



New Norcia Chimes

Newsletter of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia

November 2022

Welcome to the new look New Norcia Chimes! This is the print version of our new mobile-friendly digital version, which we send out to nearly three-thousand friends of New Norcia every month. If you'd like to get the email version, sign up to become a Friend at: <https://www.newnorcia.com.au/#register>.

Our previous editor of the Chimes, Natalie Nixon, moved on to new adventures in September. We offer a big bow of gratitude for the fine work she did in Communications during her time at New Norcia, and we wish her well.

I took over the reins in October and am enjoying sinking my fingers and toes into all the many details of communications at New Norcia – and there are many! We look forward to getting more regular news out to you via the Chimes. Plus,

we're working on a new publication, focusing on spirituality through the lens of contemporary Christian and Benedictine teachings. We are keen to get our readers involved and are calling for submissions of articles, photographs, poetry, stories, and more. If you're interested in contributing, please email me.

As we near the end of both the calendar and liturgical year, we pause to reflect on all that has transpired in our tiny town over the past year. We are grateful for the strength of our community, our many visitors, and the multitude of renovations and new events we have added to make this a truly special place. We look forward to your next visit.

Sui Oakland, Editor
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BREAKING NEWS: New Norcia Wins Gold!



Photographer Jim Longbottom, Property Manager Ian Smith and the New Norcia Grounds team attended the Australian International Olive Oil Awards dinner on Thursday 20 October in Tasmania. In total, New Norcia's fine olive oil has won five awards for our 2022 vintage:

Gold (88/100)
Champion West Australian Olive Oil
Premium Gold (94/100)
Best WA Oil of Show
Best WA Oil



It has been an extraordinary season. Congratulations, and well done!

The New Norcia Chimes is a monthly publication of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia.

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A Visitation...Like No Other!

by Abbot John Herbert, OSB

Back in 2019, delegated by the Abbot President of the Subiaco Cassinese Congregation, to which New Norcia belongs, Abbot Anselm Atkinson and Prior Giles Conacher of Pluscarden Abbey in Scotland made the long journey to Australia to preside at our Canonical Visitation. The Visitation, which usually takes place every three years, is a kind of monastic audit, whereby the Abbot and members of his community are interviewed individually to discuss various elements of the monastic life as it is experienced in this particular place. Community meetings and discussions are held, documents such as the Acts of the previous Visitation, financials, minutes of Chapter, Deans, and Community meetings are inspected, and a final report, which may include some recommendations, is given. This report is in turn presented to the Abbot President in Rome.

Underlying these canonical requirements is perhaps a more important, and certainly much appreciated aspect of the Visitation – fraternal encouragement and support. So significant was this aspect during the 2019 Visitation that I asked if that Visitation could be left open, which would allow for some on-going support in a particular way. With the Abbot President's approval and blessing, Abbot Anselm and Prior Giles agreed to return later that year to further engage with the community and its particular suite of issues. However, COVID-19 intervened, resulting in strict border closures thus preventing their return.

Finally, the Visitors were able to return to New Norcia in October 2022. With such a long intermission, rather than pick up where we had left off, all parties agreed that, given it was now due, it was more prudent to begin a new Visitation. So, upon arrival we met to officially close the 2019 Visitation and the opening of a new one was declared.

With most of the official agenda completed in the first week, we decided to postpone the final report and closure and suspend the Visitation, which allowed me to accompany the delegation to make pastoral visits to Notre Dame Priory (a

new monastic foundation in Colebrook, Tasmania) and St Mark's Abbey (an Anglican Benedictine Community in Camperdown, Victoria).

Notre Dame Priory

This community of eight monks has been established by Fr Pius Noonan, a monk of Flavigny (France), to establish a monastic community with particular emphasis on the traditional Tridentine liturgy. With the encouragement and support of the Bishop of Hobart and humble beginnings in various places, the community has settled on a magnificent property close to the tiny historic town of Colebrook. The thousand or so hectare property known as 'Jerusalem Estate', boasts lush rolling hills, a bubbling creek, an 1840s Georgian manor house, guesthouse, workshops, sheep, poultry, a fruit orchard and vegetable garden. With one of the monks having a background in viticulture, work has begun on establishing a vineyard, which will produce predominantly pinot noir and chardonnay. The monks have recently moved and re-purposed a small wooden church and assembled and installed cabin cells to form a cloister...all this in just five years.



