

Newsletter

Golding Centre for Women's History, Theology and Spirituality

Volume 11 No 1 April 2011

[The Golding Centre is situated within the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy 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 to their efforts to promote political and social reform. All were committed Catholics.]

Editorial

As has been pointed out in this Newsletter on appropriate occasions, there have always been men who were feminists in that they truly respected women and supported the education and development of their talents to contribute to the welfare of humanity both in the private and public spheres. Such a man was Tom Boland, priest, scholar and historian, who died on 7 December, 2010. Tom was a founding friend of the Golding Centre and had long been a friend of the historian and co-founder of the Golding Centre, Rosa MacGinley pbvm.

It has also been pointed out previously that this minor strand of men's history, like women's history, has been disregarded in so-called mainstream history. Certainly Tom's life was celebrated in *The Catholic Leader*, the Catholic paper of his home state, Queensland. Indeed, it highlighted aspects of his life that related to his Friends status with the Golding Centre. He completed his priestly education at the Gregorian University in Rome, gaining a doctorate in Church History in 1960. Apart from priestly parish ministry, there followed mainly teaching in the seminary along with research and production of eminently readable books contributing significantly to the much neglected area of Australian Church history.

It is prophetic of his feminist orientation that Tom's first literary effort was titled *Quiet Women*, a life of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and their founder Julian Tenison Woods. Among his numerous Church commissioned works he also produced a history of Eileen O'Connor, the founder of the Brown Nurses. Predictably, these publications are not as well known as his work on the archbishops James Duhig (Brisbane) and Thomas Carr (Melbourne). He was engaged in research virtually to his death and, indeed, in the year before he found time to write a thoughtful and encouraging review of *Elizabeth Hayes – Pioneer Franciscan Journalist*, Gracewing, Herefordshire UK 2009 by Pauline Shaw (2007 doctoral graduate of the Golding Centre).

In the 1960s Tom was a lecturer at the Banyo Seminary in Brisbane as well as the History Department of the University of Queensland. At this time Rosa was doing MA studies at the University on "Irish Migration to and Settlement in 19th century Queensland". She made

contact with Tom, being aware of his thesis done at the Gregorian University in Rome on Bishop James Quinn's migration scheme for bringing Irish settlers to Queensland. With characteristic generosity Tom lent her his thesis and subsequently engaged in ongoing discussions concerning her work.

Rosa commented: "He became a most sincere friend, alerting me to books and other publications that could be of value to me – this especially in the course of my PhD thesis on 'Catholicism in Queensland, 1910-1935: A Social History' ... On my going to Sydney in 1978 he remained a supporter of my work there in the field of religious studies and would always be in contact if he happened to visit Sydney."

Both Rosa and Tom shared an interest in and involvement with the series of Ireland-Australian conferences initially convened in 1983 by Professors Patrick O'Farrell (UNSW) and Oliver MacDonagh (ANU) in view of preparing the Irish-Australian contribution to the Australian Bicentenary in 1988. Conferences that they both attended followed in 1985 (Canberra), 1987 (Dublin) and again in Canberra in 1988. Both contributed papers to each of these conferences, which were subsequently published. The decision was made to continue the conference series, which has since produced some very valuable papers.

Rosa supported Tom in the foundation of the Brisbane Catholic Historical Society, especially in the production of a Journal to which both contributed. Rosa continues as an active member of the Society and has been invited by the current president to produce a fitting tribute to Tom on behalf of the Society.

Concerning *The Catholic Leaders*' laudatory comments such as "Fr Boland was described as 'the full package' – excelling not only in academia but also as a wonderful and caring pastor and fine preacher", Rosa responded:

They are not in any way exaggerated, if anything inadequate for a man who was respected and liked by all he met, whether in the pastoral ministries he was always engaged in ... or at an academic level. This came home to me strongly last year when I first moved to BallyCara. The elderly lady, a widow who lives in the other half of our duplex, quite by accident asked me if I knew Fr Boland – she not long before, in her little residence, had given him an 80th birthday party to which she also invited some half dozen friends, contemporaries of hers and likewise widows. This amazed me! It appears that, as a young priest on the Seminary staff he assisted in the Redcliff parish and was asked to be chaplain to the Teams of Our Lady, groups of young married couples. (I knew this French organization for married couples operated in Melbourne, but had never heard of it in Queensland!) All retained the greatest esteem for him as life took them in various directions.

