

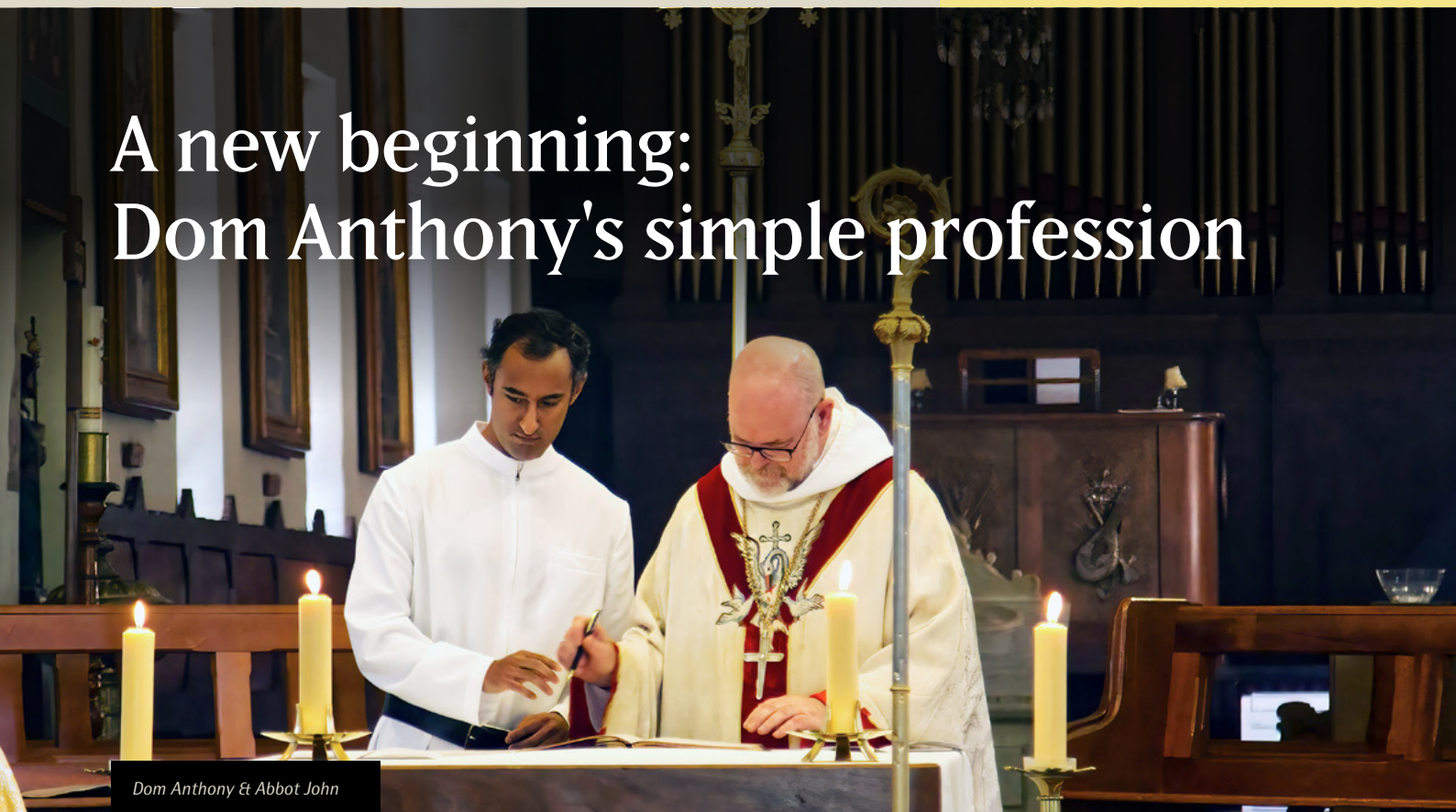
The Chimes



Newsletter of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia

Vol. 26 No. 2 Mar 2026

A new beginning: Dom Anthony's simple profession



Dom Anthony Et Abbot John

On the Solemnity of the Annunciation, Wednesday 25th March 2026, Dom Anthony made his Simple Profession of monastic vows before the community at New Norcia — a moment of quiet courage and deep significance for all who witnessed it.

