

# Friends

A Communication to the Friends of New Norcia

ISSUE 39



# Abbot John's Introduction to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of *A Town Like No Other*

**I take up the task of writing this third edition of *A Town Like No Other* on board a flight to Dubai en-route to Rome to give a short address at the presentation of the inaugural Australian Catholic University (ACU) Francis Xavier Conaci Scholarship for Indigenous Students, hosted by the Australian Embassy to the Holy See.**

This scholarship, a living memorial to Conaci, who is buried at St Paul's Outside the Walls in Rome, is an exciting project with the objective to encourage current Indigenous students, an example in which the stories of the Aboriginal people of New Norcia continue to be told in new and dynamic ways.

In the first edition of this popular book, Abbot Placid (d. 2008) wrote: "We are told we must revive and develop connections with the Aboriginal community". More than two decades have passed and numerous projects honouring the Aboriginal people of New Norcia give thoughtful testimony to the revival and development of this collaborative spirit, which began with Salvado and the mission era of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Just as Salvado did with the Aboriginal people of his time, the present monastic community continues to work closely with the present New Norcia Aboriginal Corporation. Several vibrant exhibitions have been designed and installed around the site, books on local Aboriginal language and culture have been published, and liturgical events and reunions have been celebrated, all in the spirit of preservation, reconciliation and on-going conversation.

The need for reconciliation has become more evident and

necessary as we acknowledge a very sad and disturbing chapter of our history, telling the shameful story of neglect and abuse. Along with the State Government Redress WA scheme, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and its findings and recommendations, the Benedictine Community has attempted to respond pastorally through Towards Healing, a process in which stories have been listened to 'with the ear of the heart', apologies offered, and assistance provided, all tangible signs of our sincere care and genuine regret. Alongside this journey towards healing the wounds of the past, we are working tirelessly on programmes of prevention that will ensure the safety and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.

The responsibility of our role as stewards of this unique place, its occupants, and all who pass our way, increases year by year as the fragility of this complex site becomes increasingly evident. We can all too easily fall into a disposition of despair at the enormity of the task, but we are encouraged by the significant progress that has been made through multiple projects all made possible through strategic planning, effective collaborative management, the creativity and enthusiasm of our dedicated monks and staff, the much appreciated assistance of various funding bodies and the extraordinary generosity of our valued friends and benefactors.

Since the last edition of '*A Town Like No Other*', New Norcia has undergone a major corporate re-structure in its transition from an Incorporated Association to a Private Company. In the spirit of the Rule of St Benedict in which Benedict insists the decisions of the abbot must be guided by comprehensive consultation, the current abbot is supported by the wisdom and knowledge of a Board of



Nathan Pitt, the winner of the 2017 Francis Xavier Conaci Scholarship  
Photo: ACU.



Nursing student Kate Gavin after receiving the 2018 Francis Xavier Conaci Scholarship from the Australian Catholic University. Photo: ACU.



Directors and Finance Advisors as well as the usual monastic Council of Deans and Conventual Chapter. The day-to-day operations of all administrative, commercial and monastic departments are managed by a series of committees.

In the introduction to the first edition, Abbot Placid articulates the pressure the community of the time experienced in being faced with the huge challenge of keeping the living tradition of New Norcia alive and well. Thankfully, he and the community did not give in to the pressure, facing the challenge in the spirit of good monastic zeal. The current abbot is privileged to have an equally zealous community and associates, enabling us to build on the solid (and not so solid!) foundations laid down by our predecessors.

The following list of developments shows that we are addressing many of the concerns raised by Abbot Placid, while at the same time giving witness to the grand vision throughout our remarkable history: to be a community of monks who live and pray together, open to the practical love of our neighbours in whatever ways are needed in this present moment:

- Peace and tranquillity have been restored to the town through the building of a bypass road (funded by federal and state governments)
- Gravel has given way to a network of new roads, paths and car parks in the town
- Decaying brick walls across the site are slowly being restored
- Extensive restoration, renovation and installation of safety infrastructure in St Ildephonsus' and St Gertrude's Colleges (funded by Lottery West)
- Development of an Interpretation Master Plan (funded by Royalties for Regions)
- Installation of new and impressive interpretation and way-finding signage
- Establishment of the Mission Cottage Interpretation Centre (partly funded by Lottery West)
- Restoration of the River Walk including the installation of an Aboriginal Artefacts Exhibition in the apiary (partly funded by Royalties for Regions)
- Moving from actively running the farm to leasing
- Restoration of the Spanish chapel in the monastery (Friends of New Norcia)
- Refreshment of all exhibitions and gift shop in the Museum and Art Gallery and installation of a lift (Lottery West, Tourism WA and Royalties for Regions)
- Slow but sure upgrades to the Hotel, including innovative food and Abbey Ale available in cans!
- The Roadhouse and Salvado Cafe have received a facelift
- Some rooms in the Guesthouse now boast air-conditioners (funded by a kind benefactor)
- Complete restoration of the Abbey Church clock (funded by two kind benefactors) and

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[www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au)



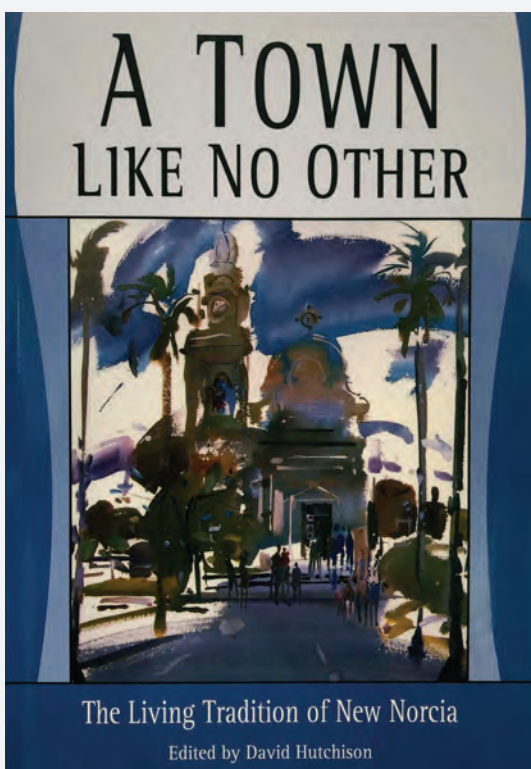
Inside the Mission Cottage Interpretation Centre

garden beds established

- Restoration of the charming Pig Keeper's Cottage—now a hermitage for guests (funded by a kind benefactor)
- Establishment of the Abbot Placid Spearritt Memorial Scholarship resulting in the translation and publication of significant historical archival material
- Extension of archives into old monastery offices
- Establishment of an Administration Centre in the old 1960s classroom block and the IT linking of all major buildings
- Establishment of a risk-management register and the development of other essential policies and procedures
- Restoration of old nuns' cells above the Museum and Art Gallery, now housing our intricate vestment collection, some of which has been beautifully restored (National Library Community Development & the Copland Foundation)

- Transferring printing and bookbinding equipment to the Education Centre, now hosting workshops
- The parish has been given new life with the arrival of several Filipino families to the district and a choir established
- The liturgy has been enriched by very fine musicians and cantors
- Several monks professed and one ordained...and some have plaster on their walls and running water in their cells!
- Our rich tradition is now shared further through the establishment of the New Norcia Institute for Benedictine Studies

The list goes on and the pressure remains, but we hope that what we have achieved in the past decade gives honour to the foundational work of our predecessors, that it is a source of pride to all who presently work so hard, but more importantly, that it gives glory to the God we all come to this special place to seek.



The third edition of  
*'A Town Like No Other'*  
 is available from  
 New Norcia's  
 Museum and Art Gallery  
 or from our website at  
[www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

# Reading at Meals

Visitors to New Norcia, whether staying in the Hotel and Guesthouse, visiting the Museum and Art Gallery, or taking part in one of the two daily town tours, generally have their own list of questions to ask. These may be about any number of aspects of the history of the place, the purpose of the many buildings and the kind of life lived in the monastery by its residents, the monks.

They hear, for instance, that the monks take their midday and evening meals in silence while one of the monks reads to them. So they understandably ask, Why? Learned and lengthy articles or book chapters have been written on this subject. The following does not aim to be learned or lengthy. It does aim to provide some historical background, situate the practice within monastic tradition and suggest some reasons for its continuance.

*The Rule of St Benedict* prescribes reading at meals. Chap 38 begins: 'Reading will always accompany the meals of the brothers.' The reader performs this ministry for a week, beginning on Sunday; he asks all to pray for him to be preserved from the spirit of pride and receives a blessing. During the meal there is to be complete silence, and only the reader's voice is to be heard, unless the superior wants to give a few words of instruction. The reader is allowed something to eat and drink before the meal, and takes his meal afterwards with the weekly servers. The brothers do not read in turn, but only those who can fulfil the task in a fitting manner.

