

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

NEWSLETTER

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Cancellation of a number of ACHS Meetings and the May 2020 ACHS Newsletter

The March, April, May and June 2020 Sydney meetings and Melbourne meetings were cancelled and the Annual General Meeting scheduled for March was deferred due to COVID -19 restrictions. The May ACHS Newsletter was not produced as there was insufficient material to include. The Sydney meetings recommenced in July and the AGM is planned for 18 October. **If COVID-19 infections increase and restrictions are reapplied the Sydney ACHS meetings may be cancelled.** When a meeting takes place a number of conditions must be complied with and procedures followed which relate to registering attendance, social distancing, audience size, sanitising, etc.

NOTICE OF THE 2020 Deferred ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ACHS 1.30 PM ON SUNDAY, 18 October, 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 25 September 2020.

Register your intention to attend via email giving your name and contact details: ACHSmeetings@gmail.com

NOMINATIONS REQUESTED FOR COUNCILLORS

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.

The Council urgently seeks new members, particularly a Newsletter and eNews editor.

Australian Catholic Historical Society Inc. Program for August to December 2019

This information is correct as at 24 July 2020, but changes may occur. There is also the possibility of meetings being cancelled if restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic are reintroduced.

Sydney Meetings

16 August	<i>David Coffey: Theologian of Spirit.</i>	Emeritus Professor Paul Crittenden. Formerly: Professor of Philosophy University of Sydney.
20 September.	<i>The "Spanish Flu" and its impacts on Catholic Church activities.</i>	Dr Janice Garaty. ACHS Councillor and historian. (Author of <i>Providence Provides: Brigidine Sisters in the New South Wales Province</i>).
18 October	1:30pm AGM 2:00pm: Presentation. <i>Under the skin? The contested history of the Bible in Australia.</i>	Dr Meredith Lake. ABC Radio National (Religion Department). Winner: NSW Premier's Australian History Prize (2019) for The Bible in Australia: a cultural history.
15 November	<i>Writing Australian Catholic history: A case study – Riverview.</i>	Mr Gerard Windsor. Novelist, reviewer and essayist (Author of <i>The Tempest-tossed Church</i>).
12 December	Annual Mass and Christmas Lunch.	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: jjcarmody@gmail.com

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

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thanks to those who have renewed their ACHS membership and welcome to new members. A reminder that payment of your ACHS Membership fee for 2020 was due on 1st April 2020. Renewal forms were included in the envelopes with the February Newsletter. A form is also available on the ACHS website. **If the address label on the envelope of this newsletter has an orange dot, it indicates that your renewal for 2020 is overdue.**

President's Report

On July 19, grateful for the opportunity, if uncertain about the future, approximately 35 of us (the maximum allowable) gathered for our first meeting since February. There was a great spirit "in the air": plainly, we have all missed getting together. The society meets both sociable and intellectual needs for us all. John Kenny generously deployed his sonic skills to make an audio recording for posting on the ACHS Website for everyone's benefit – whether they live in Sydney or farther afield. I hope that this can become a regular feature.

Such approaches, obviously, don't suit everyone, but I've recently become aware of how important "Zoom", for instance, can be. My own family has often utilised that option and the ACHS Council has also "met" using "Zoom".

The Council are delighted by our new Website, so much so that Professor Franklin (who admirably undertook that project) and I were asked by them to issue a "Media Release" – our first ever! – in the hope of drawing wide attention to the riches that it offers. Perhaps it will bring us some new members, too!

On "Bastille Day" (14 July), I was in Canberra as one of a small group who, by invitation of the National

Archives, attended the release of the letters between the Governor-General (Sir John Kerr) and Buckingham Palace at the fraught time of the Whitlam Government's dismissal. Amongst other things, including the remarkable fact that the Sovereign involved still occupies the Throne, this set me thinking about the significance of the Crown for fractious Britain. I was interested, therefore, to see an article ("Crowning Glory") in a recent copy of *The Tablet* which discussed plans for the next Coronation ceremony to be more ecumenical and inclusive – including what should be done about the oath which obliges the new Monarch to "maintain the Protestant Reformed Religion". It reminded me of AN Wilson's article (*Times Literary Supplement*, 20 March) "Full Bag of Tricks" about the "Prayer Book Controversy of 1927-28" (I was totally ignorant of it), when the House of Commons twice refused to endorse the Archbishop of Canterbury's revisions to the Anglican Prayer Book. It provoked extraordinary events, including the "Protestant Parsons' Pilgrimage" which marched through more than 100 British towns and cities protesting against because, as one newspaper claimed, Britain was "as Protestant as the sea is salt." Are we, like Britain, now a changed society? Only a serious study of history could claim to answer that question. *(John Carmody President)*

Melbourne Chapter Meeting: Monday 2 March 2020.

Presenter: Janette Elliot **Topic:** *'The Interpretation of a Marvellous Medley Both of Weal and Woe'*.

