



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Newsletter

Golding Centre for Women's History, Theology and Spirituality

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[The Golding Centre is situated within the Faculty of Theology and is named to honour the women Annie and Belle Golding and their married sister Kate Dwyer, women of the late 19th and early 20th centuries whose activism was underpinned by wide reading and in-depth research. Writing and public speaking were integral their efforts to promote political and social reform. All were committed Catholics.]

Editorial

Rosemary Goldie – a challenging mentor!



Rosemary Goldie has been much in the news in Catholic circles since her death on 27 February this year at the Little Sisters of the Poor Nursing Home, Randwick, aged 94 years. Eulogies have abounded ranging from Michael Costigan's excellent comprehensive one in the Catholic Weekly to sociologist Bruce Duncan's piece in the Eureka Street online publication, which highlighted the political dimension of her work. She was formally farewelled with much love at a requiem Mass at which Cardinal Pell presided and the Apostolic Delegate represented the Pope. The Mass was celebrated by Monsignor William Mullins, who had been an Australian "ex-pat" with Rosemary

during her time in Rome and his homily, like that of the Fr Edmund Campion's eulogy, expressed a deep appreciation and affection for her.

The latest publication in the Catholic Social Justice Series, titled *Women in the Catholic Church in Australia - reflections on Woman and Man ten years on*, was dedicated to her. For those who may have forgotten or, alas, never knew, *Woman and Man, One in Christ Jesus* was the official report of the research project on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia published in 1999. It was a project undertaken for the Australian Catholic Bishop's Conference by the Bishops' Committee for Development and Peace with the assistance of the Australian Catholic University and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

Kimberley Davis (Director of the Australian Catholic Bishops' office for Participation of Women) and Helen Mary Peters (a Sister of Mercy currently assistant to the Chancellor in the Diocese of Townsville), in their introduction in the above publication, explained the dedication:

Rosemary took on a special place in Church history as the first woman ever to hold an official post of authority in the Roman Curia, when in 1966 she was appointed an Under-Secretary of the Council for the Laity. She was one of a small group of women – lay and religious – appointed as auditors for the last two periods of Vatican II (1964 and 1965). The lay auditors attended the plenary meetings of the Council as silent witnesses, but also took an active part in commission work on the Lay Apostolate Decree, and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Rosemary later went on to become Vice-President and Professor on the Lay Apostolate in the Pastoral Institute of the Lateran University.

The following statement was then made: "This publication is dedicated to her. May her achievements, commitment and leadership continue to be a source of inspiration in the Church in Australia."

In fact Rosemary was a strong supporter of the Golding Centre, which had just begun as a project when she returned to Australia from Rome. Indeed, the Golding Centre was a fruit of the research project on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. Historians, Rosa MacGinley and Sophie McGrath, had responded to just one of the four key questions which had been central to the investigation: "What else can we do?" The point they made was that research and preservation of women's history and its integration into mainstream history, which is mainly men's history, was vital to the development of more realistic theologies and spiritualities not to mention social and political policies. Because of women's life cycle, which for most women involves time given to the responsibilities of child rearing, women are not well represented in the research departments of universities and men researchers generally have little interest in women's history. Without any real malice, they simply do not easily see the issues involved or realise the questions to be asked until the research has actually been done.

Rosa MacGinley and Sophie McGrath could see that there needed to be established a centre dedicated to women's history associated with an institution which has a life of its own like a university, such as the Australian Catholic University. This proposal underpinned the desire expressed by many women in the final report, *Woman and Man*, to get to know as inspirational mentors the women who had gone before them, as well as their desire to develop women's theologies and spiritualities. Professor Peter Sheehan, then Vice-Chancellor of the Australian Catholic University responded positively to the proposal and the University generally has been most supportive of the concept. By now a strong network has been developed and the co-founders are ready to pass on the directorship to the next

generation while continuing to provide support in various ways and be part of the established network.

