this orientation, the Propaganda Congregation, conscious of its absolute power in the mission territories, sometimes made decisions about Australia on a narrow, factually dubious basis and applied them in a high-handed manner. The summary dismissal of
Henry Gregory as Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Sydney in 1860, on the basis of one-sided evidence and without a formal trial or even consultation of his Archbishop, was a dramatic demonstration in an Australian context of the growing and sometimes arbitrary power of nineteenth-century Roman centralism as exercised through the Propaganda Congregation. Polding's secretary, Makinson, observed, 'They [the Roman officials] seem to set as much store by the popularity as by the justice of ecclesiastical government'. The cancellation of the episcopal appointments of Hanly and Hayes was founded on nothing more substantial than gossip and innuendo. Sheehy fell victim to the same mentality and the major investigation into the allegations against him was entrusted to his principal detractor. The ecclesiastical judicial system was strongly influenced by the classical Roman legal tradition of presumption of guilt against the accused. With his English expectations of forensic procedure, Polding could not understand the Roman mentality and was continually upset by its results: 'The law sanctioned by our dear Lord, the law of right is reversed - it is not for the accusers to prove the accusations but for the accused to prove innocence - Monstrous is it not'?

The Propaganda Congregation accorded a high priority to protecting the public image of the Church in the missionary territories, where Catholics were usually a minority, as in Australia. When allegations about an individual threatened scandal, especially when the matter became public knowledge, the individual would almost certainly be sacrificed by Rome for the good name of the Church. Moreover, Dupanloup once wrote that the pontificate of Pius IX was 'le règne et la triomphe de la calomnie'. Perhaps Dupanloup was exaggerating but there was certainly a readiness on the part of the Propaganda

6 Makinson-Gregory, 22 Sept. 1861, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 337.
officials to receive complaints of doubtful value, indulge the rumour-
mongerer and mete out rough justice to his victim. They were eager for any
information they could lay their hands on about missionary matters and were
not particular about where it came from. They gathered stories told by the
lower clergy in order to monitor the bishops, ignoring the pleas of Polding and
his colleagues to restrict this practice. They often failed to allow for the self-
interested motivations of their informants and advisers. Above all they placed
great faith in Cullen but it rarely occurred to them to question the objectivity of
his opinions about Australia, opinions received from biased sources and
concerning conflicts involving his own protégés and favourites.

It was not only the unreality of Polding's overall plan that weakened his
dealings with the hard-nosed pragmatism of the Propaganda Congregation but
also his personality and methods. He was vacillating and tentative by
temperament, predisposed to the abstract and the ideal. His business affairs
were often disorganized. His submissions to Rome were sometimes muddled,
confusing, shifting and incomplete.

The inefficiency of Polding is seen clearly in the arrangements for his all-
important Roman agency. In the late 1840s his agent was Thomas Grant,
Rector of the English College, but Grant also acted as the agent of the English
Benedictines who instructed him to obstruct Polding's proposals. Polding
seems not to have had an agent in Rome at all during the 1850s, the decade
which saw mounting criticism of his policies from lay groups, the Freeman's
Journal and from inside St. Mary's monastery itself, the papal judgement
against the abbey-diocese idea and the rising influence of McEncroe and
Cullen. It was only in 1860 that Polding approached Bernard Smith for
assistance after his mauling in the de Lacy affair and, two years later, that he
officially asked him to be his agent.10 But, like Grant, Smith also did agency

10 Polding-Smith, 21 May 1862, SPFLMA, Smith papers-Australia; Polding-Brown, 22 Jan.
1862, Brown papers, CAA.
work for the English Benedictines and English bishops. It was, therefore, unlikely that Smith would act simply in the interests of Polding. More than that, Polding and Smith had different conceptions of the role of an agent. Polding expected Smith to be his *alter ego* in all matters. The refusal of Smith to supply the identity of those who had stated that Hanly and Sheehy were Englishmen, his manner of proceeding in the affair of the papers of the pseudo-synod of Melbourne of 1862 and the report he gave to the *Propaganda* Congregation about Sydney in 1864 show that he preferred a more detached role. Presumably with much exaggeration, Polding once criticized Smith as never having been of the slightest use to him.\(^{11}\) Contrast this awkwardness with the close co-operation between the Australian Cullenite Irish bishops and Tobias Kirby of the Irish College who served his Australian principals with the utmost efficiency and never passed up an opportunity to promote their interests at the Roman curia.

