



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC NEWSLETTER

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Two centuries of Australian Catholic history



Dr Gerard Goldman, Director of the Broken Bay Institute, addressing the audience.

A HAPPY contingent of approximately 80 people – writers, historians, students and friends of the Society - attended the Australian Catholic Historical Society Conference on Saturday 12 September, held at the Catholic Institute of Sydney. The beautiful grounds and buildings, originally home to the 1891 State-run Strathfield Institute for the Blind, were at their best on this fine spring day. The last conference organised by the ACHS was in 2005, so it was certainly a welcome opportunity for all to get together.

The Catholic Impact on Australia was the theme of this year's conference. Father Ed Campion, keynote speaker, began an inspired talk by acknowledging those writers and historians that have had a significant impact on Australian Catholics: Christopher Dowd, Tom Boland, Ian Linden, Michael Hogan, Dorothy Day. He also made mention of a new fellowship offered by the State Library of NSW for the writing of religious history, a timely signal that there is a growing appreciation of this area of historical enquiry, and an affirmation to all present that a religious life (and a Catholic life), matters in Australia.

Guiding us through the evolving Australian Catholic identity under British rule, Fr Campion's talk, *Catholics and Pluralism*, illustrated how Australian Catholics had managed to develop their own schools and culture. One committee member

said that as she sat listening to Fr Campion's talk with his descriptions of this Catholic consolidation via parish picnics, school marches and concerts, warm spring air and bird song drifting in the window of the airy auditorium, she couldn't help but be reminded of the sentiments of Australian writer, Patrick White, in his autobiography, *Flaws in the Glass*, where he felt sure that his protestant friends realized they had missed out on something by not experiencing a Catholic childhood.

Fr Campion went on to articulate how sectarian rows soon appeared over perceived divided loyalties to Empire by Catholics, and how eventually this same bigoted society came to realize that there were other ways to be authentically Australian, other than being loyal to Empire.

He also talked about the post-war immigration



Opening session audience.

programs and the arrival of many refugees on our shores bringing new challenges for Catholics, who now had to learn how to be pluralist in religion. He reminded us of the pioneering work of Ted and Eileen Bacon with refugees, and how they could lay claim to having played a small part in creating the multi-cultural society that Australia is today.

Dr Gerard Goldman, Director of the Broken Bay Institute, was eloquent in his thanks and praise of Fr Campion's contribution to the conference and to Australian Catholic history and literature. Holding Fr Campion's latest book on his heart, *Ted Kennedy, Priest of Redfern*, made the thanks and moment even more poignant.

Committee members' main enjoyment of the



Above: **Keynote speaker, Fr Ed Campion; conference organiser, Br John Luttrell; and, ACHS President, Dr Damian Gleeson.**



Above Right: **Associate Professor Regina Ganter with ACHS Treasurer, Helen Scanlon, at the registration desk.**

Right: **Interest at the book table.**



ACHS conference was the variety of what was on offer – there were 19 presentations in all. Anne Cunningham presented Christopher, the ‘disappointing’ son of Robert Coveny, by means of the sketches he made while teaching at St Stanislaus in Bathurst. Vivienne Keely chf reminded us that others besides Fr Therry, like Fr Power, were pioneering priests who also deserve gratitude.

Outside the religious sphere, we heard of Henry Clement Hoyle, MLA and Trade Unionist. David Povey introduced us to Catholic convert, the much-loved Paramatta Mayor and councillor, Hugh Taylor (1871–1897). Robert Lehane spoke about the charismatic William Bede Dalley. His marriage in an Anglican Church provoked an interesting discussion on marriage by Catholics outside of the Catholic Church.

Many pleasant memories were revived with Michael Cullen’s talk on Cardinal Freeman as Catholic priest and Australian. One of the most unusual items was Dr Sophie McGrath’s use of handwriting analysis to support her findings about Cardinal Moran’s kindness to women.

