

**Science and Mathematics Education Centre**

**On Becoming Virtuous:  
A Life Examined Through the Prism of  
Aristotle and Aquinas**

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Doctor of Philosophy  
of  
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## DECLARATION

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university. To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

Signature: *Candace M. Francis.*

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013

*Lovingly dedicated to my sisters  
Elizabeth, Amanda and Katherine and  
to the memory of our wonderful parents  
Arthur Edward Francis 1926 – 2000  
and Kathleen Thérèse Francis 1923 – 2010*

*For John*

*In the glow of your silence, the heart grows tranquil.  
No one will ever know where you had to travel.*

*J. O'Donohue, 2001*

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an inquiry into the process of becoming virtuous, not an inquiry into virtue. This work seeks to examine those elements that may be present if a person is to acquire virtue. My thesis is that those necessary elements are intellect/reason, character/*hexis* and faith. My inquiry is posited within the life narrative of a Catholic priest, Father John Williams.

The work is divided into three sections. The first section is an examination of virtue, both moral and intellectual, as outlined in the Aristotelian work, *Nicomachean Ethics*, and St Thomas Aquinas' treatise, *Summa Theologica*. The second section is a life narrative of the Williams and Mackey clans and from this, John Williams' own story. From these foundation texts a set of questions is derived and these questions are used to interrogate three key concepts that I consider may reveal the essence of what must be in place to become virtuous. These concepts of intellect/*nous*, character/*hexis* and faith are examined through overlaying them against John Williams' lived experience. This forms the third section.

In the unfolding of the John Williams narrative a number of indicators reveal that he possesses the intellectual capacity, the personal characteristics and a particular Christian ethic, making him a suitable candidate to illustrate my thesis. His lived experience, set in the context of his role in Catholic Education, make his story a fitting subject for this examination.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | FATHER JOHN WILLIAMS AM FACE

This thesis explores the living experience of becoming virtuous. My inquiry is posited within the life narrative of a Catholic priest, Father John Williams.

It is not easy for a person to be the principal focus of another's research, so I am deeply indebted that he agreed to this examination of his life. For him, having no editorial rights over this work was, in itself, an act of trust, one not easily conferred by anyone.

John Williams provided access to his personal papers including correspondence, addresses and photographs. As well, he has been generous with his time, making himself available for formal interviews and questions of clarification. Even though I have known John Williams for four decades this munificence allowed me to come to a particular understanding of his family, and indeed a more transparent appreciation, of who he is. His narrative provides a mirror through which the intertwining course of becoming virtuous is reflected.

This thesis honors John Williams.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During my pre-tertiary education I was taught by the Victorian Presentation Sisters, fine educators who believed in the capacity of women to contribute in meaningful ways to society. I will always be grateful that I was exposed to learning through these scholarly and wise women.

Adjunct Professor Bevis Yaxley, who first lectured me during undergraduate work more than 30 years ago, supervised this study. Our paths continued to cross over the years and I am deeply grateful for his interest, encouragement, wise counsel, patience and guidance during this inquiry. His regular availability and readiness to respond to all requests for assistance has made this journey a positive and happy time.

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I attended Curtin Colloquia Group gatherings in Hobart. Adjunct Professor Bevis Yaxley, Senior Research Fellow Dr Roya Pugh and the Hobart node shared learning in a way that nurtured my enthusiasm.

The completion of this thesis has been possible with the encouragement and support of my family, friends and colleagues. I owe them a debt that I gratefully acknowledge.

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*We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey  
that no one can take for us or spare us | Marcel Proust*

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## REFERENCING FOUNDATION TEXTS

### Citing Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*

I have adopted Bekker pagination, the accepted form of reference to the writings of Aristotle. This reference system takes its name from classical philologist August Immanuel Bekker (1785 – 1871) who was the editor of the complete works of Aristotle, *Aristotelis Opera editit Academia Regia Borussica*, (Berlin, 1831-1870).

The numbers, up to four digits, correspond to the page number of Bekker's edition, followed by the letter 'a' or 'b' to denote the column number, followed by a line number. For example, 1145a15-17 relates to page 1145 in the Bekker edition, column 'a' and lines 15 to 17.

### Citing Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*

While there is no authoritative protocol for citing Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* I have employed a widely accepted notation procedure that follows the document structure.

- There are three main divisions called *Parts*
- Each part is composed of *Questions*
- Part I has 119 questions
- Part II is divided into two parts:
  - The first Part of Part II has 114 Questions
  - The second Part of Part II has 189 Questions
  - Part III has 90 Questions
- Each question is dealt with in *Articles* made up of five sections:
  - The issue of the article is given in the form of a question
  - Several plausible responses are listed
  - A contrary response (reflecting Thomas' thinking) from some authority is cited (the *sed contra* - "On the contrary").
  - Arguments are given for Thomas' response ("I answer that").
  - Brief replies are given to objections based on the initial responses ("Objections").

- In citing the *Summa Theologica* I have followed the accepted convention of referring to the above elements in order. For example *Summa Theologica (ST) II-II, Q. 1, Art 4, Ad 3*.

(Beaumont, 2010)

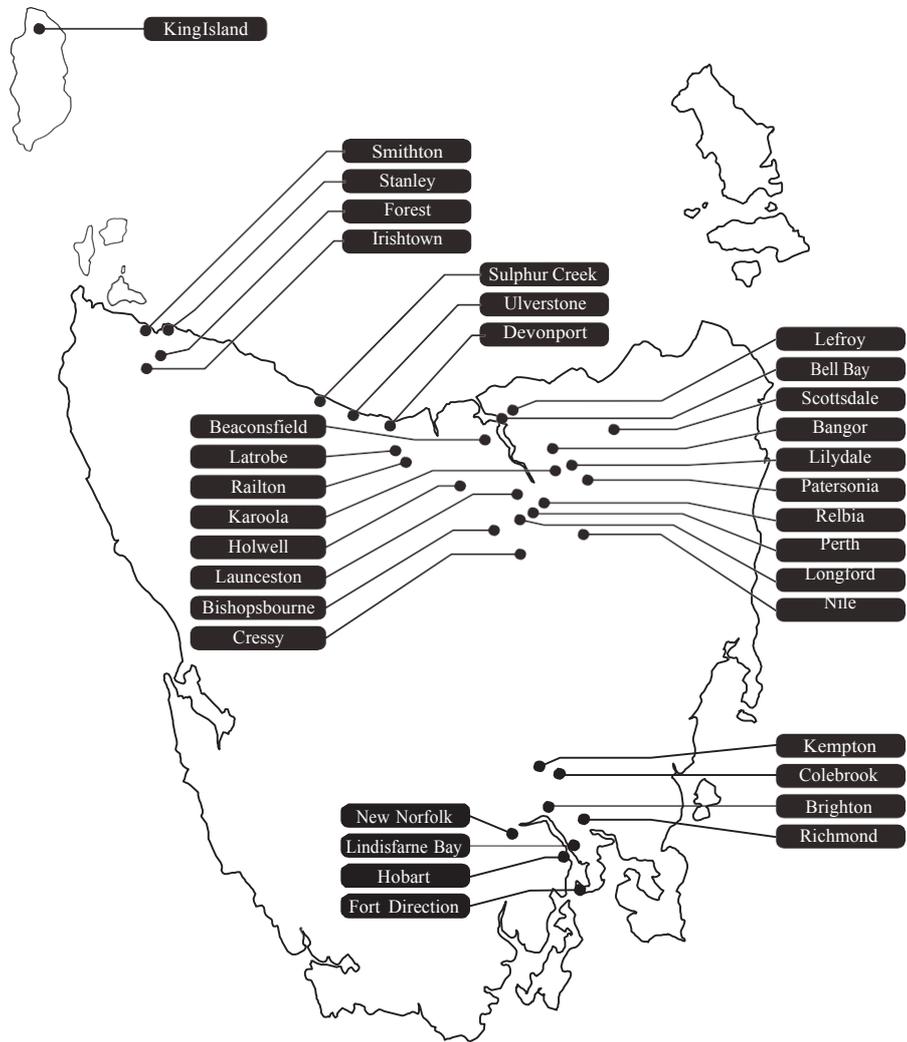
### **Citing St Thomas Aquinas' *Commentary of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics***

Before the Leonine edition of the *Sententia Libri Ethicorum* existed, a commonly used Latin edition was the Marietti edition, which had numberings for each paragraph of the Commentary. Scholars would cite these numbers and while the Leonine edition, of the SLE did not include these numbers scholars use them because the commonly used English translation of the Leonine SLE makes use of them. The numbers indicate book number followed by lecture number followed by paragraph number, for example, a citing would read SLE 4. 13. 800.

### **Map**

The map of Tasmania on the following page shows the location of the places referred to in Chapter 5.

# TASMANIA



**ad initium**



John Williams has been gifted with a mind like a razor, who feels deeply but hates to show it, who's so different from his boyhood fellow classmates by his insistence on clear definition and near mathematical distinction. He detests injustice and has been and is so often a corrective irritant to minds like mine....That this man of these qualities could have given me, a man so different, a loyalty and obedience so true across 25 years, is a measure of the strength of his faith, the clarity and conception of the wondrous mysteries of the Church - divine and yet so wounded.

It had been his lot to play a part in one of the most complex, demanding, exhausting and highest of the Church's services to humanity. So well has he done it, that not only you and I thank, but are proud and feel honoured as his brother priests of the Church of Hobart, that the Bishops and the Church round Australia value him and his work so highly. I believe that he will leave his mark, a strong mark on the overall educational story of our country because of his strength, comprehension and grasp his mind has of this radical ecclesial and social reality.

Father Williams possesses an intellectual grasp and comprehension allied to more than ordinary capacity to negotiate and manoeuvre, albeit with an appreciation of the good and the true in the position of an opponent, arising from his keen sense of justice and honesty.

**Guilford Young**  
**Archbishop of Hobart July**  
**1987**



*John Williams*  
by Patrick O'Carroll 1984

## CHAPTER ONE | INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an inquiry into becoming virtuous. The writings of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Saint Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* have provided the source for this inquiry that I have then applied to the life of John Williams, a Catholic priest living in retirement in his home state of Tasmania, Australia.

Aristotle (384BC-322BC) left writings that fill twenty volumes. Considering the age in which he lived this is an extraordinary legacy for scholars in modern times. Most famous amongst this collection is a ten-volume work known as the *Nicomachean Ethics*. As the latter part of the title suggests, it deals with ethics, the right way to be and act. Aristotle believed that being and acting in a particular way leads to happiness. He calls his work a "philosophy concerning human affairs" (NE 1181b15).

Questions around character and conduct have occupied thinkers across the millennia. It was in AD1239, as a student at the University of Naples that the young Thomas Aquinas was introduced to the philosophy of Aristotle by one of his lecturers, Peter of Ireland. It was also in Naples that Aquinas met and joined the new mendicant order of friars founded by Dominic, known as the "Order of Preachers" and now colloquially called "Dominicans." By AD1245 Aquinas had become a student at the University of Paris, attending lectures on the philosophy of Aristotle from Albert the Great. Selman (2007) observes "the relation between St. Albert and St. Thomas may be compared with the one between Haydn and Mozart. In both cases the pupil eclipsed his master in fame, but the master outlived his more brilliant student (Prologue 13).

It was largely through the influence of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, that the Western Church followed the philosophy of Plato, an influence that had been entrenched for nearly eight hundred years. The scholarship and influence of Thomas Aquinas changed this.

By AD1268 Thomas Aquinas had completed a commentary on the

De Anima of Aristotle. By AD1272 he had written a massive commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle became a significant influence on Aquinas' understanding of human affairs and this was particularly evident in the second part of Aquinas' major corpus, *Summa Theologica*. The first part of the *Summa* deals with God and his creation with the second part addressing matters of moral theology, with this section encompassing over half the entire work. While in sympathy with Aristotle, Aquinas grounded his thinking in man's relationship with God and his theology formed the foundation of Catholic teaching for the subsequent eight centuries. Of interest to me is the synergy between Aristotle and Aquinas in their understanding of intellectual and moral virtue. A comprehension of virtue has been essential to grasp the process of becoming virtuous that is the underpinning of this study. John Williams own narrative is intertwined within the theoretical framework that this thesis seeks to expand.

John Williams was born in 1938 in Launceston, a northern city in Tasmania, Australia. On the completion of his secondary education he began studies for the priesthood at Corpus Christi College, Victoria, as Tasmania did not boast a training facility for Catholic clergy. His early years following ordination were spent engaged in the pastoral activities for which he had been trained and which he expected to be his life's work.

If I were to describe John Williams I could do no better than using the words of Ron Rolheiser (2009), columnist and author, in his description of American activist Dorothy Day,

She was able to stand up strongly for truth, for life, and for justice, without bracketing what has to be forever fundamental within all relationships and discourse - charity, respect, wide compassion... (<http://www.rolheiser.com/>).

Many people are able to identify a particular moment as being significant in setting a life direction. In John Williams' case that moment came six years after ordination when the Archbishop of Hobart, Guilford Young asked

him to manage the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau while the incumbent Director undertook studies in the United States.

From this position he moved to roles as Assistant and then Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania, Commonwealth (later Australian) Schools Commissioner and member, then Chair of the National Catholic Education Commission. He was part of a group that helped embed the funding of non- government schools into the fabric of educational governance in Australia.

Truthfulness, not just correct facts, are at the heart of what I am endeavoring to achieve in this research. The essence of the question examined is “what does it mean to become virtuous?” An effort to reach the truth about “becoming virtuous” is not simple and is prone to exaggerating the relevance of psychological factors. The truth can be unfathomable but nonetheless crucial to seek and explore. As Sokolowski (2008) observes “we might easily imagine that bits of knowledge are the natural entities in the mind and that our efforts to attain knowledge are more like impersonal, natural processes. The issue of truth, however, is obviously more resistant to psychologism”(p.170). Sokolowski (2008) believes that this distinction is what separates phenomenology as proposed by Husserl, from psychology with phenomenology “the study of truth rather than knowledge” (p167). As I endeavor to explore the process of becoming virtuous in a manner that seeks truth I acknowledge this involves responsibility and consistency and my efforts to discover, interpret and understand may contain dimensions of error that entangle this attempt. This can be interpreted as the human element rising to the surface as I seek to intuit the life of another person. Sokolowski (2008) says that Husserl’s notion of truth includes personal achievement, intentionality and virtue. Kenny (2010) clarifies the second element mentioned.

Intentionality is nothing to do with ‘intention’ in the modern sense. Brentano (1838-1917) took the word from medieval contexts, in which it was derived from the verb ‘intendere’, meaning to pull a bowstring in the course of aiming at a target. An intentional object, as it were, the target of a thought (p.816).

As I endeavour to unreel a range of life events that reveal the person of John Williams, I believe both he and I are conscious of intentionality. John Williams is cognizant of truth and integrity, even when that disturbed the order of things, sometimes for Catholic church leaders and especially for those who differed in views about what constituted equity for students in Catholic schools. His manner typifies someone who is keen to engage with the world in a language that the world understands. John Williams does not expect others to engage with him in a religious way. His dialogue is characterized by patience, like the plant that struggles to emerge from the crack in the paving stone. He recognizes that no single individual or group is in possession of the truth, always presuming that those with whom he was in dialogue were acting in good faith. His identity as a priest and educational administrator in Tasmania and strategist in national circles gave him credibility in various settings and this is the complexity of endeavoring to narrate some of his varying domains of discourse. John Williams has lived a life deserving of attention.