When a novice changes his mind several times about which readings he wants for his Profession Mass, and then becomes a little particular about which translation to use, it is a fairly sure sign that he is on the right track in his monastic journey towards God. Seeking the elusive yet ever-present God is a serious business, requiring radical faith and an intimate relationship — and like any relationship, communication is fundamental. The prayerful pondering of

scripture in solitude, the attentive listening to the proclamation of the Word, and the endless recitation and chanting of the psalms in common: these are the places where Dom Anthony has been, and will continue to be, hearing the voice of God.

Dom Anthony has chosen his readings well — texts that give us insight into the God he seeks, and into who he is becoming along the way. In choosing the New International Version of the first reading from Ecclesiastes — which replaces the word 'vanity' with 'meaningless' — we glimpse something of Dom Anthony's progress in monastic life. The things once considered important, such as material possessions, status, and popularity, have grown a little wearisome, because he has discovered they have not delivered the fulfilment they once promised. As with the psalmist, his soul is "yearning for the courts of the Lord." It seems

he believes he might find what he is looking for in this monastery — in this rather motley crew of a handful of monks and a nun — and he will, because this community loves him, and wants him to find it.

If Dom Anthony continues to consult St Paul, as he has done today in the second reading from 1 Corinthians, he will be able to discern what is essential and what can be set aside. As Paul suggests, the focus will be on true wisdom — not the wisdom of the world, but the wisdom that comes from within, from the spiritual realm. This path will present all manner of difficulties, because it is, frankly, a little mad — but Dom Anthony is already discovering that it is the only way: the way of the cross, which offers the sure hope of life and fulfilment, even through long and painful periods of feeling that God is absent. The community, for its part, does not waver.



Dom Anthony Et Family

How fitting that this profession falls on the Solemnity of the Annunciation, in which Mary – for whom Dom Anthony holds a deep devotion – is presented with the unthinkable: to become the Mother of God. So unthinkable, in fact, that she declared it impossible. Yet when she listened carefully to what the angel Gabriel told her of the extraordinary things God can do, she handed herself over, signed on as God's servant, and agreed to whatever was asked of her.

In professing the monastic vows of obedience, stability, and conversion of life, Dom Anthony is doing the same – handing himself over, allowing God, through this monastic community, to lead him into his new life. That life will take him to many places he might rather not go – places that only a good measure of humility will enable him to endure. Not humility in the sense of low self-esteem, but humility in the truth of who he is before God and before the community. The paradox is that all of this monastic monotony and toil will bring him joy. It is the same for any of us on any genuine journey – it is only the real substance of life that gives true meaning

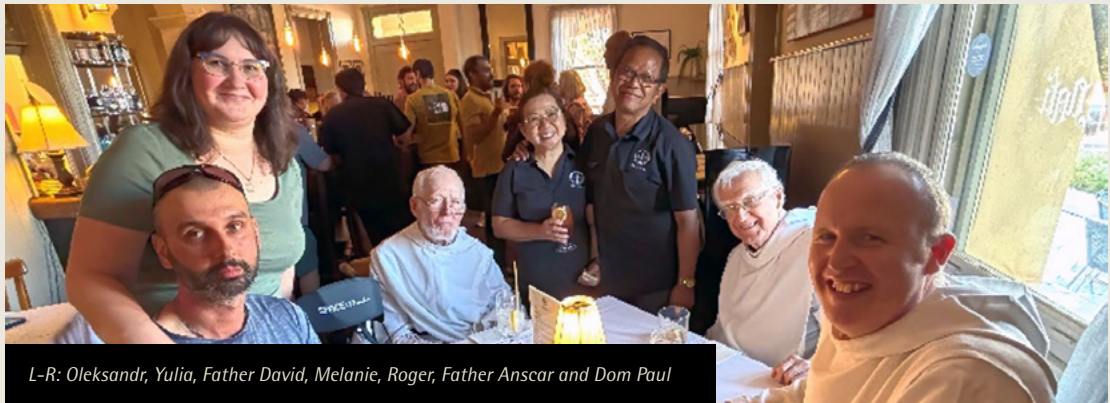
and purpose, and in turn reveals the person we are becoming: the person God intends us to be.

Before coming to New Norcia, Dom Anthony – Rohan, as he was then – had an extraordinary journey of exploration, delving into the mysteries of many religious and spiritual traditions. That journey will serve him well. It landed, finally, in baptism – in dying with Christ in order to rise with Christ. In accepting the Rule of St Benedict through monastic profession today, Dom Anthony enters further into that baptismal commitment. The community's one hope, one piece of advice, comes from the very Rule he has publicly pledged to follow:

"Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation. It is bound to be narrow at the outset. But as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love."

