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AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC
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NEWSLETTER

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Australian Catholic Historical Society Program May, June and July 2014.

A full program for 2014 was published in the February 2014 Newsletter.

(These details are correct as at 30 April 2014, but may change due to unforeseen circumstances).

Date	Topic	Speaker
May 18	<i>Winners are Grinners: A curious tale of Episcopal One-upmanship</i>	Rev. Dr John De Luca. Historian, musician and former PP of Maroubra.
June 15	<i>Pope Pius XII and the Nazi occupation of Rome.</i>	The Hon. Tim Fischer AC, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Australian Ambassador to the Holy See
July 20	<i>Recollections of a "Movement" chaplain.</i>	Dr John Challis. Former Head, ABC Science Unit

These meetings are held at 2:30 pm on Sundays, in the Crypt Hall of St Patrick's at Church Hill [Grosvenor Street], The Rocks. There is abundant bus transport along George and York Street. Railway stations are Circular Quay and Wynyard. The Circular Quay ferry terminal is nearby. Enquiries may be directed to: Dr John Carmody, President ACHS: john.carmody@sydney.edu.au

ACHS Melbourne Chapter.

Date and time: Monday 2 June 2014 at 2:00pm

Location: Seminar Room, Dorish Maru College, Yarra Theological Union, 100 Albion Road, Box Hill, Victoria.

The speaker: Mr Graeme Pender, a doctoral student.

Topic: *The musicianship of Bishop Charles Henry Davis.*

Enquiries: Dr Larry Nemer (03)8892 2603 or nemerlarry@gmail.com

Membership subscriptions for 2014 were due on 1 January 2014.

A reminder note to those who have not renewed their membership for 2014 will be included in the envelopes with this newsletter. This will be the last Newsletter that you will be sent if you do not pay your 2014 subscription. If you have any concerns regarding your membership status, please email an inquiry to: secretaryACHS@gmail.com or write a note to Helen Scanlon at PO Box A621, Sydney South, NSW 1235.

Subscription rates for 2014 are: Individual: \$45, Family (persons living at one address in Australia) \$50, Overseas \$50, Institutional (a congregation, school, library, etc. at the one address in Australia) \$50, Student (a new category introduced for 2014) \$25.

ACHS 2013 Journal.

The 2013 ACHS Journal was mailed out in March 2014 to 2013 financial members. If you did not receive the Journal and were a financial member of ACHS in 2013, please make contact. Email: secretaryachs@gmail.com or write a note to Helen Scanlon at PO Box A621, Sydney South, NSW 1235. A digital copy of the Journal is also located on the ACHS website. <http://www.australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au/journal/index.html>

The following members were elected to the ACHS Council at the AGM held on 16 March 2014.

President: Dr John Carmody
 Vice Presidents: Prof James Franklin, Mr Geoff Hogan OAM.
 Secretary: Mr Anthony Restuccia.
 Treasurer: Ms Helen Scanlon.
 Councillors: Dr Michael Belcher, Mr Tom Byrnes, Dr Janice Garaty,
 Dr Lesley Hughes, Mr Howard Murray.

Fr. George Connolly continues as Chaplain and is appointed by the Archbishop of Sydney.

At the AGM the President reported on his letter to Cardinal Pell on his new appointment.

The President Dr John Carmody reported that he had sent a letter to Cardinal Pell, the Archbishop of Sydney and Patron of the Society, congratulating him, on behalf of ACHS, on his recently announced appointment (on 24 February 2014) as Cardinal, Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy. As he would be based in the Vatican and would thus be relinquishing the position of Archbishop of Sydney (and hence the role of Patron of ACHS), Dr Carmody thanked him for his interest in support of the Society. He mentioned that the members would be wishing for God's blessings the Cardinal as he takes up this new and challenging position. Cardinal Pell sent a graciously worded reply. The text of this letter follows

Cardinal Pell's Letter in Reply.

Dear John & all at ACHS (in handwriting)

Thank you for your recent message on my appointment by Pope Francis as Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy in the Vatican. I am deeply grateful for your very kind words and thoughts as I prepare to take up this new work.

I am greatly honoured to be asked by the Holy Father to assist him. The task at hand is vital because in enhancing the financial management of the Holy See, the Church's capacity to fulfil its gospel mission and so help the poor and disadvantaged will also be strengthened. It will be challenging, interesting and probably difficult work, but as always, I trust in the Lord's help.

I will miss Sydney and the many fine, good people who have worked with me and helped me. It has been a time of great blessings; an overwhelmingly happy experience.

With warmest thanks again for your kindness, and with every good wish to you in the future,

Yours sincerely
+ *George Card. Pell* (in handwriting)
7 March 2014

**Presentation by Roy Williams on Sunday 16 March.
*God in the Lodge: Religious beliefs of Australia's Prime Ministers.***

Over fifty members and guests overcame road closures, transport diversions, and torrential rain to attend the ACHS AGM and March Lecture by Roy Williams on: "*God in the Lodge: Religious beliefs of Australia's Prime Ministers*". This was based on research Roy had conducted for his book: *In God They Trust – The religious beliefs of Australia's Prime Ministers 1901-2013*, published by Bible Society.

