

“La Australia del Espiritu Santo”

THE GREAT SOUTH LAND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Let the heavens, the earth, the waters with all their creatures
and all those here present
witness that I, *Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros...*
in the name of Jesus Christ...
hoist this emblem of the Holy Cross
on which His (Jesus Christ’s) person was crucified
and whereon He gave His life
for the ransom and remedy of all the human race...
On this day of Pentecost, *14 May 1606...*, take possession
of all this part of the South as far as the pole
in the name of Jesus...
which from now on shall be called
the Southern land of the Holy Ghost
...and this always and forever
...and to the end that to all natives, in all the said lands,
the holy and sacred evangel may be preached zealously and openly.”



These words above are the prayer of a Portuguese navigator, who was part of the Spanish Voyages of Discovery to the Pacific Ocean. There were many ships and explorers of Dutch, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish origins who passed near the north west coast line and so believed that a vast continent in the south, was yet undiscovered by other explorers. Until the arrival of Captain James Cook in 1770, the East coast remained uncharted.

The prayer, invoking the Holy Spirit, of Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, so long ago is now, more than ever, worthy of recalling, for a nation in crisis, built on Judeo-Christian foundations.

As a devout Catholic, Captain Pedro had passed through Rome, prior to this voyage, to seek the Holy Father’s blessings on his distant voyages, that risked peril or joy and months or years at sea, seeking a vast southern continent, Australia, we now know and love as home.

Let us, like Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, pray to the Holy Spirit in this time of a *virus pandemic* that has brought so much suffering and death so quickly throughout the world. May the words “*Come O Holy Spirit, and Renew the face of the earth*” become our prayer.