May it be so for you, Dom Anthony – and may it be so for all of us.





L-R: Oleksandr, Yulia, Father David, Melanie, Roger, Father Anscar and Dom Paul

New faces, fond farewells

On Tuesday 24th March, the monks and staff of New Norcia gathered at the Hostel for drinks and finger food to welcome new starters and farewell those moving on.

In recent years, New Norcia has welcomed a steady stream of international working holiday makers – predominantly French, though Italian, Chilean, Argentinian, Belgian, Polish and English visitors have all played their part – who have brought great energy and enthusiasm to the community, bolstering a workforce that can be difficult to build locally.

The evening was a chance to farewell Morgane and Alix, who have given wonderful service since November 2025, and to welcome several new faces: Sonya, returning after a few years away; Leonardo and Andrea, who will be working across several departments; and Nick Woods, our new Grounds and Maintenance Manager.

Janine also received a well-deserved surprise when the gathering broke into song for her recent birthday – a moment warmly shared with Tracy and Sister Hilda.

It was a particular pleasure to welcome Dom Anthony's parents, Dee and Pria, who had travelled from New South Wales to be present for his Simple Profession the following day.

Also welcomed, though he narrowly missed the group photograph, was Eddy – the new Chef Manager for Central Catering. We are delighted to have him on board.



L-R: Alix, Morgane, Carmel & Abbot John

Eddy

Dee & Pria



L-R: Tracy, Sister Hilda, & Janine

L-R: Sonya, Leonardo, Andea, & Nick



Welcome: Nick Woods, Property Manager

New Norcia welcomes Nick Woods as our new Property Manager — a man with deep roots in the region and a wealth of agricultural and land management experience.

Nick is no stranger to the New Norcia district. He can trace his farming heritage back five generations in the area now home to the ESA ground stations. A Calingiri boy through and through, Nick attended primary school in Calingiri before completing high school in New Norcia and then Northam.

True to form, he could not wait to leave school — at 16 he returned to the family farm at Calingiri. In 1998, he and his brother bought out their parents, and they remain co-owners to this day, with Nick's half now leased to his brother.

In 2012, Nick headed north to work for Rio Tinto Agriculture in the Pilbara, managing hay cropping operations irrigated by water drawn from the dewatering of the Marandoo and Namuldi mines. He remained there until 2022, when he came south to manage Koojan Downs and the New Norcia farm for Harvest Road — a role he held until 2025.

Nick is married to Sam, and they have three adult children: Zoe, a midwife who, with her partner Jayden, has a daughter, Mia; Tessa, who works as an archaeologist; and Joe, who lives in Esperance with his partner Ava and their son Arthur Billy, and works for CSBP.

When asked what he hopes for in his new role at New Norcia, Nick was straightforward: job satisfaction, away from the structures and hierarchies of the corporate world. He wants to come away each day with a sense of achievement, working alongside a cohesive team of good people. We think he has come to the right place.



Farewell to Morgane and Alix

After five months of dedicated and creative work, we farewell two of our most valued backpackers — Morgane and Alix — as visa requirements carry them onwards.

In recent times, New Norcia has relied heavily on international working holiday makers to fill roles that would otherwise be very difficult — or impossible — to staff locally. These young people have brought with them not only a willingness to work hard, but also impressive qualifications and creative flair. It is worth noting that most of our backpackers hold university degrees and higher qualifications across a range of disciplines.

Morgane worked primarily in the Museum and Art Gallery, stepping up admirably during a period of short staffing over the December to January period. She demonstrated real creativity, completed two Tourism WA submissions on behalf of New Norcia — including producing a video for one of them — and developed some genuinely innovative resources for children visiting the Museum and Art Gallery.

Alix worked as a general hand with the Grounds and Maintenance team, often seen in the cleaner's van or helping with town presentation — an essential and sometimes unsung contribution to the experience New Norcia offers every visitor.

After a quick trip to Indonesia to visit family, and then on to Thailand to catch up with former New Norcia backpacker friends, the pair plan to drive north towards Exmouth in search of work, eventually making their way to Darwin. The ongoing fuel situation, stemming from instability in the Middle East, may complicate those plans — but if anyone can adapt, it is these two.

We wish them both Bonne Chance!



