

FR GERALD PAYNE



B/W photograph (reproduction).

Dated: c. 1940s

BDHC archive collection.

Born November 21, 1898 in Ballarat, Fr Gerald Payne was educated at St Patrick's College Ballarat and then at St Patrick's College Manly in Sydney. He was ordained by Bishop Foley at St Patrick's Cathedral in 1923. An accomplished musician, holding the A.L.C.M. and L.L.C.M. degree, he was greatly admired for his musical skills. Fr Payne had a wide audience when he gave requested violin recitals during the 1930s over 3YB radio station in Warrnambool.

He enlisted as a Chaplain on June 20, 1940 and served for six years in the Middle East and New Guinea. During this time, he was referred to as the digger priest due to his forthrightness, unconventional methods, contempt of danger and absorption in the welfare of the troops. He finished as one of the Senior Chaplains in the A.I.F. He was finally discharged from the force on February 13, 1946. Fr Payne was Parish Priest at Hopetoun, Sea Lake (where he initiated the first Catholic school), Birregurra and Dennington. He died on December 13, 1965. He was 67.