What is it that makes a man good? Not saintly, but with a moral purpose that finds expression in the pursuit of the common good. Is this a question of nature, nurture or a combination of both or indeed some other factor? What part does a conscious life choice play in determining a chosen path? These questions led me to the preliminary question that grounds this inquiry, "What do I understand virtue to be?"

I have used two texts to examine moral and intellectual virtue. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is an exposé on moral and intellectual virtues and a seminal work that has guided man's quest to answer the deepest questions into the third millennia. This text has been used to examine Aristotle's understanding of the moral virtues. Thomas Aquinas' treatment of the virtues in the *Summa Theologica* is the determining reference for an examination of the intellectual virtues.

From this study an interpretation of virtue allows me to ask a second question that forms the core of this research- "how might John Williams' narrative reveal the process of becoming virtuous?"

It is impossible to extract a single life story from the myriad influences through which a person is formed. Central to any life is the family narrative, the seedbed of influence that is most powerful. So this narrative is not just an account of John Williams' life but also an account of the Williams and Mackey clans into which he was born, with each providing deep and lasting influence on my subject.

Moral and political philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (2007) says, "the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity" (p.221). This narrative demonstrates MacIntyre's statement. For John Williams the environmental influences of family and faith communities together with educational opportunity helped mould his identity into one that found strength through underpinning convictions, an identity, that while open to a lifetime of transformation has retained that individual essence that sets him apart as a person of character. MacIntyre (2007) goes on to say, "I am born with a past; and to try to cut myself from my past, in the individualist mode, is to deform my present relationships" (p.221).

To have access to his family story has enabled an examination of the essential threads of habit and character as they were developed within John Williams' environment. Strong in both families is an appreciation of education, strong too, the importance of loyalty, of contributing to the common good, of justice and the practical ways that this can be exercised in the ordinary rhythm of family and community life. Without this background John Williams' personal narrative would lack the essential elements of what we know about embedding a life in the life of the community. My intention has not been to make use of every biographical detail, but to harness enough facets to provide the raw material to focus on the question "how might John Williams' narrative reveal the lived experience of becoming virtuous?" I believe the narrative to follow provides the essential matter to both illustrate and give possible answers to the question.

Amongst the ethical issues to which I have given attention are questions around three areas, access to information, friendship and privacy.

As a friend there is an ethic about how I have obtained information, gathered formally or informally. As a friend, how do I write critically? Allowing the narrative to maintain integrity without breaching John Williams' right to privacy, how is that accomplished?

American biographer and poet Diane Middlebrook, in Eakin (2004) says, "when a writer addresses biographical and historical fact, telling the truth is essential"(p.2). She believes that "if you don't tell the truth you disobey a moral imperative" (p.2). The challenge was not a temptation to change the facts, rather the challenge to present an accurate reflection of John Williams' life and work in one of the Catholic Church's significant educational stories played out in the latter half of the twentieth century.

While this inquiry does not aim to be biographical it does contain some of the elements of a biography that are worthy of scrutiny. Academic and biographer Brenda Niall (2007) believes that "somewhere between detachment and identification is the biographer's shaky ground" (p.237). Niall strongly asserts that "detachment is not an absolute"(p.237) in the biographical endeavour. Years of research about an individual do not allow the possibility of arriving at a totally objective viewpoint, instead the writer becomes "committed to an idea of personality, a way of seeing that is one's own construction (p.237). Acclaimed English biographer Richard Holmes (2001) says, "Empathy is the most powerful, the most necessary, and the most deceptive of all biographical emotions" (p.4). There is an ethical imperative for me to be true to communicating the person of John Williams.

John Williams was for many years a colleague of mine. When he was Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania I worked as a consultant in the Catholic Education Office. He remained my employer when, following that position I was appointed Principal at Immaculate Heart of Mary, a primary school in the Catholic education system. Some years later, while still holding that position John Williams was appointed Parish Priest in Lenah Valley, the suburb in which my school was located. We have been friends for more than four decades. Claudia Mills, in Eakin (2004), asks the

question, "Can friends write about friends while still remaining friends and being true to the expectations and obligations of friendship?" (p.101) Further in the same volume Craig Howe, in Eakin (2004) comments,

... scholars of other people's lives document and interpret those lives from a point of view external to the subject, suggesting that the task is generally clear cut, seldom self conscious, possibly venal and ultimately less interesting (p.248).

This scenario would reduce the role of the writer to the role of journalist. I have been required to address both Mills question and Howe's comment. Had I chosen as my subject a person I did not know, I may have been in a far more advantageous position to provide a dispassionate historical account, but that is not the aim of this research. However, I do need to keep examining the prejudices that I bring to the study. Of significance is the tradition and culture that characterizes my own life, the greater part bearing some marked similarities to that of my subject. If this is the case how can I ensure that I am telling John Williams' story and not my own? Throughout this research I have been mindful of what phenomenologist Van Manen (1990) calls "bracketing," (p.175) suspending my own story to allow John Williams' story to remain the prime focus.

This is in part an historical study, chosen because I believe the distance in time adds a dimension to the research not accessible through other methods, presenting pictures of customs and traditions with past and present constantly blended to provide this understanding. John Williams as an individual is also the product of family, traditions, customs and culture. For him, the traditions, customs and culture of the Catholic Church is fused with that of his family. My interpretation of John Williams' story is contained within this scope of understanding.

This study is limited to an examination of virtue and the process of becoming virtuous embedded in an historical narrative. It is illustrative of one approach to virtue. While the works of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas have provided the foundation for this study it does not claim to be a substantial study of their work. As well, presentation of John Williams'

life has been selective and does not purport to examine every aspect of his lived experience.

This exploration of becoming virtuous is significant. The social fabric of the twenty-first century is seen by many to encourage individualism while virtue is the basis of caring for others. Taylor (1991) reflects on the double-edged sword of individualism.

Of course, individualism also names what many people consider the finest achievement of modern civilization. We live in a world where people have a right to choose for themselves their own pattern of life, to decide in conscience what convictions to espouse to determine the shape of their lives in a whole host of ways that their ancestors couldn't control (p.2).

However, this whole move has led to a different way of people perceiving their own place in the world. Taylor (1991) comments on the effects of individualism.

People lost the broader vision because they focused on their individual lives. Democratic equality, says Tocqueville, draws the individual towards himself, 'et menace de le renfermer enfin tout entire dans la solitude de son proper coeur.' In other words, the dark side of individualism is a centering on the self, which both flattens and narrows our lives, makes them poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others or society (p.4).

I believe this study will allow a re-examination of the factors necessary to enable a person to move towards a virtuous life, bringing the notion of virtue from a time past to the present day. The study demonstrates that virtue is well embedded in the human condition, in other words, individuals who are virtuous are indeed people who share the frailties of all humanity. The significance of this inquiry is in its capacity to "re-imagine" virtue and place it within the context of a person's life journey.

As well as probing the matter of an individual becoming virtuous, in this case John Williams, the inquiry establishes that virtues can be acquired through the dynamic of family relationships, community interaction, direct teaching, modeling and encouragement. The impact of individuals and community ought not be underestimated in the matter of nourishing virtue.

Such knowledge is valuable for parents in their role as nurturers of their children. Educators too assume responsibility for encouraging a child's potential. An understanding of the process of becoming virtuous provides a perspective from which educators can construct personal development programs and ultimately leads to the promotion of a more caring society.

One of the results of John Williams' work in education was to help bring the wider community to an understanding that every Australian is entitled to a good education. For nearly 100 years before the fight for funding equity commenced, the churches, and in particular the Catholic Church, had offered an alternative education system. It was a system offering education from the beginning of formal schooling through to qualification for undergraduate study. This is what the Catholic education system was vigorously trying to protect. There were issues about how non-government schools in Australia were funded, but the key issue always was whether non-government schools ought be funded from state and federal funds.

Some may argue that John Williams and those who believed that non-government schools should receive a share of the public purse were politically astute rather than servants of a higher good. In time they achieved their objective. It may be much harder to argue the place of virtue in this endeavour. This research study places this quest for funding justice as a key background element to a critical study of John Williams. His actions during this period highlight various aspects of virtue that have allowed me to answer the guiding questions. It is not an attempt to eulogize him, nor is it an attempt to focus on policy or funding model development. It is, however, an attempt to unpack and examine what it is that enables a person to fight for justice, in this case the embedding of funding for non-government schools. Insights into this time of extraordinary change in Catholic education in Australia, through the systemization of Catholic schools, the laicization of management and staff in those schools and the beginning and quite extraordinary growth in State and Commonwealth funding during the period 1970 to 1985 is valuable historical data.

This inquiry is firmly grounded in the world of human experience. John Williams' life can only be understood within his particular culture and at this time. His family, priesthood as he lived it and his life work in education has shaped his world. Understanding his 'intentionality' is the underpinning.

The narrative style will enable the reader to glimpse John Williams' mind. Interpretation is a basic structure of human experience; it is indeed something engaged in constantly in everyday life. It may be that as an interpreter I lack a full grasp of the context so judgments may fall short of deep comprehension, however this does not provide grounds not to attempt such interpretation. Lack of understanding of language, context and spirit may also be a limitation for me as well as for the interpreter. I have endeavored to use 'bracketing', suspending judgment of my world to enable me to come to a comprehension of John Williams' world. This is a technique used in various helping professions, particularly in the field of counseling. No person can completely suspend his or her own life experience to begin to examine the experience of another. It is the understanding of the interpreter that enables one to understand and make meaning of the life experience of a person. Intentionality allows the mind to move in the direction of encapsulating an experience. John Williams' life provides a rich tapestry of texts, not in the formal sense of text but in multitudinous threads of human experience. To bring these together to form one picture will be possible through this research, which is, in essence is an ontological rather than a biographical study. The influences that will be explored will include John Williams' family influences, education, his life choice of priesthood, work in education and parish life. These domains of discourse are all historically constituted and can thus be investigated.

A significant part of this thesis will rely on biographical information, however, while the research depends on this information, it would be false to posit it within the biographical genre. The narrative style concentrates on John Williams' lived experience isolating significant influences and events in his life and not aiming to give a complete

chronological history. I have sought understanding by means of interpretation that represents a significant distance from an epistemological approach. This approach best suits my purpose in that it describes how one orients to lived experience. This examination of John Williams' life will concentrate on the many influences of his life; family, education, church and politics. Diogenes said, "A human being is not something you automatically are, it is also something you must try to be" (n.d.). The examination of how a person consciously or unconsciously comes to be, what choices influence life direction all play a part in this study. The way, too, in which I experience the world, has tinted my understanding and interpretation of John Williams' narrative. Van Manen (1990) suggests that we are all 'in the world' in a certain way. For John Williams an environment of close and extended family, educational opportunities, priesthood and a burning sense of justice, enabled his emergence into full engagement with his world, an engagement that has been significantly influential.

Van Manen (1990) says "we can only understand something or someone for whom we care" (p.6), and it is within this context that this study of John Williams will be set against the background of a particular context, most specifically, his work for equality of educational opportunity for students within the Catholic sector and more broadly, across all sectors.

This narrative is retrospective for the simple reason that it is impossible to reflect on lived experience, in the manner that I have chosen, while it is occurring. The interviews conducted as part of the inquiry suggest the accuracy of this proposition. The personal engagement of others within John Williams' narrative would not have allowed the close examination that has been possible without the benefit of retrospection. This is not to suggest that the narrative has in any way been altered, but the play of elements of influence have been isolated for inclusion. It is hoped this approach will describe the internal meaning structures of John Williams' life story. Heidegger (1962) characterizes this approach as "a

caring attunement” in Van Manen (1990, p.12), a “thoughtfulness” that has allowed me to appreciate John Williams’ life as well- lived and virtuous.

Psychologist Jerome Bruner (1996) in Conle (2000) speaks of “trouble” as the *raison d’être* of narrative, “what drives the story, what makes it worth ‘trouble’”(p.190). What “trouble” made me select John Williams’ story as the heart of this research? In some measure I was urged on by a need to honor him as a good man, and to honor his contribution to equity of educational provision. In 1993, at the time of his retirement as Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania, there were a number of formal occasions to acknowledge his quarter century in education, with each occasion providing the opportunity for complimentary words, both written and spoken, and due honor being afforded. But this study endeavors to explore his story at a far deeper level. Before interrogating his narrative, words like ‘good’, ‘wise’ and ‘just leap off the page. The ‘trouble’ for me is to examine the development of these characteristics in John Williams. What brought them to fruition in him? Are these characteristics virtues? What might it mean to become virtuous?

This narrative is an intellectual search. As Donald Verene (1991) suggests in Conle (2000) “...to understand something is to discover its origin and to ‘narratively’ recreate its genesis”(p.71). The reconstruction of this life narrative will not be an all-encompassing truth, rather it will be the truth that I have experienced and examined. This includes, as well, John Williams’ personal reflections during a number of interviews conducted as part of this research. Then there is the viewpoint of others that are different again, however, I believe it results in ‘one truth’. Conle (2000) suggests the ‘telos’ in narrative inquiry is inexplicit, “it is the tacit end-in-view that drives the inquiry”(p.193). I understand my own motivation in undertaking this study nonetheless, the end result is not totally revealed. My own work in Catholic Education gave me the direct experience of the struggle for funding justice for students in Catholic schools and this work brought me into relationship with John Williams. Over the last thirty-five years he has been my employer, first within the Tasmanian Catholic

Education Office and then as a principal in the Catholic education system. On two occasions he has been the priest responsible for the parish in which I am domiciled. These factors bring me into the narrative. My own work in Catholic education has meant that I have experienced the cost of the lack of funding equity for all those involved in non-government schooling. Both my personal and professional relationship with John Williams has given me insight to sort the accumulated experiences of his life and thus highlight many defining moments.

The interpretation of narrative Conle (2000) calls 'narrativization'. By this she means, "...adding contexts and feelings, agents and history, to facts, events, ideas and people" (p.198). Such a process allows for a merging of an academic or theoretical understanding with a lived experience examined via a narrative. Emotion is not examined per se, but emotions are central to capturing the many layers in this study. This process has enabled a merging of the theoretical understanding of virtue as proposed by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas with a lived experience that is examined through John Williams' narrative. Not having a defined end-in-view allows this study to assume a research quality (Conle 2000).

Two primary texts underpin this research, Aristotle's seminal work, *Nicomachean Ethics* and Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, a foundation document in Catholic philosophical and theological studies. A secondary text that also provided insight was Thomas Aquinas' *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* one of several works completed at the end of his career. Scholars propose that this commentary was commenced around AD1268.

I am indeed fortunate that John Williams was available for a number of interviews during this research. These interviews were supplemented by access to personal correspondence, his photographic collection, speeches and personal jottings that he calls "night time musings". These personal reflections were, as the name suggests, usually written late at night. As well, interviews were conducted with family members and close associates.