Indeed it is an achievement to be celebrated in this tenth year since the establishment of the Centre that the January 2010 issue of *The Australasian Catholic Record*, Vol. 87, No 1 has the theme “Women Religious and Australian Culture”. The authors of all five theme essays are associated one way or another with the Golding Centre. The lead essay on convent high schools is by co-founder, Rosa MacGinley; the essay on the contribution of women religious in rural Australia is by Marie Crowley, a Friend, who was encouraged by Rosa to undertake doctoral work at ACU and graduated in 2009; the essay on Catholic Sisters and Social Welfare is by Lesley Hughes, University of NSW, a long time Friend who took her study leave with the Centre in 2005; the essay on missionary activities of Sisters of Mercy in PNG is by Teresa Flaherty, doctoral student with the Centre; the essay on “Feminism and Women Religious” is by Heather O’Connor, doctoral student with the Centre, who has a strong background of involvement in the politics of the wider women’s movement.

That Rosemary Goldie saw the importance of the Golding Centre in relation to the future of women in the Australian Catholic Church is indicated by the fact that she bequeathed to the present Director the care of her books and papers. The relevant clause in her will reads: “I give all my books and academic papers and Vatican documents to Dr Sophie McGrath to be distributed by her at her discretion to the Australian Catholic University.” This is an honour and a responsibility, which highlights the importance of archives and their custodians, to which our “Feature Essay” makes a contribution.

In the Spirit of the Communion of Saints may Rosemary and all those fine Christ-centred, loving women dedicated to the Church, who have gone before us, support and guide us and the relevant authorities in our endeavours.

Feature Essay

Feature Essay

Toward A Spirituality of Archives

(This is an edited version of a reflection given to the Australasian Mercy Archivists’ Conference in September, 2009 by Caroline Ryan RSM. The conference is a biennial event, usually attended by archivists from the Mercy congregations in Australia and New Zealand. Caroline, who is Vice President of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia, began her presentation by acknowledging that while she values the vital role of archivists, she has little knowledge of the science of archiving.)

‘Spirituality of archives’ could sound a bit pretentious and trendy. These days, there is a sense in which anything can be ascribed a spirituality. We hear about the spirituality of work, the spirituality of marriage, the spirituality of sport, male spirituality, female spirituality, Australian spirituality, agnostic spirituality, and so on.

But what is *spirituality*?

In broadest terms, it could be said, I think, that spirituality is the way a person understands oneself and the purpose of life, makes lasting meaning of life’s experiences, and recognises interconnections throughout the universe. While it may be innate in a person, spirituality is usually influenced by one’s

upbringing and education – formal and informal. Also, it is often informed and disciplined by an ideology, for example, socialism, or by a philosophy, for example, secular humanism, or by a religious tradition, for example, Islam, Judaism or Christianity. Mostly spirituality has moral, ethical or religious components which determine one's life choices, give character to one's relationships, and shape one's worldview.

Today, I want to reflect on a spirituality of archives in the light of Christianity. How does Christianity relate to the keeping of archives? What deeper meaning can it bring to this work which, in and of itself, is undoubtedly significant?

As I said earlier, my knowledge of the technicalities of archive keeping is very limited. But insofar as archives hold significant historical details of a human enterprise – carried out in God's name for the sake of God's people, such as that of a religious order like the Sisters of Mercy, from a Christian perspective, the service of archives, and the work of an archivist could be described as eucharistic.

What does this mean?

