

NEWSLETTER

Australian Catholic Historical Society Inc. Sydney meetings and program for 2021

This information is correct as at 17 January 2021, but changes can occur.

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
21 February	Les Murray's sacramental poetics † Les A Murray: 1938-2019	Dr Stephen McInerney Poet and Executive Officer The Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation (Sydney).
21 March *1:30 pm start.	*1:30pm Annual General Meeting 2:00pm Presentation: The Intimate Frontier: Aboriginal and settler interactions in the colonial Hunter Valley	Dr Mark Dunn Freelance historian and author of The Convict Valley -the bloody struggle on Australia's early frontier
18 April	"Answering the call": Sydney's Irish Catholic doctors in the Great War.	Honorary Assoc. Professor Paul Lancaster Menzies Centre for Health Policy, University of Sydney
16 May	The Catholic clergy – prisoners of history	Fr John Crothers Formerly PP Penhurst and Peakhurst and author of The Clergy Club
20 June	Biblical history in the novels of Dickens	Dr Jennifer Gribble Honorary Associate Professor Department of English, University of Sydney
19 July	Historical perspectives from the newly formed collection of rare books and manuscripts at the ACU	Mr Hugh Myers Special Collections Advisor Australian Catholic University (Sydney)
15 August	Cathedral Follies: the 1950s project to build a vast "Brutalist" cathedral at New Norcia and similar failures in Brisbane and Liverpool. What is the future of cathedrals?	Dr John Challis. Former Dominican theologian, Head of the ABC Science Unit and International Relations Executive, ABC
19 September.	The story of St Mary's Spires – the completion of Polding's dream	Mgr Tony Doherty. Former Parish Priest of Rose Bay and former Dean of St Mary's Cathedral (Sydney) Co-author of The Attachment
17 October	Catholic New Testament research and the significance of the Encyclical, <i>Divino afflante Spiritu</i> , and Vatican II	Dr Bruce Kaye Adjunct Research Professor, Centre for Public and Contextual Theology, Charles Sturt University, Canberra Formerly: Master, New College, University of NSW
21 November	Writing Australian Catholic history: A case study – Riverview.	Mr Gerard Windsor. Novelist, reviewer and essayist (Author of The Tempest-tossed Church and Heaven where the Bachelors sit
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: john.carmody@sydney.edu.au

ACHS Melbourne Chapter meetings

These are held at the: Yarra Theological Union Study Centre, Classroom 1. 29 Albion Street Box Hill, but the Covid-19 restrictions in Melbourne has caused these meetings to be cancelled. Members will be advised when meetings resume. **Contact:** Matthew Beckmann, OFM. Email: mbeckmann@franciscans.org.au

NOTICE OF THE 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ACHS

1.30 PM ON SUNDAY, 21 March, 2021

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

- **The Agenda:**
- **Minutes of 2020 Annual General Meeting**
- **President's Report**
- **Treasurer's Report**
- **Election of Office Bearers for 2021**
- **Items of business and motions of which due notice had been given.**
- Agenda items must reach the Secretary by 28 February 2021.
- **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.

ACHS MEETINGS and COVID-19 REQUIRMENTS

Sydney Meetings: conditions and procedures to be followed.

- If you have any symptoms associated with the COVID-19 Virus or are unwell you must not attend.
- The number of people in the crypt is limited so the audience limit will be 30.
- The seats will be separated to comply with the 4 square metre requirements for social distancing.
- Those attending will need to record their attendance in the official ACHS register and comply with venue registration procedures.
- Those attending must sanitise their hands on entering the crypt with sanitiser
- **FACE MASKS MUST BE WORN.**
- At the end of the meeting the chairs and tables must be sanitised prior to stacking them against the wall. Sanitising materials will be provided.

Registering your intention to attend an ACHS Sydney meeting

- **Your intention to attend must be booked via email: ACHSmeetings@gmail.com** Please include your name and contact details.
- A reply will be sent giving you an attendance register number.
- Once the limit has been reached no attendance register number will be provided and you will not be able to attend. However, a reserve list will be maintained in case someone is unable to attend.
- If you apply to attend, please note this in your diary. If you later decide that you can't attend please advise of that by sending a message with your name and details to ACHSmeetings@gmail.com
- If you do not get a reply to emails sent to ACHSmeetings@gmail.com please check the address and resend your email to that address.

