



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

## NEWSLETTER

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### Christmas Greeting

The Councilors of the ACHS thank members and those who have contributed to the Society in 2021 for their support and involvement in what has been another difficult year caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. We look forward to your continued membership and support and wish you, your families and colleagues a happy and holy Christmas and that God will bless you in 2022. The Council also encourages members to promote the Society and invite friends, colleagues and others to attend our functions and to join the Society.

### The Covid-19 pandemic

The outbreak of the Delta strain of the Covid-19 virus in about mid-2021 and associated restrictions resulted in the cancellation of a number of Sydney meetings in the crypt of St Patrick's, the Christmas Mass and lunch and the Melbourne meetings at Yarra Theological Union. However the President Dr John Carmody organised a series of presentations to be delivered over the internet via Zoom.

### November 2021 ACHS meeting, to be delivered via Zoom.

**\*NB the change of date** made necessary due to an unexpected commitment that emerged for one of the presenters.

*14 November	Catholic archives: are they history?	<b>Dr Odhran O'Brien</b> Archdiocesan Archivist Perth and <b>Dr Colin Barr</b> School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History University of Aberdeen
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- This Zoom session will be presented at the usual time (2.00pm).
- The identification codes and the access passwords will be provided to those on the ACHS eNews email list.
- See the ACHS website for a podcast [<http://www.australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au>].

### ACHS Membership 2022

ACHS membership year is from 1 April to 31 March in the following year. If a member's fee is not received by 1 July membership will cease. Membership forms will be included in the envelope with the February 2022 ACHS newsletter. A membership form can also be downloaded from the ACHS website.

**Fees for next year will be the same as this year.**

### Australian Catholic Historical Society Inc. Program for February to April 2022

*This information is correct as at 26 October 2021, but changes may occur.*

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
20 February	Remembering Timor 80 Years On: the Australian and Japanese Invasions of Portuguese Timor	<b>Sr Dr Susan Connelley rsj.</b> Author of the forthcoming book, East Timor, René Girard and Neocolonial Violence: Scapegoating as Australian Policy
20 March <b>*1:30 pm start.</b>	<b>*1:30pm Annual General Meeting</b> <b>2:00pm Presentation:</b> Cathedral Folly: the origins of the 1960 plan for a vast "Brutalist" cathedral at New Norcia	<b>Dr John Challis.</b> Former Dominican theologian, Head of the ABC Science Unit and International Relations Executive, ABC
*10 April <i>Note: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday</i>	Historical perspectives from the newly formed collection of rare books and manuscripts at the ACU	<b>Mr Hugh Myers</b> Special Collections Advisor Australian Catholic University (Sydney)

**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. Those attending will need to record their attendance in the official ACHS register and comply with venue registration procedures and social distancing requirements.

**Link to ACHS website:** [<http://www.australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au>].

**Enquiries to: Dr John Carmody**, President ACHS: [jjcarmody@gmail.com](mailto:jjcarmody@gmail.com)

### 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 to meetings to be cancelled. Members will be advised when meetings resume.

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

#### NOTICE OF THE 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ACHS

1.30 PM ON SUNDAY, 20 March, 2022

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

#### The Agenda:

- Minutes of 2021 Annual General Meeting
  - President's Report
  - Treasurer's Report
  - Election of Office Bearers for 2022
  - Items of business and motions of which due notice had been given.
- Agenda items must reach the Secretary by 28 February 2022.

**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.

#### Report of Sydney Meeting, Sunday 19 September 2021 delivered via Zoom

**Presenter: Dr John Carmody.** President ACHS. Formerly UNSW Physiologist and music writer. Currently contributor to *the Australian Dictionary of Biography* and music lecturer.

**Topic:** Wentworth's dream of a secular University thwarted: how Sydney University became a decidedly Protestant institution.

Many historians consider that Australia's first university, in Sydney, was a "secular" institution but the speaker argued that "public" (a term which they also often use) and "secular" are different concepts. The new university was certainly "public" because it was constituted by the Legislative Council (in 1850) and funded from public resources. Despite the importance of the NSW *Church Act* (of 1836) – which denied supremacy to *any* "mainstream" religion -- the Churches raised their opposition to clause V of WC Wentworth's Bill of 1849 (which, comprehensively sought to exclude *all* clerics from the controlling Senate) and the proposed legislation lapsed. A compromise had to be reached in 1850 and it specified that only four of its 16 members could be clergy, but it determined the tone of the university: it was no longer "secular" furthermore, given that about 50% of the colonial population were adherents of the Church of England (well above both the Catholics and the Non-Conformists), *and* that they were disproportionately represented in the "power-bloc" of the Colony, it was inevitable that the university would reflect *their* values.

That power and those values were displayed when the Senate disregarded the advice of Wentworth's "Select Committee" and, for unspecified reasons, deleted the medical, engineering and "Natural" sciences from its foundation chairs. Otherwise, TH Huxley (Darwin's most tenacious supporter) would, almost certainly, have come to Sydney. That "anti-secular" disposition was reinforced by the appointment of an Anglican priest as the university's first "Principal", Dr John Woolley, who shared the Senate's aversion to the sciences.