The Catholic Leader reporter related that fellow academics at the seminary and Dr Jennifer Harrison of the University of Queensland, who is developing Tom's immigration research, spoke with great respect of a man who had "set the bar high" with his "thorough and reasoned research and precise and readable writing." Tom was obviously a "man for all Seasons"! One of his friends declared that he was "one of the wisest people I have ever known" and he went on to give the Macquarie dictionary definition of wisdom: "Knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment regarding our actions". This certainly led to his simple, respectful, non-patronising, cooperative attitude towards women. He was in touch with reality and hence humble.

The Golding Centre has lost a good Friend who remains a model for all men endeavouring to promote the welfare of women, and hence of all humankind, both within the Church and the wider community.

Feature Essay

Feature Essay

Edith Stein the Feminist

(Many are sceptical concerning the feminism of Edith Stein but, as will be seen below, much evidence for it comes from her autobiography.)

As you well know, Edith Stein was a philosopher, Jew, convert to Catholicism, Carmelite nun and mystic. Just to remind ourselves: she was born in 1891 at Breslau in Silesia, then German territory. She was the eleventh child, the seventh surviving, of Siegfried and Augusta Stein. Her father died when she was very young and her mother, determined to be independent of her family's help, successfully managed her husband's lumber business. Edith grew up in a close-knit, liberal Jewish family.

This much loved child proved to be highly intelligent and headstrong. She recalled as a seven-year old experiencing a secret inner life, which she was unable to express. Edith was raised almost like a twin with her sister, Elsa, who was a little older then herself. Although scholarly by nature, as a child she was allowed much free play and later with her sister and young relatives and friends, both men and women, she loved to hike, play sport, discuss endlessly and she confessed that even more than reading she enjoyed going to the theatre.

Because Frau Stein respected the wishes of her children, she supported Edith's decision in 1906 to leave school at the age of fourteen and then again when, after having spent some time helping a married sister, she decided to resume study and prepare for her university entrance examination.

Matriculating brilliantly, Edith initially chose psychology as her major field of study but soon transferred to philosophy. She enrolled at Breslau University and later furthered her studies at Gottingen. Edith formed deep and lasting friendships, but described herself as an increasingly independent person. By the time she had left school she had lost her childhood faith.

During her university days Edith was part of a vital group of talented German intellectuals. She studied under the famous phenomenological philosopher Edmund Husserl. Among other distinguished academics she knew Martin Heidegger and Max Scheller.

After a brilliant university career Edith was awarded her doctorate in philosophy *summa cum laude*. There followed a career in lecturing, teaching and research. She was especially interested in contemporary problems, including the nature of woman, her education and her various roles in the wider society.

Through the influence of the philosophy of phenomenology and some Christian Lutheran friends, Edith was drawn to Christianity. After being deeply affected by the autobiography of St Teresa of Avila she elected to become a Catholic and finally entered the Discalced Carmelite Order in Cologne in 1933 at the age of forty-two. As a Catholic Jew she was a victim of Auschwitz in 1942.

Feminism

Edith had espoused the feminist cause early in life. Part of the programme at the graduation party ending her high school days had been terse epigrams about each of the members of the class. She confessed that the one concerning herself read:

Let woman equal be with man, So loud this suffragette avers, In days to come we surely can See that a Cab'net Post is hers.

Edith had campaigned for feminism in her high school days and her interest in women's issues continued throughout her life. She commented concerning her early University period: 'My deep conviction of social responsibility ... made me decidedly favour women's suffrage. At that time, this was still far from being an integral part of the women's rights movement.' (Auto. 191)

Edith observed: 'Feminism became very strong in the Weimar Republic before Hitler and the Nazis came to power. After winning the right to vote, German feminists elected thirty-two women deputies to the Reichstag in 1926 (compared to fifteen in the British Parliament and three in the US Congress) and they gained popular support for women in industry and the professions.'