Beyond the limits of this study a number of specific areas

present themselves for inquiry. The writings of Aristotle and Aquinas on moral and intellectual virtue provide a strong underpinning for senior secondary and undergraduate ethics courses. Such courses would be valuable within and beyond religious schools.

A study of moral and intellectual virtue could be a prime focus within training programs for leaders and managers, enabling participants to become attuned to, and familiar with, a framework for relationships and ethical practices that have a meaningful foundation.

The 1960's to the 1990's is the period in which this study looks at Catholic Education in Australia. A valuable historical resource could be drawn from this time, focusing particularly on new funding models for primary and secondary schools.

Another possibility for enquiry would be a study of priests, who during this period played key roles in gaining education-funding justice for Catholic schools in Australia. Like John Williams, this group of four to six individuals helped realize a new funding paradigm for students in Catholic and other non- government schools in Australia. The thesis is divided into three sections. The first section is an examination of virtue, both moral and intellectual, as outlined in Aristotle's work, *Nicomchean Ethics*, and Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* and includes the 'Design for the Inquiry'. Section two tells the story of the Williams and Mackey clans and from this John Williams' own story. The second section tells the story of the Williams and Mackey clans and from this John Williams' own story. A set of nine questions forms the basis of the third section, questions that are used to interrogate the narrative and explore three key concepts that are essential to becoming virtuous when virtue is viewed through the prism of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. The three concepts examined and juxtaposed against John Williams' narrative are intellect *nous*, reason, character *hexis*, and faith. In seeking to answer these questions I believe I have been able to demonstrate understandings of becoming virtuous as revealed through John Williams' lived experience.

## CHAPTER 2 | ARISTOTLE'S NICOMACHEAN ETHICS

### Moral Virtues | *Means and Ends to Happiness*

Aristotle's treatise on moral and intellectual virtue presented in the *Nicomachean Ethics* offers a pathway in my inquiry about becoming virtuous. I have taken Aristotle's moral and intellectual virtues as a foundation to my investigation. Aristotle provides a standard against which I can understand the elements of, and the journey to, virtue. An understanding of virtue is necessary to then be able to both grasp and articulate the living experience of becoming virtuous.

In the twenty first century the word virtuous takes a reader back to the language of Victorian times. 'Virtue', 'arête', 'excellence,' 'flourishing', are words used interchangeably both within the *Nicomachean Ethics* and within various commentaries. Aristotle argued that these terms were not used by him in the sense that they could be applied to a particular person within a given situation (a relativist approach), but rather he was firm in his conviction that the eleven moral virtues *arête* were

characteristics of human beings who act as they ought to act, those human beings with the *aretai* are 'serious' *spoudaioi*, those without them 'base' or 'corrupt' or even 'wicked' (Bartlett and Collins 2011, xvi).

Aristotle did not rely on a higher authority, as Aquinas did, believing that the highest good could be attained by reason alone. What Aristotle offers is a 'philosophy of human affairs'. His theory outlines the means for attaining happiness *eudaimonia*, because, for Aristotle, attaining happiness is the purpose of life. Interestingly, while the early chapters of the *Nicomachean Ethics* examine the notion of happiness, subsequent chapters deal with the moral and intellectual virtues and form the major part of the work, with the mention of happiness receding in prominence.

The *Nicomachean Ethics* is held by scholars to be Aristotle's lecture notes and as a result lack the order and consistency one would expect from a

scholarly treatise. The journey through the *Ethics* is circuitous, often held up by apparent contradictions and repetition. For example, Aristotle demonstrates in the following two passages that he both asserts and denies the good that comes to our lives through knowledge.

And with a view to our life then, is not the knowledge of this good of great weight, and would we not, like archers in possession of a target, better hit on what is needed (NE 1094a22-24).

Further, because he is disposed to follow the passions, he will listen pointlessly and unprofitably, since the end involved is not knowledge but action (NE 1095a5-6).

One of the abiding Aristotelian influences for Thomas Aquinas was the notion of the common good. Aristotle is unable to clearly articulate what it is that is the human good, but it is certainly connected to the community, even though the 'human good' differs from community to community. What he does argue is that the good of the community is a higher human good than the good of the individual. This is made clear in the following passage.

For even if this is the same thing for an individual and a city, to secure and preserve the good of the city appears to be something greater and more complete: the good of the individual by himself is certainly desirable enough, but that of a nation and of cities is nobler and more divine (NE 1094b7-10).

Another example of the somewhat contradictory nature of the writing (NE 1130b26-29) suggests the virtue of a good person is superior to the virtue of a good citizen. Central to what is presented in the *Ethics* is Aristotle's statement of purpose.

We are conducting an examination, not so that we may know what virtue is, but so that we may become good (NE 1103b27-28).

**Habituation** | *To begin from the things known to us* (NE 1095b4).

Aristotle suggests that habituation *ethos* that values moral virtue and noble action enables a person to grow with moral principles. One's

actions then proceed from these deeply held starting points, rather than to them.

Aristotle directed his thinking to that group who had experienced an upbringing habituated to a particular way of seeing the world. He argues that this form of rearing enables a deep knowing that is quite different to basic knowledge. For Aristotle, the principles or beginning points of moral action within people who are formed this way are 'known to them' in such a way that it is hard to define their starting point. He gives clarity to this when he says

One must begin with what is known, but this has a twofold meaning: there are things known to us on the one hand, and things known simply, on the other. Perhaps it is necessary for us, at least, to begin with the things known to us. Hence, he who will listen adequately to the noble things and the just things and to the political things generally, must be brought up nobly by means of habituation. For the 'that' is a principle and if this should be sufficiently apparent, there will be no need for the 'why' in addition, and a person of the sort indicated has or would easily get hold of principles (NE 1095b4- 10).

This thinking provides us with a 'chicken and egg' notion of knowledge. A child who enjoys parental love does not know a time when the experience was different. If a child has been habituated into knowing how to act, to knowing what is right and wrong, good and bad, then that child cannot remember a time when this was not so. This becomes very deep knowledge, developed over a lifetime. Such knowledge of how we know the very starting points of why we are as we are is difficult to articulate. The question I am seeking to answer in the life narrative that follows goes to the very heart of these issues raised by Aristotle. I will endeavour to describe the habituation and rearing experienced, rearing from which moral principles found their genesis.

What is it to say that a child has good parents? Such a statement is relative to a general understanding of 'good' when speaking about parents. Habituation in relation to virtue in Aristotelian terms relates to love, care, discipline and direct teaching, especially of offspring. His

presentation of the eleven moral virtues provides a framework against which judgements can be made. One of the reasons I have chosen the *Nicomachean Ethics* as the foundation text is to allow me to make judgements beyond the limits of relativism. His notion of *aretē*, that aggregate of qualities that combine to make up good character, is my starting point.

### **The Soul | Passions | Faculties | Dispositions**

Aristotle argues that the moral virtues are not ends in themselves but the virtuous life contributes to happiness, and from that comes his praise of the virtues. One of the populist lines in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that is interpreted as a summary of a definition of happiness reads

...happiness is a certain activity of soul, in accord with complete virtue (NE 1102a5-6).

This line introduces us to a connection between happiness and virtue. While this inquiry is seeking to understand the living experiences of becoming virtuous, it is necessary to place virtue within the structure proposed by Aristotle and this included the virtues within the soul. Aristotle does not offer a definition of soul, *psuchē*, but rather a structure that comprises passions, faculties and states of character or dispositions. Virtue, he contends, lies within one of these areas. Passions we can describe as feelings related to pleasure or pain, fear or confidence, envy and pity. The faculties describe the power that allows these passions to be felt, for example to become angry or to feel pity. Character, on the other hand can be described as a person's position in relation to the passions. If passions are allowed to be excessive, either too weak or too violent, the character demonstrated is not virtuous. It is disposition in relation to the passions that enables the virtuous person to exercise moderation.

## **Moderation | The Mean | *Key to virtue***

Acting with moderation, *sōphrosunē*, always involves choice, with both excess and insufficiency detrimental. For Aristotle, the capacity to aim at the middle is an essential characteristic of being virtuous. Excess at one extreme becomes a vice. In his commentary on courage Aristotle cites (NE 1107b1-4) the coward who is unable to stand his ground when required at one extreme and at the opposite extreme the person who will fight in a foolhardy manner in every situation. The virtuous person is able to make choices about when to take a stand, thus maintaining an intermediate position. As well, Aristotle emphasizes that not all actions or emotions have a middle ground, for example envy or murder or theft. They are always morally wrong. Finding the intermediate ground depends on each varying situation. He says.

Thus every knower of the excess and the deficiency avoids them, but seeks out the middle term and chooses this, not yet a middle belonging to the thing in question but rather the one relative to us (NE 1106b5-8).

## **Choice | *For, on the whole, choice appears to be concerned with***

*things that are up to us* (NE 1111b30).

The intermediate ground of which he speaks, is not in the object, but in the person and it is because the mean is expressed in the person that virtuous behavior is recognizable in others. This may be the reason Aristotle related choice, *proairesis*, to virtue as a better discriminator of character than actions. As well, he differentiates between choice and voluntary action, and between choosing and wishing. Aristotle proposes that choice is voluntary but not every voluntary action is made by choice. This is quite distinct from wishing; a man may wish for immortality but he cannot choose it (NE 1111b20-24). Choice relates to the means, not the end.

...we wish to be healthy, whereas we choose those things by which we will become healthy; and we wish to be happy and we

declare this, whereas to say that we choose to be happy is not appropriate. For, on the whole, choice appears to be concerned with things that are up to us (NE 1111b27-30).

There was a certain tension for Aristotle about the place of virtue in life. He acknowledged that to live a virtuous life could not guarantee happiness because all people are subject to troublesome and painful experiences in life's journey (NE 1100a5-8). On the other hand, he stresses that the practice of the virtues provides happiness both in this world and the next, (NE 1101a8) and without virtue we risk that happiness.

### **Virtue | *Moral and Intellectual***

Virtues in the *Ethics* are of two types, intellectual, *nous*, and moral, *ēthikē*, all praiseworthy characteristics outlined in the following passage.

...for we say that some of the virtues are intellectual and others are moral: wisdom, comprehension and prudence being intellectual, liberality and moderation being moral. For in speaking about someone's character, we do not say that he is wise or comprehending but that he is gentle or moderate. Yet we praise the wise person too with respect to the characteristic that is his, and we say, that of the characteristics, the praiseworthy ones are virtues (NE 1103a5-10).

Four of the ten books that comprise the *Nicomachean Ethics* are devoted to the moral virtues and the virtue of justice *dikaiosunē*, in particular. The transition from happiness to virtue is the result of Aristotle's efforts to paint a picture of the human soul, which he describes as having two parts, the non-rational, responsible for nutrition and growth, and the rational, responsible for reason and speech. Aristotle proposes that the fulfillment or completion of this rational part of the soul is the underpinning of intellectual virtue. The non-rational part of the soul does not have a particular character, even though it is responsible for the exercise of self-restraint in desire. Aristotle's summary is that the non-rational part of the soul must be subject to the rational. Yet another contradiction in the text is put forward,

that, in reality, because the non-rational part of the soul is subject to the rational, it properly belongs in that part of the soul. It is this part of the soul, whose excellence is moral virtue, the virtue of character (Bartlett and Collins, p.253). While he sees the intellectual virtue of wisdom (contemplation) as allowing the possibility of happiness Aristotle does not return to this idea until the final chapter of the *Ethics*.

Aristotle suggests very strongly that it is not sufficient to know about virtue. The serious person must examine how actions are performed (NE 1103b26-29) in order to become good.

But whatever deeds arise in accordance with the virtues are not done justly or moderately if they are merely in a certain state, but only if he who does those deeds is in a certain state as well: first if he acts knowingly; second, if he acts by choosing and by choosing the actions in question for their own sake; and, third, if he acts while being in a steady and unwavering state (NE 1105a29-33).

In commenting on this passage, Bartlett and Collins suggest the ‘knowing’ and the ‘choosing’ involved in these actions stem from the possession and activity of the correct characteristics or virtues” (p 254). Morally virtuous actions depend less on knowledge than on a person’s character.

It is repeated action that gives a person that “steady and unwavering state”(NE 1105a33) that relates to the desiring part of the soul from which actions have their genesis, thus allowing a person to make a correct choice.

Aristotle proposed his famous doctrine of the ‘mean’ *mesotēs* in relation to the virtues and this is fundamental to his judgment about how actions can be determined virtuous. It is not the mean in relation to the action in question, but the mean relative to the person performing the action, with excess or deficiency constituting its associated vices. The mean must always be relative to the individual, not because there is variance in a desirable characteristic, for example, courage, but there are vast differences between the passions of individuals. Some would be more fearful than others and be in need of varying forms of training to come to the mean relative to them. Bywater, (in Bartlett & Collins), speaks of “...a mean

defined by that argument by which the prudent person would define it” (p.35). The mean is not an independent standard for virtue, but in each case requires a determination of reason. As with the acquisition of virtues, with the guidance of another, be it a parent or teacher, habituation occurs as wisdom is passed from one person to another. But is this the source of a person’s particular characteristics? Is it just habituation through others? Aristotle does not provide an explanation. If a person is born with particular dispositions, are these dispositions the source of actions? Aristotle presents the moral virtues as the underlying principles on which our actions are grounded.

**Courage | Hope | *Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point***

*C. S. Lewis (p.161).*

Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, suggests this first section on the moral virtues is an examination of those passions that are central to life. Interestingly, Aristotle commences his conversation about the moral virtues with “courage”, *andreia*, the disposition that relates to fear and confidence. Certainly, in his outline more emphasis is placed on fear than confidence. He saw the fear of death as the extreme to which this virtue relates. In some sections of the *Ethics* the afterlife is acknowledged, however, in this discussion he sees death as the end. One would imagine that a person acting with courage, particularly in the face of death, would be more inspired to do so if there was an underpinning hope. Later in the same chapter we read

The coward *deilia*, therefore, is someone of faint hope, for he fears everything. The courageous man is the opposite, since to feel confident is to be of good hope (NE 1116a1-2).

It would depend on the source of hope in the face of extreme danger for courage to be present. In war, soldiers gain confidence by clinging to thoughts of family and friends or to religious beliefs, or the cause for which

they are fighting or a combination of these. The same elements can cause a soldier to lose confidence in the face of danger.

The writing around courage is intermingled with facing death in war. This Aristotle perceives as the “greatest and noblest danger” (NE 1115a30), principally because the safety and good of the whole community is dependent on courage shown in war. Aristotle called this “nobler and more divine” (NE 1094b10) than any good relating to a single individual. He clearly outlines that the end *telos* of virtue is “the noble” *kalos* (NE 1115b11-13). What more noble action could there be than to sacrifice one’s life for others? For Aristotle, this was a clear expression of virtue. In his eyes the community, *koinônia*, is so important, a concept that has not changed significantly in the millennia since these words were written. The very structure of our present Western society, through government from the local to the national level *polis*, ensures the whole community can share life’s benefits. This does not demean the value of the individual.

In Aristotle’s time conflicts were settled through battle, so courage in the face of death would have been a lived reality. One would hope that a new metaphor would be required for the twenty first century but this is not necessarily so when one considers the extraordinary number of conflicts worldwide that daily demand the ultimate sacrifice.

