
Theses

1999

Abbot Torres and the complex canonical status of New Norcia

Maria Teresa Avalos
University of Notre Dame Australia

Follow this and additional works at: <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses>



Part of the [History Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Copyright Regulations 1969

WARNING

The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further copying or communication of this material by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.

Do not remove this notice.

Publication Details

Avalos, M. T. (1999). Abbot Torres and the complex canonical status of New Norcia (Bachelor of Arts (Honours)). University of Notre Dame Australia. <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/93>

This dissertation/thesis is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@ND. For more information, please contact researchonline@nd.edu.au.



CONCLUSION

When Dom Fulgentius Torres willingly undertook the responsibility of becoming the Apostolic Administrator of the Abbey Nullius of New Norcia he, like Bishop Salvado, must have felt that once and for all the canonical status of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia was resolved and legalised. This union would ensure the future of the community and it would prevent it from ever becoming under the control of secular powers. However, this was not so and, in his fifth year of government, Abbot Torres found himself in a distressing and conflictive position. Problems with Provincial Superiors and the unreliable nature of the system that placed New Norcia and Torres under the jurisdiction of the Abbot Visitor of the Spanish Province started to become more difficult to solve.

As a consequence he felt discouraged and decided to resign; his resignation was rejected primarily because, it was held that his motives were not persuasive and valid. Despite the fact that his resignation was rejected, his attempt is significant because it is the first indication of magnitude of the problems he had to face and for which he had to rely on the jurisdiction of the Abbot Visitor. The second and most obvious indication of the magnitude of the problems created by the union with the SPCCPO is explained by Abbot Torres himself in his *Ad Limina* Report of 1910 to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. It has been the prime objective of this thesis to discuss and examine these issues and their interrelatedness.

The views and argument expressed in the Report to Propaganda have been corroborated by several of Torres' letters to his friend Abbot Jose Deas of the Monastery of Montserrat and by his diary entries of the year 1910. Abbot Torres' prime concern was the fact that obviously the union could not be effective because New Norcia was unique; it was a mission and Abbey Nullius in Western Australia. As such it could not be part of the Spanish Province in the same way as other regular monasteries located within the Province. A great distance separated the Province from New Norcia, reliance on correspondence to solve ordinary matters that required approval of the Abbot Visitor proved highly ineffective and costly. Finally, the interests of New Norcia were so different to those of the Province. To solve these problems he considered it necessary to separate the Monastery of New Norcia from the Spanish Province and that it was crucial to bring back BCNN into the CCPO.

His struggle achieved very little, the arrangement remained the same for it was the advice and view of the Abbot General of the CCPO that union with the Spanish Province was convenient, even if not necessary. SCPF intervened by restricting the interference of the Abbot Visitor in administrative matters of the New Norcia community and by relieving New Norcia from paying the annual charge or financial burden to cover for the cost of Visitation. Indeed New Norcia remained under the jurisdiction of the SPCCPO until as late as 1952.

The *Ad Limina* Report of Torres provides a valuable insight not only into Torres' own experiences in Western Australia, but also into the complex nature of establishing missions and monastic centres in destinations far removed from their original foundation. This thesis has examined and discussed the problems that Abbot Torres encountered when he became Abbot Nullius of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia and the circumstances that exacerbated this complex situation.