



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

The Chimes Newsletter



February 2020

Christmas at New Norcia (in four images)

The season of Advent is the season of hope and joyful expectation.

At Vespers on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday – ‘Gaudete’ meaning ‘rejoice’) the rose-coloured candle of the Advent Wreath in the oratory is lit as a symbol of our joyful expectation of the coming of Christ, both in commemoration of his birth over two thousand years ago, and as a spiritual recognition of his coming into our hearts.

As Advent draws to a close the image of Joseph leading the pregnant Mary on a donkey is added to the Advent Wreath. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that they remained there until it was safe enough to return to Israel, where Mary will give birth in Bethlehem.

At Mass during the Night on Christmas Eve the image of the infant Jesus is carried in procession through the congregation in the Abbey Church and placed in the Nativity Scene on the altar dedicated to Mary.

Mass on this Holy Night begins with the solemn proclamation of the Birth of Christ and bells are rung during the singing of the ‘Gloria’ – an ancient hymn giving glory to God who offers us peace.

We listen to the story of the Birth of Christ from the Gospel of Luke – a story so simple, yet full of mystery. It is a story inviting us to contemplate the unfathomable mystery of the historical moment when God chose to become like us in our humanity – it is a story inviting us to remember that no matter what life brings, we have a sure and steadfast friend who is always with us in the reality of our human condition.



At Vespers on the third Sunday of Advent



The Nativity Scene on Christmas Eve



The festive meal Christmas Day



The 27th Ecumenical Carols Service

Christmas Day is a day of celebration – more prayers and another Mass – and a festive meal.

Silence is dispensed, room is made for an unexpected guest and the table is full of abundance to share – turkey, wine and pudding – and gifts are exchanged – all symbols of God’s unconditional and unwavering love for us.

On the Fourth Day of Christmas we gathered in the Abbey Church for the 27th Ecumenical Carols Service – a service re-telling the story of Christ’s birth in scripture and song.

Being ecumenical, it provides an opportunity for us in our little corner of the world to give witness to unity in a wider world full of troubles and division.

In the midst of an unprecedented bush-fire season prayers were offered for lives, property and land lost, and a special collection was taken up to offer some practical support for the fire-fighters and all who rally together to keep us safe. Not knowing what lies ahead, we put our trust in Emmanuel – God with us – and pray for the New Year.

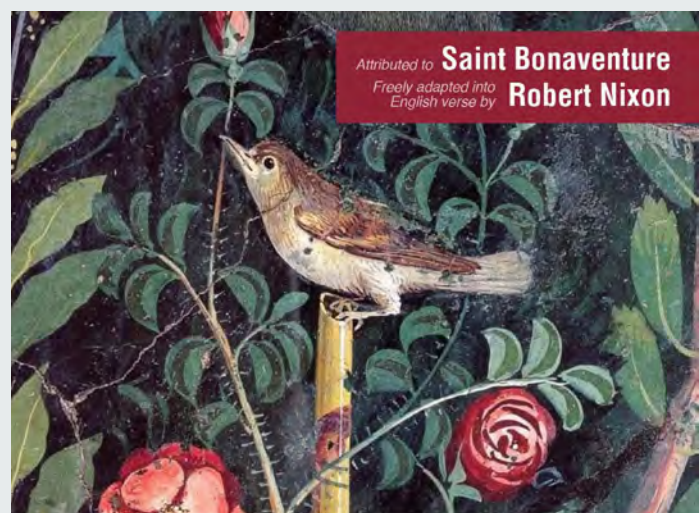
Abbot John

The Nightingale

Fr. Robert has a new publication available, released through Wipf and Stock—a free adaptation from Latin into English verse of the long, mystic poem, *The Nightingale*, attributed to the great 13th century Franciscan theologian and philosopher, St. Bonaventure. *The Nightingale* is arguably one of the most interesting and beautiful works amongst the Bonaventuran school, and is now offered in English for the first time. It uses the legend of the dying day of this mysterious songbird to relate in allegorical form the life and death of Christ, as well as the journey of the soul towards eternity. Copies will be soon available through the New Norcia Gift Shop, as well as through Amazon and the Book Depository.