It was not until 1891 that a Catholic was appointed to a Chair, Thomas Brennan in Latin (which, given the liturgical importance of that language to Catholicism, might seem almost predestined); and it was not until 1964 that a Catholic was chosen as Chancellor (Sir Charles Mc Donald). When (emphasising the non-Papist values of the university, not to mention its Scots links) Anderson Stuart was appointed foundation Professor of Anatomy and Physiology (subsequently becoming the powerful Dean of Medicine), he was, unthinkable for Catholics, also a committed eugenicist and, later, Deputy Grand Master of the Masonic Lodges of NSW. Woolley had also been an active Freemason. It is perhaps significant that there has been an active Lodge at the university since 1924.

The speaker also declared that he was convinced that the renowned poet, Christopher Brennan, would never have been dismissed if he had not been a Catholic. His "fault" was not public inebriation nor, indeed, the fact that he lived, adulterously, with a "lover" (though, by the time of his "trial", she had been dead for several months); no -- the hypocritical men of the Senate acted against him because news of his pending divorce had been published in the *Herald* and had, thereby, become a "scandal". The then Dean of Medicine went so far as to declare that "it was better to have men [as academics] to whom they could look for high character and principles" than one who was an "irreplaceable genius". Those involved might well have recalled the scriptural advice, "Let him amongst you without sin, cast the first stone."

Two other examples of blatant sectarianism, which the speaker considered no less than clear anti-Semitism, were the controversies associated with the appointment of Julius Stone in 1943 and the missed opportunity with Karl

Popper in 1945. Neither of those controversies would have happened in a truly secular university.

The speaker concluded our first experience of the Zoom technology (with its “attendance” of about 60) by advancing the whimsical speculation that a new era has begun at Sydney University, with the appointment of Mark Scott as Vice-Chancellor, the first non-academic to hold that role. If his theory is right, he mused, then that

old epoch began and closed with Anglican clerics as Heads of the University. How, in such circumstances, could it plausibly be considered a secular institution?

Some interesting matters emerged during the Q&A session. This can be listened to on the podcast of the presentation available on the Program page of the ACHS website. (John Carmody)

### **Report on ACHS Sydney Meeting, Sunday 17 October 2021 delivered via Zoom.**

**Speaker: Dr Bruce Kaye** Adjunct Research Professor, Centre for Public and Contextual Theology, Charles Sturt University, Canberra Formerly: Master, New College, University of NSW

**Topic:** Catholic New Testament research and the significance of the Encyclical, *Divino afflante Spiritu*, and Vatican II

Dr Kaye began his talk on the extraordinary flourishing of New Testament (NT) scholarship by setting the context of the social and political crisis in Europe in the 1960s. Hugh McLeod’s book *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* marked a watershed pointing to religious plurality and his perception of the failure of the churches to maintain continuity from one generation to the next. He asserts that for Catholics, the issue was the central clerical institutions and the magisterium.

Two great papal encyclicals provide the framework for the convergence of ideas that emerged in relation to scripture in the middle of the twentieth century; *Providentissimus Dei* from Pope Leo XIII [18 November 1893] and fifty years later *Divino Afflante Spiritu* from Pope Pius XII [30 September 1943]. The first was a desire to lead scripture scholarship to engage with contemporary cultural changes. Pope Leo affirms that ‘all interpretation is foolish and false which either makes the sacred writers disagree one with another, or is opposed to the doctrine of the Church.’ This encyclical offers encouragement to historical research but the church remains the final arbiter of the correct interpretation of scripture. Years later, Pope Pius asserts that study of the Sacred Scriptures will increase for the good of souls, provided the method of biblical studies laid down by Leo XIII, - which is the only ‘safe way’ - be more firmly, eagerly and faithfully accepted by all. Yet he also affirms the need to provide the circumstances of the sacred writer, the age in which he lived, the sources written or oral to which he had recourse and the forms of expression he employed.

This encouraged the German New Testament scholarship in the 1960s. Dr Kaye spoke of the separate Protestant and Catholic faculties in German universities. Post WWII, in the period of the ‘long 1960s’ scholars from Catholic and Protestant positions were substantially mixed together. There was a dramatic increase in dissertations in 1967 (five years after the start of Vatican II), into the seventies.

The major growth areas were study of the gospels and studies of an exegetical/interpretative kind. One important growth point was church office which directly relates to the concerns raised by Vatican II. For instance, the study of Pauline letters represented basic biblical work with a view to the present needs of the church. Merklein’s dissertation called, *The Church Office according to*

*Ephesians*, traces the material from Paul’s work in Antioch to his final period in Ephesus.

Since the university professors had such a significant influence on the direction of New Testament research it is worth noting the work stimulated by one of the more prolific of these professors. Rudolf Schnackenburg is well-known to English-speaking students of the New Testament from his writings. Professor Otto Kuss is not so well-known to English-speaking readers, and yet he has been prodigious in his work on the New Testament, and particularly on Paul in the theological development of the early church.

