

# Three Nuns And Priest Drown In Boat Capsize

**PERTH, Thursday.**—Three Roman Catholic nuns and a priest were drowned when a boat capsized near Mandurah, 45 miles from Perth, late last night.

*Two other nuns who were flung into the water managed to cling to the upturned boat all night and are now in a serious condition in a Perth hospital.*

The victims were Reverend Father Joseph O'Hara, 27, curate of Mosman Park Presbytery, Reverend Mother Patricia, Reverend Mother Finbar and Sister Joachim, all from the Presentation Convent at Mosman Park, Perth.

All of the victims were from Ireland.

The other two sisters, who were rescued after clinging to the capsized boat, are Sister Augustine and Sister Aquinas, also of the Presentation Convent, Mosman Park.

## **Picnic**

All six were members of a picnic party from the Mandurah holiday home of the Presentation order.

Two parties set off for a Yunderup picnic spot, one by road and the other with Father O'Hara in his new 10 ft. 6 in. dinghy.

The two parties met at Yunderup and had a picnic lunch.

lunch.

It was decided to transfer the road party to the dinghy for the return trip, while those who had gone up by water returned by car.

A fisherman found the body of a nun floating face downwards about two miles east of the Mandurah channel.

Other fishermen found Father O'Hara's body tied by rope to the outboard motor, which, though not clamped to the stern of the boat, was attached by a rope.

## **Caught Fire**

About 25 yards from the boat another dead nun was floating face downwards, and the other body was found soon after on the bottom of the river.

One of the rescued sisters said later the outboard motor had caught fire and Father O'Hara had tried to throw it overboard.

About 5 p.m. yesterday

About 5 p.m. yesterday squally conditions were encountered on Peel Inlet, and these, with the dead weight of the jettisoned engine, may have caused the capsizing of the dinghy.

Rough conditions accompanying hot weather are not uncommon on Peel Inlet. Sudden spiral squalls resembling willy-willys sweep across the estuary, and if it had not been for the twilight race meeting at Pinjarra yesterday it is certain that many more boats would have been on the estuary.

The tragedy has plunged the normally gay holiday resort of Mandurah into gloom.

There are estimated to be some 8,000 holiday-makers in the district.

On January 19, 1957, Mandurah made world headlines when 2½-year-old Graham Davies was rescued alive from a 25 ft. borehole after having been trapped in it for 23 hours.

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