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Front cover: Ironing room, Mount Saint Canice Magdalen laundry, c. 1960s
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THE CATHOLICS OF WALLIS PLAINS 1820 -1835: CATHOLICS IN A PRE-INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Michael Belcher*

The Maitland Mercury of 22nd January 1852, reported the death of an “old” man (he was 52!), James Fallen, in his home on Fishery Creek “in comfortable circumstances from his saving habits”. He arrived in the Colony under sentence of seven years in 1818. By 1852 his “circumstances” consisted of a nine acre farm on Fishery Creek with good fences, a strong slab cottage of two rooms, sheds, livestock and produce. He was, unlike most Catholics of that time and place an Englishman, quiet and sober, evidently shy, small and severely pockmarked. Like most ex-convict Catholics, however, he lived an apparently blameless life and died unmarried and alone. But one unique thing about James, something that sets him apart from the great majority of his fellow ex-convict, Catholic pioneers is that he was buried in the Catholic section of Campbell’s Hill Cemetery in a marked grave that still stands today. The question remains “did he practice his faith”? It’s dangerous to argue from a negative but the fact that the Reverend Dean Lynch, who in the 1840s tracked down most parishioners of means to subscribe to his new Church of St John the Baptist in Maitland, did not secure a subscription from James Fallen seems to indicate that James did not regularly attend his parish church. Again this looks as though it might be typical.¹

There are three essential components of any body of people which claims to be a Catholic community. These mirror the definition of a parish in the Code of Canon Law.² The first is a shared understanding of their beliefs, the second is a critical mass of people within a physical locale, and the third is some form of leadership, not necessarily ordained, that can gather the people and provide service, judgement and focus. Who were the faithful, did the “church” exist, and did these early Catholics of Wallis Plains in colonial New South Wales practice their faith in the period before

1 *Maitland Mercury* 22/1/1852. The subscribers to St Johns are in various editions of the *Maitland Mercury* during 1843 and early 1844. The convict record of James is available through the Colonial Office records and the Colonial Secretaries papers. Most of these are now available on-line through Ancestry.com. Referencing has been kept to a minimum. Much is also taken from my unpublished PhD thesis: *The Child in NSW Society: 1820 to 1837*, UNE, 1982. Those interested in pursuing a particular reference can contact me.

2 Canon 515-1.

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the institutional church, in the form of a parish at East Maitland and a parish priest, arrived in 1835? To answer these questions two approaches are taken: a statistical analysis of the 1828 Census; and, an examination of what little written evidence there is.³

In the 1828 Census the area under study was contained within the Counties of Northumberland and Durham. The Census subdistricts comprised Wallis Plains, Paterson’s Plains, First Branch, and Luskintyre. This area is currently covered by the Parishes of East Maitland (established 1835), Maitland (1841), Dungog (1860), Gresford (1872), Morpeth (1875), Lochinvar (1907), Beresfield (1947), Rutherford (1961) and parts of Raymond Terrace (1853), Branxton (1870) and Cessnock (1890s).

In 1828 the Colony of New South Wales had about 36,600 European residents, two thirds in the County of Cumberland, one third living in Sydney. Wallis Plains had a total population of 1,610, half the population of Counties Northumberland and Durham and 4.4% of the colonial population.

Overall Population

	Total		Male		Female	
	No	% of Col Pop	No	% of Pop	No	% or Pop
Colony	36,598	100	27,611	75.4	8,987	24.6
North & Dur	3,225	8.8	2,766	85.8	459	14.2
Wallis Plains	1,610	4.4	1,372	85.2	238	14.8

Religious Affiliation

(Gender breakdowns not available at most levels and some people are not identified)

	Colony		Northumberland and Durham		Wallis Plains Region				
	No	%	No	%	Males		Females		Total
					No	%	No	%	
Catholics	11,256	30.7	1,063	38.4	539	34.1	73	4.6	612 (38.7)
Other	25,352	69.3	2,162	61.6	811	51.2	160	10.1	971 (61.3)

The “Others” are overwhelmingly Protestant, predominantly Anglican.

³ The Census provides population figures but a sample (not a statistically random sample but all those with surnames beginning with C - 84 or 14%), was looked at using the resources (mostly online) of Ancestry, the State Archives, Trove and a number of other local websites. Very little demographic change occurred in the Colony in the period 1820 to 1835 except for a tripling of the overall population.

Within the Colony were 11,256 Catholics (30.7%). Only 612 Catholics (38.7% of the total population of the region or 5.5% of the Colony's Catholic population) lived within Wallis Plains. Other than some clustering around Maitland township they were very thinly spread on landholdings across an area of some 3,000 square kilometres. Given the small numbers and wide spread of the Catholics it is highly unlikely that many opportunities would have existed for Catholics to gather in community even if they had been so minded. These very small numbers mean we have to seriously question the presence of a community.

The very idea of Catholics gathering for any reason was viewed with suspicion and discouraged. There was antipathy towards Catholicism as a religion and towards Catholics as individuals and as a group. This antipathy is best illustrated by the damning indictment of Governor Brisbane in the early 1820s:

...every Murder or diabolical Crime, which has been committed in the Colony since my arrival has been perpetrated by Roman Catholics. And this I ascribe entirely to their barbarous ignorance and total want of education, the invariable companions of bigotry and Cruelty, as well as the parent of Crime... they are benighted and bereft of every advantage that can adorn the mind of man.⁴

There are three distinct elements to Brisbane's indictment: class; ethnicity; and, religion. Each needs to be examined to better understand the vehemence of his statement.

Civil Status: Numbers

	Colony			Wallis Plains Region			Wallis Plains Catholics		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Convict	14,155	1,573	15,728	751	33	784	337	11	348
Emaci- pist	6,137	1,394	7,531	359	44	403	166	21	187
Born in Colony	4,479	4,254	8,733	108	98	206	24	30	54
Came Free	2,846	1,827	3673	142	58	200	12	11	23

⁴ Quoted in Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: A History*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1977. P9.

Civil Status: Percentages of Population

	Colony			Wallis Plains Region			Wallis Plains Catholics		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Convict	38.7	4.2	42.9	47.1	2.1	49.2	55.1	1.9	57.0
Emancipist	16.8	3,8	20.6	22.5	2.7	25.2	27.1	3.4	30.5
Born in Colony	12.2	11.6	23.8	6.8	6.2	13.0	3.9	4.9	8.8
Came Free	7.7	5.0	12.7	8.9	3.6	12.5	1.9	1.9	3.8

Essentially there were four civil classes within the colony. The “free” were most concerned at the overwhelming proportion of convicts evident in these tables. This fear would have been heightened on Wallis Plains because of the higher proportion of convicts, and even more heightened because the proportion of “troublesome” convict and ex-convict Catholics was higher still.

At the colonial level it is difficult to determine the proportion of Catholics in each class but we do know that nearly all the Catholic adults were either convict or emancipist and that the majority of convict women were Catholic.⁵ These proportions can be determined for Wallis Plains and show that 44.4% of the convicts, 46.4% of emancipists, 26.2% of the Colonial Born and 11.5% of the Free Emigrants were Catholic. These tables, however, are for the total population including children. From the sample when the children are removed, nearly two thirds of the adult Catholic population in Wallis Plains was convict and 96% was convict or ex-convict in origin. In the minds of the elite the combination of convict and Catholic was toxic.

Civil Status of Sample of Adult Wallis Plains Catholics

	Convict		Free by Servitude		Ticket of Leave		Absolute or Conditional Pardon		Came Free		Born in Colony		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Male	53	63.1	16	19.1	5	5.9	0	0	1	1.2	2	2.4	77
Female	1	1.2	5	5.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.2	7
Total	54	64.3	21	25.0	5	5.9	0	0	1	1.2	3	3.6	84

5 LL Robson *The Convict Settlers of Australia*, MUP, Melbourne, 1965, pps 211-213.

A third factor further compounded these fears. Looking at the birthplace of those in the sample confirms that the overwhelming proportion of Catholics on Wallis Plains was Irish.

Origin of Wallis Plains Catholics (Sample only)

	Number	Percentage
Ireland	70	83.3
England	8	9.5
Colony	3	3.6
Unknown	3	3.6
Total	84	100

The small size and isolation of each landholding made convict retaliation (Catholic or otherwise) a constant fear. A landholder might think a regional wide revolt unlikely but in his bailiwick it was a distinct and terrifying threat. In the Region in the 1820s the thin blue line was essentially non-existent. A tiny number of “respectable” people stared down an overwhelming number of “vagabonds and undesirables”.

Overwhelmingly Brisbane’s accusations of ignorance, superstition, bigotry, crime and cruelty were a reflection of English attitudes. All the prejudices and the legal discrimination then in place in England and Ireland, through the Penal Laws for example, applied in New South Wales until their repeal in 1829 and were supplemented by local regulations. This was particularly the case if you were a convict.⁶

Even so his accusations had some basis. Many contemporary commentators on the Irish troubles of the 1780s and 90s, including the Catholic commentators, noted that the majority of even the political agitators, but more especially the criminal element, was uneducated and irreligious. Overwhelmingly the Irish Catholic convicts were criminals not political exiles. Only five of those in the sample could seriously claim to be “political” prisoners, all tried under the Insurrection Act for minor riots. With regard to education, only 13 of the sample had some indent note on their level of education and of these two could read only, five could both read and write (four of them of English origin) and six could neither read nor write. With

6 An individual, while a convict, had few legal rights (some rights in relation to his master) and no access to the Courts of Justice. Those holding a Ticket of Leave or Conditional Pardons had further rights. Most doubts and concerns related to property matters but more serious questions were raised, and in many cases went unanswered, about the status of convicts in respect of religious practice, the relationship between husband and wife and about their parental role as guardians of their children.

regard to irreligion, Catholicism was considered irreligious anyway but the practice in Ireland in the late 18th and early 19th century, a direct result of the laws in place at the time, only reinforced this prejudice. It was a confusion of religious rite and custom, poor priestly and Episcopal leadership, low levels of practice (very low mass attendance), no instruction in the faith and few educational opportunities. It is therefore safe to conclude that the majority of those dumped in NSW were indeed both uneducated and irreligious.

Compounding this was the fact that many Irish spoke Gaelic. They could not understand, nor could they be understood by, many of those who worked or dealt with them. The clerks in particular had many problems. Even simple surnames like Cronin ended up as Cronyn, Cronen, and Cronan.⁷

Finally the Catholic community in New South Wales suffered because its early clergy were in no position to offer much in the way of secular or religious leadership and instruction. The circumstances of their ministry were extraordinary, and it is difficult to see how they could have been more than the crisis managers they seemed to become, but one is left wondering what may have been if better educated and less fractious men had been appointed to the Colony.

Some Irish, Catholic convicts reoffended in the Colony reinforcing all the prejudices. There were some pretty disturbed and evil people amongst the Catholics of Wallis Plains, but as far as can be determined, only three Wallis Plains Catholics listed in the 1828 Census were executed, all for either committing or receiving the proceeds of a single felony. Most, however, belied Brisbane's accusation. Over the life of those in the sample, only thirteen were found guilty of indictable offences, most commonly stealing. This is a recidivism rate of about 16% compared to a present day rate of some 60%. The tenuous social standing of many made it all too easy to convict on flimsy evidence. Some convictions were at odds with the conduct of the accused up to and after the event.⁸ Only fifteen in the sample were charged with misdemeanours while still a convict. In most cases they absconded for short periods or refused to work, and four only were repeat offenders.

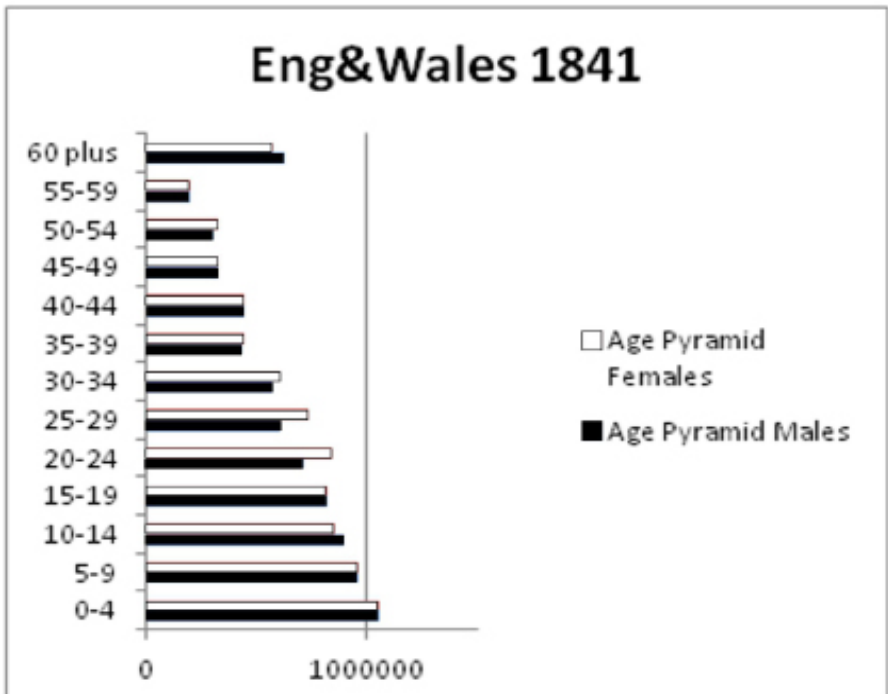
Prolonged convict status was probably one of the major contributors to recidivism and to the Irish Catholic reputation for troublesomeness. Those who came with life sentences were the most recalcitrant because there was little hope of advancing in colonial society. Those with seven or fourteen year sentences knew that they only had to keep their heads down for the requisite time and they could gain many socio-economic advantages impossible in Ireland. Evidence shows that some realised that, despite all sorts of minor offences, as long as they did

7 Catherine Carrall, a farmer of Wallis Plains, actually Catherine Sheridan the "wife" of the deceased Wallis Plains pioneer John Cahill would have answered the clerk's questions as an emancipist householder – with the brogue, Cahill became Carrall.

8 See Thomas Constantine, *Sydney Herald*, 10/3/1834.

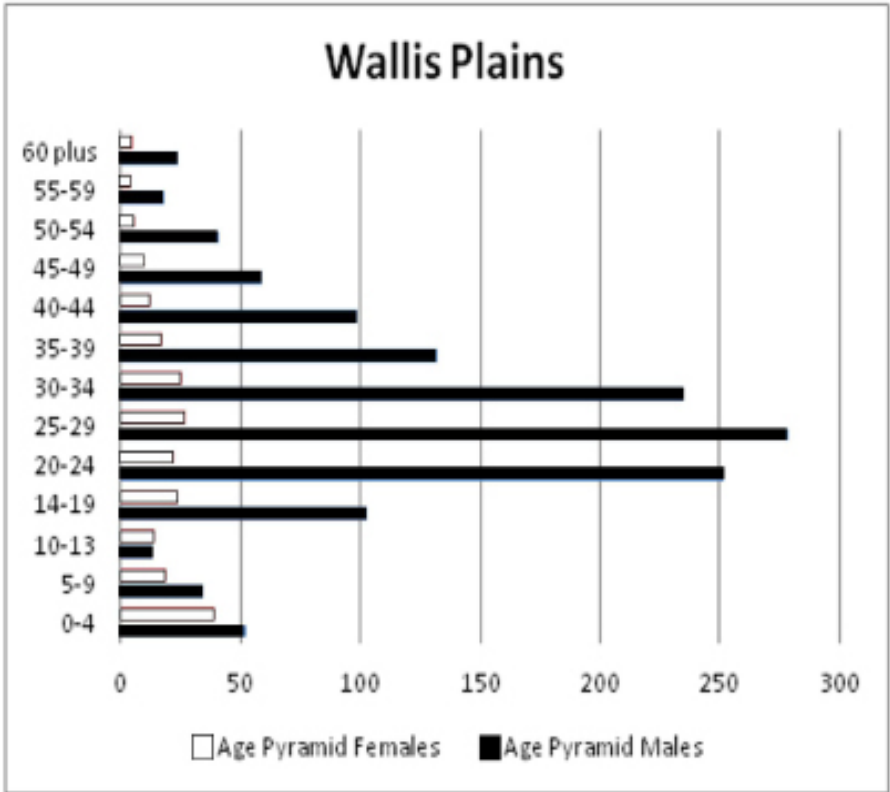
not commit an indictable offence the authorities had to give them a Certificate of Freedom on the due date. Two other factors are strongly suspected of contributing to these reputations. Both family and community, for the overwhelming majority of men, were impossible in New South Wales and particularly in Wallis Plains because neither were “normal” societies.

A comparison of English and colonial population pyramids illustrates this. England and Wales in 1841 shows the “normal” shape while the Wallis Plains pyramid is wholly aberrant: tiny proportions of male and female children; unequal numbers of adult males and females; unequal distributions across the age range; and, a tiny proportion of elderly males and females. As well, most of these men would have known no-one other than a few who came on the boat with them – they were strangers in a strange world, isolated in tiny communities of only men. This



would have been a dramatic departure from the close and family oriented society of Ireland and England at that time.

Probably most soul destroying would have been the almost impossible hope of marrying and living in family. Within the Catholic population of Wallis Plains,



87.8% were male and 11.9% female. The ratio is even more dramatic if the married/cohabiting women and the female children are removed from the numbers. 161 females are thus ruled out leaving only 75 women of “marriage” status to some 1200 men, an Adult Male:Female ratio of 1,600:100. A Catholic man had little hope of marriage, and even less chance of marrying a Catholic.

The situation for women, of course, was the exact opposite. They were in a unique position to use their scarcity to advantage, but they too must have suffered greatly from the “unnatural” structure of society in terms of female companionship and welfare.

There were, however, some advantages in the situation. The overwhelming proportion of all the population, but particularly those residing at Wallis Plains, was of working age and was, in the language of the times, “unencumbered”. This was advantageous for the employer (minimisation of cost) and the employee (minimisation of demand on income).

Gender ratios

	Males		Females		Ratio:	Adult ratio:
	No	%	No	%	Male/Female	Male/Female
Colony	27,611	74.5	8,967	25.5	307:100	409:100
Wallis Plains Region	1,369	85.2	236	14.8	580:100	829:100
Wallis Plains Catholics	539	87.8	73	11.9	739:100	1,081:100
Adults are 15 and over.						

The Catholics of the Region, the men in particular, were desirable assignees and employees with the requisite skills for this pioneering agricultural area. The three most desirable backgrounds were skilled agricultural workers, tradespeople and general labourers. Over 67% of the Catholics, based on our sample, fell into those three categories.

Original Occupations of Wallis Plains Catholics (Children excluded)

	Agriculture		Industry		Trade		Labourer		Indoor Servant		Unknown		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Male	30	39.5	4	5.3	6	7.9	15	19.7	8	10.6	13	17.1	76
Female	1	16.7									5	83.3	6
Total	31	37.8	4	4.9	6	7.3	15	18.3	8	9.8	18	21.9	82

As well, the agricultural background of the men meant that most were physically robust, borne out by the indent descriptions of the men. All of those in the sample were over five feet and many were around the five foot six mark, most were “solid” or “stout” and most had no disabilities. Unless they had a very unscrupulous master, they were not mistreated, actually earning a minimal wage and their keep and were probably better off than they would have been in Ireland. Many seemed to thrive and live long lives. Garret Caughlan (or Colghlan), a 15 year old errand boy, was only 4’11” when he arrived in the colony in 1828 but by 1832, when he was sent to six months on the roads for absconding, he had reached 5’7½” and was in the best of health.

Some employers valued their good workers and vice versa. William Cosgrove (who left a wife and three children in Ireland) was immediately assigned to John

Busby in Newcastle on arrival. Over the next decade he followed Busby up the Williams River, then to Singleton, and finally Cassilis. He was granted a Ticket of Leave in 1835 and a Conditional Pardon in 1842 but remained with Busby in Cassilis until 1847 when he disappears from sight.

Despite their earlier reputation for insubordination, idleness and lack of requisite skills, the Irish Catholics by this time were not the sweepings of the urban underclass nor the politically disaffected. The evidence of the sample shows that the vast majority lived out a productive, quiet and punishment free period as a convict and, when emancipated, went on to live blameless lives as far as the state was concerned.

In the evidence so far it is obvious, however, that the three essential components of any body of people claiming to be a Catholic community are sadly lacking. The paucity of religious education and disparate practice in Ireland and New South Wales would appear to rule out any shared understanding of their belief, there really was no critical mass of people within the region, and there certainly was no leadership, especially ordained leadership, that could gather the people and provide service, judgement and focus.

So if they didn't live as Church, did their faith impact on their daily life? There is little written evidence so events in Wallis Plains have to be closely analysed to extract whatever religious content may be present. The major life events and the more overt religious practices of the Colony such as Sunday Observance, education, social welfare, births, marriages and deaths, appear to offer the only clues for assessing the religious practices of the Wallis Plains' Catholics. Evidence is most available where clashes occurred over adherence to the "established" religion (Anglicanism or Evangelicalism) and convict disciplines and procedures.⁹ What is obvious though is that many of these events took place without the benefit of the community that existed in Ireland, so even the semi-religious festivities that accompanied and often overshadowed rites in Ireland were impossible to replicate in the isolated and religiously pluralist communities of New South Wales.

There is no doubt than many retained some residual connection to Catholicism and religion if only because it was an integral part of "home" and history. But there is little overt evidence. Some men (such as Garret Caughlan) sported religiously oriented tattoos. Of six men in the sample who are listed with tattoos, four of them had religious motifs.

In the period under study, Colonial practice meant that all convicts, regardless of denomination, were obliged to follow the practices of the Anglican or Episcopalian church. Sunday rites, for example, were always conducted by Anglican clergy or appointed Anglican laymen. Convicts were obliged to muster for worship each

⁹ Anglicanism was legally never "Established" in NSW, but in practice it had that status.

Sunday if they resided within five miles of a designated preacher. Two existed within the Wallis Plains area at East Maitland and at Paterson's Plains. Prayers and readings from the *Book of Common Prayer* were read.¹⁰

While the regulations fell into general disuse in the mid 1820s convicts and ticket of leave men were still being prosecuted for arriving intoxicated or neglecting to attend as late as 1832.¹¹

No evidence of Catholics objecting to the content of this observance could be found. There was some objection to working on Sundays but those objections were common to Catholics and other denominations.¹² Others objected that the muster allowed the men to congregate with subsequent drinking and debauchery. The argument about congregating at Muster was still being used by XX in a letter to the editor in 1832 but for quite different reasons. For him the shame of having to muster, in front of his family, with the wretched convict humanity was too much and detracted any attention from the spiritual:

instead of communing with his God, is venting his smothered anger against the unrelenting regulations which forbid him to respect himself, which weekly point out to his children that he is a marked man. Who can worship his maker under such circumstances (for the mere act of attending church is not worship)....¹³

This last remark is probably the attitude held by those who might seriously have objected to attending Anglican services. Attendance denoted nothing, so why make a rod for your own back by objecting?

When it came to the significant life events in an individual's history the same attitude seems to have prevailed. If we look at births, for example, there do not appear to have been major objections to baptisms being carried out by Anglican or any other available clergy. For the birth of a Catholic child to be registered before about 1820, and in Wallis Plains for a decade after, they had to be baptized by the established clergy. After the arrival of Fathers Conolly and Therry the opportunity for Catholic baptism existed but at Wallis Plains it was a long wait. There were significant disadvantages in not being registered and there is plenty of evidence that the majority of children were baptized. Two clergymen, Mr Cross and Mr Bowden, appearing before the Bigge Commission in 1820, agreed that the "greatest number" of children were either baptized or christened in the church.¹⁴

10 W. Alan Wood, *Dawn in the Valley*, Wentworth Books, Sydney, 1972, pps 36-38

11 *Sydney Gazette*, 14/2/1830 for example.

12 See Patrick Bennett's woes in *The Australian* 23/8/1826

13 *Sydney Monitor* 11/2/1832

14 Bigge Evidence, Appendix, CO 210/127, ff21 & 36

There was equally little choice when dealing with the education and care of the children other than to follow the practice of the Established Church, mirroring the situation they were probably used to in Ireland. The small numbers and wide spread of children on Wallis Plains would have reduced demand and the first lay led school for Catholic children in the region was not established until around 1836 in West Maitland. Children confined to the Orphanages and other institutions were instructed in the Established religion. While some notable lay Catholics of the time railed against this, it appears that ordinary Catholics thought little of it as they were as happy to use the institutions for crisis management as their Protestant counterparts.

With marriage, colonial society again reflected many of the customs of home. There was much comment on the so called sexual depravity of the colonial population but this was very class biased reflecting contact with a society with whom they would not have been in contact at “home”. There were also many complaints about the openness amongst children of the lower ranks towards sexual matters. Again this was most probably a result of the lack of privacy and the overwhelming adult nature of society rather than the oft repeated claim of active encouragement of vice and depravity in children.¹⁵ Space was at a premium and parents and children, servants and children and lodgers and children often shared the same room and even the same bed. This more open attitude to sexual behaviour carried over into relationships. An infamous Emu Plains case in 1822, which involved two later Catholic residents of Wallis Plains, exemplifies some of the attitudes that prevailed at the time:

It will also be seen by the evidence of the Rev. Mr. Fulton, that the publication of banns had actually taken place at his church, between the woman Mary Downs and James Carrol, the man with whom she was then found in bed; that she was at that time actually betrothed to him; and that Mr Fulton only waited for your Excellency's signature to solemnize their marriage, which was immediately afterwards obtained, and she was regularly married to the same James Carroll, with whom she now lives at the Five Islands.¹⁶

Cohabitation was more common than marriage in the earlier colonial period but in this period a fair number of the couples appear to be cohabiting rather than married. 34 family units, or what appear to be family units, with at least one Catholic member are listed as living within the Wallis Plains region in 1828.¹⁷ Additionally,

¹⁵ See *Australian* 31/8/1827 for example.

¹⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, 2/1/1826

¹⁷ Some of these family listings are particularly difficult to interpret because it is difficult to determine if they are siblings rather than partners.

nineteen people in the sample married after the 1828 Census. No doubt other couples are lost in the data, couples who have been split for one reason or another.¹⁸ There are also some women who arrived in or were born in the Colony as Catholics who are listed as protestant wives of protestant husbands.¹⁹

Using these Catholic family units we can estimate the number of those who married in various churches and those who may have been cohabiting. In the Census list, no marriage registration could be found for about 38%. In the sample group about 21%. The question is more nuanced because, across the colony and in Wallis Plains, the proportion of couples who appeared to be cohabiting is highest amongst those who were childless (both young and old). Clearly, when children arrived, most couples were prepared to marry as there were legal consequences not just for the couple but also for their children.

Ministers at Catholic Marriages

	CE Clergy	RC Clergy	Both	Outside Colony	Possibly cohabit
1828 Census	13	4		4	13
Sample	5	9	1	0	4
Total	18	13	1	4	17

It does not appear as if the lack of Catholic clergy was a factor in cohabitation. Some Catholics may have objected to an Anglican clergyman officiating but for a marriage to be registered it had to be a church service. It appears few cohabitants took the opportunity, when it became available, to marry in the Catholic tradition. Those few who may have had second thoughts could be the ones whose marriage is registered in both the Catholic and Anglican registers. The table, however, shows the dramatic fall in the proportion of Catholic marriages performed after 1830 by clergy of the established church despite the willingness of many to continue to marry wherever a clergyman was available regardless of denomination.

More importantly, in the overwhelming proportion of marriages, there is evidence of a great deal of instrumentality in the choice of partner rather than romantic love.²⁰ The characteristics of instrumental marriages are that there is

18 James and Mary Carroll are an example. Mary is on the Paterson River, James on the Williams.

19 Anne Clift, for example, nee Ann Duff. All the Duff males are listed as Catholics, all the Duff girls as Protestants.

20 Instrumental marriages are best described as those entered into for reasons other than mutual attraction, even if that may be a factor at the time of the marriage or later in the marriage.

often a gap in the civil status of the partners, a significant gap in the economic status of the partners, a substantial age difference with the male being much older than the female, and the marriage is entered into within a short period of time from initial meeting. There is also a deal of “trial and error” involved in relationships before a commitment to marriage. Similar religious background is usually a good sign of arranged marriages but the opposite is the case with instrumental marriages.

Looking at each of the characteristics can tell us a lot about the couples and the society in which they lived.²¹ The civil status of each of the couples at the start of their relationship shows that 48% were of equal status while in 34% of the cases the male had a higher status than the female. The overall figures reflect the more relaxed attitude during Macquarie’s period when convicts were encouraged to marry and had a much better chance of progressing. Of the nineteen who married after the census, no man married a woman of higher status, six married women of equal status and seven married women of lesser status (all convict women). The six marriages between free women and convict or ex-convict men are all between very young colonial born and emigrant women and very well off and considerably older men.

Again the Census figures show quite clearly that women were discerning in their relationships. While the proportion of colonial men in the small landholder/farmer category was only about 11% of all free men (and about 5% of all men), over 65% of the Catholic families had some land and many undoubtedly supplemented this with a trade or business. At the other end of the scale only 24% of heads were in the lowest category of labourer or servant compared to 44% of the free male population and about 70% of the total male population.

The average age at the start of a relationship for males was around 36 (range 21-65) while for women it was around 26 (15-55). Those who arrived in the more relaxed and less class competitive Macquarie era had a slightly lower average age. The real difference between the marriage prospects of men and women becomes most apparent when we look at the rapidity with which each gender formed a lasting relationship. Most women (65%) were in a stable relationship within four years (overwhelmingly within one year) of arriving in the colony compared to 11% of men. 11% of men and only one woman (a widow) were in the 20 years plus range.

The anecdotal evidence supports these statistics. The women could effectively pick and choose to find the most suitable partner. This was done either before marriage or cohabitation or they took up relationships with one or more men before settling on a preferred partner. In the overwhelming majority of cases this led to stable and lifelong partnerships which gave any resulting children a stable family

²¹ Where possible the family units listed in the Census have been combined with the family units formed by those in the sample who married. Numbers will vary because the data in some instances is not available.

life.²² Amongst those listed in the Census and those in the sample there is only evidence of a small number of partnerships that did not survive until the death of one of the partners.

The Government was always keen to promote marriage and this worked two ways. It often moved to reinforce the bonds when one partner did not do what was considered proper. This was particularly the case where one of the partners was a convict. On the other hand it often disregarded legalities (like alleged bigamy) that might have interfered with the tranquillity of family life. This was one of the areas where Father Therry, with his intransigent attitude to the legality of many colonial marriages, made himself very unpopular. The cases often involved Catholics accused of bigamy who had initially married in Protestant Churches and then remarried.²³

Obviously other factors, such as mutual attraction and the personality of the man played a part in the woman's choice. Many good and industrious men never married and one suspects that a good proportion of these men never really had the "front" to go through the undoubtedly daunting process of applying for and securing a wife. James Fallen, for example, was surely a worthy catch for any woman, but he died unmarried.

As in life, so in death. Catholics, where they had a Christian burial and/or were interred in holy ground, continued to use the services of whomever was available – Catholic or Protestant. It is impossible to determine the proportion of men, women and children whose deaths were unrecorded and who were buried literally where they dropped. It could not have been substantial even if many can't be traced. Convict deaths, for example, had to be noted. Most of the deaths probably occurred on properties and they would have been buried on that property. In the sample group the deaths of only 26 could be definitely dated.²⁴ Five were buried in Glebes and other Established Church cemeteries and only two were positively identified as having been buried in a Catholic cemetery. As well the notification of

22 An example is the authors own great great great grandparents, Henry Copas and Mary Sarah Carroll. A successful convict bricklayer he married Mary just six months after her arrival, after she had already rejected another offer. On the other hand Margaret Kenny made a series of disastrous choices, marry three absolute no hopers, mothering six children, all of whom appear to have died, before she was scheduled into the Tarban Creek Asylum in 1873.

23 Many of these problems were addressed in 1834 when *An Act to remove Doubts as to the Validity of certain marriages had and Solemnized within the Colony of New South Wales and to regulate the registration of certain Marriages, Baptisms and Burials* was enacted.

24 In most cases there were just too many people of the same name on a "possible" list and in other cases factors such as the multiple variations in the spelling of a person's name make it impossible to identify any individual.

a death did not necessarily mean that the funeral was attended by a clergyman or that the deceased was buried in a cemetery. One suspects that the example of John Thomas was typical. John is listed in the 1828 Census as a 37 year old settler in the “Swamps” area around present day Beresfield. With him was his “Housekeeper” Mary Styles, a 17 year old colonial born girl and their 2 year old daughter. They married in 1832 (registered at St Mary’s Sydney) but in 1838 Thomas died and was buried by his friends on his land. They then proceeded to Newcastle to register his death at Christchurch (not the East Maitland Catholic church), no doubt so that the estate could be settled and his wife and children left with an income and assets. The men celebrated the death in Newcastle but it was probably only a shadow of the wake the Irish would have held.

So in summary, what we have is a nascent church community consisting overwhelmingly of adult convict males, uneducated, with a poor grasp of their faith if not wholly irreligious, scattered and disorganised, lacking leadership and any of the physical infrastructure for a church. Clearly without the support of an institutional church and the drive of clergy and religious, life for most Catholics went on with little regard for their faith.

**CATHERINE CONNOLLY, GOVERNESS, WIFE: A CATHOLIC FAMILY, CARCOAR,
1868—1880**

George Connolly*

PART ONE: GOVERNESS

Catherine Frances Heydon, my great-grandmother, boarded the train in Sydney on Monday 31st August 1868. She was travelling to Carcoar, a town beyond Bathurst, to undertake the position of governess in the home of Nathaniel Vincent Connolly. He was a widower, thirty nine years old, with seven surviving children, their ages ranging from fourteen to four. His wife had died earlier that year and their eighth child, an infant, died soon afterwards.

During the journey Catherine had time to review her life. She had tested herself for a vocation in four religious congregations, each time unsuccessfully; she had been the head mistress in the Girls' Department of the Fort Street Model School and had started two private schools in her own name in Sydney. None of these endeavours had proved satisfying. She was now thirty three years old. What did the future hold for her?



Catherine Connolly

Catherine's train arrived at Mt Victoria, which was then the end of the railway line. She took the stage coach to Bathurst, an arduous trip lasting nine hours, and arrived at night time.

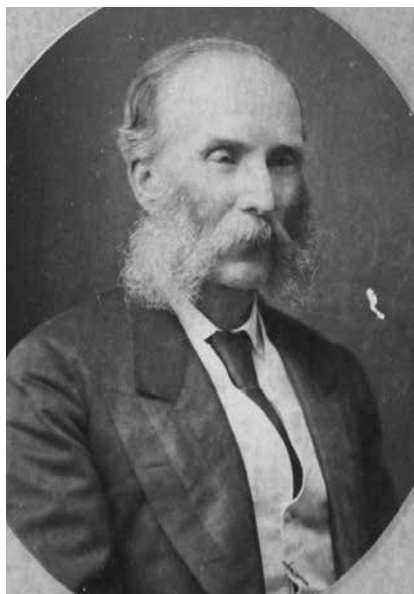
The next day she rested in Bathurst, visited the Sisters of Mercy and met Nathaniel Connolly. On the following day, Mr Connolly drove Catherine, on a journey of eight hours, to his home, a country property named *Werajel*, at Carcoar

* Reverend George Connolly is a priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney and chaplain to the ACHS. His previous article about Catherine Connolly, *Catherine Heydon, 1858 to 1868: From Subiaco to Carcoar*, appeared in the 2004 Journal of the ACHS.

Living at *Werajel*, besides the Connolly family, was Nathaniel's sister, Eliza (Lizzie), who, as a loving aunty, was caring for the children. There were two servants.

Catherine's story in this article is drawn from the letters she wrote over a twelve year period to her parents and family in Sydney. These letters give insights, not only into life in the country, but into the life of a Catholic woman and a Catholic family in the bush: the books they read and their religious practices. Catherine's parents, Jabez King Heydon and his wife Sophia lived at Ermington on the Parramatta River. In Catherine's early letters to them, she reported that Mr Connolly was as kind as could be. The children were simple and natural and were showing a liking for her. She felt quite at home already and expected to remain for a long time. Mr Connolly was 'wrapt up' in his children and was anxious for their improvement. Prior to their marriage, Catherine wrote about Nathaniel Connolly as 'Mr Connolly', never as 'Nathaniel'.

The Connollys were well known. In 1840, the then Bishop Polding appointed Nathaniel's father as a Trustee of the Catholic Church in Bathurst. Nathaniel himself was a Justice of the Peace and an Honorary Magistrate. In 1863 he played a part in the arrest of the bushranger, Johnny Vane, a member of Ben Hall's gang. Vane surrendered himself to the parish priest, Fr Tim McCarthy, who, with a written authority provided by Nathaniel, then escorted the bushranger to the police in Bathurst.



Nathaniel Vincent Connolly

Catherine met the local priest, a Father Philip Ryan, whom she described as 'an excellent priest, one in a thousand, pious and sympathetic'. He prevailed on Catherine and Lizzie Connolly to conduct a stall at the forthcoming church bazaar.

Then, scarcely three weeks after Catherine had arrived at Carcoar, Mr Connolly hinted at their getting married, although Catherine was unsure what he meant. Lizzie assured Catherine that her brother did indeed have marriage in mind. On first consideration, Catherine did not see many attractions. There were seven children. The house was 'only a bush house, everything rather in the rough'. Despite that, there was something appealing about the prospect of marriage with Mr Connolly. The Connollys mixed with the best people

in the district. There was ‘no stint’ — they lived well. Catherine felt she could very easily come to like Mr Connolly – he was so kind and attentive to her, as her next words indicate in no uncertain terms: ‘To me it is almost overpowering to be made so much of’. It may have been the first time in her life that Catherine had allowed a man to pay her such close attention.

Catherine, knowing she had Mr Connolly’s trust, felt confident enough to introduce changes at *Werajel*. In order to create a stronger Catholic atmosphere about the house, she asked her parents to send a crucifix and some images, presumably of Jesus, Mary and saints. Displaying these religious images, she was sure, would impress on people’s minds the great truths of their religion.

Catherine wanted to keep up her serious reading, for her own sake and also to teach the children. She asked her parents to send her History of the Church, the Italian Catechism and the Christian Doctrine book. She didn’t want Butler’s Catechism, which was used in the diocese of Bathurst, as she considered it too difficult for children. She intended to subscribe to two Jesuit publications from England: the Month and the Messenger of the Sacred Heart. These periodicals were edited by Henry Coleridge SJ, a Jesuit she knew from her time in London. On a personal level she wanted some lives of the saints – reading their lives encouraged her to persevere in her daily duties.

There was time for relaxation on the farm. Nathaniel Connolly taught Catherine and Lizzie how to ride a horse. Catherine soon progressed from having her horse led by Nathaniel, to some splendid long canters, and then, to going out alone. Her description of the next stage in her riding career contains romantic overtones: ‘we shall soon be going out alone in the early morning on long rides to the distant stations’.

The greatest drawback in the bush, in Catherine’s opinion, was the scarcity of religious helps. The parish of Carcoar was large, extending from Blayney to Cowra and Canowindra, and there had been Mass in Carcoar only twice in five weeks. Once they had to drive ten miles to Mass. They would not have it again for another three weeks. To compensate for this, Mr Connolly arranged for Father Ryan to spend a Sunday night at *Werajel* and on the Monday morning say Mass in the dining room, using the sideboard for an altar. Catherine remarked that several of them went to Holy Communion.

One Friday evening they went to a concert in Carcoar. Afterwards they went in to Father Ryan’s place for supper, ‘and afterwards a pleasant drive home in the moonlight’

Her father had told Catherine that meat in the country was of high quality. Catherine found this was not so. She noted that people compensated for the poor quality of the food by drinking large amounts of alcohol. She estimated that the

amount of money the Connolly household spent on alcohol would nearly support a small family. Very much tongue-in-cheek, she gives a vivid description of an evening at *Werajel*:

'Gentlemen seem to think nothing of drinking before dinner perhaps a couple of glasses of colonial wine, at dinner a glass of ale and three or four glasses of sherry, and between dinner and bedtime about four stiff tumblers of brandy and water, and strangest of all, show no signs of it.'

Catherine did not name the people concerned but two prominent gentlemen had stayed with them recently – William Bede Dalley, the member for Carcoar, and Edward Butler, Nathaniel's brother-in-law and a leading barrister.

Marriage proposal and acceptance 1868

In the letter to her mother, written on November 12, 1868 Catherine announced that she had accepted Mr Connolly's proposal of marriage. 'The anticipations which Emily (her sister) and I indulged in have been realised. I have given my promise to marry Mr Connolly.' The word 'anticipations' indicate that she and Emily had discussed the possibility that Mr Connolly might make a proposal of marriage. In those days, widowers often remarried. Catherine had not gone to Carcoar ignorant of what might occur.

Catherine, aware that her parents might be concerned that she had known Mr Connolly for only ten weeks, stressed that she felt sure that, even if she were to ponder the matter for another ten years, she would come to the same conclusion. When he proposed, she answered as she felt, and trusted to the Providence of God for the rest. Catherine described Nathaniel Connolly's character. He was thoughtful, kind and untiring in energy. She gave an example of his energy. He went to bed between 11.00pm and midnight, rose by daylight, then rode about 25 miles before breakfast.

Catherine assured her mother that Mr Connolly's love, kindness and devotion to her were unmistakable. She gave an example of his devotion to her. Mr Connolly had told her that, when she returned to Sydney to prepare for the wedding, he would often 'run down' to Sydney to see her. That meant he would leave *Werajel* at midnight and ride 30 miles on horseback to Bathurst. There he would catch the 4.00am coach. The coach would take him to Mt Victoria where he would catch the afternoon train and arrive in Sydney at 7.00pm.

Catherine's views on marriage were orthodox and well expressed. She sensed that Mr Connolly saw her as superior to him in many respects. So she resolved to keep those things out of sight, unless they were things that made him proud of her. Secondly, she was going to make him feel that he was the head. She saw no difficulty in this: 'I feel I can do this without giving up any of my just rights, or

forfeiting in the least the respect due to a wife'. Catherine enclosed Mr Connolly's card for her parents.

PART TWO: WIFE AND MOTHER

Catherine Heydon and Nathaniel Connolly were married in Villa Maria Church, Hunters Hill, on Tuesday 20th April, 1869, with Father Claudius Maria Joly SM as celebrant, and Joseph Butler and Emily Heydon as witnesses.

Ten days after the wedding, Nathaniel and Catherine returned to Carcoar — from now on he is called Nat in the letters. Aware that she had monopolised her husband's thoughts and attention in Sydney, Catherine was pleased to be home with him in Carcoar, where things were normal and natural. One morning they went for a ride together 'in the keen and bracing air', after which she felt 'like a new creature'. Catherine reported that Nat was so thoughtful and so persistently affectionate that 'it requires no effort to like him and to wish to please him'.

In the afternoons they received the many visitors who came to congratulate them. The first to come were Captain and Mrs Gennys, whom Catherine described as 'the best people' in the district. Father Ryan and the doctor also paid a visit.

Catherine was now the stepmother of seven children (she never called them 'stepchildren'). The sight of the children, when she first returned, seemed to separate her from Nat. However the feeling quickly passed. She sensed that the children were a little shy at first in addressing her as 'Mama'. However she knew they were children who could be won and who were worth winning. And very soon she reported that the children had taken to her very warmly.

Program of prayer and serious reading

Nathaniel readily agreed to the programme of prayer that Catherine's father had suggested. They had family prayers at night. The children said the Rosary every afternoon. Catherine and Nathaniel said their Rosary together. On Sundays when there was no Mass, they had prayers in the home and Nathaniel read a sermon. These Sunday prayers were similar to the prayers Catherine remembered the Sisters of Charity saying with the prisoners in Darlinghurst gaol. She preferred using these prayers to saying prayers straight from the Missal.

Nathaniel enjoyed reading the *Month* and the *Tablet*. These English periodicals were the best reading they had. Nathaniel was also reading Cardinal Wiseman's *Fabiola*. Catherine's father would have been pleased that his daughter had married a person who enjoyed good reading. Catherine asked her parents to send her three books: Bishop Challoner's *Meditations*, a book on the Holy Land written by John Kitto, and the *Manners and Customs of the Jews*. She had just finished reading the *Life of the Venerable Anna Maria Taigi*, the Roman Matron, published by Burns and Oates the previous year.

Family, children and home

From now on, Catherine had other, more down-to-earth concerns. She was the mistress of a large household, that was about to expand in no uncertain terms. She fell pregnant immediately and would give birth to four children in the space of five and a half years: the first birth when she was thirty five years old, the fourth birth when she was approaching forty one years of age. Having heard of a lady who spoilt her shape by not bandaging properly after her confinement, she asked her mother how she might prepare for that eventuality.

When Catherine arrived at Carcoar and saw that the Connollys received lots of visitors, she knew that she would need 'more dress' than she had planned. And when Sunday Mass began to be celebrated on a regular basis, she needed an even greater selection of clothes. Then began a long process by which her mother bought clothes for Catherine and the children and sent them to Carcoar. At a time when tight skirts were becoming the fashion, Catherine, writing better than any fashion writer, outlined her strategy for coping with the new fashion: 'I shall have to diminish my underclothing to accommodate myself to such fashionable tightness in the skirt.'



Richard Connolly

Gertrude, Catherine's first child and only daughter, was born in 1870. Two years later in a letter to her mother Catherine revealed her feelings about Gertrude. Simply having such a child helped Catherine understand things she had never understood before. She was pleased that Gertrude enjoyed looking at *The Illustrated News*. It was a sign that she would enjoy reading; and reading would safeguard her from many dangers, as well as elevate her above the company of servants. Sadly it was not to be: Gertrude would die at the age of four. Catherine would give birth to three more children, all boys, George, Richard and Francis

When her third child, Richard, was born in 1873, Father Ryan offered to baptise the baby in the Connolly home. Catherine gives no reason for this. Did Father Ryan suspect that Catherine was too exhausted to travel into town? She was nearly thirty nine years old and had given birth to three babies in the space of three and a half years. In any case, Catherine was glad that, with the baptism taking place in the home, she would not have to buy a special cape to wear to the ceremony.