Notre Dame Priory community with Visitors



Notre Dame Priority Church and cabin cells

This is certainly a community with vision – it hopes to one day build a monastery on one of the hills on the property, boasting majestic vistas, a most idyllic location for prayer and contemplation.

We enjoyed such gracious hospitality during this pastoral visit, including an outing to Richmond, another nearby historical town featuring the famous Richmond Bridge (1823) and Pugin church of St John the Evangelist, the oldest existing Catholic church in the Commonwealth of Australia, which also has connections to the Benedictines – John Bede Polding OSB laying the foundation stone in 1835, and Fr James Cotham OSB being the first priest in charge.

Although our traditions are very different, there was a great sense of fraternity. We wish the Notre Dame community every blessing as they continue to develop and explore their options in establishing their place in the wider Benedictine Confederation.

St Mark's Abbey

After a couple of days of social catch ups in Melbourne, including an extra day due to a severe weather warning, we made our way to the dual Anglican Benedictine Community of St Mark's Abbey founded in the 1980s by the late Abbot Michael King (originally in Melbourne). The monastery is situated on the outskirts of the beautiful grand southwestern Victorian historic town of Camperdown. Overlooking a magnificent crater-lake, this Australian monastic gem boasts beautiful Victorian bluestone monastic buildings and guesthouse, surrounded by exquisite manicured gardens and fruit orchard.



St Mark's Abbey cloister



Fr Pius, Abbot Anselm and Abbot John

The community supports itself through agistment, a lucrative printing press, the production of very fine incense, and sales from its monastic shop, which stocks a good variety of religious publications, icons, cards and other devotional items.

Along with monastic communities all over the world, the community at Camperdown is experiencing particular fragility, with just one monk (Dom Placid) and one nun (Sr Raphael) remaining. That said, every time I visit this community, I am inspired by their perseverance and adaptability – I am simply awe struck by their unwavering commitment to monastic observance.

The monastery is a much-loved presence in this rural district made up of beef and dairy farms, and the community enjoys much support from the local parish priest, oblates and locals. With Dom Placid in hospital and Sr Raphael recovering from a



Sr Raphael and Abbot Anselm in the printery



Packing incense

broken arm, we too were pleased to be able to make a small contribution to the work schedule in the printery and incense workshop during our visit.

Back to the Visitation...

Upon our return to New Norcia, the Visitation resumed. After final interviews and sessions, the Visitation Report was presented and the Visitation officially closed. The visitors were pleased to have a few days with free time to relax and attended the Spring Abbot's Table at the Hostel, before making the long journey back to Scotland. We are so grateful to the Visitors for their extraordinary service to our community, to the Abbot President, and to our monastic brothers of Pluscarden who so graciously allowed both Abbot and Prior to spend this precious time with us.



St Mark's Abbey Monastic Church

A Spring Table

Fr John cooked up another fine feast for the Abbot's Table on 22 October. The six-course meal, paired with three regional wines, was interspersed with a musical interlude by Fr Robert Nixon on the piano. These delectable dinners are proving very popular – the summer Table is already sold-out.

Stay tuned for our Autumn offerings!



