

QUOTATIONS

FROM HISTORICAL CORRESPONDENCE

Fr Jean Rocher to Fr Poupinel

May 21, 1863

'There is nothing new at the Procure. Except for a little chapel that Fr Joly is getting built in honour of St Joseph. It is coming on fast'

Jul 21, 1863

'Besides, Fr Joly is busy with his building - St Joseph's Chapel.'

Fr Claude Joly to Fr Poupinel

May 20, 1863

'The St Joseph's Chapel is almost finished: we shall not wait for you to bless it'

Oct 18, 1863

'As for the bronze statue to crown the Chapel of St Joseph, I must have that, and about 1 metre in height....the iron rod which should take the statue is already fixed.'

Nov 18, 1863

'We need a cross and candlesticks for the Chapel of St Joseph....I wrote to you in the last mail about St Joseph's statue; don't forget it - if it is not yet made: 1 metre in height, and in bronze.'

Fr Joly to Fr Yardin

Dec 20, 1863

*'St Joseph is now set up at the top of the little octagonal chapel which is now finished, and he is watching that everything goes well' ***

*** (Footnote) 'A wooden statue has provisionally been placed there, which is from the Solomons Mission of which nothing else remains.'*

Fr Joly to (unknown)

No date, but annotated 'End 1863'

'...if you can find it, a tiny Way of the Cross....like that in the chapel in Lyons: this too would be for putting in the chapel of St Joseph, the places are ready for it.'



SAINT JOSEPH'S CHAPEL

PETER MCMURRICH SM

The Chapel of St Joseph

In the second half of 1863, Fr Claude Joly SM, supervisor of works for Villa Maria monastery and church, erected this octagonal chapel dedicated to St Joseph.

It was the first building completed by the Marists on the Villa Maria site.

Following restoration the chapel was rededicated on May 24, 1996

The chapel's 150th anniversary was celebrated on Oct 15, 2013

The small octagonal chapel in the grounds of Villa Maria monastery was built in 1863 by Fr Claude Joly SM, architect and clerk of works for the main monastery building.

The erection of the chapel marked the beginning of building works on the present Villa Maria property, culminating in the completion of the main monastery building towards the end of 1865.

For some years prior to the commencement of building works the coadjutor brothers came daily from the first Villa Maria site, on the other side of Tarban Creek, to clear the new monastery site.



One of the first things they did (perhaps as early as 1858) was to construct a small wooden shrine which housed a statue of St Joseph, dedicating their work to the care and protection of one of the special patron saints of the Marist order. This statue (made of wood) had a special significance, since it was carried by the Marists involved in the disastrous attempt to found a mission in the Solomons in 1845 (which saw the violent death of the Marist bishop, Jean Baptiste Epalle, and several of his missionaries), and had been brought back to Sydney by the survivors.

This wooden statue was eventually placed inside the chapel, and a larger St Joseph statue in bronze, a metre tall, was placed on top of the chapel roof. Photographic evidence suggests that the original roof of the chapel was either slate or wood shingles.

The chapel was used during the 19th century by members of the monastery community for the celebration of private Masses and other personal devotions. Claude Joly also installed in the chapel a small set of stations of the cross, having made 14 recesses in the walls of the chapel to accommodate the 14 stations.

The St Joseph chapel was formally blessed by the Marist missionary bishop, Louis Elloy, on 24 April, 1864.

Both the bronze statue from the roof of the chapel, and the wooden statue from the 1845 Solomons expedition have since disappeared, though the latter was recorded as still being inside the chapel as late as 1964.