REMINDER: MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Payment of fees for Membership of ACHS for 2021 will be due on 1st April 2021 and must be paid by 1 July 2021. Application/Renewal forms are included in the envelopes with this Newsletter. A form will also be available on the ACHS website. NB Fees remain the same as last year.

Deferred Annual General Meeting: Sunday 18 October 2020

President's Report: Dr Carmody spoke briefly to his written report of which copies were available. He thanked all for the support he had received.

Treasurer's Report. Dr Hughes had supplied a report on the audited accounts.

Election of Council: The following members were nominated, seconded and were elected unopposed.

President: Dr John Carmody. **Vice Presidents:** Prof. James Franklin, Mr Howard Murray

Secretary: Mrs Helen Scanlon **Treasurer:** Dr Lesley Hughes.

Councillors: Dr Janice Garaty, Mr Geoff Hogan, Assoc Prof Anne Power and Mrs Anne Thoeming, Ms Christine Riley.

ACHS Chaplain: Sr Helen Simpson continues as Chaplain and is ex officio on Council.

Message from the President John Carmody

As we contemplate our history, Australians are confronted by several panoramas: these involve Asia, Europe, the Americas as well as the “Great South Land”, itself. Indigenous history is a much-neglected aspect of that history, though it *has* gained prominence over the past 20 years or so. Our story is also complicated by the fact that every other citizen is, ultimately, an immigrant who brings a pedigree which is inextricably entwined (to a greater or lesser degree) with her or his ancestry, no matter how fresh or remote.

It is also indisputable that religion has influenced *every* one of those histories. I have been reminded of that by the recent book by Dr Eamon Duffy, the distinguished Professor of the History of Christianity at the Cambridge University. Almost single-handedly (especially with *Stripping the Altars*) Duffy changed the understanding of pre-Reformation Catholicism in England, a field which had been dominated by the perspective of Protestant scholarship. This new book of essays (which I’ve not, so far, been able to read) is *A people’s tragedy: Studies in Reformation* and it is of real interest to me because I’m disposed to think that the two most influential “events” in

the history of modern Europe were the location of the nascent Christian Church in Rome, and the Reformation.

Reviewing this book in *The Tablet*, Peter Marshall described its contents as “erudite, readable and acerbic” and its author as “unashamedly a Catholic historian” (rather than an historian who is a Catholic) who “has never been a *confessional* historian”. Marshall, for example, called one chapter “a kind of love letter to the King James Bible” but argued that, in another Duffy, was “unsparing in his assessment of the prejudices of the pre-eminent Victorian Reformation historian James Anthony Froude”. A further chapter deals with Hilary Mantel and there (Marshall says) “Duffy’s critique of Mantel” – which Duffy thinks embodies values “more redolent of twenty-first-century Islington than sixteenth-century Putney” – “is potent precisely because he takes her historical fiction so seriously.”

To Marshall, the almost 74-year-old Duffy is “still at the very top of his game” and his book certainly seems to paint an unmissable historical panorama.

(John Carmody President)

Sydney meeting: Sunday 15 November 2020.

Topic: *A quiet revolution in Australia: bringing home a practical response to “Vatican II”. Celebrating the life and achievement of the Institute of Counselling in Sydney.*

Speakers: Mr Ronald Perry, Founding Director (ICS) and Psychologist, Dr Alison Turner, Second Director (ICS) and Counselling Psychologist; My Bryan Gray, Consultant Psychologist and long-term lecturer (ICS).

The story of the establishment, 50 years ago, of the Sydney Archdiocesan Institute of Counselling was told by its first director Ron Perry, Group Work lecturer and consultant Bryan Gray, and the last director Alison Turner, psychologist.

It was, indeed, a practical and timely response to Vatican II when Catholics were both excited and confused at the prospect of questioning and exploring authority and when Protestant churches had already seen counselling as a type of ministry.

Ron Perry, then a Marist brother and psychologist who had been in Rome at the time of the Council (a session of which he attended) and subsequently studied psychology in the US, where he also experienced being a member of a group, became the foundation director. Mary Lewis, a senior social worker at the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau and an outspoken member of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, helped persuade the Sydney hierarchy of the need for those involved in education and religious formation to have a better understanding of human development and counselling.

Beginning in 1970 with 80 students, mainly religious, the Institute engaged lecturers who were skilled practitioners, such as Professor Marie Bashir (Adolescent psychiatrist) and Margaret Topham (Family therapist). Those lectures

were supplemented by extensive skills-training and experiential group-work.