Vignettes from Carcoar

Catherine, the school teacher, now had to decide on the education of her own children. By the time Richard was two years old, Catherine saw that that he showed great promise. At the age of five, he knew five chapters of the catechism and several hymns composed by Isaac Watts. Richard and his older brother, George, were receiving their schooling at home from their nineteen years old step-sister, Sarah. At the same time, Catherine was teaching Sarah how to be a governess, a position Sarah hoped to undertake one day. Sarah would marry Edward Kiley, a son of the Kiley made famous by Banjo Patterson in his ballad *On Kiley's Run*.

About this time, Catherine wrote to Father Dalton SJ 'at River View estate' on the Lane Cove River, with a view to sending her sons there. She sent Father Dalton five pounds (money from the sale of cattle) for him to give to the poor and to offer Masses. Father Dalton replied that they would be ready for boarders the following year, 1879. Some years later Richard attended Riverview College, after which he spent a year at St Stanislaus' College, Bathurst. In 1888 he went to England to Downside Abbey where he and his two brothers were educated by the Benedictines. Richard remained at Downside and entered the Benedictine Order, being ordained priest in 1899.

Catherine was never afraid of expressing her opinions, even if they were about the local bishop. In 1873, Father Michael Fitzsimons, aged 31, drowned while crossing the Murray River in his buggy. Catherine laid some of the blame on the Bishop of Bathurst, Matthew Quinn, who had recently appointed Father Fitzsimons to Wentworth. Father Fitzsimons had served in Carcoar the previous year, where it was known that he was almost mad with scruples and went to confession nearly every day. Yet, Catherine said, the bishop sent him to Wentworth, a lonely mission in a fearfully hot part of the country, where he could hardly ever see a priest. 'That finished him', was her comment, and she added, 'the more I learn of Dr Quinn, the less I like him'. Her opinion was that 'of all the bishops I have seen, the only one who seems thoroughly Catholic and thoroughly human is Dr O'Mahony'. Timothy O'Mahony was the bishop of Armidale from 1871 to 1877.

With three teenaged step-daughters under her care, it was natural for Catherine to think about their prospects of marriage. One of the step-daughters, Christina, aged seventeen, was home at Carcoar on a particular weekend in 1874. On the same weekend, Catherine's brother, Charles Heydon, was visiting Bathurst with a young male friend, but they failed to call on Catherine and the family in Carcoar. The Carcoar family were very disappointed. Catherine explained that, with a daughter of marriageable age at home, the visit of a young man was a matter of interest to them. Catherine thought that her stepdaughters needed to marry young. In her forthright manner, she wrote it was hard for Catholic girls in the country; there was

nothing for them but to be nuns.

News about parish life, Catherine knew, would interest her parents. One weekday in 1874, on her mother's birthday, Catherine drove into Carcoar to attend Mass. After Mass, there was Benediction and the school children had a procession. That was the year when the Sisters of Mercy began their school at Carcoar, so that the parish priest now had the Sisters' help in organising special ceremonies.

In 1876, Catherine and Nathaniel attended the Forty Hours devotion in Carcoar. It was part of the Jubilee taking place throughout the diocese of Bathurst. Catherine reported that the girls (her stepdaughters) were much improved by the Jubilee and were contributing to a good spirit in the home.

On an October day in 1878, Catherine and Nathaniel went to the opening of the new presbytery in Carcoar. Bishop Quinn of Bathurst presided, with Bishop Murray of Maitland in attendance. Catherine told her mother that she wore the slate dress and the grey bonnet.

The tyranny of distance affected Catherine. It was the middle of December 1875 and the Christmas parcels from Sydney were waiting to be collected in Bathurst. There was no time to be wasted. Nathaniel had gone to Bathurst on a number of assignments. Catherine's brothers, Charles and Louis Heydon, were also in Bathurst. Yet the three of them failed to locate the Christmas parcels. Catherine was devastated, angry and provoked to the limits of her endurance. There she was, shut up out of town, with no means of intercourse with the outer world except through her husband, and yet Nathaniel had failed to collect the goods she so desperately needed. Catherine told her father how unkind and selfish it was of Nathaniel, and she continued: 'Oh! My dear father, I am getting to think worse and worse every day of men. If it were not for you and some priests, I should give them up altogether'.

The saddest event in Catherine's life was the death of her sister. The year after Catherine was married, her sister, Emily Heydon, entered the Sisters of Charity. Emily was three years younger than Catherine. As Sister Alphonsus, she was the first principal of the High School, known today as St Vincent's College, Potts Point. In 1876, six years after entering, Emily died—a cause of great grief for Catherine.

Catherine was too ill to travel to Sydney to visit Emily or attend her funeral. Being unable to get any Masses said for Emily in Carcoar, Catherine intensified her prayers for her: while walking on the verandah in the evenings she said the Rosary, the Blue Scapular prayers and the Stations of the Cross.

Then there was the very important matter of the mourning, that is, the clothes worn in memory of a deceased person. Catherine's mother bought it and sent it by coach to Carcoar. It was so beautiful and appropriate, Catherine told her mother, that 'the whole suit when first put on elicited bursts of admiration from the girls (her teenage stepdaughters)'. The cape would be especially useful for her, because

she did not like going to Holy Communion ‘without something to hide the figure’. In an outburst of emotion, Catherine gave away nearly all her coloured clothing to the girls, resolving to wear only black and white for the rest of her life. She expressed her depth of her feelings with the words: ‘I wish to belong to this world no more, but to my heart in heaven, where, as dear Emily once said, “the home is being made up” ’

Catherine was disappointed that the *Freemans Journal* made no mention of Emily’s death and her Requiem Mass in St Mary’s Cathedral. However the newspapers were reporting a Church scandal that, much to Catherine’s relief, Emily would not have known of: a Sister of Charity from St Vincent’s Hospital, Catherine Reynolds, had eloped with a doctor, Thomas Henry Fiaschi, and they were married shortly before Emily died.

Although Carcoar was a good-sized town, you could not buy everything you wanted there. In 1878, Mrs Smith, the wife of Doctor Smith, was expecting her first baby after ten years of marriage. It was so unexpected that she had made no provision for baby clothes. She approached Catherine and offered to buy the clothes that had belonged to Catherine’s dead infant daughter.

Mrs Smith’s request placed Catherine in a quandary. She could not bear the thought of selling the clothes of her dead daughter; at the same time, she did not want to give to a rich person what she looked upon ‘as sacred to the poor’. But, as many of the clothes were too good for the poor, Catherine struck a bargain with her. She gave Mrs Smith the whole outfit, which Mrs Smith thought was worth at least ten pounds, on condition that she gave five pounds in her own name (Mrs Smith’s name) to the Catholic Orphanage at Parramatta. Catherine was happy: she had the pleasure of doing Mrs Smith a kindness and the poor did not suffer.

Catherine was, naturally, ready to help a governess. When the Connollys were invited by friends to have lunch with them at a game of cricket at Carcoar, they took with them Miss Spark, a new governess from a neighbouring property. Catherine described her as ‘a fine girl and a perfect lady’. The young men had heard about her and were hoping to get a glimpse of her, because, as Catherine wrote, ‘her fame had preceded her’. In 2013, Catherine might have described Miss Spark as being ‘attractive’, something which would have been too indelicate to remark upon in 1878.

One evening, a few days later, the Connollys had Miss Spark over to their place for tea and invited a dozen young people to meet her. They had games and dancing until 3 o’clock in the morning. One wonders what happened when the party finished at 3.00am. Did the young people ‘sleep over’ at the Connollys, or did they wander back home in the darkness on horseback and in their horse and sulkies?

How many people in the Australian bush read the works of Cardinal Newman?

In 1880 Catherine read Cardinal Newman's *A Grammar of Assent*. She had borrowed her copy from Thomas Makinson, the convert Anglican clergyman and formerly Archbishop Polding's secretary. How did she come to borrow the book from Mr Makinson? The reason was that her brother, Charles Heydon, had married Makinson's daughter, Miriam, that same year. Having finished with the book, Catherine sent it by Cobb and Co to her brother's law chambers in Sydney, to be returned to Mr Makinson.

Fundraising was always a part of Church life. In 1880 Catherine and Nathaniel sent a donation of five pounds to Archbishop Vaughan for the St Mary's Cathedral building fund. The Archbishop had written more than a thousand letters to prospective donors.

CONCLUSION

My story finishes in 1880. None of Catherine's letters to her parents after that year are extant. In 1883 Nathaniel was appointed to the position of Police Magistrate of Carcoar, on a salary of 450 pounds per annum, a position he had long wanted and which he held until his death in 1894.

Catherine died at Carcoar in 1903, aged sixty eight. Her son Richard, the Benedictine from Downside Abbey, attended her death. It was the only time he ever returned to Australia. A graduate of Cambridge University, he became an eminent scholar in early Church history, especially in the field of Syrian Christianity. There is an entry about him in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* contains entries about Catherine's father, Jabez King Heydon, and her brothers, Charles and Louis. Her husband, Nathaniel, is memorialised in a large window in the Catholic Church at Carcoar as a layman kneeling before St Patrick.

Catherine Connolly deserves to be known in her own right as an intelligent, well-read and committed Catholic woman. She knew early Sydney, for example, the early years of the Fort Street Model School. She lived in the days of the founding figures of the Catholic Church in Australia, Archbishop Polding and Archdeacon McEncroe. Polding mentions her in one of his letters.

Her story is both Australian – the woman who leaves the city and finds her fulfilment in the bush; and universal – the governess who marries a widower with a large family. Her upbringing and life experiences had prepared her for her role as the mistress of the home at Carcoar. As soon as her future husband realised the sort of person she was, he proposed marriage without delay. Her story is in her letters, which reveal, not only the thoughts of Catherine Connolly on a variety of subjects, but how a Catholic woman of faith, learning and courage raised her family in the bush.

AUSTRALIAN IRISH CATHOLICS AND BRITISHNESS: THE PROBLEM OF BRITISH “LOYALTY” AND “IDENTITY” FROM THE CONSCRIPTION CRISIS TO THE END OF THE ANGLO-IRISH WAR.¹

Neville Meaney*

I have divided the talk into three parts; the first traces out the rise of Britishness as a definition of cultural community in Australia and the Irish Catholic response to it; the second looks at the divisions which arose around conscription 1916-18; and the question of loyalty, and the third examines the Irish Catholic support for the *Sinn Fein* in the 1919-1921 Anglo-Irish war and the reaction of the ‘loyalists’.

Introduction

With nationalism’s emergence at the end of the 19th century as the dominant social idea giving meaning to the peoples of a rapidly modernising Western world, the Australian colonies came to define themselves as an integral part of a ‘Greater Britain’. Talk of separation or republicanism which had been central to the political discourse of the mid century was left to a radical fringe. Alfred Deakin, one of the most important figures in the making of the Australian constitution, in his 1905 presidential address to the Victorian Imperial Federation League, declared that ‘The same ties of blood, sympathy and tradition which make us one Commonwealth here make the British of today one people everywhere.’ In the late colonial period as modernisation created a mass society political leaders took steps to intensify this sense of Britishness, most notably by establishing a free, universal and compulsory state system of education. At the same time they withdrew public funds from private schools, including the Catholic parish schools. It was their intention to encourage all parents to send their children to the state schools and so strengthen in the new

1 When I was approached about giving a talk to the Australian Catholic Historical Society I remembered that in my last book *Australia and World Crisis, 1914-1923* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2009)) and in some collateral writings I had given much attention to the question of Britishness and Australian identity, and along the way had, of necessity, dealt with the problem of Australian Irish Catholics and Britishness, and so it seemed to me that this talk might prove a good opportunity to bring together this material and so produce a somewhat more coherent treatment of a theme which ran through these works. The collateral writings can be most easily be found in James Curran and Stuart Ward, eds, *Australia and the Wider World: Selected Essays of Neville Meaney* (Sydney, Sydney University Press, 2013).

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generation the common feeling of being British. Though this great initiative placed a very heavy burden on the public purse, it responded to the national imperative which sought to foster one central identity for a people, and in the case of the Australian colonies this was to be founded on an idea of being 'British' and belonging to a national entity called 'Greater Britain' or the British Empire. This nationalising process was not restricted to mass education. Newspapers and novels, public rites and ceremonies also helped to inculcate the romantic myths of a heroic British past.

The Irish Catholic community, however, did not embrace this British race patriotism with the same fervour as the Protestant majority. The folk memories of English Protestant oppression and dispossession still lingered and towards the end of the 19th century these grievances were given a new lease of life. The clergy were suspicious of the public system of education and regarded the cessation of state aid as an injustice to citizens who wished to send their children to Roman Catholic schools. Obtaining no concessions they called on the faithful to build their own schools. Staffed mainly by religious orders from Ireland these schools tended to play down the story of the British Empire and to stress the pupils' Irish heritage. Though the creation of the two systems stirred up acrimony nevertheless the quarrel over education did not seriously work against Catholic co-operation in the social and political life of the country. Irish Catholics represented about a quarter of the population but unlike Northern Ireland, England and Scotland they did not live in ghettos but were spread fairly evenly throughout the country and this helped to foster trust and a common civic feeling. As a result there were Catholic ministers of the crown in all federal governments from the inception of the Commonwealth and even Catholic premiers in some of the states.

At the same time in the British Isles the movement to grant Home Rule to Ireland had gathered pace, and in mid-1914 the Asquith Liberal government, supported by John Redmond's Irish Political Party, which represented Irish Catholics in the House of Commons, passed an Irish Home Rule bill which was intended to give Ireland something approaching Dominion status. This had not been achieved easily. Indeed it had created deep divisions in the whole of the United Kingdom. The Conservative Party had opposed the measure and some political and military leaders had threatened violent resistance should the British government attempt to extend its application to the whole island. In the northern counties of Ireland the Protestant majority was unwilling to accept government by an Irish Parliament controlled by a Catholic majority. Thus the Ulster Protestants organised and armed themselves to resist the imposition of 'popish' rule on their counties. In response the Southern Irish formed a Volunteer army which was to assist the British government to enforce Home Rule.

In the midst of this most dangerous crisis war broke out in Europe and John

Redmond, who had worked with Prime Minister Asquith to negotiate the terms of the Home Rule Bill, called on the Irish Volunteers to support the British government and enlist in the British army, and a high percentage of the Volunteers joined up. Redmond's followers also accepted Asquith's decision to suspend the carrying out of the law. But just as there was a division in Britain over whether the bill should include Ulster so there was a division among Irish Catholics about whether Ireland should be a Dominion or a republic. Among Irish Catholics there were some who would accept nothing less than a totally independent republic but the great majority followed Redmond and were happy with the prospect of Dominion status inside the Empire. This would seem to be what Australian Irish Catholics and even a substantial number of Australian Protestants also favoured. Indeed in the troubled years leading up to the passage of the Home Rule Bill successive federal parliaments had carried resolutions in support of Home Rule for Ireland.

Australian Irish Catholics' attitude to the European war was conditioned by this historical context. In general it seems that they adopted Redmond's position, identifying themselves with the British cause. At a great public meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall on the day following Britain's entry into the war the Premier of Victoria exhorted all his 'fellow Britishers' to unite behind the Mother Country. The leader of the Labor party declared that 'his cry was everyone's cry: "My country right or wrong." If they faltered or hesitated they would be less than Britishers.' And John Gavan Duffy, the son of a Young Ireland nationalist and a long time advocate of Home Rule, appealed to the Irish community in Australia to 'forget old injustices and stand shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee to fight the battle of the Empire...an Empire whose flag flew over all the world, from east to west, the greatest empire the world had ever seen.'

The hierarchy echoed Duffy's sentiments, even if with somewhat less fervour. Archbishop Kelly of Sydney in a sermon in St Mary's cathedral said that 'regardless of whether Britain granted Ireland Home Rule or whether their schools were treated fairly Irish Catholics would do their duty.' At a Catholic Young Men's Association meeting in Melbourne, Archbishop Carr spoke in similar terms, maintaining that 'our religious principles and our interests lead us to forget the past and to join heartily with our fellow citizens in defence of the Mother Country and the best balanced constitution that the world has ever known.' Daniel Mannix, who had only a year earlier arrived in Australia as Carr's coadjutor Archbishop, also gave his approval to the British decision to go to war. Yet, despite this seeming desire to stress Irish Catholics' loyalty to Britain and the Empire, there was also in these speeches, by the very reference to old grievances, a remembrance of a different British history from that of Protestant Australia, a history which could, should circumstances allow it, be drawn upon to qualify or even challenge this seeming unity.

Conscription and Irish Catholic 'Disloyalty'.

During the first eighteen months of the war Irish Catholics continued to join with their fellow Australians in backing the war effort. Catholics enlisted in the AIF in numbers comparable to their proportion in the total population. The great majority of Irish Catholics belonged to the working class and voted for the Labor Party and it would appear that Irish Catholic members of the parliamentary party during the federal election of September 1914 seemed to be as willing as their Protestant comrades to end their election meetings and rallies with the singing of the National Anthem, 'God Save the King.' Likewise at the national conference of the party in May 1915 they raised no objection to sending a resolution to the King, praying that his reign would 'be crowned by victory for British and Allied armies in the great war of freedom.' And they, as far as one knows, joined in the singing of the National Anthem at the conclusion of the conference. When a few months later a group of public figures from the universities, the law and politics formed a Universal Service League along British lines and urged the adoption of conscription so that 'every man and every woman may be able to render the best service of which he or she is capable', Archbishop Kelly was happy, in company with the Anglican Archbishop and other notables, to become a Vice-President of the organisation.

Indeed it was this movement which elicited the first organised resistance to conscription. These first anti-conscriptionists were not identifiably Irish Catholics but members of the industrial unions in the eastern states. Since the outbreak of the war working class unrest had grown apace. By the end of 1915, especially after Billy Hughes became prime minister, the militant section of the labour movement began protesting about the failure of their Labor government to deal with the problems of unemployment and rising prices. These unionists resented Hughes's actions in abandoning Labor's reform program and allowing censors a free hand in dealing with their newspapers and other publications. In addition they feared that conscription might extend to the work place and take away all the rights that unions had achieved. Thus, following the example of the British Trade Union Congress, they opposed conscription, and formed an anti-conscription league. When Hughes, in a crusading 'Call to Arms', sought to raise 50,000 additional volunteers for the AIF and sent cards to all eligibles asking them to explain their intentions towards enlistment, labour union leaders took alarm and denounced what they called 'veiled conscription'. The Brisbane Industrial Council told Hughes that 'as members of the British Nation' they opposed this 'veiled conscription', and they warned that any attempt to force them to answer these questions would meet such fierce resistance that it would constitute 'a greater danger to the Empire'.

It was not until after the Dublin Easter Rising of April 1916 that Irish Catholics as such, that is separate from their role as unionists, began to take a stand against

conscription. The rising, engineered by the militant faction of the Volunteers who looked to the achievement of a republic, was supported by only a few thousand who had seized control of major public buildings in Dublin. The insurrection was a futile enterprise and the British quickly suppressed it. At first the majority of the Catholic community in Ireland showed little respect for the rebels and the Catholic bishops openly criticised the rebellion. When, however, the Asquith government failed to reach agreement with Redmond on terms for putting the Home Rule Act into effect and dealt very harshly with the leaders of the rebellion, both the people in the southern counties and the hierarchy turned against the British and showed more sympathy for the Easter rising. As a consequence the small radical party, Sinn Fein, Ourselves Alone, which aimed, in defiance of Redmond and his Irish Political Party, at preventing the application of conscription to Ireland and at making Ireland totally independent of Britain gained considerable popularity.

The Australian Irish Catholics' response to these events was in some ways quite similar. Initially bishops and laity alike dismissed the Easter Rising as rash and harmful to Home Rule, but after the failure of the negotiations over Home Rule and the British government's summary executions of the insurgents they too became hostile towards British policy in Ireland. Nevertheless there were some differences. In the first place Australia already had Home Rule and its government not the British government would therefore determine the conscription question, and in the second, there was a Protestant majority in Australia and no Catholic equivalent to Ulster to muddy the water. Even so, Irish Catholics began to connect the issue of conscription to Britain's treatment of Ireland. John Fihelly, the acting Minister for Justice in Queensland's Labor government, told an Irish Association meeting that 'every Australian recruit means another soldier to assist the British government to harass the people of Ireland.' It is noteworthy, however, that the other cabinet members disassociated themselves from his remarks.

While Hughes was in England in early 1916 the British Government introduced conscription and, on his return to Australia, he was determined that his country should do its duty and so help to ensure the triumph of the British Empire. Unfortunately for him, during his absence, all the labour movements in the eastern states had declared against conscription, even threatening Labor members of parliament with loss of pre-selection if they defied the party. Confronted with this dilemma Hughes saw that his only hope of bringing the party around would be to refer the matter to the people. He believed that by securing a substantial majority to induce enough of the anti-conscriptionists to change their minds and pass the necessary legislation.

Hughes took command of the pro-conscription campaign and turned the issue into a question of loyalty to the British Empire and British Australia. At a rally in

Brisbane he set out his case in Manichaeian terms: 'Are you for the Empire or against it?' In Sydney he claimed that the anti-conscriptionists were against conscription because they were against Britain and were 'the agents of Germany.' In Hobart, carrying the point further he maintained that the anti-conscriptionist forces comprised an unholy alliance between Irish Catholics and atheistic 'Wobblies'. His opponents were 'recruited from a section of the people who have nothing in common except a hatred of Britain.' And from this time it was the language of 'loyalty and disloyalty' which came to dominate the political discourse of the country.

When Hughes lost the referendum, he was ousted from the Labor Party and with the support of the Labor conscriptionists and the Liberals he formed the National 'Win the War' Party. In a subsequent election the Nationals won a resounding victory on a platform of British race loyalty and Hughes and his colleagues regarded their victory as a mandate to suppress the enemy within the gates. It made no difference to the 'loyalists' that the reformed Labor Party had gone to the people promising to recruit as many volunteers as possible for the Empire's cause. In their eyes the new Labor leaders were either disloyal or the dupes of the disloyal. E.D. Millen, Vice President of the Executive Council, announced that the people through the election 'had put its foot down on all those who were disloyal to the Empire.'

Archbishop Mannix had only played a small part in this first referendum. He only spoke out on two occasions against compulsion, saying that Australia had done its fair share for the Empire and pointing to a potential threat from Japan. But from early 1917 Mannix assumed a leading role in the Irish Catholic anti-conscriptionist movement. It is somewhat surprising that he should have taken up this position since while President of Maynooth Theological College, that is before coming to Australia, he had shown little or no interest in the Gaelic renaissance or Home Rule. His interest in Australian politics sprang initially from his discovery that, unlike Ireland, there was no public funding for Catholic schools. After three years of lobbying governments he found himself frustrated. Since it was the same Protestant majority that had blocked his demands for educational justice that were in the forefront of the call for conscription, he responded by making himself a spokesman for the Irish community. In his speeches against conscription and for Irish home rule, which were most often given at the opening of a new parish school, he would invariably connect his remarks to complaints about Catholics being 'robbed wholesale' and being 'ground down and persecuted.'

Perhaps encouraged by the defeat of conscription at the referendum Mannix began to taunt the ultra British race patriots. Opening a school at Brunswick in Victoria he cast doubt on British motives in going to war and openly criticised its oppressive actions in Ireland. He said that while they had heard much about going to war in defence of small nations the British were in fact engaged in 'a sordid trade

war.’ And in making this charge he cunningly manipulated a speech of Hughes’s which had maintained that Germany’s efforts to overthrow Britain’s commercial empire had to be thwarted. In the May election he openly threw doubt on Hughes’s promise that the National party would not attempt to introduce conscription without first consulting the people in another referendum. It was his hope that ‘it would not be necessary to send any more troops from Australia, either volunteers or conscripts’, and in saying this he went further in separating Australia from the British cause.

Mannix, in answer to the self-proclaimed ‘loyalists’, began to assert that Australians should put Australia first and in doing this he tried to give them an alternative loyalty. But there was no exclusive Australian myth which could rival the British one. When the ‘loyalists’ sang ‘Red, White and Blue’ or ‘God Save the King’, the anti’s had no answering nationalist hymn that they could counter with. It is noteworthy that the anti-conscriptionists, including working class Irish Catholics, could only respond with ‘solidarity for ever’. But this did not have a nationalist appeal or suggest an alternative loyalty to British Australia. The anti-conscriptionists could never with conviction accuse the British race patriots of betraying their country. They rarely tried to defend themselves by taking up Mannix’s cry and juxtaposing an alternative loyalty, an ‘Australia First’ or an Irish-Australian identity, against the British Empire. They did on occasion claim that the conscriptionists by proposing to leave Australia defenceless against an Asian danger were endangering White Australia--indeed Mannix used this argument in both conscription referenda campaigns—but even when it was used it was a British white Australia which they had in mind.

At the same time as Mannix was developing his anti-conscriptionist position, he was also taking up a more extreme position on Irish independence. The British government in an attempt to appease the Irish Catholics over Home Rule had summoned a convention comprising representatives of Britain and Ireland and of Catholics and Protestants, but it did not invite any representatives of Sinn Fein. Speaking at the invitation of the Young Ireland Society to an audience variously judged to number between 30 and a 100 thousand Mannix mocked this body and declared that it did not represent Ireland. The true convention was ‘located out in the country, on the hillside of Ireland.’ With this remark he aligned himself with the Sinn Fein and Ireland’s right to independence. Explaining himself he said that the Sinn Fein sought to wrest from English hands the government of their own country and to set up in Ireland a government ‘with Irish ideals and for Irish interests.’ As a result of the ‘martyrdom of the Easter week rebels a new spirit had entered her body...’ And he urged the Irish people to seize the opportunity afforded by the war to achieve their freedom. ‘His own advice’ he told the assembled throng,

‘would be to say “now or never”’. He warned that if the Irish did not strike while Britain was involved in the European war, they would have very little hope once Britain recovered from her present difficulty. Finally he gave his blessing to the Sinn Fein’s demand for the incorporation of the whole island, north and south, in the new nation. He was adamant that Ireland should not be cut into pieces to please an unworthy and disloyal faction in Ulster. That is, he was as intolerant towards the Ulster Protestants in Ireland as he claimed the Protestants were towards the Irish Catholics in Australia. His praise for the *Sinn Feiners* drew a hot response from the ‘loyalists’. The Melbourne *Argus* pronounced Mannix to be an ‘Arrogant Irish Ecclesiastic, openly vaunting his disloyalty in the most intensely loyal dominion.’

On 7 November, two days after Mannix delivered this speech, Hughes announced that the government would hold another referendum on conscription. Many of the National Party’s foremost supporters felt the humiliation of Australia’s failure to join the British, Canadians and New Zealanders in doing their duty by the Empire. Mannix’s speeches had done much to create ‘loyalist’ leagues and Protestant associations and had set alight a new demand for conscription. Hughes, though sharing the ‘loyalists’ sense of outrage, had at first resisted these appeals as he feared that the people would again reject the proposition. But when it seemed that unless he acted his government might fall, he finally gave in and threw himself into the subsequent campaign with even more fanatical fervour than had marked his leadership at the time of the first referendum.

This time Hughes and the ‘loyalists’ made little effort to show that the dire position of Britain and its allies required that every eligible man should be available to save the Empire, and what Hughes did say on this issue lacked substance and conviction. Rather he focussed his attack on the ‘enemy within the gate’ and though he still cited the evil threesome, the German agents, the IWW anarchists and the Sinn Feiners, it was the latter now that received most of his attention. Sinn Fein was a sinister and disloyal movement which sought an independent Ireland outside the Empire. Its members openly avowed their hatred of Britain and the British Empire and they ‘openly gloated over every success by Germany.’ Mannix’s assertion that Australians were *Sinn Feiners* was ‘an insult to the men of the AIF who had gone forth to battle for the Empire.’ Mannix had identified himself with the *Sinn Feiners* and so shown himself to be a traitor to the Empire. What a vote for conscription would mean was that the shirkers and dissidents who followed Mannix would be compelled to do their duty.

Mannix had no hesitation in entering the lists against those who traduced him and the Irish people. In answering Hughes he repeated all the arguments he had been formulating since the first referendum. Australians had done their fair share and should not be asked to sacrifice everything for the Empire. They should, like

the Irish in Ireland, put their country first. Moreover the Asian danger to Australia should not be overlooked.

And he declared that

The sun never sets upon the Empire, with its many coloured races. But we, a handful of whites in a huge continent, insist on White Australia policy. Our Coloured fellow-citizens of the Empire ask for an entry. But no, not even for the Empire's sake do we lift the embargo.

He even dared to suggest that Britain's Asian ally, Japan, could not be relied upon.

There are enemies nearer to Australia than Germany, and the day may not be too far distant when Australians will be required to defend their own interests at home.

But the feisty prelate then moved to the issues which most concerned him, namely Britain's motive in going to war and the fate of Ireland. Britain could be justified in taking part in the conflict if its motive was to protect Belgium and defend itself. But if its intention was to secure the 'economic domination of the world' and to deny justice to other small powers then the time had come 'to get out of the war' and to seek through the good offices of the pope a compromise peace.

The second referendum stirred up even more class and sectarian animosity than the first. Crowds of over 100,000 attending the rival meetings were not uncommon in the major cities. There was much heckling and even violent attempts to break up meetings. Eggs, rocks, bottles, blue metal and other missiles assailed speakers. Mannix accused Hughes of being the country's 'greatest sectarian' and Hughes responded by castigating Mannix for having allegedly said that 'if he were to have his way there would be no Protestants in Australia.' Yet, despite the depth of bitterness and rancour evident in the campaigns, both sides generally respected the basic rules of their political culture. No one was killed and on the day of the referendum the voting took place in a peaceful and orderly manner. The National Party government despite imposing partisan restrictions on what could be said and published by the anti's never attempted to interfere directly with the ballot box.

As Hughes had anticipated the 'no' vote won. But the vote did not by any means settle the matter or heal the wounds. Mannix and the Irish Catholics revelled in their victory and taunted the conscriptionists. At a Catholic Federation picnic on Boxing Day Mannix excoriated Hughes and the 'loyalists' for their 'social hatred', and he joined the 50,000 members present in singing 'God Save Ireland.' On St Patrick's Day in March 1918 the procession through Melbourne's streets was deliberately provocative. The floats were decked out in the Green and Gold colours of Sinn Fein and Mannix, in taking the salute, did not remove his biretta when 'God Save

the King' was played but bared his head when the Young Ireland Society's tableau representing the 'Men of Easter week' passed before him.

For the self-proclaimed British Race 'loyalists' their referendum defeat had increased their hatred of Mannix and his ilk. Mannix had become their *bete noir*, the devil who had poisoned the mind of many citizens and who had to be exorcised. The Reverend Dr Rentoul of Melbourne University, who had been one of the major figures behind the 'loyalty leagues', immediately after the results were known, wrote to Hughes that 'this evil-minded man' who had brought an excitable and hysterical ignorant population... to the very verge of civil war had to be damped out or transported out.'

These views of Mannix were held at the very centre of the national security state. The head of the Secret Intelligence Bureau—who happened also to be the private secretary of the Governor-General-- informed his British counterpart that

The conscription referendum was undoubtedly lost through the Roman Catholic hostile vote which was clearly and most forcibly applied through Dr Mannix's leadership throughout the commonwealth.

Mannix was 'the most disturbing element' in the country that this man of 'intelligence' had ever seen. He was 'very clever, cunning and untrustworthy' and hoped 'to force England into giving Ireland Home Rule' and so to bring Australia 'under the rule of Rome.' In criticising conscription he had 'openly and publicly, in fact in every possible way, announced that he was a *Sinn Feiner*, indeed an absolute rebel.'

Hughes agreed completely with these assessments and took vigorous action to meet the supposed threat. From the time of the first referendum he had thought that the most militant among the anti-conscriptionists were bent on bringing about an insurrection, and to this end he had instructed the military commanders in all the states to have to hand a military force which could be drawn upon when the day came. For Melbourne, the capital of the country, the most elaborate plans were made to meet such a possibility. The Victorian authorities were to have at their disposal, in addition to a District Guard, 'a mobile force comprising an AIF battalion, two eighteen pounder guns and fifty light horsemen, and in the last resort the citizen militia would be called upon.' This force would be supported by the most modern weapons, including even two aeroplanes which would 'overawe rioters by their presence in the air, co-operate with the artillery and assist in dispersing the rioters by the use of machine guns ...and by dropping bombs or hand grenades.'

At the time of drawing up these plans Hughes had believed that the radical unionists and the IWW would be the major source of the unrest. But after the second referendum when he ordered the commanders once again to ensure that everything

was in place he considered that it was the Irish Catholics as *Sinn Feiners* who were the more likely source of an uprising. To protect British Australia from its internal enemies Hughes issued new regulations under the War Precautions Act which made it illegal to incite disloyalty to the British Empire or to display flags or emblems which were symbols of an enemy country or of those disaffected from the British Empire. The national government also began to organise an Australian Protective League, a secret organisation made up of 'loyal' citizens who would report to the authorities on their workmates, employees, clients, customers and neighbours. And among the citizens invited to take part in setting up this body there was not one unionist, Labor politician or Irish Catholic.

But this was not enough. Somehow Mannix, as the central figure in this conspiracy, had to be silenced. Hughes had come to the conclusion that since Mannix and the bulk of the Roman Catholics of Irish descent were unreservedly disloyal he might have to face the difficult question of deporting the Archbishop. From mid-1917 the prime minister had sought through the British Foreign Office to persuade the Vatican to recall Mannix, and after the second referendum he had resumed his efforts, informing the British authorities that 'nothing less' than removing Mannix from Australia would be acceptable. Rome would not agree to this, but on the advice of the Apostolic Delegate to Australia the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda in April 1918 sent the Archbishop of Melbourne a letter of rebuke which reminded him 'that the office of a Pastor is to pacify souls, to allay discords and to prevent their arising or becoming embittered.' At a meeting of archbishops convened by the Apostolic Delegate to discuss how to avoid further trouble, Mannix, bowing to the wishes of Rome, moved a resolution which recommended that the clergy 'use prudence and caution in dealing with public questions, especially conscription, recruiting, Ireland and matters relating to the war.' The clergy were to be enjoined privately to avoid words or deeds that could 'give cause for the accusation against Catholics of disloyalty to the Empire.' I do not know to what degree this advice was conveyed to the clergy or to what degree it affected their behaviour. It seems, however, that Mannix until the outbreak of what came to be called the Anglo-Irish War kept his peace.

The Anglo-Irish War

Almost simultaneously with the end of the European conflict the *Sinn Fein* struggle for independence assumed a more formal and violent character. It might be said that no sooner had the Great War ended than the Anglo-Irish War began. At the December 1918 British Parliamentary elections the *Sinn Fein* won 73 seats—nearly all from the Catholic dominated Southern counties—which constituted about 70% of the total Irish representation in the House of Commons. The *Sinn Fein* members

refused to go to London and instead in January 1919 sat as an Irish Parliament in Dublin. There they unilaterally declared for independence, chose Eamon De Valera as the first president of the Republic and established an Irish Republican Army for the purpose of imposing their authority over the whole island. By the end of that year a guerrilla insurgency aimed at British institutions and officials had broken out and like all such conflicts where military discipline is weak and civilians cannot not be easily distinguished from combatants both sides committed many atrocities.

The British attempts to put down the insurrection roused Mannix and led him to sympathise publicly with the *Sinn Fein* and to join with other bishops in denouncing the British government's brutal methods. Following an American precedent, he, in November 1919, helped organise an Irish Congress in Melbourne which attracted delegates from as far away as New Zealand and Western Australia. Opening the Congress he criticised the Allies representatives at the Paris Peace Conference for having gone to war ostensibly to protect small nations and yet had failed to give justice to Ireland. In his sly way he mused on how differently Ireland would have been treated at the Peace Conference if Germany had been Ireland's oppressor but 'unfortunately for Ireland the enemy for these years had not been Germany but England.' If President Wilson and America failed them then, he declared, Ireland would have no choice but 'to rely on God and the stout hearts and hands of her sons.'

In mid-1920 as he travelled through America on his way to Rome to report on his stewardship he dropped all the nuances. Crossing the United States he met and established a lasting relationship with De Valera, and took the opportunity to make some forthright and fiery speeches. In Chicago he stressed Australian-American friendship, especially in facing 'the Asiatic menace, which is always lurking near', and he assured his audience that 'Australia looks to the United States for support and friendship in time of crisis', suggesting thereby that Australia could not depend on Britain to protect White Australia. In New York he went even further. Claiming to speak for Australia he averred that Americans should understand that 'England was your enemy. England is your enemy today. England will be your enemy for all time.'

These outbursts, reported back in Australia, coming as they did on the back of a series of organised Irish Catholic protests, created an almost hysterical reaction among the 'loyalists'. In New South Wales they formed a King and Empire Alliance which was 'to build up and maintain a strong national pride of race and Empire.' The sympathetic American Consul was invited to attend its inaugural meeting, and he spoke disavowing Mannix's sentiments. He claimed that there was 'no American citizen...who does not resent –some of the comments being cabled from the United States in the last few days.' He identified himself with the purpose of the meeting 'because the people of the United States and the United Kingdom are bound in

bonds of blood and a community of common interests.’ And at this, the assembled audience rose as one and sang ‘The Star Spangled Banner.’

At the meeting Mannix and his followers were the chief targets for ‘loyal’ outrage. As one speaker put it, of these followers, ‘a few were Bolsheviks but the others, the worst were of British stock [That is the Irish Catholics], were disloyal. It was to combat men of that type that they proposed to combine.’ To the ‘loyalists’ these renegades were traitors who had betrayed their British cultural identity and political allegiance. Against Mannix’s history of the British Empire as a story of English oppression and exploitation, they told a tale of an empire of liberty, of Britain as it spread its dominion around the globe bestowing on benighted peoples law, justice and enlightenment. Looking back at the Empire’s role in the Great War, at Britain’s action in coming to the aid of little Belgium ‘those of British stock could only feel pride in this Empire of ours.’ The ‘loyalists’ indignation was all the greater in that Mannix and his associates were giving comfort to the enemies of the Empire at the very time that the Prince of Wales, the putative lineal embodiment of the British race, was visiting Australia.

Such treachery could not go unpunished. Mannix being out of reach the ‘loyalists’ seized the opportunity afforded by Hugh Mahon, a Labor member of the federal parliament, to make him their sacrificial lamb. Mahon had grown up in Ireland and in his early years had been involved with Charles Parnell’s National Land League. After being imprisoned for his political activities he had migrated to Australia, and like Hughes and many others he had come to see Home Rule inside the empire as the solution for the Irish problem. He had at the outset supported the Empire’s cause in the Great War—two of his sons had enlisted in the AIF—but after Britain’s harsh treatment of the Easter rising rebels he had thrown in his lot with the anti-conscriptionists and begun to express sympathy for the *Sinn Feiners*.

Thus, when in late 1920 as the British began to answer guerrilla attacks with increasingly savage reprisals, Mahon became deeply affected by the actions of Lloyd George’s government. His feelings were brought to a boiling point by the fate of the Lord Mayor of Cork who after being imprisoned had gone on a hunger strike and after 70 days of refusing food had died. Having been denied the right to debate the matter in parliament, Mahon launched into a tirade against the British government while chairing a branch of the Irish Land League in Melbourne. He heaped praise on Mannix and the *Sinn Fein* and declared that British rule in Ireland was a ‘bloody and accursed despotism.’ After Mahon had left the meeting the assembly pledged its support to any movement advocating an Australian republic.

For the ‘loyalists’ the moment had come to seek revenge for the failure of the conscription referenda and the attacks on the British government and Empire. On Armistice Day the British Empire League of Australia sponsored ‘A Great Citizens’

meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall which was co-sponsored by the Commonwealth and Victorian governments, the City Council, the National Party, the Protestant churches and many other civic organisations. The President of the British Empire League called upon the government 'to prosecute or deport these latter-day rebels'. The emotional meeting passed resolutions affirming loyalty to the Crown and Empire and promising full support for whatever action the federal government might take against Mahon and 'for the rigorous suppression of disloyalty and the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire.' Hughes and his ministers shared these 'loyalist' sentiments and afraid that the courts would not convict Mahon of sedition on the available evidence used their majority to expel him from parliament, an action which had no precedent in the history of the Commonwealth.

Throughout the first half of the following year the 'loyalist' organisations remained very active and, reflecting what the Prime Minister had hinted at in public and the Prince of Wales had urged in private, they pressed the government to refuse to allow Mannix to land on Australian soil or at the least to require him to sign a pledge of allegiance to the Crown and Empire before being permitted to do so. However, by the time of his return to Australia in August 1921 the British had signed a truce with De Valera and were engaged in negotiating a peace. As a result the heat was going out of the Anglo-Irish confrontation and the Australian government thought it would be impolitic to hinder in any way the prelate's homecoming.

In the peace settlement the Irish rebels did not gain all that they had fought for. Under the Anglo-Irish Treaty they had to accept the status of a self-governing Dominion within the British Commonwealth and to allow Ulster to remain part of the United Kingdom. In the Irish Free State, as the new entity was called, there was a division over these terms. Led by De Valera hard-line Republicans refused to sign the treaty and accept the abandonment of their nationalist vision, and for a year there was a civil war in southern Ireland followed by an election which was won by those supporting the Treaty. Though some Irish Australians, including Mannix, identified themselves with De Valera it would appear that for most the treaty was an acceptable outcome since it gave the Irish Free State the same standing as Australia inside the British Commonwealth and gave the Irish Catholics in the south Home Rule.

While Irish Australians might have embraced Mannix as their spokesperson in the battle over conscription, most of them, in protesting against the British government's treatment of Ireland, did not seek a separation from the British Empire. Not even Hugh Mahon had embraced such a solution. The bitterness and resentment stirred up inside the country over conscription and loyalty lingered on for a generation. Yet Irish Catholic Australians were for the most part perfectly content, unlike their counterparts in Ireland, to be British. Inside the British

national identity they could still be proud of their origins in the same way that the English, Scottish and Welsh were. And so unlike the Irish in the Free State they never sought an independent republic. Despite their greater influence in the post-war Labor movement the Irish Catholics never attempted to put separation from Britain on the party's platform.

At the time of the Prince of Wales visit in 1920 some of those who had been most critical of British policy in Ireland gave speeches about the Crown and Empire which matched those of the so-called 'loyalists'. When, for example, the Prince visited Queensland the acting premier, John Fihelly, whose name had become a byword for treachery following his attacks on British oppression in Ireland, spoke as warmly and loyally as his detractors. In welcoming the heir to the throne he asserted that 'the Prince had endeared himself to all who came in contact with him...The traditions of our race and of his race will live and be inspired by him.' And he added that while Queensland was only 'an outpost of Empire it was a very loyal one.'

John Curtin and Ben Chifley, who came of Irish Catholic descent and had taken a prominent part in the anti-conscription movement in the First World War, when as prime minister they spoke of Australia's role in the world did so in the same terms. Just after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour Curtin rallied his fellow-Australian by proclaiming that 'We Australians ...shall hold this territory and keep it as a citadel for the British-speaking race.' In visiting London in 1944 he explained to the people of the United Kingdom that because Australia was 'over ninety per cent of British stock they were in every respect a replica of Britain and the way of life in Britain...'. And he added that in the Southern Hemisphere Australians would therefore 'carry on a British community in a part of the world that is of the utmost importance to the British-speaking race.' The labour leaders like those of their opponents had no other language they could draw upon to define Australia in a world of nations. The majority of Protestant Australians understood this and, despite the legacy of sectarianism from the war years, were willing to elect again and again in the years following the Great War Irish Catholic prime ministers and premiers.

In being British, Australians were not thinking of themselves as subordinate or deferential colonials. That was not their vision of Greater Britain. Curtin, like Deakin and Hughes before him, had no hesitation in criticising and defying British policy when it seemed that the British government was ignoring or overlooking Australian interests. Thus Curtin, against Churchill's imperious demands and pre-emptive actions, had in early 1942 insisted that Australian troops be brought back from the Middle East to defend Australia against a feared Japanese invasion. But this quarrel did not lead Curtin to seek independence for Australia. Quite the

contrary. Shortly before setting out for the 1944 British Commonwealth Prime Ministers meeting in London he told the ALP Federal Conference that the British peoples were on the cusp of a “Fourth Empire” in which the trend was ‘to augment an association of sovereign peoples by a policy which concerns the Empire as a whole.’ He told the members of the party that it was his intention to put this proposal before the Imperial conference. That is, his intention was not to find a solution to the differences which had led to the fall of Singapore by pressing for separation from the Empire. Rather he looked towards establishing institutions that would bind the British peoples more tightly together in reaching agreements on common policies when facing the world.

This Irish Catholic commitment to a British identity continued throughout the 1950s. Perhaps Joseph Cahill, the Irish Catholic premier of New South Wales, who had suffered much as an anti-conscriptionist in the First World War, gave the most fulsome expression of this national myth when welcoming Queen Elizabeth to Sydney in 1954. In his address he compared the Queen’s landing at Farm Cove to Captain Arthur Phillip’s arrival on the same spot in 1788. ‘It was’, he said ‘from that very point that our British Civilization fanned out to encompass a continent.’ And he concluded with an affirmation of Australia’s then national credo: ‘our origin is British, our soul is British. We think British. We act British.’