When Christians gather to celebrate the Eucharist, we are essentially participating in a sacred dynamic of remembrance. Through prayer, readings of the Scriptures and ritual we are recalling and giving thanks for *the wonderful works of God*. These wonderful works of God, 'mirabilia dei,' as the early church named them, begin with God creating the universe in all its beauty, order and mysterious vastness. Among the brilliance of creation is humanity, male and female, given life in God's own image, invited by God to cooperate with the unfolding design of creation, entrusted by God to nurture the earth and its creatures. Then, as the story of creation develops, we see God initiating a marriage-like relationship of love and faithfulness with humankind through the peoples of Israel; God intervening in countless ways to protect and liberate Israel from all sorts of dehumanising forces - captivity and violent exploitation by foreign powers, seduction by false gods and, of course, the Israelites' own self-serving atrocities which often brought them close to implosion; And then, we see God revealing with endless patience that mercy is the most profound expression of justice and that it is for all people, not just those who regard themselves as the chosen ones.

Christians understand that all the wonderful works of God converge in Jesus – the one who is God-among-us. By his life and life's work Jesus Christ inaugurates a new era in the history of God's wonderful works. As the embodiment of God's unconditional self-investment in humanity, Jesus offers new meaning and new hope to all who have 'ears to hear'. And in his death and resurrection he gives us the promise of unending freedom, peace and love.

The marvellous, exciting story of the wonderful works of God, told over countless generations through a mix of fact and metaphor, perhaps largely metaphor in the way that metaphor holds a deeper truth or reality, is the substance of our faith.

And it is with the light of our faith that Christians learn what it means to be in communion with God and all people – those we love, those we find hard to love, those we imagine we could never love. We learn too about how to live in harmony with the universe and about our special responsibility for its most vulnerable, fragile elements.

Remembering and giving thanks for all this is at the heart of our involvement in and partaking of the Eucharist.

In our western culture, the idea of remembering is mostly to do with marking anniversaries – birthdays, wedding days, significant national events, and so on; or more simply, it is the convenient function of not forgetting - names, faces, commitments, where I left my car keys. However, in the unique sense that we inherit from our Jewish mothers and fathers in faith, that sense which Jesus intended when, while celebrating the great Jewish remembrance feast of Passover, he told his friends ‘to do this in memory of me’, remembering is not merely about acknowledging, or failing to forget, something that happened in another time.

The technical term for eucharistic remembering is *anamnesis*. Anamnesis is a Greek word with rich and vibrant nuances. It implies not only recalling past events, but also re-living them, not literally, obviously, but engaging our hearts and minds with such attentiveness that the deep, deep meaning of those events continues to have a transformative effect in our lives, individually and communally. Their power within and among us is present and active. So, as we remember the wonderful works of God we actually experience again something like awe at God’s ever-creating genius, delight that God continues to love us into life, gratitude that God continues to liberate us from oppression and to reconcile us in love, humility that God is always ready to embrace us with mercy.

In the 1970’s when political theology was creating a disturbing relevance in some countries suffering religious and socio-economic oppression, German theologian Johann Metz introduced into theological discourse the notion of ‘the dangerous memory of Jesus’. To my mind, ‘the dangerous memory of Jesus’ refers compellingly to the power of anamnesis. That is to say, as the eucharistic community remembers Jesus, we are not simply recalling the life and efforts of a good Jewish man who lived in an obscure part of the world 2000 years ago. But ideally, we are being so charged and changed by the memory of Jesus – his consistent care for the poorest, most abandoned people and his uncompromising stand for God’s truth and justice, that we are empowered *to do as he did* in our own time and place on the earth. And we know that the sorts of things Jesus did are rarely acceptable to those who, in the interests of their own gain, ‘power over’ people or reject them or deny their human rights or keep them bound by ignorance, or seduce them into quiet subservience.

If our anamnesis is full and fruitful, and we *do* act according to the memory of Jesus in trying to confront injustice and to transform it, it is possible that we could be endangering ourselves. Even in Australia. Even in the Church.

Those heartfelt responses which eucharistic remembering excites in us – awe, delight, gratitude, humility, validate and strengthen our Christian spirituality. When they infuse our desire *to do as Jesus did* among people who are bereft of the life-chance opportunities we take for granted – education, health care, safety, meaningful employment, and so on, or who are ‘powered-over’ by forces which demean and diminish human dignity, they give authenticity to our ethic of life and mature us in our humanity.