Before



After

The Old Novitiate receives a well-deserved facelift

One of New Norcia's oldest buildings is getting a new lease on life, with careful restoration works underway to return the Old Novitiate to its former character — and to a new role as accommodation for guests.

The Old Novitiate has worn many faces over the course of New Norcia's history. Originally built in 1867 as a residence for novices, it served that purpose until 1871. It was subsequently occupied by New Norcia's first resident doctor in 1901, and then in 1904 by the Spanish Teresian sisters, brought to Western Australia by the second abbot, Torres, to teach and care for the indigenous girls of St Joseph's.

Later still, the building was occupied by the Western Australian Police during the 1960s — which explains the tall cyclone wire fence and the two rear sheds that once served as holding cells.

It is fitting that the Old Novitiate features in this edition of *The Chimes*, in the same month that Dom Anthony makes his

Simple Profession of vows — a reminder that the novitiate tradition, in spirit if not in this particular building, continues at New Norcia.

In recent months, AARI Construction, under the direction of Adrian Addario, has begun the careful work of renovation, drawing on original plans, drawings, and early archival photographs to ensure the work is historically faithful. The verandah structure and balustrades have been completely rebuilt, restoring the verandahs to their former character and removing the enclosed rails and louvre windows that had been added to the upper level over the years. There is more work ahead, but the early results are impressive.



La Table de L'Abbé

The Abbot's Table 2026

Autumn
16th May 2026

Spring
21st November 2026

4 tickets remaining
Scan below to book

21 tickets remaining
Scan below to book





A view from the monastery rose garden

Written by Sister Hilda

I have the happiness of playing in the monastery rose garden and in the last six months it has taught me much. Let me share just three of the many insights that have come my way.

We have no aphids in the garden; I thought all rose gardens had aphids! However Dom Daniel pointed out a colony of lady bird beetles, near the fish tank and now I have seen them at work. These little creatures eat the aphids and other pests as well. Furthermore they are nomadic, so they leave enough under the soil, for their next sojourn at the monastery, they do not consume everything. I thought about our consumer society and my own sense of acquisition. I would do well to have the mentality of the lady bird, using just what I need and no more. That way there will always be enough for someone else.

I usually put a rose in front of the statue of Our Lady. It's my way of praying in gratitude for this community and my own at Jamberoo. When the rose gets to full bloom I discard it and bring in another. At least I used to. One day I saw the fully blown rose in a new light, it was actually very beautiful and so I left it there for a few more days. So often we can discard/ignore things because we think they do not look all that wonderful or are past what we think is the use by date and we lose out. Maybe it is worthwhile asking God for a new set of bifocals on our hearts to see people, events, ourselves and indeed everything as He does. We are after all creations of beauty no matter what we think, always a delight to God. Our days are made so much richer by the recognition of beauty.

Finally I have learned to work in with my fellow devotees namely, the bees. Because I am also turning the petals into potpourri I am keen to get the blooms in their full colour and feel somewhat entitled to do that, seize the day! However every morning and afternoon the bees visit and get on with their bee type employments. I have now learned to give them their chance first. In other words I am learning to wait and simply take my turn when that comes, if that comes. I have learned that just because a person CAN do something, it doesn't mean that they SHOULD actually do it. Our Benedictine understanding of humility tells us that. I have my place; I need to allow others to have theirs.

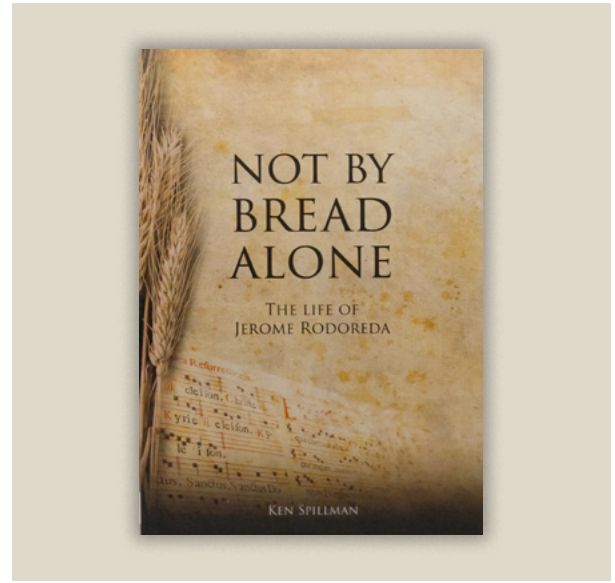


Welcome: Allegra Giagu, Music Collections Curator

New Norcia is delighted to announce the creation of a new position: Music Collections Curator. Allegra Giagu, our 2024 Abbot Placid Spearritt Scholar, has accepted the role and will begin work in the music archives on a permanent part-time basis.