ARCHBISHOP JAMES DUHIG AND THE QUEENSLAND IRISH ASSOCIATION, 1898-1920: EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan*

Many of Brisbane's distinctive hills are capped with imposing, even triumphalist, Catholic churches and schools. They are predominantly the legacy of the city's third bishop James Duhig, whose fifty-three year tenure extended from his appointment as Coadjutor Archbishop of Brisbane in 1912 until he died in office in 1965. This understates his remarkable ecclesiastic longevity: he was appointed Bishop of Rockhampton in 1905, at the age of thirty-four, making him the youngest bishop in the entire Catholic Church, or, as the *Freeman's Journal* boasted, 'The Youngest Bishop on Earth'. In explaining Duhig's selection as Bishop of Rockhampton a Brisbane Catholic newspaper, *The Age*, pointed to his Irishness, his study for the priesthood in Rome and his knowledge of and experience in Queensland, including



*Duhig, James, Bishop elect of Rockhampton,
The Age (Brisbane) 9 December 1905, p. 7*

his pastoral work in Ipswich and Brisbane. It also alluded to his 'manly presence and a charm of manner', which could not disguise his energy and administrative ability. The enthusiasm of *The Age* was prescient: Duhig went on to become the most emblematic figure of Irish Catholicism in Queensland. Until the early 1920s his public and private lives converged in the Queensland Irish Association – he had

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close lay friends among its members and officials and was of one mind with the Association on Ireland's past and future and of the place of the Irish community in Queensland and Australia.¹

James Duhig's long life (1871-1965) was intertwined with the history of Queensland's Irish community, which accounted for a quarter of the colony's population in the late nineteenth century. James was born in County Limerick and arrived in Queensland in 1885 at the age of fifteen, with his widowed mother and an older brother and younger sister. Three of his older siblings had preceded them and saved enough to pay their fares to Brisbane. Amid the throes of making his way into a new society James mixed clerical work with the acquisition of a Catholic secondary education. He was a prominent contributor to his Woolloowin parish, in Brisbane's inner north. He became an altar boy and a member of his church's literary and debating group, the Holy Cross Guild. A diligent self-improver, he studied classics at night under the supervision of South Brisbane's Father J. McKiernan. Like many other upwardly mobile young Irishmen he joined the Queensland Irish Volunteers (QIV), an ethnic military unit. When John Dillon, a militant Irish nationalist and parliamentarian, campaigned in Brisbane in 1889, Duhig collected funds for the Home Rule cause. The young man's zeal and presence attracted the patronage of Brisbane Archbishop Robert Dunne who fostered his vocation for the priesthood. The Duhig family willingly sacrificed James' significant contribution to its finances when he left to study for the priesthood at the Irish College in Rome in 1891. He was ordained in 1896, a great comfort to the Duhigs as they struggled through the depression and the industrial and other upheavals of the 1890s.²

For the Irish in Brisbane these upheavals included a resurgence of anti-Catholic sectarianism, which meant, in Jeff Kildea's words, 'the anti-Catholic bigotry and injustice of the Protestant majority'.³ In the twenty-first century the pervasive power of Australian sectarianism, well into the 1960s, has been largely forgotten, an unlamented casualty of the decline in religious affiliation and the rise of multiculturalism. To revisit sectarian Australia requires historical imagination and acceptance of the dictum that the past is, indeed, a foreign country. In Australia from the 1890s to the 1920s anti-Irish bigotry was intertwined with anti-Catholicism, subjecting Irish Catholics to what Patrick O'Farrell termed 'double jeopardy', a hazard which led to the dissolution of the Queensland Irish Volunteers.⁴

The disbandment of the Queensland Irish Volunteers was the culmination of a campaign by Queensland Defence Force (QDF) headquarters to eliminate its volunteer branch, with the Irish unit a particular target. In 1897, the year Father James returned from Rome to serve as assistant priest in Ipswich, just west of Brisbane, his former QIV colleagues were forbidden by QDF commander colonel Howel Gunter, on penalty of court-martial, to march in Brisbane's St Patrick's Day

Parade. This was a humiliating blow to the Irish volunteers who traditionally led the march, resplendent in their distinctive green and gold braided uniforms. The order was countermanded after the Catholic attorney-general, Thomas Joseph (T.J.) Byrnes, intervened. But the reprieve was temporary. With Byrnes about to leave for overseas, Gunter appointed a non-Irish, non-Catholic professional officer to take charge of the QIV. Rather than accept what they regarded as a demeaning slur, the Irish volunteers disbanded. They regrouped as the Queensland Irish Association (QIA), a non-political, non-sectarian body founded in March 1898. Its sole qualification for membership, besides good character, was ‘Irish birth or descent.’ Though its membership was predominantly Irish Catholic, it included a significant Protestant minority, with its foundation president, the crown prosecutor



Queensland Irish Association premises, Tara House, Elizabeth Street, Brisbane

John Kingsbury, a well-known Brisbane Methodist.⁵ The genesis of the QIA was a wake for the QIV held at John Brosnan’s Exhibition Hotel, a meeting place for Irish Catholics, in late 1897. That gathering determined to perpetuate the ‘bon camaraderie and...friendships’ which had developed among the volunteers, Catholic and Protestant. Many of the Irish Catholics were Hibernians and would remain connected; but Irish Protestant volunteers, unable to join the exclusively Catholic Hibernian society, were in danger of being cast adrift. This motive helps explain the emphasis on non-sectarianism in the Association’s constitution. Similarly, the non-political nature of the new organisation sought to avoid another potential source of conflict. On the positive side, the QIA sought to safeguard the interests of the Irish in Queensland and encourage the study of Irish history and literature. There was also a focus on learning about eminent Irish and Irish-Australian achievers. Self-improvement was to be encouraged through hosting distinguished visitors and the cultivation of discussion and public speaking skills.⁶

At the same time James Duhig was forging friendships with an emerging Irish-Australian elite in Ipswich, his first posting as a curate, and in Brisbane, many of them founders or influential early members of the QIA. By the early 1900s his courtly bearing, eloquence and pastoral skills had drawn him into the leading Irish Catholic circles of southeast Queensland. His friends included the Ipswich-based O’Sullivan clan, one of whom, Thomas, a future member of the Legislative Council

and judge, was to be QIA president from 1900 to 1903. Thomas's nephew, Neil O'Sullivan, a future QIA official and Queensland senator, became the archbishop's lawyer. By March 1905 it was clear the thirty-three year old was destined for church leadership. He was promoted to administrator of Brisbane's St Stephen's Cathedral. In the same month he accompanied the prominent Irish National Party (INP) parliamentarian in the House of Commons, William Redmond, then on an Australian tour, from Brisbane to Toowoomba. Redmond's Queensland visit was at the QIA's invitation. Duhig was a regular visitor to the household and office of Peter McDermott, a gregarious litterateur and founding member of Brisbane's Johnsonian Club. Under-secretary of the premier's department since 1904, McDermott was the first Irish Catholic to head Queensland's public service. He was QIA president from 1910 until his death in 1922. McDermott and Duhig shared enthusiasms for Irish history and politics and a love of literature and language. After McDermott died, Duhig bought his library of 2000 books for St Leo's, a Catholic residential College at the University of Queensland. When James left Brisbane to become Bishop of Rockhampton in late 1905 his Christian Brothers' Old Boys' farewell included a number of influential Association figures including foundation members Henry Neylan, Thomas Lehane and Timothy (T.J.) O'Shea, a prominent Brisbane lawyer-businessman and QIA president from 1903 to 1909. A few days later two QIA notables, businessmen Thomas Charles (T.C.) Beirne and Patrick Walsh (P.W.) Crowe, travelled north to Rockhampton to be at Duhig's installation as the centre's fourth bishop.⁷

Catholicism and family solidarity accompanied the Duhigs on their journey to Australia. James also brought with him a love of Ireland and a conviction that it had suffered injustice at the hands of England. Anger at England's treatment of Ireland was balanced by his pride in belonging to the British Empire. Duhig's sense of Irish history was personal and intertwined with memories of his mother, Margaret, who died in 1902. In 1906, as Bishop of Rockhampton he recalled himself as a small boy, fearfully huddled against her on an Irish hillside, watching soldiers with fixed bayonets evicting tenants. Another enduring boyhood memory was an image of one of his Irish political heroes, John Dillon, languishing in a prison cell. He attributed Ireland's doleful condition – depopulation, impoverishment and landlordism – in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to British maladministration. The solution was Home Rule instead of direct rule from London. For Duhig, Home Rule meant Ireland achieving the same degree of self-government as Queensland. His sense of grievance over the consequences of British colonialism in Ireland co-existed, at times uneasily, with admiration for the British Empire and satisfaction that 'Ireland had always shed her blood on the battlefield for Britain'. The lack of Irish self-government, he declared in Rockhampton in 1911, was a 'festering sore'

James Duhig's complicated, even contradictory, views on Ireland and Empire were shared widely among Queensland's Irish community. They were given their most consistent expression by the Queensland Irish Association one of the most impressive secular Irish organisations in Australia. After almost 120 years of existence it still plays a significant role in Brisbane's social and cultural life. Its St Patrick's Eve banquet, inaugurated in 1905, is, in the twenty-first century, still a major event on Brisbane's social calendar, attracting city, state and national political leaders. The Association's heritage-listed premises, Tara House, in Elizabeth Street near the city's heart, were purchased in 1919 and extensively remodelled in the late 1920s. The building preserves a distinctive – and increasingly scarce – example of Brisbane's notable late nineteenth century architecture and streetscape. For many decades James Duhig was a presence at the QIA, and, when he was in the city, rarely missed its St Patrick's Eve banquet.⁹

The QIA claimed that its influence was not confined to Brisbane, that Queensland's dispersed Irish community allowed it to throw its tentacles into every nook and cranny of the vast state when occasion demanded. This was no idle boast as the QIA-orchestrated tours of Queensland by Irish National Party envoys in 1906 and 1911 demonstrated. The envoys sought to raise funds and garner public support for their Home Rule campaign. The Central Queensland component of these exercises was energetically supervised by James Duhig. In 1906 he threw his ecclesiastic weight behind the Central Queensland leg of the fund raising tour by the Irish National Party delegates Joseph Devlin and John (J.T.) Donovan. Prior to their arrival Duhig revealed the extent of his own identification with Ireland's bid to win a place in the Empire at least equivalent to that of an Australian state. He advised the local reception committee that they must take advantage of the opportunity to show respect for their Irish ancestors and solidarity in the Irish cause:

We owe a great deal to the land of our fathers, and it would ill-become us to let pass the present opportunity of honouring her envoys, of aiding her in her glorious struggle for self-government – a struggle unparalleled in the history of nations – and of testifying our abiding interest in everything that concerns her welfare.

This was more than lip service. The delegates were his guests while they were based in Rockhampton. Moreover, he joined them on public meeting platforms and accompanied them on their visit to the mining centre of Mt Morgan. He took the envoys to the convent where the pupils presented them with a bouquet of flowers and a purse of sovereigns for the Home Rule fund. The visit concluded with the Bishop having the children give three hearty cheers for Home Rule; he rewarded them with a day's holiday. The children's sovereigns were part of the £350 collected

in the Rockhampton-Mt Morgan area for the Irish cause.¹⁰

In 1911 the QIA hosted another Home Rule delegation from Ireland, this time consisting of William Redmond, John Donovan and Richard Hazleton. They were in Rockhampton and Mt Morgan in August and again benefitted from Duhig's sponsorship and presence with them on the platform at public meetings. The Bishop's speeches highlighted one of the wellsprings of his commitment to Home Rule for Ireland, the link between conditions in Ireland and the wellbeing of Irish Australians. He depicted the withholding of self-government as a 'hall mark of inferiority' stamped upon the whole Irish race. Queensland's Irish community was not immune from the consequences of Ireland's subordinate status within the Empire. The 1911 tour was imbued with a sense of optimism stemming from the belief – and the envoys' assurances – that the British government was on the verge of conceding self-government to Ireland. At a public meeting in Mt Morgan Duhig anticipated the imminent removal of the 'cloud over Ireland' and emphasised that this was not just a matter for Ireland but an issue for the whole diaspora. 'When the day of Irish liberty did arrive', he told the crowd, 'no people in the world except the Irish people themselves would rejoice more than the people of the free-governed Australian Commonwealth'. After the departure of the envoys Duhig wrote to John Redmond M.P., leader of the Irish Party in the House of Commons – and William's father – that the tour had been a great success. With typical Duhig eloquence he assured Redmond senior 'that we are with you, heart, soul and pocket, and that our interest in the long battle, now, we trust, drawing to a close is as keen as if we were still living on Irish soil'.¹¹

In February 1912, James Duhig was back in Brisbane as archbishop. In his absence the QIA had flourished, the Catholic Press describing it in 1910 as 'a grand club, taking the lead in all Irish movements in Queensland', a judgement vindicated by its organisation of the Queensland leg of visits to Australia by Irish envoys. It was the gathering place in Brisbane for leading Irishmen and their descendants. Peter McDermott, a Duhig confidante, was QIA president, strengthening the bookish, intellectual and oratorical culture of the Association. Described as 'the soul of the association', he was determined to preserve the founders' ideal of a non-political, non-sectarian organisation for Queenslanders of Irish birth or descent. Its inclusiveness was not only a QIV legacy but also a defensive response to the endemic sectarianism which plagued Queensland society until the 1960s.¹²

The genius of the Irish Association in its early decades was that it simultaneously practised inclusiveness and elitism, a combination that appealed to James Duhig. There is no evidence that he ever became a member, perhaps avoiding the formality because of the Association's non-sectarian charter, but he was, nevertheless, a ubiquitous presence at major QIA functions when he was in Brisbane. The

Archbishop attended Governor William Macgregor's last public appearance in Queensland in mid-1914, a farewell at the Irish Association. At the QIA's 1915 St Patrick's Eve banquet, chaired by Peter McDermott, Duhig looked proudly around the 280 guests, taking in the new governor, Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams, the premier Digby Denham and past QIA presidents, attorney-general Thomas O'Sullivan and fellow-Legislative Councillor Timothy O'Shea. Denham, O'Sullivan and O'Shea were Liberals. Also present were QIA notables from the Labor side of politics including Michael Kirwan and Frank McDonnell. Unavoidably absent was the most significant Labor QIA member at this time, T. J. (Thomas Joseph) Ryan, the leader of the parliamentary Labor Party and soon to be premier. The gathering modelled what Duhig desired for Queensland, Irish achievement amid ecumenical concord; in his speech he emphasized the occasion's harmony, relishing the presence of 'Irishmen of all denominations'. The 1915 banquet celebrated Irish accomplishment in Queensland, symbolised by the attendance of Goold-Adams, the day after his arrival in Queensland. The governor applied to join the Association and was given an honorary life membership. The Irish – including Irish Catholics – had made their way to the summit of Brisbane society.¹³

Initially it appeared that World War One would consummate the full integration of Irish Catholics into Queensland society. As armed conflict between Germany and Britain loomed in the first half of 1914, the QIA helped organise Empire Day celebrations in Brisbane. James Duhig, speaking as an Irish-Australian, proclaimed that Britain 'would find her Catholic and Irish-Australian sons loyal to her cause'. Australia's entry into the war in August provided further opportunities to demonstrate that the Irish were an integral and loyal part of Queensland society, just as Ireland was of the Empire. Duhig blamed German philosophers for the war. The Association's Home Rule campaign was suspended on the assumption that a willing Irish contribution to the British cause would be speedily rewarded with Home Rule. Indeed, a number of prominent members were already planning visits to Ireland to coincide with the opening of a new Irish parliament. Within weeks of the outbreak of war, the Association donated £100 to a Patriotic Fund. In January, 1915, the QIA announced that many of its members had volunteered for service in the Australian Expeditionary Forces and some were already deployed in Egypt. A year later the Association was noted for its 'virile patriotism'; it described the war as a 'most arduous and gigantic struggle which the British Empire is waging against the foes of righteousness'. Special mention was made of an Anglican member of the Association, Colonel Spencer Browne, 'who had 'passed through the inferno of Gallipoli'.¹⁴

The Easter 1916 Rising in Dublin took most people by surprise – certainly members of the Irish Nationalist Party – who spent most of their time in London. It

was also unexpected by the officials of Queensland Irish Association and Archbishop Duhig, all of whom relied on the INP as their principal source of information about Ireland. When McDermott, who was mid-ocean en route to England on an official visit with Premier T.J. Ryan heard the news, he feared, correctly, that 'a fatal blow had been dealt to Home Rule'. He also assumed that the Rising was instigated by Germany and lamented that 'very seldom has misguided fanaticism [sic] produced greater visible evils'. Among Ryan's tasks in London was the delivery of a QIA message to John Redmond expressing the confidence of Queensland's Irish community in his leadership of the INP, particularly his decision to join the Empire in its war against Germany with the expectation that a British victory would result in Home Rule. The QIA followed suit and on 27 April cabled INP leader John Redmond and British prime minister Herbert Asquith to 'deplore disturbances in Ireland', reaffirm their confidence in the INP and emphasise the loyalty and valour of Irish soldiers fighting for the Empire. James Duhig, when he heard news of the outbreak, was dismissive, belittling its significance and attributing it to 'malcontents'. But Duhig was relying on INP and QIA informants; the INP had lost touch with its Irish electorate as their stunned reaction to the Easter Rising showed. Ryan reported after meeting Redmond in London that he was greatly depressed. After discussions in the House of Commons with INP members, McDermott wrote to his wife that 'All of them are greatly cut up by the recent outbreak in Dublin'.¹⁵

British reprisals in Ireland for the Dublin Rising were disproportionately brutal. Duhig condemned 'the wholesale death sentences on Irish leaders' and contrasted their harshness with clemency shown elsewhere in the Empire including to mutinous British army officers in Ulster in 1914. McDermott brought back first-hand accounts of ruins and human misery in Dublin. The uneasy balance between Empire and Ireland tilted toward the latter in Brisbane as the Dublin Relief Fund was set up in August 1916, despite claims emanating from London that all was well in Ireland. The Fund, chaired by Archbishop Duhig, with two QIA stalwarts, Frank McDonnell and Patrick Stephens as, respectively, treasurer and secretary, raised over £5000 for distribution in Ireland. The intensified British-Irish conflict could not be quarantined in the northern hemisphere; it made its way to Brisbane and into the Queensland Irish Association. It surfaced at a meeting of the Association on Saturday 2 September 1916.¹⁶

The special general meeting had been requested by over fifty of the QIA's nine hundred members. The purpose was to authorise the donation of Association funds to relieve distress in Ireland following 'the unfortunate rebellious rising'. In the course of the debate Jack (John Arthur) Fihelly, the volatile assistant minister for justice in the Ryan government, attacked John Redmond as 'useless', England as 'the home of cant, humbug and hypocrisy' and British policy in Ireland as 'the

mailed fist policy of Prussianism'. He went further, entering the conscription debate then underway in Australia by declaring 'The opinion is held by many young Australians that every Irish Australian recruit means another British soldier to harass the people of Ireland'. He found support, of a kind, from another Ryan government minister, William Lennon, who said the points he raised 'were worthy of consideration'. Then Lennon became emotional and confessed to shedding tears over reports of British atrocities in Ireland and declared that 'Ireland certainly always had special-that is specially bad-treatment accorded to her...[and that] the Irish should let England know they were tired of it'. These speeches were a disaster for McDermott, who was in the chair at the meeting, and, as head of the premier's department, had to listen to two ministers make statements which he would have deemed extreme, indiscreet and grossly unfair to John Redmond. They were also at odds with the much publicised messages sent to Redmond by the QIA and premier Ryan earlier in the year.¹⁷

The speeches were published in full in Brisbane and reported all over Australia. From Sydney the *Catholic Press* reported that the 'Fihelly episode...has put all other incidents in the shade'. The speeches, labelled 'disloyal utterances', became a *cause celebre* and ignited, or at least fuelled, a sectarian explosion in Brisbane. A spate of letters in the *Brisbane Courier* hit out indiscriminately at Irish Catholics, the QIA, Fihelly, Lennon, McDermott and Duhig, 'the chief shepherd of these erring men'. The Legislative Council censured Fihelly for public disloyalty and conveyed its disquiet to the governor, Hamilton Goold-Adams who boycotted Fihelly in the Executive Council; a potential constitutional crisis was averted only when Premier Ryan extracted a public admission from Fihelly that his QIA speech reflected neither the views of the government nor the Labor Party. While Ryan and Goold-Adams maintained their cordial relationship, the Protestant clergy were not so easily appeased. Not untypically, the Rev. A.C. Plane in Kangaroo Point's Wesley Church denounced Irish Catholics as a disloyal minority who had seized control of Queensland by dominating the Labor Party and cabinet which, he falsely claimed, supported Fihelly and Lennon. He lamented that Archbishop Duhig had not repudiated Fihelly's statements and called for 'a few Cromwells', to restore power to the majority in Queensland. While such sentiments were not uncommon among the Nonconformist denominations in Brisbane, particularly from clergy active in Orange Lodges, what set the Fihelly-Lennon episode apart was that the Anglican leaders in Brisbane, Archbishop St Clair Donaldson and Bishop Henry Le Fanu, joined the attacks on Irish Catholics and their institutions. Their specific targets included James Duhig and the Queensland Irish Association, the latter branded with 'Fihellyism', a pejorative term connoting disloyalty, Irish unruliness, and, in some cases, working class truculence. Fihelly bore the heavier assault because

of his overt anti-England sentiments and opposition to conscription. Lennon had been less confrontational; he also became a far less amenable subject for disloyalty allegations after his youngest son, Austin, won the Military Cross for distinguished gallantry in the brutal battle for Pozières in October 1916.¹⁸

With a philosopher's precision Duhig demolished Donaldson's allegations that Catholics in Queensland were acting as a conspiratorial bloc in politics, business and in the 'imperial and patriotic sphere'. He took full advantage of the lack of specificity in Donaldson's charges and his use of anonymous informants. He could have gone further and challenged Donaldson's conflation of 'Irish' and 'Roman Catholics', citing the religious and political diversity cultivated by the QIA. Particularly galling for the Irish Association was Archbishop Donaldson's description of the QIA meeting, at which the controversial speeches were made, as 'a Roman Catholic gathering'. This ignored the QIA's long non-sectarian, indeed non-denominational, history. Archbishop Duhig was in a delicate position when faced with calls to repudiate Fihelly and Lennon's 'disloyal utterances'. There is little doubt he would have disagreed with much of the substance of Fihelly's speech, certainly his condemnation of John Redmond and outright opposition to conscription. On the other hand, like many QIA members, he would have admired Fihelly's courage if not his discretion. There was a further consideration; Fihelly was the son-in-law of Peter Murphy MLC, a foundation member of the QIA. Murphy was also an hotelier, company director and one of Brisbane's wealthiest Irish Catholics. He staunchly defended Fihelly in the Legislative Council, arguing that opposition to conscription, which he shared with his son-in-law, did not constitute disloyalty. Murphy was an important layman in the Brisbane diocese and illustrates the wisdom of Duhig's refusal to condemn Fihelly or Lennon. Like the QIA, Duhig had to be inclusive, finding room in his flock for anti-conscriptionists, such as Fihelly and Murphy, alongside other equally prominent QIA members who were conscriptionists, such as the lawyer Andrew Thynne MLC and the prominent Fortitude Valley merchant T.C. (Thomas Charles) Beirne. The QIA weathered the embarrassment of the Fihelly-Lennon indiscretions and honoured the perpetrators. Both were subsequently made life members, Fihelly in 1922 and Lennon in 1928.¹⁹

Duhig's refusal to repudiate Fihelly and Lennon to appease Protestant rage says something of his strength of character. It also paid later dividends. Much to the horror of loyalists, Lennon was acting governor of Queensland from March to December 1920. Perhaps the most significant public event in the state in 1920 was the mid-year visit of the Prince of Wales, the heir to the British throne. The royal guest arrived in an interregnum between two governors and in the absence of Labor premier Edward Theodore overseas. Who should be His Royal Highness's hosts but acting governor William Lennon and acting premier Jack Fihelly. The two pariahs

of 1916 now bestrode Queensland's vice-regal and political establishments. Still heading the premier's department and hence the bureaucracy was QIA president and Duhig confidante Peter McDermott. Duhig used his influence with the Irish triumvirate to organise a Parliament House meeting between himself, the apostolic delegate to Australia, Archbishop Bartholomew Cattaneo and the Prince of Wales. Duhig had outflanked the Protestant clergymen and their purported privileged relationship with the British crown. According to his biographer T.P. Boland the archbishop regarded the meeting between Cattaneo and the prince as 'historic...the royal seal of approval on the Roman Catholic community and the end of disharmony'.²⁰

The QIA also emerged from the post-1916 sectarian turmoil strengthened, if not entirely unscarred. It was criticised from within the Irish community for its lack of Irishness, its ambivalence on the 1916 Rising and subservience to the Empire. The Irish National Association (INA) emerged as a competitor for leadership of the Irish cause in Brisbane. It commemorated the Irish victims of the 1916 Rising as 'our martyred dead' and much preferred Archbishop Mannix's outspoken militancy to Duhig's more measured style. Photos of Archbishop Daniel Mannix sold briskly at a Brisbane INA concert in 1918. But it was Duhig and returned Irish Catholic soldiers who drew the most applause from the crowd watching the Brisbane St Patrick's Day parade in 1919. In like manner, despite its critics inside and outside the Irish community, the QIA prospered in adversity. Its membership increased sharply from 822 in 1916 to over 1,300 in 1920, the year in which it moved into its own two-storey city premises.²¹

Between 1898 and 1920 the fortunes of Archbishop Duhig and the Queensland Irish Association were intertwined. They both represented aspects of one of the most significant, if often overlooked, historical phenomena in Queensland history during this period – the rise and consolidation of an Irish Catholic middle class.



Duhig, James, Archbishop of Brisbane in 1930 Queensland, 11 December 1930, p. 37

It owed its emergence and coherence, to a considerable degree, not only to the determination of immigrants to succeed in their new setting but also to ethnic and religious networks, the QIA being the secular exemplar. Duhig and the Association held the Irish community together, spoke up for Ireland, and defended the substantial gains Irish Catholics had made in Queensland since the 1860s. Both the Association and Duhig had to weather sectarian fire, the like of which had not been seen in Queensland since early 1896 when T.J. Byrnes, a Catholic of Irish descent, failed to win the Legislative Assembly seat of North Brisbane after an outbreak of religious bigotry. The sectarian conflict of 1916-1920 owes something to the indiscretions of Jack Fihelly and William Lennon at the Irish Association in September 1916. But it owes much more to a long tradition of anti-Catholic and anti-Irish bigotry at the core of British nationalism which, as Judith Brett suggests, might help explain why so many academics overlooked the rise of an Irish Catholic middle class in Australia. The content of the sectarian allegations levelled against Irish Catholics in Queensland between 1916 and 1920 was often false or even bizarre, as shown by Duhig's easy demolition of Donaldson's charges. Nevertheless, such allegations enjoyed inter-generational currency among Queensland Protestants, demonstrating Michael Hogan's point in *The Sectarian Strand* that in disputes of this nature, it is not so much the truth or falsity of allegations that matters, but whether people believe them.²²

Neither Duhig nor the QIA was doctrinaire, but both shared some non-negotiable positions including dominion status for Ireland in the Empire and equality of opportunity and status for the Irish in Queensland. There were over 500 men at the QIA's 1920 St Patrick's Eve banquet in Brisbane. Archbishop Duhig and lieutenant-governor William Lennon were seated to the right of the chairman Peter McDermott. On the other side of McDermott was the acting premier Jack Fihelly. The speakers included Duhig, T.J. Ryan, recently elected a New South Wales Labor member in the House of Representatives, Lennon and Fihelly. The non-Labor side of politics was represented by barrister Neil Macgroarty, a future QIA president (1924-1932) and attorney-general in the Country and Progressive National Party government in Queensland (1929-1932). Fihelly spoke at length on the right of Ireland to self-determination. The archbishop left the contemporary politics of Ireland to Fihelly and spoke warmly of the Irish people and of their contribution over the centuries to western civilization. When he turned to the present he remarked how difficult it was to understand Ireland from an Australian vantage point. His most telling words concerned the value and uniqueness of the QIA because 'It was the only association that opened its door to Irishmen of every creed'.²³

End notes

The authors thank Lyndon Megarrity for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

- 1 *The Age* (Brisbane), 4 November 1905, p. 3
- 2 T. P. Boland, *James Duhig*, St Lucia Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1986, pp. 26-43; T. P. Boland, 'Duhig, Sir James, (1871-1965)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 8 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1981), pp. 356-359; James Duhig, *Crowded Years*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1947, p. 130; *Catholic Press*, 30 April 1914, p. 24; Brian Doyle, 'The Irish lad who became a legend', *Catholic Leader* (Brisbane), 15 April, 1965, supplement, p. 2
- 3 Jeff Kildea, *Tearing the fabric, sectarianism in Australia, 1910-1925*, Sydney: Citadel Books, 2002, p. ii.
Sectarianism is an underexplored subject in Australian history, perhaps more particularly in Queensland history. Solid foundations for further research have been laid by Kildea and Michael Hogan (*The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History*, Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1987). See also Brian Costar, 'For the love of Christ Mick, Don't Hit Him', in Brian Costar, Peter Love & Paul Strangio eds., *The Great Labor Schism: A Retrospective*, Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2005, pp. 59-75; Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, David Symons, *Made in Queensland: A New History*, UQP, St Lucia Qld, 2009, pp. 105-6 and Siobhan McHugh, 'Not In Front of the Altar': Mixed marriages and sectarian tensions between Catholics and Protestants in pre-multicultural Australia', *History Australia*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2009, pp. 42.1-42.22
- 4 Patrick O'Farrell, 'Double Jeopardy: Catholic and Irish', *Humanities Research*, Vol. xii, No. 1, 2005, pp. 7-12
- 5 Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'Brisbane's Most Brilliant Club'? The Queensland Irish Association, 1898-1928, paper delivered to the 'The Ends of Ireland' conference of the Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Friday, 6 December, 2013
- 6 *Catholic Press*, 1 October 1908, p. 6; 22 April 1915, p. 19; 25 February 1926, p. 32
- 7 James Duhig, *Crowded Years*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1947, pp. 7, 131; William Redmond, *Through the New Commonwealth*, Sealy, Byers and Walker, Dublin, 1906, pp. 101, 111; *Brisbane Courier*, 21 January 1905, p. 4; 6 December 1905, p. 3; 16 March 1923, p. 7; *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 11 December 1905, p. 5 *Catholic Press*, 5 December 1918, p. 20; Sr. Mary Claver, 'Veteran nun has long memories of Archbishop Duhig', *Catholic Leader* (Brisbane), 15 April 1965, Archbishop Duhig memorial supplement, p. 6
- 8 *Catholic Press*, 13 September 1906, p. 19; *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 22 August 1911, p. 5
- 9 Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'Brisbane's Most Brilliant Club'
- 10 *Catholic Press*, 30 August 1906, p. 4; *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 8 September 1906, p. 11; *Capricornian* (Rockhampton), 15 September 1906, pp. 42-44
- 11 *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 23 August 1911, p. 6; *Catholic Press*, 30 November 1911, p. 4
- 12 *Catholic Press*, 7 January 1904, p. 25; 27 January 1910, p. 39; *Catholic Press*, 18 December 1913, p. 23; *Worker*, 16 November 1922, p. 10; J. J. Leahy, 'Address: The Late P J McDermott, President, Queensland Irish Association', Brisbane: Queensland Irish Association, 1923;
- 13 *Catholic Press*, 16 July 1914, p. 25; *Brisbane Courier*, 17 March 1915, p. 6; 31 May 1915, p. 9

- 14 *Catholic Press*, 3 September 1914, p. 24; 10 September 1914, p. 24; 12 August 1915, p. 26; *Brisbane Courier*, 21 May 1914, p. 8; 3 August 1914, p. 7; 23 January 1915, p. 6; *Catholic Advocate*, 3 February 1916, p. 12; *Freeman's Journal*, 1 April 1915, p. 9; Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'Brisbane's Most Brilliant Club'
- 15 P J McDermott to his wife, London, 2 May 1916; 23 May 1916; 12 June 1916; Peter Joseph McDermott Papers, OM75-01, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia; *Argus* (Melbourne), 19 April 1916, p. 9; *Queensland Times*, 29 April 1916, p. 9; *Queenslander*, 6 May 1916, p. 12; *Daily Mail* (Brisbane), 28 August, 1916, p. 6
- 16 Duhig was referring to the 1914 'Curragh Mutiny' when anti-Home Rule Anglo-Irish army officers in Ulster challenged the authority of the British government. See F.S. L. Lyons, 'The developing crisis, 1907-14' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.) *A New History of Ireland, Vol. 6, Ireland Under the Union, 1870-1921*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 140-1; *Brisbane Courier*, 11 May 1916, p. 7; *Catholic Press*, 14 September 1916, p. 20; 21 September 1916, p. 23; 6 May 1920, p. 41
- 17 William Gall, Diary, 7 September 1916, Cutting from *Catholic Advocate*, 7 September 1916, William Gall Collection, UQFL43, Fryer Library, University of Queensland
- 18 For the reception of the speeches in Brisbane see for example; *QPD* (Council), 27 September 1916, pp. 851-868; William Gall, Diary, 13 October 1916, William Gall Collection, UQFL43, Fryer Library, University of Queensland; Goold-Adams to Secretary of State for Colonies, Secret and Confidential Outward Despatches and Telegrams 1914-1921, 2, 17 December 1917, Series 12764, Item 17637, QSA; *Daily Mail*, 25 September 1916 p. 6; *Brisbane Courier*, 26 September 1916, p. 4; 27 February 1917, p. 6; 7 May 1917, p. 6; *Catholic Press*, 28 September 1916, p. 25; *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 20 October 1916, pp. 5, 6; *Daily Mail*, 19 September 1916, pp. 6, 8; 8 January 1917, p. 7; *Queenslander*, 14 April 1917, p. 40; Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'The Queensland Irish Association, 1898-1922: Symbols, Stresses and Successes', paper delivered to the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics History Seminars, University of Queensland, 28 September 2013
- 19 *Brisbane Courier*, 27 February 1917, p. 6; 3 March 1917, p. 6; *QPD* (Council), 27 September 1916, pp. 864-5; *Catholic Press*, 5 March 1925, p. 9; Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'The Queensland Irish Association, 1898-1922'
- 20 T.P. Boland, *James Duhig*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia Qld, 1986, pp. 153, 174; Rodney Sullivan, 'William Lennon (1849-1938): a North Queenslander of 'perpetual contradictions'?', *Sir Robert Philp Lecture Series*, Number 4, Townsville: Townsville City Council, 2009, pp. 53-4; *Brisbane Courier*, 19 February 1920, p. 7; 17 March 1920, p. 7; 31 July 1920, p. 5; *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 August 1920, p. 42
- 21 *Catholic Advocate*, 3 February 1916, p. 12; *Catholic Press*, 7 March 1918, p. 16; 18 April 1918, p. 16; 8 April 1920, p. 13; *Daily Mail* (Brisbane), 18 March 1919, p. 7; Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'The Queensland Irish Association, 1898-1922'. Father Denis Martin has argued the case for Mannix's 'powerful influence' in Queensland up until the 1950s in DW Martin, 'Irish Queenslanders and Dr Mannix', *Queensland History Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 4, February 2011, pp. 276-282
- 22 Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'The Queensland Irish Association, 1898-1922'; Judith Brett, 'Class, religion and the Foundation of the Australian Party System: A Revisionist Interpretation', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2002, pp. 43, 52; Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, p. 199
- 23 *The Age* (Brisbane), 27 March 1920, p. 6

MONSIGNOR JAMES MEANY, *THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY* AND *2SM*

Bridget Griffen-Foley*

By the new millennium, Monsignor James Meany (1879-1953) had made his way onto the list of possibilities for what was colloquially known as a ‘missing persons’ volume of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (*ADB*). In 2001 I was invited to write the 750-word entry on Meany, described as ‘founder 2SM “Catholic Weekly”’, for what was now entitled the *ADB Supplement*.¹ The Irish-born Meany was best-known for four things: Diocesan Inspector of Schools in Sydney; parish priest of St Mark’s, Drummoyne; founder and first managing director of Australia’s only Catholic radio station, *2SM*; and chairman of the *Catholic Weekly*. My research on Meany and *2SM* would provide a foundation for my chapter on religious broadcasting in *Changing Stations: The Story of Australian Commercial Radio*,² a particularly challenging chapter to undertake as there had been little sustained or published work on the history of religious broadcasting (particularly commercial broadcasting) in Australia.³ In this article I present an overview of Meany’s involvement with the press and radio from the 1920s to the 1950s.

James Meany was born on 17 May 1879 at Knockasnuff, Blarney, County Cork, the son of John Meany, a farmer and publican. He was educated at the National School in Blarney, Presentation Brothers’ College in Cork, and St Colman’s College in Fermoy. Meany was ordained at All Hallows’ College, Dublin, on 24 June 1904.⁴

Father Meany arrived, as a 25-year-old, in Sydney in November 1904, serving

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- 1 Published as Bridget Griffen-Foley, ‘James Meany’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (*ADB Supplement*) (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005), pp. 271-72.
 - 2 Bridget Griffen-Foley, *Changing Stations: The Story of Australian Commercial Radio* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), ch. 6.
 - 3 The main radio studies to appear are: William B. Aliprandi, *God and Mammon: The Catholic Church and Commercial Broadcasting in Australia*, EdD thesis, Cornell University, 1974; J. L. F. Buchner, *Religious Broadcasting in Australia*, MA (Hons) thesis, School of English and Linguistics, Macquarie University, 1989; Patrick William Godman, *Religious Organization and Broadcasting in Australia 1923 to 1943*, MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1990; Julia Croft, *From Mainstream to Multicultural: ABC Religious Programming 1932-1992*, BA thesis, Griffith University, 1992; Alison M. Healey, *Spirit and Substance: Religious Broadcasting on ABC Radio, 1941-91*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1993.
 - 4 J. A. Meany file, Sydney Archdiocesan Archives (SAA).

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as a curate at parishes in Leichhardt and Concord and then at St Mary's Cathedral. Quiet, practical and hard working, Meany was appointed Diocesan Inspector of Schools in 1910.⁵ In his diplomatic but insistent annual reports, Meany urged the schools to ensure that pupils completed their primary education by the age of fourteen so that they would be free to attend secondary school, and emphasised the need for more boys' schools and male religious teachers.⁶

In 1919 Meany became parish priest at Drummoyno, a position he retained until his death 34 years later.⁷ Commissioned to build a new church, St Mark's, he promised 'give me but a few weeks and I'll get matters going'.⁸ Archbishop Michael Kelly appointed Meany a Parish Priest Consultor and Diocesan Assessor in 1920 and a member of the advisory committee of Sancta Sophia College at the University of Sydney in 1925. Meany later became chairman of the college and retained a personal interest in the students, even helping them in their choice of songs for musicals.⁹

Meany attended the International Eucharistic Congress in Chicago in 1926 as he was secretary of the organising committee for the 1928 Congress, to be held in Sydney for the first time.¹⁰ He decided to use the fledgling medium of radio for evangelical purposes, buying time on 2UE. The Catholic church had initially approached radio with wariness, if not downright hostility. When, in 1925, the *Catholic Press* responded to non-Catholic Churches using radio as a means of communication with the public, it may have had 2GB, controlled by the Theosophical Society, particularly in mind. The newspaper warned its readers:

*The dangers of faith that may come to Catholics from listening-in to non-Catholic expositions of religion over the radio are obvious ... Now that radio is gradually taking the place of reading in a great many homes, it is necessary to warn Catholics to be careful of being swayed by every wind and wave of doctrine that comes to them over the air.*¹¹

Three years later, in the months leading up to the 1928 Congress, 2UE broadcast lectures, as well as special services from St Mary's Cathedral. Meany arranged for a 36-year-old theologian, Rev. Dr Leslie Rumble, to do a weekly

5 Meany file, SAA; *Catholic Weekly* (CW), 25 June 1953, p. 1.

6 Information from Br J. J. Luttrell. See also Naomi Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 1 (North Blackburn, Vic.: CollinsDove, 1992), p. 237.

7 *CW*, 2 July 1953, p. 7.

8 *Freeman's Journal*, 6 November 1919, p. 22; *CW*, 25 June 1953, p. 2.

9 *CW*, 2 July 1953, pp. 7, 24.

10 *CW*, 25 June 1953, p. 1.

11 Naomi Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 2 (North Blackburn, Vic.: CollinsDove, 1992), p. 40.

broadcast explaining Catholic doctrine. At first the talks were too theological, but with Meany's encouragement Rumble gradually learned the art of popularisation and began carefully addressing questions sent in by listeners. These broadcasts were designed in part to challenge the hostility of some Protestant groups, which were denouncing the Congress as 'worship of the wafer' and demanding that civic authorities ban the Eucharistic procession.¹²

The broadcast of the Congress itself represented one of the biggest logistical exercises yet attempted by the Australian broadcasting industry. Meany urged all Catholics to obtain a radio receiver wherever possible, remarking that broadcasting should in future be made an essential feature of Christian life. Amalgamated Wireless Australasia (AWA) installed six microphones at various points, from above the pulpit to amongst the congregation, so that listeners to 2UE and many other stations could hear the Congress' opening Mass.¹³

After these ambitious broadcasts, 2UE was happy to retain Rumble in his short weekly spots. Impressed by the interest in the Congress, Meany raised the finances to allow Archbishop Kelly to form the Catholic Broadcasting Company Ltd. When awarding the licence in 1931, the powerful secretary of the Postmaster-General's (PMG) Department, (later Sir) Harry P. Brown, reminded the licensees of a point he had been making for years: every station had a duty to 'cater for the entertainment and interest of listeners as a whole', not just one section of the community. Now Brown's comments coincided with his department's attempts to censor political talks at a time of considerable domestic and international turmoil, and with his own private worries about the way in which commercial stations were being used to broadcast 'propaganda' and 'extremist views'. The company secretary of what became 2SM sought to reassure Brown that purely religious broadcasts would be confined to Sundays.¹⁴ The station was also to provide an outlet for talks hostile to communism and sympathetic to fascism; not long after 2SM's launch in November 1931, Archbishop Kelly could be heard airing his admiration for Mussolini.¹⁵

That year, the debate about the merits or otherwise of religion on radio

12 *Wireless Weekly (WW)*, 3 February 1928, 4; 1 June 1928, 10; *Observer*, 17 September 1960, 7; *Catholic Weekly*, 26 February 1968, p. 14.

13 *WW*, 21 September 1928, p. 10; *The Story of the Twenty-Ninth International Eucharistic Congress* (Sydney: Smith & Julius, 1928), pp. 78-79.

14 Letters from H. P. Brown to William Ross, 2 June 1931, and from Ross to Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, 16 June 1931, Item 2SM File 1, Series MP522/1, National Archives of Australia, Victorian Archives Centre (NAA/Vic). See also letter from Brown to Sir John Reith, 16 September 1931, File 1A, E1/341/1, *BBC Written Archives Centre*, London.

15 Helen Macallan, *Communism on the Air* (Sydney: New South Wales Institute of Technology, 1982), p. 4.

revived. Wireless Weekly criticised religious broadcasters, particularly those on the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), for treating listeners as though they were merely eavesdroppers. A 'Farmer's Wife' declared that now, at the height of the Depression, she belonged solely to the 'Broadcast Church' as she found it difficult to physically attend services and her best clothes were sometimes a little shabby. This testimony was all the more reason, declared Wireless Weekly, for more thought to be given to religious broadcasts. Several ministers agreed with common listener complaints: sermons were tedious and uninspiring, hymns were not well-known, ministers moved about too much to be heard. None, however, was persuaded by the proposal that services should be broadcast from studios rather than churches. But nor did what might have been a predictable argument—that religious broadcasts would reduce church attendances—gain much currency. (Even so, one listener sneered at 'deeply religious individuals' who opted to listen in rather than put money on the plate).¹⁶ A Perth radio periodical, remarking that religious broadcasters deserved to 'feel like the Jesus of Galilee preaching to the multitude', wondered whether talks, sermons, orchestral music or hymns were the most appropriate fare.¹⁷

Religious ministers mostly shared Meany's enthusiasm for the medium, with Rev. W. J. Grant declaring that broadcasting gave preachers the 'opportunity of a lifetime to put a message over'. Australian Radio News editorialised that radio 'is greater as a means of touching the consciences and hearts of the people ... than that of any other engine the world has known. The radio is the universal teacher and preacher ...'.¹⁸

Several churches were determined not to let this opportunity go to waste. The NSW Council of Churches obtained a licence for 2CH in 1931, with (later Sir) Frederick Stewart, a prominent businessman and Member of Parliament, providing the financial backing. Stewart, who announced at the 1932 opening that the station's mission was 'to educate, to evangelise, and to edify', gave over Sunday to the churches, and also allocated free time for daily devotions from Monday to Saturday. When AWA acquired the lease in 1936, the churches retained entitlements to free time.¹⁹

2SM also steadily built on its Sunday night religious programming, broadcasting sessions on church doctrine and history, reading Catholic news from international

16 *WW*, 27 February 1931, p. 14; 6 March 1931, p. 3; 27 March 1931, p. 7; 29 May 1931, p. 9.

17 *Radio Program*, 15 November 1932, p. 8.

18 *WW*, 27 March 1931, p. 7; *Australian Radio News*, 1 June 1934, p. 1.

19 Sir Frederick Stewart Papers, Series 4, Folders 14-16, MS 7732, National Library of Australia (NLA).

journals, and covering special religious events. Meany, as managing director, co-ordinated appeals for charities and single-handedly ran the extended Good Friday and Christmas Day sessions.²⁰ In Melbourne, the formidable Archbishop Daniel Mannix, pressured by the Jesuits, supported a Catholic Hour on 3AW, but not the idea of a Catholic station. Mannix opened the first Catholic Hour on 14 April 1932. Father Albert Power SJ delivered the first of a series of lectures, explaining that the program aimed to ‘supply information—reliable information—about the Catholic Church; both her external activities and her internal life’. The Catholic Hour also provided a ‘Question Box’ segment, conducted by a priest, to which listeners of any denomination could send any question for a brief and frank answer.²¹

But it was another radio ‘Question Box’ that was to have a far greater impact. In 1931 Dr Rumble and Father John Thompson CM, another able controversialist, transferred from *2UE* to *2SM*. *Dr Rumble’s Question Box* became the most famous religious program on Australian radio until his retirement in 1968. Using plain language and short sentences, and avoiding rhetoric, each hour-long program on a Sunday night addressed ten letters on a variety of themes, with Rumble asserting: ‘by listening-in to other people’s difficulties, you will find many of your own problems solved, apart from your interest in what fellow men are actually thinking’. He categorised his correspondents as Catholics looking for a deeper instruction in their faith, ‘careless Catholics’, and non-Catholics. A convert himself, Rumble was happy to answer questions from non-Catholics, on topics ranging from the priest’s vestments at Mass to the seal of the confessional. Some non-Catholics wrote to Rumble to acknowledge that their prejudices had been dispelled as a result of his program; others (up to 30 a month) informed him that they had converted to Catholicism. Rumble’s replies were published each week in Catholic newspapers across Australia and in 1934 inspired the publication of *Radio Replies*. As Meany wrote in his introduction, ‘A thing is heard on the air and it is gone on the air’. Rumble’s various collections, published over decades, sold millions of copies worldwide, particularly in the United States, and became popular, religious quasi-encyclopaedias.²²

In July 1936 the Anglican Primate of Australia, Archbishop Henry Le Fanu, suggested that the ABC should adopt the practice of the British Broadcasting

20 *2SM* annual reports and correspondence, 1930-1950, Box O135, SAA.

