

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC
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NEWSLETTER

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Australian Catholic Historical Society Inc. Program for February to June 2020

This information is correct as at 24 October 2019, but changes may occur.

Sydney Meeting Sunday 17 November 2019

Speaker: Rev Dr Colin Fowler OP. **Topic:** *Disentangling the McGirrs of Colonial NSW*

Date: Sunday 17 November 2019: **Time:** 2:00 to about 4:00pm.

Location: Crypt of St Patrick's at Church Hill [Grosvenor Street], The Rocks

Contact: Dr John Carmody, President ACHS: john.carmody@sydney.edu.au

ACHS 2019 Christmas Mass and Lunch

Date: Saturday 14 December 2019 **Time:** Mass: 11:45pm, Lunch 12:30pm. **Cost:** \$55.00 per person.

Guest speaker: Monsignor Tony Doherty (former PP Rose Bay and Dean of St Mary's Cathedral)

A booking form was included with the August Newsletter and attached to recent newsemails. The completed form and payment need to be received by Tuesday 19 November 2019. The forms and payment may be mailed to the ACHS PO Box or given to Helen Scanlon at an ACHS meeting. Requests for dietary requirements, etc. are on the form.

Next ACHS Melbourne Chapter meeting 11 November 2019

Date: Monday, 11 November 2019. **Time:** 2:00 - 3:45pm.

Location: Yarra Theological Union Study Centre, Classroom 1. 29 Albion Street Box Hill.

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

NOTICE OF THE 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ACHS

1.30 PM ON SUNDAY, 15 March, 2020.

Crypt Hall of St Patrick's at Church Hill [Grosvenor Street], The Rocks.

The Agenda:

- Minutes of 2019 Annual General Meeting
- President's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Election of Office Bearers for 2020
- Items of business and motions of which due notice had been given.

Agenda items must reach the Secretary by 23 February 2020.

NOMINATIONS REQUESTED FOR COUNCILLORS FOR 2020

All positions on the Council are declared vacant at the AGM. Positions: President, Vice Presidents (2), Secretary, Treasurer, Councillors (up to 7). Nominations must be in writing, signed by the nominee, nominator and seconder who must be financial members of the ACHS and received by the secretary prior to the meeting.

ACHS Membership 2020

As from 2020 the ACHS membership year will be from 1 April to 31 March in the following year. If a member's fee is not received by 31 May membership will cease. Membership forms will be included in the envelope with the February 2020 ACHS newsletter. The fees for next year will not be increased: Individual \$50, Family \$50, Institutional \$60. Details are on the membership form.

Australian Catholic Historical Society Inc. Program for February to May 2020

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DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
16 February	<i>Catholic rural virtue: ideal and reality</i>	Professor James Franklin. UNSW. ACHS Vice President and Journal Editor.
15 March *1:30 pm start.	*1:30pm Annual General Meeting 2:00pm Presentation: <i>Les Murray's sacramental poetics</i>	Dr Stephen McInerney Poet and Executive Officer The Ramsay Centre

19 April	<i>"Answering the call": Sydney's Irish Catholic doctors in the Great War</i>	Honorary Assoc. Professor Paul Lancaster Menzies Centre for Health Policy, University of Sydney
17May	<i>The Quiet Man</i> : a new film about Fr John Neill	Fr John Neill OP OAM Formerly: Councillor, University of Notre Dame Mr Tim Perkins Director <i>The Quiet Man</i>

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 Meetings 2020

Dates: Mondays 2 March, 1 June, 7 September and 9 November.

Speakers and Topics: TBA

Location: Yarra Theological Union Study Centre, Classroom 1. 29 Albion Street Box Hill.

Contact: Matthew Beckmann **Email:** mbeckmann@franciscans.org.au

Report on Sydney Meeting, Sunday 18 August 2019.

Presenter: Robin Hughes AO Writer and producer for radio and television. Formerly: Chair, Council of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. Latterly: Pro-Chancellor, ANU (Canberra)

Topic: *Fiction and the moral imagination.*

This was an intriguing talk with an intriguing title. Dr Robin Hughes discussed her thesis on the history of literary criticism, her research confirming her personal belief in the power of literary fiction to develop concern for the 'other'. Defining moral imagination as an ability to understand the motivation of people very different from ourselves, Robin's focus is on cognition, what we think as well as what we feel, and it is in literary fiction's power to give a balance of action and reflection through a layering of plot and character development. For example, Ian McEwan's 2014 novel *The Children Act* is an interesting exploration of the crossroads between cognition and emotion. McEwan himself has claimed the novel is a deeply moral form.

Renowned literary critic Lionel Trilling, writing in the 1950s, argued for the acknowledgment of the complexity of the motivation of human behaviour. For Trilling, the novel was quite able to portray human complexity; in the novel it is the individual who is most important and the reader is privy to thoughts as well as feelings. This was at a time when the status of literary critics in the culture was becoming marginalised. Trilling was an admirer of the novels of Henry James and Robin made mention of James' *The Golden Bowl*.

