



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC  
(UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY)

# NEWSLETTER

ISSN 1837- 4123 (print) ISSN 1837- 4131 (Online)  
2012

Vol..XXV, No. 3. August

**Australian Catholic Historical Society program: Program September, October, November 2012.**  
(These details are correct as at 4 August 2012, but may change due to unforeseen circumstances).

Date	Topic	Speaker
September 9	<i>Protestants, Catholics and Vatican II: The dying gasps of sectarianism?</i>	<b>Rev. Dr Ben Edwards.</b> Lecturer in Church History, St Mark's National Theological Centre and School of Theology, Charles Sturt University, Canberra.
October 14	<i>Good shepherds, sisters of charity, and the sectarian gaze: writing a history of Catholic philanthropy.</i>	<b>Assoc. Professor Anne O'Brien.</b> School of History & Philosophy, UNSW
November 11	<i>Churches at War: then and now.</i>	<b>Dr Michael McKernan.</b> Historian, author and former Deputy Director, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.
Saturday December 8	<b>Christmas Lunch.</b> <b>Mary MacKillop Place, Mount St.</b> <b>North Sydney. 12:00pm</b>	<b>Ken Healey</b> , an accomplished speaker who has also been a writer, broadcaster and lecturer at NIDA.  NOTE: booking is required and a booking sheet is being mailed with this newsletter.

**Time and Location: 2.30pm, in the foyer of St Mary's Cathedral College hall, Cathedral Street, Sydney.**  
**Best entry is from Cathedral Street, near the Cathedral Street Parking Station.**

### Anniversaries

The ACHS acknowledges the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the episcopal ordination of George Cardinal Pell, Archbishop of Sydney and patron of the ACHS. The Society also acknowledges the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the priestly ordination of Bishop David Walker, Bishop of Broken Bay.

### MEMOIRS BY AUSTRALIAN PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS AND EX-RELIGIOUS: Sunday 13 May, 2012

Professor James Franklin spoke to the ACHS on Sunday 13 May 2012, reading extracts from memoirs of Australian religious and ex-religious. He began with those ex-religious who had expressed anger at the confinement and ill-treatment they suffered in novitiates and seminaries. John Hanrahan's *From Eternity to Here: Memoirs of an Angry Priest* and Morris West's *A View From the Ridge* both recall frighteningly narrow-minded and bullying novice-masters and both were glad to have escaped "the system". Morris West's reaction was especially significant, as his novel of the modern papacy, *The Shoes of the Fisherman*, was the best-selling novel in the United States in the year of the Vatican Council, 1963.

Representing more "middle of the road" views were the memoirs of ex-Marist Brother Paul Brock (*A Passion for Life*) and ex-Mercy sister Cecilia Inglis (*Cecilia: An Ex-Nun's Extraordinary Journey*). Both left religious life after many years but retained a generally favourable view of their time and of most of their fellow-religious. A long extract from Inglis's account of her eighteenth birthday (14 Feb 1953) brought out the extraordinary isolation of religious life from "the world".

It is not easy to find autobiographies of typical priests and religious who persisted with their vocation. Those that exist are published by small presses and hard to find. One example is *Here I Am Lord* by Kevin Condon

OP, which shows a typical priest's life of ups and downs with a long record of achievement.

In contrast to Hanrahan's and West's grim views of their novitiates, John Redrup's detailed account of life in the Mittagong Juniorate of the Marist Brothers in 1932-37 (*Banished Camelots*) is very admiring of the Brothers and speaks of "a deep affection for the prayerful round of life" (though he left before taking vows).

The final extract was from F.X. Gsell's *The Bishop with 150 Wives*, in which he describes his work founding the mission on Bathurst Island, Northern Territory. The title refers to his buying promised child brides of aboriginal elders to save them from a life of servitude.

(James Franklin)

### **VATICAN II VIEWED FROM AFAR: Sunday 17 June, 2012**

Since the Council of Trent in the mid-sixteenth century there have been just two general councils both held in the Vatican, the Pope's home ground. Vatican I (1869-70) is associated especially with the definition of papal primacy and infallibility, but when it was adjourned following the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, it left unfinished business on the role of bishops vis-à-vis the Pope and the nature of authority in the church community as a whole. John XXIII's decision to call a council in 1959 came as a complete surprise, but the idea of a great gathering that would complete matters left unfinished in 1870 and bring the church into the modern world had taken hold of many by the time it opened in 1962.

The opening session is commonly associated with changes to the liturgy, but it also saw the introduction of the draft document on the church, which became the primary focus of sharp and sometimes bitter debate through the following two sessions. Controversy swirled especially around the proposal for recognising the collegiality of bishops, always in union with the Pope, in the exercise of authority in the church as a

whole. Many saw this as the revival of an ancient tradition of balance between primacy and collegiality that had prevailed for a thousand years, but which had gradually declined following the split between the Christian East and West in the early Middle Ages, and especially since Trent and Vatican I. A vocal minority at the council opposed the idea as an attack on papal authority and in conflict with the teaching of Vatican I.