Roy mentioned the historical connection of the site on which we were gathered and the times leading up to the establishment of St Patrick's Church. It was a time of Protestant, particularly Anglican, ascendancy when Catholics were marginalised. At that time the forerunner of the Bible Society was founded in Australia in 1817, instigated by Governor Macquarie. The Bible Society is the oldest continually operating organisation in Australia.

Roy gave an overview of the religious beliefs and backgrounds of Australia's Prime Ministers from Edmund Barton to Julia Gillard, with the exception of those who served for very short terms. He touched upon the ways in which their beliefs shaped the history and development of our nation. Roy pointed out that most of Australia's prime ministers believed in, or had at some time, believed in God. Some were particularly devout Christians. Very few were indifferent towards religion. He suggested that the most religious PM's were: Alfred Deakin (though his beliefs are difficult to

categorise), James Scullin, Joseph Lyons and Andrew Fisher. The two who displayed the least contact with religious belief were: Edmond Barton and Harold Holt. Some had been associated with religious beliefs when young but, while abandoning formal adherence in adulthood, were influenced by those beliefs. Of the 24 Australian PM's he suggested, 17 believed in some form of Christian God and 7 were possibly agnostic. Looking at the Catholic PM's he suggested that three, who were baptised as Catholics, had moved away from the faith. Others: Scullin, Lyons, Chifley and Keating maintained their association with the Catholic Church and were clearly influenced by its social teachings. Roy mentioned a speech given by Keating at a book launch, at the invitation of the sisters of St Joseph. Keating quoted from St John of the Cross: "... *Consider what it is that God wants and then do it.*" He went on to indicate that the Sisters displayed a "*fidelity to the poor, and a belief in God's interest in them...*".

Roy touched on some issues, patterns and trends; particularly the influence of Christian Socialism, Catholic social justice teachings, the sectarian divide and subsequent ecumenical alignment, the State Aid to non-government schools division, policies towards "non-white" people and Aboriginal Australians.

A lively question time followed which explored many of the points raised, but also extended the discussion to related areas. Geoff Hogan (Editor)

Presentation by Sr Jane Kelly IBVM at the Melbourne Meeting 3 March 1914.

Ten people attended the first ACHS Melbourne Chapter meeting for 2014 on 3 March 2014 at Dorish Maru College within the Yarra Theological Union.

Sr. Jane Kelly, IBVM, presented the results of her research on the letters of Mother Gonzaga Barry, the Sister who brought the Loreto Sisters to Australia, and on the first seven Sisters to arrive in Ballarat. She had a photograph of the Sisters which was projected on a screen and she talked about each of them. Obviously having spent hours of research on them they had all become "personal friends" she could tell stories about. She could "put flesh on the bones" of those in the photo and identify the tasks they were given to do individually, describing the gifts that each brought to their community and their work. Her presentation reminded us of how dangerous and difficult it was for these mostly young women to leave Ireland for an unknown Australia, how the trip could be a very long one encountering calm and storms, how they survived and worked on arriving in Ballarat, their livelihood

dependent on the success of their enterprise, and how they found both joy and challenges in their work. The letters of Mother Mary Gonzaga also showed her to be a very active woman in Australia (dealing with bishops and local communities who were looking for Catholic education) and in Europe (with groups trying to reclaim Mary Ward as their founder).

There were questions asked and discussed about the "evolution" of Mary Ward being recognized as the founder of the group of religious that came to Australia and about the living situation of the Sisters on arrival. There was also some discussion about the difficulty of finding the letters and journals of the 'Lay' Sisters (many of whom were not literate), not only reading between the lines but also trusting in the oral traditions that has come down, and of getting into diocesan archives in order to look at what they contain about the Bishops' relationship with the Sisters. Everyone was stimulated by the presentation and discussion.

(Fr. Larry Nemer)

Presentation by Dr Paul Collins

A restless and contrary man: the life and journeys of Jeremiah O'Flynn.

On 13 April 2014 (Palm Sunday) Dr Paul Collins, scholar, author and former head of the Religion Department in the ABC, gave an outline of the life of Fr Jeremiah O'Flynn. He also discussed aspects of the times, circumstances and people encountered by O'Flynn and his interactions with them. He also mentioned some of the sources he had accessed; including the excellent archives in the Archdioceses of Westminster and Boston.

Dr Collins opened by challenging some of the "facts" traditionally associated with O'Flynn. One was his date of birth, usually given as Christmas day 1788, but actually, according to records, was 15 January 1786. Some accounts of O'Flynn's experiences suggest that he ran into bigoted officials who treated him unfairly. However the records suggest that O'Flynn frequently came into conflict with those in authority in a variety of locations and situations and the source of these problems were often O'Flynn's own actions. From an Australian perspective records indicate that Governor Macquarie's expulsion of Flynn from NSW was not motivated by sectarianism or bigotry. In fact when O'Flynn arrived without authorisation, he was allowed to stay pending the arrival of the authorising documents which he claimed to have been given. In fact the Colonial Secretary in London had declined to give O'Flynn authority to reside and minister in NSW on the basis of advice from the Catholic Vicar Apostolic in Westminster Bishop Poynter who had ordained him.

