

The Late Fr. Corcoran, O.S.A.

The morning of the 5th December had not long dawned (writes our Cairns correspondent) when the tolling of the chapel bell in the little town announced that Father Corcoran had gone to his rest, after three weeks of sickness—enteric fever—borne with patience and resignation. Only a few of his parishioners knew the end was so near, so quietly and patiently had the good priest borne his sufferings. These faithful few, with four brother priests, tended his last moments, heard his last words on earth, and prayed for his soul when it departed on its long journey into eternity. Thus Death came to the servant of God. The Master gave to His priest, as the reward of eight years ardent labour in His vineyard, a peaceful death, and we know—would to God we were as sure of it ourselves—a place in the Eternal Kingdom. God grant that our deaths may be such as Father Corcoran's was.

All day on Thursday the body reposed before the altar in the Church, where he had so often said Mass and preached words of advice and comfort. "Oh! for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." The dead priest was clothed in his priestly vestments. On his breast rested the chalice, and his cold hands clasped the crucifix and rosary beads, symbolical of the Mother Church. Hundreds of all religions went to take a farewell look at all that was left of poor Father Corcoran. The scene in the little chapel was one never to be forgotten. The face of the dead priest, drawn with suffering, yet calm withal, the altar draped in deep black, the noiseless tread of one or another come to take a "last look" at the beloved face, the still silence of the surroundings, broken only by the sob of





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some poor old Irishwoman, praying for the dead "Soggarth Aroon," all those will remain in my memory during my lifetime. Many an eye was wet with tears at that scene, many a heartfelt prayer went up for the dead on that day.

On Friday morning at 9.30, after the Requiem Mass, they bore Father Corcoran to his last long rest in the little cemetery. The funeral was one of the longest ever seen here. The hearse, the deceased's brother priests, the altar boys, Hibernians, Convent school children, and general public came in the order named, in the procession. The scene at the cemetery was very touching, and many were the tears shed for him "laid 'neath the mould." So they buried him, but his memory shall live.

On the Sunday following Fathers Doyle and Downey made touching reference to the deceased priest at both Masses. Father Doyle said that he felt it his duty to say something on the many good qualities of their beloved pastor, who passed away the week before. None knew his fervent piety and earnest zeal better than those—the priests—who lived with him. Later on someone more able would preach the panegyric on the dead priest. He hoped, too, that a monument would be erected to keep green the memory of the servant of God who had laboured so earnestly and fruitfully in their midst. He would ask their prayers for Father Corcoran's soul, a request that was hardly necessary for him to make. Father Downey also spoke in a similar strain.

The Bishop (Right Rev. Dr. Murray, O.S.A.) has lately been away collecting for the Vicariate debt fund, and on reaching Townsville heard with the deepest sorrow that the good pastor of Cairns had that morning been laid in his silent grave. Father Corcoran was specially dear to his Lordship, and enjoyed his fullest confidence. In Cairns and in each of the outlying stations the lamented priest has left eloquent evidence of his priestly spirit and zeal. Everywhere he was beloved by his own people and by all those who had the privilege of knowing him. His amiable bearing, gentle, winning ways, unaffected piety, and restless energy, sustained by genuine zeal in his work, won all hearts to him. Everyone mourns his loss, and

hearts to him. Everyone mourns his loss, and few feel it more keenly than Dr. Murray, Vicar-Apostolic of the North.

Father Corcoran was born at Killenaule, County Tipperary, Ireland. He was educated at the famous College of Mt. Melleray, County Waterford. He completed his ecclesiastical studies at Orlagh, near Dublin. Very shortly after his ordination he was appointed to the Vicariate of North Queensland, and he arrived in this country in 1893. His first mission was at Croydon, but for the past six years he has ministered in Cairns. His last piece of missionary work was the attending the victim of the Mungana tragedy, and, as he was not very well at the time, the worry of a long journey and a restless stay worked havoc with his health, and he came back with a heavy attack of influenza, which soon developed into enteric fever, to which, after a short but brave struggle he succumbed.—
R.I.P.

Our Armidale correspondent writes:—

On Wednesday morning, 11th instant, a solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated in St. Mary's Cathedral, Armidale, for the repose of the soul of the Rev. Thos. Corcoran, who died in Cairns, Queensland, on Thursday, 6th instant. The deceased young priest was brother of the Very Rev. P. Corcoran, P.P., of Tenterfield. He joined the Augustinian Order when very young, and, after a long and brilliant course, he, with several other members of that great missionary society, came out to Queensland, where he zealously discharged his sacred duties as pastor of Cairns till stricken down by a malignant attack of enteric fever. Several of the neighbouring priests came to Armidale to take part in the solemn function, and to pay the last tribute of respect and reverence to the memory of one whom they esteemed as a genial, gentle, and zealous brother. The Requiem was chanted by the Right Rev. Monsignor O'Connor, Fathers Walsh and Tobin acting as deacon and sub-deacon respectively, and Dean O'Neill as Master of Ceremonies. His Lordship the Bishop, the Very Rev. P. Corcoran, P.P., (Tenterfield), Fathers Gibbons (Glen Innes), O'Sullivan (Walcha) were present in the sanctuary.