It is illuminating to briefly compare Polding's style with that of his colleague, Bishop James Goold of Melbourne. Goold's character was one of 'uncomplicated conviction and resolve'.\(^{12}\) Confronted with opposition, Goold kept his head and translated his will into calm but single-minded and effective action. This contrasts with Polding's inconstancy over strategy and tendency to slide into emotionalism and depression. The differences can be seen in the two bishops' Roman correspondential style. Goold's letters are brief and to the point, sometimes sharp in tone as well. He once as good as told Cardinal Barnabò to get lost.\(^{13}\) Polding would never have addressed the Prefect in such terms. Polding's letters in times of crisis typically give way to long, rambling exercises in self-pity. Again, whereas Polding was merely *talking* about going to Rome in 1859 to conduct his defence in person against the *Freeman's*...

---

The Irish College, Rome.

(Source: J.Hanly, *The Irish College Rome*, Norwich, 1989, np.)
Journal, Goold had actually gone there a year before to deal with a similar crisis that had developed in his own diocese. On that occasion Goold enjoyed great success; Polding lost his Vicar General. Had Polding followed Goold's example the outcome for him might have been different. Propaganda officials found it easier to say 'no' by letter to a bishop safely distant by several thousand miles than face-to-face to one waiting for an interview in an antechamber of the Propaganda palace. But Polding had learned to fear Rome and was inclined to avoid the place.

Curiously, in view of the irresistible concentration of power and advantage in their hands, the Propaganda officials were sometimes timid of Polding. This is probably an instance of the principle enunciated by Cullen after many years of experience of the Roman mentality, 'Ma si sa alla Propaganda temono i leoni'. In other words, a determined, tenacious bishop with a record of long and devoted service to his people and much respected by them could instil a certain caution into the way in which the Congregation handled him. One such leone was Polding who, although generally ineffectual in his dealings with Rome, nevertheless sometimes provoked in officialdom a hesitant and deferential attitude towards him. In 1854 Polding's threat to resign compelled an unwilling Barnabò to reprimand Farrelly. Having resolved to recall Gregory in 1860, Barnabò manoeuvred the English Benedictine Congregation into assuming the appearance of responsibility for this measure. Polding's emotional reactions to disappointing papal decisions extracted semi-apologetic explanations from Fransoni and Barnabò along with assurances of how much the Archbishop was appreciated in Rome. The Propaganda officials experienced considerable consternation over Polding's

14 'But it is known that at Propaganda they fear lions'. Quoted in E.Larkin, The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland 1860-1870, Chapel Hill, 1987, pp. 86-87.
surprise visit to the city in 1866 and preferred Murray and Quinn, also there, to do most of the talking to him.

These sorts of personal responses suggest how important were the personalities involved in Roman-Australian relations in the nineteenth century. Here, too, Polding fared badly. His two principal Roman admirers, Pope Gregory XVI and Cardinal Castracane, were both dead by the early 1850s when the future of Sydney Benedictinism came up for definitive consideration. Polding was a poor politician and builder of a network of support. He managed to alienate Willson, Goold, McEncroe and Ullathorne, all of whom were well respected in curial circles. In alienating them he alienated George Talbot, a key member of the inner sanctum of the household of Pius IX. The Australian ponenti among the Propaganda cardinals during the 1850s and '60s, Patrizi, Altieri, von Reisach and Pitra, all handed in at one time or another unfavourable reports about the Australian Church under Polding's presidency.

