

Christian Brothers

Appreciation Mass and Reception

Tuesday 3 May 2016

Celebrating 80 years of Christian Brothers

teaching and residing at St Pius X College Chatswood



Celebrating the Christian Brothers

On 3 May 2016 St Pius X College Chatswood acknowledged with deep appreciation the Christian Brothers who have lived and worked at the College since 1937 at a Mass and Reception held in their honour.

We were honoured that the Most Reverend Peter Comensoli, Bishop of Broken Bay celebrated Mass with Bishop Peter Ingham, Bishop of Wollongong and Old Boy (1955), Bishop Emeritus Michael Malone and Old Boy (1956), Father James Elmore (Old Boy), Our Lady of Dolours Parish Priest, Father Paul Finucane, Father Barry Nobbs and Father Vincent Nguyen. We gave thanks for the work of the Christian Brothers and prayed for the College leadership team and staff who are now entrusted to continue their legacy as there will no longer be Brothers teaching and residing at the College.

It was my honour to warmly welcome each of our 600 guests to this special Eucharist, where we, the Catholic education community of Chatswood, gathered to ask God's blessing in appreciation and thanksgiving for the service of the Christian Brothers at St Pius X College for the past 79 – well-nigh 80 years.

Their dedication, commitment and leadership remain as an inspiration for the College. From our community through their faith and hard work.

We prayed for the grace to continue the on-going call that Christ makes to us to spread the Good News to all and for the College community "To Do and to Teach" – so beautifully modelled for us by the Christian Brothers and we asked for God's blessing on all Christian Brothers and Edmund Rice communities.

On behalf of our College community, past and present, I thanked the Christian Brothers – those present and those who could not be with us. We prayed for those called to God and the Founding Brothers of this great school.

I also restated our shared commitment to Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition.

Our Vision remains solid "to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ through quality Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition to make a positive difference in our world". To the Christian Brothers



History of the Christian Brothers at Chatswood

A speech in acknowledgement of the work of the Christian Brothers by Mr Tony Cunneen (SPX 1971), Senior Studies Co-ordinator, St Pius X College Chatswood

Bishop Comensoli, Bishop Malone, Bishop Ingham, Christian Brothers, distinguished guests, fellow teachers, fellow ex-students, friends, members of the St Pius X College Community

Welcome, Welcome, Welcome!

Welcome everybody to this acknowledgement of the contribution of the Christian Brothers to the education of thousands of young men from this area of Sydney.

time since 1937, there will be no Christian Brothers living and working on this site in Chatswood – although I note that my friend and colleague Brother Sherrin continues with his mission in the archives and a number of other Brothers such as the much valued David Curtin maintain their links with the College in a number of ways.

I have been asked to give some historical context to this evening's ceremony. I have lived through much of the College's history – having come here as a young boy in Year 3 in 1962 and then returning to stay here as a teacher from 1984. The School and the Brothers have become a part of my DNA. All history is personal, and please forgive me any heresy.

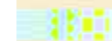
In any history of a school, the buildings, the budgets, the academic results are important, but of more value for me at this time is to remember the men who worked here – the Christian Brothers, both as individuals and as an Order.

There are many threads to their story and I cannot name all the people who have been a part of the fabric of this school, but I will do my best to acknowledge the overall impact of these men and their mission, because it is as people I will remember them.

It would have been impossible in 1935 to have imagined such an evening as this as ever occurring. The Australia then and the Australia of today are two different countries. Then, most of the students were of Irish heritage, and many young men found their vocation to be the Religious Life. Mass was celebrated in Latin and it seemed that the Catholic Church would continue in that form forever. The local church was keen to expand to help those who were still suffering the effects of the Great Depression.

In 1935, Parish Priest Father Thomas Barry, in collaboration with Bishop Kelly, asked the Christian Brothers to set up a school on the extensive church grounds which rose up the hill behind me here. There was plenty of land for what they had in mind – a modest school of just six classrooms that would cater for those Catholic youth unable to afford more established and more expensive local Catholic institutions.

forest of blue gums, angophoras and bloodwoods site was bounded by sprawling Federation-style houses. The paddock between the classrooms



History of the Christian Brothers at Chatswood *(continued)*

and monastery included an old cemetery called Coopers Flat, with its grey, faded, fallen and overgrown headstones on which the boys would sit and eat their lunches. It was a short walk to the small parish church and hall of Our Lady of Dolours.