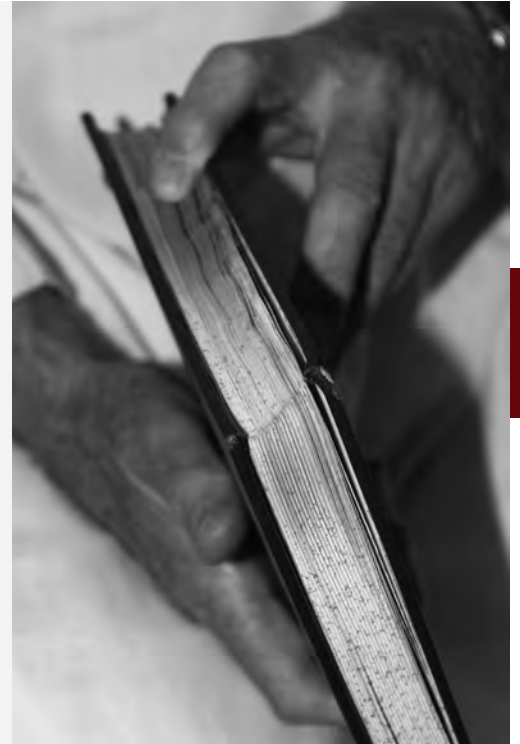
In this matter St Benedict is continuing an established monastic tradition. The longest monastic Rule written in Latin is called *The Rule of the Master*. It comes from the early sixth-century, and besides providing some useful material for St Benedict in writing his *Rule* for monks a little later, it also betrays an obsessively punctilious approach as regards practically every detail of a typical monastic day, an approach that Benedict is careful to avoid. For example, Benedict's chapter on reading at meals is disposed of in twelve verses; the Master takes forty verses to deal minutely with the same subject. Interestingly, the only reading the Master prescribes is that of his Rule, unless there are lay visitors who might be astonished at some of his prescriptions. Benedict has no such preoccupation with his own writing. The main reason for having reading at meals is to underline the spiritual side of the human person; while the body is being given necessary nourishment, the soul is also being fed, above all on the Word of God. 'Man lives not on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God' (Matt 4:4).

What do we read at meals? At lunch we begin with the Old Testament, read through from beginning to end, a reading which takes about three years. The main course of the meal is accompanied by the reading of a work on monastic, or more generally ecclesiastical or civil history, either ancient, mediaeval or more recent, or perhaps a biography. The midday meal always finishes with the continuous reading of the *Rule of St Benedict*, which is read right through three times in the course of a year. The evening meal begins with the reading of the New Testament from beginning to end, a reading which takes about one year. This scripture reading, which lasts for several minutes, is followed by something either historical or current on monastic spirituality, on liturgy, an encyclical or apostolic letter of the Pope, a letter from our monastic leaders, or the current issue of the New Norcia Studies Journal. Towards the end of the meal the Necrology of the Subiaco-Cassinese Benedictine Congregation, to which the New Norcia monastery belongs, is read; this gives the names of deceased monks (and their monastery) whose anniversary falls the following day. And finally, when relevant, the feast day or the anniversary of monastic profession or ordination of a New Norcia monk is announced, with a request for the community's prayers for the monk in question.

The practice of reading at meals is one of the elements in the daily life of a monastic community that contributes to the overall cultural formation – monastic, scriptural, spiritual, and intellectual – of the brethren. The writer considers himself fortunate to belong to a community which continues to set a value on this practice.

Fr David Barry, OSB

Do you have your own questions? 'Meet a Monk' is available in the Monastery Parlour on selected Saturdays at 4.30pm



# Done and Dusted!

**“The excitement over the completion of the 6km Great Northern Highway New Norcia bypass has now subsided and has been replaced by an appreciation of the benefits of the 29.8 million dollar construction project.”**

The principal objective of the project was to improve and upgrade the Perth to Darwin Highway with the aim to enable faster and more efficient heavy haulage transport between the two capital cities.

Continuing highway upgrades between New Norcia and Perth over the coming years will continue this work with construction well underway at Muchea for the Muchea to Morley link. This will be followed later with the construction of a 48km heavy haulage route around Bindoon.

New Norcia is also benefitting from the project with the diversion of the large number of heavy haulage vehicles and road trains that previously impacted the town site, seven days a week, all year round.

Regular visitors to New Norcia have commented on the peace and tranquillity that has returned to the townsite; and the previous negative feedback about noise and truck traffic on survey forms has been eliminated.

An interesting short video of the highway bypass construction has been posted on YouTube by the construction company Decmil. The video also highlights some of the amazing landscape of New Norcia as seen from the aerial drone footage. The YouTube clip is viewable by searching for ‘Great Northern Highway Bypass New Norcia’.

Following the bypass opening, some visitors to New Norcia missed the new turn-off due to either poor signage or older navigational devices not being updated. The signage issue has now been rectified with three new directional signs now installed on both the north and south approaches to the town providing plenty of guidance to visitors of the approaching turn-off and services available in the historic New Norcia townsite. Newer vehicle GPS mapping devices should now also be receiving the updated driving instructions regarding the change in road

conditions at New Norcia.

Tourist visitor numbers to New Norcia that had been affected during the bypass construction are now returning to previous levels. The local tourist market in Western Australia is still being negatively impacted following the mining construction boom from a few years ago as reported by the WA Tourism Commission with many WA country tourist sites continuing to experience shrinking or flat tourist activity.

New Norcia’s tourist visitor numbers are also weaker than in the mining boom days, so if you have not visited New Norcia for some time, now would be a great time to show your support and enthusiasm by arranging a visit with you and your friends to see the town in early spring through fresh eyes - and without the noise and inconvenience of road trains rumbling through the town site spoiling your photos.

Roy Gardner  
Accountant

Photo above: view of New Norcia from the bypass lookout  
To the right: one of the new highway signs



# NATSICC Picnic Day

On 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 New Norcia was delighted to welcome over 250 nationwide delegates from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC).

The NATSICC Council holds a week long assembly every second year and Perth's Technology Park was the host for 2018. The eventful programme ran from 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> October and was full of activities: assorted workshops, keynote speakers, yarning circles, a concert night, youth workshops and a day trip to New Norcia.

The picnic day kicked off at 10.00am at the Education Centre. Lester Jacobs, long term resident and employee of New Norcia, gave the Welcome to Country, followed by Abbot John Osb extending his delight in welcoming all the delegates.

The guests explored New Norcia at their own leisure throughout the day, with special guided tours by the monks of the breath-taking Monastery Library, Music Room, Refectory and Spanish Chapel, which are not usually open to the public.

The other historic buildings were open all day with New Norcia staff stationed in each explaining their fascinating history. St Gertrude's and St Ildephonsus' Colleges, with their beautiful frescoed chapels and memorabilia rooms, were very popular. As was the Education Centre: home to the Prendiville Room Indigenous Exhibition, the Abbey Press, the Old Flour Mill, the Six Seasons Art Panels and the Aboriginal Art Room. Lester was on hand to explain the different symbols and techniques used in the art of the Yued/Nyoongar people and ran painting workshops where guests were encouraged to paint their own boomerangs to take home.

The Abbey Church was full for midday prayers and was followed by a beautiful picnic-style lunch prepared by New Norcia's chef Marlon Victoriano, and served by staff in the shade of the hundred-year-old gumtree outside the Benedictine Institute's study hall. The cool grassed area proved to



be the perfect spot for everyone to relax, mingle and share stories while enjoying their lunch.

At the end of the day, the NATSICC guests gathered in the Education Centre. Abbot John delivered a parting speech focusing on the importance of coming together on days such as these to promote understanding and healing. This gave both guests and staff members food for thought and reflection.

Each delegate received a special gift bag to take home, with gifts chosen to symbolise a part of New Norcia's rich history and the spirit of reconciliation, healing and prayer.

I would like to thank NATSICC delegates for choosing New Norcia for a day

visit. A special thank you to NATSICC's ACM committee; it was a pleasure working with you throughout the year. To Abbot John, our monks, New Norcia staff, parishioners and volunteers, a HUGE thank you for all your hard work and help in making the day a great success.

Jody Burness & Lucy Nicholson



From the left: Donna Ryder, Pastoral Committee for Aboriginal Catholic Ministry WA, Shirley Quaresimin, NATSICC Deputy Chairperson, and Abbot John.

# IMAGE(in)ING GOD

## New Norcia's Contemporary Religious Art Collection

The problem of how to depict divinity has intrigued human beings since the first artist scratched an image onto a rock face to give form and presence to their belief in a supernatural progenitor. Some cultures created many gods, some only one (though distinct from all others). Some artists were encouraged to depict their god as human, others discouraged from depicting the deity at all. In this paper, I will explore how contemporary artists both imagine and give a visual image to their sense of the divine. It is a lens that helps us to understand faith and humanity's relationship with their sense of a supreme being. With billions of images already fabricated we are not without resources but even so, how to give visual form to our most sincere and significant beliefs remains open to mystery and conjecture. The collection of work by contemporary artists in the New Norcia Museum gives some intriguing examples of how artists have tackled the problem of Image(in)ing God!