Edith commented: 'There is still a multitude of thoughtless people satisfied with hackneyed expressions concerning *the weaker sex* or even *the fair sex*. They are incapable of speaking about this weaker sex without a sympathetic or often a cynical smile as well.' She added: 'Sporadically, there are Romanticists who idealise women and paint them in delicate colours against a gold background. They would like to shield woman as much as they could from the hard facts of life.' (Stein 145)

Edith lamented: 'The gains won during the early decades of the 20th century were wiped out by the effects of the economic depression. There resulted the romanticist ideology of the Nazi regime with its emphasis on the use of women to bear babies of Aryan stock.' Edith also deplored the exploitation of women in the Communist Party. (Stein 145)

After detailing some of the effort made in Germany to achieve educational opportunities for women, Edith, with some asperity, commented: 'The girls who today take their "Abitur" and go to the universities, more often than not, know nothing as to what had to be done until the German universities finally opened their doors to women in 1901 after countless meetings, memoranda and petitions to the Reichstag and state governments.' (Stein 138-9)

She pointed out: 'The radical feminists in their concern to achieve equal rights for women minimised the differences between the sexes and concentrated on their shared nature. On the other hand, the early German feminist Helene Lange, whom I admire enormously, throughout her life insisted that "the dissimilarity of the sexes must be emphasised in order that the feminine nature be freely developed and properly formed".' (Stein 155)

Edith was aware of and interested in the various studies being done in such disciplines as psychology, sociology and philosophy in connection with the differences between men and women. Edith indicated that the 'nature versus nurture' debate, concerning the differences of the sexes, was alive and well.' (Stein 145)

However, she finally commented: 'Thankfully, in comparison to the earlier discussions of this topic, tendencies to completely deny woman's uniqueness have diminished. Women have become free to be concerned with such issues as the significance of woman's intrinsic value in national life.' (Stein 33, 247)

A Catholic Women's Movement had been established in Germany early in the 20th century. Edith recognised the connection between the Catholic and non-Catholic women's movements in Germany stating: 'The goals of the Catholic Women's Movement have much in common with the non-Catholic movement and are indebted to it for valuable preparatory work: the opening up of educational opportunities and gainful employment in the economic field; and the establishment of jobs in the legal, political and social fields. Also, in the value placed on marriage and motherhood, the Catholic movement is still in agreement with the moderate elements of the middle-class feminist movement.' (Stein 159, 160)

But she added firmly: 'It should never be forgotten that the non-Catholic Women's Movement developed on a foundation foreign to us - that of German idealism, of philosophical and political liberalism. The Catholic Women's Movement must rest on its own foundation, the foundation of faith and a Catholic world view which is well thought out in all its consequences. We must be aware, too, of those elements in the wider culture which influence us.' (Stein 159, 160)

E. Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family – An Autobiography*, edited by Dr L.Gelber and Romaeus Leuven OCD, translated by Josephine Koeppel OCD, Washington, ICS Publication, 1986, 178. (Auto.)

E. Stein, *Woman – The Collected Works of Edith Stein* Vol.II, translated by Freda Mary Oben, Washington, ICS Publications, 1987, 144. (Stein)

Dr Sophie McGrath rsm (ACU Strathfield Campus)

LETTER FROM LONDON

We are in the midst of preparing for the annual H-WRBI conference which this year has returned to London. The 2011 conference was expanded to three days in order to include the contributions from the 'Who Were the Nuns' project under the able guidance of Dr Caroline Bowden. Conference papers embrace diverse interdisciplinary disciplines from history and literary criticism to architecture, music, material culture and film. Take a look at our programme at <u>http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Bedford-Centre/history-women-religious/events.html</u>. Special events tied to the academic programme include visits to the heritage rooms of two nineteenth-century congregations, Bren Ortega Murphy's documentary film 'A Question of habit' which examines the changing images of women religious in the U.S. and a tour of eighteenth-century Malplaquet House which houses portraits of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English nuns. (http://spitalfieldslife.com/2010/08/24/at-malplaquet-house/).