In the end the vote on collegiality and the constitution on the church as a whole went through with strong majority support. But by this time the teaching on collegiality had encountered a version of *realpolitik* in the Vatican. In the words of the Jesuit historian John O'Malley 'Collegiality ended up as an abstract teaching without a point of entry into the social reality of the church. It ended up as ideal, no match for the deeply entrenched system'. But perhaps Vatican II has sown the seed of collegiality and its time will come in some future age.

(Paul Crittenden)

### **FIFTY YEARS SINCE THE GOULBURN STRIKE: Catholics and Education Politics. Sunday 8 July**

Over sixty people gathered to listen to Emeritus Professor John Warhurst speak on the topic: "Fifty Years since the Goulburn Strike: Catholics and Education Politics". Setting the context, Prof. Warhurst quoted Graham Freudenburg "the oldest, deepest, most poisonous debate in Australia has been about government aid to church schools". Prof Warhurst pointed out that this was not simply a "narrow story about education policy and funding, but a broader account of the Catholic community and its various interactions with politics". He drew attention to the research and works of others including Dr. Michael Hogan who was present in the audience.

A number of topics were examined including: the ecclesiastical and political context; The details and circumstances of the Goulburn "Strike"; the immediate Consequences, 1962-1975; the longer term developments, 1975-2012 and Catholics and education politics today.

In concluding Prof Warhurst suggested that "Those involved in the Goulburn strike, if they were alive today, would recognize that they were part of the success story that is Catholic education". In 1962 the Church was somewhat "aspirational" and saw itself as being on the outside. Education was crucial in the Catholic community's vision and strategies to gain advancement in the professions and in the wider community. In 2012 that goal has been achieved.

Prof Warhurst proposed two caveats. One was complacency; where the current arrangements are seen as "just part of the furniture of Australian politics". The other is that Catholic education may be seen as being at the "heart of the church's relationship with the Federal government" and its possible influence on the hierarchy in other dealings with government. He cited an example to illustrate this latter point.

A most interesting question time followed in which some questions invited clarification and expansion of some of the points made. Dr Michael Hogan was also invited to provide some input from the audience. A number of people provided personal reflections on the

period; some lived in Goulburn at the time of the strike and gave various personal anecdotes and reflections.

The text of this address was published in *Eureka Street Vol. 22 No13*.

<http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=32230>

## 2012: AN IMPORTANT YEAR FOR THE DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Armidale, and the 90th anniversary of completion of the city's very elegant large cathedral dedicated to St Mary and St Joseph.

As with the establishment of the Diocese of Goulburn it took a lot of pressure by the Irish clergy in New South Wales and a few settlers in the late 1850s and early 1860s to encourage Archbishop Polding of Sydney to seek the creation of several dioceses in country New South Wales, and the appointment of bishops. The decision for establishment of a diocese based on Armidale was made on 5 October 1862, with a decision about the appointment of a bishop deferred for the time being. Three men ultimately were considered and rejected for various reasons. One in fact pleaded that the proposed diocese was too small to support a bishop; another argued that he had never ridden a horse in his life, and the role of bishop would involve much time in the saddle. Ultimately the first (Irish born and educated) bishop, Timothy O'Mahony, was selected and consecrated in Ireland on 30 November 1869. He

did not arrive in Armidale until March 1871, following his participation in the Vatican Council, and then spent four gruelling years of travel to build his new See.

2012 represents the 90th anniversary of the creation of Armidale's beautiful cathedral. The first cathedral had been erected in 1870-1872, but rapidly became too small for needs. The third bishop, Patrick Joseph O'Connor, decided to build a new edifice, and the period 1911-1912 saw its construction, and opening free of debt in October 1912. It finally was consecrated in 1919, after World War I. The diocese will be celebrating both significant events in the life of the Diocese in October 2012. A symposium held in Armidale in May 2012 focussing on the bishop of the day who drove the cathedral's construction, Patrick Joseph O'Connor, the theology of the cathedral, and the role of the cathedral in the religious life of the diocese, was a very successful opening event.

(Tom Campbell)

### A postscript to the story of Sr Ligouri – Bridget Partridge

In July 1920 Sr Ligouri (Bridget Partridge) left the Presentation Sisters' Mt Erin convent in Wagga. This became the focus of a heated sectarian outburst. Elements of the story include: a fear that she was being poisoned, accusations of lunacy, an alleged attempted kidnapping, a bishop being sued for false imprisonment, heated parliamentary debates and calls for a royal commission. Bridget was eventually taken in by a Congregational minister and his wife, living with them until, in old age, she was admitted to the then Rydalmore Hospital where she died in 1966.<sup>1</sup>

A distant relation of Bridget contacted the ACHS requesting information on Bridget. The ACHS Chaplain, Fr George Connolly, contacted Fr Peter Morrissey who provided the following reflections.

