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NEWSLETTER

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Annual General Meeting: Sunday 24 March 2019

President's Report: Dr Carmody spoke briefly to his written report of which copies were available. He thanked all for the support he had received.

Treasurer's report. Dr Hughes had supplied printed copies of the audited accounts. She spoke briefly about some of the expenses and that income had exceeded expenditure, due largely to an increase in donations.

Election of Council: The following members were nominated, seconded and were elected unopposed.

President: John Carmody. **Vice Presidents:** James Franklin, Howard Murray

Secretary: Helen Scanlon **Treasurer:** Lesley Hughes.

Councillors: Janice Garaty, Br Rory Higgins, Geoff Hogan, Anne Power and Anne Thoeming.

ACHS Chaplain: Sr Helen Simpson continues as Chaplain and is ex officio on Council.

Other Business: From next year the annual ACHS membership will be from 1 April to 31 March.

Life membership was awarded to Helen Barrie and Elizabeth Hagley .

Appointment of Councillor: After the AGM Christine Riley volunteered to become a councillor. The ACHS Constitution permits the Council to fill vacant positions and Christine was duly appointed by the Council at the Council meeting on 28 April 2019.

Australian Catholic Historical Society Inc. Program for May to July 2019

This information is correct as at 28 April 2019, but changes may occur.

Sydney Meetings

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
19 May	<i>The cultural patronage of Archbishop John Bede Polding, 1834-1877.</i>	Assoc. Professor Peter Cunich: Department of History University of Hong Kong.
16 June	<i>'Pauper, Servus, et Humilis'?: The 'special destiny ethos' and Irish Catholic Identity in the 20th Century.</i>	Professor Irene Whelan: Professor of History and Irish Studies Manhattan College Purchase, NY, USA
21 July	<i>"Humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God": Patrick McMahon Glynn -- from Irish Lawyer to Australian Statesman.</i>	John Kennedy McLaughlin AM Formerly: Associate Judge Supreme Court of NSW

Location, time and contact: Sunday afternoons at 2.00pm (unless otherwise stated) in the Crypt of St Patrick's at Church Hill [Grosvenor Street], The Rocks. Admission is free and does not require membership of ACHS, but a donation is welcome. **Enquiries to: Dr John Carmody,** President ACHS: john.carmody@sydney.edu.au

Further information: ACHS website. [<http://www.australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au>].

Melbourne Meeting Monday 3 June:

Speaker: Dr Dianne Hall. **Topic:** *Irish Diaspora in Australia*

Location and Time. Yarra Theological Union Study Centre, 29 Albion Street Box Hill. **Time:** 2:00 to 3:30pm.

Contact Matthew Beckmann, OFM. Email address: mbeckmann@franciscans.org.au

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 17 February 2019.

Presenter: Professor Neil Ormerod FACTA **Topic:** *Laudato Si'*: a case for action or wasted opportunity?

The delight on Professor Ormerod's face was clear as many hands went up in the large audience gathered for the first presentation of the year, when he asked how

many had read *Laudato Si* (LS). This result, as Ormerod when on to explain, contrasted with recent data which indicated that familiarity with Pope

Frances' 2015 encyclical was very low among Australian Catholics. The 2016 National Church Life Survey (NCLS), which is conducted among Church attendees, found that 78% of respondents described themselves as not at all, or barely familiar with the Pope's document.

LS is the first document of its type which had been entirely devoted to environmental issues, and while it has been warmly embraced in many quarters, it is being savagely criticised in some Catholic, including clerical, circles. The encyclical represents a desire by the Holy Father, as well as those concerned about the fate of the earth and share a sense of collective responsibility for its nurturing, to reorient Catholic thinking and attitudes about the environment. This requires a shift from an old style exploitative and ultimately destructive form of thinking about human domination over the earth to a sustaining one; a shift from a progressive technical and economic view of the world to one that connects faith, belief and actions; a shift which sees the virtue inherent in social sobriety rather than material consumption. The Pope's urgency for Catholics to see and understand the environmental crisis the world is facing has however been met with a sense of doubt and uncertainty. Catholic leadership, and engagement in Australia particularly among younger Catholics, has been weak and his calls look to have fallen on deaf ears.

Ormerod's more detailed analysis of the NCLS data found that of those who had little knowledge LS, 86% of people were aged 18-29—a group people would perhaps expect to be more attuned with LS. Of those who had heard of LS, the results also showed that 28% had heard of LS from their Parish, and 5% had heard of

the document from senior Church leadership. The immediate impact of LS has been modest, with 17% of respondents familiar with it saying it had a significant, or very significant impact on beliefs and practices. When parish leaders were asked if they had read LS, 70% said they had read all or most of it, which Ormerod said was a surprising result, given the busyness of parish life. Some Parishes had clearly taken note of LS with 30% of people familiar with LS saying that their parish had implemented an activity or initiative as a consequence of it.