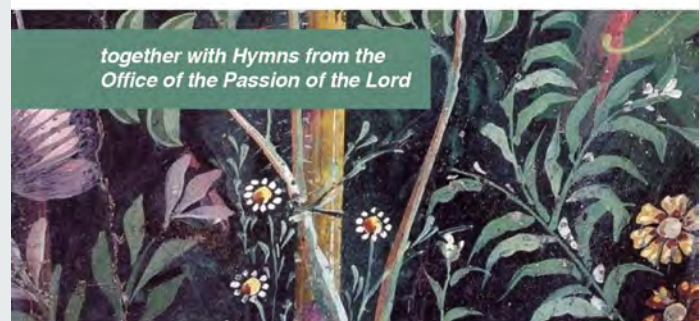
“We are in the hands of a master here. Robert Nixon, a musician, a Latinist, and above all a praying, earnest monk, has mediated to us, with great sensitivity to rhythm, and to the transactions between Latin and English, the Bonaventuran Philomela, a conspiracy of the song of a dying Nightingale, the passion of Jesus, and the journey of the soul to God. I applaud among other things Nixon’s exquisite evangelization of the English language.”

Anna M. Silvas
University of New England, Australia



THE NIGHTINGALE

together with Hymns from the
Office of the Passion of the Lord



Canonical Visitation

The Canonical Visitation of the monastic community took place on 10-14th December 2019.

Due to visa constraints the Abbot President was not able to come from Rome, so we were pleased to welcome his delegates Abbot Anselm Atkinson and Fr Giles Conacher from Pluscarden Abbey, Scotland.

Abbot Anselm visited us ten years ago and Fr Giles came for the community retreat in 2018, so it was good to see them both again.

Pluscarden Abbey have been a great support to us for many years, particularly through Abbot Anselm's predecessor Abbot Hugh Gilbert, now Bishop of Aberdeen.

Abbot Anselm opened the visitation by reminding us of its purpose i.e. to listen and offer encouragement, support and recommendation.

After days of interviewing each monk individually, and for the first time some members of staff, the visitors presented a report.

While there will always be room for improving our monastic life, the visitors commended us on our monastic observance of prayer, work, *lectio divina*, hospitality and community.

They were particularly impressed to see younger monks in initial formation and the gifts they each bring to the community.

Given our unique situation of owning and running a townsite, and that there are at least three years in between visitations, I asked if the visitation could be left open as a source of further support.

If the Abbot President grants this request, we will be pleased to welcome Abbot Anselm and Fr Giles back in 2020 to offer further assistance.

To celebrate the fraternal spirit in our midst, we replaced our usual silent meal on the Saturday evening with a barbecue, an opportunity to show off our New Norcia Abbey Ale.

The Visitation has, and hopefully will continue to be, a source of blessing for us, supported also by the prayers of our many friends and benefactors.

Abbot John



Top Photo: Abbot Anselm presents the visitation report to the monastic community.

Bottom: Abbot Anselm and Fr Giles prepare to depart for the long journey home in travelling habits – from blazing summer sun to winter snowfall.

“Good day,

Today we had the great privilege of joining a fascinating, well informed guided tour of New Norcia and it was worth every minute – thank you.

This tour is totally underrated and is just fantastic. We are not new to visit this wonderful town but our friends from Europe are first time visitors to Australia and they too were bowled over. In fact, their aunt is a nun with the Benedictine Community in Germany so it was more than special.

We will be back and will spread the word far and wide about this wonderful venue.”

Many thanks, James Searle

Our Next Spirituality Event, March 27-29

The first retreat for the Institute for Benedictine Studies for 2020 was held in February and was booked out at full capacity. So, if you are interested in our next event please don't delay (information below).

If this date doesn't work for you, we have other retreats, study weekends and experience weekends to choose from during the year. Please visit www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au to book or to find more information.

STUDY WEEKEND: March 27-29

Cardinal Newman and the 19th Century Revival of English Catholicism

Dr. Liam Lynch

In England in the 19th Century, there was a remarkable revival of interest in Catholicism. This manifested itself in the spiritual, liturgical and intellectual renewal expressed in the 'Oxford Movement', or Tractarianism. Among the many personalities involved in this, an outstanding figure was St. John Henry Newman- an Anglican minister, who converted to Catholicism, and eventually became a Cardinal.

This weekend will explore the work of Cardinal Newman, and present an insight into the 19th Century emergence of Anglo-Catholicism.



Geraldine Byrne's Farewell

In December last year, Geraldine put the finishing touches on one of the Archives' major long-term projects – the annotating of the monastery's substantial photograph collection. Originally, Geraldine came eleven and a half years earlier to identify people in photographs – a task that she was well suited for as she has an exceptional memory for names and, having grown up in the area, knew most of the people in the photographs anyway. Over the years something like 35,000 photographs were scanned by the late Fr Anthony and various volunteers, then scrutinised by Geraldine and, following internet research in many cases, the information was added to the digital reverse of the image in the form of a "tag".

I want to thank Geraldine for all her wonderful work on this project; Geraldine will be much missed but she can be happy in the knowledge that she has contributed enormously to a very important photograph collection that any archives would be proud to call their own.