On Completing the Graduate Diploma

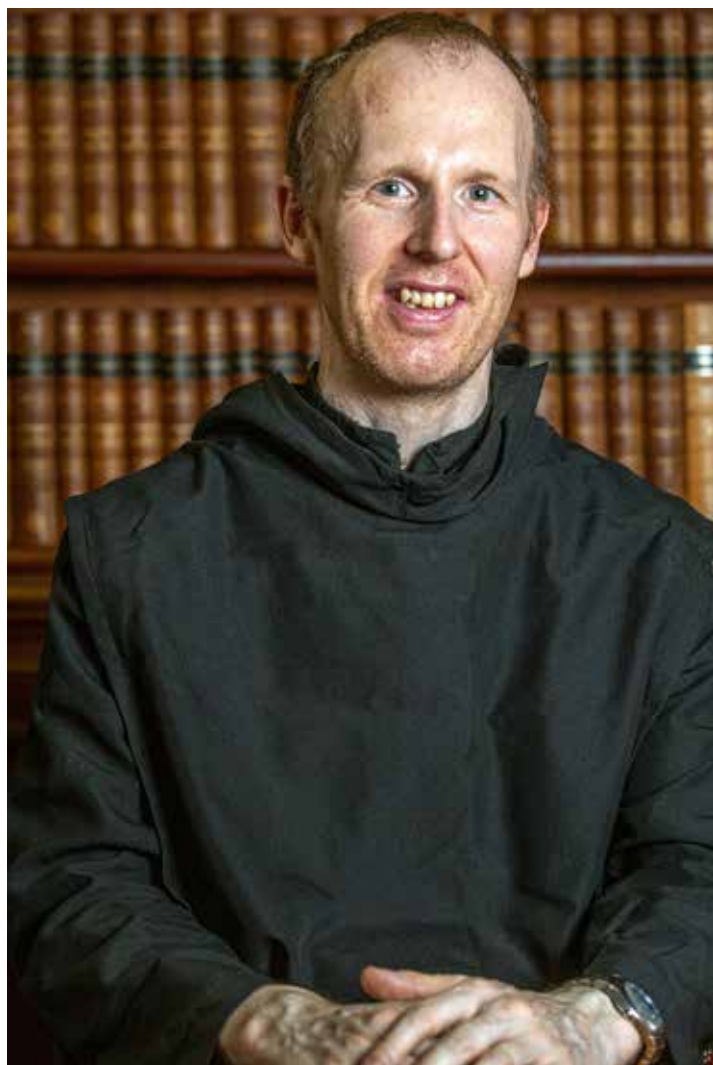
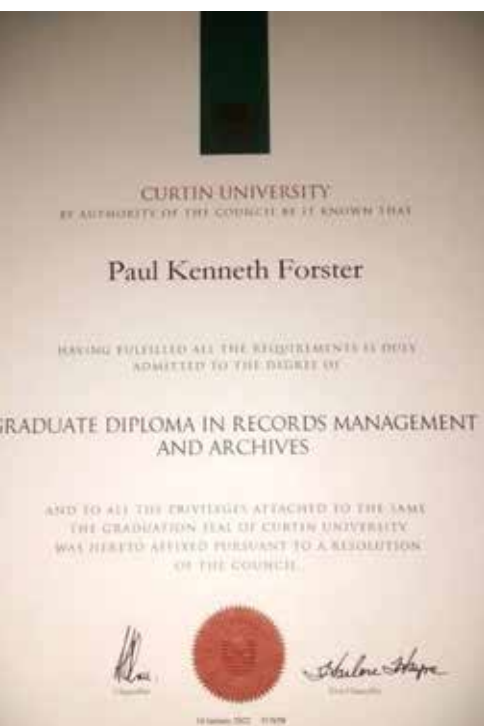
by Dom Paul Forster

Back in 2017 I started a Graduate Diploma in Records Management and Archives through Curtin University. There were eight units in total and I studied one unit each semester through to completion in November 2021.

The units I studied included Information Design, Technologies for Information Services, Recordkeeping Concepts and Practice, Information Literacy, Management of Information Services, Conservation and Preservation, Enterprise Content Management and Archives Concepts and Practice.

The majority of this degree could be done online. Occasionally I would be required to go to Perth. Each week the lecturer would put up the material and students would be expected to watch the various videos and submit the assessment tasks through the online learning platform (known as the Blackboard system). Coming from a software development background, I found the technology unit particularly helpful in garnering an appreciation of what technologies libraries are using these days. The Enterprise Content Management unit focused on electronic document and records management systems and how these are integrated into businesses which was particularly interesting. The Archives and Recordkeeping units (Concepts and Practice and Conservation and Preservation) gave me a greater appreciation of the complexities around preserving and managing records.