Now, this is where I want to make the link with a spirituality of archives.

Our congregations’ archives are repositories of sacred memories. As such, contrary to how some might regard them as dead letter offices, or fossil vaults, they have, as the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church says ‘their own intrinsic vitality and validity’ (ref Circular Letter: *The Pastoral Function of Church Archives*, 1997).

In other words, archives have a dynamism which gives them enduring relevance. They have as much to do with the future as with the past. The sacred memories they hold have formed and continue to form each congregation’s identity and self-understanding. They tell about the group’s foundation and

the pivotal events related to it. They keep some of the truth about various initiatives, successful and unsuccessful, in the group's life. They are custodians of experiences that continue to evoke joy, pride and gratitude, as well as those, which cause shame and regret. They keep account of the contribution made to our various endeavours by co-workers, volunteers and our partners in ministry. Collectively, all the congregational archives tell one vast and vigorous narrative about our mercy life and mission since 1846, when the first sisters came to Australia.

At the risk of seeming presumptuous, I think that much of the material in our archives could be regarded as memories of 'wonderful works of God' – not of biblical magnitude of course, like God's creation of the universe, or God's covenant of love and fidelity with humanity, or God's redemptive, radical immersion into human affairs, but creative, faithful and redemptive, nevertheless.

If it is right to suggest that archives have a eucharistic dimension, and if we approach them in a spirit of anamnesis, they must offer us more than static information – however historically accurate, culturally rich, and well conserved. With careful, objective scrutiny we whose deep story they keep must be able to find meaning in them for the present. We must also acquire from them insights and challenges that will help us shape a future consistent with our true values; a future which is animated by the living memory of sisters who have gone before us strong in faith, courage, trust, ingenuity and integrity of life, and graced with vision which led them beyond themselves into new and untested places. This too could be dangerous!

In conclusion I have two more thoughts.

First, our congregations' archives are not exclusively for Sisters of Mercy. Matters of privacy and confidentiality notwithstanding, much of our deep story, so many of our sacred memories, should be available, when appropriate, to such people as historians, sociologists, educators, health care providers, welfare policy makers, relatives of the sisters, professional colleagues, former students, benefactors, those who study the evolution of ministerial religious life, and so on. When they bring their particular interests into truthful dialogue with the relevant aspects of our archival content, ideally there is mutual growth in understanding about our respective concerns. In good time, it is to be hoped that this will advantage the wider society and enhance its humanity.

Second, I want to affirm your critical role as archivists in our Mercy enterprise. We Sisters of Mercy depend on your intelligent respect for our life-defining memories, including those that may be without grace or credit. As stated in the Circular Letter, you bring to your profession 'disinterested openness, kind welcome and competent service'. And, in offering the hospitality of our archives to scholars, researchers and friends, as the Letter says elsewhere, you are considered to be 'among the artisans of peace and unity' for [the human family]. And surely that is an enduring spiritual gift to us all.

LETTER FROM LONDON

Almost from the beginning of H-WRBI, Australian members of the Golding Centre have graced the annual H-WRBI conference with their presence so a visit from an H-WRBI member was much overdue! I have often read the Colloquia announcement wistfully, wishing I could attend! Well the dream came true this year!! After a very cold and snowy January and February in London, I managed to escape for a holiday break to a beautifully warm Australia. I visited cousins in Brisbane and Melbourne, and my Sydney visit featured the annual Golding Centre Colloquia. This, as expected,

was a stimulating event, both intellectually and personally. I was reacquainted with friends old and new.

Another highlight of my three weeks stay was a visit to Parramatta with Sophie McGrath doing the honours as tour guide. I learnt that many firsts in white settlement occurred at Parramatta such as the first printery and government house not to mention the first convent (Sisters of Charity) and first profession of a woman religious. I visited the Sisters of Mercy archives and then shared with the sisters a lovely repast of tea (Catherine McAuley was no doubt beaming with approval!) and cakes (yum!) while we discussed - what else but the history of women religious! Fortunately, I made it back to London just before the Icelandic volcanic ash created havoc with air travel!