In his examination of virtue Aristotle distinguishes action from the state of mind of the person performing it. A commitment to live a life marked by virtue must come from personal dedication. Annas (2011) calls it “the drive to aspire”, “...to aspire, that is, to understanding, to self-direction and to improvement” (p.20). Courage would not find expression by chance but dedication to a virtuous life as the means to nobility, “...to the courageous man, courage is noble. Such, too, therefore, is the end, for each thing is defined by its end” (NE 1115b20-21).

There may be an element of seeking something personal in acting courageously, even when done for the benefit of others. Aristotle argues that it is through the activity of virtue that a person finds happiness *eudaimonia* (NE 1098a17-18), however the reader could challenge this when

the virtue of courage is considered. Courageous action may not be pleasant, yet Aristotle says that it brings happiness. Bartlett and Collins (2011) describe this challenge or “certain circularity.”

He who acts courageously must forsake his true or greatest good, his virtuous and happy life, and choose instead to do what is noble in war; but it is in choosing to do this very noble deed that the courageous human being seeks his true or greatest good (p.258).

Is there a noble action better than courage? Certainly it is a virtue that has as its essence a concern for the greater good, for others as well as self. The concern for self, or benefit for self, is intertwined with the desire to act virtuously, rather than selfishly. Courageous actions, undertaken with the right knowledge, the right intention and the right choice, may give an individual a sense of personal achievement and significance. This may certainly be the case, even when the courageous action is unpleasant.

Aristotle’s writing about courage is marked by the introduction of the notion of nobility, *kalos*, which he believes is the *telos* or ‘end’ of virtue. He says.

But the courageous man is as undaunted as a human being can be. He will fear things of this sort, then, but he will endure them in the way that he ought and as reason commands, for the sake of the noble, for this is the end of virtue (NE 1115b11-13).

What it is that drives a person to think and act for others ahead of self, the truly selfless response that Aristotle calls ‘noble?’ His prime example is of the person who gives their life in war, an act of great courage as well as being a noble action, one that clearly demonstrates the *telos* of virtue. While few outside the theatre of war are called to give their life, many have done that through their life work or a faithful living out of a calling to a particular vocation. There are many expressions of giving one’s life, making that life gift noble through the manner in which it is lived. This sacrifice is clearly demonstrated in the parent who cares for their child with severe

physical disabilities or the person caring for a spouse with dementia.

**Moderation** | *But is as correct reason demands* (NE 1119a20).

In Aristotle's description of the moral virtues, he next cites moderation, *sōphrosunē*, after courage. Interestingly, the mention of nobility all but disappears. In this description moderation leads to physical well-being. Bartlett and Collins (2011) suggest, "The dedication to such well-being and preservation seems scarcely noble, but it is otherwise sensible" (p.259). Aristotle goes on to describe the moderate person.

But as for all the pleasures that are conducive to health or good conditioning, these the moderate person will long for in a measured way and as he ought; he will long also for such other pleasures as do not impede the healthy pleasures, or are not opposed to what is noble, or do not outstrip his resources (NE 1119a16-18).

In Aquinas' commentary on 'the Ethics' he juxtaposes moderation with courage for the clear reason that both pertain to the irrational part of the soul *psuchē* and so must conform to reason. "Such is the sensitive appetite to which the passions of the soul belong" (Aquinas, 1993, SLE 3.7.595). Courage is concerned with the passions of fear and daring, that division of the passion that Aquinas calls the irascible, those instincts which find expression in competition, aggression or defense. Moderation on the other hand is concerned with pleasure and pain. These instincts Aquinas calls concupiscible, finding expression in pursuit/avoidance instincts with the associated emotions of joy and sadness, love and hate, desire and repugnance. Courage on the other hand calls forth emotions of daring and fear, hope and despair and anger.

For Aristotle, courage and moderation belong to the irrational part of the soul, those elements that are common to humans and members of the animal kingdom. Inclinations around food and sex are certainly common to both humans and the animal kingdom. Animals do not share a passion such as honor nor the pleasures associated with a love of learning. Such a love

does not arise from any bodily function but through the mind's awareness. He does not suggest that moderation is not concerned with pleasures of the soul. As well, moderation is not concerned with all the senses; it does not include the pleasures of sight, or the pleasures proper to hearing or smell, all experienced indirectly both in man and animal. For example, "for it is not the smell of hares that the hounds enjoy but their meat, and the smell produces the perception (*of the meat to be enjoyed*)" (NE1118a17-19).

**Liberality | *It belongs to virtue more to act well than to fare well***

(NE 1120a12).

Aristotle lists the third moral virtue as liberality, *eleutheriotēs*, the capacity to use one's own wealth well. Integral to liberality is giving, with prodigality and stinginess sitting at either end of the expression of this virtue. In the following passage Aristotle describes the prodigal *asōtia* person's vice as their own self-destruction through the unwise use of their resources.

...we sometimes assign the term prodigality to a combination of things, for we call prodigal those who lack self-restraint and who, in their licentiousness, spend lavishly. Hence the prodigal are held to be very base people, since they have many vices simultaneously. But in fact they are not appropriately called by this name, because a 'prodigal person' means someone who has one vice, namely, ruining his own resources (NE 1119b30-35).

In his explanation of the virtue of liberality *eleutheriotēs* Aristotle speaks specifically of the care of one's money. While there are times in life where one can recall occasions where expense is ignored, it is the responsible use of one's financial means that is the liberality of which Aristotle speaks.

Peter Lawler (2011) suggests that any virtuous behaviour requires risk taking for the very reason that you need to think beyond yourself. The stingy person knows that resources may be required in the future and to risk those resources through some act of generosity could place one in a

precarious situation. The risks associated with giving are fundamental to virtuous behavior and particularly so in a discussion about the virtue of liberality where the risks associated with unwise giving can have consequences that are broad ranging. Generosity is the term that we would use to describe liberality. A generous person still needs to spend in the right way for the right reason.

The very word 'liberality' *eleutheriotēs* relates to the choice to give and spend freely. Aristotle says that it originates in the noble impulse to display freedom from necessity. An individual's freedom with time and resources provides a portrayal of liberality that is characterized by generosity. Lawler (2011) says that generosity can be demonstrated in two ways.

He shows he's free from necessity by being so proudly ungrudging in his spending. But he also shows his freedom through his class. His spending is never vulgar or utilitarian. It's always on things that are noble and beautiful and intrinsically good, on the various accomplishments that are evidence of our singular greatness. So generosity is about supporting the arts, liberal education, and other impressive monuments to who we are. It is about using your time and money to raise your community above the banality of commerce and networking toward the appreciation and achievement of what proudly distinguishes human beings from the merely necessitarian creatures (p.1).

Aristotle states clearly that liberality is not dependent on the resources held or the amount given, but in the characteristic of the giver (NE1120b9-10). Aristotle draws a distinction between liberality and justice, emphasizing that justice, that is concerned with money is characterized by receiving and liberality characterized by giving. Bartlett and Collins (2011) comment on this distinction.

Since central to justice are judgments about what is fair or equal, about what share of the good is due to different parties the movement here to liberality instead of to justice allows Aristotle to give the fullest possible expression to moral virtue's connection with noble deeds (p. 259-60).

For Aristotle, virtue resides in the way a person conducts oneself, rather than through how well one fares (NE 1120a12).

**Magnificence** | *To secure and preserve the good of the city appears to be something greater and more complete* (NE 1094b7).

Magnificence, *megaloprepeia*, is the fourth moral virtue outlined in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, with the distinction between liberality and magnificence being one of scale. Both act for the sake of the noble action that is “common to all virtues” (NE 1122b6-7). Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on the *Ethics*, uses the term “munificent” (Aristotle 1993, Litzinger Trans. NE 1122a34), derived from ‘munus’ meaning gift, relating particularly to lavish gifts for the common good, with the giving commensurate with the giver’s circumstances and appropriate to the work to be undertaken. It is also about the virtue of the work itself, not just the generous giving of the munificent person.

One of the examples of such a work cited in the *Ethics* is the only time in Aristotle’s work that a person’s attitude to the divine is mentioned. He says.

Of expenditures we say that some kinds are honorable, such as those that concern the gods – votive offerings, (sacred) buildings, and sacrifices – and similarly too those that concern the entire divine realm and are proper objects of ambition in common affairs (NE 1122b19-23).

Bartlett and Collins (2011) posit this inclusion to an alert to the “omission of piety from the list of virtues” (p.261), suggesting a person making a magnificent gesture related to piety provides the benefactor with permanence “akin to the immortality of the gods” (p.261). In undertaking a work for the gods a person’s own greatness becomes intermingled in the work.

The step from liberality to magnificence is echoed in Chapter 3 of the *Ethics*.

For even if this is the same thing for an individual and a city, to secure and preserve the good of the city appears to be something greater and more complete: the good of the individual by himself is certainly desirable enough, but that of a nation and cities is nobler and more divine (NE 1094b7-10).

### **Greatness of Soul | *Comprising all the goodness of the other virtues***

Aristotle describes “Greatness of Soul”, *megalopsychia*, as the first complete virtue, by its nature comprising all the goodness of the other virtues. This leads to him calling this virtue an ornament to all the others.

Greatness of soul, then, seems to be like a kind of ornament of the virtues, for it makes them greater and does not arise out of them. For this reason, it is difficult in truth to be great-souled (NE 1124a12).

Being capable of great actions the great-souled person is entitled to claim honour, which Aristotle claims is the greatest of the external goods. Of interest in understanding this virtue is the part the individual plays in self- understanding of personal gifts. Self-knowledge is that insight that permits a person to know and accept his or her own gifts and so have a realistic and healthy self-regard. Aristotle would describe this as honour, the greatest of the personal goods. At present, the word resilience, rather than honour, finds favour in literature, resilience being that innate or learned capacity of self-belief that enables a person to recover quickly from life’s difficulties. All humans require this capacity to live fulfilling lives, though many struggle to be resilient as a result of a deficit in personal self-regard.

Over the last century, and particularly encouraged by some religious groups, self-worth was believed to be in conflict with humility. It was a mistaken belief that humility was posited as an extreme of envy, resulting in a lack of self-regard. Interestingly, Aristotle does not allude to humility in his list of virtues. This notion of ‘loss of self’ finds expression in many cultures and traditions. One thinks of the place of Afghan women within their culture, seen as mere chattels to men, to be bought, sold, swapped and legally killed if laws and customs are

transgressed. Aristotle is clear in his explanation of the type of person he is speaking about.

The great-souled man, then, is an extreme in terms of greatness, but he is in the middle in terms of acting as one ought, since he deems himself worthy of what accords with his own worth, whereas the others exceed or are deficient (in judging their own worth) (NE 1123b13-15).

This concept finds an appropriate parallel in Matthew's New Testament Gospel story of the Parable of the Talents.

It will be like a man who was about to leave home on a journey: he called his servants and put them in charge of his property. He gave to each one according to his ability: to one he gave five thousand pounds, to the other two thousand pounds, and to the other one thousand pounds. Then he left on his trip. The servant who had received five thousand pounds went at once and invested his money and earned another five thousand pounds. In the same way the servant who received two thousand pounds earned another two thousand pounds. But the servant who received one thousand pounds went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid the master's money.

After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The servant who had received five thousand pounds came in and handed over the other five thousand pounds. 'You gave me five thousand pounds, sir,' he said, 'Look! Here are another five thousand pounds that I have earned.' 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' said his master. 'You have been faithful in managing small amounts, so I will put you in charge of large amounts. Come on in, and share my happiness!' Then the servant who had been given two thousand pounds came in and said, "You gave me two thousand pounds, sir. Look! Here are another two thousand pounds that I have earned." 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' said his master. 'You have been faithful in managing small amounts, so I will put you in charge of large amounts. Come on in and share my happiness!' Then the servant who had received one thousand pounds came in and said: 'Sir, I know you are a hard man: you reap harvests where you did not plant, and gather crops where you did not scatter seed. I was afraid, so I went off and hid your money in the ground. Look! Here is what belongs to you.' 'You bad and lazy servant!' his master said. 'You knew, did you, that I reap harvests where I did not plant, and gather crops where I did not gather seed? Well, then, you should have deposited my money in the bank, and I would have received it all back with interest when I returned. Now, take the money away from him and give it to the one who has ten thousand pounds. For to every one that has, even more will be given, and he will have more than enough; but the one who has nothing, even the little he has will be taken away from him' (The

Jerusalem Bible 1966, Chapter 25: Verses: 14-29).

The parable is clearly describing use of personal talents, with a corresponding message that individuals are obliged and challenged to make the most of their personal gifts. Aristotle and the gospel writer may be suggesting that this drive is innate in all people and forms the basis of education through which communities and societies have developed. A correct understanding of humility is more closely aligned to a modest view of ones' own capacity.

Aristotle details the qualities of the great-souled person who is even tempered in times of prosperity and bad fortune; eager to be of service but spurns receiving assistance from others; not fearful of the opinions of others and not the type of person to want to talk personally about achievements, nor interested in gossip about others and especially not concerned with revenge. He says as well.

But neither is he one to remember evils done him; for it does not belong to a great-souled man to recall things with a grudge, in particular evils done him, but rather to overlook them (NE 1125a3-5).

As well Aristotle's account of the great-souled man presents another view of courage.

...but he will hazard great dangers, and when he does so he will throw away his life, on the grounds that living is not at all worthwhile (NE 1124b8-9).

Bartlett and Collins (2011) interpret such a man with greatness of soul as constituting

...the peak of an ascent of the virtue of courage. The perspective of the great-souled man thus represents the explicit fulfilment of a most fundamental principle of virtue: that it be chosen as an end in itself (p.262).

What does this really mean when we speak about virtue? One would not

think, yes, today I am going to be courageous, or great-souled. Might such a sentiment relate to the conscious act that impels a person to relate and act in a certain way? I suggest the virtuous way of behaving may be so ingrained in a person that it becomes the moral compass that determines direction in thought and action. It is within the great-souled person that truly virtuous behavior is manifest. A courageous person may also be a spendthrift and such a person would not be seen as a contradiction. But the great-souled person is one who possesses all that is good from each virtue.

I strongly believe in our common humanity. Significant for all people are those times when personal actions and thoughts accord with the most noble and virtuous behavior. Common to all people as well are those times when thoughts and actions fall far short of the standards to which one would normally aspire. Are judgments arrived at according to the peaks or the troughs? If the effort is there to reach the peak then I proffer that is as truer indication of character. This nuance applied to Aristotle's description of a great-souled man allows for the description to actually be applied, otherwise no person would reach the heights necessary to be called great-souled. He says three times in the *Ethics* that of the great-souled man "nothing is great to him" (NE 1125a3). He describes this in another way "He is also the sort to benefit others but is ashamed to receive a benefaction" (NE 1124b8-9). The Litzinger translation of the same passage found in Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1993) reads

He is good at helping others - which is a mark of a man of excellence, but he shies away from taking favors - a thing characteristic of a man of lesser gifts (NE 1124b8-9).

The Litzinger translation continues, "The magnanimous man likes to remember those he benefits but not those by whom he is or was treated generously (NE 1124b11-12).

