



Pax, a Latin word meaning peace, is the motto of the Benedictine monks of New Norcia

The Chimes Newsletter



July 2020

Dom Paul Forster Solemn Profession

We congratulate Dom Paul Forster for his Solemn Profession on Monday 29th June. Below is Abbot John's homily delivered at Mass on the day.

The question Jesus puts to the disciples in today's gospel – “*who do you say I am*” – Jesus has been putting to Dom Paul all throughout his Christian journey. It is a question Dom Paul has been answering in a very particular way since he first came to the monastery four years ago. In being clothed as a novice, in making simple profession a year later, and in the three subsequent years of preparing to make solemn profession today, Dom Paul has been acknowledging Jesus as Christ, the Son of the living God. And, not only that, he's been taking heed of St Benedict's instruction to *prefer nothing whatever to Christ*.

Throughout his Christian life thus far, Paul has known the love of Christ for him, and although he has in turn been loving Christ back through imparting that love within the many relationships in his past, he's been responding more fully to this commandment of love by expressing his desire to enter more deeply into union with Christ by the bonds of fraternal love, that is, in this particular community of like-minded brothers seeking God.

In the four years we've been journeying with Dom Paul, there's no doubt in our minds and hearts that he is seeking God. That's why we're assembled here right now, because Dom Paul has been tested to see if he can live the monastic life in the spirit of the letter to Timothy we just heard – that is, in the spirit of the sound teachings of Christ. He has done so by embracing and living in the spirit of the *Rule of St Benedict*.

In doing so, Dom Paul has given noteworthy witness to the precepts of St Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which he chose on the occasion of his being clothed in the monastic habit. Dom Paul has indeed excelled in bearing with us in love; he has indeed made every effort to maintain unity with us; he has indeed been able to live here in peace; he has indeed been able to live in our midst with a sense of

hope in times when it has felt rather to the contrary; he has indeed been able to draw from the grace given him when he has found it difficult to see much evidence of the spirit of grace alive and active in the community. In other words, Dom Paul has passed with flying colours in his observance of chapter 72 of the Rule:

“This, then, is the good zeal which monks must foster with fervent love: They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other, supporting with the greatest patience one another's weakness of body or behaviour, and earnestly competing in obedience to one another. No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else.”

Again, just as Elijah heard a voice asking him: “*what are you doing here?*”, we've been asking Dom Paul the same question throughout the four years of his initial formation, and we'll continue to keep asking it. Like Elijah, his answer has been “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God



Dom Paul Forster, left, with Abbot John Herbert

of hosts.” Dom Paul’s answer has been endorsed by his actions, that is, his monastic life of prayer, work, lectio divina, study, hospitality and community life – all enriched by his embracing humility, obedience, stability and conversatio morum, the ongoing conversion of his life.

Dom Paul has been able to do all this, because he has experienced God here in a very real and profound way, just as Elijah in the first reading experienced God on the mountain of the Lord, not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the “*sound of sheer silence*.” It is through this listening in the silent depths of his heart, that Dom Paul has been able to also experience something of God in the moments of “wind, earthquake and fire” moments that are an inevitable and necessary part of community life.

In preferring nothing whatever to Christ, Dom Paul has, as the entrance hymn suggests, found in Christ his star, his sun. And, in that light of life, he will, through his solemn profession and every moment thereafter, walk till his travelling days are done. From this moment on, Dom Paul will sing today’s responsorial psalm in a deeply profound way that only he and the God he seeks will understand: “*shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life.*”

This monastic community has been given the honour and privilege of being able to share something of that understanding, a gift for which we are truly grateful. And it is in the spirit of gratitude that we lay our hands on you today, Dom Paul, as Timothy did for the Christians of his time, empowering them with a spirit of power, love and self-discipline. In so doing, we pray that you will be given a renewed sense of grace, which will affirm you in your holy calling, the good treasure entrusted to you, and to us, so that Christ will indeed bring us all together to everlasting life.