Allegra is currently completing a PhD in Fine Arts at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, where her research centres on eighteenth-century Iberian music theatre. She is also a practising performing artist, bringing with her a genuine love of music and a strong grounding in both scholarship and stage.

New Norcia's music collection holds a rich and largely untold story. In this role, Allegra will begin the careful work of bringing that story to light – gently reawakening a body of music that has long remained quiet. Many of our readers will already know Allegra from her performances with Fr Robert Nixon; we look forward to sharing the fruits of this new chapter of her work with New Norcia in the months and years to come.



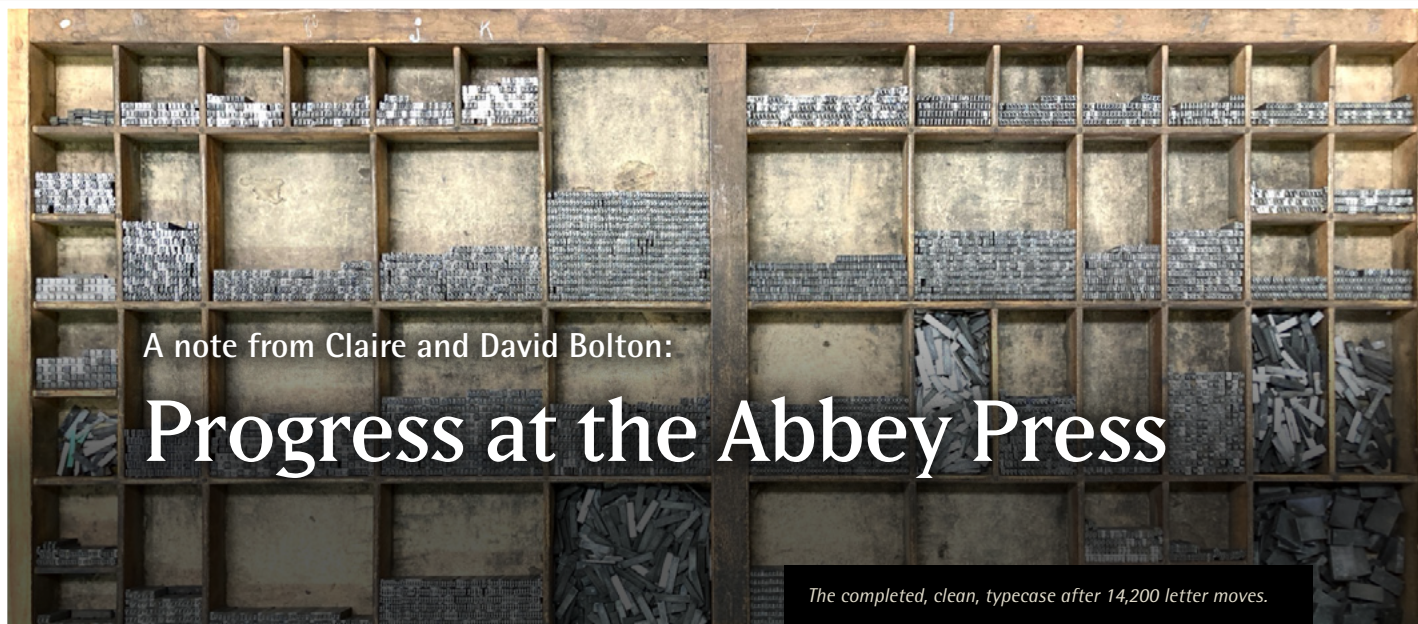
Abbey Press book nominated for WA Premier's Award

An Abbey Press title is among the contenders in the 2026 Western Australian Premier's Book Awards for non-fiction – a significant recognition for both the book and for New Norcia's publishing heritage.

Ken Spillman's *Not by Bread Alone: The Life of Jerome Rodoreda* has been entered in the award's non-fiction category. Spillman, a well-known and prolific Western Australian author, has written what can only be described as a remarkable transnational story – one that reshapes our understanding of the colony of Western Australia as seen through a lens other than the usual British perspective.