The local Priest, Father Barry, was a Christian fellow Old Boys in the local Catholic community. They established an association in the parish hall, before the School was built. It was a time when the Catholic community had a strong sense of cohesion and a real sense of mission to improve the lot of their young men – almost a pioneering spirit. This community commitment would continue throughout the School's history, made manifest by the practical support of many families, such as the Chaplins, the Supples, the Ryans, the Curtins and the Watkins, who did so much to develop the facilities and maintain the traditions of the community. There were always people willing to improve the School in a practical sense in collaboration with the Christian Brothers. The Brothers inspired a sense of community.

"The first community typified the many Christian Brothers who followed. They were men committed to their religion, who saw their life's work as a mission of service to God through education."

The School started when the Catholic Church saw itself as a bastion against the forces of chaos and darkness – Communists lurked everywhere and there was a sense of real threat of barbarism from overseas, as outlined by Bishop Kelly when he came to Chatswood in 1937. On that hot day, 147 young Catholic boys



arrived on this site from Chatswood, Artarmon, Lane Cove, Roseville, Naremburn and Willoughby to be privileged to have one original student here from that day – Phil Ryan. Thank you for coming. The wide space beneath the gum trees just below the classrooms.

Brothers who followed. They were men committed to their religion, who saw their life's work as a mission of service to God through education. Each of the College's principals made their mark. Each Christian Brother endeavoured to make the school a better place. The then Parish Priest, Father Flynn, knew that one problem was the lack of Science facilities so he purchased the ex-army huts to house Science labs and classrooms. These huts became a feature of the School. The cultural forces of that turbulent decade made boys naturally resistant to authority in a place where once discipline was simply taken for granted. Our facilities improved. Then Brother, now Professor, Graham Rossiter oversaw the establishment of the Science labs, which still serve

Yet, these men contributed much to the story that is Australia.



Br Coll McDonald "Mac"



Br John Stephenson, Br Don Connell, Br Michael Walsh



Br Paul Leary, Bishops Barry Collins, Michael Malone and Peter Ingham

Christian Brothers Chatswood at that time only went to the local Catholic community. Soon after its foundation, the Second World War took hold. Boys destined for battle would come and visit the Brothers, such as Bernard Carter, as part of the ritual of farewell before heading overseas: two of them, Jacob de Sisto and Anthony Gillespie to be Killed in Action. Fathers dug air-raid trenches in the yard in June 1942 and, soon after, the School hosted a fundraising event for the war. Two Japanese midget submarines which had been sunk in the wide space beneath the gum trees just below the classrooms.

After the war, the Catholic community worked to expand the School. Brother Moylan, here tonight, was part of the community from that time. Each of the College's principals made their mark. Each Christian Brother endeavoured to make the school a better place. The then Parish Priest, Father Flynn, knew that one problem was the lack of Science facilities so he purchased the ex-army huts to house Science labs and classrooms. These huts became a feature of the School. The cultural forces of that turbulent decade made boys naturally resistant to authority in a place where once discipline was simply taken for granted. Our facilities improved. Then Brother, now Professor, Graham Rossiter oversaw the establishment of the Science labs, which still serve

The School continued to expand. It purchased land in an endless store of goodwill from the laity to support the project. The irrepressible Brother Max O'Connor was instrumental in giving the school its name – St Pius X College – after the great Pope from earlier in the century.

The Catholic community maintained its sense of identity throughout the stresses of the 1950s. The boys from St Pius X attended parades of Catholic students in the Showground on St Patrick's Day. Cadets, which had been started by Brother Levander, were a popular school activity, giving the boys the opportunity to experience leadership and adventure. Rugby, Cricket, and other sports fostered the cultural life of the students.

