

## FEBRUARY 19, 1974 Fr Mark Hall, CM



**Fr Mark Hall** was born in Hunter's Hill, NSW, in June, 1885. He had his first schooling with the Christian Brothers at Balmain before attending St Stanislaus' College, Bathurst, from 1896 to 1905, a period which covered studies in the late primary, full secondary and some Philosophy courses. His elder brother, Fr John Hall, CM, had preceded him at St Stanislaus' and in his decision to be a Vincentian priest, the first Australian-born of the Congregation.

In those days it was necessary to complete Vincentian studies in Ireland, as Australia was part of the Irish Province of the Vincentian Congregation. The Vincentian Seminary at Eastwood was begun only in 1922, and the Australian Province of the Vincentians set up in 1926. Fr Mark continued his studies at St Joseph's, Blackrock, Dublin, and was ordained to the priesthood on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1910, in Dublin by Archbishop Walshe.

On his return to Australia he was appointed to the staff at St Stanislaus'. He remained there till 1927, for most of the time as Prefect of Studies and Choirmaster. He was a leading light in all sporting activities as was his brother John, also of the Bathurst College staff till 1928.

Fr Mark was captain of the College Cricket and Football teams, which both played in those days in Senior Grades and repeatedly won their competitions. He played on the Sydney Cricket Ground for the Country side and was reputed over several years the most brilliant scrum-half of the Western Division of the State which he regularly represented.

On leaving St Stanislaus' he was appointed to the Teaching Staff of the Vincentian Seminary at Eastwood. He began a long association with the Diocesan Seminaries at Manly and Springwood about that time and went as spiritual director to Manly in 1930. He remained at this work till 1968. Many generations of priests knew and revered him through those years. Many came to see him through the years of his retirement at Ashfield. The occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of his priesthood was honoured with the presence of Cardinal Gilroy at Ashfield.

The last years of his life were marked by patient physical suffering which required hospital care and nursing when home at Ashfield. He was a patient at Lewisham and Calvary through those years from time to time. His mental faculties remained to the end. His death was sudden but not unexpected, least of all by himself. Over twenty priests concelebrated his Requiem Mass. The principal celebrant was Archbishop James Carroll of Sydney, assisted by Bishop Thomas of Bathurst. Present in the sanctuary were Bishops J. Cullinane of Melbourne, Bishops E. Clancy and E. Kelly of Sydney. A group of priests and students totalling over a hundred, assisted at the Mass and the congregation included a wide representation of the teaching and nursing sisterhood of the Archdiocese as well as Fr Hall's relatives and friends. A special place was reserved for a representation from his old school of the Christian Brothers at Balmain where he attended as a student in primary days and from St Stanislaus' College. The homily was preached by Mgr James Madden, with whom Fr Hall was associated over many years at Manly Seminary. (*From "Echoes" from St Stanislaus*)