21 Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 2, p. 41.

22 Brian Maher, ‘John Christopher Thompson’, *ADB*, vol. 16 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), p. 383; Edmund Campion, ‘Leslie Audoen Rumble’, *ADB*, vol. 16 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), pp. 150-1; *CW*, 12 June 1958, p. 23; 26 February 1968, p. 14; Dr Rumble, *Radio Replies* (Sydney: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, 1934), pp. ix-xv.

Company (BBC) by arranging and broadcasting church services suggested by a united Christian body. Although the proposal received some support from Christian circles, and the ABC was prepared to consider it, the Catholic hierarchy declined to participate on grounds explained by Meany:

*Non-denominational religion ... is like something filtered—no bones, no structure, no positive philosophy; just a hotch-potch of various and sometimes opposing tenets, thrown together like a dog's breakfast. Definitely, we would never have anything to do with non-denominational religious broadcasting ... We have fixed for us by Rome, two or three broadcasting rules which we must abide by. For instance, we must never broadcast prayers, such as morning or evening prayers, or the Rosary. Nor must we broadcast ordinary devotions, such as the Benediction, or even Mass—except when it is a High Mass or a sung Mass. Definitely, as far as radio listeners are concerned, the radio reception of Mass never fulfils the obligation of those bound to assist at the Mass.*²³

A year later, in 1937, Meany surveyed a decade of Catholic broadcasting in Australia. He contentedly told *Radio Pictorial of Australia* that there had been no falling off in church attendances, partly because practising Catholics were obliged to attend Mass; listening in allowed people to quietly listen to and think about the word of God and appreciate the musical beauty of Mass.²⁴

World War II brought both tighter regulatory control over, as well as new opportunities for, religious broadcasting. In September 1939 Meany, who had admiringly described Rumble's style as 'piquant' and 'provocative', wrote to Archbishop Norman Gilroy to express some concerns about the session. Possibly alluding to Rumble's stance on Mussolini, Meany wondered whether the federal government might feel that the session was 'stirring up strife in the community' when unity of all was called for. But the session was not taken off air, and over the next twelve months there was a 10 per cent increase in religious programming on 2SM. Listeners heard daily prayers for victory and peace, as well as talks by Gilroy and wartime appeals. Meany proposed that Gilroy quote 'What Shall I Do for the Land that Bred Me', a poem by the British poet and Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins, and consider options for postwar reconstruction. In 1940 Meany credited to this additional religious programming, with its patriotic overtones, an unexpectedly large growth in 2SM's audience.²⁵

When the parliamentary Gibson Committee delivered its report in 1942, it was

23 *Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, 17 July 1936, p. 11.

24 *Radio Pictorial of Australia (RPA)*, 1 August 1937, p. 7.

25 Memos from Meany to Norman Gilroy, 3 and 5 September 1939, 16 December 1940, File: J. A. Meany, also File 2SM, Box O135, SAA. See also Meany's introduction to Rumble, *Radio Replies*.

clear that the anxiety created by Australia's participation in the war was responsible, at least in part, for the view that religious (by implication Christian) broadcasting was now a force for good and should be encouraged. Christian teaching, the report concluded, was 'of great importance to national morale and national development'.²⁶

Meany had become a Monsignor in 1929, but preferred to be known simply as 'Father'.²⁷ He was a courteous and dignified man who won the devotion of all who worked under him.²⁸ There was a real sense of family at 2SM, where Meany's duties extended to celebrating the marriages of employees, such as those of the popular announcers Dom Harnett and Doreen McKay.²⁹



Monsignor Meany at 2SM announcer Dom Harnett's wedding, September 1938.

Source: Radio Pictorial of Australia, 1 October 1942, p. 22

Meany was constantly called upon to fulfil administrative roles in the service of the church. He was Chancellor of the archdiocese from 1937 to 1944 and became a Diocesan Consultor in 1942.³⁰ A fine athlete and skilled golfer, he accepted the presidency of St Michael's Golf Club, in Little Bay, on its formation in 1939. Overseeing membership and fund-raising drives, Meany helped to put the club on a sound financial footing.³¹ He was appointed chaplain of the Catholic Club in 1941 and subsequently joined the board of the Catholic Club Land and Building Company.³² He attended screenings at the Commonwealth Film Censor's Office³³ and represented Catholic schools on the

National Fitness Council and the soldiers' children's section of the Repatriation Department.³⁴

26 *Report of the Joint Committee on Wireless Broadcasting, 1942*, pp. 7, 53, 60-1.

27 *CW*, 25 June 1953, p. 1.

28 William Keane SJ to Norman Gilroy, 23 June 1953, Meany file, SAA. This file contains scores of other tributes of a similar nature.

29 *RPA*, 1 October 1942, pp. 22-23.

30 Meany file, SAA. Also *CW*, 25 June 1953, p. 1.

31 *Daily Telegraph*, 5 April 1940, p. 1; *CW*, 25 June 1953, p. 1, 2 July 1953, p. 24.

32 Meany file, SAA. *CW*, 2 July 1953, p. 24.

33 Meany to I. G. McKay, 25 August 1936, Meany file, SAA.

34 Meany to Norman Gilroy, 15 October 1946, Meany file, SAA..

By now Meany's media interests extended well beyond 2SM. In 1935 he was appointed a director of the Catholic Press. It had first appeared in 1895, the result of a meeting of clergy which had decided to purchase the rights to the Irish-Australian newspaper. The Catholic Press was, with the more established The Freeman's Journal, one of two weekly Catholic newspapers in New South Wales. Under the editorship of Tighe Ryan, the Catholic Press was militant, fearless and uncompromising, particularly in its opposition to conscription, and it was loathed by Billy Hughes.³⁵ In 1917 its board of directors consisted of some four priests and three laymen; bishops and priests made up nearly half of the 169 shareholders. According to Naomi Turner, this was an unusually high investment by clergy in a Catholic newspaper.³⁶

In 1930 Archbishop Kelly opened new, three-story premises in Surry Hills, but within a few years the *Catholic Press* was somewhat moribund. By 1941 or 1942 the board was concerned that the newspaper was 'failing to succeed in reaching the goal or objective for which it was established, i.e., entry into and influence upon the Catholic home, and failing to make ends meet in the ordinary commercial enterprise sense'.³⁷

In 1942 Meany oversaw the amalgamation of the *Catholic Press* with the *Freeman's Journal* to create the *Catholic Weekly*, the official organ of the Sydney diocese.³⁸ He recruited as editor James Michael Kelleher, formerly a journalist in Brisbane and chief sub-editor of the *South*



Wireless Weekly, August 26, 1938

35 CW, 29 June 1950, p. 30.

36 Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 2, p. 34.

37 CW, 29 June 1950, p. 30. *Catholic Press* board meeting, n.d. [1941], E2734, SAA.

38 CW, 25 June 1953, p. 1; *Newspaper News*, 1 July 1953, p. 28.

China Morning Post. Kelleher was a gifted layout artist, sub-editor and writer of taut prose and pithy headlines. A bright, modern pictorial tabloid made its debut on 5 March 1942. The *Catholic Weekly* featured local and international news, social reports, regular columns, statements from Gilroy, and pages for women and children. Many unnamed 'special correspondents' filled its pages beside regular columnists like Dr Rumble, who wrote the apologetics, Monsignor Leonard Toomey's news

from the Catholic Youth Organisation, and sport penned by 2SM commentator, and former Rugby League player, Frank Hyde. By mid-1943 the loss of £50 per week had become a profit of £50 per week.

The *Catholic Weekly* campaigned for state aid for Catholic schools and implacably opposed communism. In 1949, the year Meany became chairman of the Catholic Press Newspaper Company, Gilroy wrote to him to express some concern about the nature of headlines and the placement of articles. Headlines, he advised, should 'always be on something enabling, religious, spiritual ... Vice and sin should not have headlines even in condemnation. At least that is my view'. In 1950, marking a century of



The Catholic Weekly, Thursday March 5, 1942

Catholic journalism, Gilroy wrote to Kelleher:

The task of the Catholic journal is to be dauntless in stating the truth,

*fearless in refusing error but charitable, as becomes an auxiliary of the Church established by our divine Lord, in everything written in its pages. I pray that the 'Catholic Weekly' will successfully continue to fulfil its divine mission.*³⁹

By this time the *Catholic Weekly's* sales were double those of the combined circulation of its predecessors.⁴⁰

Meany had to relinquish some of his duties in the late 1940s as his health was failing.⁴¹ Still, in around 1950, Cardinal Gilroy asked Meany to help conduct a secret investigation into the activities of the Catholic Social Studies Movement.⁴² When his doctor advised him to take a six-month break in 1951, Meany remained on the boards of 2SM and the *Catholic Weekly*.⁴³

The Broadcasting Act 1948 provided that a new statutory body, the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB), would be responsible for ensuring that 'divine worship or other matter of a religious nature' was broadcast for adequate periods and at appropriate times.⁴⁴ The notebooks of the board's Director of Program Services, Adrian Jose, indicate that this requirement was a source of frustration for some station managements. In 1952, for instance, Jose recorded that the free weekly spots on 4LG Longreach that rotated between various Protestant denominations were 'mostly badly handled'. The hymns supplied were 'scarce and deteriorating', the local clergy 'too unreliable'. When 4BK's manager, S. R. I. Clark, fronted the Royal Commission into Television in 1953, he reported that in his experience some religious bodies assured of free time made little attempt to 'train personnel in broadcasting technique'.⁴⁵

The Catholic Church was not aligned with the Christian Broadcasting Association, which was formed by some Protestant churches in 1953, for there had long been an element of sectarian rivalry on Australia's commercial airwaves. It was perhaps most marked in Sydney, where Rev. Thomas C. Hammond, principal of

39 Norman Gilroy to Meany, 9 December 1949; Gilroy to James M. Kelleher, E3105, SAA.

40 *CW*, 8 October 2000, pp. 14-15.

41 Meany to Norman Gilroy, 28 January 1948, Meany file, SAA.

42 Bruce Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy: Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001), p. 170.

43 Meany to Norman Gilroy, 4 June 1951, Meany file, SAA.

44 B. G. Cole, *The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia Since 1948*, PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 1966, p. 337.

45 Adrian Jose Papers, Series 5, Folder 5, Station Inspections 1952, 4LG, MS 7702, NLA.

Moore Theological College and a trenchant Anglican, was heard on 2CH. A digest of his talks was published as *The Case for Protestantism*, with chapter headings like 'Why We Reject Transubstantiation' and 'Blunders of the Pope'. Eventually by popular demand the broadcast schedule was arranged so that Hammond and Rumble did battle at the same time on Sunday nights; ironically, the two programs on 2CH and 2SM shared the same AWA transmitter.⁴⁶ Another policeman on the lookout for 'pre-Reformation antics' and 'Marxist and Roman items' was Rev. Bernard Judd, a Church of England minister who in 1942 began hosting morning devotionals, followed by forthright commentaries, on 2CH.⁴⁷ One listener wrote to the ABCB in 1952 to say that although she liked *Dr Rumble's Question Box*, she was fed up with the way different denominations had turned 'religious broadcasting into a competition [for] who can 'howl the others down'.⁴⁸

Some Catholic broadcasting centred on popular displays of piety: in 1953 4BK's racing commentator, Tom Foley, compered the 'Living Rosary' ceremony, involving 6000 children from every Catholic school in Brisbane.⁴⁹ In Melbourne, Archbishop Mannix set up an organisation called 'Catholic Radio Programmes', with a Father Miller at the helm. By 1953 it was producing recordings which were being regularly broadcast in six dioceses. However, Mannix now felt that the issue of Catholic broadcasting was of such importance that it needed to be addressed by bishops across Australia. Just a few years after the formation of the ABCB, some form of Catholic broadcast was being regularly undertaken at only 61 commercial stations, meaning that there was no significant Catholic presence on the other 42 stations. As the introduction of television approached, the Catholic hierarchy of New South Wales proposed the formation of a central body to represent Catholic thought in the field of broadcasting.⁵⁰

These deliberations coincided with significant changes at 2SM.⁵¹ On 23 June

46 *SMH*, 16 December 1967; Warren Nelson, *T. C. Hammond: Irish Christian*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), pp. 117-118.

47 Letter from Rev. Bernard Judd to Broadcasting Committee, 28 February 1972, File: Broadcasting Committee, Box 2, NSW Council of Churches Records, IRN 412494, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.

48 Letter from Phyllis Ryner to J. O'Kelly, 28 August 1952, Item BF/3/1 PART 1, Series MP1170/3, NAA/Vic.

49 David Hilliard, 'Popular religion in Australia in the 1950s: A study of Adelaide and Brisbane', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 16 (December 1988), p. 224.

50 'Broadcasting', agenda item for meeting of Hierarchy of New South Wales, 8 April 1953, Box F1311, SAA.

51 The following discussion is based on 2SM annual reports and correspondence, 1953-1956, Box O1315, SAA. See also *CW*, 25 June 1953, pp. 1-2; *SMH*, 4 July 1953, p. 4; 8 July 1953, p. 5.

The Catholic Weekly

WITH WHICH ARE INCORPORATED "THE CATHOLIC PRESS" AND "THE CATHOLIC FREEMAN'S JOURNAL."
Business Office: 118-119 Coleridge Street, Sydney.
Vol. XII, 1953. (Published at the G.P.O. Sydney, for circulation by post as a newspaper.) SYDNEY, THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 1953. (PRICE: 10 PENCE PER COPY.)

DEATH OF MONSIGNOR MEANY
Founder Of Station 2SM And "Catholic Weekly"

"THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY" RECORDS WITH PROFOUND SORROW THE DEATH OF ITS
FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN OF DIRECTORS, THE RIGHT REV. MONSIGNOR JAMES
MEANY, P.P.

One of Australia's outstanding priests, Monsignor Meany was also the founder and managing director of Radio Station 2SM and parish priest of the Sydney suburb of Drummoyno.

In 1928 he won an international reputation as organizing secretary of the first and only International Eucharistic Congress to be held in Australia.

His death, which followed a series of heart attacks during the last few years, occurred in his office at Station 2SM on Tuesday, June 23. On the previous afternoon he had presided at a directors' meeting in the "Catholic Weekly" office. That was familiar to those acquainted with that building "as it happens."

With him, whom the last field address survived was the Rev. Dr. Thomas McMahon, M.A., the permanent staff of St. Patrick's College, Manly.

Dr. McMahon immediately assisted Monsignor Meany and arranged his funeral.

Although the Monsignor's health has been failing rapidly for the last few months, his death came as a shock to the staffs of 2SM and "The Catholic Weekly."

Many recall when they heard the news. Four Monsignor Meany was in the office and some a "Father" to all his employees.

He met all their problems by word and deed that the best possible conditions of employment possible.

All Hallow's Priest

There is a County Irish, Ireland, on May 19, 1879, Monsignor Meany was educated in local Catholic schools and then went on to the famous All Hallow's College in Dublin, his studies for the priesthood.

Throughout his long private life, he would have celebrated his sacerdotal golden jubilee were it not for a deep loss he his wife and the Transient Friars who trained him.

He was recognized as the leading All Hallow's man among the clergy of Australia and on more than one occasion he organized highly successful National events for the furtherance of the work of that great university.

Deceased at All Hallow's on June 24, 1954, Father Meany came to Australia late in the same year.

He served for short periods at Leichhardt and Concord and in 1946, the late Cardinal Moran brought him to the staff of St. Mary's Cathedral.

In 1950, Father Meany was given the field of many popular diocesan activities when he became Inspector of Catholic Schools.

Archbishop Kelly, who succeeded the Cardinal in 1951, gave Monsignor Meany the high honor in which he is reported Father Meany. Throughout his long apostolate he had been known by the title and loved to him usually the title.

Almost every diocesan post, except that of Inspector of Schools, had one time or another been held by Monsignor Meany.

He was General Archdeacon for many years in one of the Archdiocesan Councils and a General Secretary. He was one of the original members of



THE LATE MONSIGNOR MEANY

He was a member of the Catholic Church Trust. He was Chairman of the Archdiocese, and since 1942 he was a Diocesan Councillor.

While Sydney was honored by being selected as the venue for the International Eucharistic Congress in 1928, Monsignor Meany was appointed secretary of the organizing committee.

Congress Organizer

To prepare himself for the great task, he attended the 1928 Congress at Chicago, and it was on his report of this great event that the Sydney organizations were planned.

The Congress was, of course, successful beyond even the most optimistic hopes of Archbishop Kelly, who truly acknowledged that a great share of the credit belonged to the organizing secretary.

In the following year, the Holy Father himself expressed his pleasure and gratitude by appointing Father Meany a District Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

It was an indication of the esteem bestowed on him that he never used the title when

referring to himself. It was his wish to be known simply as "Father Meany" and none of his intimate friends ever called him anything else.

It was his work in connection with the Eucharistic Congress that aroused Monsignor Meany's interest in broadcasting.

First of all, he visited here on Station 2SM for Congress publicity and then arranged for Dr. Bonaldi to do a series of broadcasts explaining the Catholic position with regard to the question of the Eucharist.

Amazed at the interest created by the local weekly among Monsignor Meany, one that public interest in the Catholic religion could be satisfied by reading lines on commercial stations. He then determined to establish a Catholic broadcasting station, and about a year he had raised the necessary finance.

After encountering many obstacles, Monsignor Meany eventually secured a broadcasting licence and the Catholic Weekly, which had been founded the month which put 2SM on the air for the first time.

Active Till Death

It is said that the Monsignor Meany continued to be active until the station and his last task completed only an hour or so before his death, was the organization of the station's Sunday night programme.

The work which will go into operation on September 1, involves the introduction of many of the best Catholic programmes currently being broadcast in the U.S.A.

Station 2SM has made considerable preparations to first broadcast, and more than 1000 have taken place, but one feature has been a tradition—Christmas Day and Good Friday were reserved exclusively to the Managing Director. With the assistance of only one engineer, he ran the radio station, and the majority of the programme on those days were hundreds of representative letters from all parts of Australia and New Zealand.

From his very commencement, Monsignor Meany made 2SM an instrument for the advancement of every Catholic activity in the Sydney Diocese.

Thousands of people were raised to enlightenment, particularly St. Anthony's School, and they were open to Education Day as almost done was launched on behalf of the station during the 100th day and probably the annual broadcast.

The victory of the Little Company of Mary at Loughborough Hospital was the central theme of Monsignor Meany, and he organized the annual appeal for the New Home.

(Continued on Page 2.)

1953, Monsignor Meany collapsed and died in his office. Just an hour before his death, reported the *Catholic Weekly*, the 74-year-old had finalised plans for the reorganisation of Sunday night programming, involving the introduction of some popular Catholic programs from the United States. This anodyne statement obscured the ugliness of a situation that was developing at the station. As a committee of inquiry led by Bishop James Carroll would later report, 'Meany's name was regarded generally as being interchangeable' with that of 2SM. Meany's position as managing director had been

The Catholic Weekly, Thursday June 25, 1953

ambiguous as he had generally not exercised the duties of a chief executive, leaving the management of the station to the general manager. At the same time he had passed on little information to the board of directors, a group of people lacking much expertise in broadcasting and found by the inquiry to be a 'rubber stamp'.

When Meany had asserted himself in administration, wrote Carroll, a clash with the general manager, B. B. Stapleton, had developed. It was not entirely clear whether Meany's plan for more American religious programming was the sole trigger for the deterioration in their relations. The day after a board meeting, Meany

dropped dead. Rev. Dr Muldoon, who was with him in his office, administered the last rites. There is a hint that all may not have been well at the *Catholic Weekly*, either, with both Gilroy and Meany questioning, in 1952, whether the staff and plant were being used to full advantage.

On 25 June 1953,⁵² 3000 people from the religious, media and business communities attended Meany's requiem mass, which was celebrated by Cardinal Gilroy and broadcast on *2SM*. The mass was held at St Mark's, Drummoyne, the church he himself had built; just a few weeks earlier, he had opened a new parish school there. The *Catholic Weekly*'s reports on the funeral, and its published tributes, ran to four full pages. Meany's estate, sworn for probate at £12,372 and consisting principally of shares in *2SM*, was left largely for the maintenance of primary schools and the benefit of pupils in Drummoyne.⁵³ He was survived by a sister in Bellevue Hill, and a brother in England.⁵⁴

On 30 June 1953, exactly a week after Meany's death, Muldoon, the acting managing director (whose nickname was 'The Bull'),⁵⁵ called a special board meeting at which he tabled a report that was 'read in shocked silence'. Although the report has not survived, it seems that there was concern that the station was stagnating as no new program had been introduced for several years and ratings were low. Stapleton angrily agreed to the request that he resign, and five other employees quit in sympathy.

With another general manager, Kevin Byrne, Muldoon set about introducing new programs and revamping the advertising department. In 1955 the station reported a record profit of £17 407. But still all was not well behind the scenes, resulting in Carroll's inquiry. At the heart of the problem was the delineation of responsibilities between the (priest) managing director and the (lay) general manager, an issue that the board had never satisfactorily faced. In 1955-56 the committee recommended that the position of managing director be abolished and the administration of the station be left to the general manager. Gilroy and the board assented to the recommendations, which concluded that 'broadcasting is a highly specialised business and ... a priest's qualifications are not such as to equip him for this role'. From now on a priest who served on the board, probably as chairman, was to exercise full authority in the making of religious broadcasts and 'promote a good spiritual atmosphere at *2SM*'. This meant that Sydney's two religious stations—*2CH* and *2SM*—were in the hands of secular managers, with ordained ministers

⁵² *SMH*, 24 June 1953, p. 28.

⁵³ *SMH*, 7 October 1953, p. 8.

⁵⁴ *CW*, 2 July 1953, p. 7; *SMH*, 24 June 1953, p. 28.

⁵⁵ John Carmody, 'Thomas William Earle Muldoon', *ADB*, vol. 18 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2012), p. 188.

largely confined to co-ordinating religious programming.

Monsignor James Meany had played a key role in pioneering and developing religious broadcasting in Australia. The commercial station he founded, and ran for 25 years, was the only Catholic station to emerge anywhere in Australia. He had also presided over the creation of the *Catholic Weekly*, which remains the newspaper of the Sydney archdiocese. But by the time of his death in 1953, the role of the managing director versus the general manager, and indeed the contribution that ordained priests could or should make, was being debated at 2SM. After dominating popular music ratings in the 1970s, new competitors helped to induce a ratings slide in the 1980s, and the archdiocese sold the station to Wesgo in 1992. This brought to an end a singular, 60-year experiment in Catholic broadcasting in Australia.

So what of Meany himself? In 1936, he had explained: ‘To me God is a pure spirit, incorporeal, but try as I may I fail to conceive the immaterial without in some way giving it material form’.⁵⁶ However, he had come to feel some ambivalence about his secular responsibilities, which for decades had centred on, but not been limited to, the media. In 1950 he suggested to Cardinal Gilroy that monsignori wear their robes at all times; he was a poor example and ‘the worst offender’, having convinced himself that in all the hurly burly of his commercial work ‘the purple’ was an embarrassment to others.⁵⁷

56 Meany to I. G. McKay, 25 August 1936, Meany file, SAA.

57 Meany to Norman Gilroy, 30 May 1950, Meany file, SAA.

CONVENT SLAVE LAUNDRIES? MAGDALEN ASYLUMS IN AUSTRALIA

James Franklin*

A staple of extreme Protestant propaganda in the first half of the twentieth century was the accusation of ‘convent slave laundries’. Anti-Catholic organs like *The Watchman* and *The Rock* regularly alleged extremely harsh conditions in Roman Catholic convent laundries and reported stories of abductions into them and escapes from them.¹

In Ireland, the scandal of Magdalen laundries has been the subject of extensive official inquiries.² Allegations of widespread near-slave conditions and harsh punishments turned out to be substantially true.³ The Irish state has apologized,⁴ memoirs have been written, compensation paid, a movie made.⁵ Something similar occurred in England.⁶

- 1 ‘Attack on convents’, *Argus* 21/1/1907, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/10610696>; ‘Abbotsford convent again: another girl abducted’, *The Watchman* 22/7/1915, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/111806210>; ‘Protestant Federation: Why it is needed: Charge of slavery in convents’, *Maitland Daily Mercury* 23/4/1921, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/123726627>; ‘Founder of “The Rock” at U.P.A. rally’, *Northern Star* 2/4/1947, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/99154812>.
- 2 Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (Ireland, 2009), ch. 18, <http://www.childabusecommission.ie/rpt/pdfs/CICA-VOL3-18.pdf>; Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee to establish the facts of State involvement with the Magdalen Laundries (McAleese Report, 2013), <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/MagdalenRpt2013>; summary at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/05/magdalene-laundries-ireland-state-guilt>
- 3 J.M. Smith, *Ireland’s Magdalen Laundries and the Nation’s Architecture of Containment* (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame Ind, 2007); older history in R.L. McCarthy, *Origins of the Magdalene Laundries: An analytical history* (McFarland, Jefferson NC, 2010). (Although the best-selling memoir of alleged abuse is apparently false: H. Kelly, *Kathy’s Real Story: A culture of false allegations exposed* (Prefect Press, Dunleer, 2007)).
- 4 Enda Kennedy’s State apology to the Magdalene women, 19/2/13, transcript at <http://www.thejournal.ie/full-text-enda-kenny-magdalene-apology-801132-Feb2013/>
- 5 The Magdalene Sisters (2002), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Magdalene_Sisters
- 6 R. Kollar, Magdalenes and nuns: convent laundries in late Victorian England, *Anglican & Episcopal History* 73 (2004), 309-334.

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What of Australia?

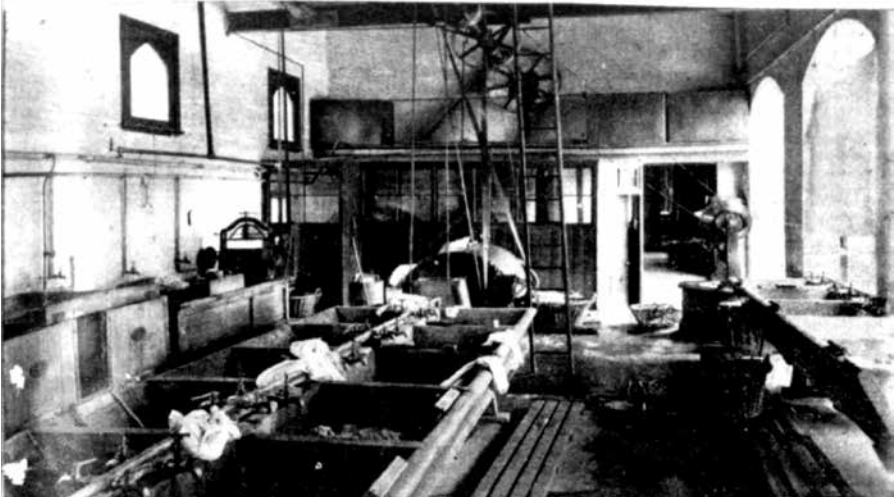
The convent laundry system

Australia did have a similar system. Conditions were indeed harsh, but it remains not easy to gain a just overview of what happened. Views conflict sharply. Apparently genuine memories of very oppressive conditions conflict with nun's recollections of their doing their best for difficult cases. This article aims to present both sides of the story.

Each Australian state capital had, from about the 1890s to the 1960s, a large convent which contained a commercial laundry where the work was done by mostly teenage 'fallen women' who were placed in the convent, voluntarily or involuntarily, for reasons such as being destitute, uncontrollable, picked up by the police and similar.⁷ Most were run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, an order that specialized in 'wayward' girls. They included the head house at Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne (1864-1974),⁸ with offshoots at Oakleigh and Albert Park,⁹ the Home of the Good Shepherd, Ashfield, Sydney (1913-1969),¹⁰ the Good Shepherd Convent, Mitchelton, Brisbane (1931-1978),¹¹ Mount Saint Canice, Sandy Bay, Hobart (1893-1974),¹² 'The Pines', North Plympton, Adelaide (1941-1974); the Home of the Good Shepherd, Leederville, Perth (1902-1979),¹³ and St Aidan's, Bendigo.¹⁴ Similar

- 7 A. Gill, 'Bad girls do the best sheets', *Sydney Morning Herald* 24/4/2003, <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/04/23/1050777303111.html>; also ABC Radio National documentary, 'Bad girls do the best sheets', 9/4/2001, <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/encounter/bad-girls-do-the-best-sheets/3479892>.
- 8 C. Kovesi, *Pitch Your Tents on Distant Shores: A History of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Tahiti* (Playwright Publishing, Caringbah, 2006, 2nd ed, 2010); Anon, *Abbotsford Centenary 1863-1963* (Collingwood, 1963), 'The Abbotsford convent and the Magdalen asylum', *Kilmore Free Press* 13/10/1881, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/57701643>. Photos of the present state of the building at <http://www.abbotsfordconvent.com.au/history-heritage/buildings>; a 2008 video tour at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIfJI-XGISo>
- 9 L. Schwartz, 'A local spin on the laundries of shame', *Age* 27/4/2003, <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/04/26/1051316051211.html>
- 10 Gill, 'Bad girls'; photos at <http://nma.gov.au/blogs/inside/collecting/photos/good-shepherd-dormitory-bed-making/>; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an24493557>; brief positive recollections of former workers in 'Home from home for five faithful ladies of Glenworth', *Sydney Morning Herald* 1/7/1981.
- 11 <http://mitchymemories.blogspot.com.au/2013/03/site-78-good-shepherd-convent-home-and.html>
- 12 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Saint_Canice
- 13 <http://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/wa/WE00100>; <http://annfreespirit.50megs.com/custom4.html>
- 14 A recollection at <http://nma.gov.au/blogs/inside/2011/08/19/the-nuns-thought-we-were-criminals/>

establishments run by other orders were those of the Good Samaritans in Sydney – Pitt Street (1857-1901), Manly (1881-1910) and St Magdalen's, Tempe (1888-1980),¹⁵ and St Joseph's in Adelaide, run by the St Joseph Sisters.¹⁶ Information on most of these is available in the two professional institutional histories of the orders, Christine Kovesi's *Pitch Your Tents on Distant Shores: A History of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Tahiti* and Margaret Walsh's *The Good Sams: Sisters of the Good Samaritan 1857-1969*.



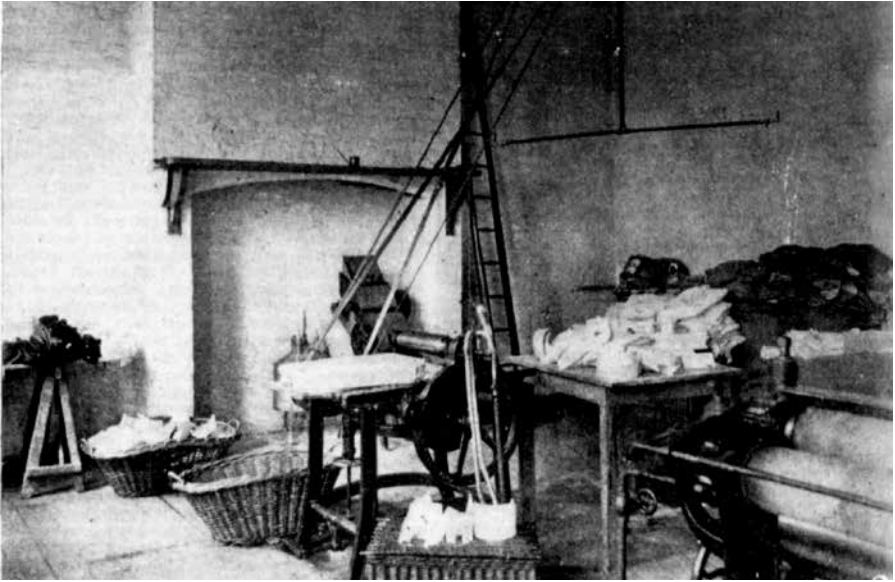
Interior of the laundry, St Magdalen's Retreat, Tempe, 1899¹⁷

They were large operations. In 1904, Abbotsford had about 366 'Magdalen penitents' (with another 154 at Albert Park), with 110 nuns (including novices) –

15 M. Walsh, *The Good Sams: Sisters of the Good Samaritan 1857-1969* (John Garratt Publishing, Mulgrave, 2001), 162-192; H. Taylor, 'The Magdalen refuge at Tempe', *Sydney Morning Herald* 20/1/1890, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/28276773>; 'Death of Rev. Mother Gertrude', *Freeman's Journal* 17/9/1898, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/115385376>; 'St Magdalene's Retreat, Tempe', *Australian Town and Country Journal* 10/6/1899, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/71329414> with photos at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/5321101>; records available in Records of Sisters of the Good Samaritan Convent, Arncliffe, 1877-1948 [microform] (W. & F. Pascoe Pty. Ltd., Balgowlah, for the Society of Australian Genealogists, 1982).

16 'St Joseph's Refuge', *The Register* 28/5/1903, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/55429124>

17 For both Interior of the laundry, St Magdalen's Retreat, Tempe, *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 10/6/1899, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/5321101/>



Interior of the laundry, St Magdalen's Retreat, Tempe, 1899

that did not count 310 children in the 'Industrial and Preservation' class and 290 in a day school for the surrounding area.¹⁸ At its height in the years after WWII, there were 1000 women and children (that includes the orphanage and other parts as well as the refuge) plus 120 nuns and novices.¹⁹

Laundry work was regarded as suitable as it did not need much training and made money without great capital expense. The moral point of it was explained by the head nun of Abbotsford about 1890:

the inmates are principally engaged in laundry work, this being, in the opinion of the sisters, the most suited to all, and calculated to occupy the mind and body, leaving little time for melancholy reflection on the past or anything except the work of reformation.²⁰

18 Kovesi, *Pitch Your Tents*, 206; also 'The Abbotsford convent', *Argus* 1/2/1907, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/10612917>.

19 <http://www.theage.com.au/news/in-depth/on-a-mission/2006/12/17/1166290410670.html>

20 Report of the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions 1890-91, p. 1272, quoted in J. Monk, *Cleansing their souls: laundries in institutions for fallen women*, *Lilith* 9 (1996), 21-32

Memories of harsh conditions

Memories of conditions in the convent laundries by those who were in them are overwhelmingly negative. The complaints detail a pattern of verbal abuse, shaming, lack of love and extremely hard work. Any one recollection might be put down as exaggerated, but the story is consistent.

An inmate of Abbotsford recalls:

We girls got up early, went to mass, came back, attended the refectory where we all had breakfast (such as it was) then we went to work. I was only a kid back then and didn't know better, I just accepted their slavery as normal! . . . We had a huge bath and toilet area. We had a bath once a fortnight from memory and even so the water we used had been used several times before we got in Y....UCKO! The crows, usually called auxiliaries, would drag us down there and beat the bejes-s out of us if some nun had a complaint against any of us. Never mind if it was true or not. Biff! Bash! And cop that! Until we grew older and now and then fought back.²¹

Typical are the memories of Janice Konstantinidis, an inmate of Mount Saint Canice in the 1960s (her recollections are printed in full in the accompanying article):

Other forms of punishment took the form of the extra cleaning of the dormitory floors. Used tea leaves were thrown over the floors, which we would then have to sweep and polish. There was a large, red cement hallway that ran through various areas of the home. Scrubbing this hallway while on my hands and knees was a job that I came to know well. It would take me over two hours, and I was expected to use a toothbrush for the grouted areas. I would be given this punishment for simply asking "why?", or for taking too long in the toilets. They did not consider the fact that I suffered from constipation and that hurrying was, therefore, impossible for me.²²

From 'The Pines', Plympton:

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- 21 <http://abbotsfordblog.com/memories-on-abbotsford-convent-on-an-ebay-discussion-forum/> A book of poems based on interviews of former Abbotsford residents (in various parts of the establishment): P. Sykes, *The Abbotsford Mysteries* (Spinifex Press, North Melbourne, 2011); a fictional version based on research in K. Greenwood, *Unnatural Habits: A Phyrne Fisher Mystery* (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2012).
- 22 J. Konstantinidis, *Life in "The Mag"*, National Museum of Australia online exhibition 'Inside: Life in children's homes', 2011, <http://nma.gov.au/blogs/inside/2011/02/28/life-in-the-mag/>. Another hostile account of Mount Saint Canice at <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/288361>

*The nuns' constant vilification branded us – as livestock are branded – by fire. We were treated as mere objects of contempt, there to earn our wretched keep in Magdalene Infernos around the world.*²³

And recalling the first day at 'The Pines':

*Mother Superior materialised. It was as though she glided into the room from out of nowhere, with her long black habit flowing all round her, she startled me. 'Your name will be Jane' she instructed. Then she opened THAT door which led to a concrete court yard. Before I could ask a single question the door was slammed and bolted behind me.*²⁴

From Leederville:

*It was a bugger of a life. The nuns were cruel. They belted us, hit us with bunches of keys and put us in straitjackets like Chinese dolls. I'm still deaf in one ear after a belting. I cut my plaits off so they couldn't pull me up by them. I was very miserable as a child.*²⁵

There are a few less negative comments. Victoria Stuart, who was in Mount Saint Canice from the ages of 15 to 18 in the early 1960s, found it an improvement after a very difficult time in a Salvation Army home, which followed a disturbed home life that included rape by a neighbour. She felt cared for by the nuns, saying 'the nuns did care about what happened to us' (though she resented the long hours of work without pay). She saw the wall around the convent as 'to stop blokes coming in', not to confine the girls. When she became pregnant later she returned to the nuns.²⁶

A reasonably positive view of Abbotsford may be inferred on the part of former laundry inmate Mrs Cecilia Ryan, who returned to stay temporarily at Abbotsford in 1967 at the time of the execution of her son Ronald Ryan.²⁷ (There are also some more positive memories from those in other parts of the complex, such as the orphanage.²⁸)

Almost entirely absent from the recollections are stories of sexual abuse and

23 <http://magdalenaundrytestimony.org/#/australian-magdalen-laundries/4576129509>; further in Rachael Romero's film *In the Shadow of Eden* (<http://www.nma.gov.au/audio/detail/rachael-romero-on-in-the-shadow-of-eden>); "The Pines" compared to a prisoner of war camp in Andrew Murray's Senate speech in 2008 (<http://www.forgottenaustralians.com/pdf/AUSTRALIANDEMOCRATSPEECHES.pdf>).

24 <http://nma.gov.au/blogs/inside/2011/04/19/in-the-beginning/>

25 <http://annfreespirit.50megs.com/custom4.html>

26 Victoria Stuart interviewed by Rob Willis in the *Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project*, 2011, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.oh-vn5751943>

27 Kovesi, *Pitch Your Tents*, 297.

28 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.oh-vn5717375>; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.oh-vn5017833>

of serious physical assaults and beatings²⁹ (although there are some memories of corporal punishment of the kind then common in schools, such as ‘They used to belt you with wet towels’³⁰). That agrees with the Irish experience, where there are almost no such allegations (contrary to some popular perceptions).³¹ In many cases, that contrasted with the girls’ lives before entry. The negative memories involve instead mental cruelty, confinement and very hard work.

Then, as in any underfunded institution, there was the food. ‘Breakfast [at Abbotsford] was luke-warm porridge with a slice of STALE bread. Lunch on the other hand was soup, with the morning’s left over porridge added for volume!’³² Regular doses of epsom salts are remembered with particular loathing.³³

One aspect of deprivation that may not be expected by modern readers was the silence. In accordance with the traditions of the nuns, work and much of the rest of the day proceeded in silence. Some of the allowed talk was strictly supervised. A visitor to the Tempe asylum in 1890 explains one purpose: ‘One great element of success in the system of the refuge is the impossibility of the relation of experiences among the inmates. When at work, or at meals, or in the dormitories, silence is compulsory. Proper periods are allowed for conversation, which is carried on in, and improved by, the presence of the nuns.’³⁴

Another aspect of the deprivation suffered by inmates was the very poor quality of education, or for more senior girls, the total lack of it. The visitor to Tempe, while praising all other aspects of it, ‘regretted to notice an absence of books or means of wholesome recreation’ (he is told that lack of money is the cause). One of those who made a submission to the Senate’s Forgotten Australians inquiry says she worked from the ages of 8 to 12 in Mount St Canice without any schooling.³⁵ That was of course illegal.

Other dangers of life in the homes included diseases and industrial accidents (which were of course common in outside workplaces too). Doris Dyer lost her

29 But one allegation of sexual abuse by other girls at Abbotsford at <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/former-residents-to-boycott-nuns-reunion-20130620-2olqm.html>; some memories of corporal punishment at Leederville: <http://annfreespirit.50megs.com/custom4.html>

30 Schwartz, ‘A local spin on the laundries of shame’.

31 McAleese report, ch. 19.

32 <http://abbotsfordblog.com/memories-on-abbotsford-convent-on-an-ebay-discussion-forum/>

33 Konstantinidis, *Life in “The Mag”*; <http://annfreespirit.50megs.com/custom4.html>;

34 Taylor, *The Magdalen Refuge at Tempe*.

35 Forgotten Australians, submission 182 (Report section 4.71); also in <http://magdalenelaundrytestimony.org/#/australian-magdalone-laundries/4576129509>

right arm in an accident with the mangle shortly after starting at the Leederville laundry in 1942 (she says the nuns treated her well afterwards).³⁶ Sister Mary of St Columba at Abbotsford badly injured her hand in the laundry machinery in 1889 and had to have it amputated; she “bore her cross with admirable fortitude, offering her sufferings for the conversion of our loved Penitents to whom she is so devoted.”³⁷ Physical effects of the heavy work could show up later: “I worked in the laundry. I did the slave child labour for them. I worked on the presses. I’m definitely paying for it now ... physically I’m just no good. I’m 56 and I can barely get around.”³⁸ Victoria Stuart at Mount Saint Canice believed her lungs were damaged by the high levels of bleach used on the laundry from the infectious diseases hospital.³⁹

Conditions of manual work were harsh everywhere, even if pay was better. Lynette Kluck, at Leederville in the 1950s, says she found the work just as hard later in a commercial laundry.⁴⁰

The alternative homes for girls in trouble no doubt varied but some were worse. The state-run Parramatta Girls Home, which also had a laundry, had similar harsh conditions but a worse record for assaults.⁴¹

Confinement and escape

A profound change in the nature of the institutions goes some way towards explaining what happened. They began as refuges but turned into prisons. In early years, there was emphasis on the freedom of inmates to leave, and the conditions from which inmates came were often not such as to invite return. The visitor to the Magdelene Asylum at Tempe in 1890 reported:

... the applicants shall be fallen women, and that they undertake to remain in the refuge for two years. There is nothing, however, in connection with the place, which is open on all sides, to compel them to keep this promise ... Upon my inquiring of several women, “Why do you stay here when you could earn good wages outside?” The reply was invariably “We are happy here; there is no temptation; we get plenty of everything; the sisters are good to us.”⁴²

36 <http://annfreespirit.50megs.com/custom4.html>

37 Kovesi, *Pitch Your Tents*, 157.

38 ‘Former residents to boycott nuns’ reunion’, *Age* 21/6/2013, <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/former-residents-to-boycott-nuns-reunion-20130620-2olqm.html>

39 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.oh-vn5751943>

40 <http://annfreespirit.50megs.com/custom4.html>

41 B. Djuric, *Abandon All Hope: A History of Parramatta Girls Industrial School* (Chargan My Book Publisher, Perth, 2011); earlier, N. Williamson, Laundry maids or ladies? Life in the Industrial and Reformatory School for Girls in NSW, Part II, 1887 to 1910, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 68 (1983), 312-324.

42 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20/1/1890, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/28276773> 79

The Good Shepherd order was originally founded to provide asylums to destitute women, that is, places of voluntary refuge in something the same way as modern women's refuges. They were only with some difficulty persuaded to expand their work to involuntary cases – Bishop Goold in Melbourne encountered resistance in 1864 when he asked the nuns at Abbotsford to add a Reformatory to their work, but succeeded in overcoming it.⁴³ The Good Samaritans faced the same problem. Their founder, Archbishop Polding, had visited an establishment in England what was 'prison-like with bars and locks', and rejected that model for New South Wales.⁴⁴ The Good Samaritans continued that policy for the early decades of their Magdalen institutions. But from 1907 they became involved with the Children's Court and accepted girls who were sentenced to custody for a fixed period. Those came to dominate the intake.⁴⁵

As the laundries came to be used as dumping grounds for girls picked up by the police, got rid of by their parents and step-parents, or sent on by jails and other institutions, they turned into penal institutions with locks, barred windows and walls. The attitudes of inmates followed suit: 'I was in Abbotsford and it was little more than a prison. There was no way to walk out the door, they were all locked. I was forcibly restrained more than once trying to get away.'⁴⁶ An institution where inmates are forcibly confined is very different from one full of the willing. It is necessarily full of resentment on the part of the inmates, many of whom are also the kind of people already resistant to authority and routine by the time of arrival. No-one loves their jailers.

As a counterpart, it is full of desperate and aggressive disciplinary strategies on the part of the (untrained) warders.

The context is that the mid-twentieth century was the high point of belief in the benefits of forcible institutionalization – of mental patients, removed aboriginal children, child migrants and others. In the twentieth century, some 500,000 children are believed to have undergone institutional care in Australia.⁴⁷

Inevitably, escapes and attempted escapes were frequent. Convent escape stories

43 Kovesi, *Pitch Your Tents*, 71.

44 Walsh, *The Good Sams*, 169.

45 Walsh, 172-4, 182.

46 <http://abbotsfordblog.com/catherine-kovesis-book-pitch-your-tents-on-distant-shores/>

47 A. Chynoweth, 'Let our histories be visible', *ReCollections* 7 (1) (2012), http://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/volume_7_number_1/commentary/let_our_histories_be_visible

were sometimes reported in the newspapers: Abbotsford in 1905,⁴⁸ Abbotsford again in 1920 and 1923,⁴⁹ from Ashfield on a rope of knotted sheets in 1954.⁵⁰ Escapees caught were usually sent back.