The 1960s saw great change in the world. Brother Stephenson worked hard to gain a better site for the School – the lack of space here has always bedevilled us. Under the magisterial leadership of Brother Kerr, the School challenged the boys to achieve their best despite a critical shortage of classrooms. The cultural forces of that turbulent decade made boys naturally resistant to authority in a place where once discipline was simply taken for granted. Our facilities improved. Then Brother, now Professor, Graham Rossiter oversaw the establishment of the Science labs, which still serve

History of the Christian Brothers at Chatswood *(continued)*

us well today. There were more classrooms. Music went from strength to strength. Debating, Public Speaking and Drama became features of the College. The School was, for a brief time in the 1970s, co-instructional with Our Lady of Dolours across the road, with the boys and girls sharing classrooms and activities.

In recent decades, the School has been lucky to have a succession of inspirational principals, who each had a distinctive style and sense of mission. 6fc hAYfDUHf]W_K \ JH`YX`hAY`7c`Y[Y`k`Jh`[fYUhUU]r UbX`Y`ZM]Y`bWm`DUh`7`UgY`mXY`Y`c`dYX`hAY`Vi`JX]b[g further. Brother Moylan returned to assist in a time of some need. Brother Myron Byrne supported his staff passionately in the face of many pressures and had a vision that he would put every boy on stage UhihAY`C`dYfU`<ci`gY`tc`gb[`z`^`gig`hAY`mVci`X`gUm for the rest of their lives that they had performed at that wonderful venue. Brother Walsh brought great stability, energy and a genuine love of learning, along with a passionate care for all within his world. <Y`XY`Y`c`dYX`hAY`HY`UWm`7`Y`bHY`UhCI`Zc`fX`:`U`g` and used to like to go down and see the work unfold – and was even seen wielding a shovel on occasion. The ebullient Brother Leary managed the next round of extensions as the needs of the School outgrew the ghY`z`UbX`hAY`UbU`7`fgh]Ub`6fc`hAY`f`Df]p`W]d`U`z`6fc`hAY`f`<c`Za`Ub`z`Ugi`HY`mYI`HY`bXYX`hAY`7c`Y[Y`f`g`Zc`hd`f]bh in Chatswood, buying property in Anderson Street at a time when land prices in Chatswood were cb`mf]X]W`ci`g`UbX`bch`UgV]n`UffY`m`Ug`fcbca`JW`Ug`hAY`m`UfY`bck`<Y`k`cf`_YX`U`fX`tc`a`U`_Y`hAY`7c`Y[Y`Y`Ub`UbW]U`mgY`W`fY`UbX`g`dYfj`gY`X`hAY`Vi`JX]b[`c`Z`hAY`[`na`b`Ugi`a`UhCI`Zc`fX`:`U`g`A`f`7`ci`Ub]z`ci`f`U`fgh]Um Principal, admits he was lucky to inherit an institution that was so strong – spiritually, academically, Ub`UbW]U`ml`UbX`k`Jh`J`gck`b`g`fcb[`gY`bgY`c`Zg`f]h and character.

A mark of the success of a Christian Brothers' YXi`WU]cb`Jg`hAY`a`Ubm]UbY`YI!gi`XY`b]g]h`Ug` produced. We were always proud to have three Bishops as Old Boys – Bishops Malone and Ingham, here tonight, and Bishop Collins, now deceased. Dfc`a`JbY`bh`W]h`h`Y`bgj`W`Ug`i`ghW`A`JW`UY`G`U`H`f`m of the Supreme Court of New South Wales who is also an Admiral and Judge Advocate General of the Australian Armed Forces sat next to me in Year ' "<Jga`chAY`f`d`Ub`hAY`hAY`J`fcb`V`U`f`_`h`f`Y`g`]b`?`J`_`G`h`Y`Y`h and led tree-planting working bees at Chaplin Oval. Senior Editors Paul Kelly and Greg Sheridan of The Australian newspaper went to school here and are still friends with their fellow ex-students. Current K`U`UV`mi`A`JW`UY`<c`cd`Y`f`k`Ug`Y`f`Y`z`U`h`ci`[`U`Y`k`J` bch`VY`hAY`U`f`gh]D]i`g`V`c`m`t`c`fi`b`ci`h`c`b`h`c`h`k`JW`Y`b`U`a` Oval in England. Many professionals, tradesmen, workers, fathers – many simply decent men – owe their formative years to the Brothers at St Pius X.