Institute Day 2020 - Join us on Saturday, 1st August

The New Norcia Institute for Benedictine Studies Day is approaching quickly, scheduled for Saturday, 1st August. It promises to be a fascinating event, focusing on the subject of ‘Monastic Reformers’, and will showcase some of the scholarship taking place within the cloisters of our own monastery. Fr David Barry will deliver a presentation on Smaragdus. During the 9th century, he was Abbot of St Mihiel, a monastery in France’s north-eastern region known as Lotharingia. He was recognised as a grammarian, teacher, theologian and proponent of the Rule of St Benedict in the monastic renewal movement under the Emperor Charlemagne and his son, Louis the Pious. Fr David’s presentation will concentrate on Smaragdus as a monastic reformer before and after the Synods of Aachen (816 and 817), as exemplified by his Commentary on the Rule of St Benedict. Fr David is recognised as a leading authority on Smaragdus, having published the first English translations of his most significant writings.

Dom Paul Forster (who has recently made his solemn monastic profession) will discuss the life and work of St Dunstan of Canterbury. Dunstan developed the ancient church at Glastonbury into the first Benedictine monastery in England, then served for twenty-eight years as Archbishop of Canterbury. He was the most popular saint in England for almost two centuries. His life and work is of interest to those of us living in the 21st Century as it sheds light on the mediaeval church and the battles they faced.

Fr Robert Nixon will speak about St Celestine V, who commenced his life as a hermit and eventually founded

several monasteries and a monastic congregation. In a series of bizarre circumstances, he was then elected to the papal throne, from which he abdicated after only five months (probably under coercion) and was then imprisoned for the remainder of his life. Curiously, he is one of very few popes to have written an autobiography (the only other one is Pius II), a strange but apparently authentic document which has been long overlooked in the scholarly world.

The day will commence at 10am, in the Institute Building, and will finish at about 3:00pm. As always, a splendid lunch is included.

Bookings may be made online through the New Norcia webshop at www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au.



St. Celestine

Safeguarding at New Norcia

Back in February, New Norcia's staff and monks took part in a full day safeguarding workshop, delivered by the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth.

The total power outage in town, following days of severe thunderstorms, interfered with the PowerPoint presentation, phone and internet connection, however did not reduce the power of the confronting yet important message being delivered or the amount of information absorbed by the group.

The Safeguarding Program is the first of its kind to be established by a Catholic diocese in Australia.

It is formed by the fundamental belief "that children and vulnerable adults have the right to physical and psychological safety at all times and we must play our part in protecting all children and vulnerable adults".

It was delivered by Program Director, Andrea Musulin and Program Coordinator, Barbara Blayney who together have nearly 50 years' experience as police officers – largely in the area of child protection and domestic violence. In 2011 Barbara was inducted into the WA International Women's Hall of Fame for her work in the area and implementation of many workshops.

Andrea explained that the day focuses on raising awareness of our collective responsibility to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Archdiocese and promote their well-being.

"We are aiming to prevent abuse and reduce opportunity and risk. We are also aiming to increase the likelihood of detection and reduce the long-term impacts of abuse".

"We now have 240 Safeguarding Officers working in Catholic parishes in rural and metropolitan WA however it is everyone's responsibility to do the best we can," she said.

New Norcia's Safeguarding Officers are Tracy Sievewright and Melissa Victoriano. As the day continued, findings from the 2013 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse were detailed. It presented information about



Barbara Blayney, Abbot John Herbert & Andrea Musulin.

the Catholic Church and the reshaping of its culture towards the reporting of abuse.

It discussed the different types of abuse, the grooming of children and vulnerable adults; where there could be possible risk today; and how to identify vulnerability and risk.

Barbara explained how and when to respond to a disclosure or incident, and when to report.

"It is very important to always believe the person, to reassure them and stay calm."

"There are many reasons people choose not to report possible abuse, however anyone can and should report anything of concern regardless of proof to a Safeguarding Officer, the Police or to the Department of Child Protection."