My grandmother owned a large leather-bound illustrated bible that contained several full colour illustrations, most rather undistinguished. One though enthralled me and drew me back again and again to this musty, brittle repository. It was Raphael's *The Transfiguration*, illustrating the moment on Mount Tabor when Jesus was transformed spiritually and physically, his divinity expressed through the radiance of light. As a small boy in Gran's dark and fusty drawing room with the heavy tome on my lap, my nostrils alert to the rich aroma of neglect, I floated above the earth imagining—no experiencing—that moment of transcendence. That a painting could create such an extraordinary sense of luminous actuality, could alter time and space, could bring me into such close proximity so completely—mentally and physically—with an experience, was remarkable! Unsurprisingly then, since that time I've always been attracted to artworks that allow me entry to moments of revelation when my reality is shifted, twisted, warped or re-calibrated by a spark of insight that leads to deep knowingness.

For this reason, I am drawn to many of the works by artists represented in the New Norcia Contemporary Religious Art Collection.

And God made man in his image, in the image of God he made him: male and female he made them ~ *Genesis 1:27*

When looking at the ways in which contemporary artists have represented divinity it is also clear that they have *made god in their image*. From the works held in the New Norcia Collection I want to explore some of the ways in which contemporary artists have depicted their god, and how these modes of representation are responding to our changing world.

Contemporary artists are often iconoclastic or subversive when approaching religious subject matter (for example Maurizio Cattelan's *La Nona Ora* [1999] showing Pope John Paul II struck by a meteorite, or Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* [1987] depicting a crucifix bottled in urine). Not so these artists in the New Norcia Collection, who embrace the challenge of documenting their faith and giving form to their beliefs. According to Mark Oakley, Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral in London, 'We're all looking for a resonant, universal language with which we can explore questions that you might call spiritual. And for many, the religious vocabulary is no more, it isn't resonant, so we need to find shared forms that we can utilise to start the conversation—and art is one of them'.<sup>1</sup> The works in the New Norcia Collection reinforce Oakley's thesis.

### Salvatore Zofrea

Some artists have a very deep and personal commitment to their God and enter into

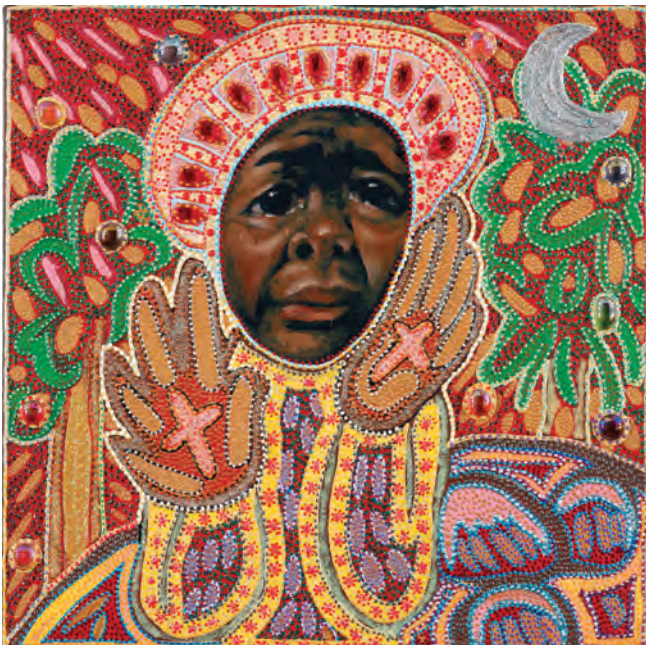
a pact to link their work to a promise or hope of redemption. Salvatore Zofrea began painting the psalms as a celebration of life and his rediscovery of Catholicism. At a time of great personal suffering he sought solace in the beliefs of his childhood and on recovery he undertook to fulfil his promise to paint all 150 psalms.

His painting *Psalms 71/72* addresses a recurring theme in his work: the provision of food and the connection between eating, imbibing and Holy Communion (*Figure 1*). In several of his psalm paintings this image of food and the simple ritual of daily meals is expressed as an act of communion. Bread has traditionally symbolised both spiritual nourishment and the body of Christ, 'the living bread which came from heaven', and that interpretation is at the heart of all these paintings. Of course food is an essential element of Italian life and in several of the series Zofrea documents his family eating and preparing food.



Prepare the Way (1989) by John Coburn





Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane by Julie Dowling (1999)

which may be evident in their presentation for anyone who likes my art is done by an unseen Angel.<sup>2</sup>

His work was untutored, grounded in personal experience and initiated by a compulsion to recount a narrative about his life. In one series Hopewell described the conception, birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, combining the theological with the personal, the spiritual with the everyday and the ethereal with the banal. They are ideas so important they could not be contained on just one surface, so the message

was expanded onto the verso.

The second painting of the series represents Christ's passage down the birth canal to enter the world and take on his mission of salvation. He is represented by a golden megaphone protruding from the surface; a golden trumpet, illuminated by the yellow field in which it is placed, sounds out the good news to the world. The ministering midwife is in awe and a bowl holding the afterbirth glows brightly. It is a moment of joyous celebration depicted with deft skill.

Angels in the heavens rejoice along with us, but at the same time there are questions Hopewell poses on the back of the painting. *The Miricale of the Birth of Christ* documents a subject painted by artists over the past two millennia, but never like this! 'Wisdom From on High', Hopewell writes on the verso, explaining that '...the Christian Faith was born, and man had a soul'. But why would God give his only son to make a world of peace and then create war? 'Why', he writes several times, and answers, 'I do not know', and 'nobody else knows', but 'have faith, *The Miricale* of Creation'.

Clearly it was a very profound and personal experience of divinity that prompted his painting. Hopewell's ability to summon forth a visual language from his own resources, referencing what he found in the world around him, then digging deep to reveal new insights, is the essential component of all great art. It is also a moment when we as viewers encounter another person's humanity, when we empathise and connect. His *God is Love: Last*

*Supper* is a celebration of the painting's central message, spelled out in sparkling letters: GOD IS LOVE (*Figure 3*). Hopewell articulates the Christian message that Christ died for our sins and his sacrifice is our redemption and he highlights the need to take up the challenge of giving our lives to deliver that message.

Around the central sun-like orb surrounded by smiling angels and stars, planets attached to the frame spin around in this universe of love and forgiveness, just as we must be subservient to God and act in accord with his power and authority. The cosmos was always a powerful metaphor for Hopewell of the balance and unity we must find in our own lives. His representation of a universe in harmony, symmetrically arranged, ordered and controlled, is a map for the future. In this harmonious world Joyce will be well and their lives together will continue under the auspice of God's love.

### Miriam Stannage

Miriam Stannage also had a deep faith. Her father was an Anglican minister. Throughout her life she invested her work with her own theological interpretation of world events, often played out in intimate, domestic subjects. A series of work from the mid-1980s was overtly about biblical themes. *The Flood and the Seven Deadly Sins, Crucifixion, and the Stations of the Cross* were so intense they suggest a personal crisis, or perhaps a deep response to world crises, as Helen Ennis acutely observed in Lee Kinsella's monograph on the artist, published just before her death in 2016.<sup>3</sup>

*Stations of the Cross* symbolically narrates the final events leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ (*Figure 4*). In Stannage's own assessment, *Stations of the Cross* was one of her major accomplishments. She considered it to be about 'death, but also of course about resurrection'.<sup>4</sup> It was difficult to

From the history of Renaissance painting he discovered strategies for illustrating biblical stories with experiences from his own life and the lives of his family and friends. In the process he discovered how to release the mystical in the commonplace. His history and his deep religious conviction has enabled him to create a unique body of work that parallels contemporary Australian art. His paintings depict divinity in his own image and embedded in his life. These are his family and friends sitting at the table, with Christ in the garden and reunited in Heaven, and in settings he has constructed from his memories of family events. It is the miraculous in the everyday in a very real sense for Zofrea.

### Stan Hopewell

Stan Hopewell also made a pact with his God. He began painting at the age of eighty, when his wife Joyce was terminally ill, and he committed to paint his love of God, his love for Joyce and their life together, and the impact of his beliefs on those he met and cared about for as long as she remained alive. Although the period of his creative expression was brief—no more than four years—in that time he created a body of remarkable work that offers an insight into the human impulse to make sense of the world, to reveal the unseen and to decode the inexplicable.

With few models of artistic practice to work from, he developed a highly sophisticated way of making paintings that incorporated assemblage, collage, electrical wiring and elaborate framing. His catalyst for creation was a compelling need to impart a powerful message. However, surprised by his ability, he assumed an unseen power must have directed his hand. In a letter, he wrote to me on the 23 March 2007, just weeks after our first meeting, he explained:

...I have a confession to make...My hand and arm were guided by an unseen Power on my paintings and the skill



God Is Love: Last Supper by Stan Hopewell

produce as she battled to accommodate her understanding of this narrative while acknowledging the long visual tradition of interpretation of the Stations of the Cross.