Drawing on relatively recently discovered archives from Catalonia, alongside material held in the New Norcia archives, the book brings to life the journey of one of the young Catalan Benedictine postulants who arrived in Fremantle in 1849 with Bishop Serra. It also details the spectacular arrival in December of that year of the Spanish warship *Ferrolana*, carrying the first large group of forty Benedictine missionaries, and documents the forces that propelled this remarkable band to leave their homeland and make their way to Western Australia.

Not by Bread Alone was launched at the New Norcia Library Lecture Day in October 2025. It is available from the Museum and Art Gallery gift shop, or online through the New Norcia web shop.



A note from Claire and David Bolton:

Progress at the Abbey Press

The completed, clean, typecase after 14,200 letter moves.

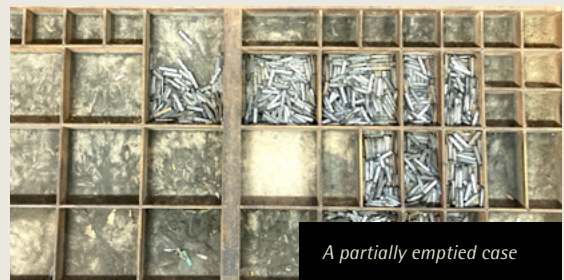
Fifteen years in the making, the Abbey Press Typecase Cleaning Project is steadily nearing completion — one letter at a time.

Type letters for letterpress printing are stored in wide shallow trays named typecases. The typecases are divided into small compartments, the size depending on the use of the letter, i.e. the letter 'e' has the largest compartment and 'z', 'x' and 'q' have the smallest. The typecases have no lids and are stored in a frame, up to 20 or 40 cases high. Without lids the type cases collect dust over the years.

As part of the restoration of the Abbey Press we have been slowly working through the 104 cases of type, cleaning, sorting and counting them as we go. None of them were clean, and the amount of fluff, dust, grit, insects, etc. that have accumulated over the years, varies.

We launched our Typecase Cleaning Project 15 years ago, and started work on the easiest cases that contained very few, large letters. We could clean at least 5 or 6 of these cases in a day. We gradually worked our way through, tackling the increasing levels of difficulty, as the numbers of letters in a case increased in volume and decreased in size.

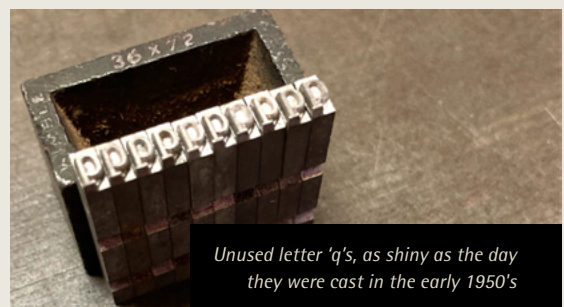
The cleaning process involves removing the letters manually from their present dirty home, rubbing the dirt off the letters before placing them temporarily into a 'holding case', then cleaning the original case of all the horrors left behind, and finally returning and counting the cleaned letters to their original home. At the same time we checked that all the letters were in the correct place. We found many letters, especially 'y' that had strayed into the wrong boxes and a number of letters that travelled from different founts - all have now been safely returned to their correct homes. It would have



A partially emptied case

helped perhaps if we had had a vacuum cleaner with a fine gauze nozzle to remove the dust etc, (and not suck up the type letters) but the vacuum would not have cleaned the letters, nor found the errant ones.

On our latest visit we bravely tackled one of the fullest founts, containing 7100 letters. This was a lower case fount of 12 point Canberra Old Style letters. The fount had been purchased 75 years ago and we found some of the letters, lurking at the bottom of their compartments, that were still as shiny as when they had first been cast, and had never been used. It took two of us working for two days to sort out this case. There were 614 'e's. However there are still at least 20 cases needing attention.



Unused letter 'q's, as shiny as the day they were cast in the early 1950's

We value your feedback


At New Norcia, your feedback helps shape a better experience for every visitor.

We actively listen through a variety of channels:


- Our in-house visitor survey
- Reviews on TripAdvisor and WikiCamps
- Conversations and comments on Facebook and Instagram

Whether it's a suggestion, a story, or a snapshot—every bit of feedback helps us grow and improve.