Other sessions, too numerous to cover here, included interesting papers by Tony Earls, Greg Haines, James Franklin, Regina Ganter, Damion Gleeson, Helen Lucas, Katherine Massam, Stephen Utick, and John Warhurst. Some attendees expressed disappointment at not being able to be at all the sessions, but for those that missed sessions there is a CD of transcripts available for purchase.

The sale of books by the various speakers was also a popular feature of the conference. It was not surprising to see that the most popular book for sale was Fr Ed Campion’s publication about Fr Ted Kennedy. In all, \$820 was spent by

attendees and given to the various authors. Br Alan Bradstreet also had a display of back copies of the *Society Journal* of which 33 copies were sold. Our thanks go to Helen Scanlon, and the team of volunteers at the book table.

A display of books from the Veech Library’s Special Collections – the Hibernica Collection of Irish History and literature, and the Australiana collection – was set out for browsing in the Library’s foyer. It was interesting to view the diverse works which ranged from the early C19th sketches of Sydney by John Rae, to books on the scourge of communism.

The final session, *Meddlesome Catholics*, ended with a spirited talk by Clara Geoghegan on the enduring Christian principles of Caroline Chisholm; and, a passionate look at some Melbourne Catholics by Michael Costigan during his time as Associate Editor of the *Melbourne Advocate*, with particular emphasis on that meddlesome master, Bob Santamaria.

The day finished with a pleasant dinner for 34 at the Institute. Dr Jeff Kildea, a barrister who devotes much of his spare time to researching and writing Australian history, spoke about the challenges, thrills and trials of researching in libraries and archives while travelling overseas.

The committee all have to agree that the Catholic Institute in Strathfield was a fitting venue for the conference. In the unhurried, friendly spaces all enjoyed the experience, and, hopefully, we will be back there again.

Dates for your diary

Please note the following ACHS meeting dates for 2010 in your diary: 14 March (Annual General Meeting), 11 April, 16 May, 20 June, 11 July, 15 Aug, 12 Sept, 10 Oct, 14 Nov, and 11 Dec (Christmas Lunch). The speakers' list is still being finalised. And don't forget this year's Christmas Luncheon Sat 12 Dec 2009 – booking form is available in this issue.

Welcome to our new members

Mrs Lorraine Byrnes, John Johnson, The Mercy Heritage Centre in Queensland, Neil Macintosh, Michael Moran, Stephen Utick, Frank Wilson and Sr Mary Ryan rsm from Bathurst. We hope you enjoy your interaction with the Society.

Call for new members for ACHS Council 2010

The Society depends on both the support of its members and on the efforts of its Council. As several of our long-standing members are retiring, we are in real need of volunteer replacements. Please consider helping, or perhaps asking another person to accept a nomination. The AGM is scheduled for 14 March 2010, and we will need your nominations to be tabled before or at the meeting. On behalf of our members, the committee would like to say thank you to Dr Perry McIntyre who has been on the Council since 2005, to Marg Zucker who has been with us since 2007, and to Br John Luttrell who will also be retiring from editorship of the Journal. A truly dedicated and productive innings from all three.

Help needed to write a church history

The Holy Family Largs church in the East Maitland Parish celebrates its centenary next year. Ms Helen Russell is seeking help from a member to assist her in the writing of the church's history, which is located near historic Morpeth, NSW, and was a 'station' church until 1957. 'Station' churches were located outside of the parish, usually for the benefit of parishioners unable to travel long distances to the parish services. Anyone who is interested in this project can contact Helen at this address: 5 William St, Largs, NSW 2320. Helen also has information

about many of the early landowners and convict labourers in this area, and the boost to the local population between 1840-1855 by Irish and German immigrants.