One of the more difficult cases in Mount Saint Canice, Evelyn (in the late 1960s), recalls:

The authorities decided the Salvation Army wouldn't be able to handle me, so I was eventually sent to Magdalene Girls Home in Sandy Bay... After a couple of years I started to run away, I would scale the fences, undo the bars on the windows, get out through the laundry, whatever way I could, I was always taken back by the police, boy, then I would cop it. The nuns chopped off my hair with garden sheers, I would be made to scrub corridors with a toothbrush, I would be placed in a shoe cupboard for hours at a time ... Eventually I was given Largactyl this was a drug to sedate me and to quieten me down, I was given 50mg at first, then increased it to 100mg, they would stand over me and watch me take it to make sure that I had taken it. On one of my escapades, I actually got to Burnie met this guy and I had sex with him, I don't know why, maybe I was looking for someone to love me. Well the moral of this story is I got pregnant. I was taken back to Mt, St. Canice (Magdalene Home renamed).⁵¹

(She was sent to the Salvation Army home and the baby forcibly adopted.)

Sometimes the authorities were over-enthusiastic about rounding up escaped girls. The Melbourne *Argus* of 1927 reported an escape that came before the courts:

ESCAPE FROM CONVENT.

GIRL SWIMS YARRA.

Maisie King aged 17 years, recently an inmate of the Abbotsford Convent, appeared in the Fitzroy Court on Thursday on a charge of having been without sufficient lawful means of support.

48 'The Abbotsford Convent: Story of an escaped girl', *The Watchman* 24/6/1905, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/111962032>; A Protestant story from Sydney of 1904 in 'Escape from a Sydney convent', *The Watchman* 15/10/1904, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/111922093>

49 'Escaped from convent', *Sydney Morning Herald* 17/8/1920, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/15902574>; 'Girl escapes from convent: climbs 18ft. wall', *Riverine Herald* 7/4/1923, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/115175910>; 'Escaped from convent', *Argus* 13/4/1923, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/1889875>.

50 'Escaped from convent to get outside job', *Mail* (Adelaide) 28/8/1954, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/58101331>

51 <http://www.adoptionoriginistas.com/stcanice.html>

Policewoman Connor said: -Defendant was placed in the Abbotsford Convent by her mother who declared that she was unable to control her. On the morning of April 11, defendant, in company with five other girls, swam the river and escaped from the convent. In company with Constable McGregor I arrested defendant at Fairfield on April 12.

King said: -My home life was unhappy, and some time ago I asked the sergeant of police at Richmond if I would be justified in leaving home. He explained that if I left home and kept myself respectably I could not be taken back against my will. I obtained a position with a drapery firm and left home. I was paid £2/10/ a week, and I rented a room at Port Melbourne for which I paid 12/6 a week. Then at the instance of my mother I was taken into a taxi-cab under the pretext of being taken to a doctor. I was driven, however, to the Abbotsford Convent, where I was taken in, contrary to my will. In order to escape from the convent I had to cross the river. I am well able to earn my living and to look after myself.

Mr W.G. Smith: Can you get any work?

King: Too right I can!

Mr. Smith: That's the spirit. It appears that the warrant was issued for the arrest of this girl as a means of getting her back to the institution from which she escaped. I cannot say that she is without means. On the contrary, I believe that she is a very willing worker.

The case was dismissed.⁵²

The more secure the security, the more dangerous escape attempts could be. Janice Konstantinidis's memoir of Mount St Canice recalls an attempt of 1964:

A group of three girls was planning to escape one Sunday night while the rest of the girls were watching a film. I was in my dormitory helping to bathe Kerrie Anne when they attempted to escape. I had gone to the window to see if I could see them jump. They had planned to jump from the third floor bathroom window – this was one of the few windows that had no bars – to a ledge, to another ledge, and then to the roof of the first floor, which was concrete and had been added on to the home in its later years. The first girl jumped, but lost her footing when attempting to land on the ledge. She kept falling until she landed on the concrete roof. I heard her fall and saw that she lay still. The alarm was sounded by someone and the flood lights came on. An ambulance and the police were called. We soon learnt that the girl had broken her back. We never saw

⁵² *Argus* 16/4/1927, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/3849362>, combined with 'Escaped from Convent', *Mirror* (Perth) 23/4/1927, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/76401079>

her again. We were told that after being discharged from the hospital, she was sent to Lachlan Park, which was a mental institution.⁵³

An escape attempt from the third floor can hardly have been a surprise, since *The Rock* had complained about exactly that sixteen years earlier. *The Rock*'s editor, Wal Campbell,⁵⁴ claimed to have interviewed two 14-year-old girls who had been severely injured jumping from the third floor of Mount Saint Canice in 1948.⁵⁵ While *The Rock* is not a reliable source, the details of the interviews with the girls agree with other accounts, so it seems that in this case Campbell came across a true story. The story was also reported in the Tasmanian press.⁵⁶

Mary Torpy, inmate of the Good Shepherd Convent in Albany W.A. in 1899, found the ultimate escape. The coroner recorded a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind, finding that she must have thrown herself into the tub of boiling water intentionally.⁵⁷

One possibility for escapees was to seek refuge with Protestant anti-Romanists. The Rev. George Tregear, the leading Protestant critic of convents, claimed in 1918 to have sheltered eleven escapees, 'seven of whom lived in his home for some years.'⁵⁸ Some of them apparently became tired of life as exhibits.⁵⁹

Confinement was not permanent (except for some intellectually disabled girls who stayed on indefinitely), but the circumstances of leaving were sometimes not helpful for girls by then used to institutionalized living. According to one of the Forgotten Australians submissions:

These 6 girls spent 4 years or more working as UNPAID LABOURERS in the NUNS COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY [of the Good Shepherd convent, Ashfield]. When they neared their 18th birthday, they were called out

53 J. Konstantinidis, *Life in "The Mag"*, 2011, <http://nma.gov.au/blogsinside/2011/02/28/life-in-the-mag/>

54 <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/campbell-john-william-wallace-wal-12837>

55 *Plunged from Third Storey to Freedom: the stark truth of the "inside" of a Roman Catholic slave laundry as told by girls who escaped* (Protestant Publications, Glebe, 1982, reprinted from *The Rock* of 1948).

56 Kovesi, *Pitch Your Tents*, 268; 'Archdeacon defends Magdalen Home', *Mercury* 1/9/1948, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/27755270>; 'Laundry conditions at Girls' Home', *Launceston Examiner* 4/9/1948, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/52647605>

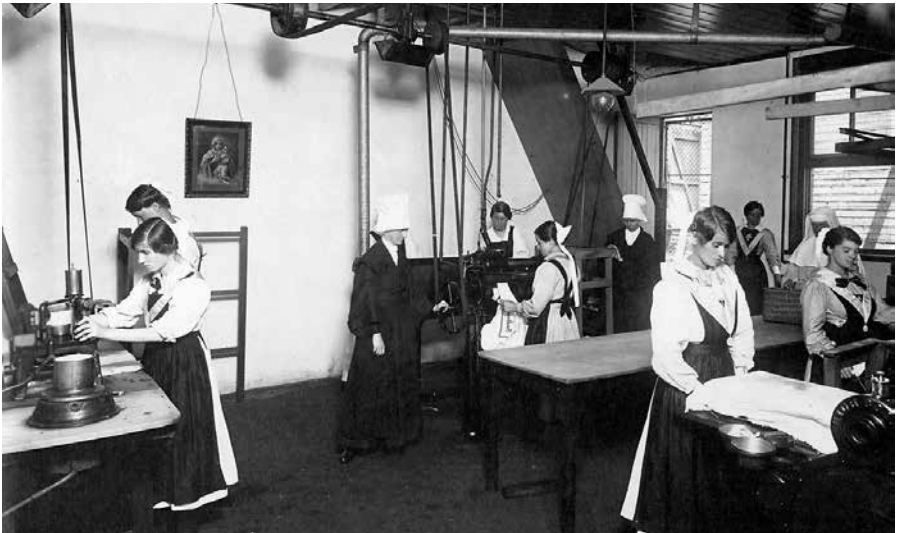
57 'Suicide in a convent,' *Albany Advertiser* 16/11/1899, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/69895580>

58 'Protestantism', *Grenville Standard* 20/7/1918, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/119673099>

59 Catholic story of a return from Protestant exhibiting in 'Back to the convent,' *Freeman's Journal* 26/11/1908, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/111281150>.

of the workrooms, told to change their clothes, they were given a small suitcase which contained all their possessions, they were given £1.00 and shown the door. These girls were just dumped on the street just a few days before their 18th birthday, they were not given a chance to tell the other girls they were leaving.⁶⁰

(That conflicts with the statement of the Mother Prioress at Ashfield in 1954, that women who left the home to take jobs outside were given new clothing and a minimum of £30.⁶¹)



Machine room, Good Shepherd convent laundry, Ashfield, 1918
Good Shepherd Archives, Abbotsford

Where the girls came from

To understand experiences in the homes, it is necessary to have some idea of where the girls came from, what had happened to them and why they were confined there.

The visitor to Tempe in 1890 (when it still had more of the character of a refuge than a reformatory), reports:

60 *Australian Senate, Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children (2004)*, http://www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Completed_inquiries/2004-07/inst_care/report/index, submission 93 (Report section 4.101).

61 'They get no pay but are mostly contented', *Sun-Herald* 12/9/1954.

I questioned a number of inmates very closely. I found that they were not light causes that the nuns had to deal with. Many of the women had led terrible lives—they had literally been rescued from the streets. Among the elder women I found that drink had, as might be expected, been a prime factor in their misery. Several of the young girls, however, had sad histories of deliberate seduction, which led one to regret that the punishment of flogging was not applicable to this crime.⁶²

Life outside on the streets was not ‘taking control of one’s sexuality’, as contemporary feminist mythology would have it.⁶³ A ‘fallen woman’ found in Little Bourke Street in 1895 by the Wesley Central Mission said ‘I will tell the Sister how dreadfully miserable I am; I hate my life; I was *once good and pure*, but look at me now ... *we have lost our name*, our honor, our character; we have lost all.’⁶⁴ (Not to mention the risks of assault and venereal diseases.)

Later, however, the girls forcibly confined in the homes often (though not always) came from backgrounds disturbed in other ways, a factor that needs to be taken into account when considering how they were dealt with and how they saw life in the homes. When poverty was endemic and before the era of the Pill, there were vast numbers of unwanted children, or children wanted but with parents unable to cope. The system of orphanages was overwhelmed by the numbers. Also, the phrase ‘wayward and intellectually disabled’ girls means what it says.⁶⁵ The numbers of the intellectually disabled were much larger than today, for reasons still not totally clear but including malnutrition, diseases like measles, industrial pollutants, assaults and physical accidents and child neglect.⁶⁶ Violence was widespread.

So the reasons for admittance to the Magdalen institutions are often a litany of extreme deprivations. Women were admitted to Abbotsford in the 1880s for, among other things, ‘larceny’, ‘insulting behaviour’, being ‘out at night with boys’, ‘neglected and associating with prostitutes’, ‘being found in a Chinese brothel’, ‘concealed birth and burial of her infant with the assistance of her foster parents’. Rose Hubbard, a fourteen-year-old orphan in 1885 with an artificial eye, was admitted to Oakleigh after burning down a house.⁶⁷

62 Taylor, ‘The Magdalen refuge at Tempe’.

63 J. Monk, *Cleansing their souls: laundries in institutions for fallen women*, *Lilith* 9 (1996), 21-32.

64 R. Howe and S. Swain, *The Challenge of the City: The Centenary History of Wesley Central Mission 1883-1993* (Hyland House, South Melbourne, 1993), 47, quoted in Monk, *Cleansing their souls*.

65 <http://mitchymemories.blogspot.com.au/2013/03/site-78-good-shepherd-convent-home-and.html>

66 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flynn_effect

67 Kovesi, 179-80.

Janice Konstantinidis, herself placed in Mount Saint Canice by a father she describes as ‘a sadistic alcoholic’, mentions a friend who had trouble with schoolwork: ‘She had been placed in the home because her parents were heavy drinkers and her mother had thrown her into a fire.’⁶⁸

No doubt more girls than realized at the time had been raped by their fathers. Rachael Romero from ‘The Pines’, who is perhaps the most bitter critic of the laundries, describes a background of physical and sexual abuse by her father.⁶⁹ Another Pines inmate had suffered rape by a neighbor.⁷⁰

An extreme example is Camelia M’Cluskey, who killed her three children with an axe in Bendigo in 1910. Found temporarily insane by the jury at her trial, she was confined in the Abbotsford Convent (from which she escaped by forcing a lock in 1911).⁷¹

The Melbourne papers of 1927 reported this case:

*Winnie O’Malley, a middle-aged woman, was charged at the Fitzroy Court on Monday with having at the Fitzroy watchhouse on the night of August 6, assaulted Agnes Dobbie ... Winnie O’Malley said:-I left the Abbotsford Convent on the day in question. I am willing to return for six months.*⁷²

Obviously, women and girls from with such disturbed histories arrived in many cases with psychological wounds that made them very hard to deal with. A Good Samaritan nun in 1947 wrote of her charges:

It is difficult to find even one vulnerable spot through which to appeal. The majority of them come under compulsion and they have no intention of settling down and no desire to be different.⁷³

Reports by outsiders

Although the convents were generally cut off from the outside world, there were visits of an official and journalistic nature which have left reports. They tend to be generally positive. The impression of the inmates from the visitor to Tempe in 1890 is:

They work hard from daylight till dark in the various divisions of the laundry, in

68 Konstantinidis, *Life in “The Mag”*.

69 <http://nma.gov.au/blogs/inside/2011/02/10/in-the-shadow-of-eden/>

70 <http://nma.gov.au/blogs/inside/2011/04/19/in-the-beginning/>

71 ‘Dun-Street tragedy revived,’ *Bendigo Advertiser* 13/6/1911, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/89848791>

72 ‘Assault in lock-up: Woman’s nose broken,’ *Argus* 9/8/1927, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/3871747>

73 Sr Paula Cadusch, 1947, quoted in Walsh, *The Good Sams*, 190.

each of which a sister is always present with them. They receive no wages, yet they appear to be happy and contented. There can be no mistake as to the affectionate relationship between them and the sisters.⁷⁴

Visitors to the Industrial School attached to Abbotsford and to Oakleigh in 1902 report 'The children were all looking happy and contented' and 'the girls struck us as being very cheerful and happy.'⁷⁵ An unannounced visit to Abbotsford by the Charities Board of Victoria in 1923 found that in the laundry, 'Except in the case of a few unfortunates of obviously low mentality, the girls looked happier than one would expect, and all were clean and tidy.'⁷⁶ A visitor from the Children's Welfare Department writes to Mother Prioress at Oakleigh after a visit there in 1934, 'Yesterday I was particularly pleased with the whole content of the convent and with the healthy and contented appearance of practically all the girls I interviewed. I was also with a great deal of pleasure impressed with the love for the Sisters these girls had and their appreciation of what is being done for them.'⁷⁷

Such reports of brief visits need to be read while keeping in mind the possibility that some evidence was hidden. According to one former inmate, 'When the government came out you weren't allowed to tell them anything or you'd get belted.'⁷⁸ On the other hand, eyewitness reports by people whose specific job it was to inquire into conditions cannot be ignored.

Following the escape of two laundry workers aged 25 and 29 from the Good Shepherd Convent, Ashfield, in 1954 – they sustained bone fractures after dropping from knotted sheets⁷⁹ – the *Sun-Herald* sent two female reporters to the home, with the nuns' permission. They found 180 girls there, of whom 55 were there 'under restraint'. The 124 voluntary inmates included 24 auxiliary nuns, 65 adult women who were 'subnormal' and similar, and about 30 who were originally there involuntarily but had stayed on. The reporters found that 'The bright, airy dining-room has a warm, homely atmosphere', and observed tennis courts and an auditorium for picture shows. Mother Prioress regrets that all girls have to be

74 Taylor, 'The Magdalen Refuge at Tempe'.

75 *Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools, Report of the Secretary and Inspector for the year 1902*. (Good Shepherd Archives, Abbotsford; thanks to Fraser Faithfull for supplying).

76 Charities Board of Victoria, file on 'Abbotsford Female Refuge', Public Record Office file UPRS 4523/P1 Unit no. 149 file no. 1446, notes by Fraser Faithfull, Good Shepherd Archives, Abbotsford.

77 JRH, Children's Welfare Department, to Mother Prioress, Oakleigh, 22/11/1934, in Good Shepherd Archives, Abbotsford (thanks to Fraser Faithfull for supplying).

78 Schwartz, 'A local spin on the laundries of shame'.

79 'Says incident at convent "a thoughtless escapade"', *Courier-Mail* 28/8/1954, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/50587538>

confined at night as there is no separation between voluntary and involuntary inmates. The dormitories are described as seriously overcrowded and the reasons why all correspondence must be censored are reported without comment. After discussion with a large groups of girls without a nun present, the reporters conclude: The girls claim to be mostly happy; they expect that the nuns will find them a job when they leave (some in typing and nursing but mostly in domestic service); many are orphans and used to the comfort and security of having things done for them; they feel they don't need money.⁸⁰

The nuns' story

The story is incomplete without an understanding of the nuns' perspective. Writings on the topic so far have not made an effort to explain that perspective. That risks repeating the historical travesty of the Stolen Generations apology, where people who had never done anything for the worst-off in society tearfully apologized for the actions of others, such as patrol officers and missionaries, whose reasons for acting were carefully written out of the story.

Unfortunately, the nuns have not written their story themselves. Memoirs by nuns in Australia in general are very rare,⁸¹ and those few do not deal with the Magdalen asylums. The institutional histories of the orders, while informative, do not directly address the former inmates' allegations and say whether they believe them true or false. Requests to the Sisters of Charity and to the author of their institutional history for comment on that question for this article did not produce responses. The present-day Good Shepherd sisters have made an official statement (2013) that they are 'deeply sorry for acts of verbal or physical cruelty that occurred',⁸² but do not expand on that. So it is necessary to make some tentative inferences from a small amount of evidence.

The brief recollections by nuns that are available paint a very different picture from that of the inmates. Old Good Shepherd nuns commenting much later say: 'I worked in the packing room ... For me, working alongside the women and the fun we could have as we worked was a favourite memory.' 'It is strange to say that a favourite place was the laundry. I didn't like the work, especially the hotel guests' personal laundry – too much could go wrong ... but the whole place was full of life and energy and, mostly, good will. The packing room section of the laundry where I worked was highly organised, but not stuffy. I enjoyed the sense of connection with other Sisters and with the girls and women.' 'At Abbotsford I worked in several

80 'They get no pay but are mostly contented', *Sun-Herald* 12/9/1954; also Kovesi, 271.

81 J. Franklin, Memoirs by Australian priests, religious and ex-religious, *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* 33 (2012), 142-162.

82 <https://www.goodshepherd.com.au/blog/good-shepherds-150-years> (2013); the nuns' process to deal with the abuse claims described in Kovesi 367-72.

sections of the laundry providing work place training for the girls and women which I enjoyed because the Sisters worked alongside them and it was a great time for building relationships and sharing their concerns and hopes for the future.⁸³

Those comments are a reminder that the nuns shared, even if on a voluntary or semi-voluntary basis, some of the conditions of the inmates, such as the bad food, the hard work, the confinement and the long periods of silence. One nun recalled, ‘we were working at midnight and I really thought [Sr] Vincent would die. Then we would get up at five, trying to get through the mountains of work ... it was terrible.’ From another, ‘we just slaved then, and it was very, very hard work ... We would start at 7am and work after tea as well, because we had taken on these big hotels.’⁸⁴ In one respect, the nuns enforced on themselves a discipline beyond that imposed on their charges – the grotesque, uncomfortable and constricting clothes.

The sisters had in general volunteered for an extremely rigid and controlled form of life – they were thus the opposite in personality to the ‘uncontrollable’ girls under their charge. A nun installed as Sister Assistant at Mount Saint Canice in 1962 was given a card saying, ‘You no longer have a will of your own because from now on the Superior’s will is your will as her Assistant.’⁸⁵

The attitude to obedience required of the nuns is illustrated by the address at Abbotsford in 1901 by a nun from the head house in France:

*You know what our Holy Rule says on this subject. It tells us how to act when we are reprov'd. We are to kneel down at once, Kiss the ground, and listen to what is said without reply or excuse. Mind, without reply or excuse, whether we are guilty or not.*⁸⁶

The women who volunteered for that kind of regime naturally regarded extreme discipline as in the best interests of their charges as well as themselves. The ‘uncontrollable’ women from the streets were the least likely kind of people to agree.

Nor were such women likely to agree with the nun’s model of success, especially in earlier years, which was that the inmates should be vividly penitent of their former sins and expire in the odour of sanctity.⁸⁷

Mutual incomprehension and hostility was increased by the rule of the Good

83 Sr Noeline White, Sr Pamela Molony and Sr Geraldine Mitchell, in Good Shepherd Action, pamphlet for Good Shepherd Festival Day, 2013 (supplied by Good Shepherd Archives).

84 Kovesi, *Pitch Your Tents*, 280.

85 Kovesi, 289.

86 Kovesi, 287.

87 Kovesi, 162-5.

Shepherd order that prevented inmates from discussing their past. So the nuns had no idea of what their inmates had been through. A nun explained decades later:

We didn't know one thing about them, which didn't make us as understanding as we could have been. I remember one day, a young girl was brought in – she would have been about fourteen or fifteen – and she was put on the mangle ... Well, after a while she got tired or something, I suppose, and she went away and sat somewhere else ... She was told to go straight back to the mangle. Now that child had been brought straight from having a miscarriage, and we didn't know. I had a little girl, she was a half-American negress, and I had to teach her. I didn't know that that little soul about twelve came to us from a maternity home. Well, you know, had you known, it would have altered my approach to them altogether. You'd have been more patient and more understanding ... See, we were taught ... that we were the nuns and we weren't allowed to even touch them. That made you sort of distant.⁸⁸

The nuns' model of what was right for both their clients and themselves was thus inherently a rigid and disciplined one that was unlikely to appeal to women brought under duress. There was no physical contact, and no emotional contact in the sense of listening to the girls' own concerns. The rules of the order enforced not only chastity but the lack of true or 'particular' friendship between nuns; nuns had a communal life but nuns did not go two by two. The vow of obedience, internally and externally imposed, could warp both those who took it on and those on whom obedience was imposed by force. It would not be surprising if some nuns' personalities became twisted, especially when added to chronic tiredness, lack of hormone replacement therapy and the like, and reacted with cruelty.

The accounts by both inmates and nuns of the unremitting hard work in the laundries are also a reminder that, like other institutions for the poor, they operated under the pressures of extreme lack of money. Like orphanages, they received almost no government funds, and the Protestant Federation applied pressure for further reductions to all such 'sectarian' charities⁸⁹ – it was regarded as the thin

88 Sr Felicitas Hanrahan SGS, 1995 interview, in Kovesi, 281.

89 'St Augustine's Orphanage: Dr Mannix attacks the Treasurer for reducing the grant', *Geelong Advertiser* 24/9/1921, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/119754241>; <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/3744869>; 'Another glimpse of the cloven hoof', *Freeman's Journal* 1/7/1926, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/116776078>; 'Convents and orphanages: Protestant Federation's objections', *Chronicle* (Adelaide) 13/5/1922, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/87430005>.

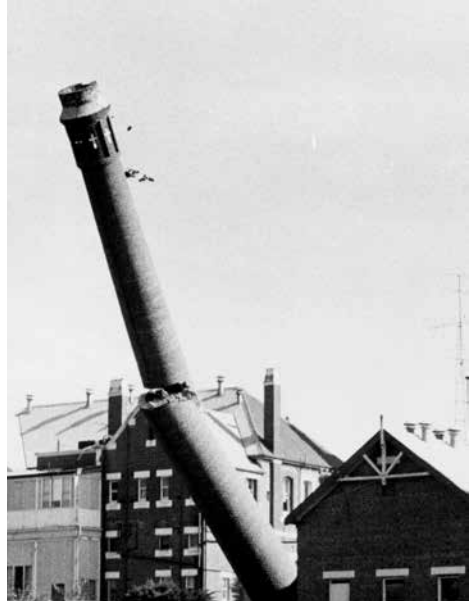
end of the wedge for state aid to denominational schools.⁹⁰ Although there were complaints from commercial launderers that the convents were using cheap labour to compete with union labour paid award wages, the industrial courts recognized that the convents took anyone as labour and barely paid their way.⁹¹ (It is true though that money could be found for some elaborate chapels and, at Abbotsford, a luxurious Bishop's Parlour.⁹²)

Conclusions

Three points need to be made.

First, the sisters faced an immensely difficult task, and one that only they were prepared to take on. It was a task they performed without material benefit to themselves. They took in girls whom no-one else wanted and who were forcibly confined, contrary to the wishes of both the girls and the nuns. The girls came from a variety of very disturbed and deprived backgrounds and were individually hard to deal with in many cases. Dealing with them in the mass in large numbers was doubly difficult, since any significant proportion of uncontrollables in a group makes management and discipline extremely hard, as anyone who has lived in a boarding school knows. The budgets of the convents were minimal.

Second, there is an issue about the perceptions of people from backgrounds as disturbed and deprived as many of the girls in the laundries. Put simply, those who



Demolition of the laundry chimney, St Aidan's Bendigo, 11 May 1986

90 'State aid barred', *The Watchman* 15/3/1923, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/112235848>; 'The war on the orphans', *Freeman's Journal* 15/3/1923, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/116731771>

91 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/1442230>; 'The Victorian Protestant Federation: An Attack on Convent Laundries', *Freeman's Journal* 12/9/1918, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/116785928>; <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/15852379>; <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/116769770>; <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/115098015>; Walsh, *The Good Sams*, ch. 5.

92 <http://www.abbotsfordconvent.com.au/venues-hire/venues/bishop%E2%80%99s-parlour>

do not receive love early have difficulty perceiving positive human interactions. They understand human interactions differently – more negatively – from others. Those helping them are well aware that gratitude is not to be expected. For similar reasons, it has to be considered whether some former inmates might be blaming the convents for effects whose causes lie elsewhere and earlier. When ex-inmates found it difficult to fit into normal society and had trouble with relationships, it may be that the reasons for that lay as much in lack of parents and previous abuse as in what happened in the convents. As with the inmates of institutions generally such as orphanages, aboriginal missions, prisons and mental asylums, it could be asked whether those arriving from disturbed backgrounds involving a gross lack of love might see things more bleakly than those more fortunate.

Yet when all that is fully taken into account, the consistent story of former inmates includes a high level of gratuitous positive cruelty and emotional deprivation. If we just keep to the factual matters reported and leave aside matters of perception and later effects, there is both convergence of evidence from different sources and a clear picture of emotional abuse. As the *Forgotten Australians Report* rightly says, ‘The response that times were different and that standards and people’s thinking and understanding of children’s needs have changed, fails to explain or recognise the severity of the documented behaviours.’⁹³ It remains unexplained why so many individual nuns should have done that and why their culture supported it.

93 *Forgotten Australians*, section 5.53.

LIFE IN “THE MAG”

Janice Konstantinidis*

At the age of twelve, my grandparents and father took me to Mount Saint Canice, one of the Magdalene Laundries.

The laundry was run by the Order of Good Shepherd Nuns in Hobart, Tasmania. There were a number of these laundries in Australia, as well as in other parts of the world.

I am not sure how or why it came to pass that the nuns took in women and children, but I know that the courts did not hesitate to send adolescent girls there for punishment. It was also common for parents to place their children in these homes when support them or care for them them, or for any number of reasons. It is not my purpose to speculate here as to why the state allowed this and, indeed, there has been an inquiry and subsequent public apology to all of us who were incarcerated in this manner.

It is important for me to write my own record of my experiences so that it can become public knowledge. In doing so, I hope that no child now or in the future ever has to experience the horror I did.

I had been told that I was going to Mount Carmel, a Catholic boarding school in Hobart. My father had been asked to find a school for me as his parents, who were unwell, were no longer able to provide care for me. My father was a sadistic alcoholic, who lied to my grandmother about where I was going. Because the nuns could do no wrong in her mind, my grandmother was pleased with his choice.

My first day at Mount Saint Canice began at six a.m. It was pitch black and cold. “My eyes hurt when the nun turned the lights on. A nun walked through the dormitory, she called out, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”. All of the inmates got out of bed and fell to their knees. I learned that this command was to be obeyed immediately upon penalty of losing a mark. I will talk about marks later.

I also got out of bed and dropped to my knees. We said the Lord’s Prayer in unison. I was then told by a girl next to me to make my bed, and to get washed and dressed. We lined up at the unlocked door and waited until all were assembled, before filing through the next dormitory and down two flights of stairs.

As I type this, I look back and realize that there were no exit signs and no fire escape in that particular area. Even so, the doors were locked at every turn. We

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would have been in serious danger had a fire ever broken out.

We walked silently through two more doors, our numbers growing as each group joined us. We ended up in the convent church. We, the girls from the home, had a part for ourselves that had been sectioned off, although some of the older girls sat in the public area. The nuns had their section as well. We had to attend Mass each morning. I was Catholic, so this was not new to me; but many girls were not and, therefore, resented having to attend Mass. I have to admit that I resented this as well, as I did not have a strong belief in God.

We were not allowed to speak at all.

When Mass was over, we filed back in order. Once assembled, we made our way to the refectory for breakfast, which was usually oatmeal with milk, and toast with butter and jam.

After breakfast, we filed out of the refectory. I was escorted to a huge room by Judith, an auxiliary nun, and told that it was the ironing room. There, I was introduced to Mother Marguerite, who was in charge of this area. I had never seen anything like it. There were ten large cloth-covered ironing tables that ran through the middle of the room. These were duplicated down either side of the room, so there were twenty places at which the girls would iron. There were huge steam pressers and steam egg-like implements used for pressing clothes. These ran along either side of the tables. There was also an area that led to the next room, and just nearby, there were many bins of wet clothes waiting to be ironed.

I was shown to a table near Mother Marguerite, who was ironing. She pulled a bin towards me and informed me that it was my job to iron handkerchiefs until the bell rang, and that I would be collected for school as I was a schoolgirl.

Once again, I was told that there was to be no talking.

I was shocked, to say the very least, at this turn of events. I had no idea what was going on, but I began to iron the handkerchiefs obediently. This and other laundry work would be my employment until I left Mount Saint Canice at age fifteen and a half.

Bells governed us. They were rung late at night and at” and say “5 a.m.) in the morning for the nuns, the first one being at 5 a.m. These bells became a way of life for They also suited my need to perform rituals, so I was able to put a lot of my existing obsessive compulsive disorder into the various bells as they sounded. Being at Mount Saint Canice exacerbated my existing condition of OCD. My face often went numb from anxiety .

All nuns immediately stopped whatever they were doing at the sound of the bell; even if they had been in the process of dotting an “i”. We were expected to likewise.

At nine a.m., a girl in school uniform called to the ironing room for me. She

told me her name, and took me to the area of the convent in which the school-aged girls were given lessons. At that point, I was still of the belief that I would find myself at Mount Carmel. But this was not to be the case.

The schoolroom and general area was divided into three rooms. We used one for the classroom, one for sewing, and the other for cooking. Our teacher was Mother Claver, a small but plump nun with a sharp tongue, whose bark was a bit worse than her bite. I was shown some navy skirts, white blouses, and navy sweaters to see which would fit me. I tried as hard as I could to find the right size, but nothing fitted me very well. I was given some white socks and told that I would get a pair of lace-up shoes when my size came in.

I was then taken to the room where the cooking was done. Another nun, Mother Philip, was teaching cookery there, so I joined a girl at a table. I felt uncertain about all this as I knew that I was in the wrong colour uniform for girls from Mount Carmel. They wore light brown tunics with sky blue blouses.

As I looked around me, I saw, in the distance, what I thought was a long, blue swimming pool. I asked the girl next to me if we were going to swim in it at some point. She looked at me peculiarly, and asked me to repeat myself. The class was silent and everyone was looking at me. I think there were about fifteen of us who were of school age.

When I repeated myself, I was told, amidst roars of laughter, that that was no pool, and to go and have a proper look. I walked over to the windows, which were huge and took up one entire side of the building.

One girl said to me, "Can you see now?" What...what I had thought was a pool was actually blue corrugated iron. "Can you see the rolls of barbed wire on top," she asked. I nodded. For the first time I noticed that the windows were barred. "Where the f*** do you think you are?" another asked. "When I told her I was at the Mount Carmel Boarding School for Catholic Girls, huge peals of laughter followed."

"You're in the 'Mag,' they shouted. "The Magdalene Girls Reformatory, otherwise know as Mount Saint Canice" one girl said when she saw the puzzled look on my face. "Why are the windows barred?" I was having trouble absorbing what they were saying and I began to feel unwell. "They're to prevent us from jumping out," the first girl said.

I could feel an anxiety attack coming on.

Mother Phillip guided me into the next room to sit down. I thought that my heart would break. I felt betrayed and humiliated, and I began to cry. I told Mother Phillip that someone had made a mistake and I had been sent to the wrong school.

"You've been placed here by your family and will have to stay." She patted my arm. She said it would be some time...

She told me that my family had placed me with them, and that I had to stay. I

asked her when I could go home, but she told me that it would be some time before I would be allowed to leave.

It turned out that it would be eight months before I was allowed a break for Christmas. I can't describe the turmoil engulfing my mind at that point. The reality was simply too sad for me to contemplate.

The memories of my early days at Mount Saint Canice are not consistently vivid, although I am not sure why. I do recall that the first night was terrifying. I was afraid to sleep in the middle of the room with so many people I didn't know.

I had been given a seat at a table with three other people in the refectory, which was a new word for me. There were about 200 girls inside. The first thing I noticed was that they were not all young, and this puzzled me. The refectory was divided into three areas, one populated by women who were quite old.

Some of these were the women who ran the convent farm; some were intellectually challenged; and some had been in the convent for most of their lives. I would learn all about this later.

Everyone seemed to be looking at me and they probably were, since I was the new girl. I squirmed in my seat. After all, I was the new girl. I was seated at a table with Judith, the auxiliary nun mentioned previously. These nuns wore grey habits with grey stockings and black lace-up shoes. They wore veils with a light blue strip of fabric around the head area, although it was not a full-faced coif like those worn by the other nuns. They wore light blue and grey belts, and had large silver crucifixes hanging from their necks. These nuns took yearly vows and were usually the product of a lifetime in the institution.

While not considered for 'proper' orders, they were nonetheless nuns as they saw it; and some, like Judith, were in charge of a group of girls. These women were made up of girls who had been in the convent for many years, and who had been sent there themselves.

Sitting at my table was a young woman who was about 18 to 20 years old. She was profoundly intellectually challenged, and she carried her teddy bear with her at all times. Judith cared for her as though she were her mother; in fact, she was like her child. Her name was Kerrie Anne. She could not speak, and was very myopic. I was frightened of her at first because Judith told me that she bit people if she was annoyed.

Mealtime was unusual for me. I was not accustomed to being with so many other new and unusual people. There were times when I was afraid. In the afternoon, we had bread with butter and jam, along with cups of tea.

There was no speaking allowed while eating. I later learned that one could speak if it was the feast day of a saint. Whenever the nun on refectory duty came

into the room, she would say: "God be blessed", and the room would buzz with chatter. When we finished eating, we washed our cutlery in coloured plastic bowls, which were brought to the table by the girls whose turn it was to do so. The bowls were filled with hot, soapy water from a large jug, which was also brought to the table. We reset the places, wiped our placemats with a cloth, and dried the cutlery with a tea towel. Our plates were taken away when we were finished. We all took turns at these jobs.

After tea that first afternoon, I went to what was known as a group room. I was assigned to a group called the Rosarians. There were about thirty girls to each of four groups. The nun in charge of mine was Mother Magdalene. The group room was used for recreation, and had chairs and tables for crafts and puzzles. We also had a TV and various other bits and pieces. We took turns to clean the group room.

On that first terrifying night, I had been allocated a bed in a huge room, which was shared by about 40 girls. All the women at the home were referred to as girls, regardless of age. I was not able to sleep in the two rooms that the other group members used as they were short of a bed for me; so I slept in the dormitory used by some of the older girls and auxiliary nuns. My bed was in the centre of the room in the middle of a line of beds.

I recall the main lights going out around nine o'clock, as it was my turn to shower. My shyness about going to the shower made me late. I was also extremely nervous and I dropped my new shampoo and watched helplessly as it spilled all over the tiles. The bottle, which had the name Blue Clinic on it, was made of glass. I was so upset that I had spilled it. Thankfully someone came to help me to clean it up. I also recall going to bed with wet hair that night. I could still see the moon through the windows. I noticed that these windows were also barred, but I tried not to pay too much attention to this.

I cried that night; it was all very, very strange to me. I was also particularly upset because I could not perform my rituals in case I was seen, so I had to do them in my mind.

I had developed OCD when I was nine years old and I had a need to perform many rituals as a result of this. My time in Mount Saint Canice made all this considerably worse, as I was constantly anxious.

The curriculum at the school at Mount Saint Canice was very basic. It covered basic arithmetic, spelling, and the usual subjects up to about grade four level. I recall being annoyed that we had to learn about Burke and Wills, early Australian explorers. I tended to do my work and say very little.

After some weeks, Mother Claver asked me to help some other girls, and I did this throughout the rest of the school year. I was very sad about this, because I

wasn't learning and the thing that had been so very important to me since I began school was to absorb myself in my schoolwork.

Most of the girls found their schoolwork to be very hard. There was one other girl of my age who was unable to manage her schoolwork. I will refer to her as Lucy, although this is not her real name. Lucy and I became friends and have remained in contact to this day. She had been placed in the home because her parents were heavy drinkers and her mother had thrown her into a fire.

I kept hoping that I would be able to go home to tell my grandmother about all that I was experiencing. My watch had been stolen in the first week, as had my underwear. The latter were, however, replaced by Mother Anselm from the reserves that she had. These clothes were new, but old-fashioned; they were made of pink cotton, and the bras were unlike any I had ever seen. I later discovered that they had originally been purchased for the nuns. Long pink petticoats and white ankle socks were the norm.

We were deloused and checked for fleas on admission to Mount Saint Canice. I was aghast at the very notion, but had no choice but to go along with it. On my second day, I was given a bottle of vile-smelling liquid by Judith, and told to shower with it. I think this was usually done on the first day, but I had arrived late the previous day. Judith also delegated an older girl to wash my hair with kerosene, and this is what burned my neck. There was also no treatment for this.

We all had to take a glass of Epsom salts once a week. This was to 'clean us out' and, in fact, usually gave us diarrhoea. We all hated drinking it, but we would lose a mark if we refused. There was also no sense trying to write home about our circumstances, as all our mail was read. This applied to both incoming and outgoing mail. Some girls had to rewrite their letters, while others found pieces cut out of the mail that they received from home and friends. We were allowed to read and write letters on Saturday afternoons in our group rooms, and all letters had to be shown to the nun who was in charge of our group.

School ended with a bell at 3 p.m. We filed out in line to the refectory. After having our afternoon tea, we went back to work in our respective places in the laundry until 5 p.m. when we finished work.

We were allowed back into the dormitory to have a quick wash before having dinner at 5.30 p.m. As usual, there was no talking, except when we were given permission to do so. The meals, while fattening, were generously proportioned and always warm. I have to give credit here; no one went hungry.

There was even a convent cat to feed. My grandfather had been in the habit of drowning my cats whenever they had kittens. I would come home to find my cat gone and sometimes only one kitten left. I grew to like the convent cat. It belonged to Mother Phillip and I used to amuse Lucy by writing poems about it.

The laundry was huge. There was the ironing room where I worked when I was not in school, the machine room where Lucy worked, the folding and packing room, and the drying rooms. The machine room was very large and contained two enormous mangles and rows of large washing machines. One man who had been employed by the convent for years operated these machines. He was unfortunate enough to have his daughter come to the home a year or so later. She had been sent to the convent by the courts. He was not allowed to speak to her, but they would look at each other from a distance.

The laundry provided services to hospitals and many other institutions. It also offered private laundry services, mainly to the priests, as well as to the archbishop's residence. To my knowledge, it was the biggest commercial laundry in southern Tasmania. The mangles, which pressed all flat items, were so large that it took two girls to feed a wet sheet into one, and two on the other side to remove and fold it. The heat was so intense that a wet sheet would only need to be fed through once. The work that we did in the ironing room was different, and consisted of tending to smaller items such as underwear, shirts, and hankies. There were dozens of shirts and hundreds of hankies per day. This work was done every weekday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and girls who were over 14 worked on Saturday mornings as well.

I was allocated a place in a new dormitory in time for my 13th birthday. I recall being glad that I could finally see out of a window. Our dormitory was three stories high, and although my window had bars, I could see the moon and some of lower Sandy Bay, and for this I was immensely grateful. There were nine beds in the room, which was one of the smaller dormitories, and Judith and Kerrie Anne were my roommates. I had a bed, a single locker, a chair, and a mat. Our beds had to be made to army standards, and we had to keep our area clean and tidy. There was an inspection every Saturday afternoon, after which we were given our marks.

Sometimes the girls would try to escape. In fact, on occasion they were successful. But they were invariably caught by the police and brought back to the home.

Their hair would be cut roughly within an inch of their scalps, and their fingernails would undergo similarly harsh treatment. "Punishment frocks", which were dresses made from hessian with bias binding trim, would also be worn for some months. The girls could wear a skivvy under them, but all of their own clothes, with the exception of socks and underwear, were confiscated.

These punishment frocks had to be worn to "parlour," much to the humiliation of the girls. Parlour was the room in which the girls saw their family on the second and fourth Sunday of the month.

Some girls who were nearing the end of their sentence would be allowed home for a weekend. This was an extremely special event. In all my time at Mount Saint

Canice, I never went to parlour. I had no visitors, with the exception of one visit from relatives from the country who had heard that I was at the home.

There is one particular incident that I will never forget. A group of three girls was planning to escape one Sunday night while the rest of the girls were watching a film. I was in my dormitory helping to bathe Kerrie Anne when they attempted to escape. I had gone to the window to see if I could see them jump. They had planned to jump from the third floor bathroom window – this was one of the few windows that had no bars – to a ledge, to another ledge, and then to the roof of the first floor, which was concrete and had been added on to the home in its later years. The first girl jumped, but lost her footing when attempting to land on the ledge. She kept falling until she landed on the concrete roof. I heard her fall and saw that she lay still. Someone sounded the alarm and the floodlights came on.

Somebody called the police and an ambulance soon arrived. We learned later that the girl had broken her back.

We never saw her again.

We were told that after being discharged from the hospital, she was sent to Lachlan Park, which was a mental institution.

I felt guilty about not telling on the girls for years. But I was between a rock and a hard place. Had I told on them, I would have been beaten up and ostracized. An escape plan usually took a few weeks to hatch unless someone was really upset and did it on impulse. The week leading up to the escapes were usually tension filled, many of the girls living vicariously through the would-be escapees. It was exciting in a weird way, and no one would have told on them.

The other girls who wanted to escape from the home would cut themselves or take some other action that would require admission to hospital, as this was seen as preferable to being at the home.

One girl who had escaped, been recaptured, and whose hair had been cut off as a result, was working with me in the ironing room one day. Mother Marguerite had gone out for a few minutes. The girl was working on a press for shirts, and I saw her lay her hands on the press as one would do to flatten out a shirt. I then noticed with horror that she let the press down on her hands.

I ran to her, thinking that it must have been a terrible accident, and I stepped on the release foot pedal. But this was a mistake as her hands were stuck to the top lid of the press. She screamed, I screamed, and an older girl raced to help us. The burned girl was taken to the hospital and did not return until sometime later.

Despite the trauma that I experienced, I was expected to carry on with my work, and to eat my afternoon tea as if nothing had happened. I had nightmares for a long time about the girl who had jumped, and the girl who had burned herself.

I was terrified of the times that I spent as a carer for three girls who had epilepsy.

I was terrified of seizures, but was given the job of watching these girls – some of whom were over 21 years old – at night.

We slept in a room with nothing but mattresses so that, in the event of a seizure, no one could do themselves any harm. When a girl had a seizure, I had to run from the room – I was given trustee privileges for this – and I had to pull hard on the rope that rang the bell. Mother Marguerite was the convent nurse and, after a time, she would appear with an injection for the girl or girls, as sometimes another girl would have a seizure as well. I was so horrified that I could hardly speak. I would even have anxiety attacks of which they were completely unaware. To say that I lived my life in constant anxiety and fear while in the convent would be an understatement.

There were times of incredible sadness for some of the girls. Sometimes a girl would come to the home pregnant, or another might escape and become pregnant. Although she would try to hide her condition for as long as possible, she was eventually sent to Elim House in West Hobart, which was a Salvation Army home for unwed mothers. The girls eventually came back to us after they had delivered their babies. Some of them were over 18, but remained wards of the state until they were 21 years old.

They had no say in what happened to them or their babies. To see their sorrow at having lost their children was heartbreaking. To see them punished for what, in hindsight, seems to have been depression was also devastating. Worst of all was the news that one girl had hanged herself, which was such a shock to me that I felt unable to breathe for some time. She had been a lovely person. She had come to the home in the very early stages of pregnancy and had been sent to Elim House. She'd come back to tell us that she'd had a baby boy.

On Saturday mornings, we were allowed to sleep in until 7 a.m. We went to a later Mass, had our breakfast, and came back to the dormitories to clean them. We would even wash and polish the floors on our knees. Everything in the convent was always spotless, and we took turns cleaning the bathrooms, which were then inspected.

We were expected to shower every night and again in the morning if we wanted to. Due to my constant efforts to get the kerosene out of my hair, I began to wash it every day, and I have continued this practice to this day.

We worked in our dormitories until lunchtime. After lunch, we went to our group room and we were allowed to talk or play a game until Mother Magdalene came, at which point we had other activities to do. Every second Saturday, Mother Anselm would come to the groups as well. She would be told about us and would give us marks and pocket money according to how many marks we had received. I believe that these marks were a way of maintaining some degree of control over the girls. Three marks were to be given to each girl; one for work/school, one for

our general care of our selves, and overall cleanliness, and the other for our general behaviour. If we were 'good' in all three areas, we received four shillings. If we lost a mark, it would be three shillings. The loss of two marks meant that we got only two shillings, and the loss of all three marks meant that we received no pocket money and no special privileges such as being allowed to go to the movies, which were shown on Sunday nights.