SCAN BELOW:



We are on
TRIP ADVISOR



Follow us on
INSTAGRAM


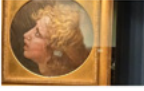




Follow us on
FACEBOOK

Helen C
2 contributions

More than expected




It's rare to visit a town and be blown away by the outstanding standard of the artwork, woodwork, history, stories, museum, value for money. A place I will definitely revisit and encourage others to visit too. Only an hour and a half away, its one of Perth's best kept secrets! Michelle, our tour guide is passionate and knowledgeable, very enjoyable tour especially the rendition of Amazing Grace in the music room. Too much to see in 1 day. Loved every minute of it! Heartily recommend



Visited **October 2025** • Travelled solo
Written 29 October 2025

Wonderful experience.

Fascinating story of determination and faith. Wonderful experience and some beautiful architecture and the chapel interiors are absolutely incredible. Tour guide (lovely lady originally from Manila but long term Aussie) told a wonderful story with feeling and humour. She also has a lovely singing voice! Museum on site is well worth several hours to view with stories, artifacts and some incredible paintings. A full day experience to get full value.



Visited **October 2025** • Travelled as a couple
Written 12 October 2025



New artwork arrives at the Museum & Art Gallery

A bold new piece of public sculpture has taken up residence in front of the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery — and it is already proving to be quite the conversation starter.

The sculpture, titled *Oh My God*, was created in 2012 by New South Wales artist and sculptor Lucy Vader as part of the Cottesloe Beach Sculptures by the Sea exhibition. Around the same time, the City of Vincent commissioned the same work as part of their street art programme, and a version has since stood on Beaufort Street between Northbridge and Highgate. The New Norcia installation is the Sculptures by the Sea version.

OMG has, of course, become a ubiquitous acronym in the everyday language of young people — but in the context of New Norcia, it takes on a richer, more layered meaning. Here, it becomes an expression of exuberant joy in the face of magnificent architecture and the experience of the peace of God — the Pax — that visitors so often remark upon when they come to New Norcia. It invites a double take, a smile, and perhaps a moment of genuine wonder.



Father Robert Nixon Soirées 2026

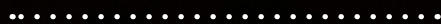
A Chopin Recital
20th June 2026



Scan below to book tickets



French Impressionists
5th December 2026



Scan below to book tickets





Coming Events

From April 2025

2nd - 5th April 2026

The Easter Triduum 2026

10th - 12th April 2025

Weekend Retreat: Benedictine Secrets For Balance and Serenity

Visit our website for a complete list of Coming Events - newnorcia.com.au/whats-on/events-calendar/current-events

Studies Day 2026: postponed to October

Due to ongoing uncertainty in the Middle East and its effects on fuel supplies and pricing, the decision has been made – with considerable reluctance – to postpone the May Studies Day until October. This timing also has a pleasant historical precedent, aligning with the old Studies Launch dates of earlier years.

We sincerely apologise to everyone who had been planning to make the journey to New Norcia in May and we very much hope to see you in October. A confirmed date will be announced as soon as possible, and will be advertised on the New Norcia website and in The Chimes.

As a reminder, the theme for Studies Day 2026 is Monks and Music, and will be held in the beautiful chapel of St Gertrude's College. Speakers include Judith McGuinness, Paul Watt (Adjunct Professor of Music, Adelaide University), and Allegra Giagu, with Abbot John joining to provide updates on restoration works and future plans. The day will also see the launch of another Abbey Press title: The Griver Letters.

Liturgical Calendar

From April 2026

Thursday 2 April Holy Thursday	:	Tuesday 21 April St Anselm (Memorial)
Friday 3 April Good Friday	:	Thursday 23 April St Adalbert (Optional Memorial)
Saturday 4 April Holy Saturday	:	Saturday 25 April Anzac Day
Sunday 5 April Easter Sunday	:	Sunday 26 April Fourth Sunday Of Easter
Sunday 12 April Second Sunday of Easter	:	Wednesday 29 April St Catherine of Sienna (Memorial)
Sunday 19 April Third Sunday Of Easter	:	



NEW NORCIA
BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY

The Chimes is a monthly publication of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia. To subscribe to the digital version, email publications@newnorcia.com.au.

© 2026 | Benedictine Community of New Norcia

New Norcia Road, New Norcia WA 6509, Australia
T: (08) 9654 8018
www.newnorcia.com.au