Marrying Out

An interesting two-part program about those that married across the Catholic-Protestant divide in pre-multicultural Australia, was broadcast on Radio National's *Hindsight*, 18 October. *Marrying Out* was produced and presented by Wollongong University lecturer, Siobhan McHugh, and was based on oral histories recorded by Siobhan for her doctoral thesis at the University of Wollongong. The transcript is available on the *Hindsight* webpage. While you are there you might like to download the audio of an interview with Dr Brenda Niall about her new book, *The Riddle of Father Hackett: A Life in Ireland and Australia*, Nat Library of Aust (2009), on RN's *Late Night Live*, 10 Sept 2009.

Books

Dr Samantha Frappell has written an enormously pleasurable history of the much-loved and highly respected girls' school, St Vincent's College, Potts Point, NSW, founded by the Sisters of Charity in 1858 for their sesqui-centenary. Published by Kingsclear Books (2009), it is available through the school.



Br Tony Butler fms, one of the last three teaching brothers at Marist College, Kogarah, NSW, has written an interesting book about the history of the College for its centenary, *No Truce with the Rocks* (2009). Br Tony says 'the rocks aptly stand for the clearing and development of the physical site over its one hundred years; but the rocks are also the rough material from which the students have been hewn in order to become the good Christians and good citizens so urgently desired by the Marist founder Marcellin Champagnat.' Mr Mark Hilderbrant is acknowledged for his contribution to the Sports Section of the book.



Profile of an early church architect

The editor of the newsletter recently purchased a pen made from the jarrah used in Perth's original 1865 St Mary's Cathedral (proceeds from the sale going to the Cathedral's restoration fund). Perth's Diocesan Archivist, Sr Frances Stibi pvbm, puts together for us the story of the Cathedral's architect Joseph Ascione, variously described as a mason, architect, builder, bricklayer and stone mason, from archival records.

ASCIONE was born in Naples, Italy in 1819. As a 30 year old, he arrived in Western Australia with Bishop Serra's party on the *Ferrolana* on 30 December 1849. An aspirant to the Benedictine Order, he did not make any profession of vows, but did live at their Subiaco Monastery.

Brother Joseph, as he was known, became involved in several of Bishop Serra's building projects around Perth - the first Catholic Church at Guildford, the first Catholic house and Church at Fremantle, the Bishop's Palace in Perth, the Benedictine Monastery at Subiaco, and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (what we know today as St Mary's Cathedral, Victoria Square).

Records show that from 1862 to 1864 Ascione employed five ticket-of-leave men on the Cathedral project. He is very often mentioned in the letters of the monks as they write to each other, and in a letter of recommendation written by Fr Martin Griver (acting Apostolic Administrator, later to become Bishop of Perth) to Archbishop Goold of Melbourne, he referred to the great contribution made by Brother Joseph to the construction of the Cathedral. 'He has been a mason from his youth, and given proofs of his great skill and capabilities; for he has been the only architect or Director of the building ...which every intelligent person says, is a work of great merit. The building Committee recognizes an outstanding debt to him.'

His name occurs on the subscription list in the fourth place and the following entry explains how he was able to subscribe the large sum of £100: 'Br Joseph Ascione, the Chief Mason and director of the building subscribed for £100 to be paid by his work ...but it is evident that his work is worth more than £100.'



Ascione headstone in St John's cemetery, Kapunda, SA.



1865 Cathedral. The Bishop's Palace is in the foreground.

Joseph Ascione was obviously popular during his stay in Perth. He was Godfather to at least ten children at the Cathedral and was witness to several marriages.

In February 1865, soon after the opening of the Cathedral, Joseph Ascione left Perth, travelling to South Australia where he had friends, Bishop Christopher Reynolds and Fr Frederick Byrne who had also come out with Bishop Serra. On 26 June 1865 Fr Martelli wrote to Bishop Salvado in New Norcia 'Ascione has been given work by Byrne enlarging a chapel five miles out of Adelaide. If the work is satisfactory Byrne will take him on for a further three years. Not a word about a sweetheart but news of a wedding is expected soon.'