The sequence from courage to greatness of soul helps the reader to understand nobility *kalos*. Aristotle suggests nobility is not achieved in forsaking one's greatest goods (in the case of courage even the willingness to

forsake one's own life), but in 'greatness' of virtue which is both noble and good indeed and the highest end of human action. In this instance we find a contradiction to the philosopher's thoughts in Book 1 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where virtue is described as being subordinate to happiness and strongly stated many times in his elucidation of the moral virtues that virtue itself must be the end. Aristotle says

Happiness above all seems to be of this character, for we always choose it on account of itself and never on account of something else. Yet honor, pleasure, intellect, and every virtue we choose on their own account – for even if nothing resulted from them, we would choose each of them – but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, because we suppose that, through them, we will be happy. But nobody chooses happiness for the sake of these things, or, more generally, on account of anything else (NE 1097b1-5).

Aristotle told his audience that the great-souled man was dependent on wealth, position and good birth in order to embark on actions that could be described as great. This person possessing such fortune was often idle, waiting for the opportunity to undertake worthy activities. Yet to achieve happiness the activity of virtue must be present, which leads to a knotty relationship between virtue and happiness.

**Justice | ...neither the evening star nor the morning dawn being so wondrous** (NE 1129b27).

It is here in this description of the great-souled man that Aristotle introduces another strand of thinking into his treatise. The shift comes in identifying virtue less with the action of noble and great deeds and more with those qualities that contribute to the common good, particularly in relationship to others, culminating in his description of justice that constitutes all the virtues "in relation to another". He says

Justice, then is complete virtue, though not unqualifiedly but in relation to another person. And so on account of this, justice is

often held to be the greatest of the virtues, neither the evening star nor the morning dawn being so wondrous (NE 1129b26-7).

Justice, *dikaioṣunē* too, Aristotle describes as a second complete virtue, and as he establishes a description of the just person the place of the great-souled man begins to lessen in his established list of virtues. He presents a subtle difference between the virtues of greatness of soul and justice in a way that would slightly diminish the great-souled person. The difference alluded to will be found in the motivation for action in the great-souled person, being a sense of personal superiority. His outline of ambition as a virtue provides a further teasing out of the idea of personal motivation for action. This 'love of honour' Bartlett and Collins describe as a "descent from the heights of greatness of soul" (p.264). In his summary of the virtues of gentleness, friendliness, truthfulness and wittiness, Aristotle seeks to correct some of the defects in the great-souled man. These virtues can all be aligned to relationships, not in the political sense but in the associations shared by those who live in community.

**Ambition** | *One can seek honour from where and in the way that one ought* (NE 1125b7).

Aristotle describes the ambitious, *philotimia*, person as a 'lover of honour' with liberality and ambition detached only by degrees from the virtues of magnificence and greatness of soul. Liberality, *eleutheriotēs* and ambition *philotimia*, are set out around smaller riches and honour, with magnificence and greatness of soul characterized by great honours, and great expenditure. Aristotle describes this virtue in the same way for the mean and one extreme, the other he cites as lack of ambition, explaining it thus.

Just as there is a mean, an excess and a deficiency in the taking and giving of money, so also in the longing for honour can have more or less of such a longing than one ought, and one can seek honour from where and in the way one ought. For we blame the ambitious person, on the grounds that he aims at getting honour

more than he ought and from where he ought not; and we blame the unambitious person, on the grounds that he chooses not to be honoured even in the case of what is noble (NE 1125b5-11).

There is some uncertainty suggested between what is praised and what is blamed in the exercise of ambition that may be summarized as desiring ambition more than is proper and accepting honour where it is due.

Ambition, “love of honour” as outlined by Aristotle, is a natural good. All people need recognition for achievements, for work successfully attempted and completed, for study, for parenting, indeed for the full breadth of human endeavour. Such recognition, while not necessarily in the public arena helps build self-esteem and it is through this ‘love of self’ that individuals develop the sense that they have something worthwhile to contribute to others and the wider community. Aristotle says that ambition can be desired more than it ought (NE 1125b6) and it is at this point that blame is apportioned. However, as a society we tend to admire those who exhibit a level of ambition, for without it gains are not made. This is a virtue whose mean has no name.

**Anger | Gentleness | *The gentle person wishes to be calm and not led by his passion (NE 1125b35).***

Aristotle leads his examination of honour to a discussion of justice, into what Bartlett and Collins (2011) define as “the virtue that attends to the demand that each individual be assigned his just share of the good” (p.264). In this move towards justice Aristotle takes anger *orgilotēs* as his starting point, another nameless virtue, which he names, ‘gentleness’, *praotēs*, a name that also describes the deficiency in relation to the right use of anger. “The gentle person wishes to be calm and not led by his passion, but rather as reason may command” (NE 1125b35). The gentle person only rises to anger in situations that require a forceful show of passion. Such expression of emotion would be difficult to control and Aristotle suggests that it is only

the truly gentle person who is able to strike the balance. He alludes to other forms of anger that form the extreme of this virtue, using the term 'irascibility' to describe those who easily rise to anger and appear unable to control this emotion. The gentle person is more likely to be forgiving with the irascible person more inclined to punish and seek revenge.

Consideration of the virtues has thus far dealt with external goods, riches and honours. The virtue Aristotle calls gentleness deals with the "external evils that provoke people to anger." (Aquinas, 1993, SLE 4.13.800). Gentleness is a certain mean for anger, but the extremes of gentleness are not named. The implication is that gentleness is a lack of anger. Gentleness, in some commentaries referred to as 'meekness', can also describe the person who never rises to anger, either in a good or bad sense. This is not the sense in which Aristotle speaks of gentleness as a virtue. Thomas Aquinas interprets gentleness as a compliment if the gentle person

...is so disposed: first, that he is not disturbed internally in the judgment of reason by anger; second, he is not led by anger in external choices, for reason determines the objects of anger and the length of time within which anger should react (Aquinas, 1993, SLE 4.7.801).

This leads to a particularly fine point on the subject of the parameters of this virtue. While the virtue deals with anger we are told that its mean lies within gentleness, not a gentleness that neither responds to good nor evil, that gentleness is at the extreme, but gentleness where reason is the controller of emotion and action and where an expression of anger has a rightful place. The irascible person is led by emotion, not reason.

### **Friendship | Truthfulness | Wittiness | *The social virtues***

Aristotle moves from virtues that relate to external expressions to those that relate to human actions. Friendship, *philia*, truthfulness, *alētheia*, and wittiness, *eutrapelia*, are all virtues bound up in associations, sometimes referred to as the 'social virtues'. In the first mention of these

virtues in (NE 1108a26-30) the order of treatment is truthfulness, wittiness and friendship. In (NE 1226b20) the order is reversed with friendship referred to first. Coupled with truthfulness Aristotle presents a commentary on the serious actions of people in relation to one another. In friendship, one extreme is obsequiousness, *areskeia* where a person strains to please another, being careful never to contradict so that no offence is given. At the other extreme is the person who disagrees with everything others utter, a truly quarrelsome personality *duskolia*. The mean then is the person who accepts what others say or do, but if words or actions are against what that person considers right, then they have the courage to speak. This openness of relationship is a foundation for true friendship and of the sort that Aristotle would regard as virtuous. While Aristotle fails to give a name to the mean habit, he regards it as different to friendship because true friendship is characterized by deep feelings, yet this method of interaction could be applied to any social exchange. Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on this passage uses the translation 'amiability', a word that is especially applicable to relationships across the spectrum of interactions. Aristotle says

This characteristic differs from friendship, however, because it is without the relevant passion, that is, the feeling of affection for those with whom one associates; ....For he will act similarly in the case of both those that he does not know and those he does know, of both those who are intimates and those who are not-except that he will also do what is suitable in each case (NE 1126b25-27).

Bartlett and Collins (2011) explore the reason for Aristotle presenting the virtues as a group, with friendship receiving a far deeper treatment in later books in the same work. They suggest that Aristotle was pointing to the fact that it was not only the moral virtues that pointed to the best life.

...in naming these largely nameless virtues that pertain to pleasure and truth in our speeches and actions, including our playful amusements, Aristotle also points to a good or goods that, not being wholly within the ordinary moral horizon, need to be

identified and defined (p.266).

The mean actions of friendship are also reflected in the virtue of truthfulness, *alētheia* and he proffers that an examination of these matters assists in coming to an understanding of the nature of virtue. Aquinas, in his commentary on this passage, interprets Aristotle as saying “the science of moral matters is completed by a knowledge of particulars” (Aquinas, 1993, SLE 4.4.832). In the following passage Aristotle reiterates the importance of the examination he is undertaking.

Yet it is not the worst thing to go through considerations of this kind as well, since we would know better what pertains to character by going through each of them (NE 1127a14-16).

In the discussion on truthfulness Aristotle draws a distinction between what people claim about themselves and that aspect of truthfulness belonging to those who speak the truth in a matter concerning right or wrong. Truth in this sense is more aligned to the virtue of justice *dikaiosunē*. This contextual restriction on definition enables truthfulness to take its place in this group of virtues because its demonstration is clearly in relationship to others.

The truthful person of whom Aristotle speaks is that person who claims nothing more or less than they are. Aquinas, (1993) in his *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, says the Greek word *autocastos*, is used by Aristotle in this context, because it refers to the person who is “admirable in himself, and because he does not seek to be admired more than becomes him” (SLE 4.10.835). He also refers to the person who is *autophastos*, “essentially sincere, manifesting himself to be what he is” (SLE 4.11.835). Aristotle suggests that this way of being is a habit and one that is seen in our speech, our actions and our lives.

The extreme is the boaster *alazoneia*, but even here Aristotle draws a number of distinctions. Boasting for honour he sees as less of an evil, “he who pretends to qualities greater than he possesses for no particular purpose resembles a base person, and yet he appears more silly than bad”

(NE 1127b9-10). This does not provide a reason for our condemnation of boasting as glory and honour have a relationship with honourable things. The third distinction applied to boasting cites those who boast about money or those things that have monetary value. Aristotle sees this category as an inferior good and by nature more evil than the other two categories mentioned. In all instances it is not the capacity to boast that is worthy of scorn, but the choice made to do so.

At the opposite extreme Aristotle refers to a 'dissembler' or an 'ironist' *eirōneia* as one who flees from vanity, and, in this regard, such a person is more acceptable in social interaction than the boaster. As well, a further category of dissembler is also mentioned. Those who want to appear more moderate than in fact they are, giving a false impression of their own truth. Aristotle highlights in his account the case of the Spartans who embraced a pretentiously simple mode of dress that masked differences of wealth. This expression of irony became in itself a form of boasting.

Aristotle speaks of the person who chooses to say less so as not to offend. This is not the type of truth that he would recommend if one were before a court of law. There is graciousness about the sensitive person who knows when a response of frank truthfulness is not the most appropriate in a particular circumstance. Some take pride on their capacity to always speak the truth, no matter what the circumstances. Aristotle is really telling us that it is virtuous to also, "...incline more in the direction of [saying] less than what is true, for this appears more refined, given the irksomeness of the excesses in this regard" (NE 1127b7).

"Rest and play seem to be necessary in life" (NE 1127b5). It is with these words that Aristotle begins his comments on wittiness *eutrapelia*, the third of this group of social virtues. Unlike friendship, which is posited in our daily interaction with others, wittiness finds its place in the pleasantries of rest and play, the recreation that is essential to a balanced life. Aristotle is specific in his description of wittiness that he includes with tact and places it within the realm of humour that does not give offence or hurt others

We have all known those who at first meeting are full of

humorous banter, poking fun at themselves as well as others, but subsequent occasions demonstrate the basis of this type of humour as hurtful and embarrassing and no one is spared. At the other extreme is the dour, humourless boor. Laughter, that spontaneous human reaction to humour, has a liberating power. In some instances, humour is derived from topics that mock or are crude or demeaning to others. For this reason, Aristotle suggested prohibiting young people from viewing comedy, which in his day was characterized by foul language and innuendo. *Tact epidexiais*, is key to Aristotle's understanding of wit as wholesome and a source of pleasure for others. Tact provides that balance that takes into account the appropriateness of what is being said. A graceful wit is life-giving rather than demeaning of others, and in Aristotle's view, "those who 'play gracefully' are both nimble-witted and tactful...a refinement that marks the superiority of educated people, over innuendo, coarseness and crudeness" (Bartlett & Collins p 268-9).

Aristotle speaks of laughter and comedy as providing an avenue for liberation, with wittiness forming a parallel with play and rest. The liberating benefits of laughter are known in every possible human interaction, even to the inclusion of "Clown Doctors" in children's wards in the large metropolitan hospitals. In situations where children are undergoing radical medical interventions and facing life-threatening illnesses, the positive effect of ironic humour, delivered with tact, is well documented.

The virtues of friendship or amiability, truthfulness and wittiness are the very windows through which we come to know others, first through ordinary social contact if this is prolonged, and in some business relationships. A person characterized by truthfulness has integrity and a relationship of friendship is enhanced when laughter and wit add that dimension that allows friends to enjoy each other's company. This picture is characterized by a refinement of engagement.

## Shame | *For those who feel shame blush* (NE 1128b14).

At the conclusion of Book 4 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle has a short piece on shame, *aischros*. He is quick to assert that shame is not a virtue, for, rather than a habit, it is more like a passion *pathē*. Shame is a passion that can exact a bodily response, "...for those who feel shame blush and those who fear death turn pale" (NE 1128b14). He continues by pointing out the value of shame for the young because without it many would fall into bad ways unless shame restrained them. Aristotle did not believe shame belonged to older people because the restraining powers of shame are not to be understood as virtuous, because the continent or virtuous person would not be acting in such a way that he would require it. He concludes this short piece with a connection to what follows in Book 5, a discussion of the great virtue of justice.

Aristotle holds that the virtues he presents in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, taken together, form a whole, a whole that includes some virtues assuming more importance than others, for example the virtue of courage, set beside a nameless virtue, known only by its extremes. This judgment is reflected in the presentation of the virtues not being equal in emphasis, but their inclusion is central to understanding those habits that together enable a person to live a good life and achieve happiness in its richest sense. This is particularly apparent in Aristotle's treatment of the virtue of justice that he places at the pinnacle of his treatment of the virtues. With greatness of soul it is a complete virtue. Greatness of soul is a virtue in relation to oneself and justice in relation to others.

Distinctly different from the other virtues, justice looks to the happiness of the whole community with the word itself having two meanings, 'lawfulness' and 'fairness'. Aristotle has considered the virtues dealing with the passions, whereas justice deals with actions. In dealing with the passions Aristotle gives attention to how a person is internally influenced by passions, whereas with justice the focus is what happens externally in action. In coming to a mean of justice, the action, rather than the mean of

reason, is its determinate. Justice is not a mean between two vices. Particular justice rather than legal justice is the philosopher's consideration, noting that the effects a habit of justice has on a person are threefold, the first being an inclination to work of justice, the second is just action and the third, is to "wish for just things" (NE1129a90).

### **Will | *The principle underlying external actions***

The *Ethics* presents the reader with the key to action being will, not passion, and will becomes the principle underlying external action. The action of the will is the same for both just and unjust action. As a person would will and perform just actions, so too, are unjust actions willed and performed.