Ron stressed the generosity of all involved, lecturers, administration staff, group leaders and the Christian Brothers who provided rent-free accommodation at St Patrick’s at Strathfield, the Mercy congregation who gave them office space in North Sydney, and the Willoughby Parish which gave them space for many years. He also spoke of the generosity of David Bollen who researched and wrote the history of the Institute in his book “Opening Up” which includes wonderful stories of both students and staff.

Links with the Archdiocese were flexible and over the years the number of religious students reduced and applications came thick and fast from lay people, particularly women, many of whom were involved in helping in their parishes or were teaching in schools.

Bryan Gray, also a Marist brother in the early years, and a highly-trained psychologist, explained the nature of the group work experience for students which was the key to the experiential nature of the Institute’s program. He gave examples of the stages of a group’s work for members, usually numbering about 10 or 12, as they struggled to be in the *present*, both as individuals and in relation to their group.

The first experience of a group could be like being on the moon, he said, or in a strange land, with no obvious task or instruction from the facilitator. A few group-meetings, further on when the members felt safer with each other, they would begin to realise that *they* could take authority themselves and experience emotions in the *present* situation. Towards the end of the semester, they would often express surprise at their emotions, such as sadness or relief.

Following Vatican II, Catholics were developing an ability to think and act in the present and not just to accept authority. The group-work journey let participants learn and accept their own emotions, such as pride anger or jealousy as they felt it themselves, and take their own authority, not as others feel or think or what they were taught to think.

Alison Turner, a psychologist who had been a student and a group facilitator, became Deputy Director in 2003 and Director from 2006 to 2013. She spoke of the achievement of getting accreditation for the course from the Higher Education Board in 2003, which involved voluminous documentation and was masterminded by Sister Margaret McGovern who had always been a tireless worker for the Institute, a marvellous lecturer and group facilitator. She died later that year, but the course was accredited for 3 years thanks to her persistence.

In 2006 the course was accredited for another 5 years and again in 2012, which was by this time very important to the students, many of whom wanted a qualification as they were practising as counsellors or wanted to progress to other degrees at University. The Institute was approached by the ACU to amalgamate, which made sense as the course was then being run on ACU premises and housed in a cottage on the campus [no longer rent-free!]. An agreement was signed by the Board in 2012 and the transition worked well for the students that year, with no disruption to their course work.

However, “the wheels fell off” gradually for the administration and Alison, beginning with no meals for the generous lecturers, objections to the number of group facilitators and the demand that the course be run in uniformity with all other campuses across Australia. This meant the end of group work, the underpinning of the Institute’s ethos. Sadly, the partnership ended, somewhat acrimoniously, in 2013.

Although the Institute no longer exists in physical form, the value of what it provided lives on in the hearts and minds of its students and staff who grew and transformed personally and professionally through their experience. It was an impressive and worthwhile Australian achievement in response to Vatican II.
(Diana Carmody, lecturer and group leader, 1979-2005)

75th Anniversary of Archbishop Gilroy of Sydney being named a Cardinal

On 18 February 1946 Pope Pius XII named the Archbishop of Sydney Norman Gilroy a Cardinal with the title of the ancient church of the Four Crowned Martyrs. Cardinal Gilroy was the first Australian-born cleric to become a Cardinal and the first Australian-born cleric to be appointed Archbishop of Sydney. He was also the first Patron of the Australian Catholic Historical Society.

Death of Bishop Geoffrey Robinson

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson died on 29 December 2020. He had served in various roles including being a former auxiliary bishop of Sydney. He had written a number of books and exercised leadership in leading the Church to appropriately deal with child sexual abuse and the victims. The funeral Mass for Bishop Robinson was held on 6 January 2021 at St Joseph’s Enfield where he had lived in retirement. May he rest in peace.

Death of Archbishop Phillip Wilson

Archbishop Phillip Wilson died suddenly on 17 January 2021. He had been Archbishop of Adelaide and Bishop of Wollongong. His conviction for concealing child sex abuse, while a priest in the Maitland Diocese in the 1970s, was rejected on appeal. May he rest in peace.

Mass to mark the centenary of the death of Eileen O’Connor

On 10 January 2021 a Mass was held at St Brigid’s Church, Coogee, to mark the centenary of the death of Eileen O’Connor. There is a new official website devoted to the life of Eileen and her cause for canonisation:
<https://eileenconnor.com.au/>

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