While there is some variation across the States in these results, an overriding conclusion that Catholics generally know little about LS is apparent. Ormerod noted a lack of leadership from Bishops in relation to LS, but also acknowledged that its release coincided with the ongoing Royal Commission into Institutional Child Abuse which diverted Catholic attention away from it.

In concluding his presentation, Ormerod noted the Pope's plea through LS that we can no longer ignore the impact of environmental change, and that 'we may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth.' As Catholics and as people of the world, we need also to be mindful that contemporary lifestyles are unsustainable and 'can only precipitate catastrophes.' Catholicism as a whole, appears to have not yet woken up to this crisis.

For the full LS encyclical, see:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

(Anne Thoeming Councillor)

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 24 March 2019.

Presenter: Jane Morlet Hardie (FAHA). A member of the Directorium of the International Musicological Society, and an Honorary Research Associate at the Medieval and Early Modern Centre of the University of Sydney.

Topic: *Continuity and Change: Contexts and Meanings in some Spanish Liturgical Chant Manuscripts in the Rare Books Collection of Fisher Library*)

Dr Jane Morlet Hardie, is a musicologist who has researched and taught tertiary students in the area of Iberian liturgical music and manuscripts of the Medieval and Early Modern periods. Her work includes: sacred polyphony and liturgical chant. The materials for this presentation were from the rare book collection at Sydney University's Fisher Library which contains Spanish liturgical music manuscripts including: The Lamentations of Jeremiah, graduals, antiphons, processions and others that were used in both cathedrals and monasteries.

Dr Hardie's presentation was enhanced by a group of singers who chanted some of the items shown via a PowerPoint display. The group included Jim Forsyth,

Fr Brian Maloney, Fr Michael McLean, Peter Lewis and David Harvey.

Dr Hardie showed us a range of images which included written texts, musical texts, images and discussed aspects of these with us and a number of these were chanted by the choral group. The types of books she mentioned included: Breviary, Antiphonal Missal, Gradual, Processional and Passional. Some contained text, illustrations, liturgical chant and some a mixture. The items she showed us were mainly from the sixteenth century, however the library collection has items from approximately 1250 to 1800 and have been sourced from various collections and provide insight into the liturgical and musical history of the Catholic Church in Spain.

She also mentioned some practical issues related to parchments, accessing materials, and also some personal experiences. One was years ago while in the British Library in London: *“The hair stood up on the back of my neck as I looked at the marvellous illuminations, and the music notations, and realised that some man – had sat in front of this exact parchment more than 400 years ago with his rostrum, quill pens, brushes and inks and made this book”*. She also mentioned various issues related to the production of these documents including that various individuals would have been involved in the production of individual documents, that these were adjusted at different times, notes were sometimes added. One of the notes she mentioned, presumably written by one of the monks who copied the book, was *“Praise be to God, and if anyone should damage this book may they burn in Hell”* (Translation). Dr Hardie also showed us and discussed interpretations of various illustrated

images contained in the manuscripts and drew our attention to particular aspects of these and the symbolic messages they conveyed.

It has not been possible to mention all the detail covered in this presentation, but it was unique in that it was informative, interesting, entertaining and engaged our intellectual, musical and visual senses; among others.

Physical access to the collection is available by contacting the Fisher Library to make arrangements. She also mentioned that the funds used to purchase these items are exclusively via donations. Dr Hardie mentioned that the collection is being digitised.

See Websites:

<https://digital.library.sydney.edu.au/nodes/view/6933>

and <https://digital.library.sydney.edu.au/>

(Geoff Hogan Councillor)

Melbourne Chapter Meeting: Monday 4 March 2019.

Presenter: Katharine Massam **Topic:** *“Thrice Three Times”* Benedictine women at New Norcia

Dr Katharine Massam of Pilgrim College within the University of Divinity has for over ten years been engaged in researching the somewhat neglected tale of the religious women who have been part of the story of the Benedictine presence at New Norcia.

Katharine traced the early story of engagement of religious women in the Benedictine venture in Western Australia. Katharine considered the tale from Abbot Salvado’s initial wariness and explicit rejection of women as part of the mission to later Benedictine recruitment of women for the mission and absorption of groups into an explicitly missionary group. The tale was brought up to the modern day, including the closure of the women’s last communities in Western Australia and even beyond. Katharine was engaged with a reunion between the women and some of the now grown children of the mission as well as co-

workers. This provided a fascinating insight for writing history: how do these women themselves now evaluate that period of their lives and what they achieved.

The paper raised questions - and gave rise among the audience to even more – about how best to characterise the roles played by these women. Were they helpers, missionaries, domestic workers or some combination of them all? The transition through these roles and how this contributed to the New Norcia enterprise made for a fascinating and engaging presentation.