Moreover, it was severely to Polding's disadvantage that he failed to establish a satisfactory rapport with Alessandro Barnabò, for 27 years the Secretary General and Prefect General of the Propaganda Congregation and one of the most powerful voices in the development of papal missionary policy in the nineteenth century. The sensitive, idealistic Polding did not know how to deal with the brusque, plain-speaking, no-nonsense Barnabò. The personal relationship between the two men reached its nadir in 1863 as a result of the allegations about the nationality of Hanly and Sheehy. 'The conclusion is evident', Polding wrote to Gregory, 'he [Barnabò] either is no gentlemen or does not consider me to be one. I would not treat a schoolboy the way he treats bishops - Cardinal though he be, he is only a priest' (Barnabò never received episcopal ordination.) Polding could have 'no respect for a man who has no respect for his office allowing it to be the vehicle of slander and insult...' Forgetful of the demands of 'common courtesy', the Propaganda Prefect
seemed to consider 'misrepresentation and slander...a matter of no account'. A biographer of Newman wrote, 'Barnabò was about the last man to understand Englishmen or be understood by them', a comment which throws light on the difficult relationship between Barnabò and the Englishman Polding. This relationship left its mark on Roman policy towards Australia. It is significant that Barnabò seems to have got along well personally with Goold, a man who, like him, was straightforward, resolute and businesslike.

Equally problematical for Polding was his relationship with Pope Pius IX. The impression that his Vicar General made on Pius at the ill-fated audience of 1854 was catastrophic. That impression ruined Gregory's career and thereby caused acute distress to Polding and undermined his plans. The Pope refused to make Gregory either coadjutor in Sydney or Bishop of Maitland, even though the Propaganda cardinals had recommended Gregory for the latter position in 1859.

The rebuff which Polding suffered when he approached Archbishop Cullen in the late 1850s for support in putting down dissent in Sydney was a major setback. The main lines of influence in decision-making about Australia in the critically important 1860s lay along a Rome-Dublin axis. The Propaganda Congregation was not utterly in thrall to Cullen as witnessed by Barnabò's irritation at being misled about the nationality of Hanly and Sheehy and at the avarice of some Irish missionaries in Australia and the failure of the Cullenites to obtain a mitre for Michael McAlroy. Nevertheless, the symbiotic relationship between Barnabò and Cullen Hibernicized the Australian hierarchy in the 1860s and installed Cullen's own associates in the new bishoprics. Well might Cullen call Barnabò 'a very staunch friend' of

Ireland. As late as 1871 Barnabò was dealing with affairs of the Australian Province through Cullen, bypassing the Metropolitan.

The English Catholic Church did not do for Polding at Rome what the Irish Church did for Irishism in Australia. The English bishops regarded Polding as a nuisance. Bishop Brown of Newport objected to Englishmen being sent to Australian dioceses. Bishop Grant of Southwark seems to have opposed the appointment of Crookall to Armidale. Archbishop Manning of Westminster worked resolutely against the appointment of Herbert and Roger Vaughan and, when he failed in the case of Roger, wrote to Archbishop Simeoni pleading that no more talented ecclesiastics be sent away from England. Bishop Ullathorne of Birmingham was responsible for the decision to sack Gregory.

In the context of the steady decline of the mutual confidence between the Congregation de Propaganda Fide and Archbishop Polding we shall probably never know what Fransoni, Barnabò and other Romans really thought about Polding privately, even if their assessments of his policies are clear enough. The surviving papers generated by the Propaganda system about Australia are official letters and documents which are seldom revelatory of personal attitudes. This archival circumstance, together with the fact that Roman officials tended to use stock phrases in their correspondence, guarded carefully their sources of sensitive information and were uncommunicative when it suited them, gave the Propaganda Congregation a sphinx-like demeanour which Polding found frustrating. The abundance of Polding’s private correspondence with friends and confidants such as Gregory, Geoghegan, Goold, Smith, Brown and Ullathorne affords plenty of evidence of what he thought deep down about the Congregation. 'How ignorant the people are in

17 Cullen-Murray, Good Friday 1876, MDA, A.1.48; see also Cullen-Simeoni, 1 Mar. 1874, CEPA, SOCG, vol. 1002, fols. 541 ff.
18 Barnabò-Cullen, 13 May 1871, DAA, Cullen papers/Holy See 1871-1878.
The palace of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide. This illustration shows the entrance to the seminary for students from missionary countries run by the Congregation, the Urban College de Propaganda Fide, facing on to the Piazza di Spagna.

