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NEWSLETTER

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Australian Catholic Historical Society Inc. Program for August to December 2018

This information is correct as at 24 July 2018, but changes can occur.

Sydney Meetings.

| DATE | TOPIC | SPEAKER |
|------------------------|---|---|
| August 19 | Catholic Social Justice and parliamentary politics. | Senator Susan Ryan AO: Formerly: Hawke government Minister, latterly: Age and Disability Discrimination Commissioner |
| *September 2 | Faith at "World's End": Father Angelo Confalonieri and the first Catholic Mission to Northern Australia | Professor Mark McKenna: Department of History, University of Sydney |
| October 21 | Their Eminences, an <i>éminence grise</i> , and ruffled feathers: the sometimes rocky voyage of St Patrick's, Church Hill, within the Archdiocese of Sydney | Fr Peter McMurrich sm: Vicar Provincial and Archivist Marist Fathers' Australian Province. |
| November 18 | In Paradise, under the sun: Francis McGarry and the rewards of missionary work in 1930s' Alice Springs. | Dr Charmaine Robson: Independent scholar and 2017 Australian Religious Fellow of the State Library of NSW |
| December 15 (Saturday) | 12:00pm Annual Mass and Christmas Lunch MacKillop Centre North Sydney Mass: 12:00pm. Lunch: 12:30pm | After lunch speaker: Howard Murray. Topic: Annulment: A Catholic Divorce? Cost and booking details to be advised. |

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>].

***Note the September meeting is on the first Sunday (September 2)** which is also Fathers Day. Apologies, but September 2 was the only Sunday in September that the Crypt was available due to parish and other functions.

Melbourne Meetings 2018

Monday 3 September. Speaker Max Vodola and Professor Jayme Anderson. **Topic:** James Alipius Goold: A Baroque Bishop in Colonial Australia.

Monday 12 November. Speaker: Chris Dowd. **Topic:** Mgr. George Talbot

Location and Times: Seminar Room of Dorish Maru College, Box Hill. 2:00 to 3:30pm.

Contact Fr Larry Nemer email: nemerlarry@gmail.com

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 20 May 2018.

Panel Members. Dr Bernadette Tobin AO: Director: Plunkett Centre for Ethics, Australian Catholic University and St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney. **The Hon. Deirdre Grusovin AM:** Formerly NSW MLC, MLA and Cabinet Minister.

Professor Carole Cusack: Professor of Religious Studies, University of Sydney.

Topic: *Humanae Vitae* after 50 years: a retrospective panel.

Over 70 members and visitors attended this session issued on 25 July 1968. The encyclical rejected the focusing on Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* recommendations of the Papal Commission on Birth

Control, which had endorsed a relaxation of Catholic teaching. Following their individual presentations, the speakers engaged in a panel discussion with questions and comments from the audience.

Dr Tobin considered the question addressed by the encyclical ('Under what conditions is sexual activity morally praiseworthy?'); two of its key assumptions (on the nature of the human person, and the nature of married love); and the strengths and weaknesses of the document. Woven throughout was a comparison and contrast with today's everyday thinking on these matters. Some of the ethical and philosophical issues related to the ethical evaluation of an act, its consequences and motivation were discussed. She questioned whether the encyclical's evaluation 'got it right' and noted that *Humanae Vitae* moved from a teaching mode to a legal mode.

The presentation by the Hon. Deirdre Grusovin AM included an excerpt from a Compass program in which she and the late Morris West were interviewed about the impact of the encyclical on the Church and community, including the fact that women had no voice in the Church.

She canvassed a number of issues she and other Catholics encountered in relation to *Humanae Vitae*.

Professor Cusack noted the historical development of papal infallibility and canvassed the many social changes since 1968, including global changes in the patterns of religious affiliation, including in western countries the significant drop of the percentage of the population affiliated with the Catholic Church.

The discussion following the presentations included many examples drawn from personal experiences including problems of physical, mental and emotional health of mothers and the ethical challenges faced by health professionals in dealing with these. One point raised was the opening statement of *Humanae Vitae*. "To the venerable patriarchs, archbishops and bishops and other local ordinaries in peace and communion with the Apostolic See; to priests, the faithful and to all men of goodwill. Venerable Brothers and Beloved Sons." Women are not mentioned.

(Lesley Hughes and Geoff Hogan)

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 17 June 2018.

Presenter: Br Dr John Luttrell fms (ACHS Life-member) Formerly of Catholic Institute of Sydney and Broken Bay Institute.

Topic: *In search of Cardinal Gilroy*

Brother Dr John Luttrell's recent biography *Norman Thomas Gilroy: an obedient life*, examines this prince of the church, and how he exerted such a significant influence over Australian Catholics. John's presentation covered some details of Gilroy's life, and generated significant audience interest and engagement, particularly from people who in their youth had met with or had some direct knowledge of "the Cardinal". Cardinal Gilroy presided over an Australian post-war period during which the Catholic population in his own Diocese of Sydney doubled and, thanks to his intervention, there was a rapid expansion in its Churches, parishes and schools to meet the growing spiritual and educational needs. For the thirty-one years that Gilroy led the Sydney Archdiocese, over seventy new parishes were created in Sydney to cater for these needs. He represented the face of the Catholic Church locally for the first six years, and for twenty-five years as Cardinal, Gilroy represented Australian Catholics nationally and internationally.