Other forms of punishments took were the extra cleaning of the dormitory floors. Used tealeaves were thrown over the floors, which we would then have to sweep and polish. There was a large, red cement hallway that ran through various areas of the home. Scrubbing this hallway while on my hands and knees was a job that I came to know well. It would take me over two hours, and I was expected to use a toothbrush for the grouted areas. I would be given this punishment for simply asking "why?", or for taking too long in the toilets. They did not consider the fact that I suffered from constipation and that hurrying was, therefore, impossible for me. Furthermore, the red corridor was cold and draughty most of the time.

We always referred to ourselves as slaves, and, looking back, I can see that we were. All the girls who could work, worked long and hard hours, and the sum of four shillings was an insult to them. I had never had any money and was often away in my fantasy world; so it did not occur to me to be less than grateful for anything that came my way that was not going to hurt me. It is hard for me to look back and adequately explain this, but it is how I felt.

We were expected to use this money to buy our own toiletries and other items for our personal use. Some girls had parents who provided for them, while others did not. In any case, the nuns took everything that came into the convent and dispensed it as they thought appropriate. Only sanitary pads were provided and we had to ask Mother Marguerite for these. They were known as a packet of "Bunnies" and we were only allowed one packet per menstrual cycle. My periods were heavy and I suffered chapping due to changing napkins infrequently.

We would go up to the dormitories at 7:30 p.m. each week night and lights were out at 9 p.m. I was always excited to get into my bed. I had the most wonderful fantasy life that anyone could imagine and I could not wait to get lost in it. My fantasies were many and varied, but a common theme involved having a large family.

As mentioned before, the population of the home consisted of many different girls. There were older girls — women — who no longer worked in the laundry; they would sit outside in one particular corridor where there was sun, in their own group rooms, or perhaps in bed. Some of these girls had not been outside of the home for many years. I knew one older woman who told me she had not been outside for over twenty years. There was another woman in her late thirties whose

job it was to care for these girls. As far as I know, this woman had come to the home in her youth, and had never left. Every so often, when one of the older women was dying, we were allowed to visit her bed if we wanted to. This was so we could say goodbye to her before she died. I was also terrified of this.

Other girls were younger and suffered from various forms of developmental delay. These girls would often work on the convent farm, which was huge and very productive. They were often overweight, and smelled of cow manure, as I recall. They did not suffer any nonsense from the younger girls. They would clip our ears as we walked past, or hit out at us. Some of these girls had been in the home for as long as they could recall. There was a family of three girls who lived in the home with their mother. I am not sure how this came to be.

There were a number of girls and older women who were mentally retarded. I'd say about 15%. I know I tried to help teach in the classroom at the home. Some girls were illiterate. I used to bath one girl who was severely mentally challenged. I can't begin to think what would have been the matter with her. At fifteen she was unable to speak, and spent her days following one particular auxiliary nun about. This 'nun' cared for her, and delegated her bath to me. Judith, the 'nun', told me that the girl had come from very well off parents who couldn't cope with her. That this inability to cope or want her, had been exacerbated when the girl had reached puberty and began menstruation.

Then there were the girls who were sent to the home for various so-called crimes — the fallen, the wretched, and the shamed. I have to say that I can't recall any bad girls at the home. Rather, as I see it, their behaviour was the product of being institutionalized. Of course, I did not know any of this then, and I saw myself as bad, and without worth or entitlement.

I have never really recovered from my years of living in Mount Saint Canice. I lived in fear of being locked up again, and maybe, at some levels, I still do. After leaving the home, I went on to make some extremely poor life choices. I was unhappy for most of my life, suffering from profound depression and anxiety. It was not until I was diagnosed with Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in therapy in my late fifties that I began to think and feel like I could actually control my own life. To this day, I believe that someone should be accountable for the tragic occurrences that I witnessed and underwent at that time. When I recall these incidents, I do not believe that any apology given by the government was ever enough for me.

I enjoy a good quality of life now, but I know many women who suffered the same fate in these homes. These women have not been able to lead happy or productive lives. I can only hope that my story will serve to remind people what can happen when children are not cared for or shown the respect and love that they need.



Packing room, Mount Saint Canice Magdalen laundry, c. 1960s
Picture: Good Shepherd Archives, Abbotsford

THE EVOLVING CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL IDENTITY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON COLLEGE OVER ITS 40 YEARS

Margaret Ghosn*

Introduction

Our Lady of Lebanon School was opened on January 1st 1973 in Harris Park, Parramatta. Two Religious sisters from the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family Congregation, Juliette Ghorayeb and Constance Bacha (who became Principal in 1974) arrived from Lebanon and laid the foundations for the school. They were aided by Monsignor Peter Ziade, parish priest of Saint Maroun's Church. The school opened its doors with an enrolment of 115 pupils under Our Lady of Lebanon Church, situated on land that was originally occupied by the settlers and pioneers John and Elizabeth Macarthur. The purpose of the school was to provide education to Maronite families newly arrived in Australia, and to maintain the cultural, linguistic and spiritual practices of the community.

Sister Juliette returned to Lebanon the following year and when Sister Madeleine de la Croix arrived in Australia in 1974, she was assigned to Our Lady of Lebanon School. Over the years the Principals have been Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family (MSHF) and include Juliette Ghorayeb 1973, Constance Bacha 1974-1995, Irene Boughosn 1996-2004 and Marlene Chedid 2005-2013.

For Monsignor Ziade the need to establish schools was crucial to his work in Australia as written in his personal account, 'We were concerned very much with our schools, for their existence was vital to our survival as a community and to the inculcation in the younger generation of a deep attachment to their country of origin and an abiding respect for good morals and a true Christian faith.'¹ Maronite schools were established from 1970 onwards and today include Saint Maroun College at Dulwich Hill, Our Lady of Lebanon College at Harris Park, Saint Charbel College at Punchbowl, and in Melbourne the Antonine Primary Cedar campus and Secondary Trinity campus. Their uniqueness has been in their ethnic, religious and cultural contributions. Today these institutions are experiencing enrolments of children of former students, who also insist that their children maintain the spiritual, cultural and linguistic background.²

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Establishing Our Lady of Lebanon Primary School

On the 4th of September 1972 an application to open a new school titled Our Lady of Lebanon Primary School was lodged.³ On the 10th Dec 1972 Cardinal James Freeman blessed the future church and the bottom level which was to be the locale for Our Lady of Lebanon school. Following this on 15th Jan 1973 the CEO of Sydney advised that a new school, Our Lady of Lebanon, was to be established in Harris Park.⁴ On the 23rd Jan 1973 approval was granted for the school to purchase necessary items at reduced prices from the Government Stores Department including the Curriculum syllabus, class rolls, lesson registrars, timetables, exam report books and exam record cards and on the 13th April 1973 Sister Juliette, placed the first purchase order from the Department of Education.⁵ From 25-27th Jan 1973 discussions in regards to establishing a bus service for students was entered into. This was essential as the school would not be able to run without student numbers and these children of Maronite background were scattered over the locale including Merrylands, Greystanes, Guildford, North Parramatta, Dundas, Oatlands, Blacktown, South Wentworthville, Girraween, Seven Hills and Granville.

On the 30th May 1973 the Catholic Education Office levied 20c per child. With an enrolment of 130 students at the time, it came to a total of \$26! Yet it was not until the 29th June 1973 that the Certified K-6 School was given under the provisions of the Public Instruction Act 1916, and this provision extended until the 31st December 1978.⁶ It was in the same year in September that the Government cancelled the free milk scheme to schools.

Many Lebanese families would assist the Sisters and the School in the early years including Hannah Khoury and family, Joe and Freda Budwe, Chafic and Najla Wehbe, Joe and Warde Chahine, as well as the neighbours, all of whom were Australian citizens of Lebanese Maronite descent.

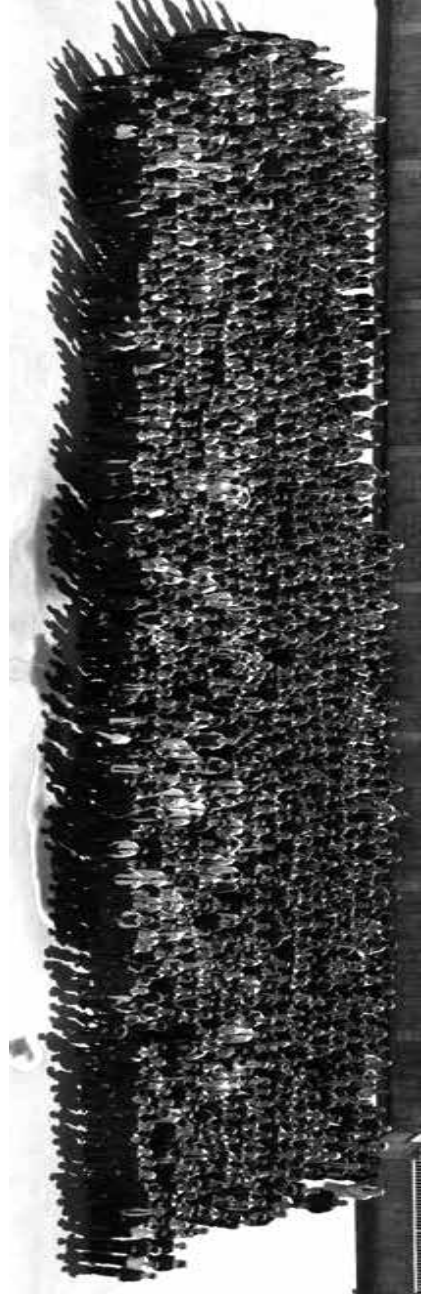
According to the 1974 census there were 161 students, 80 boys and 81 girls. Of these 160 were of Lebanese background and 1 Greek background student, making it evident from the outset that this new Maronite Catholic school was considered to be for the Lebanese Maronite community. Of the 161 students enrolled, their religious affiliation included 142 Maronites, 6 Orthodox, 3 Protestants, and 10 were Muslims. Staff included the 2 Sisters, Constance and Madeleine, 5 female staff and 1 male staff.

The Schools Commission in 1977 declared the school as disadvantaged which allowed for the release of funds that went towards carpets, playground equipment and other facilities including demountable classrooms which would hold them over until the Capital grant was acquired. This was followed in 1978 by a Federal Grant of \$680,000 for the construction of premises to house an infants and a Primary department and administration. In 1978 the sisters acquired two adjoining house



Our Lady of Lebanon College, early years

*Our Lady of Lebanon College
students and staff. 2011*



blocks opposite the church to accommodate the Primary school and convent which were to become known as 23-25 Alice Street, the official address of the College. Construction was completed in 1982 and housed a student population of 354 and a staff of 16 and 2 sisters. The official opening was performed by Senator Peter Baume, the Minister for Education, on the 26th of June 1982. This first building project at the school incurred a debt of \$200,000. The construction of a second upper-primary set of classrooms occurred in the late 1990s to accommodate the increasing number of enrolments.

The Secondary Department – becoming a College

The decade of the 1980s saw the need for a Secondary department. The Sisters were aware that unless a Secondary was established many parents would withdraw their children in Years 5 and 6, in order to place them in feeder schools that guaranteed places in Catholic High Schools. Applications were lodged and necessary plans of designing and lobbying commenced. However it was not an easy road as observed through the telegram received on 9th October 1985 from Canberra that announced that, ‘the Commonwealth Minister for Education has not approved your school as eligible to receive general recurrent funding from the Commonwealth in respect of the proposed extension of the school in 1986.’ No concise reason was offered for the adverse government funding decision but as Sister Constance recalls, the remark was given to her that the school was so beautifully built the sisters should consider converting it into a hotel! However the Maronite community were not prepared to accept the rejection, insisting on their rights to have an independent Maronite Catholic College. The community organized petitions to the Schools Commission, to local members of parliament, to the Commonwealth Education Minister Susan Ryan, and letters to the Lebanese Ambassador and Lebanese Consul-General. It took successive applications for Federal funding before approval was given three months after the commencement of the Secondary.⁸ This was followed by a response from the State Government in May 1986 in which a



Our Lady of Lebanon College, primary school staff, 1979

letter from the State Department of Education stated, 'I have been advised that your school is now provisionally approved for General Recurrent Grants.'⁹

During the early Secondary years students were accommodated in partitioned classrooms in the church hall and in refurbished flats at 36 Weston Street. Finally a Schools Commission Grant of \$1,218,000 was made over 1988 and 1989 with the School contributing \$730,000. The Secondary B block facing Weston Street, was completed in 1990 at a grand total of \$2,424,095. The Federal building grant was issued in 1990 for \$1,168,300 to be staggered over three years, with the school contributing around \$600,000.¹⁰ Registration visits by the Education Department for the Secondary occurred consecutively in 1986, 1987 and 1988, to ensure it conformed to all regulations as its year cohort increased a year level annually. Permission was granted to offer courses leading to the award of the Higher School Certificate (HSC) and in the Year 1991, the first time the College entered students for this credential for the first time.

The beginnings of the Secondary department commenced in the Church hall before later moving to its two purpose-built buildings in 1990 and 1992 included thirty five students, two fulltime and four part-time staff. The first Secondary building included a staffroom, library, a science lab, food technology kitchen and a woodwork room. By the completion of the final stage of this project in 1992 the College had grown into a school providing education to almost 1,000 students from Kindergarten to Year 12 and employed a total of eighty staff.

The official opening of the Secondary in 1992 was performed by the Prime Minister The Honourable Paul Keating. The Maronite Bishop of Australia, His Excellency Archbishop Joseph Hitti, paid tribute to the work of the Principal Sr Constance and Sr Madeleine.¹¹ The event was recorded in the papers with the *Telegraph Mirror* writing, 'It (the school) reflects the fact that there is strength in our cultural diversity and that the energy of an ethnic community can strengthen our pursuit of common national goals.'¹² In the *Parramatta Advertiser* it was written, 'Fanfares, anthems, flags, culture and entertainment, adoration and adulation were all ingredients of the reception Prime Minister Paul Keating received when he opened Our Lady of Lebanon School at Harris Park on Friday.' He referred to the Commonwealth contribution of \$2.3 million in recent years and the community's own 'magnificent effort and sacrifice.'¹³

The 1990 census recorded 555 Primary students and 306 Secondary students which in that year consisted of Years 7-11.¹⁴ The Census of 1995 listed the population of the Primary at a total of 623 students and in Secondary a total of 384 students. Within just over 20 years the College had advanced from a 115 Primary student enrolment school with classes held under the Church to a College with over 1000 enrolments from Kindergarten to Year 12 with four buildings housing the

students. The Australian Maronite community had supported this project that had commenced with a vision by Monsignor Peter Ziade and was made a reality through the work of the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family.

Along with numerous internal refurbishments and the provision of a College-wide computer network which has moved the College in synch with the technology of the modern age, there were further constructions in the Secondary. The next building included a purpose-built library, an assembly hall, canteen and six classrooms. These additions to the Secondary were officially opened on 17th September, 2004 in the presence of the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, who made reference to her Lebanese cultural background in her opening speech. The Member of Parliament Philip Ruddock and Mr Ross Cameron, Member for Parramatta were present at the official opening, as was the Maronite Bishop Ad Abikaram, and the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family Congregational Leader Gabrielle BouMoussa. Messages were sent from Prime Minister, The Honourable John Howard, and The Honourable Dr Brendan Nelson MP and Minister for Education, Science and training.¹⁵

Visits by politicians

Political visits were common from all branches of government and from all political parties. It began in 1974 when the Member of Parliament, The Honourable Philip Ruddock visited the school and would become a regular guest. Since then notable visits included on the 20th of June 1982 the Minister for Education, Senator Honourable Peter Baume on the occasion of the official opening of the extension of the Primary school. In 1984 the Member of Parliament and Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Mr Barry Wild, attended for an awards ceremony. On 15th August 1989 the NSW Premier, The Honourable Nick Greiner visited the school. On 4th September 1992 the Prime Minister of Australia, The Honourable Paul Keating, attended for the official opening of the Secondary B and C blocks, to much fanfare! Then on the 11th June 1997 The Honourable Philip Ruddock, the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs was in attendance and visited again the following year on the 13th of November 1998 for the College's celebration of its Silver Jubilee.

The Prime Minister, The Honourable John Howard, visited the College in 2000. His visit included an address to all staff and students and the many parents who came along, followed by a meeting with the senior students to discuss economics. A reporter from the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote that 'the students at Harris Park did welcome the Prime Minister, applauding and cheering as he entered the grounds, but they were not unquestioning. The Year 12 students said they wanted education, reconciliation and anti-discrimination on the agenda for this year's Federal election.'¹⁶

The following year in 2001, saw the visit of the New South Wales Premier Bob Carr and two weeks later the NSW Liberal Parliamentary Leader John Brogden was in attendance. Then on the 17th September 2004 on the occasion of the official opening of the A Block in Secondary, the New South Wales State Governor Dr Marie Bashir attended along with Member of Parliament Philip Ruddock. In 2004 the Minister for Education Dr Andrew Refshauge visited and more recently in March 2013 the Honourable Thomas George, Member for Lismore, addressed the Secondary students at the College ANZAC ceremony, making reference to his Lebanese heritage.

In more recent times

With an increase in Federal Government funding in 2008-2009, Our Lady of Lebanon College took advantage of this to extend, refurbish and update its educational facilities. Building initiatives included the relocation and upgrading of three science labs that included smart boards as well as a new computer lab and access to wifi. Funding also resulted in a new drama room and redesigning the administration department. With the help of the Parents Association and the College's own efforts over 2008-2012 Primary classes were fitted with Smart boards.

The Federal Government in 2009 called for a push to update and modernise Primary schools with Our Lady of Lebanon College receiving \$3 million to spend on building a new Primary block which included a library, IT room, four classrooms and a multipurpose hall. The official opening of the additional Primary F block occurred on the 10th February 2012 in the presence of The Honourable Julie Owens, Member of Parliament, the Local State MP for Parramatta, The Honourable Geoff Lee and The Lord Mayor of Parramatta, The Honourable Lorraine Wearne.¹⁷

Cultural maintenance over forty years

The College was established from the beginning to maintain the Lebanese cultural heritage of the Maronite migrants and their children. This was carried out in a number of ways. One early example was the first excursion that took place on the 19th June 1973 where the Years 1-6 students visited the Lebanese Consulate, Saint Mary's Cathedral, the Australian Museum, and Saint Maroun School Redfern with a picnic in Hyde Park. The cost came to 75c per child. Our Lady of Lebanon school emphasised to its students from the beginning its hyphenated Australian-Lebanese identity, its Maronite Catholic faith and its Lebanese cultural background.

Excursions since then have included 'Mirath in mind,' which includes students studying a Lebanese figure in depth, who has played a significant role in the entertainment industry, writing about the person and performing their Arabic songs or literary works at a convention. There have been regular visits to Arabic

radio stations and newspapers, experiencing Lebanese cuisine, inviting an Arabic calligrapher for incursions and offering Lebanese folk dance lessons (dabke) to students. Lebanon Independence Day is also celebrated annually by Primary students and includes speeches, songs and dance.

In 2011 Lebanese Independence day was celebrated in the Secondary when Year 12 students decided to make of it a celebration with Lebanese food on sale, Lebanese music played during lunchtime, trivia competition per year group and an assembly in the hall with guest entertainer Robert Chehade of Lebanese background, who starred in *Fat Pizza* and the theatre production of *From Lebanon with Love*.

The promotion of the Australian-Lebanese identity was seen at the official opening of the Secondary as described in *Our Catholic Schools* when it 'began with the Lebanese and Australian anthems and continued with a folk dance, speeches and a prayer liturgy. Guests included Bishop Bede Heather, the Maronite Archbishop of Australia and New Zealand Joseph Hitti.'¹⁸

Visits from Lebanese Politicians to reinforce the Lebanese cultural identity have included Lebanese Members of Parliament Danny Chamoun, Amin Gemayel and Simon Douiehy in earlier years. Lebanese Members of Parliament Sami Gemayel and Michel Mouawad, who both visited in 2012. They emphasised that families in Australia should maintain their Lebanese culture, make frequent visits back to their homeland and vote in elections in Lebanon.

However despite nurturing a positive attitude in students in regards to their ancestral heritage, the Australian media was often a stumbling block with its persistent negative coverage of Middle Eastern people. Students from Our Lady of Lebanon College were interviewed in 1998 over racism towards the Lebanese following the New South Wales Premier Bob Carr's comments linking gang violence to the Lebanese identity. In the *Daily Telegraph* one student, Sarkis Elia, commented, 'We build our reputation up and then when this one thing happens we have to start again.'¹⁹

The views of the College students were also sought by newspapers and two senior students Laura Jilwan and Charlie Zoghaib, appeared on the Channel 9 Sydney *Today Show* to present their point of view in regards to the drive by shootings in Lakemba in 2000 where the Police Commissioner Peter Ryan referred to as an ethnic issue and that the Lebanese community should take responsibility for.

On Friday August 10th 2001, Premier Bob Carr visited Our Lady of Lebanon College. Two weeks after the Premier's visit, the leader of the New South Wales Liberal Party John Brogden visited the College. A journalist from *The Bulletin* magazine wrote, 'The hot-button issue in this Catholic Maronite school, is the battering the community feels it has copped in the past year. They say that they are

still reeling from a sense of unfair collective guilt after the arrest and sentencing of a group of gang rapists. All of the attackers were from a Muslim-Lebanese background and the victims were all targeted Caucasians.²⁰

On the first anniversary of September 11, the US Consul-General, Eileen Molloy, attended a Mass at the College. She returned to the College a week later to discuss the events unfolding on the world's stage with senior students.

In regards to the world stage it is worth noting that although students past and present do visit Lebanon on a regular basis, there is little evidence that students from Our Lady of Lebanon College ever choose to settle there. Most students graduate from the College and pursue further studies in Australia. There are those very few who have benefitted from their Arabic language, taking up positions in the Middle East or in the case of Yaara BouMelhem who after working across *News and Current Affairs* at SBS in TV, Radio and Online, relocated to Beirut, to report for Australian and international networks, including SBS and Dateline. Other former students have made an impact on the world stage include Christopher Esber and Josette Hazzouri in the fashion industry.

As the name Our Lady of Lebanon College has been a point of contention over the last decade, due to negative media coverage in regards to Middle Eastern people, the College has struggled to maintain a positive image of its cultural heritage, and students have been constant victims of stereotyping. As a result, in 2013 the process commenced to change the College name to reflect its founding history. It is in the transitioning process which will eventuate with a new name, 'Holy Family Maronite College – Parramatta.' Staff, students and parents have welcomed the proposal, although a minority have argued that Our Lady of Lebanon College should remain as the identity.

Linguistic maintenance over forty years

In the opening two years of the school, in 1973 and 1974, aside from English, students were taught Arabic and French as secondary languages but French was stopped in 1975 as students favoured it over Arabic! The Sisters insisted on placing emphasis on the Arabic language as a first priority although French has been offered as an elective in Secondary. Over the years Arabic has been compulsory as a second language through Primary and Secondary. This insistence has been beneficial to students who graduate with two languages and there have been numerous occasions where students have achieved first ranking in the State for the HSC course Arabic Continuers. The College also holds appeal to students who migrate from Lebanon and wish to pursue studies in Arabic and French.

On the 16th May 1994 an Arabic Reading Routes programme was produced by the school under New South Wales Ethnic Schools Programme and sent for review. After a few recommendations and changes, printing funds totaling \$3,300 for one

thousand copies was given to the school and 5 copies of the programme forwarded to the Ethnic Schools Centre for resources.²¹ Through the work of the Primary Languages other than English Coordinator Mr Charbel Baini, Our Lady of Lebanon School annually published Arabic reading and writing texts for the students.

Primary Arabic Concerts have been a regular feature and very popular with parents. Performances over the years included: Ghost Town in 1990, Indian from Lebanon in 1991, The Lebanese Street in 1997, Our Aboriginal neighbour in 1998, Hello Australia and others. These annual concerts involve students speaking in Arabic, dressing in cultural costumes and performing the Lebanese folk dance accompanied by Lebanese instruments and as can be imagined these Arabic plays are popular with the parents who are nostalgic for their homeland. Secondary students have also performed Arabic plays although not frequently. However Lebanese music, instruments and dance feature prominently in their concerts, talents quests and Expo Extravaganzas.

However with second and third generations of students coming through the College in more recent times, less students speak Arabic and fewer families use the Arabic language at home. As a result compulsory Arabic to Year 10 was re-considered and in 2012 it became an elective subject for Year 9 students onwards.

Religious Maintenance over forty years

The first Maronite Bishop, Abdo Khalife, visited the school regularly and would preside annually over the celebration of the Year 3 First Holy Communion. Bishop Joseph Hitti, followed by Bishop Ad Abikaram, have since presided over this celebration.

Maronite Masses have always been celebrated by the College and the chaplain has always been a Maronite priest. Masses throughout the year include celebrating the feast of Saint Maroun held around 9th February as well as the celebration of Our Lady of Lebanon feast day on 15th August, the Feast of the Assumption. Masses have also been celebrated for the Feasts of Saint Rafqa (in March), Saint Charbel (in July) and Lebanon Independence Day (21st November). The College also prepares for Lent with a Mass on Ash Monday, unlike Ash Wednesday in Roman Catholic Schools.

A significant event that consolidated the Maronite Catholic College identity was the visit of the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch, Nisrallah Boutros Sfeir, in 1993 when he was welcomed by applauding students and parents. The Patriarch returned again in 2008 to celebrate Maronite 08 and Secondary students of Our Lady of Lebanon performed liturgical dances before the patriarch and a crowd of 20,000 Maronites at Parramatta Stadium.

Conclusion

The establishment of Our Lady of Lebanon School, which would later become known as Our Lady of Lebanon College, was unique for a number of reasons. Most significantly, it was, along with its sister school Saint Maoruns, the first Maronite schools in Australia and one of the very few Maronite schools outside of the Middle East. Our Lady of Lebanon school was located in Parramatta and the only school of the area to offer compulsory Arabic as a second language from Kindy to Year 6 and later through to Year 10, with it being an elective in senior years. Its students have always been of a Lebanese background, with a minority from Egyptian, Syrian or Australian background. The College has also consistently celebrated the Maronite Catholic Liturgy and its chaplains have always been of the Maronite Rite. However over forty years times have changed.

In preserving the culture, language and religious traditions of Lebanese Maronites, the emerging reality was that over time communities de-ethnicize. Over the forty years Our Lady of Lebanon College has experienced the changing demands of Australian life, second and third generation students as second language learners, and parents of varied bilingual skills. Furthermore there are also never-ending building programmes, increasing government compliances, competing academically with local schools and the need to be astute in politics and business.²² Despite the many demands and struggles, today with a student population of 687 in the Primary and 490 in the Secondary, the College's unique aspects are still sought and valued by the Maronite community. The young people still identify and take pride in their Lebanese heritage and their parents, many of whom have been born in Australia, still value the Maronite spiritual practices and morals that their parents taught them and the cultural patterns they grew up with.

The College has had to become competitive in the academic and sporting arena, has had to update its resources and teaching facilities, expanding its playgrounds and constructing new buildings, however its cultural, linguistic and spiritual identity has remained relatively stable, which is what parents and students value in a time of ever changing demands.

Endnotes

- ¹ Peter Amin Ziade, *Memories and documents of a priest*, (The Maronite Diocese of Australia, 1973), 144.
- ² Margaret Ghosn, 'Maronite Institutional development across Australia' in *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, Volume 31/32, 2010/2011, pp15-26.
- ³ Document dated 4th September 1972, sent by Mr T. H. Barker, Secretary, found in College archives.
- ³ Document sent from the Metropolitan West Area by J. A. Thomson, Director of Education, found in College archives.

- ⁵ Document addressed to The officer in Charge, Supply Branch, Department of Education, Brickfield Hill, Sydney. Items requested included 6 complete sets of curriculum syllabus, 12 large sized timetables, 6 class rolls, 6 lesson registrars, 2 general sized timetables, 6 exam report books and a quantity of exam record cards. Found in College archives.
- ⁶ Document received from Department of Education, Area Metropolitan West, signed by J. A. Thomson, found in College archives.
- ⁷ *Celebratory Booklet, Official Opening 1992*, Our Lady of Lebanon School p9, found in College archives.
- ⁸ The appeal against the rejection of the funding application was heard on 26 March 1986. This was upheld and approval was granted on 7 April of that year.
- ⁹ Letter from Department of Education, Schools General Program Section to Sr Constance Bacha, Principal, May 30, 1986, found in College archives.
- ¹⁰ *Celebratory Booklet, Official Opening 1992*, Our Lady of Lebanon School, Sr Constance's speech, p11.
- ¹¹ *Celebratory Booklet, Official Opening 1992*, Our Lady of Lebanon School.
- ¹² Cheryl Critchley and Mark Gold, 'PM Cultivates our tall poppies' in *Telegraph Mirror*, Saturday, September 5, 1992.
- ¹³ 'Keating makes a Hawkish promise' in *Parramatta Advertiser*, September 9, 1992, p 1.
- ¹⁴ 1990 Census of Non-Government Schools 1990. Summary of Final Staff and Student Data. Census No. 1485, August 1st 1990, found in College archives.
- ¹⁵ *Our Lady of Lebanon College Official Opening Ceremony Booklet*, 17th September 2004.
- ¹⁶ 'Prime Minister goes back to school for the tough questions', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 March 2001, p. 6.
- ¹⁷ *The Official Opening of the New Primary Building booklet*, Friday, 10th February, 2012, found in College archives.
- ¹⁸ *Our Catholic Schools*, CEO Parramatta, Term 3, 1992, Vol 3, No. 3, p1.
- ¹⁹ *The Daily Telegraph*, Friday November 6, 1998, p4.
- ²⁰ Maxine McKew, 'Lunch: John Brogden', *The Bulletin with Newsweek*, 27 August 2002.
- ²¹ Letter from NSW Ethnic Schools Board, Lancelot St, Five Dock, Signed Natasha Post, Executive Officer, 16th May 1994, found in College archives.
- ²² Margaret Ghosn, 'The Eucharist and Religious Life: A Maronite Outreach in Australia' in *Religious Life Review*, Dominican Publications, Volume 51, Number 273, March/April 2012:99-107.

SPYING FOR THE HOLY OFFICE: A SYDNEY STORY

Edmund Campion*
i.m. Myfanwy Horne**

Fellow students of history, want to tell you a story - which is what we historians do, isn't it, we tell stories? This is a story about a Sydney priest who got called into the Archbishop's office, at four o'clock one afternoon, on the fifteenth of September 1987, and when he got there, he said later, he found the Archbishop 'in a boiling rage'.

Some background: in March 1987, an older student, a graduate of the University of Sydney and of Oxford called Tony Abbott had left the Manly seminary and gone to work at *The Bulletin*, a weekly news magazine. A few months later, he published an article there about his seminary experience, which the editor called *WHY I LEFT THE PRIESTHOOD* and put on the cover of the magazine.¹ Tony Abbott mainly wrote about his disenchantment with seminary personality formation programmes; but he also commented on the academic side, saying that Dr David Coffey taught that 'the very fullness and perfection of Christ's humanity constitutes his divinity. Such ideas, Abbott wrote, had impelled him out of the seminary. In his book *Battlelines*, first published in 2009, he proffers a more generous view, naming Coffey as 'allegedly a "resurrection denier" but a captivating lecturer and, in my judgment, a conscientious seeker after truth'. Abbott's *Bulletin* article occasioned something of a firestorm in succeeding weeks. There were letters to the editor, including a joint letter from the academic staff at Manly supporting Coffey, and an article defending the seminary rector by his vice-rector, Bill Wright, now the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle/and an article criticising the Manly theologians, especially David Coffey — an article that brought its author to the Archbishop's office, as mentioned.

This author was Father Terence Joseph Purcell, Parish Priest of St Benedict's Broadway since 1973. He found Archbishop Clancy, as I have said, 'in a boiling rage', extremely angered at what he took to be a direct attack on himself in Purcell's *Bulletin* article, although, as the priest pointed out, he had not mentioned the archbishop's name at all. Back and forth their contest went on that September afternoon, a dramatic piece of ecclesiastical theatre:

1 Cf *The Bulletin*, 18 August 1987

*Edmund Campion, a Sydney priest, is an honorary professor, Australian Catholic University. Paper given to ACHS, 18 August 2013.

**I dedicate this paper to the memory of my old friend Myfanwy Horne. A week after we had celebrated her eightieth birthday at the State Library of New South Wales, she died, on 30 July 2013. Requiescat in pace.

- You attacked the seminary, which I control, therefore you attacked Me. Good Catholic parents whose sons are at Manly will be disturbed/You are hindering vocations to the priesthood.
- What I did was reply to Fr Bill Wright’s unsatisfactory reply to Tony Abbott... It’s common knowledge that both Sydney seminaries are infected with Newchurch policies. That’s a public fact.
- God made me the Archbishop of Sydney, not you. Anyone can write to me, as you have done often; then it’s my responsibility.
- Well, I rarely get a reply; and I can’t think of one single case where positive action resulted... As for Dr Coffey on the Resurrection: thirty to forty priests have appealed to the Holy See on this. He took time off for a short while but then he was back at Manly. Now he is being investigated by the Congregation for the Defence of the Faith. The Coffey case has been in the public forum for some time: do you really think it was responsible to leave him on the staff at Manly. Anyway, I don’t think, as a senior priest, that I’m doing my duty simply by writing to the Archbishop and leaving it at that...

So throughout the afternoon the argument went back and forth between the two of them with the Archbishop, Terry Purcell noticed, maintaining ‘intense anger and hostility’.

When it was over, Terry went back to Broadway and wrote a four-page report of the interview, marking it CONFIDENTIAL. Then he put it together with twenty other pieces of evidence about David Coffey and sent the bundle off to the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Defence of the Faith, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger.²

Ordained in 1954, Terry Purcell was now a senior Sydney priest. When the archdiocese had set up its Council of Priests, following Vatican II, he became the first secretary of the council; then, when councillors decided they needed a priest, rather than a bishop, as their chairman, they elevated him to this role. He was an active chairman, working hard to iron out inequalities in priests’ remuneration,³ so that when Sydney established a clergy remuneration and retirement fund, he became its first head. These appointments showed the esteem he was given by his fellow priests.

² The Roman Inquisition, founded in 1542, became the Holy Office in 1908 and was renamed the ‘Congregation for the Defence of the Faith’ in 1967. Cardinal Ratzinger became its Prefect in 1981. Cf. Paul Collins: *From Inquisition to Freedom* (Sydney: Simon & Schuster: 2001); David Alvarez: *Spies in the Vatican* (Lawrence USA: University Press of Kansas: 2002); Tess Livingstone: *George Pell* (Sydney: Duffy & Snellgrove: 2002); Gerald O’Collins SJ: *On the Left Bank of the Tiber* (Ballarat: Connor Court Publishing: 2013)

When he spoke, he expected to be listened to. So when John Heaps was named as an auxiliary bishop to Sydney, in 1981, Terry appealed to Cardinal Freeman to have the appointment rescinded. To no avail: Freeman told him that the Sydney priests had voted for Heaps and that the cardinal's criterion for episcopal appointments was openness to the world. 'For my part' Terry wrote to a friend, 'I cannot recall a single occasion when Cardinal Freeman accepted any advice I gave him as Chairman of the Presbyteral Council.' It was a judgment he was to repeat on Cardinal Clancy, after their argument, in 1987.

That argument had not settled the matter, so for another year David Coffey remained under surveillance, with his file at the Holy Office growing as more and more material came in from Australia and two investigations were pursued in Rome. Throughout this harassment David Coffey maintained a dignified silence, until, at the end of 1988, came news of his acquittal of all charges.³

Nevertheless, Terry Purcell kept his eye on the theologians and others at Manly. In August and September, 1994, for example, he sent reports to Mgr Thu (who by this time could be considered his case officer at the Holy Office) naming David Coffey, Neil Ormerod, Richard Lennan, Marie, Farrell and Neil Brown as 'dissenting staff'. They should be dismissed, along with the rector of the seminary, Paul McCabe, 'who Tias publicly advocated the ordination of women to the Priesthood and abolition of celibacy'.

It was not only academic theologians who caught Terry Purcell's eye. As a senior churchman he was of course properly interested in the appointment of bishops and, once they were appointed, he kept his eye on them too. In 1998, for example, with Cardinal Clancy's retirement imminent, he sent a warning to the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops: do not think of appointing any of the following to Sydney: Bishop Barry Collins, Bishop David Walker, Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, Bishop Michael Putney, Archbishop Hickey of Perth, Archbishop Francis Carroll, Bishop Patrick Power, Bishop Faulkner of Adelaide. Then follows a teasing sentence: 'I have supplied Cardinal Ratzinger with extensive files on most of the foregoing over a number of years.'

Earlier, he had reported to Ratzinger, 'I have just received damning information about Bishop-elect David Walker's Eucharistic teachings, but I am not able to collate this data at present' It is interesting to speculate who might have been the agents providing Terry Purcell with such material for his reports to the Holy Office. Their names might be found in the lists of priests who sometimes met at Broadway or who signed open letters to brother priests.

³ David Coffey: 'The Resurrection of Jesus and Catholic Orthodoxy' in ed. Neil Brown, *Studies in Faith and Culture*, 1980; Wanda Jamrozik, 'Seminary is teaching heresy, claim priests' in *SMH*, 5 September 1988; David Coffey in *The Catholic Leader*, 6 November 1988.

Marist Sister Maur Woodbury might be another. She provided Terry with minutes, agenda, budget items and a draft protest letter from the executive committee of the Leaders of Religious Institutes in NSW. With these she delivered a file of material on Barry Collins, who had just been named as Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes. In an interview Bishop-elect Collins had queried whether the Apostles were 'ordained' at the Last Supper, which engaged Terry Purcell's suspicions about his orthodoxy. Reading Sister Woodbury's material that covered fifteen years, when Collins had been director of religious education in Sydney's Catholic Education Office, convinced Terry that the Bishop-elect was 'heretical', as he now wrote. He could not understand how the Vatican's due diligence procedures had missed this: 'It is difficult to escape the conclusion that there has been serious neglect of duty,' he wrote, 'on the part of ecclesiastical authority.' Six years later, Barry Collins died, still Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes.

Geoffrey Robinson was not yet a bishop when he came to Terry's attention. As head of the church's matrimonial tribunal, Robinson wrote a draft position paper on re-marriage and the Eucharist, in November 1982, for discussion among the priests. To Terry's eyes, this opened a way for Catholic divorcees to receive Holy Communion, and he opposed it at a priests' meeting and in writing and in a complaint to the papal nuncio in Canberra... who did nothing.

So off, by registered airmail, went two reports to Ratzinger. No reply. A year later, Robinson now a bishop, Terry complained to the Holy Office of their inattention. So they looked for his two reports *and could not find them*. And Robinson was now a bishop! This slackness determined Terry not to trust his reports to the mail. In future he preferred to entrust them to a man he described as his 'senior Acolyte' at St Benedict's, a Qantas employee, who would deliver them in person. He also used Brian Harrison, a former seminarian at Manly, now studying at the Nepomucene College in Rome for service in Puerto Rico. Terry kept an eye on Bishop Robinson, whose name continued to feature in his reports to the Holy Office across the next twenty years.

* * *

Aged 15 when his father died, Terry Purcell took a public service exam to get work, passed in the first 50 and landed a job as a clerk in the Lands Department. Called up for military service when World War II broke out, he spent most of the war in Darwin with the army engineers repairing coastal guns, radar and anti-aircraft guns. He became a staff sergeant and after the war returned to the public service. He wanted to be a priest but he lacked the essential Latin; and he didn't fancy spending five years in the minor seminary school at Springwood filling the gap, as Cardinal Gilroy suggested. Providence brought a generous Marist Brother across his path, who offered to coach him; thanks to this Marist Brother he got up to the

mark in one year. He was ordained in 1954, aged 32.

As a young priest he was interested in adult education, serving as a lecturer and attempting to establish courses by mail, using cassettes recorded by Sydney clerical experts. This work alerted him to his own deficiencies, so he enrolled in a correspondence degree through London University, achieving an honours Bachelor of Divinity. Then he became parish priest of St Benedict's, Broadway, where his father had grown up alongside Norman Gilroy.

As parish priest of St Benedict's for 32 years, Terry dedicated himself to bringing back the beauty of holiness to the old stone church with all-night vigils, a choir, rich vestments, Latin liturgies and repairs to the fabric. He spent \$100,000 of his own money refurbishing its peal of bells and at the end of his life he was awarded an Order of Australia medal in recognition of his restoration of the historic church.

That said, it could not be claimed that his ending was a happy one. In July 1996, he had celebrated the appointment of Dr Pell as Archbishop of Melbourne by sending Cardinal Ratzinger press clippings and triumphing in a covering note, 'As one would expect, the appointment of Archbishop Pell has caused anger, frustration and resentment on the part of the Newchurch Liberal Modernists.' Then, in 2001, heavily persuaded by Ratzinger, Dr Pell came to Sydney. One might have expected Terry Purcell to have been ecstatic; but it was not so. For soon the new archbishop was inviting Notre Dame Australia, a small West Australian university, in to Sydney as a counterweight to Australian Catholic University, the largest Catholic university in the world;⁴ and he was offering them St Benedict's church, presbytery and school as their campus on Broadway. Terry Purcell, who thought he had permanency of tenure, was told to move out by March 2005. He went on ABC radio protesting that Cardinal Pell's style was not approved by the majority of Sydney priests.⁵ Then, come March 2005, he had moved out. The next year he was dead, aged 84.⁶

Once upon a time, black was the colour of vestments at every Requiem Mass but in recent times priests have worn white vestments to signal their faith in the Resurrection. At Terry Purcell's funeral, however, the death notice in the paper stipulated that concelebrants were to wear purple vestments. Independent even

4 Vice-Chancellor Greg Craven, speech at ACU North Sydney, 15 February 2013.

5 ABC Radio, *PM*, 23 August 2004.

6 Lyn Mills: *St Benedicts, Broadway (Sydney, St Benedict's: 2012)*; Alan Gill: 'A celebrant of conservatism' in *SMH*, 30 January 2007; Damir Govorcin, 'Scholarly priest was a "friend to the poor"' in *The Catholic Weekly*, 7 January 2007; Edmund Campion, 'Defender of the faith: Father Terry Purcell, *Madonna*, September/October 2012; Shirley Fitzgerald: *Chippendale: Beneath the Factory Wall*. (Sydney, Halstead Press: 2008); Matthew Thompson, 'Turf war sours welcome at these holy gates' in *SMH*, 2 August 2004.

in death. Bishop Julian Porteous, who preached, said that Terry had never taken a backward step when it came to tackling issues on which he had a particular conviction. The concelebrants all knew what the bishop meant.

What happened next is worthy of attention. To support this assertion, let me direct you to a collection of essays by the doyenne of Australian biographers, Brenda Niall, *Life Class: The Education of a Biographer*. She suggests that few lives of priests get written because their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience ‘rule out much that is common to human experience’.⁷ Well, while this may be true of the Jesuits, whom Brenda Niall knows well, it does not apply to the majority of our priests, who don’t take vows and hence are called ‘secular’ (that is, unvowed) priests. Later, in the same essay on writing a life of Father William Hackett SJ, she hits on a truer obstacle to the writing of lives of priests, secular or regular: when they die, their personal papers are thrown out. Happily, this proved not to be true of Father Hackett, so Brenda had eight archival boxes of papers from which to quarry her intriguing biography of the Jesuit priest.⁸

When Father Purcell died, his personal papers were bequeathed to the State Library of New South Wales. There, a year or two ago, they appeared in the Mitchell Library catalogue: 43 boxes of them, a vast, rich, rare trove for a future biographer. (In comparison, the Manning Clark collection in the National Library of Australia, ‘one of the largest individual archives in Australia’ according to his biographer Mark McKenna, comes to 200 boxes.)⁹ Of Father Purcell’s 43 boxes, I have been able to explore only three.¹⁰ Almost everything else is currently restricted. My work on those three boxes - 16 kilograms of paper, a weighty pile - was sufficient to allow me to sense, however, the frustrations and the satisfactions of that future biographer. Among that untidy mass, he will find much to intrigue him. Daily he will face the architectural problems that aggravate all biographers: which paths to follow? Which thickets to explore? What to include? What to leave out? - Problems that in a small way have annoyed me while writing this paper: so much material, so little time.

Does one pursue, for instance, Terry’s relationship with Brian Harrison who, early on, told him not to expect any kind of acknowledgement from the Holy Office;

7 Brenda Niall: *Life Class: The Education of a Biographer*. (Melbourne: MUP: 2007) p.260.

8 Brenda Niall: *The Riddle of Father Hackett* (Canberra: National Library of Australia: 2009)

9 Mark McKenna: *An Eye for Eternity: The Life of Manning Clark*. (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press: 2011) p.29

10 Terence J Purcell papers, ML Mss 8114, boxes 26, 27, 28. Acknowledgement: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales and courtesy copyright holder.

'I'd say you're bashing your head against a brick wall' wrote Harrison, in 1985. (But Terry did get one acknowledgement, in 1995.) It was Brian Harrison, whom Terry proposed to the Holy See as a future bishop of Armidale and whom he consulted when his 'senior Acolyte' wanted to become a priest. Aged 29, the acolyte couldn't stomach Manly since he was told on an open day there that the big thing about being a priest today was good preaching; then, after being accepted by the Bishop of Wollongong, he lasted only a weekend at the Late Vocation seminary in Kensington (NSW); and apparently found the Nepomucene College, Rome, too expensive.

There are anecdotes in the Mitchell Library papers that a future biographer might develop into character sketches. One day strolling through Rome together, Terry and the 'senior Acolyte' came across two Australian bishops, Coleridge and Pell. Improving the hour, the men from St Benedict's turned the conversation towards the achievements of Fidelity, a Victorian watchdog magazine that shared many of Terry's ecclesiastical concerns and for which he sometimes wrote. It was a sad reality check: the two bishops did not share their enthusiasm for Fidelity magazine.

That future biographer will have to decide whether or not to name the clerics who fall under Terry Purcell's suspicion: the much-loved monsignor whose writings on ecumenism are delated to Ratzinger; the press spokesman who must be stopped from becoming a bishop; the Penguin author who is lumped in with "Modernists, Trendies and semi-Trendies"; the president of an historical society whose participation in a radio programme about David Coffey is said to be 'arrogant, defiant and anti-Roman' and who writes letters to the editor. Could such naming be actionable? Certainly there is an excess of odium theologicum in these papers, as when he tells Ratzinger that a local bishop is known as 'the Protestant Bishop' or when he refuses to sign an emollient group letter to Cardinal Clancy because he is a 'Newchurch sympathiser and crypto-Modernist'.