Rome about our real position', he wrote in 1863.\textsuperscript{20} He allowed that Rome might be good at governing the familiar, long-established churches of Europe but was convinced that it knew nothing about Australia 'except what they have derived from the most prejudiced channels'.\textsuperscript{21} He could not understand why, when information was needed about Australia, Barnabò did not simply ask him and the other bishops who had laboured there for many years and who knew the place well. 'Why', he asked, 'will the Cardinal mistrust us and trust these intriguing, ambitious men?'\textsuperscript{22} He felt that he had been persecuted for years by Roman gullibility about false reports\textsuperscript{23} and in the midst of the Sheehy crisis he exclaimed, 'Each mail makes me more and more dissatisfied to live under Propaganda - Lies are received - lies are acted upon - Progress in paralyzed...In one word, it is impossible to govern these distant churches under Propaganda'.\textsuperscript{24}

Polding's striking achievement in obtaining an English Benedictine successor right at the end of his public career is to be explained in terms of the same factor which caused Rome to throw out most of his other proposals: pragmatism. The decade 1859-1868 was the high tide of Cullenite influence at Rome concerning the Australian missions, the most intensive period being 1865-1868 which saw the creation of the very opposite of what Polding wanted, a militant-Irish episcopal ascendancy. The setting-aside of McAlroy in 1869, due largely not to Polding but to Goold, was the first sign that the Cullenite monopoly was coming to an end. Propaganda officialdom saw Hibernianism as a reasonable approach to the internal problems of the largely Irish Catholic community in the 1850s and '60s but by the end of that period it seemed to be getting out of hand at the level of external relations with the wider society.

\textsuperscript{20} Polding-Gregory, 21 Apr. 1863, SPM-DownAA/MF, N 447; see also Polding-Smith, 21 Jan. 1863, \textit{SPFLMA}, Smith papers-Australia.
\textsuperscript{21} Polding-Smith, 22 Jul. 1863, \textit{SPFLMA}, Smith papers-Australia.
\textsuperscript{22} Polding-Geoghegan, 17 Dec. 1863; see also Polding-Smith, 22 Jul. 1863, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{23} Polding-Smith, 1 May 1868, \textit{SPFLMA}, Smith papers-Australia.
Having reshaped the episcopate to bring it into line with the sociological reality of Catholic life in Australia, Rome began to be worried that the Hibernian ecclesiastical dominance had gone too far, urged on by Polding's repeated warnings about the danger which aggressive Irish nationalism posed to social harmony and good relations with the civil authorities. The Congregation decided that it was necessary to find a new balance. The Vaughan appointment was the result.