Katharine’s book is with the publishers now and it is hoped that it will be available in mid-2019: Katharine Massam, *Between: Spanish Benedictine Missionary Women in Australia*. (Matthew Beckmann, OFM)

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 28 April 2019.

Presenter: Gael Winnick Co-author of the history of St Michael’s Church

Topic: *St Michael the Archangel, Wollombi: the Church that moved and was paid for three times*

The history of St Michael the Archangel dates from January 1840 when a church was erected on a donated piece of land in the lower part of the Wollombi Valley. This first building may have been slab, but later that year Bishop Polding processed into the village accompanied by prominent Anglicans and laid the foundation stone, a 1.53m stone column, now lying sideways as part of the current church wall. The architect of this stone church is not known, and the first mass was held in 1843. The debt on this was paid fully in 1847.

The lovely stone Anglican church St John the Evangelist, designed by Edmund Blackett, was opened in 1849. The Wollombi Valley has very steep sides and floods were a recurring problem. In early 1893 there was an exceptional flood, water was said to cover St Michael’s, and the building sustained damage. It was decided to rebuild on higher ground and in October 1893 a new foundation stone was laid by Bishop Murray. It was recorded that £415 was placed on the stone, even though this was in the depression years. Much of this was given by non-Catholics of the area.

Ecumenism has always been a feature of the valley community. In 1840 donations from Protestants were publicly recognised in print. This fellowship culminated in 2006 when Anglicans and Catholics in the Wollombi Valley signed a Covenant.

The new church of St Michael is thought to be a rebuild of the old one and was completed and opened March 1894 by Bishop Murray.

The church has come under several different parishes, but by 1905 it was in Cessnock. Following Vatican II, the PP Fr Troy removed the altar rails and replaced the wooden altar with a marble one, reusing stone from the altar rails of the Cessnock church of St Joseph's.

In 1990, St Michael's was closed suddenly, stated to be because of poor attendance and shortage of priests. There was no consultation. In 1991, the PP of Cessnock reorganised the church interior of St Joseph's, the placing of altar, pews, Blessed Sacrament and this outraged many of the Cessnock congregation. Five days after this, on April 30, St Michael's was stripped of everything, altar, Tabernacle, statues, Stations of the Cross, all but the pews. Many of these items had been gifts of the valley families. Then in July 1991 the sale by auction of the church was advertised. There were petitions and letters to the Bishop but no response. Brian McAteer, then president of ACHS, wrote stating that the church should be retained as a shrine to the early priests, and Polding and Murray who worked in

the district under such difficult conditions. The sale went ahead on 7 September and was bought by the community for the reserve \$120 000.

There was much restoration needed. There had been earthquake damage and rising damp was an issue. It was found that decorative wall painting existed beneath later work. This was retained and additional decoration was done. Finally, it was reopened October 1999. They paid off the debt, money was raised by having memorial windows made representing the creation. The church today is recognised as a Catholic church by the Diocese, it is financially independent and mass is held monthly plus 5th Sundays. The Bishop attends each year on the feast of St Michael. So the church was paid for three times, in 1847, then the second church debt was only £100 out of the £600 total cost after four years, and again since 2006 it has been debt free.

This very interesting talk was illustrated throughout by photographs of the church and surrounding landscape of the valley. It was interesting to members to learn that ACHS is the organisation which would be responsible for assets should the Trust be dissolved.

Questions followed. Brian McAteer spoke of the trips to Wollombi undertaken by ACHS in the past and of the donation by the Association to St Michael's of the Polding portrait. *(Helen Scanlon Secretary)*

Bicentenary of Catholic Schooling in Australia

Br Kelvin Canavan fms an ACHS member who was Executive Director of Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney. has provided the following information regarding the approaching bicentenary of the establishment of Catholic Schools in the then colony of NSW.

The first lasting Catholic school in the colony was opened in Hunter Street, Parramatta, probably in late 1820. It was certainly in existence early in 1821. Br Kelvin provided the follow extract from Br Ronald Fogarty's book.

By the time of the arrival of the first Vicar-General, the Reverend Dr W. B. Ullathorne, in 1833, there were roughly ten Catholic schools in the colony, all of them having been established after the arrival of Father Therry. The first of these schools was at Hunter Street, Parramatta, and was established under George Morley as teacher, about the end of 1820 or the beginning of 1821. In it were thirty-one children, seven of whom were Protestants; but the latter, according to the report, were 'very young'. (Written evidence in letter of Win Sherwin, Chief Constable, to Secretary Scott, Bigge Appendix BT, Box 20, p3525.) p21

(Brother Ronald Fogarty (1959), *Catholic Education in Australia 1806-1950*, Volume 1. Melbourne University Press).

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