To demonstrate the separation of just and unjust behavior Aristotle alludes to the differences in science, where the contrary belongs to the same capacity. Aquinas (1993 Litzinger Trans) in his commentary offers the example of white and black to sight, health and sickness to medicine (SLE 5.2.890). In science, knowing the contraries is the means for knowing the other.

The unjust person acts in three possible ways: through breaking the law, by wanting too much and, third, by being unfair. In everyday language we would ascribe the last descriptor to the person who fails to 'pull their weight.' Aristotle then describes legal justice, which is determined by law. Whatever the authority, be it a monarchy or democracy, every law enacted has some measure of justice because laws are designed for the people. He says

The laws pronounce on all things, in their aiming at the common advantage, either for all persons or for the best or for those who have authority, either accord with virtue or in some other way (NE 1129b15-17).

Laws essentially are prescriptions of individual virtue and Aristotle cites a number of examples to give this emphasis. They include an outline of

why a courageous person would not leave the battle, throw down weapons or flee (NE 1129b20), or the moderate person would not commit adultery and the gentle person would refrain from striking or slandering another. While virtuous habits are well formed in some, the laws enacted through the legal justice system ensure all in a community have boundaries of behaviour that enable community life.

Aristotle regards justice as a perfect virtue, not in relation to itself but in its relation to others, and for this reason he holds justice to be the greatest of the virtues. The use of the following proverb serves to highlight the place of justice in the assemblage of virtues, "...neither the evening star nor the morning dawn being so wondrous" (NE 1129b29). Aristotle contends that justice itself comprehends every virtue at the same time. Legal justice exercises virtue in relation to another and it pertains to legal justice to exercise virtue through enacted laws. Aristotle also made clear the distinction between the exercise of virtue within a person, and the exercise of virtue that includes others. How one relates to others when in authority will test the presence of the virtue of justice, because it is within the exercise of authority that one person connects with another. Aristotle quotes Bias, one of the seven traditional sages of Greece, who said, "office will show the man" (NE 1130a2).

Aristotle moves from a consideration of legal justice to what he terms particular justice, which also has an orientation towards another. He describes a justice that is a particular virtue, and one that is made known by its contrary, a particular vice. His interpretation is that injustice is different from the many other vices to which people are subject. The examples he names include the soldier who throws down his shield because of cowardice, or the parsimonious person who refuses to help a friend in need. While particular justice has a common name with legal justice he differentiates the two with legal justice relating to the common good and particular justice pertaining to a private person. Hence, a transgression of particular justice may not necessarily be illegal, but it may be covetous and is concerned with honour or money or respect for others. Aristotle

applies a very subtle distinction to 'motivation for action'. The example he cites is that of the adulterous man. In one circumstance he may be motivated in his action by lust, in another circumstance he transgresses against justice for the sake of gain. In the following passage Aristotle describes this separation.

Yet when a person grasps for more, he often does so, not in connection with any one of these sorts of things, and even less in connection with them all, but rather in relation to a certain wickedness (for we blame it), namely, injustice (NE 1130a20-23).

Justice has a twofold character, legality and equality. Positive laws aim to produce virtuous behaviour in orientation to the common good. What also impacts on individuals is the instruction required in the effort to live a virtuous life. Where does this instruction belong? Is it found within political science or in some other science? The essence of particular justice is that to be a good person and a good citizen differ. Bartlett and Collins (2011) highlight this dilemma between justice as mean and as a virtue.

...this discussion also begins to illuminate a tension within moral virtue between the two ends that demand our devotion as morally, serious human beings, the common good on the one hand, and our perfection in virtue as an end in itself, on the other (p.274).

Aristotle rejects Pythagoras' view that justice is enacted through retaliation rather than reciprocity. He proposed that where people are gathered in community some system of exchange is required to allow the common life to proceed in fairness and harmony. Without this capacity for reciprocity people would be living as slaves. The capacity to exchange is one of the hallmarks of community, and reciprocity must find its underpinning in equality, which is the foundation of law. Aristotle states,

For as we saw, these accord with law and exist among those for whom law is natural, namely, those for whom there is equality in ruling and in being ruled (NE 1134b14-15).

Aristotle divides particular justice into two forms, distributive and corrective. By a principle to which all have agreed, distributive justice attends to the distribution of goods common to the community. Contained within this notion of justice Aristotle introduces the principal of 'merit' or 'desert'. Corrective justice on the other hand does not take account of merit but is applied to contracts and transactions to determine who is to bear blame for a particular action. Goods are valued by 'need' and the 'measure' the term used to represent need, makes the value of the goods comparable, acting as a guarantee for future exchange, usually in the form of money. In the present day demand for goods has become the measure, with government-established systems to ensure essential services, such as food and power remain within the grasp of all citizens. In addition to controlling price, the government also subsidizes the income of low or no income citizens through pensions and other benefits. This bond of exchange forms the basis of a functioning community.

Political goods, on the other hand, are the ruling offices of the community with merit the basis on which appointments are made. It is honour rather than money that is the path to such office. Aristotle asks what constitutes merit, is it freedom, wealth, noble birth or virtue? In the present time there is an interesting example in American Presidential campaigns where wealth is certainly essential if an individual chooses to pursue pre-selection. Unlike many other countries in the western world the personal challenges to virtuous behaviour, from all stages of a candidate's life, are laid bare in the public arena. In any community there will be transgressions of the law and the legal justice system is in place to ensure obedience, and punish as appropriate. In the whole explanation of justice Aristotle almost overlooks this aspect, preferring to concentrate on the voluntary exchange of goods as the means of community growth. Bartlett and Collins (2011) note this oversight in their commentary. "The treatment of distributive and commutative justice not only downplays the dispute over rule but also virtually ignores the role of anger and retribution in the punishment of harms" (p. 275).

There is a proportion in distributive justice that is about merit rather than sameness. In our democracy merit is judged according to the conditions of freedom, with the mean of distributive justice understood according to a relationship of proportions. Aristotle speaks of proportions as a geometrical notion between people and actions, "...for proportion is an equality of ratios" (NE 1131a31). Put simply, proportionality is geometric equality, a relation of one quality to another. Aquinas (1993) says in his commentary on the *Ethics*, "If in distribution man unites the things to the persons in this way, he acts justly" (SLE 5.3.943).

The mean of commutative justice, rather than geometric in structure, is accessed via an arithmetical equation. The law looks at the nature and extent of the damage, treating each party equally. Aristotle concludes, "rather the law looks only at the difference that stems from the harm done, and it treats persons as equals" (NE1132a5-6). The different relations of persons are not considered. Equality of quantity and not equality of proportion is the determinant of commutative justice. It is played out through the legal system and it is through the power invested in a judge that disputes are settled. Aristotle describes this process, when he says

To go to a judge is to go to the just, for a judge wishes to be, as it were, the just ensouled. And people seek a judge as a middle way, and some call them mediators, on the grounds that, if they hit on the middle term, they will have hit on the just. The just, therefore, is a certain middle way, if in fact the judge is as well. The judge also restores equality...(NE 1132a21-25).

Aristotle makes a precise distinction when speaking about just action as a mean. In all other cases the virtue stands as the mean between two vices, for example stinginess and prodigality lie at either extreme of liberality, with both extremes cited as vices. In the case of the just action as the mean the extreme at one end is doing what is unjust, and at the opposite end is suffering from what is unjust. This is not a middle course between two vices, as is the case with the other moral virtues. Justice is a mean between having too much and too little, it is the specific perfection associated with

the aspiration for gain. Other virtues, too, focus on gain, honour through greatness of soul or security through the exercise of courage are two examples. This concept of particular justice is difficult to separate from the other moral virtues discussed. Aristotle suggests a resolution to the difficulty he has posed through insertion of particular justice as a part of complete justice, thus bringing it into the realm of the common good. If this follows, there is a difficulty in judgment about the mean of particular justice being fair and equitable in relation to the common good. What is the standard of the good condition of the individual with respect to moral virtue? There could well be occasions when the common good and individual activity of moral virtue are at odds, for example, where surrender in war may be the best option for the community, but it would challenge the courageous soldier to throw down arms. If the common good is the standard, the direction of general justice must take from sources other than the individual, and those sources come from the moral authority of the law.

**Natural Justice | Political Justice | *Each of the just and lawful things***  
*is related* (NE 1135a6).

In coming to moral decisions there are two measures, the common good with the mean embedded within legal justice and the other, personal goodness. Because these two ends cannot always be reconciled the ideal of the community is set within its own limits.

At the conclusion of his long statement about justice Aristotle introduces the distinction between natural law and the law under which communities are bound. He says natural law does not change, whereas political systems and laws are subject to many influences. Examples of such movement can be observed in the development of laws in any country, most often in the area of proportionality. In England, theft is still a crime, but no longer is a transgressor of such a crime transported for what in past days meant lifetime banishment from country and one's own people.

Many societies, but not all, have shifted the emphasis in lawmaking to assist perpetrators to rejoin the community by means of rehabilitation, rather than subjection to retribution. Aristotle suggests that natural justice is part of political justice, defining the separation this way

Of the just in the political sense, one part is natural, the other, conventional. The natural part [of political justice] is that which has the same capacity everywhere and is not dependant to being held to exist or not, whereas the conventional part is that which at the beginning makes no difference whether it is thus or otherwise, but once people have set it down, it does make a difference: for example, the sum of money to offer for ransom, or to sacrifice a goat rather than two sheep...(NE 1134b19-23).

To act justly is difficult, even to know what is just. In many respects Aristotle leaves the reader without certainties about the absoluteness of just law and of equity. It may be for this reason that Aristotle moves to 'correct reason' as he examines the intellectual virtues.

### **Intellectual Virtues | *Habits by which the soul expresses the truth***

*(Bartlett and Collins p.365).*

The examination of the moral virtues begs the question, "Are the virtues means?" and on this there appears little doubt. "Are the virtues an end also?" is the logical question to follow.

Through his whole account of virtue Aristotle has maintained his stated original intention, "not so that we may know what virtue is, but so that we may become good" (NE 1103b27-28). In his outline of the moral virtues, Aristotle has provided the characteristic of virtue, which is found at the mean between two extremes. As an example, he outlined liberality as a virtue with prodigality and stinginess the vices at its extremes. However, in his writing on moral virtue, Aristotle has not detailed what it is that assists a person to know what action is truly a virtuous one. An act of liberality may be stingy in one circumstance and extravagant in another. As well as knowing what it is to be liberal, how does one know that the action taken,

in whatever circumstance, ensures that the mean is achieved? As well, the circumstance of the expression of the mean is variable. The aim of acting in a virtuous manner is to live a good life by avoiding the extremes. Aristotle poses the question, how do we know what action to take in a given situation? Early in Book 2 of the *Ethics* the reader is offered an entry point to understanding.

...it is necessary to examine matters pertaining to actions, that is, how one ought to perform them, for these actions have authoritative control over the sorts of characteristics come into being, just as we have said, "Now, acting in accord with correct reason" is commonly granted, and let it be posited for now - what pertains to it will be spoken of later, both what 'correct reason' is and how it relates to the virtues (NE 1103b29-34).

An understanding of becoming virtuous cannot be restricted only to an insight into the moral virtues, and must also include an inquiry about the intellectual virtues.

**Correct reason | Prudence | ...and prudence is correct reason** (NE1144b28).

Bartlett and Collins (2011) in their commentary on the *Ethics* refer to an interpretation of the use of the phrase 'correct reason' which could offer another lens to subsequent interpretation of its use in discussion of the intellectual virtues.

This famous phrase *orthos logos*, which translators have often rendered as "right reason" is as ambiguous as its components: what is "correct" *orthos* may or may not be true, and a *logos* may be a rational argument or a "speech," rational or not (p.28).

In the beginning of Book 6 Aristotle states quite unequivocally that correct reason is but one portion of a virtuous act. He says

...it is true to say that one ought not to strain or slacken either too much or too little, but as accords with the mean and as correct reason states. Yet if somebody should possess this alone, he would be not further ahead in his knowledge (NE 1138b26-30).

Aristotle calls correct reason ‘prudence’, *phronēsis*.

For virtue is not only the characteristic that accords with correct reason, but also the one that is accompanied by correct reason. And prudence is correct reason concerning such sorts of things (NE 1144b26-28).

**The Soul | *So of both of the intellectual parts (of the soul), the work (or tasks) is truth’* (NE 1139b11).**

In this examination, Aristotle reiterates his division of the soul into rational and non-rational parts. The rational soul is characterized by ‘thinking’, known also as the contemplative *theōria* virtue, and in the non-rational soul, character *ēthos* or moral virtue.

The rational soul Aristotle further divides into two parts, the first being ‘knowledge’ in the strict sense of knowing things scientifically, that body of thought that we can claim to be known beyond us. The second way of knowing is characterized by calculation and deliberation, which is prudence. Prudence, in this sense, describes the calculation and deliberation that leads to action, but not action that would result in artefacts. This type of action Aristotle would place with the action of the soul concerned with the arts.

Aristotle outlines three ingredients of the soul, sense perception, intellect and longing. These form the principles of human acts. It is through sense perception that animals are pressed to action. With this acknowledgement Aristotle excludes sense perception from the discussion. While animals respond to their senses they do not engage in social action. Aristotle’s examination concerns those parts of the rational soul that enable both truth and action. In this matter, truth does not pertain to the senses, as in the case of animals that are moved by natural instinct.

The prudent *phronimos* person deliberates on those actions that can improve individual and communal lives. The exercise of prudence is not concerned with those things past or fixed, for example the seasons of the year, “and nobody deliberates on things that do not admit of being otherwise. The calculative, as a result, is one part of that which possesses

reason" (NE 1139a14-15).

Intellect has a double action; it either informs truth or reveals that which is false. Longing too has a double action; on the one hand the pursuit of good, and its opposite, the pursuit of evil, which Aristotle puts simply when he says, "What affirmation and denial are in the case of thinking, pursuit and avoidance are in the case of longing for something" (NE 1139a21-22).

Aristotle argues that the work of each part of the soul relates to truth, and intellectual rectitude moves in a line parallel with right longing, ensuring that those things for which we long are good and can only be assured if this longing is coupled with right reason. "This, then, is the thinking and the truth concerned with action' (NE 1139a27).

Using faculties for contemplative thinking enables a person to differentiate between good and evil. Practical thinking on the other hand requires the alignment of truth and longing, with longing always aligned to the end rather than the means.

Action *praxis*, too, finds two meanings in the *Ethics*, first there is work (*tasks*) where something is made, this becoming its end, and there are immanent actions, where the action itself becomes the end, for example, justly becoming angry. When faced with choice it is the intellect and moral disposition that will provide enlightenment for longing. Action can itself be in two forms, something to be made, or alternatively something to be done. Choice becomes the principle of action and is part of longing and it is longing that provides awareness of good and evil. Intellect informs true and falsity. The end for both is contingent upon the intellectual pursuit. Action always remains in the person, like hearing, understanding or willing, whereas making produces something outside the person. Aristotle highlights the synergy between intellect and truth in the following statement.

So both the intellectual part (of the soul), the work (or task) is truth. The characteristics, then, by which each part will to the greatest degree attain the truth are the virtues of the two parts respectively (NE 1139b11-13).