She was particularly inspired by other artists who worked non-figuratively and yet still succeeded in conveying a sense of human presence and scale, and even more challenging, a sense of invisible, metaphysical and spiritual realms. She constructed the tableau of her fourteen *Stations* outdoors, using natural ground (rock, dirt or sand) on which she placed ordinary, everyday objects meant to be symbolic: the crown of thorns is fashioned from barbed wire (an explicit Australian reference to rural fences); a coat-hanger refers to Christ being stripped of his garments; a dead white bird symbolises his death on the cross; and a stained handkerchief represents Veronica wiping the face of Christ. Seva Frangos, in her essay printed in the catalogue for Stannage's 1989 exhibition at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, perceptively writes:

The intimacy afforded with the words has been emphasised through the simplification of the image, and this intimacy is equal to the intimacy of the Christian Belief it explores. The images become a series of 'dense, tactile and haunting symbols' which provoke simultaneously both an intensely personal and impersonal response from the viewer.<sup>5</sup>

### Robert Juniper

One of the most significant additions to the Collection is Robert Juniper's *Last Supper: Lord, is it I?* acquired in 2016 with a grant from the Copland Foundation. Juniper was searching for a contemporary visual expression of the incantatory power of this inward looking, meditative art and Paul Klee's inspiration never waned as a source of inspiration. Since the 1940s and evident in his early work *St Xavier's Thorn and Fetish* (University of Western Australia Art Collection, 1954), Klee is a crucial point of reference.

Juniper's natural feeling for ornament and pattern is evident in these paintings and the slightly later *Three Kings Came*. He discovered in the work of Stanley Spencer and particularly in the works of Paul Klee both an aesthetic interest and a practical purpose. He understood the formal repetitious intonation of the liturgy and the power of the pattern and ornament in icons and religious imagery, learned as a choir boy soprano in England, and he used visual patterning to reinforce that sense of unification and organisation in his paintings.

*In Last Supper: Lord, is it I?* (exhibited in *Australian Painting Today* in 1961, at

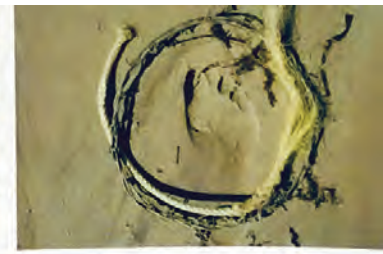
the Whitechapel Gallery in London, curated by Bryan Robertson), he created one of his most ambitious and successful paintings on a religious subject. Once again it pays homage to Paul Klee and lays the foundation for Juniper's now familiar treatment of the local landscape as textured fields enlivened with finely wrought visual incidents, such as leaves, a bird or the traces of human habitation.

### Aboriginal Artists

Considering New Norcia's history it is appropriate that several works by Aboriginal artists are included in the Collection. Working in collaboration with the local Yuat people of the Noongar nation, Salvado and his fellow monks created a community that flourished when so many others failed. It is a testament that Christianity remained an important part of the lives of the local people.

In her version of the Last Supper, Lynda Syddick Napaltjarri, a Pintupi woman from Lake MacKay in the Gibson Desert, created a wonderfully abstract painting that reduces the image of Christ to a dash of blue in a moment of benefaction or surprise, as he raises both his arms. In doing this he radiates a force field of energy, while his disciples are reduced to the cypher of a half circle. Like Juniper, Napaltjarri creates a powerful and succinct visualisation of her image of Jesus as a source of all power. Although informed by their different cultural inheritance and their different experiences, they both found in abstraction a way to transmit those ideas succinctly to a wider audience.

In a similar way Debbie Nannup, a local Yuat woman, in *The Visit of the Magi* (2009), is able to encapsulate the complex narrative of the journey of the three wise men to the crib in Bethlehem to welcome the Messiah. Like Napaltjarri she uses a simplification of forms, and the repetition of pattern we've seen in Juniper's works, to describe the nativity story. Each of the four panels containing a separate component of that narrative, yet together they provide a cogent account of the key



*Stations of the Cross by Miriam Stannage (1985)*

element of that story and the presentation of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Pattern has always been an important component of Julie Dowling's work. A Badimia Yamatji woman, she uses the rich and complex interplay of pattern in religious imagery, and in particular the icons of the Eastern Church, as a formal device in her practice to celebrate and solemnise members of her family and her extended community. Her homage to John Pat, a young Aboriginal man brutally murdered, is an excellent example of this process of commemoration and acknowledgement.

It is also evident in her depiction of *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* (Figure 2). Dowling presents Christ as an Aboriginal person, male or female, who is troubled, like Christ, enduring the same doubts and fears, their lives inextricably entwined in his story. So much of Dowling's work is at this level of deep identification and 'knowing' and it is what gives her paintings such power and impact.

### Professor Ted Snell

Due to space limitations this is not a full version of the article. The complete article is available on our website at [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

<sup>1</sup> A Sooke, 'Does modern art hate religion?', British Broadcasting Corporation 2018, London, 21 October 2014, viewed 20 July 2018, <<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140602-does-modern-art-hate-religion>>.

<sup>2</sup> S Hopewell, letter to the author, 23 March 2007.

<sup>3</sup> L Kinsella, *Miriam Stannage: time framed*, University of Western Australia Publishing, 2016, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

# New Norcia Museum & Art Gallery

The biggest news from the museum over the last year was the very successful upgrade to the ground floor exhibition. The Museum was set up in the 1970's and had not been upgraded since so the displays were dated, dusty and in much need of a face-lift. In 2017 a grant was obtained through the third round of the Royalties for Regions Regional Visitor Centre Sustainability Grant Program (RVCSGP).

The grant funds and additional funds from New Norcia were used to freshen up the outside of the museum; the fence was repainted, the old straggly rosemary bushes removed and terracotta pots with olive trees put in their place. Three aluminium table and chair sets with umbrellas were purchased. Inside the ground floor, museum space was completely emptied, replastered in places, repainted, recarpeted, led lighting installed and two new air-conditioners purchased. The curators came in and reworked the space from the tired 1970's exhibition to a light, bright, easily followed version that highlights the focal points of the New Norcia story. AXIOM Design Partners created way-finding signage for the three floors of the building and a new brochure was designed, giving visitors additional information to enhance their experience.

The upgraded exhibition guides visitors through the first fifty years of the mission. High art embroidered vestments, paintings and metal work from European benefactors are displayed alongside quieter lithographs, engravings and maps of the mission. Early farm equipment, blacksmith's tools (many made by the monks), survey material and telegraphic instruments important to the town's development, together with medical and pharmaceutical goods and equipment are also shown. They sit alongside displays of craft industries including wine-making, pasta-making, honey-making and the olive oil for which a silver medal was awarded to New Norcia at the Franco-British Exhibition in London in 1908. Of special interest are the 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the mission's Yued people and pioneer monks which tell a visual story of early mission life.

In response to the bus tours that come to New Norcia, a few new tours have also been created, which are outlined below. The tours are available to any group with more than six people and showcase the many different facets of New Norcia. All tours include entry to the Museum and Art Gallery. For bookings contact the museum manager on [info@newnorcia.wa.edu.au](mailto:info@newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

## New Town Tours Available

### BENEDICTINE LIFE TOUR

1.5 hours, \$20.00 per head

Habits of New Norcia – Meet a Monk

Tour Guide – Monastery gates, Abbey Church

Fr Robert Nixon – Organ recital

Prayers with the Monks

### NEW NORCIA TOWN TOUR

1 hour, \$20.00 per head

Hotel – History

Monastery Gates – Benedictine and Monastery History, Architecture

Abbey Church – History of the Art and Building, Rosendo Salvado, Moser Organ

Mission Cottage

St Gertrude's College Chapel

### FOOD AND TAPAS TOUR

2 hrs, \$40.00 per head

Museum – Taste fruit bread, introduction to history of food/monks/farming and living at New Norcia

Flour Mill – History of flour making, pasta making

Olive Shed – History of olives; tasting of olive oil with New Norcia Bread

Bakery – History of bread making and tasting Biscotti, Pan Chocolatti and Nut Cake

Hotel Verandah – History of wine-making, taste the Abbey range and Abbey Ale

### NEW NORCIA INDIGENOUS HERITAGE TOUR

1.5 hours, \$20 per head

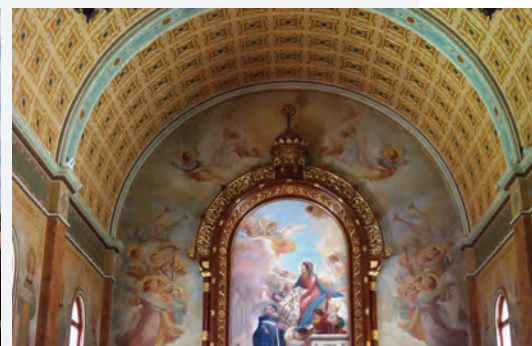
Museum – Introduction then St Josephs' School exhibition

Mission Cottage Interpretation Centre and Mission Cottage history

Prindiville Room – Indigenous Cultural Display

St Mary's College – Indigenous Art Panels and Education Centre

Additional self-guided River Walk



# Artisan Bakery - Fired Up

The history of bread-making at New Norcia Monastery spans back more than fifteen decades. Archival records show the wood-fired oven, still used to the present day, was built in the 1870's. However such is the importance of bread in the Mediterranean diet that history reveals that bread was made on a regular basis from as early as 1853 when the first flour mill was built.