And now on to H-WRBI upcoming events! The 2010 H-WRBI conference offers several firsts! This year's conference is being organised by Kristien Suenens of KADOC-KULeuven and will be held at the Louvain Institute for Ireland in Europe. The theme is 'Female religious on the British Isles: Interactions with the Continent'. Such a tightly defined theme will enable conference organisers, for the first time, to publish a volume of essays based on the conference proceedings. The programme should be published sometime in May and booking details will be found at <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Bedford-Centre/history-women-religious/>.

2011 conference planning is also in process. It will be organised by the 'Who were the Nuns?' (<http://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk/>) project team under the leadership of Dr Caroline Bowden and will be held at Queen Mary, the University of London, on 23-25 June 2011. The conference theme is identities, organisations and exile and the call for papers will be distributed shortly. For more information contact Caroline at c.bowden@qmul.ac.uk.

Dr Carmen M.Mangion, Birkbeck College, University of London

Book Launch



The Golding Centre had the pleasure at the April 2010 Colloquia of hosting the Australian launch of Pauline Shaw's book Elizabeth Shaw *Elizabeth Hayes: Pioneer Franciscan Journalist*, published by Gracewing.

The Director of the Golding Centre, Dr Sophie McGrath, chaired the occasion, opening the proceedings by commenting that she was delighted that Franciscans had been the focus of the thesis of Pauline Shaw, the first Golding Centre doctoral student to graduate. It was fitting, too, that the annual Colloquia of the Centre was the occasion for the Australian launch of her book based on her thesis. In 2003 the Australia Franciscans sent a generous cheque to the Golding Centre explaining that the women and men Franciscans of Australia could think of no better way to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the death of St Clare than to make a contribution to a Centre dedicated to women's history, theology and spirituality. It was appropriate that the generous Franciscan tradition be honoured by the Centre. Sophie then invited Professor Robert Gascoigne, Head of the ACU National School of Theology, to formally launch Pauline's book in Australia.

Professor Gascoigne commenced by pointing out that in his recent major work, *A Secular Age* (2007), the distinguished Canadian thinker, Charles Taylor, speaks of three key periods in the conception of religious identity in the modern world. In the ancient regime, before the French Revolution, religious identity was a given together with the institutions of the monarchical state. After the revolution, there emerged what Taylor calls the "Age of Mobilisation", an age of intense commitment to mobilizing large faith communities, of developing and retaining their allegiance at a time when that allegiance could no longer be taken for granted, in a social and intellectual climate that was often adversarial but which also offered the means of mobilizing group identity in the form of freedom of speech and of the press. Our own age, since about 1960, Taylor calls the "Age of Authenticity", an age in which the search for authentic self-expression and self-realisation has become more influential than the mobilization of community identity.

If we are now in a different age from that "Age of Mobilisation" delineated by Taylor, then it behoves us to study and understand that age, to appreciate the particular features of the age when Catholic identity was formed through intense and sustained efforts to educate and mobilize communities of faith – and to strengthen them against adversaries – in the context of freedom of the press and modern means of mass communication. Dr Pauline Shaw's *Elizabeth Hayes: Pioneer Franciscan Journalist* is an excellent study of one important figure of the "Age of Mobilisation", of a woman who brought intense religious commitment, a convert's missionary zeal and a highly developed English literary heritage to the task of developing and strengthening Catholic identity through the vehicle of the periodical press.

Professor Gascoigne went on to show how seriously Elizabeth Hayes took the words of Leo XIII concerning the Catholic press in the late nineteenth century. For Pope Leo, the task of the press was to "fight writing with writing", to make "a powerful instrument for salvation" of "the powerful engine for ruin" that the press could be. Professor Gascoigne explained the intellectual, political and social context of this papal exhortation.