The intellectual virtues listed in the Ethics are art, science, prudence, wisdom and understanding. Bartlett and Collins (2011) describe intellectual virtues as "...habits by which the soul expresses the truth" (p.365).

### **Science | *Knowledge built on what is already known***

In the context of Aristotle's outline of intellectual virtues, science, *epistēmē*, pertains to those things that are of necessity, knowledge of things that "in an unqualified sense are all eternal" (NE 1139b23-24). He tells us that all science, all new knowledge, is built on what is already known. Thomas Aquinas (1993) in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* says, "We cannot arrive at the knowledge of an unknown thing except by means of something known" (SLE.6.5.1147). The two means of knowing presented are induction and syllogism. Induction involves forming a principle, or with a new universal, through experiments with particulars. Syllogism is an inference deduced from two propositions. It must be noted that knowledge does not always result from a syllogism. Aristotle viewed science as a habit that could be demonstrated and based on principles.

### **Art | *All art finds expression in making***

The habit that has *activity* through reason is prudence, whereas the habit that is *productive* through reason is art *technē*, and all art finds expression in making. Correct reason must be the basis for considering art as an intellectual virtue. Artistic expression is an expression of truth, with the action of art made up of three features, first, thought about how the piece is to be made, second, the making phase and third, the completed product. Aristotle proposes that art is different from science and mathematics because both have come into being because of necessity. Prudence pays attention to action and art pays attention to making and in this way the two differ.

## **Prudence | *A characteristic bound up with action***

Distinct from science, prudence, *phronēsis*, deals with matters that appear “other than they are”, “...on matters of which there is no art” (NE 1140a31). As has been stated, the end for art is found in the artefact, but with action, a good undertaking becomes its own end. It remains, therefore, that prudence is a true characteristic that is bound up with action, accompanied by reason, and concerned with things good and bad for a human being” (NE 1140b5-6).

Aristotle mentioned “household managers and politicians” as examples of those whose lives are often marked by the capacity to deliberate for the benefit of others. He goes on to say that the reason “moderation” is spoken of is because it “preserves prudence” (NE 1104b9-12). It is through observation of those who act prudently that an understanding of prudence is gained and it is through the capacity to influence for good that the virtue is evident. It is also through counsel in a particular matter that a person is considered prudent, and, if this is the case, we are right to assume that the prudent person would be able to provide wise counsel when faced with significant life questions. The subject of deliberation and consideration relates to those things not yet attained, as opposed to scientific matters, which concern necessary things. Art, on the other hand, is about making things and Aristotle tells us the good of making is not in the maker but in the thing made. When referring to action, the very good operation of the action, *eupraxia*, becomes the end. He says that what preserves reason is moderation, *sōphrosune*, and it is from this that prudence *phronesis* takes its name. Pleasure and pain are two significant variables that can easily distort the end in any deliberation, especially as our human reaction to pain is to move from pain towards pleasure. Moderation *sōphrosune* assists in preventing this distortion.

Aristotle suggests that there are two parts to the rational soul, one part being scientific and the second estimative, which is that capacity to form opinions. To form opinions is distinct from correct reason hence the

rationale for placing prudence within the intellectual virtues. Having opinion, coupled with reason, allows consideration of things that “could be otherwise.” This brings to light a particular difficulty with this section of the *Ethics*. On the one hand Aristotle is suggesting that prudence is correct reason, a means of consideration and deliberation, and on the other hand, it is opinion forming which leads to knowledge of what ‘could be otherwise.’

Aquinas offers the following comment on the subject of prudence being an intellectual virtue.

Nevertheless, although prudence resides in this part of the reason as in a subject – because of this it is called an intellectual virtue – it is not connected with reason alone, as art or science, but it requires rectitude of the appetitive faculty. A sign of this is that a habit in the reason alone can be forgotten (for example art and science) unless a habit is a natural one like understanding. Prudence, however, is not forgotten by disuse, but it is destroyed by the cessation of right desire which, while remaining, is continually engaged with the things belonging to prudence, so that oblivion cannot come along unawares (Aquinas, 1993, SLE 6.1.1179).

### **Wisdom | *The most precise of the sciences***

Wisdom, *sophia*, however, is a combination of understanding and science, and postulated by Aristotle to be the most precise of the sciences. Once something is understood, the fundamental principles become known, and it is this faculty that he terms intellect or understanding.

Understanding is not taken here for the intellect itself but for a particular habit by which a man in virtue of the light of the active intellect, naturally knows in demonstrable principles (Aquinas 1993, SLE 6.1.1179).

In our time wisdom is attributed to those who have a deep knowledge of their field. Such a definition would be in a qualified sense whereas in an unqualified sense a person would be deemed wise who appears wise in every aspect of life, even if that person does not possess wisdom in a particular art. Wisdom is that knowledge which is its most certain form and it is superior amongst the sciences. This is because wisdom treats

first principles, “for example, those belonging to being as being” (Aquinas 1993 SLE 6.5.1181), “...a kind of perfection of all the sciences” (Aquinas 1993 SLE 6.2.1183). In placing wisdom among the sciences Aristotle remarks that political science and prudence, both with a focus on human affairs, cannot be amongst the best of the sciences because he believed man was not the highest in the order of importance within the cosmic structure, rather he viewed the world itself as the pinnacle of creation. “...to take only the most manifest example, the things of which the cosmos is composed” (NE 1141b2).

Prudence actually holds an unusual position amongst the intellectual virtues. According to Aristotle it is limited to the selection of means and is wholly dependant on having the correct end in place. This strongly infers that moral character must be well grounded for the correct end to be in place. In turn such grounding must be tied to excellence of character. Aristotle confirms the necessity for the moral virtues to be well established before the intellectual virtues can be accessed. “...virtue makes the target correct, prudence the things conducive to that target” (NE 1144a7-9).

The virtue of prudence tends to span both moral and intellectual virtues. Later in the *Ethics* Aristotle places prudence clearly in the realm of the moral virtues when he says,

Prudence too is yoked to the virtue of one’s character, and it to prudence, if in fact the principles of prudence are in accord with the moral virtues and what is correct in the moral virtues accords with prudence (NE 1178a16-19).

Keeping in mind that prudence is a means rather than an end, how does a person know that an action is right? That knowledge is required so a person may live a virtuous life. Having the capacity to form opinions is one step towards this (NE 1140b25-28). Bartlett and Collins (2011) suggest that Aristotle’s lack of focus on the ‘what’ of knowledge was essential for a virtuous life was because his audience was more interested in a ‘that’ question. “What is it that I need to live a virtuous life?” not “Why should I live a virtuous life?” (p. 283)

Aristotle proposes that awareness or knowledge about the end of moral action is itself not knowledge, but a deeply held conviction that is the result of habituation at the hands of the community. It is that conviction that is expressed in speech as opinion *phronesis*. He outlines this notion,

Thus we assert that (he who is in this way obedient to the commands) of his father and friends in some manner possesses reason – and not that he does so in the manner of (someone knowledgeable in) mathematics (NE 1102b32-34).

Bartlett and Collins (2011) place prudence in the panoply of virtues as “...less an intellectual virtue than a necessary accompaniment to the moral virtues” (p.283). In this research the placement of prudence as a virtue in no way diminishes its importance in this inquiry. Prudence remains significant as a means of expression of both moral and intellectual virtues allowing the faculty of deliberation to unite with that aspect of longing that enables a person to examine things as they might be, rather than as they are. Aristotle highlights the influence of prudence found in the community as the ingredient for transmission.

Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* re-emerged for serious study in the thirteenth century. St Thomas Aquinas was central to this re-emergence and his sympathy for Aristotle’s ideas find currency in his own work. However Aquinas places God at the very centre of his thought. Belief in God is central to the life narrative that will be examined in this inquiry and for that reason Aquinas’ work on virtue demands to be examined. The following chapter will give the reader a glimpse into the relationship between virtue in this life and that termed ‘supernatural’.

## CHAPTER 3 | THE SUMMA THEOLOGICA OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

### Significance of Aquinas' Thinking

Aristotle provides a clear insight into the virtues, reached through the development of reason and the moderation of the lower tendencies, with contemplation of the truth the vehicle to happiness. Aquinas supported Aristotle's thinking especially in regard to the moral virtues, most attainable with action described as a mean between immoderation and deficiency. But Aquinas' philosophy took a significantly different direction that has impacted Christian teaching. In the light of the narrative to be examined, a narrative posited within Catholic life, the importance of understanding the theological underpinnings of Catholic teaching about virtue is essential. This chapter endeavours to open for the inquiry the critical differences in the thinking between Aristotle and Aquinas. The intention of this chapter is to reveal understandings of the following elements: happiness in this life, and eternal happiness, which Aquinas called 'perfect'; morality through right order; free will; personal disposition and habits; body and soul; the part reason has to play in the cultivation of virtue and, most significantly, the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (love), a construct beyond what was treated by Aristotle.

The significance of Aquinas' writing in shaping theology, particularly moral theology, is immense. His thinking has shaped moral teaching since the Thirteenth Century and was foundational to the seminary education John Williams received. Because Aquinas' thinking found currency over hundreds of years his influence permeated Christian understandings of man's relationship to God, understandings that were taught in the home, in the primary classroom through to more complex theological studies at tertiary level. Such was the reach. But what were his ideas?

The first section of the second part of the *Summa Theologica*

examines what it is to be human, with articles on action, habits and a treatise on the law. In this section, Aquinas provides an ordered and thorough examination of the variety of elements that influence action. While this treatise is regarded as a philosophical one, it is also a theological examination of man's relationship with God, expressed most radically through the relationships people have with one another. It may appear, on first reading, that Aquinas was so influenced by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that the *Summa* is an effort at 'repackaging' his philosophical thoughts. While there are similar points and acknowledgement of Aristotle's writing, Aquinas takes a different starting point.

The happiness of which Aristotle speaks in the *Ethics* can be attained through living a virtuous life. Aquinas, on the other hand, makes the distinction between 'imperfect happiness,' which is achieved through the exercise of the virtues in this life, and 'perfect happiness,' which is attained through salvation. Aquinas explores imperfect happiness in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*. What he offers in the *Summa Theologica*, according to Kaczor (2008), "is a description of how God saves his people...the relationship of faith and reason, nature and grace, Old Law and New Law, virtues acquired and virtues infused..."(p.14). This he suggests is a far more complex knowledge than the knowledge required by an individual to be saved. What the *Summa* offers is a detailed moral theology. This chapter does not attempt to critique Aquinas' treatise, instead I am attempting to place his writing about the intellectual and theological virtues into the framework of this inquiry.

Aquinas' thinking has shaped Catholic theological belief for the past eight hundred years with his philosophy and theology enshrined into the Code of Canon Law until the latest revision in 1983.

The professors should by all means treat the studies of rational philosophy and theology, and the training of students (in seminaries) in these subjects, according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor, and should hold these as sacred (Code 1366 § 2).

It was Aquinas' scholarship that shaped John Williams' priestly formation, and for this reason, it is important to include him in this inquiry. His writing has shaped the formation of the subject of the life narrative in this inquiry, so an examination of the virtues, including the theological virtues, are an obvious underpinning for this inquiry. Professor Bill Long suggests "large doses of Aristotle are necessary in order for Thomas, in fact, to make sense" (Long, 2005). Such a succinct summary provides an entrée into this chapter on Thomas Aquinas' understanding of virtue. To understand the living experience of becoming virtuous it is necessary to have a clear understanding of virtue. The examination of virtue in the *Nicomachean Ethics* has provided a foundation text for this undertaking. Because of the significant influence of Aristotle's work on Aquinas, his writings fit logically into the texts chosen for consideration.

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* formed foundational thought for Thomas Aquinas' approach to virtues, outlined in his philosophical masterpiece, *Summa Theologica*. Aquinas is able to link Aristotle's list of virtues with those attributes of character that are prized within the Christian tradition. Conversely, the vices enunciated by Aristotle find comparison with the biblical concept of sin (Kenny, 2010). To Aristotle's list, Aquinas adds three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity, key dispositions of Christian life, which I have included as a focus for this chapter. An outline of Aquinas' thought on the intellectual virtues assists the reader to understand the theological virtues.

Thomas Aquinas drew a concept of virtue from the work of Aristotle, however there is a separation evident in the underlying principles of each philosopher. In Aristotle's writing a virtuous character is the impetus driving good actions. Aquinas, on the other hand, focuses on a person becoming good through performing good actions. In this way, a person becomes virtuous. This difference is important to grasp in this inquiry into the lived experience of becoming virtuous.

Having good dispositions is primary for Aristotle, with the highest good being contemplation of the truth, whereas for Aquinas, the end is

his focus. Because of this belief a good deal of the *Summa Theologica* is devoted to presenting both a philosophy and a theology that guides one toward a final end. In contrast to Aristotle, Aquinas' writing concerns ends both natural and supernatural. He believes people have only one end and this cannot be attained through human power alone.

### **Happiness | *Imperfect and Perfect***

Aquinas diverges radically from Aristotle's thinking in his belief that man participates in the divine nature of God. While he was influenced by Aristotle in his acceptance of the mean as key to understanding virtue, Aquinas' conviction about the relationship between God and man moves his thinking to another level beyond anything Aristotle proposed. According to Aquinas, it is this relationship with God and the living out of religious values that positions a person, not only for true goodness but it is the measure for ultimate happiness. Hardon (2001) describes this separation from Aristotle's thinking.

...by way of contrast with Aristotle - as the mainstay of an ethical system which believes that God and religious values are primary, and that true goodness is to be measured in terms of an ultimate finality, reasoned by man's natural intellection but fully possessed only on the basis of Christian faith (p. 9).

People must use their natural intellect and be receptive to the gift of faith to know the truth. Aquinas believed that God could be known by reason and by grace, beginning with our natural knowledge of things.

### **Will | Reason | *Choices guiding action***

For Aquinas, the will is the key driver in the perfection of virtues and only those powers that come under the influence of the will can attain the status of being called virtuous. The choices that are made about actions

involve the will, and understanding the will is the means to understanding virtue. Because will is the appetite of reason, and appetite inclines us to good, it is through appetite that we desire ends. The application of reason enables a person to grasp the outcome of a choice made. Animals also seek ends, but by natural instinct and without the comprehension of ends that people experience. For Aquinas, it is reason that directs to an end and the will moves in the direction of the reason. This progression is described in the following passage.

It is the will which moves the soul's power to their acts, and this is to apply them to operation. Hence it is evident that first and principally use belongs to the will as first mover; to reason as directing; and to the other powers as executing the operation...Now action is properly ascribed, not to the instrument, but to the principal agent, as building is ascribed to the builder and not his tools (ST. 1-11, Q.16, Art. 1).

Reason provides the bearing and the will moves in that direction. Because it guides all others, reason is the strongest of our powers. Aquinas deemed that while God moves the will every time we act virtuously (Selman 2007) he does not compel the will, nor move it against its nature. Choice always belongs to individuals. In this way the will is able to see opposites. As Aquinas tells us, only the final end is not our choice, because no one chooses not to be happy (ST. 1-11, Q.13, Art. 6).

