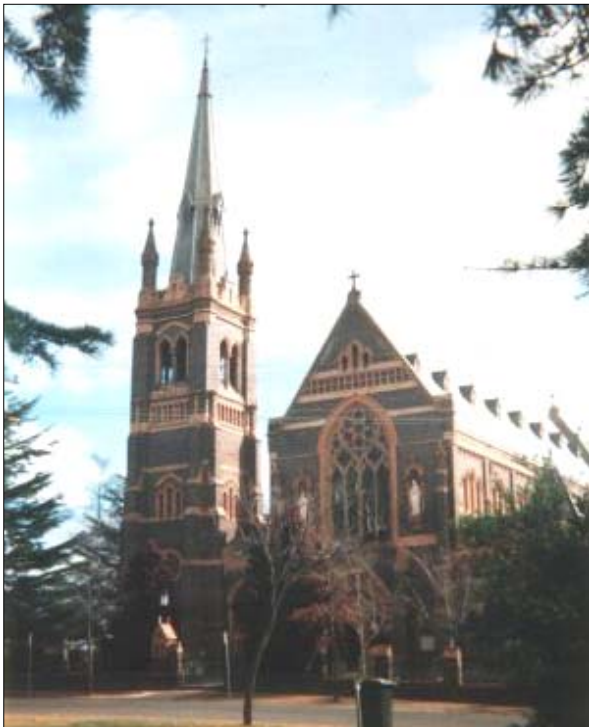


100 years: In Memory of Bishop Torreggiani

30 September 2003

Capuchin Friars' Voice from the past



From 1833 Capuchin Friars came to Australia and left their footprints in the history of this great land. This became a significant contribution to the pioneer faith in 1879 when Bishop Torreggiani and a number of Capuchins arrived to begin ministry in the Diocese of Armidale NSW.

2004 will be the 100th Anniversary of the death of Bishop Torreggiani. To mark this historic event the Capuchins of Australia are preparing a special Assembly of friars in Armidale from 17th -19th February, 2004.

To commemorate this event, Br *Patrick Colbourne OFM Cap.*, was commissioned to write a book on the life of Bishop Torreggiani and to prepare the groundwork for this special event.

It is proposed that the friars would spend Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of that week in Armidale with a display, the launch of the Biography of Bishop Torreggiani and visits to sites of Capuchin interest.

The sub-title of the biography of Bishop Torreggiani is to be *"An Instrument of Peace"* because this sums up the whole course of his life.

Br. Patrick Colbourne writes. *"Against a background of tension between the English religious clergy and the Irish diocesan clergy of the day Bishop Torreggiani was selected by Archbishop Vaughan to be a buffer between the parties.*

An Italian Capuchin who learnt English around the coal mines of Wales ministering to Irish miners, he was transplanted across the world to minister to predominantly Irish miners, shearers, railway workers and farm hands who were pioneering settlements in northern New South Wales.

Before the separation of the Diocese of Grafton (present Lismore) he visited people on the north coast as well as beyond the mountains into the "great scrub" from Tamworth to the Queensland border.

He introduced many religious congregations into his diocese and was renowned for having a soft spot for clergy who found it difficult to conform and fit in, some of which were among the Capuchins who came to work in his Diocese.

To the end he remained a deeply religious prelate who made sure annual missions were preached through the districts, who introduced and fostered the Third Order of St Francis and promoted the Portiuncula Indulgence.

His friendship with the Anglican Bishop of Armidale and Grafton, Doctor Green, was a matter of public note and wonder. The esteem of Bishop Murray, the Irish Bishop of Maitland, was deep and genuine and at the end of his life his successor, Bishop O'Connor, referred to him as "our old chief".

In the broader picture of Australian history his life saw the coming of Federation, the coming of the railway to the whole of the New England district and the transformation of the nineteenth century of squatters and selectors into the agricultural, pastoral and mining industries of the early twentieth century.

This story of men and women who made this possible will be told in the biography and remembered in our prayerful celebrations in Armidale in February 2004.