At the Melbourne Chapter's first meeting for 2020 Janette Elliott of the Yarra Theological Union presented a paper on Julian of Norwich with a gloriously alliterative title of 'The Interpretation of a Marvellous Medley Both of Weal and Woe'. Janette demonstrated her impressive grasp of her subject matter by providing a hermeneutical framework for understanding the writing and recorded thought of this enigmatic figure so different in outlook and experience to most contemporary readers. As well as a content to make sense of Julian's oft quoted but poorly appreciated statement that 'All will be well, all be well, all will be surpassingly well,' a real strength of the presentation was at the methodological level. Janette

offered a sophisticated but effective way to navigate the mass of 'visions', 'dreams' and 'showings' to demonstrate the consistency of approach within Julian and her considerable contribute to a tradition of spirituality stretch back to the Cloud of Unknowing and beyond. Few who were present will think about 'remembering' in quite the same way again – or at least in quite so feeble a sense. With a fitting Lenten touch, Janette reminded us that Julian held that the recalling of fault and shame are but ways to make ourselves more conscious of divine mercy and forgiveness. Even our failings can be a ground to recall that truly 'all shall be well'. *(Matthew Beckmann, OFM)*

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 16 February 2020.

Presenter: Professor James Franklin **Topic:** *Catholic rural virtue: ideal and reality*

The remote rural Irish-Australian Catholic communities portrayed in "John O'Brien's" *Around the Boree Log* (1921) were, in his picture, poor, virtuous and pious. Was that true?

The talk began with a brief overview of the long history of the idea that rural people are especially virtuous and

free of urban vices; as Thomas Jefferson put it, "Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God ... Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age or nation has furnished an example." European Catholicism praised simple peasant faith, while in Australia B.A. Santamaria's National Catholic Rural Movement promoted an economy of small

rural holdings for moral as much as economic reasons. Mannix urged country people not to abandon the land for the “the lights, cinemas and other so-called attractions of city life.”

So what was it really like in those communities? Was it as in *Around the Boree Log*, with little Irish mothers, trimmin’s on the rosary, friendly social life at Casey’s after mass, everyone laughing at Hanrahan’s “We’ll all be rooned”? That was indeed a large part of what happened. It is confirmed by a remarkable memoir of life in the Kanimbla Valley in the early years of the twentieth century, Bernard O’Reilly’s *Cullenbenbong*. The talk included some extensive extracts.

Knowledge of Catholic doctrine was difficult to project into remote regions. Many orders of nuns established convents in tiny towns, but even so those settlers truly in the backblocks (as Banjo Paterson puts it, “On the outer Barcoo where the churches are few, And men of religion are scanty”) had very little contact with organised religion. Ignorance was profound, as in “O’Brien’s” poem

where the bishop asks the country boy why Christmas is the greatest day of the year and gets the answer, “It’s the day before the races out at Tangmalangaloo.”

A number of observers noted that rural religion was less sectarian. With so few people, everyone had to help one another. It is true that sin was not absent in those regions. Not everyone was a saint. The strongly Catholic northeast of Victoria is called “Kelly Country” because it was the home of Australia’s most celebrated psychopathic killer, Ned Kelly. The remoteness of farms sometimes allowed conditions close to child slavery where family patriarchs worked children excessively. An example was the harsh upbringing of Ben Chifley on his grandfather’s farm outside Bathurst.

The presentation is available as a podcast on the Program page of the ACHS website or the following link: <https://anchor.fm/james-franklin05/episodes/Catholic-rural-virtue-in-Australia-ideal-and-reality-ebmtbt> (Based on a summary provided by James Franklin)

Presentation that had been scheduled for the 17 May 2020 ACHS Sydney meeting

The meeting scheduled for 17 May was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, but permission was obtained for the film about Fr John Neill OP OAM -- *The Quiet Man* to be made available for viewing via a link, on the ACHS website. The film was to have been the main feature of the May meeting’s presentation. Go to the ACHS website:

<https://australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au/> (or Google “Australian Catholic Historical Society”) then go to the Program page and then to the May meeting and click on “**by this link**” Alternatively, go to the following link: <https://vimeo.com/361563256/4aa9da06a7>

Sydney Meeting, Sunday 19 July 2020.

Presenters: Dr Paul Collins. Author and broadcaster, and **Emeritus Professor Robert Gascoigne.** Theologian, formerly: Australian Catholic University

Topic: *Pastor aeternus*: 150 years since the promulgation of “On the infallible teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff” -the binding dogma of “Papal Infallibility”.

Professor John Carmody introduced Dr Paul Collins and Professor Robert Gascoigne and reminded the audience that 18 July was the 150th anniversary of the end of Vatican I

Dr Collins, began his talk, with the context of the conclave that elected Pius VII in 1800. Notable factions included the Ultramontanes who favoured central Roman authority while the Gallicans favoured regional autonomy. Moderate ultramontanes asserted that Christ made St Peter the ruler of the Church by divine right. Therefore, only a Pope can approve Council decrees, and essentially it was this position defined in Vatican I.