As part of this degree there was a requirement to undertake a three-week practicum placement. I chose to do this at the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth Archives which is located in Highgate. So, from Tuesday the 10th August through until Monday the 30th August 2021 I was at the Archdiocesan Archives working closely with the Archivists there (Odhran O'Brien and Anne Wilson). The issues which concerned me most before I started the practicum was whether or not I had enough knowledge about archival practice to make a positive contribution to the Archdiocesan Archive. I had only completed the theory components and had relatively limited experience of working in an Archive at New Norcia. I have been living in the monastery now for the past six years so a lot of things can change in the technology world in that time. For the Practicum I worked on a number of small projects including



Dom Paul is the Monastery's New Librarian

After completing his Graduate Diploma in Records Management and Archives, Dom Paul Forster now looks after the vast collection in the Monastery Library.

the appraisal of Parish records from various archive boxes. I also catalogued items onto a Mosaic database. I learnt a lot about the inner workings of an archive and the various processes that are followed to accession records, itemise documents and record item level descriptions. During my time in Perth, I would stay at the Redemptorist monastery in Vincent Street North Perth. They were all most welcoming and showed me wonderful hospitality.

Overall, I found the study a challenging and incredibly rewarding experience. For one of the assessments, I had to write a 20-page business case complete with full costings, another time I produced a video presentation outlining the benefits of evidence-based practice from a medical librarian's perspective. You could say the topics were diverse and often involved thinking creatively. One of the highlights was working with the other students enrolled from around Australia and gaining insights into a field that I knew little about when I began back in 2017. Hopefully I can put the skills learnt in the past four years to good use around the monastery library and archives.

Mandorla Exhibition 2022

The theme from the 2022 Mandorla Art Award was Metamorphosis – a profound or radical change. On Saturday 18th June the Mandorla Art Award People's Choice Award winner was announced, an award sponsored by the Benedictine Community of New Norcia. It is now on display at the New Norcia Museum with other pieces from the 2022 Mandorla Exhibition, including the winner of the major \$25,000 St John of God Health Care Prize Chalice, a stunning work created by Claire Beausein, from wild silkworm cocoons stitched together with silk thread.

New Norcia was fortunate to be able to acquire a photographic piece from the exhibition by Eva Fernández, titled Nina Robado. The artist's statement:

Many Nyoongar children were stolen and institutionalised as a result of colonisation. Forcibly removed from their families by the government with the assistance of churches, children's lives were under the control of missions. They were subjected to cruelty and lack of care and compassion. Irrespective of the attempt to assimilate and annihilate Aboriginal people, this subject is a symbol of survival, resistance, and revival. She is also a cancer survivor. The ultimate metamorphosis.

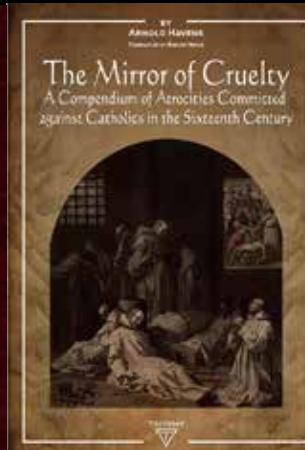
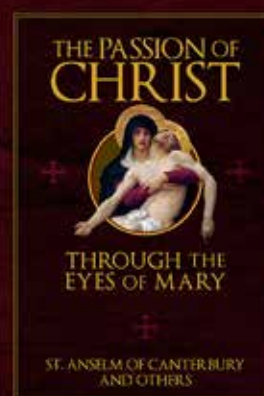
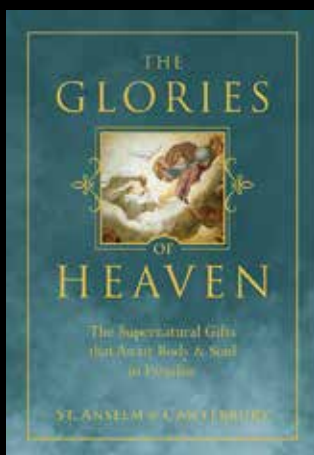
Since taking office, Abbot John said it has been his responsibility to respond to the multifaceted issue of the dark chapter of New Norcia's history – the neglect and abuse of Aboriginal (and other) children. 'Along with meeting with victim/survivors, redress, and safeguarding initiatives, open acknowledgment and apology is vitally important', he said. 'As well as statements through various forums, we have installed a permanent memorial 'Rock of Remembrance' next to the Abbey Church. We have also undertaken an ongoing project to identify and mark graves in the cemetery, with new signage recently installed'.