Peter Hocking
Archivist



Geraldine Byrne

Still Available to Purchase!

We have received a few emails from visitors worried about where to purchase their favourite New Norcia port, beer or wine since the closure of the New Norcia Hotel.

Rest assured, New Norcia Abbey Ale and Pale Ale, the range of New Norcia Wines and New Norcia Ports will continue to be available from the Museum & Art Gallery Gift Shop in town, or from the online webshop at www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au.



Guesthouse Update & Easter Preparations

With one month of the new year already behind us, it is time to think about preparing for Easter. The Lenten Retreat led by Fr David Barry on the 28th Feb-1st March is fully booked. This is a great start to the year's spirituality programme.

If you would like to join us in New Norcia for the Easter celebrations, or if you would like further information, please email Bernadette on guesthouse@newnorcia.wa.edu.au.

For those able to join us for the whole Paschal Triduum (Thursday-Sunday) a special Easter package is available. Easter services in New Norcia begin with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Thursday evening the 9th April. Guests wishing to participate more fully in the services by helping with a reading, please contact Fr Robert at organist@newnorcia.wa.edu.au before the 1st April.

The first of the private retreat groups came to stay at the Guesthouse on 14th February, and another the following weekend. If you are thinking of a quiet getaway, midweek bookings are available and fit in nicely with a trip on the TransWA coach.

Bernadette Taylor
Guesthouse Manager



The New Norcia Hostel Opens its Doors

The New Norcia Hostel, previously the New Norcia Hotel, welcomed its first group for lunch on 13th February.

Group Accommodation Manager, Jody Burness, and her team have been working tirelessly to give the inside of the building a mini-facelift and Marlon Victoriano has been busy planning delicious meals. So it is fresh and ready to welcome resident groups, tour groups or private functions. Meals can be enjoyed in the grand dining room or the beautiful outside veranda, with various food options available.

The New Norcia Hostel is available for group bookings only and minimum numbers apply. To enquire for more information, please contact Jody Burness on (08) 9654 8018.



New Norcia Guesthouse



Set around a courtyard garden in the southern cloister of the Monastery, the Guesthouse provides accommodation and meals to those who wish to spend some time apart from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

In keeping with the rule of St Benedict to “welcome guests as Christ,” the monks invite all guests to join them in their daily round of Mass and prayer. Spiritual direction and reconciliation are available on request and a programme of organised retreat weekends is offered each year.

Group bookings are welcome. The Guesthouse is the ideal venue for parish and staff retreats. A maximum of 24 people can be accommodated. The monks are happy to provide retreat directors or offer input for spiritual programmes on request.

Accommodation options include:

- 8 twin share rooms, with ensuite bathrooms and reverse cycle air-conditioning. Adult accommodation only.
- 1 twin share room and 6 single rooms with a shared bathroom facility. These rooms have a column oil heater and a pedestal fan. Adult accommodation only.
- St Ildephonsus' Cottage: a self-contained house with 6 single bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, lounge, kitchen and dining area. Ideal family accommodation.
- Pig Keeper's Cottage (Guesthouse Hermitage): accommodation for one.

Meals:

All meals are provided in the Guesthouse dining room with an option to join the monks in the Refectory if you wish. The monks eat in silence whilst a reader reads from the text of the day, scripture and the Rule of St Benedict. The Guesthouse meals are the same as those served to the monks.

- Breakfast is self-serve continental style from the Guesthouse kitchenette at any time before 9.30am. Guests may also help themselves at any time to tea and coffee.
- Lunch is the main meal of the day and consists of three courses; soup, main course and dessert. A complimentary glass of wine is provided with the meal.
- Dinner is the lighter meal of the day and consists of soup and a light main course with a complimentary glass of wine.

Tariffs:

Tariffs are a suggested donation. The Guesthouse is both a place of service and a source of the Monastery's livelihood. We appreciate the recommended donation to cover our operational costs and contribute to our income. We are grateful to those who can give more than the suggested amount, this helps us manage ongoing costs and renovations, and welcome those whose means allow for less.

Guesthouse: \$100/person, including all meals. B&B \$60/person.

St Ild's Cottage: \$150/night B&B for a family of 2 adults & 2 children (under 16yrs). Extra adults \$25/night & children \$15. If eating at the Guesthouse, lunch \$25/person & dinner \$20, children 1/2 price.

Pig Keeper's Cottage: \$110/night full board

Contact Details:

The Guesthouse is open for bookings every day except Christmas and Boxing Day. The office is open 9am-5pm daily.

Phone - 08 96548002

Mobile - 0429 919 000

Email - guesthouse@newnorcia.wa.edu.au