Considering the origins of Papal Infallibility, Brian Tierney showed that, up to 12th century, canonists believed that the Pope could and did err and that it was the Church, not the papacy, that could not err. Collins’ picture of the Council is of between 600 and 700 bishops attending, belonging to different factions: the extreme ultramontanes, the moderate pro-infallibilists, those who opposed infallibility because the time was not right and those who opposed on theological grounds.

Professor Gascoigne took up the story, providing the context for Vatican I as an attempt to respond to the beginnings of the democratic era and the Enlightenment. The monarchical order had been threatened by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, leading to the widespread theft and destruction of church property and the murder of priests and religious. Nevertheless, the Papal vision of social justice was limited. Vatican I’s two big documents were formed by conservative ultramontanes.

Dei Filius, on the Catholic Faith, was a response to the secular strands of the Enlightenment, affirming the roles of reason and faith in a complementary relationship. *Pastor aeternus*, was the constitution on papal primacy and infallibility. Papal primacy meant that local bishops were responsible to the Pope, rather than to governments and rulers, and that the Pope had the right to intervene, against and in defiance of the orders of local rulers. Papal primacy is the affirmation of a Catholic truth, which was without its proper context when it was promulgated.

The questions that followed drew great responses from both speakers.

Q1. The first question was about the wording that decreed 'that degree of infallibility with which Christ endowed his Church'.

A. Dr Collins confirmed that this wording was included at the command of the Pope, without discussion with the Bishops.

Q2. What about a model of governance of the sole trader who surrounds himself (sic) with people who tell him the truth, the best of monarchical government?

A. Dr Collins felt we need to move to the local Church as the primary model. Professor Gascoigne thought the highest magisterium is best exercised by the Pope together with an ecumenical council. (*Anne Power*)

(Podcast is on the ACHS website
<https://australiancatholichistoricalociety.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ACHS-July-2020-Podcast.mp3>)

Scholarship at the Cathedral

James Franklin's Scholarship at the Cathedral presentation titled "*Mathematics and Ethics: The Two Sciences with Demonstrable Truths*" did not occur on Tuesday 2 April 2020 due to the restrictions imposed in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. The talk was videoed and is now available on the following link:

<https://www.satcathedral.org/2020/mathematics-and-ethics-the-two-sciences-with-demonstrable-truths/>

New Australian Catholic History Resources on ACHS website

<https://australiancatholichistoricalociety.com.au/history-resources/>

The Australian Catholic Historical Society has made available a new suite of resources on special topics in the history of the Catholic community in Australia.

A page on Architecture, Art, Drama and Music displays the breadth of Catholic culture, while one on Intellectual Life shows the depth of Catholic contributions to philosophy, theology, literature and the theory of society.

The Timeline of Australian Catholic history has proved especially popular. Other pages are on Catholics charities, Catholic involvement with indigenous

Australians, Women in the Australian Church, Irish Catholics, and the sexual abuse crisis.

ACHS Vice-President Professor James Franklin said "Each page gives an easy-to-use overview of the topic, with a wealth of links for further browsing. Anyone, from school student to leisured retiree, can quickly gain an insight into any aspect of the rich Catholic heritage of our country."

(*This is an extract from a Media Release prepared by Vice President Prof Franklin*)

Archdiocese of Sydney marks Bicentenary of the arrival Fr Therry and Fr Conolly

The Bicentenary of the arrival of Fr Therry and Fr Conolly in Sydney was celebrated at a Mass in St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney on 3 May 2020. They were the first two officially appointed Catholic priests in Australia who were authorised by both Church and State to celebrate Mass in the New South Wales colony. Fr John Joseph Therry and Fr Philip Conolly had sailed from Cork on a ship carrying more than 100 convicts. Fr Conolly remained in Sydney for less than a year before being sent to Tasmania. Fr Therry spent more than 40 years in Sydney and was involved in establishing the first Catholic church in Sydney on the site now occupied by St Mary's Cathedral.

The Archbishop of Sydney, Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP laid flowers at the burial place of Fr Therry in the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral and during his homily at the Mass paid tribute to Fr Therry and Fr Conolly.

An article in the Sydney Gazette dated Saturday 15 July 1820 contains a report on a public meeting held on the 30th June 1820 "for the purpose of adopting measures to effect the very desirable object of erecting a Place of Public Worship, for the use of the Roman Catholics of this Colony. The meeting was attended by all the respectable Catholics of the Settlement and also some Protestant Gentlemen." The report mentions Fr Conolly, who chaired the meeting, and Fr Therry and states that a committee was formed for that purpose. Those mentioned as members of the committee included: Fr Conolly, Fr Therry, James Meehan, William Davis, James Dempsey, Edward Redmond, Patrick Moore, Michael Hayes and Martin Short. (Link to Sydney Gazette article on Trove. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2179608>) One of those attending, James Meehan, surveyed the site on which on which the church was built.

(*This item was published in the May 2020 ACHS newsemail*)

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