"We as a group need to take ownership of our past and take the correct steps to create a positive future," she said.

New Norcia has recently developed a Safeguarding platform on its website dedicated to protecting children and all the vulnerable in the Catholic Church. The site contains information about the Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL) – established in response to the Royal Commission – and news items. It also includes a Document Library which contains a range of information including The Safeguarding Handbook developed by *The Safeguarding Program*.



Staff and monks talk to the presenters and to each other in the Institute of Benedictine Studies building, where the day was held.

For more information please visit our website at www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au/safeguarding.

Safeguarding Final Audit Report

The Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL) has published a Final Audit Report which includes the results of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia's compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

The NCSS provides a framework for Catholic Church entities to build safe cultures and environments and to ensure that safeguarding practices are consistently applied across the Catholic Church in Australia.

Overall Audit Findings

“Compliance with the NCSS Indicators has been assessed using a four-point maturity scale. Our assessment indicates that BCNN has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 105 (99%) of the 106 Indicators which are relevant to their operations. One Indicator (1%) is yet to be addressed, relating to the development of cultural safety training.”

To download a Media Release by CPSL “Safeguarding Audit for the Benedictine Community of New Norcia Published” or the Final Audit Report by CPSL, please visit the Safeguarding section of our website at www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au.



2020 – New Norcia Study Weekends & Retreats

STUDY WEEKEND: September 25-27

A Course in Reading Gregorian Notation for Musicians

Fr. Robert Nixon, osb

The term ‘Gregorian chant’ is often used to generically refer to all the non-polyphonic repertoire of the Latin Church. This large and varied body of repertoire by no means represents a single or unified style, tradition or approach; and the performance and notational practices of Gregorian in current use emerged as a result of a 19th Century reform movement. This course will provide a theoretical background, and practical instruction in how to read Gregorian notation, for those who are already able to read standard musical notation.

BENEDICTINE EXPERIENCE WEEKEND: November 6-8

Benedictine spirituality is more readily experienced than defined. These weekends in the monastery guesthouse (beginning with Vespers at 6.30pm on Friday, concluding after lunch on Sunday) provide the opportunity to enter fully into the monastic rhythm and balance of prayer, work, lectio divina, hospitality and community life. There will be opportunities to ponder the riches of the scriptures and monastic literature, both in group discussions and personal silence and solitude, bringing from the ‘storeroom, things both new and old.’ Participants are also invited to join the community for silent meals in the refectory, one of many invitations to listen with the ‘ear of the heart.’

For more information, or to book, please visit our webshop at www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au.

A CUT Above

Wonderful news. The Abbey Press has a new guillotine blade. We can now cut our paper, more than one sheet at a time and also straight! Our thanks to Geoff and Phil, who collected the blade from Hughans in Perth, brought it up to New Norcia and fitted it.

The heavy, cast iron, guillotine was made in Germany by Dietz and Listing in Leipzig, probably in the late 1890s or early 1900s. They also manufactured the Abbey Press' tall standing press, used to press a stack of books at different stages of their bookbinding progress.

It has already been used to cut some card to correct size ready for printing more pages of the slowly growing Type Specimen Book. It sliced through a 3cm pile of card as easily as slicing soft cheese, and no burrs on the cut edge either.

Thank you to the Community for enabling the restoration of this wonderful machine to its cutting glory.

Claire Bolton



Claire Bolton and the new guillotine blade

Congratulations!

We would like to congratulate our own Bernadette and Terry Nuske (pictured left) on their wedding on the 29th March, as well as Cory and Nicole Payne, Keith and Bobbie Hunt's grandson, on their recent wedding at Mazenod College.



Defibrillation Machine Locations

There are two defibrillation machines located in New Norcia. One on the wall at the Roadhouse between the male and female ablutions; it can only be accessed by dialling 000 and obtaining a pin code.

The other is located in the Guesthouse lounge room in a clearly marked cupboard. If entering the lounge from the reception area it is on the left.