Gilroy, as the first Australian-born Archbishop of Sydney was a central figure in the 'Australianisation' of the archdiocese and the Australian Church. His seminary studies in Rome connected him with a wider world beyond the Australian domestic frontier. He engaged with

leaders from other Western and non-Western regions of the world meeting with five popes, religious leaders of various faiths, King George VI, Queen Elizabeth II, Emperor Hirohito, President Diem of Vietnam, Australian prime ministers and other political leaders. Gilroy's travels to Rome as a Cardinal were a reminder to Australian Catholics of the global nature of the Church at a time of upheaval due to the cold war, the Labor split and Vatican II.

In his reflections on the background to Gilroy's biography, John said his aim was to ensure the work was neither a hagiography of the man, nor a church propaganda piece. Criticisms by others of Gilroy are included in the work. Some described him as harsh, inflexible and overly thrifty, formal and aloof. To others, he was simple and sincere, spiritual and pastoral.

John's presentation of Cardinal Gilroy gave us an insight into the significance of this Australian and he reminded listeners that individual works are partial accounts. There is more research to be done in understanding this man who wished only to be a priest, but instead ended up an obedient Cardinal. (Anne Thoming)

Melbourne Chapter Meeting: Monday 4 June 2018.

Presenter: Dr. Graeme Pender **Topic:** *The Contribution Bishop Charles Henry Davis (coadjutor to Archbishop John Bede Polding) made to the early Catholic Church in Australia, 1848-1854.*

Graeme mentioned that most histories have focussed more on Polding during the period between 1848 and 1854 resulting in Davis contributions to the early Catholic Church in Australia being overlooked.

Charles Davis was born in Usk, Wales. He attended St. Gregory's Downside from the age of 11 and completed his education there in 1833. Proficiency in music was one of Davis' achievements at Downside and in Sydney. He

was professed as a Benedictine monk on 24 June 1834, ordained a deacon on 23 February 1839 and a priest on 8 November 1840. He held several positions at Downside until he was appointed, at Polding's request, as co-adjutor to Sydney (and appointed to the Diocese of Maitland which he never visited). He sailed from England on 20 August 1848 and arrived in Sydney 8 December 1848.

Davis took his responsibilities as co-adjutor seriously since Polding was away much of the time. Among his duties were: daily administrative responsibilities of the archdiocese; rehearsal of the choir at St. Mary's; organ playing at the Cathedral; chaplaincy to the Benedictine nuns at Subiaco; Senate of Sydney University; supervision and management of St. Mary's Seminary and Lyndhurst College; examination of students and postulants; Prior at St. Mary's Monastery during the many absences of Polding and Abbott Gregory; and various spiritual and pastoral duties in the Archdiocese of Sydney. He had spasmodic health problems.

Graeme elaborated on his role in providing music for the Cathedral (he was an organist and composer), the services he provided for the Benedictine nuns at Subiaco, the Roman Catholic Orphan School, and the Irish Orphan girls at Hyde Park and to the prisoners at Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour.

Davis' contribution to Catholic education was immense. He was frequently acting Abbot of St. Mary's Monastery, President of Lyndhurst College and he represented the Catholic Church on the Senate of the University of Sydney.

Davis was a competent leader. His negotiating skills were applied in his effort to settle a land dispute between Bishop Wilson and Fr. John Therry in Hobart. He also was able to "calm the waters" whenever the Abbott, Henry Gregory, was away. While being loyal to Polding. He believed that Polding's "Benedictine Dream" could not last.

Davis was able to communicate with the ordinary person. He was also a refined and educated man who helped the acceptance of Catholics among Sydney's establishment and among Government officials. When Polding left for Rome in 1854, Davis became the most senior Roman Catholic ecclesiastic in the colony with responsibility for the whole Sydney mission. Despite his often debilitating ill-health and crushing workload, Davis showed remarkable human and Christian qualities. He died prematurely of a heart condition on 17 May 1854.

(Fr Larry Nemer SVD)

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 15 July 2018.

Speaker: Emeritus Professor Desmond Cahill: Department of Intercultural Studies, RMIT University

Topic: *Humanae vitae*: The beginning of the end of Tridentine Clericalism?

Professor Cahill began by outlining the history of contraception from the early Egyptians and Greeks to modern times and mentioned that it was not until the 1920s that the female menstrual cycle and the period of fertility was understood.

In 1920 the Anglican Lambeth Conference condemned contraception, but ten years later this decision was reversed. However, in 1931 Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Casti Conubii* condemned all artificial contraception. Prof Cahill suggested that some observers thought Rome was unable to accept that the Holy Spirit was with the Anglican Church and needed to differ.