O'Flynn's family circumstances in Ireland, his education in Killarney by the Franciscans, his entry into St Susan's Abbey in Lulworth, Dorset in 1810 and his rapid progress to ordination as a Trappist monk in 1813 by Bishop Poynter were described by Dr Collins, as were disputes with his monastic superior who excommunicated him and withdrew his faculties. O'Flynn's experiences in various Caribbean locations were mentioned as well as his later absolution and reinstatement by Pope Pius VII. Dr Collins then mentioned O'Flynn's attempts to be appointed to NSW, his illegal arrival in Sydney in November 1817 and his final arrest and deportation in May 1818. O'Flynn later sought permission to return to NSW, but this was also declined. O'Flynn eventually returned to the Caribbean and was expelled from Haiti and later Dominica. He finally went to the USA in 1824 and, after being refused faculties in Boston and Philadelphia, settled in Susquehanna County near Silver Lake in 1825. He was finally granted faculties by Philadelphia in 1828 and served as a priest in Pennsylvania until his death from pneumonia in 1831.

Dr Collins suggested that O'Flynn was not particularly influential but his life spanned and intersected with the beginnings of the modern world: Australia and the United States were developing, slavery was being abolished and there was a massive expansion of Catholicism. The extent of his travels was also remarkable and was an "early example of a vast movement of people across the world."

Dr Collins returned to O'Flynn's interaction with those in authority and pointed to instances where O'Flynn displayed "resentment and opposition to some high-handed church leaders and bishops" which "revealed a man willing to challenge authority"; a precursor of what is often seen in Western developed nations today. It was possible that O'Flynn's clash with the Colonial Office may have helped to publicise the needs of

Catholics in NSW and the appointment of Fr Conolly and Fr Therry who arrived in 1820. Dr Collins concluded by stating that "Jeremiah O'Flynn had been a good and faithful priest and, despite the brevity of his life and clashes with those in authority, that was the real test of his character."

Geoff Hogan (Editor)

The restoration of the old cathedral of St John the Baptist Maitland.

In October 1840, just a year after the parish was established and the Reverend Mr John Lynch was appointed the first parish priest, Bishop Polding visited Maitland to lay the foundation stone of St John the Baptist church. It was originally to be built on Campbell's Hill but Lynch moved it closer to his flock in Central Maitland and Horseshoe Bend. In 1843, right in the middle of the worst depression in the young colony's history, he opened a subscription list for the building of the church. Catholics, Protestants and Jewish people donated generously and it was completed in 1846. Amongst the Catholics there were many of convict origin (and a few who were still legally convict) and new immigrants who were overwhelmingly Irish. Many of the Protestant givers had Irish Catholic wives who were stout supporters of the faith and the church. In 1862 the tower was added and the church was complete with a lined highly polished cedar ceiling, a "handsome and commodious" gallery and a "graceful and ornamental" chapel. When Bishop Murray arrived to take possession of the Diocese of Maitland in November 1866 he took St John the Baptist as his Cathedral. It remained so until 1933 when it was turned into a hall for the newly created Pro-Cathedral across the road. In 1952 the old church was absolutely butchered to allow four classrooms to be built over the top of the hall. In 1989 the Newcastle earthquake severely damaged the Pro-Cathedral and it was decided to return it to a hall and return St John the Baptist to a living church. It opened

again in 1994 but it was closed in 2011 because of safety concerns.

The Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle Bill Wright is now keen to rescue it from its sad state and restore it as one of the centres of faith in the Diocese. Fundraising will take place over the next year and then the sandstone exterior of the building will be restored as much as possible with the classrooms being removed and the roof lowered to its original position. Depending on how much money is raised, some work will also be done on the interior but, unfortunately, absolute restoration is impossible – too much damage was done installing the classrooms.

The diocese is keen to track down all those with some association with the Church. By now hundreds of thousands would be descended from people baptised, married or buried from this church. If you are one of them, or just interested, contact Michael Belcher (02 49301458 or michael.belcher@bigpond.com).

The launch of the rescue mission was held on Palm Sunday 13th April 2014 on site in Cathedral Street Maitland.

The web address of the restoration appeal is: <http://www.mn.catholic.org.au/parishes-priests/st-johns-restoration>

(Michael Belcher).

Parish Centenaries in 2014

The following parishes in the Sydney Archdiocese were founded in 1914: Maroubra, Neutral Bay / Kirribilli and Rose Bay. Source: http://www.sydneycatholic.org/parishes/foundation_dates_of_sydney_parishes.shtml

RIP

A long time and active ACHS member and former councillor, Shirley McGlynn died on 23 April 2014. Members of the Society pray for the repose of her soul and offer condolences to her family and friends.

<p>Postal address The Secretary ACHS PO Box A621 Sydney South, NSW, 1235</p>	<p>Enquiries may also be directed to: secretaryachs@gmail.com Website: http://australiancatholichistoricalandsociety.com.au/</p>
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