Subsequent research in South Australian records shows that Joseph Ascione married Mary Anne Doyle, aged 22, daughter of Patrick Doyle at St Patrick's Cathedral, Adelaide on June 1865 in the presence of Fr T Dowling. Baptism and confirmation records of six children of the marriage have been found in the Kapunda Church Registers.

Joseph Ascione took the Oath of Allegiance on 27 June 1868 shortly after completing the mandatory 3 year period of residence in SA thus becoming an Australian Citizen.

Despite copious research in South Australia no other buildings have been found that can be attributed to him until he was involved in the building of the School Rooms, built and opened in March 1885 near St Rose's Church, Kapunda. The Architect was Mr. Oldham and the contractor Joseph Ascione. The foundation stone was laid by the Most Rev. Christopher Reynolds, Bishop of Adelaide.

Three years later on 17 May 1888 Sr Josephine of the Sacred Heart wrote to Bishop Salvado at New Norcia on behalf of Mrs. Ascione to inform him of the sudden death of her husband.

Joseph Ascione died at Kapunda, SA, on 10 May 1888 aged 69. He was buried there at the Cemetery of St John on 13 May 1888 by his friend Fr Frederick Byrne. His occupation was given as Mason.

MEDICAL TRAIL BLAZER

Our first Catholic female religious doctor missionary

IT HAS recently been reported that medical trail-blazer Dr Mary Glowrey may be another Australian saint in the making.

Born in 1887, Mary Glowrey came from a large Catholic family from the Western district of Victoria. Although quiet and modest, she shone at her studies. The first time she matriculated she was too young to enter University so she repeated the course, gaining in the process the coveted Exhibition prize of £400.

In her final year of Medicine, Mary was awarded Honours in Medicine, Clinical Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics & Gynaecology and received glowing references from her teachers who included the luminaries Professor HB Allen and Hugh Devine. She spent her resident year at Christchurch Hospital in New Zealand, then returned to Australia where she entered private practice and took up posts at the Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, and the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital.

She received her religious vocation one day in October 1915 after reading the life story of Scottish doctor Dr Agnes McLaren. Dr McLaren became a Catholic at the age of 61 and went to India at age 72 to establish a Catholic hospital for the care of Indian women. There was a pressing need for female doctors. Maternal and infant mortality was high, and, by custom, Indian women could not be examined by a male doctor. Dr Glowrey said "My life's work lay clear before me now. It was to be medical mission work in India".

As Dr Glowrey made preparations for this work she became involved in the Catholic Women's Social Guild (now known as the Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga) and was elected its first General President. The league's headquarters in Fitzroy is named Mary Glowrey House.

Dr Glowrey also undertook further studies to better equip herself for her future medical duties and was admitted to the degree of Doctor of Medicine on 23 December 1919. The following month she left for India and in May 1920 she entered the Congregation of the Dutch order of the Sisters of the Society of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Guntur, India, where she took the name Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart.

At the time there was a general ban on religious practising as doctors but Doctor Glowrey obtained special dispensation to do so from Pope Benedict XV, thereby becoming the first Catholic



Mary Glowrey in 1910 as a final year medical student. Image courtesy of the University of Melbourne Medical History Museum.

nun-doctor missionary.

In one letter home Dr Glowrey noted that the number of patients at St Joseph's Hospital Guntur exceeded that of St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne but St Vincent's had many more staff. "So you can guess how much work I leave undone". For many years she worked as a sole medical practitioner, filling a variety of medical roles including obstetrician, surgeon, paediatrician and ophthalmologist, aided by nurses & dispensers she had trained. She travelled to visit the sick and dying in outlying villages and studied and made use of traditional Indian medicines.

The care she showed her patients was never forgotten by her patients and colleagues. It was said that many conversions resulted from her example.