*I owned a picture (from what source I can't remember) of Joe Partridge, Sister Ligouri's brother, who'd just come out from Ireland to see what he could do for his sister. In this 1921 photograph he was standing with Father Michael O'Kelly PP of Peshurst and his assistant Father Mick Farrell. O'Kelly's black greyhound stood in the foreground. I sent this picture a few years ago to the Sister Archivist of the Wagga Presentation Order.*

*I only met Bridget Partridge face to face once. It was in 1956 when I was a curate in Hurstville. It was one of the parishioners, Sheila Tearle, a dedicated member of this Catholic Historical Society for many years till her death in 2003 (aged 100), who asked me to call on Bridget who only lived a few blocks away. Sheila had been a student at Mount Erin Presentation College Wagga just before Bridget left the convent in 1920. If I remember rightly the street Bridget lived in was The Avenue, Hurstville. She was still living with the Congregational minister Reverend William Touchell and his wife who had taken her in soon after her "escape" from the convent.*

*When I knocked on the door Mrs. Touchell, intrigued, I'm sure, that this innocent young Catholic priest should presume to intrude, let me in and introduced me to Bridget, calling her "Pat". They called each other "Pat" and "Mick". Mr. Touchell had died a year or two before this. Plump little Bridget sat meekly with her knitting, as nun-like as ever, tired old eyes behind small steel-framed spectacles, rosary beads in her lap, and we spoke of generalities. The two or three rooms in view reminded me of Dickens' Miss Faversham and her preservation of the remnants of her life's tragedy. The tables and other surfaces were littered with the newspapers of thirty five years ago, the family still*

reliving, apparently, the bitter drama of 1921's court case in Wagga. Mrs. Touchell said she'd leave us alone for a while. At my ever-tactful invitation, Bridget said yes, she would like to have Confession and Holy Communion, but at that moment Mrs. Touchell sang out from the kitchen telling "Pat" not to take any notice of me, and I was over-ruled. Today, a bit older and wiser, I can see I should not have worried poor Bridget at that stage in her life anyway; she was, no doubt, ever praying, closer to God than I could ever hope to be. And that was the end of my mission.

One more thing. Before I left the house, Bridget's protector magnanimously said she could arrange to get me a wife if I wanted one. She said she and hubby had done that same favour for the Passionist Father Enright some years before. For better or worse I declined the offer.

Envoi. When Bridget died in 1966 Sheila Tearle rang and asked me to do the funeral at Rookwood. I forget why or how this would have been possible, all things considered; maybe all Bridget's friends had died or drifted, I don't remember. Whatever the details, I didn't wish to start another sectarian war so did not get involved. A Congregationalist burial was performed. Peter Morrissey, retired Sydney priest. 3 July 2012.

Further information was provided by Sr Alexis of the Wagga Presentation Sisters who provided two photographs, a letter from Bridget's brother Joseph, a moving account of attempts to provide a suitable marking on Bridget's grave, and another touching account about Christmas cards being sent by Bridget to the Wagga sisters accompanied by ten shillings "for the sisters to have a nice cup of tea".



Bridget (L) and Mrs Touchell 1920



(L to R) Joseph Partridge, Fr. M. Farrell, J. Hunter, Fr M. O'Kelly 1920

See Kildea, Jeff (2006). Where crows gather: the Sister Liguori affair 1920-21. *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*. 27 (2006), 31-40. (<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Where+crows+gather%3A+The+Sister+Liguori+Affair+1920-21.-a0156362604>).

An entry on Bridget Partridge may also be found in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/partridge-bridget-7968/text13875>).

### The John Hume Institute for Global Irish Studies at UNSW.

Two talks which may interest ACHS members.

- **Thursday 4th October.** A panel chaired by Tony Earls of Macquarie Law School will discuss 'Irish Lawyers in Colonial Australia'.
- **Monday 5 November** Professor Cormac O'Grada from University College Dublin will deliver the 2012 Patrick O'Farrell Memorial Lecture.

**Further information:** Angela McLoughlin, Tel: +61 2 9385 7164, Email: [a.mcloughlin@unsw.edu.au](mailto:a.mcloughlin@unsw.edu.au)

### Call for papers

Papers are being called for The Third International Conference on Religion and Spirituality which will be held on 8-9 March 2013 at Arizona State University, Tempe Arizona, USA. Further information is available on the website: <http://religioninsociety.com/conference-2013/>

<p><b>Postal address</b> The Secretary ACHS PO Box A621 Sydney South, NSW, 1235</p>	<p><b>Enquiries may also be directed to:</b> <a href="mailto:secretaryachs@gmail.com">secretaryachs@gmail.com</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://australiancatholichistoricalociety.com.au/">http://australiancatholichistoricalociety.com.au/</a></p>
---	---

---

All correspondence for the newsletter to: PO Box A621, Sydney South, NSW 1235. © 2012 Australian Catholic Historical Society. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the Copyright Act, 1968, no part may be reproduced without written permission from the Secretary. <http://www.australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com>.

---