It's all there, in those boxes at the Mitchell Library, awaiting an energetic biographer to write the life of a secular priest who had the good sense to leave his papers to the State Library rather than to some ecclesiastical archive where — come to think of it — they may not have survived.

INCARNATION: ULTIMATE CLOSENESS

Ken Healy*

Introduction

This is an expanded version of a too-condensed, ten-minute address to the Christmas meeting in Sydney of the Catholic Historical Society on 8 December 2012. That talk was headed 'Evaluating Myths'.

Its genesis lay in occasional lectures at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) between 1987 and 2006. After a series of introductory lectures on the Athens of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, many students clearly favoured the ancient Athenian ideal of human conduct over the story of Adam and Eve in the garden and its consequences. The question arose: Why had the Judaeo-Christian myth bested the ancient Greek model?

At no point do I address the influence of political power-plays or wars. The narrative seeks a compelling reason why the Judaeo-Christian myth, and ultimately Christianity itself, so completely vanquished the attractive ancient Athenian ideal. I also draw some brief comparisons in divine/human relations as expressed in Judaism and Islam, the other Religions of the Book.

The Athenian Ideal

The most common misunderstanding of the ideal life envisaged for the citizens of ancient Athens lies in the translation of the motto of the Delphic Oracle: 'All things in moderation'. I do not dispute the words, but will examine their context. At NIDA I summarised it in a phrase containing a word from the Greek and one from Latin: 'dynamic equilibrium'. Most Australians do not readily associate a phrase containing the word 'moderation' with anything dynamic. But in Athens it was essential to be constantly on the balls of one's feet, like a boxer, able to change direction, to evade and to attack. The metaphor applied physically, spiritually, imaginatively, politically, professionally. They were a quick, passionate people who contemned sloth or stasis. The Greeks had little interest in their creation myths: not enough action.

'Equilibrium' is the word I chose to denote the need to be dynamic in every endeavour, whether familial, religious, civic, scientific, artistic or military. The citizen was ideally an all-rounder, giving his (only males were citizens) most

* Ken Healey was a Franciscan friar for 13 years before moving to Canberra, where he was theatre critic for the Canberra Times and a staff member at ANU. He spent more than 20 years teaching History of Theatre at NIDA from 1987, and Dramaturgy at UNSW. Since 1988 he has been pre-concert speaker for the subscription concerts of the Australian Chamber Orchestra in NSW and the ACT. This is a revised version of his talk to the ACHS on 8 December 2012.

dynamic effort to each facet of private or public life at the appropriate time. The Renaissance revived this ideal with the notion of the Elizabethan Man.

As I learned at the feet of Professor Rob Jordan, Head of the School of Theatre Studies at the University of New South Wales when I joined the NIDA staff, the most useful way of conceiving the Greek gods is to imagine each as the personification of a basic human tendency or trait. (The notion is classically spelled out in Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*.) Not only does this help to explain why there are female gods as well as males, it accommodates what we may classify as negative or undesirable tendencies, without wholly condemning them. 'Everything in due time and place' would be a helpful crib on the Delphic Oracle's advice.

Paradoxically, the Greek gods are all tunnel-visioned monomaniacs, the antithesis of the Athenian ideal. When a human devotes excessive time and/or energy to serving a particular god, he provokes the enmity of the neglected god who champions its opposite. Apollo versus Dionysus was popularised by Nietzsche, but chastity versus sexual licence, peace versus war, justice versus mercy and similar dichotomies imply struggle rather than moderation. Incidentally, tragedy springs from any major imbalance, upsetting equilibrium in a ruler: the fatal flaw many of us met when studying Shakespeare.

Among the attractions of the Greek ideal is the sense that every human impulse or tendency is an expression of a god-connected need. Repression leads to imbalance, the source of tragedy. Conversely, the Fall, central to the Judaeo-Christian myth, generated a potentially lethal distance between the godhead and humans. The subsequent redemption story won few admirers at NIDA.

The Athenian ideal sought a kind of closeness by serving the entire pantheon, one god at a time. It did not last, as individual gods lost popular familiarity. Too hard, too diffuse when confronted by monotheism. No Greek god is a role model. So that contest was lost.

A Slightly Risqué Story

An English Squire was shooting on his estate when one of the barrels of his shotgun back-fired, fatally. Suddenly finding himself at the Pearly Gates, he was overwhelmed by a rush of South Americans whose train had run off a mountain in the Andes. Being Catholics, the Latinos of course went directly into heaven, carrying the Squire with them in the crush. Confused, when he heard the flapping of a bird's wings he instinctively fired his second barrel. All heaven broke loose. Someone had shot the Holy Ghost. The terrified Squire hid under a passing cloud. An old, bearded man beckoned him to come higher into the cloud. 'I can't', cried the Squire, 'I've just shot the Holy Ghost.' 'Let me hide you', whispered the old man. 'My name's Joseph, and I've had a problem with that bird for a couple of thousand years.'

That joke, faintly shocking when I heard it in the 1950s or '60s, circulated only among priests and religious, a seeming paradox until one notes that it is essentially about a *prima facie* embarrassing closeness between a human, Mary, and the godhead. Its natural community consists of those who are professionally concerned with that relationship and its corollary, Joseph's unique role, 'foster father'. The joke may also be seen as a smiling put-down by modern sophisticates of the very notion of myth.

Myths

Among the most dazzling achievements of ancient humans, myths embody stories that are so profound and complex that no myth can be wholly encompassed in a single telling, or singing. In pre-literate times simple verse-forms and various modes of chanting helped people remember the words. Yet variations abounded; the inherent richness of the myth resisted containment in a mere narrative. No single repetition of a mythic tale can reveal the whole myth, any more than a single facet can display the entire diamond.

To dismiss myths as false, or even to dichotomise them as either true or false, is to misunderstand and devalue them. Their stories grow richer as they strive for a kind of plenitude.

Myths may be imagined as having a nucleus, not exactly of truth, which would be anachronistic, as we shall see, but consisting of an 'agreed given', the essential story. This core attracts surrounding embellishments. The more potent the myth, the more surrounding details it tends to gather. Some embellishments may be mutually contradictory, but they never impoverish the myth. Quite the contrary. Versions of the myth eventually compete, increasing its rich ambiguity. (Note: the 'agreed given' is not an idea or concept, but a series of actions and events centred on one or more beings. It is too limiting to call them persons or even characters. Think of the Rainbow Serpent.)

If one accepts the points made above, it follows that we may speak of the Judaeo-Christian myth, but not of the Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox one. Likewise, Shiite and Sunni are competing versions of the Muslim myth, and Jews may be Hasidic, Ashkenazy, liberal or ultra-orthodox in the pluralist world which the secular Jew, Isaiah Berlin taught us so much about last century. Our forebears were probably monists, insisting on a single truth; they would likely have mistaken our pluralism for relativism, now canonised in the phrase of Gen Y as 'Whatever turns you on'.

Truth

Surely a myth's core contains its truth? More accurately, we may speak of its essence. Truth is a tricky concept when applied to myths, especially religious myths. We live in a world dominated by Aristotelian binary logic: true/false, 1/0, yes/no.

Not only our computers, but our law courts and even our parenting can hardly be imagined without it. But myths ante-date the ubiquity of binary logic. They are multi-valent. The pantheons of Norse gods and Greek gods are so gob-smackingly impressive because actions and events impossible in the contemporary world can simultaneously flourish, seemingly without self-contradiction. The power of a myth depends not on ‘either/or’, but ‘also/and then’.

In the world of binary logic, both of the opening chapters of Genesis cannot be true; they may, of course, both be false. To believe that either is literally true is to be guilty of anachronism. Who among the early listeners to the Genesis story, or later among its first readers, would even comprehend the notion of literal truth applied to the deity?

The whole point is that the godhead cannot be confined by the limits of the literal. Islam must face this problem in avowing the literal truth of the Koran, as dictated to Mohammed. The Biblical story of creation is so extraordinary that it rates two independent initial tellings, with an additional new start after Noah’s flood. This is fruitfulness in myth-making.

On the other hand, truth has been the concern of Church Fathers, the Councils and the Vatican. But myth precedes theology. The contemporary Christian myth embraces embellishments from Archbishop Lefevre to Hillsong Church. Until the Reformation Rome could shed heresies; since then we have learned to live beside them: pluralism.

In Australia it has become fashionable to deride the scriptural myths found in the Religions of the Book — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — while giving due public deference to the dreamtime myths of our indigenous people. Such a double standard suggests a world-outlook coloured by fashion. Myths, of whatever ancient origin, demand a certain reverence; they are first among our earliest attempts to record experience of the numinous. Myths seek to explore beyond the mundane, as they reach towards the ineffable.

Proximity

We categorise some apparent exceptions to the laws of nature or science as miracles. The possibility of miracles raises the question of divine intervention or interference in human affairs. This in turn takes us back to the period when, according to the relevant myths, the gods or God routinely acted, directly or through an agent, in matters closely affecting humankind. Proximity was of the essence in divine/human relations in this first period, for the Greeks as well as the monotheists.

Comparing the ancient Greeks and the three Religions of the Book, we detect similarities and differences. The Greeks sang of the Age of Heroes, when gods bred with humans. A Hero was the result of Zeus’ tugging a human female, who always

conceived a mortal child. After the Age of Heroes the Greeks had to make do with re-telling their myths, most notably by Homer. Our contemporary world shows little or no interest in these myths, except on stage or screen. The Greeks embraced Christianity in a culturally specific form which became Orthodoxy.

Pluralism again

For Christians, the best summary of and commentary on the period of interaction preserved in the Hebrew scriptures is contained in Jack Miles' revelatory book, *God: a Biography*. Miles treats the Hebrew God, Yahweh, as though he was the central character in a literary work, and thus traces the evolution of the idea of God among the Jews. We should note that the Messiah is still awaited. This renders the current silence temporary, and is central to the difference between the Jewish longing for the Messiah and the Christian celebration of His coming, and the subsequent (present) era of the Holy Spirit.

In Islam the word was not made flesh, but was valued above it. By having Allah personally dictate every word of the Koran in Arabic to the Prophet, Islam confers an absolute primacy on the words by which the godhead communicated with humans. This ordering of values may partly explain the bewilderment that many Christians experience when faced with Islam. After all, for Christians and most others such scriptural literalism is limited to fundamentalists.

Incarnation

In the Religions of the Book, striving for proximity to the godhead is so crucial that it is arguably a working definition of holiness. The mathematical notion of the asymptote supplies a figure that may be useful here. It is a straight line which is approached more and more closely by a point moving along a curved line, but is not touched by the point, however far it moves (*Macquarie Dictionary*). Let the godhead be represented by the straight line, and each of us be a point on the curve: closeness, but always otherness. Then comes incarnation, and the essential gap, at best tantalisingly minute, is at once closed.

Jesus became human without ceasing to be divine. Incarnation goes beyond interaction, even interpenetration. It is better than osmosis, something only the deity can do, without attenuation of the godhead. Quite the contrary. It is the harbinger of the Trinity, it intensifies the concern of the faithful for an after-life and, not least in importance, it elevates the flesh, potentially vanquishing both puritanism and dualism.

Before systematic theology developed, and long before the Middle Ages 'canonised' Aristotle as the pagan godfather of Aquinas, the Christian myth, by means of incarnation, triumphed over all its rivals.

I am suggesting a reason why Christmas has always been the most popular

Christian feast among ordinary believers. Indeed, so popular that clerics often felt the need to have St Paul remind us of the primacy of Easter — ‘If Christ be not risen ...? Surely it is not too much to ask, during the twelve days of Christmas, to be allowed to celebrate unreservedly the clincher that belongs to Christianity in the titanic struggle among competing religious myths. Christians alone can cry, ‘He is Both; and He is Ours.’

THE PASSING OF THE ENGLISH CHRISTENDOM AND THE FUTURE OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION¹

Bruce Kaye*

Traditional Anglican structures have developed little beyond provincial level. That has reflected an underlying provincial ecclesiology of disciplined order sufficient to provide a ministry of word and sacraments that is both catholic and apostolic. It has also embodied a practical recognition of the limits of workable connection. This is reflected in the persistent refusal of successive Lambeth Conferences to see themselves as a disciplinary body and their affirmations of provincial autonomy. As a consequence when we have had to deal with global Communion issues of order we have not had extensive ecclesiological precedent. Our history has not prepared us to handle such conflicts with confidence. Communion.²

Introduction

There is a particular focus in this paper on the social and relational aspects of the Anglican tradition because these are at the forefront of the recent and continuing conflicts amongst Anglicans which feed an interest in the future of the Anglican Communion. Perhaps it is helpful to draw a distinction at this point between the Anglican Communion and the churches that belong to it. The Anglican Communion is what Benedict Anderson has called an ‘imagined community’, that is to say one which you never actually get to see.³ A primary community is one which involves direct relational engagement, like a parish church. An imagined community is one to which we relate without that sustained physical contact, like the Italian community in Australia or maybe a diocese. This Anglican Communion

- 1 This article is based on a paper given at a meeting of the Australian Catholic Historical Association, November 17 2013. I am grateful for the invitation to give the paper and for the stimulating questions and discussion.
- 2 Inter Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *Communion, Conflict and Hope* (London: The Anglican Communion Office, 2008) paragraph 49.
- 3 See B Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).

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goes a little further than this in that it has consistently described itself as a ‘fellowship of churches’,⁴ that is to say; it is not a church with individual members. In this respect it is conceptually different from the self-understanding of the Roman Catholic Church. This difference often caused misunderstanding in the work of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission. It was clear that the Roman Catholic members of the Commission reported back to a body in their church who could in due course speak for the church as a whole. In the case of the Anglicans they reported back to a diverse group of institutions none of which could speak on behalf of all the constituent parts of Anglican churches around the world. The institutional arrangements of the Anglican Communion are of relatively recent creation and there have been other organisational experiments in the past that have not survived.⁵

As with all religious traditions it is crucial for an understanding of their dynamics to have some sense of their origins and development and especially is this so for the social and relational aspects of the tradition and their institutional expressions. In Roman Catholicism I assume that it is impossible to have some sense of the insitutionality of the tradition without an awareness of the contributions of Gregory the Great and Gregory VII, of Vatican I and Vatican II, to name just a few of the significant points in the story of that tradition. So in the narrative of what we now call Anglicanism there are some critical landmarks that need to be highlighted. It is to that task that I now turn before coming to the current arrangements in the Anglican Communion and how I think it might more helpfully be conceived.

1. A NARRATIVE OF THE ANGLICAN STORY

a. In England

A few years before he died in 735 the Venerable Bede wrote from his monastery in Jarrow on the banks of the Tyne in Northumberland a Christian History of the English. He envisaged, what did not at the time of writing exist, a christian nation of the English that occupied the whole land. This English nation was not only blessed by God but also peculiarly called by God to be the christian nation of the land. The English did not become a united nation on the land until after the strenuous efforts of Alfred two hundred years later and following him of Harold. Both of these successfully held at bay the Scandinavian invaders, only to be conquered by William Duke of Normandy. Under William the nation was consolidated and confirmed as

4 Lambeth Conference 1930 Resolution 49. Lambeth Conference Resolutions <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/downloads/index.cfm> . Accessed 8 November 2013.

5 See B. N. Kaye, *Conflict and the Practice of Christian Faith : The Anglican Experiment* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009).

christian. As in the terms of the day for both the English and Norman traditions, the King was supreme and the Archbishop of Canterbury was his servant in the maintenance of this christian kingdom in which the king was responsible for his people, body and soul.⁶ When William I clarified the authority of the ecclesiastical courts he was not so much granting independence to them as clarifying the way in which the authority of the king was to be exercised.⁷

The Anglo-Norman settlement provided the foundations for later history and some themes continued well into the modern period and shaped the later forms of the English church.⁸ The maintenance of the independence of this kingdom in both political and clerical terms was not easy and relations with the Pope, especially Gregory VII, were an ongoing theme of claim and counter claim. The conflict between Anselm, the Pope and Henry I on investiture and homage and between Henry II, Beckett and the Pope over the status of church courts illustrate the issues very clearly.⁹ Nonetheless there was a clear and strong note of lay supremacy, seen in the relations between the archbishops of Canterbury and the king.¹⁰ There was a tradition of monasteries being responsible to the diocesan bishop in contrast to

6 See H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc : Scholar, Monk, and Archbishop* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

7 See Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, p.132. This emphasis anticipates the Westphalia axiom, *cuis regio cuis religio*.

8 See Norman F. Cantor, *Church, Kingship and Lay Investiture in England, 1089-1135* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1958) and some recent modifications of his thesis in Sally N. Vaughn, *Archbishop Anselm : Bec Missionary, Canterbury Primate, Patriarch of Another World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

9 King Henry I and Anselm were in conflict over the king's insistence on his right to invest bishops into their office, including Anselm. Supported by the Pope Anselm went into exile and the conflict was only resolved after a compromise by which Henry gave up the right to invest but retained the right to demand homage. This was settled by the concordat of London in 1107. The conflict between Henry II and Thomas a Beckett concerned the power of ecclesiastical courts alone to try criminous clerks. The issues were set out in the Constitutions of Clarendon established by Henry II in 1164. Beckett was supported by the Pope. After Beckett's murder Henry went to Avranches and did obeisance to the papal legates in penitence. However most of the Clarendon Constitutions stayed in place.

10 As Christopher Hill puts it in relation to canon law in Anglican churches, 'The part played by representative clergy and laity alongside the episcopate is highly distinctive of Anglican Canon Law everywhere in the Anglican Communion. Christopher Hill, 'Ecclesiological and Canonical Observations on the Principles of Canon Law Common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion.', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, 14 (2012),(400-07).

the Cluny model¹¹ and of monks as bishops who were in turn subject to the king's authority. Even to this day every English bishop undertakes an act of fealty and an oath of allegiance to the Queen of England using a form that goes back to that given by Lanfranc to William I and by Anselm to Henry I.¹²

The central authority of the nation in the crown also meant that the faith of the people was uniform in that there was but one national church of England. Such a notion was repeated in extreme form and enlarged to require a high degree of uniformity in the sixteenth century Reformation legislation and the Restoration Act of Uniformity of 1662. These were the features of the christian nation of England, a lay ruler and clerical servants. This church was the Church of England, not the Church in England. It was the English Christendom.

The seventeenth century saw all the elements of this English christendom in conflict. The beliefs and practices of the people became more varied with the rise of a puritan or disciplinarian movement. The unity of the nation under the crown was challenged by conflict with the growing power of parliament, and the politico religious role of Charles I as a suspected Roman Catholic like his wife. These exploded in the civil war, the execution of Charles and the abolition of episcopacy in the national church. At the restoration parliament insisted on a return to the old order of episcopal ministry with an Act of Uniformity that saw the ejection of 2000 clergy from their parishes. The Act was part of the so-called Clarendon Code, which imposed severe civic disabilities on those who did not conform.¹³ But it was too late. Continuing dissent led to modest toleration for dissenters in 1689. In the eighteenth century widespread religious dissent mainly in the form of Methodists led to more organised religion outside the borders of the established church. All of this made it impossible to think of the established church as the

11 The Cluny model established a direct relationship to the Papacy and a network of authority back to the mother house. See the discussion of this and the moves of other monastic houses to seek closer alliance with the papacy rather than the diocesan bishop in Kathleen G. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century : Spirituality and Social Change* (Manchester; New York, New York: Manchester University Press ; Distributed by Palgrave, Manchester Medieval Studies, 2005) pp.59-61.

12 See BN Kaye, 'How Can We Speak of 'Canonical Scripture' Today?', *Journal of Anglican Studies* 11.1 (2013),(1-14) 3.

13 The Clarendon Code consisted of the Corporation Act (1661 repealed 1828), which required all municipal officer holders to be communicant member of the Church of England and to reject the Solemn League and Covenant, The Act of Uniformity (1662) which compelled uniformity of worship through a prescribed Book of Common Prayer for all clergy, The Conventicle Act (1664) which forbade meetings for unauthorised worship, The Five Mile Act (1665 repealed 1812), which forbade nonconforming ministers from coming within five miles of incorporated towns and from teaching in schools..

Church of England. Rather it was a Church in England attached to the state for certain privileges of establishment. The 'national church' had lost the Puritans, the Methodists and sundry others all for the sake of a notion of strict uniformity defined by the increasingly powerful parliament, only to find that in a relatively short time that same parliament was beginning to look to greater forms of toleration and plurality.¹⁴

These changes left the Church of England with a significant ecclesiological challenge. The issue of jurisdiction was now complicated and compromised and continues to be the subject of adjustment even to this day on such matters as the appointment of bishops and clergy. Not until the early twentieth century was a Church Assembly created with lay representation and not until 1970 was a General Synod established with clerical and lay representation. Even so key legislation of the General Synod still requires the approval of the British parliament.

It is not surprising that in the nineteenth century the Tractarian revivalists sought for some deliverance from the state bondage of the church and called for the bishops to assert their apostolic authority. Here at least was an attempt at an ecclesiology. It did not seem a very English call in a christendom tradition that had for centuries given overall authority to the laity in the form of the crown and it appeared to many to look like an appeal in Roman form. Also during the nineteenth century the changing pattern of understanding reflected in the organisation of disciplines in the universities led to a professionalization of theology with the clergy as its custodians, and the rectory as the focal point of that culture. In this way the fissiparous dynamics of social change and intellectual endeavour also divided theology into specific traditions. In due course this has lead British universities to have theology departments that incorporate the study of all religious traditions, not just christianity, and certainly not just Anglican theology. All of that in the one hundred and fifty years since the Royal Commissions into Oxford and Cambridge in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The English Christendom has passed away even though some of the furniture remains in place. It left behind a church with very significant issues of ecclesial and social identity.

b. The Influence of Empire and Colonies

The focussed national conception of this christendom meant that when English people or institutions moved outside the national borders some complicated and occasionally odd things emerged. Developments proceeded more quickly in the colonies than in England.

¹⁴ See the account of this triumph of the lay parliament in C Cross, *Church and People 1450-1660. The Triumph of the Laity in the English Church* (London: Collins, Fontana Press, 1976)

Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the world in the years 1577-1580.¹⁵ The ship's chaplain was the Revd Francis Fletcher. During the crossing of the Pacific Drake excommunicated Fletcher because he considered he had shown a failure of faith during severe weather and because he undermined Drake's authority as captain. He did so on the grounds that he was the supreme authority on the ship and for ecclesiastical purposes represented the Royal Supremacy. He re-instated Fletcher when they reached the west coast of America where Fletcher conducted prayers for the ship's company and some indigenous Americans who had gathered. Thus was the first Anglican service held in the future USA. Travel and settlement outside of England created a multitude of strange and different episodes.

While much is made of the founding significance of the Puritan settlements in North America in 1620 the first colony was established at Jamestown in 1607 for commercial reasons by the London Company. There was a subsidiary motivation to convert the indigenous peoples to Christianity but trade was the first thought. When the company failed in 1624 Virginia was made a Royal Colony thus giving it direct protection of the crown. During the English Commonwealth period the Anglican establishment in Virginia was abolished. An elected General Assembly delegated church matters to local parishes. This local option came to an end with the restoration of the crown and episcopal church order in England with new laws in Virginia making Anglicanism the established religion. Royal colonies generally were administered through a Governor appointed by the Crown. This carried with it a degree of church establishment in some of the colonies. However there were no English bishops appointed to the North American colonies. Oversight of the Church of England churches and clergy was handled by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel with the episcopal oversight of the distant Bishop of London. After the War of Independence all oversight and jurisdiction from England ceased and the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America was formed with a constitution similar in outline to the new federal constitution of the USA. This involved significant ecclesiological issues that were not easy to resolve. Scottish Episcopal bishops consecrated the first bishop in the USA because the Archbishop of Canterbury was forbidden by law from consecrating bishops for areas outside England.¹⁶

All the Australian colonies began as Crown Colonies. New South Wales (1788) and Tasmania (1803) were the early examples and both were established in the main as convict settlements. Others such as Western Australia (1829) and South Australia (1850) were for free settlement and trade. In NSW the Church of

¹⁵ See endnote

¹⁶ See Philip H E Thomas, 'Unity and Concord: An Early Anglican 'Communion' ', *Journal of Anglican Studies* 2.1 (2004), (9-21)

England was essentially the established church, though this gradually changed and in 1836 Bourke introduced what was effectively a plural establishment of Anglican, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches. The Commonwealth constitution in 1901 prohibited the establishment of any religion, which the High Court has ruled means any particular religion and hence means the Commonwealth Government can support religions as long as it is on an equitable basis.¹⁷ In 1847 the British government approved the appointment of bishops in South Australia, Victoria, and Newcastle, which, together with Tasmania and New Zealand, were constituted as an ecclesiastical province with Bishop Broughton in Sydney as Metropolitan. In Broughton's mind this meant that as a province they were free from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁸ It is a conception of metropolitan province with a long history in Anglicanism and can be found very early in the attitude of the Norman archbishops of Canterbury, Lanfranc and Anselm, in their relations with the Pope.¹⁹ In Australia synods emerged in the 1850s as the pattern for church governance. These synods were shaped by the political understandings of the time and an attempt in some way to give expression to the long history of lay controlled governance in the Church of England.

The English Christendom died in the colonies earlier and more systematically than in England. There is not as much furniture left around in these jurisdictions as there is in England.

Conclusions

The rise and fall of the English Christendom has left some clear ecclesial marks on the understandings and practices of Anglican churches around the world. The strong identity of church and nation has meant over the long term jurisdictional separateness from other Christendoms. That tradition has yielded a strong provincial ecclesiology. Anglicanism has never been and is not now a global church. This is what lies behind the understanding of the Anglican Communion as a 'Fellowship of

17 See R Ely, *Unto God and Caesar. Religious Issues in the Emerging Commonwealth 1891-1906* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1976) and BN Kaye, 'An Australian Definition of Religion', *University of New South Wales Law Journal* 14.2 (1991), (332-51).

18 Broughton made his argument during the 1850 Bishops' conference in Sydney and is recorded in a diary kept by Bishop Perry which is kept in the archives of the Diocese of Melbourne. See also BN Kaye, 'The Strange Birth of Anglican Synods in Australia and the 1850 Bishop's Conference', *Journal of Religious History* 27.2, June 2003 (2003), (177-97).

19 See Sally N. Vaughn, *Archbishop Anselm : Bec Missionary, Canterbury Primate, Patriarch of Another World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012) pp.153-166.

churches'.²⁰ The precise nature of this 'fellowship' and how it operates is at the heart of the recent and continuing conflicts between Anglican Provinces. The passing of the English Christendom has eclipsed the long historical experience of lay control of the church in the person of the monarch. The place of the laity in church governance was thus a crucial and disputed matter in the nineteenth century and still is a matter of underlying tension. That tension is accentuated by the adoption of certain kinds of managerial approaches to organisational life in the church that often lead to the accrual of power to office holders like clergy and bishops.

2. CURRENT CONFLICT IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

In every tradition of christian faith there has been conflict. There have been many Peters with their Pauls to resist them face-to-face because they were thought to have stood self-condemned. (Gal 2.11-14)

It should not be surprising then that there have always been differences and often conflicts between the Anglican churches around the world. The current set of conflicts is made more prominent because in the modern world distances have shrunk and communication is more immediate.

The first Lambeth Conference in 1867 was sought by some of the colonial churches because of conflict in South Africa and was first conceived of as a conference for bishops within the British Empire. It was boycotted by a number of English bishops and opposed by the archbishop of York on the grounds that it could imperil church state relations in England. Christendom was still important to the Church of England, even in its attenuated form. Relations with the political powers was an area of friction and conflict in the colonial churches and would emerge in different cultural terms in the USA. It has had a complicated history in the non-colonial Anglican provinces, which can be seen in stark form in the experience of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai in Japan during the second world war.²¹

This aspect of the question came into focus in the second half of the twentieth century with the decolonisation of the British Empire and the consequent impact of different forms of nationalism in the former colonies on the Anglican churches in them. This process is sometimes characterised as the Harold MacMillan / Geoffrey Fisher road show setting up independent nations and independent Anglican

20 See end note.

21 In 1939 the government passed a Religious Corporation Law compelling all protestant churches into one united church (Koydan). It split the NSKK. See A Hamish Ion, *The Cross under and Imperial Sun. Imperialism, Nationalism, and Japanese Christianity, 1895-1945*, in M. R. Mullins (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, pp.69-96 (Leiden: Brill, 2003) and a short account in relation to the issue of contextualization in Bruce Kaye, *An Introduction to World Anglicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp.59ff.

provinces. The formation of the companion independent Anglican provinces that make up a great part of the Anglican Communion, especially in Africa, thus coincided with the mid twentieth century decolonisation period. Inevitably the underlying elements of the colonial and postcolonial period provide a framework for the ecclesial thinking and sentiments of these churches and for the churches of the colonising powers, England and the USA. These dynamics do not work in just one direction. They are complex, multilayered and not always apparent.

While this points to the gathering independence of Anglican Provinces in the post colonial period there were attempts made to establish arrangements to hold these independent provinces together. In the earlier phase of local independence a conference was held in London of Colonial bishops in 1852 to discuss inter colonial issues. Nothing came of it. St Augustine's College Canterbury was established to train missionaries and operated from 1848-1947. From 1947 -1967 it functioned as a theological college for the churches of the Anglican Communion.

The first Lambeth Conference in 1867 was very clearly an event for 'connection through consultation'.²² An attempt to provide more organised preparation for what might be "decisions", or resolutions was called for in 1897. The proposal was rejected. A pan Anglican Congress was held prior to the Lambeth Conference in 1908. The pattern was not repeated. At the 1948 conference Regional Councils for consultation were called for. Two were formed.²³ At the same conference Geoffrey Fisher successfully promoted a resolution for the establishment of an Advisory Council on Mission Strategy, but nothing came of it. A pan Anglican Congress was held in Minneapolis in 1954. An American bishop, Stephen Bayne, was appointed as an Executive Officer in 1959. Another pan Anglican Congress was held in Toronto in 1963 that approved a document called Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ. The rising power of the American "empire" was influencing the world of Anglican provinces.²⁴

In 1968 the Anglican Consultative Council was established with lay, clerical and episcopal representatives from the provinces, who had approved a constitution for the Council. This is the only body with a constitution approved by the provinces. At the same time the position of Secretary General was established. In 1976 the

22 See Alan M. G. Stephenson, *The First Lambeth Conference, 1867* pp. xviii. 380. pl. 12. Published for the Church Historical Society [by] S.P.C.K.: London, 1967)

23 The South Pacific Council and the Council of the Church of South East Asia.

24 See S. F. Bayne, *An Anglican Turning Point : Documents and Interpretation* (Austin, Tex.: Church Historical Society, 1964) and *Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ, with Related Background Documents. Edited with Introduction and Concluding Chapter by Stephen F. Bayne* (London: S.P.C.K., 1963) and the remarkably useful H. G. G. Herklots, *Frontiers of the Church. The Making of the Anglican Communion* pp. 293. Ernest Benn: London, 1961)

ACC established the first Inter Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission to address the question of diversity and plurality in Anglican churches. The report was published in 1986 and virtually ignored. The same year a mission agencies consultation in Brisbane recommended the formation of a Global South Network of provinces from the South to consult on mission issues, especially in Asia and Africa. The network first met eight years later in 1994 in Limuru.

In the post war period some very powerful political dynamics were at play. New independent nations and churches in Africa, the rising influence of ECUSA in a phase of US empire expansion, local diversification in churches, decline in church life in the economically and historically powerful western nations and explosive growth in Africa. The long 1960s marked a manifest social break with the European Christendoms of the past and was accompanied by radical changes in social attitudes. Especially was this so for the Episcopal Church in the USA because of its involvement in the civil rights movement, particularly significant because of the historic association of Episcopalians with the slave owning South. Standing behind all of this was the threatening shadow of the Cold War in which Africa was a field of surrogates for great power conflict. In Europe the cold war was exemplified by the construction of the Berlin wall in 1961 and its collapse in 1989.

In the midst of these contrary cross currents Anglicans were trying to hold their separate Provinces together. The Lambeth Conference addressed wider political and social matters, the ACC started meeting (1971), The Primates were invited in 1979 to meet in between Lambeth Conferences to advise the Archbishop of Canterbury and in 1988 they decided on their own initiative to meet annually and constitute themselves as a kind of standing meeting of the Anglican Communion and to issue statements. After the fall of the Berlin Wall the social revolutions in the USA moved into the arena of the Anglican churches; the rights of women and relations between the sexes. That only in 1970 did the General Convention of ECUSA agree to admit women to its General Convention shows the traditional conservatism of that church which was being overwhelmed by the social revolutions of the long 1960s.

The Anglicans found themselves thrust into a new and strange question – how are we to understand this new form of an Anglican Communion of churches in the light of a tradition of faith so strikingly formed in a national and Provincial way.

The first theological response to this challenge focused on a theological account of plurality and the gospel (IATDC I – 1988) but it was ignored. The Lambeth Conference of that year called for study on homosexuality as it had a decade before asked for study and reports on the consecration of women. In both case nothing was done. The 1998 Lambeth Conference had been prepared for with regional meetings so that issues could be brought to the main conference. Observers and participants

approached the conference thinking that something would be decided and as a result something done. The conference was being turned into a kind of parliament.²⁵ After a fierce and acrimonious debate a relatively conservative resolution was passed on homosexuality. Everyone went home with their own opinion intact. Some bishops published group resolutions after the conference decrying the Lambeth resolution.

The action now began to be dealt with by committees or commissions appointed outside the range and effective influence of the ACC. The Council called for a new pan Anglican Congress. Plans were drawn up but it all came to nothing in someone's corridors during a meeting of the ACC. The Primates had moved into the driving seat and with the Archbishop of Canterbury were looking for a form of administrative solution. The Virginia Report of IATDC II provided a theology of koinonia but was used to further instruments of "enhanced" structures and rules for communion.

It all turned serious and highly conflictual when the diocese of New Westminster in Canada authorised services of blessing for same sex unions in 2003, and Gene Robinson, a man in an openly gay relationship, was appointed to be bishop of New Hampshire in the USA. This set the stage for the so-called Windsor Process that looked to the acceptance of an Anglican Covenant that would enable some "decision" in relation to wayward provinces.²⁶ This process has continued on to this day, but it is like the proverbial Australian river in the dry – it has seeped out of sight into the sand.

Rowan Williams ran with all this as archbishop, though he made a major and stunning change to the character of the Lambeth Conference of 2008. It was a consultative and listening conference. He gave some of his finest speeches during the conference, and there were no resolutions. The Lambeth Conference as Parliament had been stopped dead. A GAFCON (Global Anglican Future Conference) conference was held in Jerusalem in 2008 for a large but selected group of mixed conservatives and a second has been held in Nairobi this year. It has a continuing organisation, the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, whose secretary has been Peter Jensen. It presents itself as a shadow Anglican Communion for what they are pleased to call "orthodox Anglicans". There is a significant splinter church in the USA and another in Canada. These dissenting conservative evangelicals give every impression of establishing themselves as an alternative Anglican Communion, which they will presumably present as the authentic version.

25 See endnote.

26 For a critique of this in terms of an urge towards a new confessionalism see CG Brittain, 'Confession Obsession? Core Doctrine and the Anxieties of Anglican Theology', *Anglican Theological Review* 90.4 (2008), (777-99)

3. AN ECCLESIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

The issues before Anglicans at the present time in regard to the Anglican Communion are in broad terms ecclesiological. It is true the presenting questions refer to gender relationships in the public life of the church. Other themes like how to make a decision on such moral questions are crucial to dealing with these conflicts. However the question of how the institutions of the Anglican Communion are to act in this situation is essentially an ecclesiological one. In the light of the Anglican tradition of faith how is the Anglican Communion to be understood ecclesiolegically?

i) A Pilgrimage Ecclesiology

In general terms I would characterise an Anglican approach as a ‘pilgrimage ecclesiology’. Several years ago I was asked to write an Introduction to World Wide Anglicanism. The book was published in 2008. It was not to be a history of world Anglicanism. An excellent book had already been published on that.²⁷ So the first question before me was what actually is World Wide Anglicanism. Is it a global entity distinguishable from local manifestations, or a local church with an extensive diaspora? Is it a general term to describe the aggregation of diverse and independent churches around the world? Grappling with this forced me back to questions of ecclesiology in relation to this kind of tradition. My conclusions were something like this:

The problem is that Anglicans wish to hold tenaciously to the traditional order of ministry while not being willing to regard it as part of an absolute hierarchy, whether Reformed or Roman Catholic. But then that is what the Anglican version of Christianity is all about. It claims that our faith is built on Jesus himself as the incarnate Word of God. It claims that as a consequence of that foundation our response is always limited, partial and contingent: not limited in the sense that we can go nowhere with it, but rather that wherever we go with it we will need necessarily to go by faith. The institutionalisation of church life is inevitable, indeed necessary. However, the precise form of the institutional arrangements is always sub specie aeternitas and always open to reformation, which is to say change. The institutions share the pilgrimage character of the faith of the community

²⁷ Kevin Ward, *A History of Global Anglicanism* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See also WM Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide* (London: SPCK, 1997) and the very incisive Hugh Gerard Gibson Herklots, *Frontiers of the Church. The Making of the Anglican Communion*. London, Ernest Benn, 1961).

that has created those institutions. Those institutions are always in the nature of experiments.²⁸

This way of approaching an understanding of Anglicanism enables a number of important issues to come out; how identity is conceived, the underlying principle of contextualisation, Catholicity and the provision of ministry and sacraments.

ii) Identity By Originating Narrative

Such a pilgrimage approach to Anglican ecclesiology sits very comfortably with the way in which Anglicans see themselves as belonging to a tradition of faith deriving from the long English experience. Indeed most of the constitutions of the Anglican Provinces tend to put their identity broadly in these terms. Within the broad scope of christian traditions identity is construed in a variety of ways. Lutherans in terms of the theology of Martin Luther, or in the case of the Reformed traditions, John Calvin, Methodists in relation to the revival led by John and Charles Wesley, Roman Catholics in relation to the role of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ and the instrument of the Magisterium. Each in their different ways provides a path for developing an identity that can be sustained and adjusted through passing generations. Each in varying ways looks to the origins of the faith in the life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. The Anglican model is less precisely defined than some others and for that reason some Anglicans have tried to instantiate the sixteenth century reformation (its BCP and Articles of Religion) as the foundational defining documents for Anglicans. It is an assertion that is difficult to sustain historically and ignores the claims of those very reformers that they were agents of continuity in the history of their faith.

iii) Contextualisation (Incarnation)

Also buried deep in the history of this tradition is a notion of contextualisation. This is not unique to the Anglicans by any means. Indeed the first expression of it in the English context is in the letters of advice from Gregory the Great to Augustine in Canterbury.²⁹ Localisation is present from a very early time. The reform instincts of William the Conqueror and his Italian born and Norman trained archbishop Lanfranc, were directed by a determination to honour the older English traditions of church practice. This strategy nurtured in the Church of England a sense of a dispersed authority in decision-making and institutional power. It set the appeal to the New Testament scriptures in the context of an appeal to the life

28 With some minor changes this comes from Bruce Kaye, *An Introduction to World Anglicanism* p. 215

29 See Bede, et al., *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (London,; J.M. Dent, The Temple Classics, 1903) Book I, 27

of the early church. It moderated the varying notions of Royal Supremacy. It sat comfortably with the legal framework represented in the fifteenth century by Sir John Fortescue (*De Laudibus legum Angliae* 1468-1470)³⁰ and had to finesse around the more imperial version of the time of the Tudors. It finds prominent expression in the first Anglican Communion Doctrine Commission Report *For the Sake of the Kingdom* (1986).

There is a further contextual aspect to mention and that is in relation to the degrees of proximity in the communities that go to make up Anglican churches. The parish is the primary community where a congregation is formed in the christian beliefs and practices by direct relational encounter. The diocese is a different kind of community with different tasks and different relationships. The bishop is the representative agent for the discipline of clergy who are the agents for the delivery of a ministry of word and sacrament. The Province is different again and juridically provides for the discipline of bishops and an appeal from the diocesan disciplinary judgements in relation to clergy. Clearly these communities also undertake other society related activity, but their essential jurisdictional function in to ensure the provision of a ministry of word and sacrament. The Anglican Communion has no jurisdictional role, though it clearly has the potential to exercise a very important role in sustaining a vital catholicity amongst the Provinces.

iv) Catholicity

Catholicity is a mark of the church in the early creeds and has been an habitual theme in the history of christianity. However catholicity reflects a semantic field with many aspects and is wide in its range. The term is used often in the sense of belonging to the catholic church as for example in the opening statement of the constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia;

The Anglican Church of Australia, being a part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, holds the Christian Faith as professed by the Church of Christ from primitive times and in particular as set forth in the creeds known as the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed.³¹

Clearly this means that the ACA claims to be part of the mainstream of christianity.

30 See John Fortescue and Shelley Lockwood, *Sir John Fortescue : On the Laws and Governance of England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, 1997).

31 See The Constitution Canons and Rules of The Anglican Church of Australia 2010 (Melbourne, Broughton Publishing, 2011) p 2 http://www.anglican.org.au/docs/Constitution_Canons_BOOK_FINALrevclient_indexed.pdf

It has been the subject of careful re-visiting in the IATDC report, *Communion Conflict and Hope* in relation to understanding the Anglican Communion.³² The report elaborates a broader and more dynamic sense. It points out that from the beginning ‘the local church has had a catholic dimension; it relates to the wider body of churches in space and time. Without such relationship it cannot function healthily as a local church.’ (para 45) Even within the local church there are gifts that are received and ‘the experience of catholicity is an experience of delight in the gift of the other both within the local church and beyond it.’ (46) ‘For Anglicans catholicity has, however, been an experience of incompleteness. Anglicanism has never sought to be a worldwide church sufficient to itself. It has sought from the first to find its place in the life of the universal church, from its beginnings to its eschatological consummation.’ (48)

This is a dynamic notion of catholicity in terms of active inter dependence rather than in terms of status or membership. It is also a notion that highlights the place of gifts in ecclesial life.

The Commission went on to point out that ‘the traditional Anglican structures have developed little beyond the provincial level. That has reflected an underlying provincial ecclesiology of disciplined order sufficient to provide a ministry of word and sacraments that is both catholic and apostolic.’ (49)

This represents in a nutshell both the basic resources and the challenges for Anglican Churches in a global environment. At the level of inter-communion relations they have had to experiment and they will have to continue to experiment, not only in terms of a pattern of relationships and how they work, but also the kind of identity that can appropriately be ascribed to the Anglican Communion. Given the disposition to conceive identity in terms of the narrative of the tradition that might also contain lessons that could be learnt for any continuing experimentation.

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

The present so-called Instruments of Unity need to be revisited. They are an experiment that has not proved to be particularly effective or apt and they do not adequately represent some key elements in the tradition. They are biased in favour of the ordained, especially bishops, and they appear to me to be often confused as to their purpose. The only properly constituted body is the ACC and its fundamental role is to consult. At least this is going in the right direction. Whatever arrangements are tried the purpose should be to encourage the kind of catholicity set out in the IATDC III report. That is to say those activities that promote engaged mutual

³² Inter Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, *Communion, Conflict and Hope* (London: The Anglican Communion Office, 2008)

support and encouragement.

There is a further problem with the current arrangements. There is a long tradition of individual initiative in the Anglican narrative. One can see this in the role played by the religious orders prior to their destruction by Henry VIII and in their revival in the nineteenth century. It is also visible in the independent schools, societies and a multitude of church organisations that flourished in the nineteenth century and still today and which are not related to or part of the ecclesiastical judicatory. One thinks of welfare organisations, mission agencies, service agencies and ministry agencies such as colleges, publishers and groups like the Mothers Union. If one is thinking about those arrangements that serve the catholicity of Anglican churches, these are in many ways much more important than the four so called Instruments of Unity. There are a significant number of networks and groups established by the ACC that perform a similarly important role in this area. I think of the ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue groups and the various commissions that have existed from time to time. In this context regular pan Anglican congresses of the kind recently proposed but killed off behind closed doors would be valuable. Indeed that proposal amalgamated the Lambeth conference with such a congress, which would be a significant advance.

All these are instruments of catholicity in different ways and in relation to different aspects of the life of the Anglican churches around the world have been vehicles of the dynamic catholicity called for by the IATDC.

The role of the archbishop of Canterbury is a focal point for the historical narrative on this tradition. In that sense Rowan Williams' reversion to the terminology of 'Focus of Unity' has been quite significant. Any incumbent of that office should be encouraged to foster that narrative.

In such a diverse and scattered collection of churches with different ministries and gifts for each other there is a role for some kind of body that would encourage some balance amongst all these various means of catholicity to which I have referred. A similar role for relations between provinces would be appropriate. The ACC is the nearest entity we have for this purpose and it would be good if it saw as its primary role the encouragement of contacts and engagements between the provinces. Where conflict arises then there are well known relational strategies for approaching such conflicts.³³ It does not and should not seek to arbitrate between the provinces. Nor should it make these ministries of catholicity its agents. Rather

33 After the 1998 Lambeth Conference a group was set up that could have been a beginning in this direction, but unfortunately it was not pursued. The group published a report which was ignored in the subsequent debates. *A Final Report from the International Anglican Conversations on Human Sexuality* (City: Anglican Consultative Council, 2003).

it should have a sufficient sense of the whole that would enable it to encourage ministries so the whole becomes as rich and effective a tapestry as possible.

A perennial threat to effective catholicity amongst these Anglican churches is that dispositional alliances develop which often means that genuine catholicity is hindered. Dispositional alliances in themselves are not wrong. Indeed they are understandable and sometimes beneficial, but they often represent a failure of nerve in the face of difference. They provide the opportunity to retreat into a comfortable cordon sanitaire of agreement and mutual reinforcement instead of seeing difference and conflict as an opportunity to engage and learn. Such situations are part of the soil in which catholicity and faithfulness grow. What is at stake here is not the viability of sub groups but the good of the churches. That calls for commitment to the good of the churches through openness to learn from others who are different in the way they have received the tradition of Anglican faith and practices. The encompassing dispositional sub group often eats at the heart of catholicity in the church because it teaches its members the dangerous skill of disagreement instead of the constructive virtue of argument.