A more recent trend in literary criticism is for literary critics to embrace the full range of moral issues within the

novel and to regard the novel as about particular people in particular situations not about abstract concepts. This trend, termed the 'ethical turn', a veritable renaissance in ethical theory, dates from the 1980s and developed out of philosophy's turning to literature as part of a turn to ethics in certain parts of the humanities. Although the 'ethical turn' is regarded as relatively recent, in fact Jacques Derrida had been engaged with the question of ethics and literature as far back as 1967. Robin emphasised that while most people use ethics and morality interchangeably, as different as they are, they are so bound together that one cannot separate them.

With an illustrious and multi-awarded career as a documentary producer Robin has pursued her inherent love for literature in her thesis. She told her audience her greatest pleasure was to retire to a novel at the end of her working day. Perhaps we may return to her favourite novel *Middlemarch* with a refreshed perspective. The audience's vigorous questioning of the speaker clearly indicated its appreciation of this erudite examination of the role of literary fiction and the moral imagination. Robin lamented imagination is very much overlooked and her wish for politicians to read literary fiction to raise their concern for the 'other' is surely one her audience could concur with. (*Janice Garaty Councillor*)

Report on Melbourne Meeting, Sunday 2 September 2019.

Presenter: Val Noone. **Topic:** *"Daniel O'Donovan: From Berlin to Beagle Bay: Daniel O'Donovan Irish Monk"*.

Dan O'Donovan, now an elderly retiree in Broome, is one of those truly unique figures of the Australian Church whose name is known to many but who himself is far less known. The son of an Irish diplomat, Dan's early life was spent abroad in Germany and Portugal and when at home in Ireland he was caught up with his family in the upheavals of the Irish Civil War.

Val's presentation traced the numerous forces that have long played in Dan's life. An eremitic impulse has drawn him to the life of the Carthusians, the writings of Evagrius Ponticus and Ephraem of Syria and to Tarrawarra Abbey in the Yarra Valley as a Cistercian monk. A thirst to engage with Australia's indigenous people brought him to Western Australia and ultimately as priest of what

became the Diocese of Broome serving those people. Here Dan engaged in a project still continuing to be informed and shaped by both these traditions. The result is a unique figure that is Dan O'Donovan.

The discussion following the presentation was enlivened and enriched by the presence of a number of people who had lived with and worked with Dan in the West and who were able to bring their own personal experience and perspective to the conversation. (*Matthew Beckmann*)

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 15 September 2019

Presenter: Professor Mark McKenna. **Topic:** *Father Angelo Confalonieri and the view from Port Essington 1838-1849.*

The room was silent as Professor McKenna described the dramatic political, physical and emotional landscape of Victoria Settlement at Port Essington which lies some 4,000 kilometres from Sydney in the Cobourg Peninsula just east of Darwin. Britain claimed sovereignty over the area in 1838 and with this, carried imaginings of a thriving permanent settlement which would thwart potential competing claims by Dutch and French authorities. It was in this unrelentingly hot, humid, isolated and insect-ridden red landscape that 200 Royal Marines strove to live and flourish in a naval garrison, but ultimately failed to do so during their brief tenure. White ants feasted on the pre-fabricated timber buildings and wooden furniture brought in by the British, and bodies succumbed to the effects of tropical disease. A general ennui settled in the minds of the largely unhappy population living in the malodorous mangrove environment. The lengthy time it took to send messages between the old and new "home" further complicated life at Port Essington and added to the sense of isolation experienced by the newly located. Ships were welcomed with apprehension and anxiety in case of bad news from "home."

It was into this landscape that Father Angelo Confalonieri, a missionary priest from near Lake Garda in northern Italy, came in 1846 to minister to what he thought were the 'poor and naked savages' in the 'forests'

of northern Australia and to do this before 'a Protestant mission' could 'establish itself' there.

Despite efforts in Italy to acclimatise himself to the expected privations he would encounter, he underestimated the extent to which he needed to tend to his own physical needs for food and shelter, and perhaps overestimated the spiritual and other needs of the indigenous population.

Confalonieri learned to live among this population, ate native food and roamed with his new people. He kept notes of language translations and delighted in his ability to speak what he thought were traditional tongues. But these people were not impoverished in the way Confalonieri thought. They had initiative and traded with near northern neighbours as well as the British and found ways to meet their physical needs. Spiritually, Confalonieri seemed unable to grasp 'the importance of their Dreaming and creation stories—an oral gospel that bound the people of the past, present and future to the land and all that inhabited it.' The Vatican Archive holds many of his works which McKenna noted had been painstakingly done and with a sense of authorial pride.

Angelo Confalonieri died of malaria just two years after arriving at Port Essington where he is buried.

(*Anne Thoeming Councillor from notes supplied by Prof. McKenna*)

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 20 October 2019.