Wood-fired bread is very different from the commercially baked bread available in most supermarkets today. Wood-fire baking is very hot, but also gentle, making a vast difference in the final taste, texture and substance. The final product has a colour and taste in the crust that modern day baking equipment cannot recreate. The oven, which is lit 365 days a year, works by burning wood which heats the 5 x 4 metre oven. It takes three loads of local hardwood to get it to the correct temperature of 260 degrees and only then is it ready to bake the hand moulded bread which has been proving for up to five hours.

Once the bread is in the oven, the fire is taken out of the chamber so the bread is baked by radiant not direct heat. This results in the delicious chewy, golden crust and slightly smokey flavour that New

Norcia bread is renowned for. Once all the bread has been baked the New Norcia Nut Cake, Biscotti and Pan Chocolatti is baked as the oven is cooling.

New Norcia's resident master baker, Terry Nuske, has been baking at New Norcia for over fourteen years. He relocated from Victoria and embraced life in the monastic town. "It's a slower way of life" he says, "I work harder and longer, but there's a real sense of peacefulness here". When Terry first arrived he was fortunate enough to be able to talk to Dom Paulino Gutierrez about his bread making skills. Dom Paulino was a town legend. He arrived in New Norcia from Spain in 1928 and over his 84 years at the monastery, became a master shoemaker, infirmarian, rabbit catcher, stamp collector and fisherman. However his real passion was the sixty years he spent as

baker and olive oil maker, in fact he attributed his long life to the staples of olive oil and bread!

Even with the time-taught skills of a seasoned artisan, Terry says the daily ritual of baking has its good and bad days. "Sometimes you do everything right, and it still doesn't quite work" he says. The union of yeast and flour is precarious and delicate, affected by temperature, the season and timing. "The key to good bread is a relaxed oven" he explains, "a gas oven will keep firing to maintain an even temperature, but with a wood fired oven, you must get it right." Depending on the time of year, Terry bakes between eighty and two hundred loaves a day to produce the daily bread for the New Norcia monastic community, the local residents, and the town's visitors.





In 2018, the Perth based operations of the bakery closed down and now all New Norcia products are solely baked in the original oven here at New Norcia. The bakery has undergone major refurbishments and improvements, carried out by the New Norcia maintenance team. They modified part of the former monastery butcher's shop, which has now become the new bakery packing room and further improvements are planned to enable the range to increase. Already the smell of freshly baked scones has been added to the early morning aromas wafting from the building. Whilst the bread is not available in Perth, New Norcia Nut Cake, Almond Biscotti and the Pan Chocolatti are presently available at *The Black Truffle* in North Fremantle, *Fresh Provisions* in Mt Lawley and Bicton and *Just in Time Gourmet* in Cockburn Central. The number of outlets will increase in time.

If you are coming up to New Norcia and want to get some bread to take home and freeze why not ring up and pre-order? The range is listed below and all orders can be made by calling the Roadhouse on 9654 8020 or Museum Shop on 9654 8056.

Lucy Nicholson  
Communications Manager



Pictured above: baker Terry Nuske busy at work

Pictured right: Dom Paulino Gutierrez in the bakery, taking bread out of the wood-fired oven

Pictured left: Brother Donato Arce and Brother Paulino Gutierrez work in the bakery, in 1928 [NNA 72847P]

## Freshly Baked Products Available to Order

- Traditional white bread
- Old mill wholemeal bread
- Seven grain bread
- Rolls: knot, round, hamburger, hot dog and dinner
- Pizza bases
- Pizza bianca
- Multi grain fruit bread
- Zucchini bread
- Olive, rosemary and sun dried tomato bread
- Graubrot bread (light rye German style)
- Jam and lemon tarts
- Scones
- Hot cross buns
- Fruit mince pies

# “Listen, my son”

Each year the monastic community takes a week off from the usual routine to enter more fully into the essence of its vocation...to seek God. The week is spent in strict silence, and apart from the opportunity for a little sleep-in each morning, the special timetable provides more opportunity for personal reflection.

To facilitate this reflection someone is invited to provide input, which takes the form of two daily spiritual conferences. Through these conferences the monks are invited to take up St Benedict's instruction at the beginning of his Rule for monks to listen with the “ear of the heart.” This year we were pleased to welcome Fr Joseph Chua, a Cistercian monk from Tarrawarra Abbey in the beautiful Yarra Valley, Victoria. Fr Joseph – a medical doctor before joining the monastery – is presently working on his doctoral thesis on St Bernard of Clairveaux.

Under the title “Mystery, Mysticism and Mystics” Fr Joseph explored subjects such as the everyday mysticism found in the *Rule of St Benedict*: silence, the mystery of Christ, the mystery of self, the mystery of the other, God's love for us, and contemplation. While quoting from the wisdom of some of the great spiritual writers of the Christian Tradition, Fr Joseph was extremely

grounded, often speaking from his personal experience. We appreciated the many light-hearted illustrations he shared from his own and other monastic communities. Fr Joseph concluded each conference by handing out a sheet with solid spiritual texts to ponder, questions for further reflection, and cartoons to remind us not to take ourselves and our spiritual lives too seriously!

Fr Joseph preached at the celebration of the daily Eucharist and presided at Sunday Mass in the Abbey Church – his homily was much appreciated by the local parishioners and visiting guests, and they enjoyed his company at morning tea in the parlour.

Between conferences, Fr Joseph enjoyed exploring this ‘town like no other’ and was regularly spotted polishing up his conferences over a coffee at Salvado's Cafe! At the end of the retreat-silence Fr Joseph particularly enjoyed a barbecue supper – the Tarrawarra monks don't eat meat – and an overnight excursion to Geraldton with another visiting monk Fr Mauro Maccarinelli from Praglia Abbey (Italy), Dom Paul and our new novice, Peter Stefanski.

Fr Robert intends inviting Fr Joseph back some day as a guest speaker in the New Norcia Institute for Benedictine Studies.



Pictured above: New Norcia's monastic community with Fr Joseph Chua (in white)

# My Year in Melbourne – 2018

When the lecturer asked me to dance for the class in our second session on Grace I realised my course in spiritual direction was going to be more challenging than I had imagined. I tried because Heart of Life Spirituality Centre in Melbourne is not a place to say no, but like a constipated camel!

While spiritual direction is an ancient ministry in the Church the term can be a little misleading. It's a one-on-one meeting but not always about religion. A person could come with a relationship difficulty, troubles with grief or some other life issue. Neither does a spiritual director try to solve problems or give advice like a councillor, psychologist or social worker. He or she is essentially a listener who believes the person usually knows the answer themselves but might need some help to bring it to awareness.

When Abbot John suggested I undertake the course I had little understanding of what it might involve. I probably had a vague idea about learning new skills. However the programme is based on the philosophy that you can't be a good listener if your own stuff keeps getting in the way. It is therefore first and foremost about self-awareness. Right from the start the staff said that the course would change us. And they liked nothing better than getting into those dark corners and locked rooms and giving them a thorough airing. With good reason Heart of Life is sometimes called Heat of Life!

The course was divided into two semesters with three streams running concurrently, one theological, another psychological and the third practical. We studied subjects like Grace and Conversion, the Stages of Human Life, Discernment, the Human Experience of God, Ecological Spirituality and Professional Standards. And each week we had four sessions of hands-on spiritual direction practice. The material was excellent but the assessment was demanding. I wrote around 45,000 words over the ten months, a big



Dom Chris pictured second from left with other course participants

load for a new pensioner.

The centre is a Catholic institution however both its teaching staff and its clientele come from a variety of Christian traditions. While the course can be done either full-time over one year or part-time over two, I was one of eight full-timers most of whom came from South East Asia. The sexes were equally divided with ages ranging from the late forties to the mid sixties. Three were day scholars and five of us lived-in. Despite the differences the group gelled and we became a close, supportive little community. As the residential ladies objected to mixed bathing I happily scored the one en-suite bedroom however self catering was more complicated. Having never cooked before I came to rely on my begging skills. Fortunately the Good Samaritan sister in the group was more than true to her name and kept me supplied with first-class left-overs from her convent and my own brothers and sister were also part of the food chain. Only occasionally was I reduced to sardines on toast.

Heart of Life is located at Box Hill, an eastern suburb of Melbourne about 20kms from the CBD. It's on a large, countrified property owned by the Franciscans who also

have a community of twelve friars living on site. I was able to join them for Morning Prayer and Mass most days and keep up the bones of monastic life. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the Heidelberg School artists Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin had a weekend camp in the area but today the skyline is dominated by high-rise apartments and half the population speaks Mandarin. With its easy train, tram and bus links Box Hill proved to be an excellent base for getting around both the city and country Victoria.

2018 was a privileged year for me. The course was a late and unexpected opportunity to get a better handle on my wayward heart. And because Melbourne is my home town, I got to spend more time with family and old friends than I had in nearly forty years. Their kindness kept me from developing cabin fever. Fortunately I passed the Graduate Diploma in Spiritual Direction and now look forward to joining Fr David in offering the ministry to visitors to New Norcia.

Dom Christopher Power, OSB

# One Year of Priesthood

## *Some reflections*

Just a few months ago, on January 28, was the first anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. The great spiritual grace of ordination was a call and anointing to the sacramental ministry- to make Christ present to the world, to function as an instrument of work of His one Catholic Church. This ministry has its heart and essence in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, which is the eternal sacrament of His presence amongst us.