These considerations suggest that the Primates meeting needs to be re-conceived, perhaps even let go altogether. The Primates could have a role as facilitating catholic interaction between provinces, but the current model of meeting has not had an outstanding record in recent years.

The ACC should be the operative consulting body and should focus on its original role of consultation. It should also have a coordinating role to encourage and facilitate the myriad of other means by which Anglicans and their churches are held in some degree of effective engagement and interdependence.

The Lambeth Conference has been moved back into a more viable and useful mode by the 2008 meeting. It is a trend to be pursued.

The two Anglican Congresses of 1954 and 1963 had a significant and constructive influence on the people who participated. They encountered a wider world of Anglican churches. These large congresses had very significant impact for those participating in making tangible the imagined community of the Anglican Communion. It has been a capital error not to continue with them.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The picture I have presented here is of an Anglican Communion that majors on mutuality and engagement across the wide range of ministries and activities of the churches in the provinces. It is of a fellowship of churches held in an identity for Anglicans arising from a common originating heritage sustained by the vigorous exercise of a dynamic form of catholicity. In formal terms this model does not have

the determinative insitutionality of a magisterium, nor of a definitive theologian such as Calvin or Luther. In form it probably resembles more the pattern in the Orthodox families, though with a quite different narrative and thus resulting shape.

Another view of the Anglican Communion is that found in the so-called Windsor Process and the attempt to establish an Anglican Covenant with membership or status determining powers. This has been the response of the current Instruments to the conflict between and within Anglican Provinces. It has not in my view been a good idea and has not been particularly successful. Dissent has grown, and increasingly become institutionalised and thus divisions and conflict confirmed. But it has failed signally to honour the dynamics of the long narrative of Anglicanism and the pilgrimage that has produced a particular understanding of ecclesiology. The differences here are considerable. They imply different judgements about the kind of ‘fellowship’ the churches of the Anglican Communion should have and how that is best pursued. One is a precisely membership defining coherence, the other a more loose limbed relationship building cohering. The former seems to me to fly in the face of the Anglican narrative. I think the model of dynamic catholicity that is highlighted by the Doctrine Commission report, *Communion Conflict and Hope* reflects better some of the key elements in the tradition and reflects more adequately a pilgrim ecclesiology. In that sense it seems to be to be more defensibly Anglican.

End note 20: Lambeth Conference Resolutions, 1930, 49.

The Anglican Communion

The Conference approves the following statement of nature and status of the Anglican Communion, as that term is used in its Resolutions:

The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces or regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, which have the following characteristics in common:

- a. they uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order as they are generally set forth in the Book of Common Prayer as authorised in their several Churches;
- b. they are particular or national Churches, and, as such, promote within each of their territories a national expression of Christian faith, life and worship; and
- c. they are bound together not by a central legislative and executive authority, but by mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the bishops in conference.

The Conference makes this statement praying for and eagerly awaiting the time when the Churches of the present Anglican Communion will enter into communion with other parts of the Catholic Church not definable as Anglican in the above sense, as a step towards the ultimate reunion of all Christendom in one visibly united fellowship.

Endnote 27: Lambeth 1998 1.10: This Conference:

- a. commends to the Church the subsection report on human sexuality;
 - b. in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage;
 - c. recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ;
 - d. while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialization and commercialisation of sex;
 - e. cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions;
 - f. requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us;
 - g. notes the significance of the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality and the concerns expressed in resolutions IV.26, V.1, V.10, V.23 and V.35 on the authority of Scripture in matters of marriage and sexuality and asks the Primates and the ACC to include them in their monitoring process.
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End note for footnote 15 The colonies were started over a period of 125 years as follows:

Colony name	Year founded	Founded by	Became Royal Colony
Virginia	1607	London Company	1624
Massachusetts	1620 - Plymouth Colony 1630 - Massachusetts Bay Colony	Puritans	1691
New Hampshire	1623	John Wheelwright	1679
Maryland	1634	Lord Baltimore	N/A
Connecticut	c. 1635	Thomas Hooker	N/A
Rhode Island	1636	Roger Williams	N/A
Delaware	1638	Peter Minuit and New Sweden Company	N/A
North Carolina	1653	Virginians	1729
South Carolina	1663	Eight Nobles with a Royal Charter from Charles II	1729
New Jersey	1664	Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret	1702
New York	1664	Duke of York	1685
Pennsylvania	1682	William Penn	N/A
Georgia	1732	James Edward Oglethorpe	1752

COMMENT: IRISH NUNS DURING ENGLISH BENEDICTINE RULE

Moira O'Sullivan RSC*

This article aims to set right statements about S. M. Lawrence Cater, one of the five pioneer Sisters of Charity, that appeared in the essay by Robert O'Shea, *Irish Nuns during English Benedictine Rule: The Impact of Irish Sisters in Early Catholic Australia*.¹ It is especially important to counter O'Shea's claim that Cater 'had to be released from her vows' because of her behaviour on the *Francis Speight's* voyage to Australia.

In 2013, beginning with a book launch on 15 August, the Sisters of Charity mark the 175th anniversary of the arrival of their five pioneers in Australia on 31 December 1838. In memory of those Sisters, school houses and hospital buildings that follow the Sisters' traditions have been named after each of the five, Cahill, O'Brien, De Lacy, Cater and Williams. Learning about these brave women is one outcome of Vatican appeals for religious to return to their roots. This research has been fed by a serious study of relevant material in the archives of Propaganda, the Irish College, St Paul outside the Walls at Rome, Propagation of the Faith archives in Lyons, Downside, Ampleforth, Stanbrook, and the former Fernham Benedictine archives in England, as well as army records at Kew, land and commercial property records in the National Library, Dublin, Dublin diocesan archives, the archives of the Sisters of Charity in Ireland, the *Clyde Company Papers* in Tasmania, the official Governors' Reports from Sydney to London and other personal correspondence, some held in Melbourne diocesan archives, the Sydney archdiocesan archives copies of the Benedictine Journal, many exchanges with Sr M. Gregory Forster OSB and S. M. Xavier Compton SGS, as well as recent books on early Australian church history that touch on the same period.²

Unfortunately, these gleanings have been shared only through talks and conferences, so that even a thesis concentrating on the first twenty years of the Sisters' presence in Australia has little personal information for general reference. This leads to mistakes, as Robert O'Shea has no doubt realised. Because those connected to the Sisters of Charity will want to speak about the first Sisters during the anniversary celebrations, it is essential to comment about how they are

1 *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* 33 (2012), 23-32.

2 Those that have most information relevant to the Sisters of Charity or their context are: M.M.K.O'Sullivan, *'A Cause of Trouble'? Irish Nuns and English Clerics* (Sydney: Crossing Press, 1995), John Hosie, *Challenge: The Marists in Colonial Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987)

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mentioned in Robert O'Shea's essay, 'Irish Nuns during English Benedictine Rule: The Impact of Irish Sisters in early colonial Australia,' *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* 33 (2012), 23-32.

It is a pleasure to see attention coming to the religious women, who were at times in the past little more than statistics for some authorities in their reports to Rome. O'Shea's essay highlights the need for religious women to communicate their stories. There are few religious leaders who see this as a priority and so the stories are not known. O'Shea also recognises the significance of the big break with tradition and expectations caused by the founding of the Irish Sisters of Charity. (Rome insisted on 'Irish' before the name, since the normal interpretation of Sisters of Charity in Europe was of those founded by St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac.)

In general, O'Shea's arguments will not be discussed, but it would be hard to let pass the acceptance of Suttor's claim, quoted on p.24, that in newly founded religious congregations, as among Irish immigrants, 'social and political motives mingle inextricably with religious.' Religious mirror their background. Sebastian Barry's novels are enough to show how even Irish families were divided in their political loyalties. The 1916 Dublin Rising had little public support because so many Irish had family members fighting in the British army. It was even less of a question for the 1838 arrivals. Among the pioneers, S.M.Magdalen Cater was English, two of the others, S. M. John Baptist De Lacy and S. M. Xavier Williams had brothers in the British army, while S. M. Francis de Sales O'Brien, as well as being a ward of Lord Clifford before she was a Sister of Charity, spent about eight months on his country property in England with her English novice mistress, also time in Lady Stanley's house. S. M. John Cahill's father, a glovemaker, depended on the custom from Dublin Castle, the seat of British government in Ireland. The closest to nationalist sympathy was the foundress, Mary Aikenhead, whose father once shielded Lord Robert Fitzgerald from capture, but she was not in the group of pioneers. There was no particular reason for politics or nationalism to cause the Sisters of Charity to be antagonistic to the English, but rather the opposite. That is why the suggestions of 'divided loyalties' (p.26) with the Sisters regarding Polding has little to do with their being Irish but more with his misunderstanding of how different their type of religious life was.

The misunderstanding that interferes with the aims of our 175th year commemoration, however, is the remark that Cater had a 'dalliance with the captain of the ship' (p.25). Here is the passage that possibly led O'Shea to this judgment: 'By a little scheming the soft-hearted, soft-headed captain was got to pay special attention to one of the younger nuns. She was more clever and witty than she was altogether wise, though a woman of very good education.' Both Ullathorne and

the other Sisters saw the level of attention escalate, so that Ullathorne 'saw the Captain one evening take her shawl and put it on her as she came out of the cabin to join her sisters.'³ There are many women who have allowed a gentleman to help them with a coat, even today. Cater was foolish for not making the captain realise that his behaviour was inappropriate and fending it off herself, but such gallantries were not unusual in the circles in which she had moved. Since one description of her highlights her pockmarked face, and she was past her first youth, she was not a natural magnet for gentlemen.

Cater could not have been 'released from her vows' for such foolishness, even if there had been - which there was not - anyone in Sydney able to dismiss a religious with perpetual pontifical profession. Since there were few at the time who could plough through the morasses of conflicting church laws, it is understandable that they would equally be a mystery to O'Shea. Not only was Cater not 'released from her vows' but Polding appointed her novice mistress for a time in 1840. The passage in Ullathorne's book on which O'Shea bases the belief that Cater had a 'flirtation' with the captain of the ship says as much about Ullathorne's inexperience as about Cater.

One of the most incontrovertible pieces of evidences against O'Shea's claim that Cater was released from vows is a holograph in the archives of the Sisters of Charity in Ireland. From the Sydney vicar general, Dr H.G.Gregory, to 'Dear Mrs Aikenhead', the foundress of the congregation, on 11 April 1846, over seven years after Mr Dean claims that Cater was released from her vows:

*The Archbishop of Dublin having expressed his willingness to receive again under his jurisdiction any of the sisters who accompanied Dr Ullathorne to Australia, should they at any time wish to return to their native country, I have in the absence of Revd. Dr. Polding acceded to the frequently expressed desire of Sister Mary Magdalen Caters [sic] to place herself under your maternal care. She accordingly sails hence tomorrow in the ship Dublin.*⁴

The archives of the Australian Sisters (RSCA) have a letter from Mary Aikenhead dated earlier than Gregory's, refusing an appeal from Cater to be taken back in Ireland. The first version of the Annals of the Irish Sisters was written by S.M.Camillus Sallinave, who was a companion with O'Brien in Parish when they went to study hospital management there. She was also a friend of De Lacy. She copied all the Cater correspondence in and after her time in Australia. One about Cater is from Polding to Aikenhead 24 September 1846, but there are many others,

3 *From Cabin-boy to Archbishop: The Autobiography of Archbishop Ullathorne*, printed from the original draft, ed. Shane Leslie (London:Burns Oates, 1941),138.

4 The newspaper gives the actual sailing date as 14th, not 12th April.

including from Cater and her brother, Dudley. In 1851 or soon after, Cater changed to being a Benedictine Oblate at Hammersmith, London, before eventually leaving religious life. She had left the Sisters of Charity by 5 August 1849 when she wrote to Aikenhead asking for a copy of Dr Gregory's letter so that she could present it when she applied to another convent 'on the continent.'

There are many other minor points where O'Shea's essay can be contested, for example, that those in Australia were sent by Aikenhead to form a new institute (she warned Cahill and O'Brien that Polding might find that necessary), or that there was more than one novice in the 1838 group. Here are a few others: St Vincent's Hospital began and continued for years on voluntary contributions, not government subsidies from the beginning. The 'Bibles incident' involved one Bible and one prayerbook supplied by a non-Catholic clergyman. Benedictines were not the only religious to distinguish between choir and lay members.

Even if the unfortunate Cater is turning in her grave at having her instability resurrected, it is good to have a historian willing to discover some of the stories about the early Church in Australia. For this reader, it was particularly pleasing to find, in the last line on p.24, that O'Shea recognises the significance of the new type of religious typified by the Irish Sisters of Charity and then their initiative in coming to the new colony across the world.

**IRISH NUNS DURING ENGLISH BENEDICTINE RULE: THE IMPACT OF IRISH
SISTERS IN EARLY CATHOLIC AUSTRALIA
A REPLY TO THE RESPONSE BY MOIRA O’SULLIVAN RSC**

Robert O’Shea*

It is pleasing to have the opportunity to respond to Moira O’Sullivan’s comments upon the 2012 article ‘Irish Nuns during English Benedictine Rule: The Impact of Irish Sisters in Early Catholic Australia’. It is rewarding to know an article has been so closely read, and moreover has gained currency on the occasion of the Sisters of Charity’s 175th anniversary in Australia. It is particularly useful that the paper has prompted O’Sullivan to put a larger portion of her extensive study of civil and congregational archives on record. Her research in Roman, Irish, and English institutions is obviously more extensive than an article limited by practicalities to Australian sources, and it is good that she has been able to shine new light on the hitherto obscure fate of Sister M. Lawrence Cater. However, this should not detract from the broader thesis of the article; that pioneering Irish nuns in Australia, by both internal reforms and external demands, redefined and expanded the role of religious women. This should only enhance the celebrations of a milestone for the Sisters of Charity.

O’Sullivan’s primary concern is the claim that Cater had to be released from her vows due to a ‘dalliance with the captain of the ship’.¹ It is evident that whilst only a single, peripheral line in the article, it has greater repercussions when the Sisters of Charity wish to celebrate each of first five Sisters in Australia. The assertion that Cater was released from her vows comes from T.L. Suttor’s 1965 book *Hierarchy and Democracy in Australia*, which states ‘one of the original party, who had played the woman to the ship’s captain on the way out, was released from her vows, and returned home under Mrs Chisholm’s wing in 1846’.² Suttor’s notes concerning sources support O’Sullivan’s suggestion that Ullathorne’s autobiography is the source of the claim.³ Given that the title of Ullathorne’s book draws attention to his years as a cabin boy at sea, his inability to distinguish between gallantry and misconduct by the ship’s captain is surprising. It is unfortunate that the article

1 Robert O’Shea, ‘Irish Nuns During English Benedictine Rule: The Impact of Irish Sisters in Early Catholic Australia,’ *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, 33 (2012), 25.

2 T.L. Suttor, *Hierarchy and Democracy in Australia 1788-1870: The Formation of Australian Catholicism* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965), 79.

3 *Ibid.*, 317.

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repeated Suttor's implication that Cater was released from her vows whilst in Australia, when O'Sullivan's research indicates that Cater left the order of her own volition, at some point between 1846 and 1849, after her departure from Australia. It seems that Cater's somewhat itinerant path, such as her plans to join a convent in Europe, then joining the Benedictine Oblates in England and finally leaving religious life, have led to confusion in the historical record, which O'Sullivan's research has helpfully lessened.

However, this inaccuracy does not detract from the article's broader assertion, namely that part of the nuns' pioneering task was to work within an ill-defined web of authority between Rome, Ireland, England and Australia. Indeed, O'Sullivan's evidence of Cater's period in Australia reinforces this thesis. H.G. Gregory, the Vicar-General of Sydney, writes to Aikenhead informing her that Cater will be sailing for Dublin, a request of Cater's which Aikenhead had previously refused. Gregory bases this decision on the Archbishop of Dublin's 'expressed willingness' to receive back in his archdiocese any of the nuns who accompanied Ullathorne. It is these multiple levels of hierarchy which lead to ambiguity and the appearance of 'divided loyalties' between Irish and Australian leadership.

O'Sullivan is concerned that the article implies that such divided loyalties may have a nationalistic basis; and details the background of the five pioneering nuns to indicate their connections to England or British institutions. However, this seems a problematic way to illustrate the statement that the nuns had no political reason to 'be antagonistic towards the English, but rather the opposite'. Having brothers serving in the British Army is an unreliable indicator of political sentiments within a family, as enlistment in the military or the police was attractive due to the pay and conditions, regardless of ideology or denomination. Whilst outside the period being discussed, the statement 'The 1916 Dublin Rising had little public support because so many Irish had family members fighting in the British army' seems particularly debatable as many Irish nationalists were encouraged to enlist in the belief that Home Rule would be granted upon the conclusion of the war.

O'Sullivan lists other concerns, such as the implication that the first sisters were sent by Aikenhead with the plan to form a new institute. However, the text of the article already seems to coincide with O'Sullivan's claim that 'Aikenhead warned Cahill and O'Brien that Polding might find that necessary', stating that Aikenhead's 'decision to institute the Australian branch as a separate congregation under Polding's control should have appeased the clergy'.⁴ O'Sullivan is correct in stating that St Vincent's Hospital was founded on voluntary contributions, not public funds, but the government did provide land grants.⁵ Even if the 'bible

4 O'Shea, 'Irish Nuns During English Benedictine Rule,' 25-26.

5 Margaret Walsh, *The Good Sams: Sisters of the Good Samaritan 1957-1969* (Mulgrave: John Garratt Publishing, 2001), 32.

incident' concerned only a single bible, supplied by a protestant clergyman, it was nevertheless the catalyst for de Lacy's dramatic departure from Australia, which commanded public interest; the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported of a public meeting which raised £88 to support her following her departure.⁶ Finally, the article does not claim that the division between choir and lay nuns is exclusively Benedictine; rather it is part of a broader paragraph comparing a variety of 'older European and Irish orders' with Australian practices.⁷

Having been prompted by this response to re-examine the article and its conclusions, there appears to be nothing in it which 'interferes with the aims of our 175th year commemorations'. Even if it has taken most of those years to correct aspersions made on Cater in books in 1866, 1965 and in an article in 2012, this is all part of the challenge of giving pioneering religious women an identity and a voice in Australian Catholic historiography, when many of the available sources still treat them, as O'Sullivan notes, as 'little more than statistics for some authorities'. In this respect, it is the more complicated characters such as Cater and de Lacy who are most important to the narrative. Re-examining the vast journeys of they took, and their correspondence between their origin and destination, gives a vivid sense of their boldness and their preparedness to incorporate Australian differences into their ways of religious life.

6 'St. Vincent's Hospital – Departure of Mrs. De Lacy,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 June 1859, 5.

7 O'Shea, 'Irish Nuns During English Benedictine Rule,' 27.

Moira O'Sullivan comments:

Mr O'Shea may like to know that much of Dr O'Sullivan's material is held by the Sisters of Charity archives. and copies of her thesis are also in libraries like the Mitchell, Sydney University and the National Library. Many religious archives are rich sources for research, if he continues to be interested in these areas.

BOOK REVIEW

The Price of a Wife? The Priest and the Divorce Trial

Author: Anne E. Cunningham

Anchor Books Australia

Available for \$34.95 from www.anchorbooksaustralia.com.au

ISBN: 97809 8033 5491

Reviewed by Liz Rushen*

Launched by former Irish Ambassador, Richard O'Brien, at the Irish-Australian conference hosted by the Global Irish Studies Centre at UNSW on 6 December, this is a story of love, lust, blackmail, religious bigotry and old-fashioned skulduggery.

In December 1900, Fr Denis O'Haran, Dean of Sydney's St Mary's Cathedral, became entangled in a bitter divorce trial. Australian cricketer, Arthur Coningham, accused the priest of having an affair with his wife, Alice, and demanded £5000 compensation for the loss of his conjugal rights. The priest denied the affair and two court cases ensued. The action in the courts was inflamed by sectarian tensions and, in ways not dissimilar to that of today, newspapers became enthralled by intrigue in the Catholic Church and the



The Price of a Wife?



activities of a myriad of local characters, including Evangelical Protestant, Rev. William Dill-Macky; Catholic solicitor, politician and civil servant, Thomas Michael Slattery; barrister and politician, Jack Want; the whistle-blowing priest, Fr Kenny, known as 'Zero'; and a collection of characters from St Mary's Cathedral.

This story is well-known in some sections of the Catholic Church but recently unearthed documents allow a new interpretation of the story. Dr Anne Cunningham is very familiar with intrigue in the Catholic Church in Sydney, having written her PhD (published as *The Rome Connection* in 2002) on the politics of the English Benedictines and their disdain for their Irish secular counterparts in New South Wales in the years 1865 to 1885. Secular bitterness and church politics continued to

* Dr Liz Rushen was awarded her PhD from Monash University, Victoria, in 1999.

the turn of the century where this story is set. A legal victory for O'Haran would be seen as a victory for the Catholic Church, but after two trials, there was no winner—for the rest of his life, O'Haran was tainted by the accusations of the Coninghams, who were financially ruined. Alice paid the greatest price—she lost the love of her husband and that of the charming priest. Indeed, what price a wife?

I recommend this to anyone interested in church politics and the public responses to private relationships made public. Dean O'Haran was an attractive man, popular with the ladies but did he have an affair with Alice Coningham? See what you think when you've read *The Price of a Wife*?

BOOK REVIEW

The Forgotten Ones: teachers in the Catholic schools of New South Wales before 1880

Author: Charles McGee

Sydney : Catholic Education Office, 2012

104 pages : illustrations, facsimilies, portraits ; 24 cm

ISBN: 9781863828390 (paperback) 1863828397 (paperback)

Includes bibliographical references (pages 95-101)

Reviewed by John Luttrell*

In the history of Catholic education in NSW one of the best known episodes is that of Premier Henry Parkes' ending government funding for private schools with the Public Instruction Act of 1880. This could well have been the death knell of the many Catholic schools which since the early 1800s had been staffed by teachers employed by the local parish priest. However, the schools were saved by the bishops' policy of bringing in religious orders to manage and staff the schools from the 1880s to the 1960s. Naturally, histories of Catholic education have since given great prominence to the contribution of religious orders who have maintained continuous archives.

But what of those hundreds of teachers who had pioneered Catholic schooling in New South Wales in the decades before 1880? Few names have been recorded in general histories and little has been published about their struggles and achievements. Charles McGee has set out to fill this gap in the history of Catholic

* Dr John Luttrell is a Marist Brother who for 20 years taught in several Marist high schools around Sydney. From the 1980s he undertook further studies in Catholic Church history, with several publications for the Catholic Education Office, Sydney and the Diocese of Broken Bay.

education. He brings a long interest and experience to the topic, from his years as a teacher in Catholic schools, first as a Marist Brother and later as a lay teacher. His earlier books include *On a Winner: A History of Marcellin College Randwick* and *A Decision Not Regretted: The Early Years of Rugby League in Sydney Schools*.

McGee traces the story of Catholic schools from beginnings amongst Irish convicts around 1800 and shows how they developed strongly when the Church Act of 1836 ensured funds for church schools. While this story has been told before by the likes of Ronald Fogarty, McGee's concern is to name and recognise the many teachers involved. Therefore he devotes a chapter to each decade provides cameo accounts of a number of teachers in Catholic schools in that decade. Each chapter ends with a list of names and schools for the decade – for the 1830s he has found the names of sixty teachers and their schools and for the 1860s he identified 300 teachers.

For most of these teachers records are very scanty – perhaps a mention in a local newspaper, an inspector's report or a parish history. So McGee is to be commended for his industry in tracking down these names and showing us something of the extent of primary education in those times.

The chapter on the 1870s, 'The End of the Road' was the most interesting for me because the careers of the teachers mentioned reflect the changes in Catholic education caused by the withdrawal of government funds. Nearly all these teachers lost their positions in Catholic schools and were replaced by teachers from religious orders. McGee gives examples of these changes and also shows how many of them then gained positions in government schools. He also puts paid to a negative stereotype of Catholic teachers as being generally incompetent and unreliable. One case was James Gribbin who ran the Catholic school at Liverpool for over twelve years. In 1882, as state aid ended, the parish priest replaced him with Sisters of Charity, and he then spent the rest of his teaching career as an assistant teacher in public schools. Cornelius Dwyer was headmaster of the Catholic school in Moruya. He lost that position in 1882 but within two years had returned to Moruya to become a long-serving and respected headmaster of the public school.

Charles McGee concludes: 'This book has, I hope, brought to light some of the names and a little of the story of the real pioneers of Catholic education in NSW: the men and women who laboured in primary schools for Catholic children during the 1800s.' This he has certainly done, and one hopes that his book may inspire similar research efforts for recognition of the pioneers in other states of Australia.

BOOK REVIEW

I am bound to be true: The life and legacy of Arthur A. Calwell.

Author: Mary Elizabeth Calwell

Melbourne: Mosaic Press, 2012

ISBN 9781743241400 (pbk); 260 pages.

Reviewed by Janice Garaty*

This book, a review of the considerable and varied accomplishments of Arthur Augustus Calwell (1896-1973), is a eulogy rather than a historical account. Written by Calwell's daughter and sole surviving child, it informs the reader of the principles, the obsessions, the political victories and disappointments of this man who was active in Australian public life for almost 60 years. His interests were multi-faceted, his reading wide, as was his circle of friends drawn from the highest levels of Australian politics and the Catholic Church hierarchy as well as more humble folk.

Historian John Molony's observation that Calwell departed from politics and from life 'secure in conscience' is a true summation of the life-long philosophical position of this man, who in the eyes of his daughter could do no wrong. Certainly there is much to praise in his long list of achievements. The author reveals three key influences which do much to define the public Calwell. One was his Irish ancestry, with the strong influence of his Irish-born maternal grandparents reinforced later on with his marriage to Irish journalist and teacher Elizabeth Marren. I was surprised to learn Arthur as well as Elizabeth wrote and spoke Irish fluently.

Another life-long influence was his education at the Christian Brothers' St Joseph's College, North Melbourne and the close friendships he made there; his cohort included the National Civic Council's B A Santamaria, Archbishop Beovich of Adelaide and Bishop Lyons of Sydney. Mary Elizabeth notes his ability to combine loyalty with a capacity to be critical of those who abused the Catholic heritage so precious to him. His appointment as a Papal Knight was ridiculed by many of his Labor confreres.

A third influence was his unwavering belief in Labor principles which was fostered early on by his father; he remained a trade union member all his adult life. Calwell had joined the ALP at the age of 16 years, the same year he watched Archbishop Mannix arrive in Melbourne. Mannix remains an integral part of Calwell's journey through life as told in this book. He was active within his beloved Australian Labor Party from 1914, when at the age of 18 years he became Secretary

* Janice Garaty was a teacher of humanities for many years before completing studies in public history and starting a new career as a professional historian.

of his local ALP Branch. After many years serving in the Victorian Central Executive, in 1940 he succeeded Dr William Maloney, the Federal Member for Melbourne and Calwell's mentor, rising to the ALP's very heights, elected deputy to Evatt in 1951 after the death of Chifley and then leader of the parliamentary party in 1960. His political ambitions were stymied by the Split of the Labor Party's anti-communist (Catholic) faction in 1955, the Democratic Labor Party splitting the working class vote and denying Labor electoral victory. The author provides insight into the turmoil within the two factions and its effects on Australian Catholics. Her claims that Religious were coerced into voting for the DLP are unsubstantiated. Mary Elizabeth quotes Don Aitkin, noted Political Scientist: 'He would have made a good Prime Minister; I wish that he had had that opportunity'.

Calwell was rightly proud to be appointed Australia's first Federal Minister of Immigration, in July 1945; he was already Minister for Information with control over press censorship, the ABC and Radio Australia. In these roles he proved to be an able administrator and consummate user of the media. It was he who eloquently convinced PM Chifley and the caucus of the need to boost Australia's population by large-scale immigration from European countries, beyond Britain. Calwell continued to believe in the necessity of the White Australia Policy. It was he who coined the phrase "New Australian" taking his inspiration from Abraham Lincoln's "New American".

Keeping up with the multitude of characters I found frustrating; the use of surnames without title and/or position after their first mention kept me going to the index. It was often unclear when the author was continuing to paraphrase Calwell's words and the short paragraphs break up the flow of the narrative. Expert editing would have reduced these irritations.

The uncatalogued Calwell papers in the author's possession are the book's major source. Mary Elizabeth has produced a loving and completely uncritical account of a multi-faceted, strongly principled and talented man. Calwell was a creature of his time and this account is a window into that time. It informs the reader of strained Church-State relations some fifty-sixty years ago, explains the rationale behind the great influx of displaced persons post WW II and PM Menzies's campaign to ban the Australian Communist Party, while failing to examine the long-term effects of these on Australian society. This book gives a good account of Calwell's strong drive to secure social justice for those in need, regardless of faith and race but I would have welcomed a deeper exploration of those key influences in Calwell's life to understand better the private man behind the public figure. 'Calwell's determination to work as a Catholic in the public forum' needs to be examined further than this book allows.

BOOK REVIEWS

A midlife journey

Author: Gerald O'Collins SJ: 2012; (pbk) 437 pp; \$29.95.

On the Left Bank of the Tiber

Author: Gerald O'Collins SJ: 2013; (pbk), 310pp; \$29.25.

Last of the lands we knew: Recollections of the Life and Times of Maev O'Collins

Author: Maev O'Collins, as told to her nephew, Les Coleman; 2013;

(pbk), 232pp; \$29.95:

All three books published by Connor Court Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 224W, Ballarat, Vic 3350;

Reviewed by Michael Costigan

The writers of the two most recently published of these three books saw them both launched late in 2013. They are brother and sister Gerald and Maev O'Collins, who belong to one of Victoria's most noted Catholic clans. In those two recent books they both tell compelling but very different stories about expatriate experiences, one centred in Rome and the other in Port Moresby.

We are living in a Jesuit moment in the Catholic Church today, under the first ever Pope from the Society of Jesus. Father Gerald O'Collins, one of Australia's highest performing Jesuit priests, now aged 82, chose a suitable time to complete the story of his life up to the day, 11 February 2013, when he learned of Pope Benedict XVI's resignation.

Gerald O'Collins has told that life story in two volumes totalling 747 pages. The first, *A Midlife Journey*, was released in 2012, although it was actually written but not published nearly 40 years ago when the author, in his early 40s, was on sabbatical leave. Having joined the Jesuits in 1950, he had spent close to a quarter of a century studying and teaching theology in Melbourne, Cambridge and Boston. In 1966 he had an academic summer in Germany at Tübingen University, where he got to know well his neighbour and fellow theologian Josef Ratzinger, the future Pope. Over the years he was to spend much time in Germany, mainly in Tübingen, where he also became a friend of the Swiss-born theologian Hans Küng.

All of this and much more fills the pages of *A Midlife Journey*. Recognising nearly forty years after the manuscript was written how some of the views

*Michael Costigan was editor of *The Advocate* [Melbourne]; Director, Literature Board of the Australia Council; and Director and Executive Secretary, Australian Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace.

expressed in his early forties “are naïve, brash or even worse, and how thirty-two years teaching in Rome changed me”, Father O’Collins nevertheless saw value in recording with few amendments how he experienced life at that time. It was a good decision. His book throws much light on how an intelligent young cleric studying and teaching before, during and after the Second Vatican Council reacted to the momentous events occurring in the Church and in society through that period.

He does not shirk from revealing some personal aspects of his life that involved struggle and the need to make agonising decisions. This applied particularly to a friendship he had in Cambridge with Margaret, a bright and attractive young American student. The possibility of marriage and therefore his need to leave the Jesuits and the priesthood was in the air. He chose not to go down that path. In a moving passage (page 361) he recalls his last meeting with Margaret, in Boston in November 1968. After describing his farewell glimpse of her from a bus window, just before he returned to Melbourne, he adds the saddest sentences in the book: “I never saw her again and we never corresponded. I tried to make the break complete by refusing to find out where she went to live and what became of her.” That took courage but was it altogether fair to Margaret?

Based in Melbourne for several years with some returns to Boston and elsewhere on teaching assignments, O’Collins was able to influence the organisers of the 1973 Melbourne International Eucharistic Congress to give the event a strongly ecumenical character. He also helped the Anglicans to host a visit by Hans Kung to Melbourne for a well attended series of lectures. And he preached an ordination retreat to seminarians at Corpus Christi College, remembering that he had supervised that same class’s spirituality year six years previously.

A Midlife Journey brought the Victorian priest’s history to 1974, when he was appointed to the lecturing staff in the theological department of Rome’s Pontifical Gregorian University (the “Greg” in popular parlance). *On the Left Bank of the Tiber* is an account of his 32 years living and working in that famous Jesuit-run university, the alma mater of numerous popes, other Church leaders, clerics from many lands and more recently not a few lay graduates, male and female.

The Gregorian’s location, south of the Tiber and hence on the river’s left bank, gives the book its title. Thus it differs from St Peter’s, the Vatican, the Janiculum hill, Trastevere and the headquarters of the Jesuit General (sometimes called “the Black Pope”) – all on the right bank, although not very far on foot from the Greg. In the centre of old Rome, the university is close to the Quirinal Palace and a short walk from sites like the Forum, the Trevi Fountain, Piazza Venezia, the Venerable English College (Rome’s oldest national seminary) and the Tiber itself.

The book makes fascinating reading not only for old Romans like the present reviewer (1952-63) but for anyone interested in the life of the Church at its heart

during the pontificates of Paul VI (especially his final four years) and both of the John Pauls. In two chapters the author, writing about these three pontiffs, reveals some intriguing facts while drawing on sources close to the papacy as well as on his own experiences. This is mainly so in the case of John Paul II, to whose life and death he devotes 50 pages. He summarises well and pays tribute to the Polish Pope's great achievements, while articulating a few reservations about his centralising policies, his condemnation of liberation theology and his contentious 1981 intervention in the running of the Society of Jesus after the General, Father Pedro Arrupe, suffered a stroke. That was a different kind of "Jesuit moment".

Readers are treated to a rare glimpse into what went on behind the scenes at the Greg in the author's years there (1974-2006). It was a time not without turmoil for that institution, for the Society of Jesus, for the Church in general and also for Italy, which the author, a stranger on his arrival, grew to know well and love dearly.

Throughout his long stay O'Collins occupied a room on the university's fourth floor, where some of his Order's most celebrated academics had lived or were still living.

His own career as a highly esteemed theologian blossomed at the Greg, where he had a six-year term (1985-91) as Dean of Theology. His best known field of theological expertise was the Resurrection, a subject that is the theme of eight of the more than sixty book that he wrote himself, co-authored (often in collaboration with others, notably the American Father Daniel Kendall SJ) or edited.

The Australian priest also developed a keen interest in the theology of Revelation, taking some positions that at times caused anxiety for Rome's more conservative guardians of what they saw as orthodoxy. O'Collins was able calmly to deflect criticism by demonstrating that his approach was consistent with tradition and with the teachings of Vatican II and John Paul II.

Father O'Collins had to confront some of the upholders of orthodoxy at the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) when he acted as an advocate for the Belgian Father Jacques Dupuis, his fellow Jesuit and dear friend. He defended Dupuis effectively in an hour-long presentation to a CDF panel chaired by Cardinal Ratzinger. Father Dupuis, supported by the likes of Cardinal Koenig and Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald in his role as a leader on dialogue between Catholicism and other religions, had been challenged by the CDF for some of his views, mostly found in his bestselling work *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*.

Accusations against Dupuis had gone to the CDF from a few "self-appointed vigilantes", as the author calls them. One or two were apparently from the Gregorian itself, where Dupuis too was living after years in India. Father O'Collins stood by him during the last half dozen years of his life, when his orthodoxy continued to be questioned from time to time. Gradually the severity of the adverse judgements

about his ideas was mitigated, without leading to an unqualified burial of all suspicion. He continued to win applause for his writing and teaching until his death in 2004.

Gerald O'Collins gives a detailed 50-page account of the Dupuis affair in a chapter which in itself is a significant contribution to modern Catholic history writing.

What emerges from this book is that the Victorian country boy and Xavier College boarder who ascended the heights of theological research and exposition was in no way an ivory tower academic.

That he was endowed with a rare gift for making friends is clear from both volumes of his memoirs. In Rome, his circle of friends included, among others, the aristocratic Doria family, a circle of young disciples and the girls working for Gucci. He became an unofficial chaplain to many of these friends, as well as others, conducting their baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Two of his best personal friends for many years have been the German Protestant theologian Jürgen Moltmann and his wife Elizabeth, to both of whom *On the Left Bank of the Tiber* is dedicated. Other close ecumenical friendships have been with the Anglican Archbishops George Carey of Canterbury, who wrote the foreword to *A Midlife Journey*, and Peter Carnley of Perth. Then there were his generous American benefactors Eugene McCarthy and his wife, together with cherished Roman friends like George Barzilai and Mimi Sbisà - and of course many of the Gregorian's staff and students.

While O'Collins valued his long-term amicable relationship with Ratzinger and recognises him as a great theologian, he considers that the future Pope showed, in some of their exchanges at the CDF, that he tended to ignore or even disdain modern biblical scholarship.

O'Collins's writing style is conversational, especially in his first memoir and in the first half of the second, when he offers lively accounts of his extracurricular activities with many acquaintances. In later chapters of *On the Left Bank of the Tiber* he explains clearly in simplified form the meaning of certain theological principles which are expounded more technically in his professional works.

His skill as a communicator with journalistic inclinations has found regular outlets in journals like the *Tablet* and in his performances as a television or radio commentator or interviewee. As a professional theologian he relished chances during long Roman summer breaks to accept lecturing engagements in many countries. Of particular value was his involvement in theological "summits" in Yonkers, New York State, on the Resurrection (1996), the Trinity (1998), the Incarnation (2000) and Redemption (2003) – all leading to publications.

The author's benign approach to most subjects gives way in a few instances

to a felt need to criticise certain individuals and organisations with a degree of asperity. Among them are the American Cardinal John Wright, the Italian Father (now Cardinal) Angelo Amato, his Cambridge contemporary and fellow Australian Clive James, the liberation theologian Leonardo Boff and above all the founder of Opus Dei, Saint Josemaria Escriva, as well as that organisation itself. His reporting of a quip by some Romans about the 2002 canonisation of the allegedly flawed Escriva – that it involved a papal dispensation “from the requirement of sanctity” – will not please the sainted Spaniard’s many devotees and might have been better edited out.

The writer makes a valid point about some attacks on “the Vatican” implying it is a monolithic entity. This, he says, ignores the considerable diversity in the opinions of the hundreds of people associated with the Holy See.

In a confessional mood near the end of the book, he records a wish that he “had done more for the poor and needy”. There was no real need for guilt there. From his early days as a Jesuit Gerald O’Collins had longed to serve on the Australian Jesuit mission in India but his Provincial had told him that his “India” was to be on the lecturing podium in places like Rome.

His achievements were recognised on his 70th birthday in 2001 by the publishing in Rome of *The Convergence of Theology*, a collection of essays by 21 scholars paying homage to him. Other honours followed in Australia – being appointed a Companion of the General Division of the Order of Australia (AC) and as an Adjunct Professor of the Australian Catholic University.

One can be sure in this Jesuit moment that the Church and society as a whole, not excluding their disadvantaged members, have been the beneficiaries, directly and indirectly, of the life and activities of Gerald O’Collins SJ.

The Australian Jesuit’s slightly older sister, Emeritus Professor Maev O’Collins, has been no less open-handed in her distribution of benefits to others, especially in Papua New Guinea, where she lived as an academic for almost two decades and where she often returned after retiring to Canberra. At the same time, her general outlook during a fascinating life suggests that she would be inclined to consider herself the beneficiary of the many Papua New Guineans whom she befriended rather than the reverse.

Maev O’Collins told her life story to her nephew, Les Coleman, in a series of recorded interviews. The cooperation between them has resulted in a coherent and readable memoir. The brother and sister give their own accounts (Gerald’s in *A Midlife Journey*) of growing up happily in Rock Lodge, a house on a rural property several kilometres from the Melbourne seaside town of Frankston. Children of the lawyer Patrick Francis (Frank) O’Collins and Joan Glynn, the pair enjoyed the company of two older sisters and two younger brothers, as well as occasional

visits by various relations. The parents, siblings and some of the other relations and friends make frequent appearances in the memoirs of both writers. One of Gerald O'Collins's early books (1965) is a biography of their distinguished maternal grandfather, the Hon Patrick McMahon Glynn, a member of the first Australian parliament in 1901 and later the Minister for External Affairs. Maev recalls that Glynn held the latter role in 1914, when the federal government took over Norfolk Island from Great Britain.

Given the distance of Rock Lodge from the kind of Melbourne schools favoured by their parents, Gerald and Maev each spent several years as boarders at Xavier College, Kew, and Sacre Coeur College, Glen Iris respectively – and then in the Catholic residential colleges (Newman and St Mary's) at Melbourne University.

On a scholarship, Maev studied Arts-Social Work at university. Influenced by her Sydney aunt, the well-known social worker Mary Lewis, Maev decided to take on her aunt's profession, completing her Diploma at Sydney University in 1951, while staying at Sancta Sophia College. She was 22 and took her first overseas trip to Europe later that year with her brother Jim and cousin Deirdre Lewis.

What followed over nearly half a century was a marvellous career in social work, first as a practitioner, then as a teacher and a promoter of social action. That career began with Maev's appointment in 1952 to the small staff of Melbourne's Catholic Social Services Bureau, led by a highly respected and pastorally sensitive priest, Father (later Bishop) Eric Perkins. Maev was a quick learner as well as a thoughtful critic of Catholic attitudes in areas like adoption, where at that time Church members and others had limited understanding. She had a compassionate approach to single mothers who were sometimes virtually compelled to surrender their new-born babies for adoption. The young social worker was one whose influence helped to lead to wiser practices and legislative changes.

After another gap year (1956) during which she again travelled abroad, Maev returned with renewed confidence and skill to what had been re-named the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. Eric Perkins was later to call her "the greatest Catholic social worker" he had known. She had stayed for ten more years in Melbourne until deciding to do a Master's degree at Columbia University, New York. She remained there to qualify for a doctorate, completing five years at Columbia.

Her New York experience was to have a decisive impact on the Australian woman's future. It was there that she met the young Michael Somare, who urged her to consider devoting herself to Papua New Guinea at a time when the country was preparing for independence. Somare's persuasive words were: "You are a long way from home. When you finish your studies, come and work for us at the new University in Port Moresby. Then if you get sick of us or we get sick of you, it's not far to go home."

When a new position, lecturer in social work at the University of PNG, was advertised, Maev applied and was accepted. She was to be based there from 1972 to 1989, eventually becoming Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology – and Emeritus Professor on her retirement at 61 in 1989.

Close to three-quarters of Maev's memoir is devoted to those years in PNG. It was again a time when she learned much while fearlessly defending and promoting principles in which she believed, even if some other expatriates rejected them. What she appreciated increasingly was the importance of trying to understand the local people and to appreciate their culture, varied as it was from place to place. As an experienced social worker herself, she placed a strong emphasis on field work. Before sending her students on assignments, often in their own or other remote villages, she would visit those destinations herself to assess the situation. This took her to many parts of the country and enhanced her appreciation of its cultural diversity and richness, as well as her understanding of a multiplicity of socio-economic and political issues.

These methods were appreciated. When, as a single woman, she visited areas where her safety might have been in jeopardy, the people would take measures to help and protect her. This was also the case in Port Moresby, often seen as a dangerous city.

Maev was also prepared, when it was deemed appropriate, to take sides in public controversies before and after independence came in 1975. She continued the friendly relationship, originating in New York, with Somare. Like other staff at the university, she made a real contribution to preparing students who had the potential to take leadership roles in the new nation. One among many of these was another future Prime Minister, Pais Wingti.

Some of the friendships Maev made with Papuan New Guineans have endured through her retirement, which took her to Canberra and valued associations with the Australian National University and the Australian Catholic University, where, like her brother Gerald, she is an Adjunct Professor.

In the early years of that retirement, Professor O'Collins accepted consultancy assignments in PNG, spending as much time there as in the ACT. She was also involved in other activities in the South Pacific, notably in Vanuatu and Norfolk Island (with its remembered link with her grandfather). She has had an enduring concern for national and international social justice and human rights issues.

Wherever she has been in this fruitful and eventful life, Maev says that she has been guided by the advice of her father, Frank O'Collins, and her uncle, Bishop James O'Collins: "This was a tolerance that suggested reaching out to accept things that you did not understand, about how to behave in an unfamiliar setting and how to make friends."

BOOK NOTE

Providence Provides: Brigidine Sisters in the New South Wales Province

Janice Garaty*

Published by UNSW Press

RRP is \$49.95 (plus postage) available from Brigidine Provincial Office 93 Carrington Rd Coogee NSW 2034

The book marks the 130th anniversary of the Brigidine Congregation and begins with a journey of six self-exiles from the 'soft green fields' of Mountrath to the 'black soil plains' of the Castlereagh in 1883; Mother John Synan wrote she had never felt more lonely as their ship left the London dock. Many more journeys were to follow: physical journeys, often perilous and certainly arduous; spiritual journeys, both collective and individual, as decreed by the Second Vatican Council; personal journeys as the Sisters retreated from education and explored new ways in which their considerable talents and individual interests could be utilised. New ministries took Brigidines to New Guinea, the outer Western Suburbs of Sydney, into jails and courtrooms, migrant hostels, placement as hospital and university chaplains, detention centres, even the United Nations. The book ends with an overview of the present and varied works of the Sisters and their future directions.

The author was conscious of the need to give a voice to individual Sisters, the Brigidines in country towns, in large boarding and secondary school complexes, in poorly resourced parish schools and prestigious city colleges and she discovered their stories in letters, in personal interviews, in speeches and written reminiscences. Evident in their stories are continuing battles; battles against drought, heat and dust, deadly diseases, overcrowded schoolrooms, interfering bishops and demanding parish priests, inadequate cramped accommodation, war rationing and real fears of enemy invasion. Ever present was the 'tyranny of distance', between the congregation's governing body in Ireland and between the communities of the NSW Province which by 1942 spanned three Australian states and extended to New Zealand. Their individual contributions have been woven into a vibrant tapestry of a religious institute dealing with struggle, conflict and great change over 130 years.

Back cover: Catherine Connolly in later years at her home, “Werajel” near Carcoar (see article p. 18) Picture supplied by Patrick Connolly