We continue to look for ways of building an awareness of the significance of the history of women religious through various mediums. One of our members, doctoral student Kate Jordan, has added a section to English Heritage's Women's History pages entitled 'Nuns and convent building in the nineteenth-century' (the subject of her doctoral thesis). Check it out at <u>http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/womens-history/nuns-and-convent-building/</u>. And in 2012, H-WRBI will be sponsoring a session at the nineteenth International Medieval Congress which will take place in Leeds from 9-12 July 2012.

In other news, our website is on the move. We have tentatively agreed to have the Institute of Historical Research host our website. This will allow us more flexibility and more timely updates. Two of our H-WRBI members have volunteered to update the website regularly. This is scheduled to take place in the autumn.

And a final reminder that the 2012 conference will be held at University College Dublin in June 2012 and is being organised by Deirdre Raftery and Louise O'Reilly. Please contact them at for further information at <u>deirdre.raftery@ucd.ie</u>.

Dr Carmen M. Mangion

Birkbeck College, University of London.

Book Review

Margaret M. McKenna, *With Grateful Hearts! Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of St Joseph in Queensland, 1870-1970* (Sydney: Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, 2009). Pp. vii + 368.

This book marks a further and valuable addition to the growing library of publications concerning the Sisters of St Joseph and their joint founders, Julian Tenison Woods and Mary MacKillop. In 1866, in the small town of Penola in South Australia's then sparsely settled south-east, they initiated the second Australian-founded women's religious institute, which was also to become the second most numerous and widespread in Australia after the Sisters of Mercy. They were founded initially to teach in parish primary schools in the particular crisis facing these schools in South Australia where government funding, still available in other colonies, had been withdrawn.

Fr Woods based his founding inspiration, which the then young teacher, Mary MacKillop, recognised as the answer to her own heart's search, on a Sisterhood – the Sisters of St Joseph of Puy (founded ca.1650) - which he had observed during student days in the south of France. Unenclosed, mobile and working in small groups, they were women of their people, dedicated to meeting spiritual and social needs in the French countryside of the time. This type of Sisterhood was an innovation in Australia, where it was not understood and often positively misrepresented by many. However, the Sisters soon found a warm and encouraging response among the struggling people in the small, often remote and ephemeral communities they committed themselves to serve. Soon also they attracted vocations and began to spread rapidly.

The ground was thus laid for both ready acceptance and developing confrontations in Queensland, where the Sisters were invited in 1869 by Bishop James Quinn who came to know of their mobile and effective mode of operation in South Australia. Late that year, Mary led a small community to Brisbane, the first move out of their home colony and so far with only the official approbation of the Bishop of Adelaide. This was to form a major sticking point with James Quinn: while active , transdiocesan congregations were securing Roman approbation, with full centralisation, from the early 19th century on, diocesan congregations remained under the jurisdiction of local bishops. Hence the Josephites' need to obtain papal approbation if they were to retain their commitment to full centralisation – Mary obtained this provisionally in Rome in 1874. Quinn's objective remained to form a Josephite congregation centralised in his own diocese. An educator himself, he also wished the Sisters to teach instrumental music and to provide a measure of further education in at least the developing centres, both of which were ruled out in the Sisters' basic commitment to elementary instruction of poorer children.

After establishing her Sisters in Brisbane, Mary returned to South Australia to face difficulties emerging there. Fr Julian Woods, later working in Queensland, readily collaborated with Bishop Quinn in a rapid spread of the Josephite Sisters, resulting in the staffing of fifteen schools by 1876, these extending up the coast to Townsville and inland to Copperfield and Helidon. By this time it was also becoming clear that adherence to the Roman directives could be achieved only by a parting of the ways. The Sisters also met with painful hostility from some parochial clergy, leaving Mary no alternative but to withdraw them. The upshot was complete withdrawal from Queensland by the end of 1880. A small diocesan community of Sisters, who had either left the centralised institute or came from the diocesan congregation already set up in the Bathurst diocese by Bishop Matthew Quinn, was

established in Bundaberg in 1881 before Quinn's death later that year; it was followed by a similar community in Bowen. Both proved ephemeral, with the final members leaving Bundaberg in 1897.