After Polding's disaster-prone direction of the Archdiocese of Sydney's dealings with the Congregation, the advent of Roger Bede Vaughan inaugurated a new phase of Roman-Australian relations. Vaughan's style of transacting affairs with the Congregation would be very different from Polding's and much more successful. He was familiar with the curia and its ways from his five years of residence in Rome in the 1850s. He gained in 1873 and retained thereafter the confidence of the Propaganda officials. His working relationship with Cardinal Franchi was far more effective than Polding's had been with Cardinal Barnabò. His political abilities were more astute and his methods more businesslike. Consequently, when the peace among the Australian bishops which seemed to have arrived in 1874 was soon shattered by a new outbreak of bitter conflict, Vaughan was skilfully able to deploy Roman power to inflict a series of humiliations on the Cullenites which, by the end of Vaughan's ten-year episcopate in 1883, had transformed the ecclesiastical politics of Australia. Of course, the Vaughan appointment was a Pyrrhic victory for Polding in that Vaughan made no move to revive the monastic establishment but, on the contrary, dismantled it as soon as Polding was dead. On Vaughan's own unexpected death, the Benedictine citadel itself, the Archdiocese of Sydney, finally fell to the Cullenites with the appointment in 1884 of Cullen's own nephew, Patrick Moran. However, these matters lie outside the scope of this thesis.
A final comment about the point at which we began: ultramontanism in Australia. Polding and his fellow bishops were genuine in their fervent devotion to the person and office of the Pope, absolute identification with his cause and enthusiastic embrace of the ideology of the new papalism. At the notional, theological level their ultramontane sentiment was unquestioned because unproblematical. However, when the Roman system intruded itself into Australia via the Propaganda Congregation to make concrete judgements about the local Church, episcopal responses could be decidedly unpapalist. This is clearest in the case of Polding who, after thirty years of struggle, anxiety and defeat, simply lost confidence in the whole system and became deeply disenchanted. But even the main beneficiaries of papal policy in Australia up to around 1870, the ultra-Irish party, were markedly less enthusiastic about Rome when decisions started to go against their interests. The Cullenites resented the suspension of Quum ad catholicae Ecclesiae utilitatem, could not understand why the Propaganda Congregation would not touch McAlroy and scorned the appointments of Sheehy, Crookall and Vaughan. Their dissatisfaction with Rome would grow in the 1870s and early 1880s as Vaughan played their game better than they. Always docile publicly, Polding and the other bishops were prepared to subject Rome to strident criticism privately. Whatever their exalted ideas about 'God's vice-regent on earth', their chief interest in the papal system was how to utilize it politically to promote their influence and objectives and counteract their opponents. This Polding was not good at.

ARCHIVES AND OTHER REPOSITORIES OF PRIMARY SOURCES

AUSTRALIA

Archives of the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, New Norcia
Salvado correspondence.

(For other, microfilmed material from this collection, see below, State Archives of Western Australia.)

Archives of the Archdiocese of Adelaide
2.301 Murphy papers
2.302 Geoghegan papers
2.303 Shiel papers
2.304 Reynolds papers
box 'Documents from the Catholic Archives, Sydney, New South Wales. Series 31A. Documents from the Catholics Archives, Maitland, New South Wales. Series 31B'.

Archives of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
Lanigan letterbooks 1867-1885
1870-1896

Lanigan correspondence: bundle 'Episcopal letters and documents to and from Dr. Lanigan'.
bundle 'Non-episcopal correspondence to and from Dr. Lanigan'.

Archives of the Archdiocese of Brisbane
Quinn letterbooks March 1860 - November 1864
September 1866 - February 1875
February 1867 - September 1877
January 1870 - July 1873
March 1871 - May 1875
August 1873 - June 1878
Archives of the Archdiocese of Perth

box A2  Bishop Brady

box A3  Bishop Serra

Serra letterbook no. 2  1850-1853.

Archives of the Archdiocese of Sydney

Correspondence of the Overseas Clergy: Cullen, Kirby, Manning, Smith, Talbot.

Correspondence of Propaganda Fide: Bermingham, Geoghegan, McEncroe, Polding.

Correspondence of the Religious Clergy: Farrelly, Geoghegan, Goold, Polding.

Correspondence of the Secular Clergy: Bermingham, Dunne, McEncroe, M.Quinn, Willson.

Moran papers.

Vaughan papers.

Archives of the Diocese of Bathurst

Quinn correspondence files, 1865-1873.

Quinn letterbook, 1867-1884.

Archives of the Diocese of Maitland

Murray correspondence

Archives of the Generalate of the Australian Sisters of Charity, Sydney

H102 Early Sisters:  Correspondence
                     Propaganda Fide, Rome

Archives of the Generalate of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, Sydney

Polding correspondence

Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission

Correspondence file 'Bermingham - Dunne, etc.'
boxes
'Correspondence - Letters. Inward 1831-1859'.
'Bishop J.T.Hynes. Letters and papers'.
'Bishop Willson (Hobart). Letters and memoire'.
'Inward letters. 1869-1873'.
'Most Rev. P.B. Geoghegan. Ib'.
'Goold inventory'.
'Propaganda Archives 1'.

Goold diary

Hynes diary

**Mitchell Library, Sydney**

Am 38 Sheridan Moore papers

Downside Abbey. Select papers relating to Australia 1834-1862. FM4/2792. (See below, *Archives of Downside Abbey*.)

