

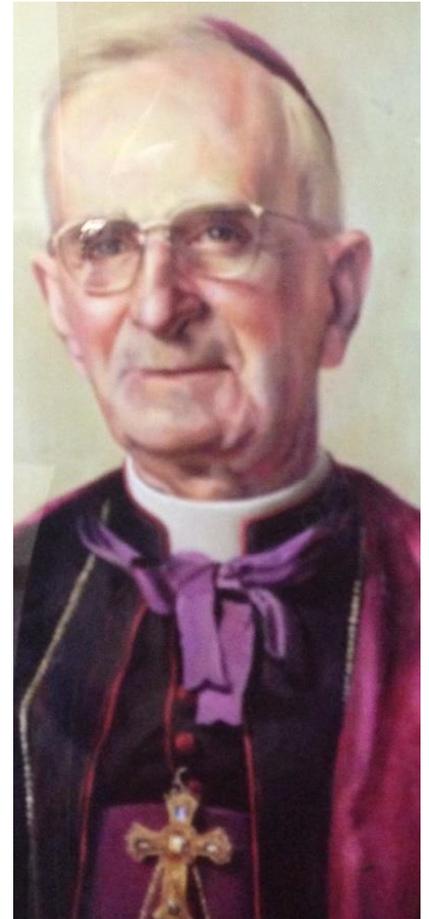
From the Diary of Bishop John Francis Norton – 1925

Inscription....

*Diary kept for my dearest Mother
on the P. & O Steamer "Mongolia"
by John F. Norton
With the Australian National
Pilgrimage to Rome & Lourdes 1925.*

4th April, 1925

I shall make a beginning to-day, for I am leaving Bathurst and entering on the first part of my journey. Fr Brosnan and Mr TJ Purcell - the Bishop's solicitor, well known in Sydney legal circles and is a man from whom I had received many kindnesses, saw me off by the mid-day train. It was quite an informal departure. I knew I would see both of these friends again in a few days. Strange to say I saw the City of the Plains receding from view without emotion of any kind. As the train pulled out I first noted the red-tiled roof of the Bishop's House and the square tower of the Cathedral. Then, as these were lost to sight, my eyes rested on the spires of the College. Soon, even these ceased to hold my attention and I just sat back in the compartment, and I cannot say what was the most prominent thought in my mind. I cannot explain how I left the place that has been my home for more than nine years without being deeply moved. It was not for want of affection for it, because I am deeply attached to it and for very good reason. The years passed there have been very happy ones. Scores and scores of kindnesses have been received there. Strong friendships with my brother priests have been formed there, and if these things will not make a man love a place nothing can. The only explanation I can give of the unmoved manner in which I took my leave of it was that I was very tired. The last few months have been very hard and scarcely a midnight has seen me in bed. During the last week or so it had been always one or two in the morning. This was by no means a matter of choice, for no one loves a sleep better than I, but this was the only way in which I could get through the multitude of affairs on my hands. In view of my pending departure everything had to be wound up, accounts balanced and nothing left that would puzzle my successor. As well as all this, the Bishop was very ill and it was doubtful if he would be able to travel at all. So that, the uncertainty, left me in a very peculiar position. However, all these things have been got through and I find myself in the train bound for Sydney, as the first part of a journey to Europe.



As the afternoon wore on and the Blue Mountains were approached, it began to get colder and the rain commenced to fall, but when I reached Sydney it had become quite mild. After stowing my baggage and having my tea, I went to St Patrick's Church to arrange about Mass in the morning and when this was done, I went to the hotel and went to bed.

5th April, Palm Sunday

I said Mass on the side altar of St Patrick's and then went back to the hotel and wrote some letters. I had lunch with my good friend the Rector of St John's, and spent some time with him afterwards in his beautiful college. That night I again treated myself to an early sleep.

6th April

I said Mass in the lovely Chapel of the Brigidine Nuns at Randwick and there met Fr Brosnan, who with Mr Purcell had come down with the Bishop during the night. We were both kept busy during the day with a multitude of affairs. We lunched with Mr Purcell and we had Fathers Casey and Dunne with us for dinner. They had motored down to see the departure. The Bishop had stood the train journey well and the doctor had pronounced him fit to travel.