In 1900, Mary MacKillop saw the return of her Sisters to Queensland, to Clermont close to their former labours in Copperfield. Thus began a renewed, remarkable and much appreciated extension throughout the State of the institute she had so courageously preserved. By 1970, the Sisters had undertaken work in over fifty locations, both urban and rural, while extending their services in keeping with local needs and changing educational requirements. All of this, as well as their initial Queensland experience, has been carefully researched and thoroughly documented by Margaret McKenna in her book *With Grateful Hearts!*, based on her earlier doctoral thesis and further developed for publication. Even readers who feel they know the history of Queensland well will meet much new local history as we note references to a spread of regional newspapers, such as the *Peak Downs Register* and the Bundaberg *News-Mail*, as well as to many parish and local school histories. The writer has extensively utilised that most cogent of primary sources, the wealth of preserved letters, especially in Josephite and Roman archives, bearing on the Sisters' Queensland experience both before and after the interval of their withdrawal from the then colony. Added to these sources are many personal recollections.

The story is set within a carefully referenced evolving historical and educational context as Queensland developed over the decades, while the final appendices give valuable statistical information. In particular, Margaret McKenna has sought to interpret Mary MacKillop's life as a living woman, meeting often agonising crises with resolution and a thoughtful understanding. In particular, she deals with the painful rift with Julian Tenison Woods, as their differences in personality and ultimate view of the Sisterhood – to which the giftedness and spiritual essence of both contributed – began to surface. Basically, as Margaret explores in detail, the spiritual influences on their lives differed, something understood by Mary herself, as she continued to hold her co-founder in a strong bond of respect, fondness and insightful appreciation of his gifts, while able, when called for, to state her differences with him in unambiguous terms. Hence the telling choice in the final appendix of Mary's letter to Julian of 12 September 1879 (pp.360-6).

Dr Rosa MacGinley pbvm (ACU Brisbane Campus)

Patricia Madigan, Women and Fundamentalism in Islam and Catholicism – Negotiating Modernity in a Globalised World (Pieterlen/Switzerland: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, 2011) viii, 338pp.

This book is part of Religions and Discourse, Vol 53, edited by James M.M.Francis. It takes an historical-theological approach to understanding the complex relationships among gender, religion, economics and politics in a global context, with particular reference to Islam and Catholicism as two worldwide, culturally diverse and patriarchal religious traditions. It looks at ways in which Catholic and Muslim women, both within and between their respective traditions, are critiquing fundamentalist theological and cultural positions and reclaiming their rightful place within the life of their religious traditions.

In doing so, it argues that they offer to their respective religious communities, and beyond, a holistic way of negotiating the impact of modernity in a globalised world. The final chapter of the book gives voice to some Australian Muslim and Catholic women who, at a local level,

reflect many of the overall concerns of women who find themselves at the cutting edge of their respective religious tradition's negotiation of modernity.

Patricia Madigan OP is Chair of the Broken Bay Catholic Diocesan Commission for Interfaith Relations and Chair of the Living Faiths Commission of the New South Wales Ecumenical Council (Sydney). She completed her studies in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue at Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem, the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, and Harvard Divinity School, where she specialised in Christian-Muslim relations. She was awarded her PhD in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Sydney.

For information re price etc email: info@peterlang.com Website: www.peterlang.com

(Patricia was a presenter at the 2009 Golding Centre Colloquia where she spoke to her doctoral thesis with the following conversation being led by Pauline Rae smsm from the Columban Institute. Ed.)