In the 1960s the contraceptive pill had become available and there was much discussion of the "population explosion". A Papal Commission for the Study of the problems associated with the family, population and the birthrate was established. In June 1966 a majority report favored approval of contraception, but a minority report opposed it. On 29 July 1968 Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae* "on the regulation of birth". It reflected the position of the minority report. Prof. Cahill detailed both reports, who were associated with them and influenced the writing of *Humanae Vitae*. He then examined the thinking of St Thomas Aquinas, the Council of Trent and suggested that Catholic conceptual thinking on sexuality took

place in monasteries and universities by celibate men which exalted sexual purity and virginity over marriage. Paul VI was reported to have been dismayed at the reaction to the encyclical and it was the last he issued.

Prof Cahill mentioned that some have pointed to flaws in current church teaching on this topic. The first is that contraception is against natural law. However, Karl Rahner has stated that the question is "To what extent are we allowed to manipulate nature in the achievement of the good of responsible parenthood and the cementing of the marital relationship." The second flaw is that each act must remain "open to the transmission of life." This implies that a post-menopausal woman should not have sexual relations. The third relates to *Sensus Fidelium* in that much of *Humanae Vitae* has never been accepted by the people of God with about 80% now supporting the use of contraceptives.

In the immediate years after the encyclical at least eleven episcopal conferences, including Australia, affirmed statements that people had the right to exercise their consciences on how they became responsible parents. Had the Church adopted the majority report, the authority of the papacy and episcopacy would have been maintained, and the fruits of Vatican II would have allowed discussion on other issues. In recent years Pope Francis has issued *Amoris*

Laetitia, with an emphasis on discernment and well-formed consciences.

The reaction to *Humanae Vitae* has thus challenged Tridentine clericalism. The clerical sex abuse catastrophe may also impact on this. One point that Prof Cahill mentioned was the need to develop a theology of the child. Another was that the Church will

also need to consider aspects of the Sacrament of Penance in the light of the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse. Prof Cahill concluded by stating that is why we need the Gospel of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

An interesting and active Q&A followed

(Helen Scanlon)

Follow-up to 15 April 2018 Presentation

A Synopsis of the activities of the Royal Commission. *Provided by Stephen Crittenden.*

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was the largest royal commission there has ever been in Australia and the most serious and wide-ranging government inquiry there has ever been into the Catholic Church in Australia, (perhaps also internationally).

The statistics are by now well known: 57 formal case studies which heard evidence from 1200 witnesses over 400 days of public hearings; 15,250 contacts to the Royal Commission from people who were within terms of reference, 8000 private sessions with survivors of child sexual abuse; 11 issues papers; 5 consultation papers; 7 public policy roundtables and 28 private roundtables; 44 community forums; 53 published research papers; over 700 staff overall, with around 325 at the peak of operations, 70% of them women and half under the age of 34. Two-and-a-half thousand referrals to the police. Those referrals were being made right up to the last hour of the royal commission's operations. Many of the convictions you are currently hearing about in the media stem from those referrals - although not, I hasten to add, the two matters relating to Catholic prelates which are currently before the courts.

Over the five years of the Royal Commission the six Commissioners between them conducted around 8000 private sessions with survivors of child sexual abuse (10 percent of whom were in prison at the time of their private sessions). Arguably the RC's greatest achievement was this 'bearing witness' to the personal experiences of survivors of child sexual abuse, and the comfort this has brought to survivors, both individually and collectively. During the final Catholic hearing panel discussion about the sacrament of Reconciliation, it was quite moving to hear Father Frank Brennan address the Commissioners as 'confessors to the nation':

To put it very bluntly, though most of you are not members of the Catholic Church, nor pride yourselves as theologians, you have been the de facto confessors of the nation ... now for years. You have far more experience pastorally on these things than even all these learned professors and bishops I am surrounded by will ever have.^[i]

Then of course, there were the reports - including all the separate case study reports, some of which are still to be published because of ongoing court matters; reports on Working with Children Checks, Redress and civil litigation, Criminal Justice; and the 17 volume final report handed down on 15 December, of which by far the largest volume was Volume 16, Religious institutions. In fact, it was so large - 2534 pages - that it had to be published in 3 separate books using finer paper than the rest of the report.

Thirty of the RC's 57 case studies examined religious institutions, and of these 15 examined Catholic institutions, 7 examined Anglican institutions, 3 examined the Salvation Army. There were also case studies into institutions managed by or affiliated with the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Uniting Church, Australian Christian Churches and affiliated Pentecostal churches, Yeshiva Bondi and Yeshivah Melbourne (both part of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement of ultra-Orthodox Judaism), Australian Indigenous Ministries (formerly known as the Aboriginal Inland Mission), and a Hindu-inspired ashram. Some critics have argued that the RC concentrated too heavily on the Catholic Church - but given the sheer number and variety of Catholic Church institutions, this proportion seems about right.

^[i] *Transcript of Frank Brennan, Case study 50, 9 February 2017.*

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