So what will people remember of the Brothers?

Many ex-students remember the Brothers as caring, sincere, interesting, often inspiring men who gave their all in service to God. The memories of the Brothers are the memories of people: the kindness of Brother Carter; the rare ability of Brother Brian >Y`ZY`fgtc`hY`UW`j`J`fi`U`m`U`b`m`g`V`Y`W`h`c`h`hAY`<G7`Y`j`Y`/

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“The light of Christ, lit and kept burning by the Christian Brothers”

Homily by the Most Reverend
Peter Comensoli, Bishop of Broken Bay

We began our Liturgy this evening with the lighting of



Transformational Education through Partnership and Community

Speech by Brother Ted Magee, Christian Brothers Oceania Province Leadership Team

Bishop Comensoli, Bishop Ingham and Bishop Malone, Fr Paul and fathers, my brothers, Mr John Couani, and members of the St Pius X, Chatswood community,

I stand before you tonight as a member of the Oceania Leadership Team of the Christian Brothers and representing our Province Leader, Br Peter Clinch, in humility and gratitude.

We Christian Brothers are grateful to our God who has inspired our Founder Blessed Edmund Rice, to bequeath a legacy of transformational education of young men and women throughout the world.

Since 1937 some 166 brothers have shared in handing on that legacy in this place at Anderson College. It is a legacy of transformational education of young men and women throughout the world. Since 1937 some 166 brothers have shared in handing on that legacy in this place at Anderson College. It is a legacy of transformational education of young men and women throughout the world.

The often quoted Old Testament scripture: "seventy is the sum of our years or eighty if we are strong" is most apt tonight. Strong has been the eighty years

of service which the brothers have given here; courageous has been their decision to develop this place; and, bequeathing St Pius to the new and energetic leadership of others is a tangible sign of our inheritance. Founder, Blessed Edmund Rice, impressed on us is our inheritance.

Edmund was a man who knew full well that it was in partnership and in community that the dream he had of transformational education would survive. He never deviated from their vision. Today marks one more step in that journey, here at Chatswood.

There is a time to plant, to water, to nurture, to build, to grow and there is a time to let go and know all that has been done in the past will continue soundly and resolutely into the future as St Pius X continues to be a Catholic College in the Edmund Rice Tradition.

The time has come. This is the acceptable time – the right time. That right time is now.

We acknowledge the support we have received from the Diocese, the Parish and local community of Chatswood all these years. We are deeply grateful for the support of the staff, parents and school community who have cherished and cared for our brothers for nearly eighty years. We assure you of our continued prayers for your welfare.

In this present era our Congregation directions are calling us to new expressions of living out our Founder's charism and being brothers for the world. Religious brothers are men who are transients. Our commitment gives us the freedom to move where the Spirit challenges and beckons. In spite of our age we respond happily to the challenge. Could I add here my personal gratitude to the last two brothers in our Province – who have responded to the new challenges with characteristic generosity, and to Br Carl Sherrin who continues his valuable work in the Archives of the College.

We pray for you all and ask humbly that you pray for the Christian Brothers particularly the many who have served this community faithfully and made their home here. We pray that you will continue to grow to that perfection which is its destiny.



Br Magee



Br Michael Walsh, Br Pat White, Br Brian Moylan and Br Myron Byrne



Bishop Malone and Bishop Ingham

Chatswood Christian Brothers 1937 - 2016

Addicoat, A T	Crough, K S
Alroe, M J	Curtin, D M
Ansell, L J	Davis, E L
Baldwin, J D	Dean, B C
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Bent, L A	Denny, P F
Bible, L P	Donohue, G R
Bird, R N	Dowd, T I
Bourke, T N	
Bowler, L L	
Bradstreet, A F	
6fUXnžA 'E	
Butler, W C	
Byrne, F M	
Carter, B J	
Casey, T I	
Condell, F X	
Connell, D C	
Corbett, J R	
Corkeron, P B	
Crohan, L S	



fide et labore
THROUGH FAITH AND HARD WORK

EDMUND RICE EDUCATIO