Presenter: Sr Prof M. Isabell Naumann ISSM (Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary) THD/STD, President of the Catholic Institute of Sydney (Ecclesiastical Faculty of Theology), serving on the Pontifical Council for Culture, Rome. She was born in Trier, birthplace of St Ambrose and of Karl Marx.

Topic: *Developments in Mariology since Vatican II: A global perspective.*

Isabell gave a very stimulating talk which has been published in a longer version as: Wagner, K., Naumann, M I., McGregor, P J., Morrissey, P., eds., *Mariology at the beginning of the third millennium*, edited by Kevin Wagner, M. Isabell Naumann, Peter John McGregor and Paul Morrissey. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications 2017, 1-31.

Her talk began in earnest with her questions about the contemporary place of Marian spirituality in theological curricula. Presenting some negative views, she argued that some have condemned Marian study to theological minimalism. In some circles, Marian study has been seen as devotional rather than spiritual. To others, Mary is seen as an impossible ideal. Nevertheless, Vatican II marks the rebirth of new approaches about Mary, as a sign of contradiction with an ongoing role in the history of

salvation. Citing Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*, Isabell described Mary as drawn into the mystery of the Incarnate Word, and being both the pre-eminent member of the Church and also active as mother-educator of all the members. In her view, Chapter 8 is the first unified and extensive presentation of a Mariology given by a Council. She applauded the significance of this as the conclusion of *Lumen Gentium*, explaining that ponderings on the mystery of the Church in the first chapter are resolved in the final chapter in the personalised figure of Mary and her place in the mystery of Christ and of the Church. This salvation historical perspective includes the figure of 'a woman watching over', the human co-operating with grace in the work of salvation.

Isabell talked of Mary's pilgrimage of faith, being present when the Church begins its own pilgrimage at Pentecost.

She is Mary, the believer and an icon of fidelity for the Church as a whole. She is a gift from Christ to every individual. Scholarly references provided the basis for Isabell's claim that the Second Vatican Council marked a turning point in the Church's understanding of its own mission, which consequently affected Marian theology and spirituality. The cultural symbol significance of Mary (seen as Mother and Child) answers the need for a transformational model. Isabell drew attention to four contemporary cultural images of Mary. These are the vitalist image of Mary in Africa (Mary personifying life treasured and shared in community), the spiritual image of Mary in Asia (pointing to unity beyond diversity), the strong socially oriented image of Mary in Latin America (embodying social justice), and the personalist image of Mary in Western culture, mainly the North Atlantic culture (Mary as companion). Isabell also asserted that the Mother-Child representation is the symbol of love and life, able to cross all borders of human understanding, and unite humanity in some of its most fundamental values and concerns.

This talk concluded with Isabell drawing attention to the pure 'Yes' of Mary to God, reserving no area of will for herself. Her comprehensive fiat becomes the expression of

her Christoform attitude, that Mary's initial 'Yes' grew into a permanent fiat-structure for the ecclesial community. Mary's 'Yes' is not passive but an active fecundity. It is faith that is being for, being for God being for the other, called to exist for others, to become a gift.

The questions that followed this talk asked whether there was a theological tradition that explored apparitions of Mary. Isabell's answer was that the theological tradition was based on scripture, and the image of Mary as the one who believed, the new creation in Christ, the first member of the New Testament. Another question was about life in Nazareth and Isabell pointed to Elizabeth Johnson's *Truly our Sister: A Theology of Mary in The Communion of Saints*. A third question was about the change in reflection on Mary as a result of the Reformation. There was a need to counter Luther's idea of humankind as corrupted. The approach turned to co-operating with God, becoming co-actors with Him. The final question was about the decision of the Council to have Mary be the subject of Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*. Isabell said that, in retrospect, it was a master stroke of the Holy Spirit, that Mary's ongoing role in salvation is shown in this way.

(Anne Power, Councillor).

Some Anniversaries in 2020

250 years ago 1770

- Captain James Cook arrives at what was to become known as Botany Bay.

200 years ago 1820

- On 3 May 1820 Fr John Therry and Fr Phillip Conolly, the first Catholic priests officially appointed to Australia, arrive at Port Jackson from Ireland.
- Fr Therry obtained a land grant from Governor Macquarie on which to build a Catholic Church. James Meehan Deputy Surveyor of Lands, a Catholic and former Irish convict, surveyed the site. A church was built on the site which is now occupied by St Mary's Cathedral.

150 years ago 1870

- The Papal States were occupied by Italian troops ending Papal rule of that territory and causing the First Vatican Council, which opened in December 1869, to be permanently adjourned in October 1870.
- Josephite sisters report Fr Keating for sexually abusing children.

100 years ago 1920

- Sister Liguori (Bridget Partridge) leaves the Presentation Sisters Convent in Wagga Wagga. This started a series of events that, linked with other issues, caused an eruption of sectarian bitterness.
- Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne is prevented from landing in Ireland by the Royal Navy.
- Dr Mary Glowrey leaves Melbourne to become a medical missionary in India.

50 years ago 1970

- Pope Paul VI makes the first-ever Papal visit to Australia.

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