Amongst her other responsibilities Dr Glowrey found time to set up the Catholic Hospital Association of India and became its first President (1943–1951). Today the Association is said to be one of the world's largest non-governmental organizations in the health sector with nearly 3,226 member institutions.

Dr Glowrey remained conscious of the fact that only limited medical assistance could be provided when so many had need and her long term goal was to see the establishment of a Catholic medical college. Dr Glowrey died in Bangalore, India on 5 May 1957 after a long illness. Her dream for a Catholic medical college was finally realized with the foundation of St John's Medical College at Bangalore in 1963.

*Barbara Cytowicz
Archivist, St Vincent's Melbourne*



ORDER FORM FOR CD OF PROCEEDINGS OF ACHS CONFERENCE

Catholics in Australian Public Life

The Catholic Institute of Sydney, 12 September 2009

A compact disc of the texts of proceedings of the conference is being produced. The cost of the CD is \$15.00 (including postage). It is expected to contain the papers given at the conference as set out below. However, it is possible that a few of the presenters may not wish to have their paper published at this time.

1. Edmund Campion: Keynote address on 'Catholics and Pluralism'
2. Michael Cullen: Cardinal Sir James Darcy Freeman as Catholic priest and Australian
3. Anne Cunningham: Christopher Coveny
4. Tony Earls: Stories of Four Catholic Judges on Australia's Colonial Supreme Courts
5. James Franklin: Calwell, Catholicism and the Origins of Multicultural Australia
6. Regina Ganter, Griffith University: German missionaries in Queensland: a Q150 website
7. Janice Garaty: Judging a Man by his Deeds: Henry Clement Hoyle, MLA & Trade Unionist.
8. Damian Gleeson: Monsignor J.F McCosker's influence on C'wealth Social Policy 1950-70
9. Gregory Haines: Lay Catholic Society, male, in NSW 1830 – 1885.
10. Vivienne Keely chf: The Reverend Mr Power: Government Priest 1827 -1830
11. Jeff Kildea: Hugh Mahon: Political Conundrum
12. Robert Lehane: The Dalley Phenomenon
13. Helen Lucas: The Archdiocese of Sydney and establishment of the Palm Island Mission
14. Katharine Massam: 'Easter in the Public Realm'
15. Sophie McGrath: Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran, Feminist
16. David Povey: Hugh Taylor of Parramatta, the poor man's friend.
17. Stephen Utick: An Engineer and the City: Mission and Vision in the Life of Charles O'Neill
18. John Warhurst: Catholics in the Liberal Party of Australia: Philip Lynch to Malcolm Turnbull
19. Panelists Michael Costigan and Clara Geoghegan on 'Meddlesome Catholics'.

Name

Postal Address

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I enclose a cheque/money order of \$..... for copy(ies) of the Proceedings of the Australian Catholic History Conference.

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99 Albert Road
Strathfield NSW 2135**



BOOK REVIEW

Ted Kennedy Priest of Redfern

by Fr Edmund Campion

David Lovell Publishing, Melbourne (2009)

This is one of the most inspiring books I have read for some time. Though I can imagine Ted Kennedy being unimpressed with my praise! He was not that kind of person!

Father Ted Kennedy (1931–2005) was most well known for this parish work in Redfern, inner Sydney, home to one of the country's largest urban populations of Indigenous Peoples. It was poverty-stricken, rundown and neglected by the politicians – even though it is only literally walking distance from the State Parliament House and business district. It is a world away from the corridors of power.

Ted Kennedy arrived at Redfern in 1971 and by trial and error created a new type of ministry of working with Sydney's least, lonely and lost. It was very difficult and controversial work. Father Ed Campion has written brilliantly about this work.