For me, the celebration of the Mass is an incredible privilege, and has been a source of tremendous riches. Each time I say the Mass, I am struck by the awesome responsibility bestowed upon me by God. For God truly becomes present in each Eucharist, under the physical form of bread and wine. The sacrifice of the Mass, small though it may seem from an earthly perspective, participates in, and is indeed one with, the ineffable sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. And it is through this alone that we are saved, and in this alone lies all of humanity's hope.

The ministry of preaching, intrinsically linked with that of celebrating the Eucharist, is for me also a wonderful thing. God gives us infinite riches in the Scriptures- a luminous wisdom deeper than human thought, which is often mysterious, yet always infallible. It is a Word which re-assures and comforts us, yet also challenges and perplexes. In giving homilies, I feel called to share some of this wonder with the congregation- not, by any means, as an 'expert' who can explain everything with authority, but as a humble fellow seeker after the Truth of Christ which sets us free.

The past year has been one of many new experiences- as well as Masses, I have celebrated one wedding, two funerals (including that of my late father), and about half a dozen baptisms. My priesthood has been for me the fulfilment of a God-given vocation, to follow ever more closely in the footsteps of our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and to serve ever more faithfully His body here on earth, the Church.

Fr. Robert Nixon OSB



## Study Weekends and Retreats

In 2019, the New Norcia Institute for Benedictine Studies (NNIBS) is delighted to offer a wonderful and extremely interesting variety of retreats and study weekends.

The focus of the retreats is primarily spiritual- the approach to God through prayer, silence and experiential sharing and reflection. The focus of the study weekends is, of course, primarily educational and philosophical. Yet both approaches substantially intersect and articulate- for there is no spirituality without knowledge, nor is there true knowledge without spirituality. To love God is to know God, and to know God is to love God.

The topics covered in our various study weekends are diverse. Our first study weekend is a fascinating exploration of the fecund, yet often paradoxical, spirituality contained in the works of

Oscar Wilde, presented by Dr. Liam Lynch. We have then a weekend, presented by myself, on the various philosophical schools in the Mediterranean world at the time of Christ- offering an insight into the thought-world out of which the nascent Church emerged. A study of the lives, apothegmata, praxis and spirituality of the Desert Fathers will follow, presented by various monks of the monastery, in which the fascinating phenomenon of these earliest of Christian monastics and hermits will be examined. Finally, Dr. James Cregan will present a weekend on the theology of the Garden of Eden- an often overlooked, but powerful and multivalent, archetypal religious image.

Our retreats will cover a number of relevant, challenging and deeply enriching themes. Abbot John will lead retreatants on a journey through the mystical spirituality of St John of the Cross, and

in particular his engrossing *Dark Night of the Soul*. There will be a very interesting retreat reflecting upon the challenges and spiritual opportunities offered by the movement through the transitional stages of life- such as vocational discernment, change of life status, ageing, etc. Finally, NNIBS is pleased to co-operate with the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) in presenting a weekend on the meditation techniques developed and promoted by John Main, osb, a key figure in the renewal of interest in the practice of meditation in the West.

We hope you will be able to take advantage of the veritable cornucopia of remarkable opportunities offered through the NNIBS this year, and look forward immensely to your participation.

To book a retreat please go to the webshop at [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au).



# A Novice from Poland

My name is Peter Stefanski. I was born in Poland 47 years ago in a small wooden house in the middle of an old pine forest. My father worked as a civil servant in the agriculture department in the local county office and my mother ran the house and looked after children - I have two elder sisters and a younger brother.

When I was two my family moved to the nearest country town where I went to the primary school. At fifteen I started my secondary education at a technical high school; during that time there were no Catholic schools in Poland. Furthermore, religious education was removed from government-run schools and we had to go to a special classroom organised by the parish priest outside the school grounds.

After graduation as a technician mechanic I moved to Warsaw to undertake studies at Warsaw Polytechnic, I wanted to become an electronics engineer. After a year I dropped this study and moved to Warsaw University to study Economics; I was very interested in emerging capital markets, especially the newly created Stock Exchange. Whilst studying I had casual jobs in accounting which really appealed to me, so after finishing my studies at Warsaw University I started my career in accounting working for a mobile service provider.

I have been interested in monastic life since my youth. In my twenties, I felt called to go overseas and work on a mission bringing the local people the Good News. After five years working in business I decided to finish my career as an accountant and join White Fathers - the Society of the African Mission. Unfortunately this did not work out and after twelve months went back to commercial work and continued my career in accounting.

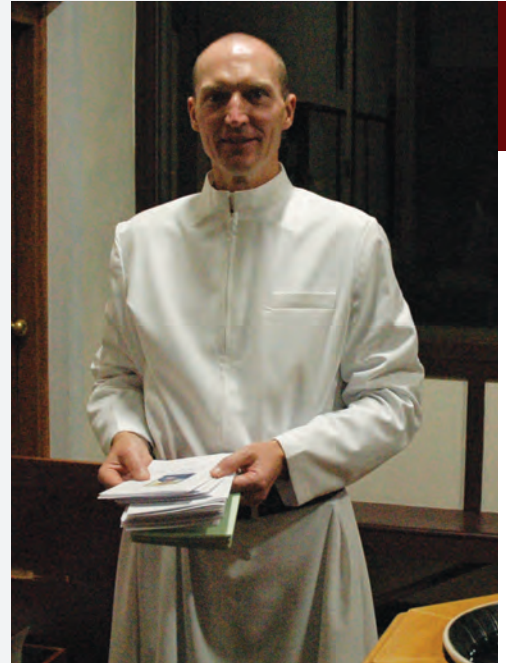
In 2005, I visited the Benedictine Monastery in Tyniec, Poland. Since then, I have been interested in Benedictine values and way of life. I am a man of action and the motto 'ora et labora' fully accords with my personality. After this visit, my vocation to the monastic life and work on a mission was revived.

Six years ago I came to Australia. During my postgraduate studies in Adelaide I met a man from Perth called Mark. He told me about the Benedictine Monastery of New Norcia. It immediately sparked my imagination - this was the place I was looking for - the Benedictine spirit with a strong missionary heritage.

I came to New Norcia a year ago as an observer. My time was taken up mainly with office prayer and work in the monastery orchard. From the beginning I fell in love with the orchard which reminded me of my happy childhood in Poland when I played with my siblings among the plum trees and cherry trees next to our family house.

On 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2019 I was received into the noviciate of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia. Since then my life has changed drastically. Now, I run as fast as I can to fulfil all my tasks and obligations. Nevertheless, I am enjoying Australia and am excited about spending the rest of my life in New Norcia as a Benedictine monk.

Dom Peter Stefanski



## Fr Robert's Piano Compositions

Fr Robert Nixon's piano compositions can now be downloaded free of charge from the following website:

<https://archive.org/details/Fr.RobertNixon-NewNorcia>

Or alternatively, you can go to [archive.org](https://archive.org) and search for Fr. Robert Nixon.

In our modern world, it seems hard-copy CD's are quickly becoming redundant!

# Greetings from ACL!

With the departure of Librarian Carolyn Talbot and Collections Manager Marina Baker last year, the three collecting bodies of Archives, Museum Collections and Library have been amalgamated into one department called Archives, Collections and Library, or ACL for short. This department is managed by the Archivist with the help of three dedicated committees each of which will meet twice a year. The former ARP Committee has been reorganised slightly and will now include Dom Christopher Power; the Library Committee remains unchanged but with Dom Paul Forster, the Librarian, and the Archivist participating, whilst a new Collections Committee has been established. In addition to the Abbot and the Archivist, this Committee includes Dom Christopher Power, Carmel Murray (Museum manager), Curator Joy Legge and conservation specialist Dr Ian McLeod from the Maritime Museum in Fremantle. Both Joy and Ian have enjoyed a long standing relationship with New Norcia and have proved

invaluable for their advice and assistance, so we are delighted that they have agreed to join the Committee.

Both the Library Day and the Studies Day have been suspended for this year as it is hoped that next year a rather different programme can be organised incorporating aspects of all three sub-departments in a single event and perhaps held over two days; as this is still in the planning stages, further developments will be advertised on the website. The 26<sup>th</sup> Studies Launch however will still be held this year, as usual, at the Palms Community Centre in Subiaco at 6pm on Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. Although final details are to be confirmed, it is hoped the Journal will include papers on Catalan and A O Neville (the Chief Protector of the Aborigines), the Abbey Press by Claire Bolton, Salvado's friend Bigliagoro, and James Walsh who was a convict artist in Western Australia and who had links to New Norcia.

The Abbot Placid Spearritt Memorial

Scholarship will continue without change; the 2020 Scholarship will be advertised a little later on the website with applications closing on August 31<sup>st</sup>. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Santos Salvado correspondence scholars, Eugenia Schettino and Judy McGuinness for their outstanding translations of Santos' letters from the first period whilst he was still in Spain and before he arrived in 1868. Eugenia and Judy have already translated the letters by Santos while he was at New Norcia. Also, I would like to thank Andrew Walton, our other scholar for his wonderful catalogue of New Norcia's maps, complete with linked photographs. This is the first major work that has been undertaken on New Norcia's substantial map collection and, with its links to other documents (especially Salvado's diaries), it provides a very important resource for researchers.