**National Library of Australia, Canberra**

Microfilm records of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide: *Scritture Originali Riferite nei Congressi - Oceania*, 1806-1878. (See below *Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Rome*.)

MF M1651: Microfilm records of the Archdiocese of Westminster, 1818-1930. (See below, *Archives of the Archdiocese of Westminster*.)

**St. Patrick's College, Manly**

Microfilm of Birt Collection. (See below, *Archives of Downside Abbey*.)

Eris O'Brien papers.

**State Archives of Western Australia (at the Battye Library, Perth)**

Microfilm of original material held at the *Archives of the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, New Norcia* -

- MN 629/1 ACC 2234A/1: Salvado diaries, notes and letters
- MN 629/1 ACC 2234A/1, file 21: Garrido's sea log, 1846-1853, and sundry notes.
- MN 629/1 ACC 2234A/1, file 23: Garrido's diary, 1849-1853.
- MN 629/1 ACC 2234A/1, file 24: Garrido's diary, letters and notes, 1850-1861.
- MN 629/1 ACC 2234A/4: Correspondence 1835-1849.
ROME

Archives of the Abbey of San Paolo fuori le Mura.

Necrology sheet on the death of P.D.Bernardo Smith, 1892.

Smith papers:  Australia.
Propaganda - S.Ufficio.

Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples


Lettere e Decreti della Sacra Congregazione e Biglietti di Monsignor Segretario, vols. 327-370 (1842-1874).

Scritture originali riferite nei Congressi. La prima serie: Oceania, vols. 2-10 (1842-1874). (See above, National Library of Australia, Canberra.)

Scritture originali riferite nei Congressi. La seconda serie: Sacra Congregazione, Cardinali, Segretari, Protonotori, Consultori, vol. 3.

Scritture originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali, vols. 974-1001 (1851-1874).

Udienze di Nostro Signore, vols. 106-178 (1847-1874).

Archives of the Generalate of the Christian Brothers

boxes  207  Correspondence. Australia file 2337, 1842-1870.
    0022  Letters to and from Propaganda Fide.
    0023  Photocopies of material from Propaganda Fide.
    0024  Cullen correspondence. Irish College. 1843-1850.

Archives of the Generalate of the Marist Fathers

Letterbook, Lettres du Procureur de Lyons, 1845-1856.

Memoires Mayet.

OG 031  Oceania Generales.

1.230  S.C. de Propaganda Fide. Correspondence, Colin-Fransoni, 1845-1847.
232 ad Episcopos.

233.2 Epistolae Colin.

418.1 Oceanie Nouvelle Calèdonie, 1848-1853.

420 Correspondence with bishops.

458 Oceania Province: Correspondence of the Procurators, Dubreul, 1845-1846, Rocher, 1845-1852, Pro-procurators, 1847-1864.

**Archives of the Generalate of the Passionist Congregation**

*Sectio Provinciae Spiritus Sancti. Documenta Fund. Primaevae. 1847-1848, 1936-.*

**Archives of the Irish College**

Cullen correspondence.

Kirby correspondence.

**Secret Vatican Archive**

*Segretario di Brevi, 1845-1873 (5064-5528, Gregory XVI-Pius IX).*

*Segretario di Stato (S.C. de Propaganda Fide).*

**BRITAIN**

**Archives of the Archdiocese of Birmingham**

Correspondence series 'B', 1830-1899.

**Archives of the Archdiocese of Cardiff**

Brown papers.

**Archives of the Archdiocese of Westminster (See above. National Library of Australia, Canberra).**


Wiseman papers: Correspondence with Rome.

Letters from foreign bishops.
Archives of Downside Abbey

Abbots' Archives.

Birt Collection (See above, St. Patrick's College, Manly).

President Generals' Archives: Burchall box.

Ullathorne papers.

Public Record Office, London

FO 43 Jervoise despatches, 1871-1874.

FO 45 Domestic various, January-June 1871.