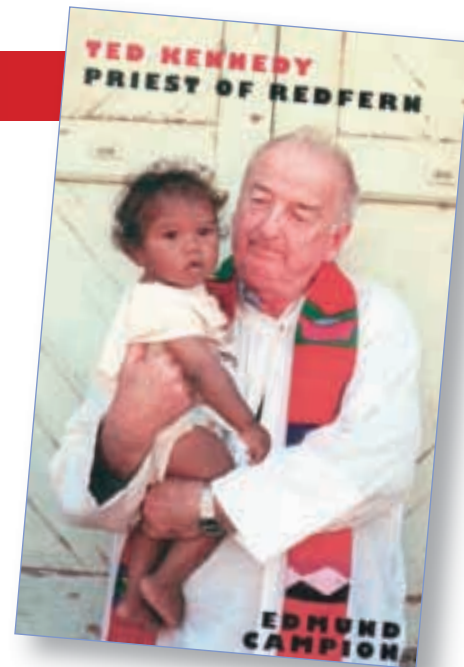
I got to know Kennedy in the mid-1970s while I was a student activist at the nearby University of Sydney. He was a charismatic figure in a rumpled sort of way. He would not have approved of my calling him 'charismatic' but there was something about him that set him apart from others in the church and suggested that he had some good ideas.

In reading the book, five points occurred to me about the book and Kennedy's life. First, the book shows how Kennedy learned on the job, especially at Redfern. He was open to new ideas and helped create a new way of working with Indigenous Peoples. He never stopped learning.

Second, as so often with Christian pioneers, he managed to operate despite the church bureaucracy and not because of it. The Catholic hierarchy stopped him from doing even better work. I just wonder what could have been achieved if the full church resources had been placed behind his work and enabled him to make the most of his ideas.

Campion quotes Kennedy's colleague Father Jerry Golden's advice on how to survive in the church: (i) Golden did not mix with bishops (ii) he paid little attention to theologians and (iii) he did not read the official churches newspapers. Good advice irrespective of the denomination!

Third, despite all the hassles he stayed within the church. I have come across so many talented



nuns and priests who have just given up and left. An example would be Father Bruce Kent in London whom I have known for four decades – a very elegant and charismatic priest – who eventually led the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in the days of the Thatcher Government. In the end, despite being apparently destined for high Catholic office he gave up his priestly status.

Fourth, it seems that an Australian era is dying with the passing of people like Kennedy: the belief that entry into the Australian church (irrespective of denomination) is a way of changing society. Some young people – thankfully – still believe that it is possible to work for a better society and so are recruited to good causes. But the church no longer seems to attract the number of enthusiastic priests and nuns it used to. Young people find other avenues into which to channel their enthusiasm.

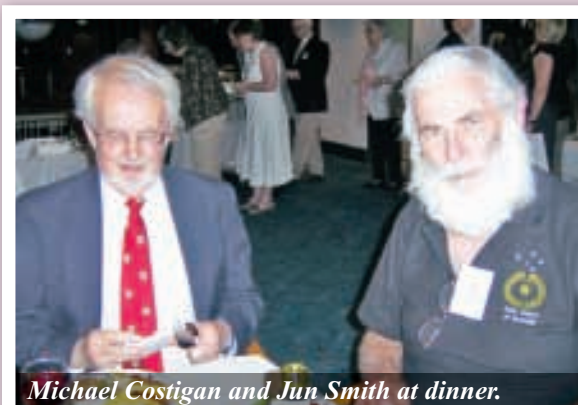
Finally, Kennedy involved good people in his work. For example, Campion talks of Wiradjuri woman Shirley Smith. She used to visit imprisoned Indigenous prisoners and when challenged on her right to do so by prison officials she said simply 'I'm his Mum'. By the time I got to know her through Rev Sir Alan Walker's National Goals and Directions Movement [*Movement for the creation of a just Australian society started by Rev Walker in 1981 – ed*] she was well established as 'Mum Shirl'. She also ended up in Kennedy's orbit and was a great asset.

To conclude, this is an entrancing study of Christianity with its sleeves rolled up.

Keith Suter
Social and religious commentator

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Highlights of the 2009 ACHS Conference



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