In March 1957, a gathering of nineteen German Catholic New Testament scholars took place and expressed a desire to hold meetings on a two-yearly basis. During the 1960s, the conference spread beyond Germany both in terms of its membership, and its location, and it came to be called, Conference of German-speaking Catholic New Testament scholars. The following meetings revealed a focus on the use of historical critical methods in the study of the New Testament. The focus turned to Redaction criticism in 1959 from Heinrich Schlier, in 1961 Anton Vögtle on the work of Rudolf Bultmann on the Son of Man and then in 1963 the whole discussion was on the historical critical method for which over fifty scholars were present. Two years after the start of this conference in 1959, Pope John XXIII called for a council in the Vatican. It opened in 1964 and finished in December 1965.

Dr Kaye’s purpose in this talk was to draw attention to the stream of Catholic theological work on the New Testament that was enlarged by *Divino Afflante Spiritu*. The growth in publication of journals and monographs brought with it more engagement with protestant scholars and with the development of the historical critical method that had been such a mark of protestant scholarship since the early eighteenth century. He concluded that *Divino Afflante Spiritu* encouraged intellectual openness in biblical studies, and the historical critical method.

### **Some of the Questions and answers.**

Q. Luther was very much in Catholic minds. Also, German books translated into English had an impact because of their optimism, their positive interpretation of the bible rather than ‘thou shalt not’. Can you comment?

A. I remember hearing Hans Küng give a lecture where he said there were more Catholic theologians doing research on Luther than Protestant. If you track research on Romans, Lutheran interpretation dominated in ‘the new look on Paul’.

Q. The Germans placed emphasis on the German soul. How did this affect scholarship?

A. When I arrived in Freiburg, I was in shock for 6 months about the encyclopaedic knowledge of the professors. They had a power and knowledge about them. The tone and depth of scholarship was overwhelming. My reading on this has led me to think of the Catholic institutional tradition having a coherence that protestant ecclesiology does not have.

Q. Focusing on the coherence of the Catholic ecclesiology: might there be a point where the pragmatic consequence of the rampant individualism affects decision-making?

A. The Anglican institution was not quite robust enough to put aside political differences. The institutions were paralysed.

Q. A question on oral history sources.

A. Oral history became an important part of redaction criticisms. A number of key Scandinavian societies led these studies. It was overtaken by a revival of literary studies. In the 70s, people interested in contemporary reference points. Oral sources has been a way to get to understanding the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith.

(Anne Power)

### **Report on changes to the MacGinley Award.**

The ACHS Council has approved changes to its prestigious MacGinley Australian Catholic history award. The award amount has been increased to \$1,000 and a new application deadline of 28 February 2022 has been determined. The ACHS is keen to ensure the award becomes a way to increase general awareness and engagement with Australian Catholic history and has developed a marketing plan to ensure information about the award is circulated among academic and religious institutions. The scope of the award has been revised to ensure the widest possible range of work associated with Australian Catholic history is eligible for submission. Such works may include biography, social, cultural, institutional, or political history. Jointly authored papers are now eligible for consideration, and successful applicants may be offered the opportunity to have their paper published in the *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*. **For further information about the award and its entry requirements**, see:

<https://australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au/awards>

### **Fifth Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia**

In October 2021 the fifth Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia assembled in a “multi-modal form online”. It had originally been planned to assemble in April 2020, but the Covid-19 pandemic delayed that. Further sessions of this Council are planned. Earlier Plenary Councils in Australia were held in 1885, 1895, 1905 and 1937.

### **Australian Religious History Fellowship**

The ACHS congratulates Dr Damian Gleeson on being awarded the Australian Religious History Fellowship for 2022. Damian is a past President of the ACHS. The Australian Religious History Fellowship is managed by the NSW State Library and was established in 2010 for the study and research of any aspect of Australian religious history. Dr Gleeson’s project will explore the Irish Catholic community in New South Wales between 1820 and 1860.

### **Death of Brian McAteer**

Brian McAteer died on 7 October 2021 aged 92. Brian was an active ACHS member, had been a Councillor and President and was awarded Life Membership of the Society. Helen Scanlon noted “Sad to have lost a man who had such a deep knowledge of ACHS history, but also of the wider Catholic and Australian history”. James Franklin noted that “His article ‘Our diamond jubilee’, *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, 21 (2000), 59-66 was excellent on the history of ACHS”. R.I.P.

### **150 Years ago in 1872**

- An Episcopal Commission exonerated Mother Mary MacKillop. She was recomunicated into the Church and the Sisters of Joseph were permitted to continue their work.
- The Marist Brothers opened St Patrick’s Primary School in Harrington Street, The Rocks, Sydney.
- The Victorian colonial government secured the passage of a bill abolishing government aid to church schools. Moves to cause this to happen began in other Australian Colonies.

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