Digitise the Dawn

Australian Women's Archives Project (to which ACU made a significant contribution in 2002) is supporting **Donna Benjamin** (aka@kattekrab) who is organizing a campaign to digitize Louisa Lawson's Newspaper *The Dawn*. Donna runs a small business called **Creative Contingencies** and is an active member of the Australian Open Source Community. Creative Contingencies is providing free hosting for the website, and managing the collection of funds. All proceeds raised will be transferred to the **National Library of Australia** for the sole purpose of digitizing *The Dawn: A Journal for Australian Women*. If you would like to donate go to: http://digitisethedawn.org

Forthcoming Conferences

(Although most of us will not be able to attend these conferences, to be aware of them and the scholarly work being done in the field of women's history both within and beyond Australia broadens our horizons and encourages us.)

Women's History Association of Ireland Conference, 27-28 May 2011

This conference will be held at the University College, Cork. It will be hosted by Women's Studies in association with the School of History, University College Cork. The conference theme is "Gender and Sexual Politics in Ireland". This might include such topics as:

Histories of repression/transgression/emancipation/liberation/revolution; body politics; sexual cultures; the sexual politics of personal relationships; deconstructing public discourse/religious discourse; sex education; reproductive rights; medicalisation; sexology; rape and sexual crime; age of consent; prostitution; double standards; institutions and abuse; censorship.

The keynote speaker will be Dr Leeann Lane, whose biography of Rosamond Jacob was published in 2010. (*Rosamond Jacob: Third Person Singular*, Dublin: UCD Press, 2010) On the evening of 27 May, Professors Maria Luddy (Warwick University) and Mary O'Dowd (QUB) will conduct a symposium on their AHRC-funded project, Marriage in Ireland, 1660-1925.

Further information contact Dr Sandra.McAvoy email: <u>Sandra.mcavoy@ucc.ie</u>

Australian Women's Network Annual Symposium 7 July, 2011

This symposium will be held with the Australian Historical Association Conference in Launceston. The theme of the symposium will be "Utopian Visions" which have been prominent in women's activism, writing, artistic endeavours, "everyday" experience and popular culture. This symposium invites scholars to reflect on the broad theme of how utopianism has featured in women's history, working to both expand and restrict women's horizons. How have Utopian Visions motivated or shaped women's lives – for example, in visions of ideal womanhood or conceptions of a desired feminist feature? How have they functioned as inspirational, progressive, restrictive, unrealistic or even exclusionary?

All speakers must be current members of the Australian Women's History Network. To join visit their website: <u>www.auswhn.org.au</u> For more information contact Dr Jane Carey: auswhn@gmail, com

Australasian Welfare Workshop, 15-16 November 2011.Venue: The University of Waikato, Hamilton, Aotearoa/New Zealand

This fourth Australasian Welfare History Workshop will be held in conjunction with the New Zealand Historical Association "Past Tensions: Reflections on Making History", 16-18 November 2011. The workshop theme for 2011 is "Welfare and Power" and we invite proposals on this aspect of Australasian welfare history, including its intersections with the histories of gender, war, race, childhood, medicine, religion, volunteering and philosophy. Paper proposals not directly related to this theme will also be considered.

The workshops are open and lively gatherings of scholars from fields including history, politics, social work and social policy. The first workshop was held in Melbourne, Australia in February 2005 (at the Australian Catholic University – ed.), the second in Wellington, NZ in November 2007, and the third in Sydney, (University of New South Wales) in 2010. Post-graduate students have made an important contribution and are very welcome. Special issues of History Australia and Historical Studies have been devoted to papers from previous meetings.

The keynote speaker will be Professor Kathleen McCarthy from the Graduate Centre at the University of Chicago. She is a scholar of Nineteenth Century U.S. History, Philanthropy, Civil Society, Voluntary Associations and Social Reform and the author of *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society*, *1700-1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); editor of *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); *Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art* 1830-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Her current research focuses on women, power and money in twentieth-century American life.

Abstracts (maximum of 250 words with name and affiliation) to be sent to Dr Bronwyn Labrum (workshop convenor): <u>b.j.labrum@massey.ac.nz</u> by 30 July 2011.

(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)