Peter Hocking  
Manager, ACL

## Education Centre & Group Accommodation

In 2018 over 3,200 guests visited New Norcia for camps!

We are a popular location for them; the great acoustics in the buildings make them perfect for music while the large halls are good for performances, teaching and discussion. Many schools use the town's green spaces for Year 12 retreats or reflection. School children are housed in dormitory-style accommodation which, in these modern times, is a novelty, while the night time creaking of the old buildings gives rise to many a story told in the dark with hushed voices! The staff are trained in First Aid, all have Working with Children checks and there are two safeguarding officers in town. New Norcia Catering

Services has had good reviews throughout the year and is available for a daily meal, picnic or barbeque through to full service.

Increasingly though, we are becoming more popular with adults groups who utilise the Old Convent, which has space for groups of up to thirty people. Tempted by the peace, bush surroundings, star filled skies, the heritage buildings and the landscape environment we are seeing many different types of group: photography, filming, bird watchers, meditation, yoga, astronomy groups as well as family or friend reunions. The frescoed chapels are popular for weddings and the other iconic buildings are in demand for birthdays, receptions and family reunions. Constant

improvements are being made to our spaces: this year St Gertrude's College was freshly painted throughout and disabled facilities were added together with a new bathroom and conveniences as well as ramps for easy access.

More information can be found at [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

### Feedback

*"We were very happy with everything. The staff were great, they seemed to understand young people and were outstanding to work with, full of good grace, humour and down to earth."*

# Friends 2019 Project: Renovation of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery



Following last year's successful refurbishment of the Salvado exhibition on the ground floor, we are delighted to announce plans to move upstairs at the Museum and renew New Norcia's 20<sup>th</sup> century story. The current display in the north gallery is 23 years old and is tired, dated and limited in its scope. Our aim is to interpret the era in a more comprehensive, insightful and engaging way and link it more convincingly with the adjoining galleries.

Like the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this second chapter in New Norcia's history is a big story. In response to new social and pastoral needs the Benedictine Community shifted from a single focus on missionary work at New Norcia to providing formal education for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the town. It also expanded its activities to include staffing a range of parishes and institutions in the surrounding area as well as founding a new mission at Kalumburu in the Kimberley.

In response to these new activities New Norcia's built environment changed dramatically. A building boom exploded and the simple bush settlement transformed into a small European town in the edgy modernist style current in Barcelona at the time. Also its population grew steadily over the next fifty years peaking at around 500 during the Second World War. The great majority were children resident in St Joseph's Girls' Orphanage, St Mary's Boys' Orphanage, St Gertrude's Ladies' College and St Ildephonsus' College for Boys. Each

institution was staffed by a different religious order and to a large extent was a separate world with its own distinct culture.

However after successfully negotiating its way through two wars and a depression, New Norcia then had to face the progressive decline and eventual closure of these institutions, again as a result of changing social and pastoral needs. But the 20<sup>th</sup> century story ends on a surprisingly positive note with the town on the cusp of a revival as a centre of multi-faceted hospitality.

Fortunately the Museum has an outstanding collection of artefacts from this period. There are architectural drawings, furniture and tools from the building boom, liturgical items and musical instruments used by the monks as the community progressively became more clerical, and a range of large religious paintings that were placed around the town to remind the residents why they were there. We also have many more humble and intimate objects that reveal the personal lives and struggles of people who lived in the various institutions of the town.

One spectacular suite of artefacts that will go on show for the first time is the model, drawings, photographs and DVD of a new monastery and cathedral designed for New Norcia in the 1950s by Pier Luigi Nervi, the great 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian architect whose work includes Rome railway station, San Francisco cathedral and the UNESCO building in New York. Amazingly his New Norcia project featured in the Australian

pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2014!

Thankfully the Museum's north gallery is a large space that can do justice to both these artefacts and their story. However after constant public use over twenty three years the gallery requires extensive refurbishment. General painting and specialist LED lighting are essential as well as specific exhibition requirements such as display furniture and interpretative materials. We will keep you informed as we develop our detailed layout plan and the costings become clear. We sincerely hope you will want to help us fund this important project.

Like the Salvado display, this new 20<sup>th</sup> century exhibition seeks to open up stories for visitors and encourage them to move outside the Museum and explore the town's buildings and spaces where the history actually happened. Because of its ability to link artefacts, buildings and records New Norcia has the potential to tell a nationally important story with rare depth and energy. When it does, the whole place comes alive, providing a memorable experience for visitors and a sustainable future for the site.

All donations for this exciting project are very welcome and of course tax deductible. You can donate through the webshop at [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au) or via EFT (NAB Bank; BSB 086006 Acc 842750860 ref Friends Project 2019) or by cheque made out to Monochorum Ltd.

# Buildings and Grounds



New lighting in St Gertrude's College chapel



Lester Jacobs preparing the olive grove for the coming rains

## Lighting Upgrades to College Chapels

The lighting in both St Gertrude's College Chapel and St Ildephonsus' College Chapel has been upgraded and was completed in February this year. The luminaries that were specified by Lighting Options were a mix of LED fittings and have made a huge difference by drawing the eye to the beautiful details of the murals and carving housed inside. The lighting systems are wireless operated. Maintenance staff assisted the contractors completing carpentry work to conceal installation of lighting and wireless control systems.

Lighting Consultants: Lighting Options Australia

The installation was completed by Global Cabling over a two week programme.

## St Gertrude's College

During December and January this year an ambulant bathroom was installed on the ground floor for visiting groups staying at the college. This project was undertaken by S Dodemaide Builder with the assistance of regular New Norcia contractors.

## Park Side Plastering 2018

Last year, Parkside Plastering completed repairs on the first floor of St Gertrude's

College inside walls, the walls had been badly damaged and the old wooden slats were visible. To repair them they had to use the specialised skill set of plastering in the art of lath and plaster. The final result is very fine.

## Monastery Projects

Maintenance staff and contractors completed a bathroom upgrade in the monastery. This project included a toilet for monks and guests on the ground floor of the monastery and two new showers for the monks.

The work required the demolition of an old shower and toilet room and then new plumbing, lighting, tiling; painting and new fittings were installed.

Builder John Brassington has been working on the verandas around the central court of the monastery. He has been removing and replacing jarrah posts, beams and floor boards which have all been exposed to the weather and have deteriorated and rotted due to weather and age.

## Roadhouse

The Roadhouse had a new roof, gutters and down pipes installed by Top Gun Roofing together with a new cool room

and upgrades to the kitchen area.

## Resurfacing Asphalt Surfaces

In May 2018 Pave Mix completed asphalt resurfacing of areas around town. They completed re surfacing around the back of the monastery, the grounds and maintenance shed and around the Roadhouse.

## Bakery

A number of small projects have been completed. First a store and packing room was needed, so the old butcher's room was converted and then an office area and a room for new fridges and dry store were installed with painting and new lighting.

The maintenance team has been able to complete most of this work in-house with the electrical work being completed by Mark Leuba.

After Easter, Park Side Plastering will be onsite to complete render repairs on the internal walls of the Bakery.

## Apiary

The Apiary roof needed to be replaced due to age and deterioration of the galvanised roof sheets, so a new roof and roof timbers were installed while the internal walls were

## AROUND THE TOWN

replaced and white washed and new display cabinets placed inside.

Top Gun Roofing supplied and installed the new galvanised roof sheeting, gutters and down pipes.

As the reroofing project was about to start it was noticed that white ants had eaten through some of the roof timbers. New Norcia maintenance staff replaced the roof timbers and then installed bird wire to stop birds entering the Apiary and making it their home.

### **Australian Olive Association Field Day IPDM Workshop**

On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February the Australian Olive Association Field Day IPDM Workshop was

held at New Norcia. Topics discussed were risk management, bio-security, and grove management which included a grove walk inspection of the olive trees. The group visited the old olive shed where the olives used to be crushed and processed into oil. The old olive crush was set in motion, a fantastic opportunity for the participants of the field day and also the monks and staff of New Norcia. The crush last worked in 1999, when it was shut down due to OHS laws. Lester Jacobs demonstrated the stages of olive oil production and how he and Dom Paulino Gutierrez made the oil. He even crushed a



The old olive crush in action

few olives! A special thank you to David Ashfold who volunteered his time to make sure the Moffat-Virtue 5 hp engine which drives the olive crusher was serviced ready for the demonstration and run on the day.

**Ian Smith**  
Property Manager

# Guesthouse

2018 began very slowly with the first few retreat weekends only attracting up to five participants. By the end of the year the Guesthouse had accommodated over 3,870 guests. We welcomed a diverse range of retreat groups during 2018 including a group from The Multicultural Wellness Centre, Wollaston Theological College and the Red Hat Ladies to name a few. The last retreat group of the year was St Benedict's College, NSW, on December 27<sup>th</sup>.

