

# Cathedral treasures discovered

When the body of Bishop Matthew Gibney, the third bishop of Perth was excavated under the floor of St Mary's Cathedral by archaeologists Dr Shane Bourke and Fr Robert Cross, it was found that the Bishop was holding a pair of rosary beads.

Because there was a large nest of white ants associated with the coffin of Bishop Gibney, it was initially difficult to discern the rosary beads. However, close examination revealed their presence and they were carefully taken from the coffin for closer examination.

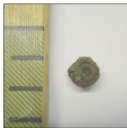
Most of the beads were found. Those missing are thought to have been attacked by the white ants, given that the beads were made of wood. However, the cross, medalion and crucifix were so corroded



Rosary beads found in the coffin

as to be unrecognisable, except as a clump of corroded metal and wood.

The rosary beads did not seem to be of exceptional quality, being similar to common wooden rosa-



**Close-up:** One of the beads.

ry beads available at pious goods shops today.

Once the beads had been examined and photographed, they were returned to Bishop Gibney's coffin.