Sister Pauline Robinson responded to Professor Gascoigne, underlining the great contribution that Pauline's scholarly work has been to the life of Franciscan Missionaries as they now grasped more fully their special charism. Pauline pointed out that Elizabeth Hayes was the first person to edit and publish a Franciscan journal in English; the first editor-publisher of a Franciscan journal in America; the first Franciscan woman to edit and publish a Catholic journal

The author, Pauline Shaw, then thanked Professor Gascoigne and Sister Pauline Robinson for their encouraging remarks. Interestingly, she traced her work on Elizabeth Hayes from the 1970's when there emerged again after Vatican II a call for more in-depth socio-religious and historical research in the Church. This eventually gave birth to the Institute of Religious Studies (IRS) out of

which has developed the Golding Centre. Pauline thanked the many women scholars, religious and lay, who had encouraged her over the years. Especially she thanked Dr Rosa MacGinley pbvm, an early guide and her final official supervisor.

(The full transcript of the presentations of Professor Gascoigne, Sister Pauline Robinson mfc and Dr Pauline Shaw mfc will be found on the Golding Centre website in the Requested Transcripts section.)

Book Reviews

Pauline J. Shaw, Elizabeth Hayes: Pioneer Franciscan Journalist (Leominster, Herefordshire UK: Gracewing 2009). Pp xx.320

(We have been honoured with reviews of Pauline Shaw's book from both Dr Tom Boland and Emeritus Professor Edmund Campion. The following is an amalgam of these two insightful reviews.)

This is a remarkable book about a remarkable woman. Anglican Elizabeth Hayes traveled through many countries and many occupations to become Mother Mary Ignatius of Jesus, foundress of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MFIC). On her way she was active in the Oxford Movement, the romantic religious revival of the nineteenth century, missionary life in the West Indies, the Franco-Prussian War, the American Western expansion, the turbulent Rome of Pius IX.

In the English-speaking world the closing decades of the 19th century saw an expansion of Catholic magazines that is evidence of a renewed Catholic self-confidence as well as increased literacy. Today historians of popular religion mine such magazines as archives of the laity's sensibilities.

Annals of Our Lady of the Angels established by Elizabeth Hayes was one such popular magazine. Soon after Elizabeth Hayes founded the MFIC she decided to promote Franciscan spirituality through the press. Always inspired by St Francis of Assisi and adapting his spirit to the needs of the time, she pursued an apostolate of the press in the era of newsprint. Even apart from her passionate religious life, her story is an exciting picture of vibrant nineteenth century Western life. She edited the *Annals* on the move from the American West to the Deep South and eventually to Rome.

Elizabeth Hayes was concerned that Catholic people should have reliable reading material when so much of the prolific periodical press was secular, critical or even anti-Christian. Contributors to the *Annals* included well known writers of the time, such as Mother Augusta Drane OP and John Henry Newman's friends, Emily Bowles and Lady Georgiana Fullerton. Serials ran from issue to issue. She was sensitive to the vibrations of the age, and she realized that newsprint was the life blood of the century.

Indeed author, Pauline Shaw, has located Elizabeth Hayes' work in the literary culture of the time, secular and Christian. She comprehensively details the contemporary journals that formed opinion in Europe and America and the *Annals* relation to them. Bridgett, Brownson, de Vere, Dickens, Dupanloup, Faber, Hecker, Lacodaire, Montalembert, Newman, Rosmini, Ullathorne, Vaughan are among the many whose ideas or contributions appeared in the paper. Even Julian Tenison Woods gets a mention.