New Translations from Fr Robert

New Norcia's Fr Robert Nixon has had a number of new translations released recently through TAN Books, a major US Catholic publisher. The Glories of Heaven is a transcription of a series of talks given by St Anselm of Canterbury describing the celestial wonders and bliss which await each Christian soul in the afterlife. The Passion of Christ Through the Eyes of Mary is a compilation of late medieval writings by various saints which touchingly depict the sufferings of Christ through the perspective of His Mother. A Tale of Death and Glory: The Acts of St Sebastian and His Companions is an exciting and dramatic recounting of the horrors of numerous martyrdoms under the persecution of Christians by Diocletian. Attributed to St Ambrose of Milan, this is the oldest and most detailed narration of the famous story of St Sebastian. Each of these works are now available in English for the first time.

Trivent Publishing (Hungary) has also released Fr Robert's translation of The Mirror of Cruelty. This work, originally published in 1608 by Arnold Havens, a Carthusian monk and historian, compiles vivid, frightening and authentic descriptions of atrocities committed against Catholics during the 16th century. All of these titles are available through the New Norcia gift shop, major online retailers, and the webshops of the publishers.



The Museum & Art Gallery Exhibitions

Essence of Country

Essence of Country is an exhibition of paintings by Albert Namatjira and members of his family, who were esteemed artists in their own right. The majority of the paintings were donated to New Norcia by the Michael Jones' estate in 2018, and they join New Norcia's own collection and one other kindly loaned to the MAG by Jillian Passmore. Michael Jones was an old boy of St Ildephonsus' College who later went on to be a grazier in Kojonup and it is because of his very generous bequest to New Norcia that we are able to mount this significant exhibition of fifteen paintings. We are also indebted to Ruth Ellis for the significant contribution she made in providing background information on the Namatjira family.

Albert Namatjira, born Elea Namatjira, was a Western Arrernte-speaking Aboriginal artist from the MacDonnell Ranges in Central Australia. As a pioneer of contemporary Indigenous Australian art, he was the most famous Indigenous Australian of his generation. In 1956 his portrait, by William Dargie, became the first Aboriginal person to win the Archibald Prize. Namatjira was also awarded the Queen's Coronation Medal in 1953, was elected an honorary member of the Royal Art Society of New South Wales (1955), and was honoured with an Australian postage stamp in 1968.

Dreaming Spires

Originally planned by the late Joy Legge, Dreaming Spires tells the story of cathedrals at New Norcia that might have been, but were never realised. Starting with Monsignor Hawe's early thoughts in 1918, through Abbot Gusi's dream in 1938 and on to Fr Urbano Gimenez' ambitious project for a Gothic-style cathedral in 1946, the exhibition concentrates mainly on renowned liturgical architect, Pier Luigi Nervi, and his design for a new monastery and cathedral during the 1950's.

The archives are fortunate to have many plans and drawings of Nervi's creation, including a model that was created in Rome and shipped to New Norcia and which forms the centre piece of the exhibition. Nervi's plan, like those before him, never came to fruition but the dream continued under Perth architects Henderson and Thompson. The exhibition features many of Nervi's as well as Henderson and Thompson's plans and drawings, together with full colour illustrations of the beautiful cathedral windows, which were said to have been created in Rome and which are rumoured to be still there.



Also on show, in a continuous loop, is a computer-generated film, made by University of Western Australia architecture students in 2016 as part of the Unbuilt Western Australia project, showing what the Nervi cathedral might have looked like if it had been built.