After much deliberation it has become apparent that to survive ever rising costs, the Guesthouse suggested donation will need to rise to \$100 per person per night. This will still include all meals. It is many years since the suggested donation amount has increased. The change took effect on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

The programme of retreats and study weekends for 2019 can be found on New Norcia's website. Registration through the webshop has streamlined bookings for these weekends. The first retreat for

2019 was a Lenten Retreat led by Fr David Barry on March 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>.

During the hot quiet months of December and January there have been many improvements made to the Guesthouse area. The old carpet in the dining room has been removed and replaced with a wood-look hard flooring. There is now a screen door at the exit to the Guesthouse courtyard. No need now to battle the flies and goannas! The old metal frames and fly screens on the bedroom doors have been replaced with a strong mesh. The old wardrobes in the lower guest house have had a fresh coat of varnish.

If you have not visited for a while, come and stay a night or two and enjoy the improvements. Although the weather may be a little warm, the clear night skies are magnificent!

**Bernadette Taylor**  
Guesthouse Manager

## Farewell to Veronica

We would like to extend our best wishes to Veronica Rivé on her retirement from New Norcia. One of the longest serving employees, her fabulous work ethic and way of just getting on with the job in hand has been invaluable to our community. For the last 20 years the laundry has been her main hang out! Sometimes with only a Joey for company (in her other life Veronica rescues orphaned kangaroos). We also remember her stint as a gardener where her green fingers made the roses grow lush and luscious. She enjoyed her farewell tea and we will miss her laugh and quick sense of humour.



Veronica (right of centre in white shirt) with some of New Norcia's community members

# Reprinting Moreno's Missa Decima

The Abbey Press wheels were turning busily at the end of October, with a one day letterpress workshop. The Press was also used to reprint a small booklet of one of Dom Moreno's Masses, last printed in the 1950s.

Amongst all the type faces in the Abbey Press there is also a large number of type-high blocks used to print various illustrations. Some of the blocks are for music printing, and for some of the music it has been possible to identify which piece of music they come from. We have over fifty copies of a hymnal, but not all; we have three of a set of four from another Mass, etc. However, luckily, we have all sixteen blocks needed for the vocal parts of Dom Moreno's Missa Decima, his tenth mass, composed in 1932/33. A further bonus was that the border and type for the title, and a small ornament used on the cover had also all survived from the 1950's. The same paper used for the cover was in the paper store, and a similar quality off white paper was used for the inner pages.

Cutting the paper was a challenge as the board shear does not produce a sheet with an accurate right-angle, and the splendid

guillotine is in need of a new blade. However paper was prepared, the imposition scheme was planned for the positioning of the blocks and work began. The proof press was large enough to print four blocks at once. All the inking was done with a hand roller, and the printed sheets of paper left to dry over night before printing a different set of blocks on the back. With all four print runs of the music blocks completed the type had to be set for the title page and cover, trying to match as closely as possible from the earlier printing.

With all the printing complete it was time to do the binding - again using what was in the Abbey Press, from earlier times - a bone folder for folding the pages, and linen thread to sew the pages together. Then the booklets had to be trimmed at the foot and the fore-edge, again by hand owing to lack of guillotine blade.

Three and a half days of work later, a limited edition of twenty five copies of Missa Decima were produced by traditional methods.

Claire Bolton



Workshop participants learn the art of working the New Norcia Abbey Press

## A limited edition from the Abbey Press MISSA DECIMA by Dom Stephen Moreno

A unique reprint of Dom Stephen Moreno's tenth Mass, his Missa Decima, has just been produced in a limited edition of only twenty five copies.

The Abbey Press has used the surviving, original, type-high blocks, from an earlier edition of the Mass for this publication. Most of the typefaces and the border, used for the cover and the title page of the earlier edition have also survived and been used again here.

Dom Moreno (1889-1953) joined the Benedictine Monastery at New Norcia in 1908. He was a prolific composer, mainly of liturgical music, writing over twenty masses. His Missa Decima, was composed in 1932-33 for three voices, two soprano and one contralto. It was probably first printed by Chenna, specialist music printers in Italy. Some twenty years later the Mass was reprinted by letterpress by the Abbey Press at New Norcia, and now again in 2018.

Letterpress printed, 20 pages, hand sewn with linen thread into paper cover

c. 190mm x 145mm | Price: \$50.00

Available from the Museum and Art Gallery webshop at [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au).



## RIP Thomas Roy Taylor

Thomas aka Tommy Tucker was born on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1951 in one of the cottages on the church quadrant in New Norcia. He was an extremely healthy baby, in fact the midwife had to take him to the butcher's shop scales to weigh him as he was too big for hers. He was the eldest son of Beryl and Roy who lived in New Norcia but, being a shearer and a shearers' cook, they often went on long trips around the state for work leaving Tom and his siblings in the care of St Mary's School while they were away.

He left school when he was twelve, and worked with a bulldozer contractor in the area before joining New Norcia's farm and becoming head stockman for the next eighteen years. Deeply committed to the surrounding community he was a member of the local ambulance brigade, fire brigade, football club, golf club, badminton club and of course the cricket club! He was also one of the delegates fortunate enough to go to Melbourne in 1973 for the 40<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress where he met Mother Theresa. In the early 1980's he was chosen to lead the Marian Procession around New Norcia which he found a great honour. Tucker married his beloved Rose in 1979 and in the early eighties they left New Norcia and worked in various places before returning in the 90's; Lisa and Greg were born during this time. Tommy took up the post of Housemaster of St Ildephonsus' College and Rose worked in the laundry and they spent their spare time with their extended family and friends fishing, hunting and camping.

Twenty years later and after eighteen wonderful months as grey nomads, they returned to retire in Calingiri in 2012 where Tucker could support his beloved football team, the Calingiri Cougars, and also helped out by being a trainer and a strapper.

There are too many qualities that he will be remembered for but he will be especially remembered as warm hearted, good fun, having time for everyone, a committed member of the community and always ready for a joke and a laugh. He will be missed enormously.



## Mandorla Winners' Gallery

A temporary dedicated space has recently been created at the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery for winners of the biennial Mandorla Art Award for religious art.

The current exhibition features a selection of ten works from across the Award's history including a large painting by Theo Koning entitled *Re-creation* which won the inaugural prize in 1985 and Mikaela Castledine's work in cotton, glass and ceramics titled *God Is In The House* which was the 2019 winner.

The Mandorla Art Award for contemporary religious art is Australia's most significant thematic Christian art award. For each Award a passage from either the New or Old Testament of the Bible is selected and artists are invited to respond in the medium of their choice. Since its inception it has attracted some of the country's finest artists including John Coburn, Leonard French, Brian McKay and Judy Dowling.

The Award offers a total prize pool of \$42,000 with a winning prize of

\$25,000. The St John of God Health Care System is the Award's principal sponsor. While the Award is Perth-based, a selection of finalists travel to the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery for a second exhibition and the announcement of the winner of the People's Choice Prize of \$2000, sponsored by the Benedictine Community.

For information on the 2020 Mandorla Award visit [www.mandorlaart.com](http://www.mandorlaart.com).

# New Norcia

## 2019 Calendar of Events

Fri 10 - Sun 12 May	Benedictine Study Weekend
Fri 31 May - Sun 2 June	Benedictine Experience Weekend
Fri 21 - Sun 23 June	Benedictine Institute Retreat
Fri 12 - Sun 14 July	Benedictine Study Weekend
Sat 3 August	Annual Institute Day
Fri 16 - Sun 18 August	Benedictine Institute Retreat
Fri 13 - Sun 16 September	Benedictine Study Weekend
Fri 11 - Sun 13 October	Benedictine Institute Retreat
Thur 7 November	New Norcia Studies Journal Launch
Fri 8 - Sun 10 November	Benedictine Experience Weekend
Mon 25 December	Christmas

### SAVE THE DATE

#### New Norcia Writers' Festival 24<sup>th</sup> August

Join Amanda Curtin as she talks about her latest book on a revered WA artist, *Kathleen O'Connor of Paris*; Dr Michael Levitt on health and happiness with *The Happy Bowel*; Steve Hawke on his powerful debut adult novel *The Valley*; Jon Doust on the timely reissue of his compelling memoir *Boy on a Wire*; poet Annamaria Weldon on her sparkling new collection *Stone Mother Tongue*; and Bindy Pritchard on her debut short story collection *The Great Leap Forward*. Our two performances this year feature The West Australian's Travel Editor Stephen Scourfield and percussionist Steve Richter presenting a new work for spoken word and music, *Elsewhere*; and operatic baritone Robert Hoffman with pianist Tommaso Pollio performing a German art song in the original language and in translation.

Visit our website for more information regarding up-coming events: [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au).



### YOUR WILL

When making your will and thinking about worthwhile causes, have you thought of including New Norcia? New Norcia is one of the great heritage sites in Australia. Your bequest would help us immensely in our work of preserving and sharing its heritage.

If you would like to contribute to the Monastery through this avenue, our legal title is: Monochorum Ltd. For more information, contact the Abbot on (08) 9654 8018 or [john.herbert@newnorcia.wa.edu.au](mailto:john.herbert@newnorcia.wa.edu.au).