Some of the devotional articles and practices recommended may strike modern readers as unduly sentimental – Father Faber was a favoured writer – but they were appreciated at the time. Elizabeth Hayes was fortunate that the great Archbishop John Ireland of St Paul, the diocese where she founded her congregation, was sympathetic to her enterprises. His predecessor, Thomas Grace, was once told by a waspish journalist that she was “an adventuress, a swindler, a liar” desperate to become a religious superior. (This story is in Marvin O'Connell's magisterial history of St Paul archdiocese, just published by the University of Notre Dame Press, USA – too late, alas, for Pauline Shaw.)

It is, indeed, well to revive the memory of Elizabeth Hayes, a valiant woman for our day. She recognized the spirit of her time and turned it to Christian usage. That is a message for our century.

[This book is selling for \$35, GST inclusive. Postage not included (postage within Aus. is approx \$12)
Cheques Payable to 'Missionary Franciscan Sisters'. Book Sales, PO Box 1100, Stafford. Q.4053. Online sales
– www.gracewing.co.uk Email: gracewingx@aol.com

Joanna Bogle, ed., *English Catholic Heroines* (Leominster, Herefordshire UK: Gracewing, 2009). Pp.vii + 318.

This book is the companion volume to *English Catholic Heroes*, earlier published by Gracewing in a series aimed at younger readers, such as high school and undergraduate university students. However, with contributions by respected contemporary historical writers, it merits a wider readership. The chapters move from the earlier documented history of Anglo-Saxon England with recent analyses of Sts Hilda and Ethelreda, through Queen Margaret of Scotland on to figures of the high and later Middle Ages, Julian of Norwich and Lady Margaret Beaufort.

Recent more objective Reformation era research is reflected in the accounts of Margaret Pole, Mary Tudor, Margaret Clitherow, Margaret Ward and the more famous Mary Ward, Maria Fitzherbert brings us to the later 18th century, to be followed by an impressive array of women from the following century: Margaret Hallanhan, Caroline Chisholm, Clare Moore (of Crimean War fame) and outstanding women associated with the Oxford Movement, among them Elizabeth Hayes, Pauline Shaw's contribution, which was especially sought by Gracewing following their publication of her book, *Elizabeth Hayes: Pioneer Franciscan Journalist*.

Later entries bring us into the 20th century with names better known in England than Australia and concluding with Lady Helen Asquith (d.1999), granddaughter of the English Prime Minister and a convert to Catholicism. Some of the women represented were vowed religious, many lay – also a number whose heroic lives have been recognised by the Church. Each author sees points of relevance for our own lives in committing ourselves to the service and betterment of our little section in humanity's onward journey.

Rosa MacGinley

Forthcoming Conference

19th Annual Conference of the British Women's History Network

This conference is to be held on 10-12 September 2010, University of Warwick with the theme "Performing the Self: Women's Lives in Historical Perspective". The organizers explain that the idea that selfhood is performed has a very long tradition. This interdisciplinary conference will explore the diverse representations of women's identities in the past and consider how these were articulated. Papers are invited on: writing women's histories; gender and the politics of identity; ritual and performance; the economics of selfhood – work and identity; feminism and auto/biography; performing arts; teaching women's history.

Contact: Dr Sarah Richardson, Department of History, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL. Email: sarah.richardson@warwick.ac.uk

The Fourth Conference of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture.

This conference will be held at Notre Dame University, Western Australia 16-19 December 2010. The theme of the conference is "living on the edge". The edge is perceived as a place of transition and transformation, a launching place for change and action to counter ecological degradation and regenerate communities and ecosystems. The conference asks how human nature ecologies are affected by the environmental crisis. It

covers a variety of challenges and approaches – scientific, social, psychological, spiritual and cultural – that emerge through living on the edge.

For more information: [www.religionandnature.com/society/conferences,htm](http://www.religionandnature.com/society/conferences.htm)-3D20

Conference organiser: Dr Yamini Narayanan

[This Newsletter is produced by the Golding Centre for Women's History, Theology and Spirituality. Please address all correspondence to the editor, Dr Sophie McGrath rsm. Email: sophie.mcgrath@acu.edu.au]