IRELAND

Archives of All Hallows' College, Dublin

Correspondence file: Sydney, Melbourne.

Archives of the Archdiocese of Dublin

Australia box 58/1.

Cullen papers: Holy See, 1849-1878.

Roman agents and Irish College.

Murray papers: Australia & New Zealand, 1830-1852.

Archives of the Generalate of the Irish Sisters of Charity, Dublin

RSCG/1/B Aikenhead correspondence (vi) Australia.

ANTHOLOGIES, BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDES, COLLECTIONS, DICTIONARIES, ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND RESEARCH AIDS

Annuario Pontificio (this directory of the Holy See was published under various other titles in the nineteenth century, such as Notizie per l’anno and La Gerarchia Cattolica e la Famiglia Pontificia per l’anno), various publishers, Rome, 1842-1874.


Inventory of the Historical Archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or 'De Propaganda Fide', N. Kowalski & J. Metzler (compilers), Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1983.

Ius Pontificii de Propaganda Fide, Typographia Polyglotta S.C. de Propaganda Fide, Rome, 8 vols., 1888-1897.


SECONDARY SOURCES

Journals

American Historical Review
Australasian Catholic Record
Catholic Historical Review
Church History
Historical Studies
Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand
Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society
Journal of Ecclesiastical History
Journal of Religious History
Published Books and Articles


Christian Bros., History of the Institute, Bray Printing Co. Ltd., Dublin, 2 vols, (no year given).


------------- The Missionary College of All Hallows 1842-1891, All Hallows College, Dublin, 1986.


Dillon, G., The Spoliation of Propaganda, M.H.Gill & Son, Dublin, 1885.


Guilday, P., 'The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide 1622-1922', in *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. VI, no. 4, January 1921, pp. 478-494.


--------- Lay Catholics and the Education Question in Nineteenth Century New South Wales: The Shaping of a Decision, Catholic Theological Faculty, Sydney, 1976.


-------------------


McCarthy, P., 'The Foundation of Catholicism in Western Australia, 1829-1911', in University Studies in History and Economics, Aug. 1956, pp. 5-76.


MacSuibhne, P., Paul Cullen and his Contemporaries, Leinster Leader Ltd., Kildare, 1961, 3 vols.


----------------------


----------------------


----------------------
The Irish in Australia, University of Sydney Press, Sydney, 1986.


Reuter, A., 'Diritti e doveri della S. Congregazione: la sua fisionomia', in Compendio di Storia della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione
Roberts, C., 'James Quinn's Roman Background', in *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. XXXVII, no. 1, January 1960, pp. 11-16.


---


Thorpe, O., First Catholic Mission to the Australian Aborigines, Pellegrini, Sydney, 1949.


Unpublished Theses, Typescripts, Papers and Essays


Campbell, G. (compiler), 'The History of the Sisters of Charity in Australia', roneoed typescript in the Archives of the Australian Sisters of Charity, Potts Point, ny.


Newbold, M., 'The Turbulent Bishop Brady: An Outline of Western Australian Catholic History during John Brady's role as priest and Bishop of Perth, 1843-1871', typescript in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Perth, ny.


Potts, M., 'We Never Sink: Matthew Quinn as Bishop of Bathurst, 1865-1885', BAHons thesis, University of Sydney, 1971.
Prud'homme, C., 'Stratégie Missionnaire du Saint-Siège sous le Pontificat de
Leon XIII: Centralisation Romaine et Défis Culturels', doctoral thesis

Suttor, T.L., 'The position of Catholicism in Australia, 1840-1900', seminar
paper, 1958, copy in the library of St. Patrick's College, Manly, Eris O'Brien
papers.

Waters, I.B., 'Australian Conciliar Legislation Prior to the 1917 Code of Canon
Law: A Comparative Study with Similar Conciliar Legislation in Great
Britain, Ireland and North America', DCL thesis, Saint Paul University,
Ottawa, 1990.

Wright, W.J., 'William Bernard Ullathorne and the 1859 Crisis in the Sydney
Catholic Church', research paper, copy in History Department, University
of Sydney, 1984.