Rinske Car Retrospective

New Norcia's textile collection includes an 18th century Italian cope and chasuble, 19th century pretiosa mitre and a 1640 Dutch burse, among other precious textiles. The display, named the Rinske Car Retrospective, features delicate items which have been meticulously conserved by Rinske Car of the Denmark River Textile Conservation Studio. A large flatscreen TV adjacent to the exhibition also has a PowerPoint presentation on the restoration of the cope.

Rinske Car is Western Australia's most experienced and accomplished textile conservator, with more than fifty years' experience covering all types of historic and ancient textiles. Trained in the Netherlands, she interned in London and did extraordinary work on a range of modern and old textiles before emigrating to join the Western Australian Museum to

conserve textiles from the Batavia shipwreck (1629). Since moving to Denmark, Rinske has spent almost a decade developing new methods for conserving and stabilising the remarkable collection of ecclesiastical textiles which are seen on display at New Norcia.



Coming Events

10 December 2022

A Latin American Fiesta, Piano Concert (sold out)

10 December 2022

Called to Silence – Thoughts in Solitude

Thomas Merton retreat

18 February 2023

Abbot's Table : Summer (sold out)

24-26 February 2023

Lenten Retreat – The Seven Last Words of Christ,
with St Bonaventure (register online at NN's webshop: www.newnoria.com.au)

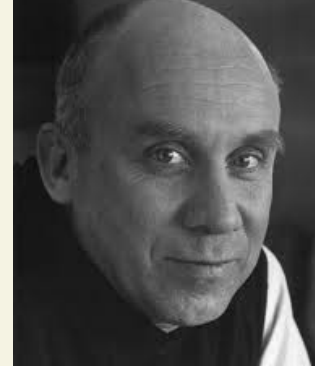
Meet With Merton

Called to Silence –

Thoughts in Solitude

10 December 2022

This day retreat is part of a series presented by Sylvia Grevel entitled 'Spirituality with Thomas Merton'.



Vocation to solitude: To deliver oneself up, to hand oneself over, to entrust oneself completely to the silence of a wide landscape of woods and hills, or sea, or desert; to sit still while the sun comes up over the land and fills its silences with light. To pray and work in the morning and to labor in meditation in the evening when night falls upon that land and when the silence fills itself with darkness and with stars. This is a true and special vocation. There are few who can belong completely to silence, let it soak into their bones, breathe nothing but silence, feed on silence, and turn the very substance of their life into a living and vigilant silence.

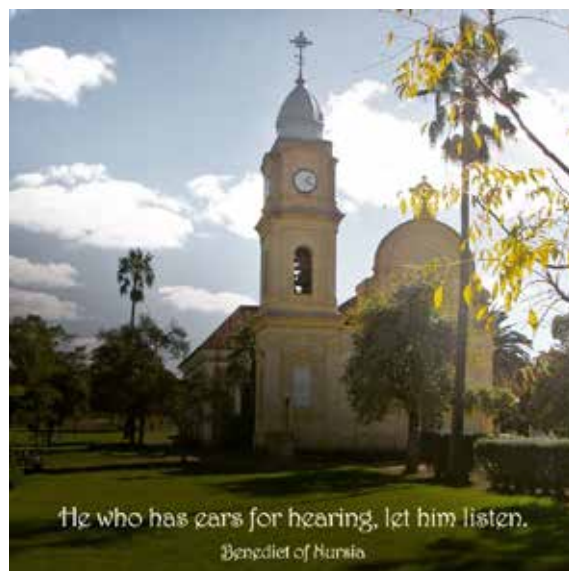
-from THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE by Thomas Merton

Contact Sylvia Grevel to register or for more information:
info@sylviagrevel.com



We're on Instagram!

New Norcia has jumped into social media – well, in a small way – with our new Instagram accounts. Find out all there is to do during your next visit to New Norcia at "Visit New Norcia". Learn about the lives of the monks and the Benedictine rule of life at "New Norcia Monastery". Please follow us!



He who has ears for hearing, let him listen.
Benedict of Nursia



visit_new_norcia_



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New Norcia

“Be careful to be gentle, lest in removing the rust,
you break the whole instrument.”

Benedict of Nursia