Aquinas proposed happiness as the 'end' or purpose of life, but he differed from Aristotle in that he firmly believed this state of happiness was only achieved in the next, eternal life with God. He states, "Man's last end is the uncreated good, namely, God, who alone by his infinite goodness can perfectly satisfy man's will" (ST. 1-11, Q.3, Art.1), and again, "But in men according to their present state of life the final perfection is in respect of an operation whereby man is united to God" (ST. 1-11, Q.3, Art. 2, ad. 4).

Aquinas believed that it is through the use of a person's natural powers that one is able to attain imperfect happiness, that happiness that belongs in this life, in the same way as virtue is attained, but through natural powers alone perfect happiness cannot be achieved. It is the action

of God, aligned with an individual's will and actions, if focussed on eternal life as an end, which combine to ensure this perfect happiness. Aquinas says quite clearly, "Final happiness consists in the vision of the Divine Essence which is the very essence of goodness" (ST. 1-11, Q. 4, Art. 4).

Aquinas says that comprehension and delight also belong to the will because it is the same power that possesses a thing as that in which it rests. However, the will cannot act without an act of the intellect preceding it. It is the will that moves a person to the final act of the intellect, which is happiness.

Aquinas judged the virtues to be good habits that led to actions that incorporated the powers of the soul. That final action is an individual uniting himself or herself with God. He postulates that people reach God in two ways, first, through the action of the intellect, and second, through the action of the will. A certain 'imperfect knowledge' of the end is present in the intellect and it is through the will 'by love' that a person's relationship with God is nurtured. The analogy of a lover and the beloved is used to illustrate his point. If the thing beloved is already present to the lover, it is not sought. If the beloved is impossible to attain, again it will not be sought. But sometimes it is within reach, but a person's capacity to attain it has not been achieved that stage. Aquinas says it is hope that causes a search for an end, which becomes a driver and this connection that a person of faith has to what they long for, is the final happiness. Happiness is attainable if this sense of hope, driven by love, is present.

As well, Aquinas speaks of three elements that must correspond in happiness, vision, comprehension and delight. Vision indicates perfect knowledge of the end, comprehension of the presence of the end, and delight, achieved when the good is attained, or in Aquinas' words "repose of the lover in the object beloved" (ST.1-11, Q. 4, Art. 3). Hope and love, too, belong to the will, because it is that same power that loves, as that which tends towards something not yet possessed.

Aquinas reiterates Aristotle's proposition that a well-disposed body is necessary to achieve happiness, adding that such happiness is for this

life. Happiness, he calls 'imperfect', while the vision of God in the next life provides 'perfect' happiness. For imperfect happiness, external goods are necessary, and while not belonging to happiness itself, allow the operation of virtue (ST.1- 11.Q.4.Art. 7). Friendship of others is also necessary for imperfect happiness, a human need that Aquinas explains.

If we speak of the happiness of this life, the happy man needs friends, as the Philosopher says (*Ethics*1x9) not to make use of them, since he suffices himself, nor to delight in them, since he possesses perfect delight in the operation of virtue; but for the purpose of a good operation, viz., that he may do good to them; that he may delight in seeing them do good; and again that he may be helped by them in his good work. For in order that he may do well, whether in the works of the active life, or in those of the contemplative life, he needs the fellowship of friends (ST 1-11, Q.4, Art. 8).

However, having achieved perfect happiness, the need for friends is no longer necessary.

Happiness once had can be lost. Contemplative happiness can be lost through forgetfulness, which Aquinas likens to the loss of knowledge through sickness. As well, he suggested that certain occupations that do not allow a person to contemplate could be an avenue for loss of happiness. Repetitive work undertaken in factory settings could be a modern example of this proposal.

Aquinas said that active happiness, that is associated with the way one lives life, could be placed in jeopardy through the changed actions of the will in a movement that flows from virtue to vice. For a virtuous person, outward changes can thwart virtue, but not destroy it. Of course, once perfect happiness is achieved all other impediments are removed.

According to Aquinas, when a person is raised to a share of eternity nothing can change that state, as eternal life goes beyond change. "This is done by the Divine power, which raises man to the participation of eternity which transcends all change" (ST 1-11, Q.5, Art. 4, ad.1).

## Morality | Right Order

For the will to move towards the end, to achieve perfect happiness, it must be in the 'right order', enabling those acts that lead to virtue and are necessary for the acquisition of happiness. Aquinas tells the reader that happiness is gained by certain acts, and what he terms morals are those principles that guide good action. It is only when these principles are understood can a person act in a manner considered to be good. It is from this assumption that a system of morality exists within any society.

For a Christian, these principles find their genesis in the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses to guide the Hebrew people. The Ten Commandments have a dual structure that first acknowledges God and, second, shows respect for others. It could be argued that the underlying principles of the Ten Commandments continue to inform the basic structure of our legal system. What has flowed from these basic principles in the Christian tradition is a complex web of prescriptions to guide countless actions encountered in life. In the Catholic tradition these prescriptions for and against actions found currency in catechisms, ranging in complexity from a simple book in the possession of young children, to catechisms for adults through to the complex Code of Canon Law.

Aquinas teaches that through a grasp of these foundational principles a person can concur with the end. He offers the example of the man who wills to have good health as only being possible if the principles of good health are understood. The importance of grasping foundational principle is essential to this inquiry and will be further explored in the development of guiding questions in the next chapter.

And how is the will moved to act? Action assumes two forms according to Aquinas, firstly acting or not acting, and secondly making the choice between this or that action. Aquinas describes this progression.

A thing requires to be moved by something in so far as it is in potentiality to several things, for that which is in potentiality needs to be reduced to act by something actual, and to do this is to move (ST. 1- 11, Q. 9, Art. 1).

Key to understanding Aquinas' notion of action is a grasp of what he calls 'hope,' a concept with four elements. First, hope is moved only by good; secondly hope is about the future, it is not interested in what is already possessed; thirdly, the end must be something demanding and difficult to achieve, and, lastly, that this difficult thing is possible to attain. Hope presupposes desire but is different from desire in the way that irascible passions differ from concupiscence. Aquinas concludes that the happiness of hope is bestowed on us through grace, which makes a person pleasing to God. Hope as a notion, is necessary for a person of faith, for it is because of faith that a person would have a reason to hope, not just for happiness in this life but most particularly happiness in the next. This underpins the basis of Christian hope. Aquinas gives considerable attention to the intrinsic principles of human action, which, in turn, assists an understanding of the virtues. The foundational principles he outlines are power and habit. He concludes that, first, the intellect is a power of the soul, but not its essence, and, second, reason and intellect are not distinct powers. For Aquinas this is made clear when consideration is given to the action of reason and intellect, that begins with the apprehension of intelligible truth, and through reason, advances from one understanding to another. It is in this way that a person comes to know an intelligible truth. He calls this speculative intellect 'reason'. The practical intellect that comprehends the movement from one understanding to another he calls 'prudence'. Aquinas' understandings of intellect and reason echo Aristotle's writing (ST. 1-1, Q.79, Art. 8).

### **Natural Instinct | Free Will**

Aquinas believed that everyone has free will, but not all actions are the result of using free will, with some actions the result of natural instinct. Aquinas did not consider natural instinct as free judgement. The example he cites is of the sheep that shuns the wolf, a judgement made not through reason, but rather because of natural instinct. The fact that people are able to

act on comparative choices, not only natural instinct, enables some understanding of free will. Because humans are rational, free will is integral to decision-making. Aquinas suggests that, in the strict sense, free will is an act, the principle of the act that allows a person to make a judgement. Free will is not a natural habit it is, in fact, a power, a power of the soul.

Aquinas regards habits as the way in which people are disposed to actions and passions, for example, the generous person is well-disposed to giving, and the person who is mean is ill-disposed to giving, with free will involved in both dispositions. Free will is indifferent to good and bad choice. Rather it is the process of coming to choice that is the role of free will. Because of this, Aquinas says that free will is not a habit. Rather, a habit is “a kind of medium between mere power and mere act” (ST. 1-1, Q. 87, Art.2). In the same article, Aquinas states that faith is not known by any external action of the body, but by an “interior act of the heart” (ST. 1-1, Q.87, Art.2). Unless a person has taken an intellectual step of belief, faith will not be known.

The word ‘habit’ comes from ‘habere’ meaning ‘to have’ (ST. 1- 11, Q 49, Art, 1). Aristotle proposed habit as an action or passion of the ‘haver’, a quality that implies lastingness. Disposition, on the other hand, can be imperfect and perfect; imperfect when it is lost and perfect when the disposition becomes a habit. Aquinas, too, acknowledges this progression, “and thus a disposition becomes a habit, just as a boy becomes a man” (ST. 1-11, Q.49, Art. 2). Disposition can be viewed in two ways, first as the genus of habit and second as it is either for or against the habit. This has already been mentioned as imperfect and perfect habit.

Aquinas points to the transitory nature of imperfect dispositions, highlighting the changeable reasons that cause this to happen. The example he uses is sickness and health. One may have a healthy disposition but that does not preclude an individual succumbing to illness. A habit, by its nature is not something that is easily changed because habits have ‘unchangeable causes’, for example, virtue. This relationship between habit and disposition is supported in Aristotle’s writing. Habit implies

lastingness, disposition does not. In the development of the approach to my inquiry, notions of habit and disposition will be further explored, particularly in relation to the influence they have on the development of character.

The development of the intellect is assisted by consideration and understanding. These become a habit belonging to the intellect, while phantasms (figments of the imagination) find source in both body and soul. Aquinas says that all actions must be advanced by means of a habit that disposes the person to act in a particular way. Habit, by its nature, is fundamentally related to will in that it is habit that is employed when one wills. He also believed that some people are subject to certain habits because of their individual nature. "For some are disposed of their own bodily temperament to chastity or meekness or such like" (ST. 1-11, Q.51, Art.2).

Aquinas says that to develop the habit of virtue many acts are required. While many acts of reason are required to acquire a habit of forming opinions, a habit of science could come into being by one single action that brought to light a new understanding. Such is the power of the intellect, that for the lower apprehensive powers the same acts need to be repeated many times over to enable commitment to memory. He was also of the belief that some habits were instilled in man by God's action. He proffered two reasons to support this claim, the first being that while man moves towards perfect happiness of life with God, the action of achieving this is beyond the normal proportion of human nature and the habit of maintaining this disposition to perfect happiness can only come through, what he terms, 'divine infusion'. His second reason is that God can produce second causes, describing the passage in scripture the records the apostles receiving the gift of languages at Pentecost. These disciples were all Galilean's, with each now able to speak a different language (Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 2, Verse 7-11). Aquinas describes this phenomenon. "This he gave to the apostles the science of the Scriptures and of all tongues, which men can acquire by study or by custom, but not so perfectly (ST. Q. 51, Art.4). Habits, too, can be both

good and bad. A good habit, Aquinas tells us, is that habit that inclines a person to act according to their nature. On the contrary, bad habits incline a person to act against their nature. This finds currency in his view of virtue as being at one with nature and according to reason. It follows then that acts of vice are at odds with both reason and nature.

## **Virtue | Habit**

Aquinas continues his treatise with a shift of focus to virtue. He begins his exposition by examining whether a habit is a virtue emphasising a particular perfection of power, with power in this context finding its completion in action, and in accord with nature. Powers that belong to nature, can in themselves, be called virtues. I believe the moral virtues fall within this definition. Then there are rational powers, which are proper only to people, and they determine acts according to habit. As such, human virtues are habits. “For the act of virtue is nothing else than the good use of free will” (ST. 1-11,Q.55, Art.1, ad.2).

This idea is expanded in the introduction of the principle of merit that has a twofold aspect. First, we become good by acts of goodness, by the very doing of the action and, second, we merit by the power of the principle that guides that action. In this way we become good by both virtue and habits. Such a theory finds ready currency in an examination in the following life narrative with many examples of this duality providing a clear view of the experience of coming to virtue.

Being constituted of body and soul, Aquinas proposes that the body holds the place of matter and the soul, form. The forces that are proper to the body are held in common with all animals, but it is the forces of the soul that are held by man alone. Human virtue, as we understand it, Aquinas says belongs to the soul. Like Aristotle, Aquinas points to that which is deepest and most reflective of our common humanity as the seat of virtue. Aristotle called it *hexis* and Aquinas *soul*. Virtue is about action, not being, and the action required must derive from habit.

While virtue is a principle of operation, that operation is dependent on the disposition of the operator. Aquinas tells us that like habits, virtues require an ordered disposition of soul. In the sense that the powers of the soul are ordered to each other, action in one aspect must not conflict with another principle or power so that virtue is not hindered from operation. Virtue is restricted to works of reason and Aquinas warns against assigning virtue to being. “Virtue which is referred to being is not proper to man; but only that virtue which is referred to works of reason, which are proper to man” (ST. 1- 11.Q 55, Art.2, ad. 2).

Because virtue is always good, because it is the perfection of a power of the soul, it is a good habit that produces good works. Aquinas offers a clear definition of virtue that introduces a notion about the action of God that is not present in Aristotle’s writing on the subject. He says “*Virtue is a good habit of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us*” (ST.1-11.Q.55.Art.4). Infused virtue, or that “which God works in us, without us” (ST.1-11.Q.55.Art.4), presupposes faith. Individuals can acquire virtues, but Aquinas says it is through the action of God alone, without any action on the part of individuals, that such a good can be completed in a person. Aquinas qualifies this by insisting that infused virtues require personal consent. How then does this process unfold?

Aquinas held that God works in every will and in every nature and it is through the assent of will, an action in itself, that this divine action can come to fruition. It was from Augustine that Aquinas pursued the idea of habits “which God works in us, without us” (ST. 1-11, Q. 55 Art. 4, ad. 6). Aristotle proffered habituation and practice as a means of acquiring the moral virtues, for example, becoming gentle through gentle actions and by habituating oneself to feel gentleness and irascibility in appropriate ways. Aquinas adds another means by which these virtues can be acquired. His philosophy led him to believe that human beings can be transformed through the action of God’s grace to receive the moral virtues. These infused moral virtues have different ends and different measures. Acquired virtues

lead to imperfect happiness, the happiness that is restricted to this life. Infused virtues, on the other hand, relate to perfect happiness achieved in eternal life and subject to the action of God. Where human reason is the measure of acquired virtues Divine Law is the measure of infused moral virtues. Because of the differences in cause, ends and measure Aquinas concluded that they were a different genus of virtue (ST. 1-11, Q. 62. Art.3).

Aquinas treats four types of law, eternal, natural, human and divine. Long (2005) describes eternal law as the order of the universe “pre-existing in the mind of God...God’s wisdom in both planning and then creating the universe” (p.2.). While this law exists, God’s wisdom governs all aspects of our world, including the working of nature and the workings of the planets. Aquinas calls one’s ‘natural inclinations’ the means of access to eternal law for the reason that it is natural for a person to seek to unravel the complexities of the world. Because God is beyond the limitations of time, Aquinas calls God’s law, eternal. Natural law, on the other hand, is the participation by people in eternal law. He describes natural law in the following way.

It is evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them...Wherefore it (human nature) has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law (ST 1-11, Q. 91, Art. 2).

As has been stated, natural law is man’s participation in eternal law, not as something that is ‘other worldly,’ but as a law deeply rooted in our world “whereby we discern what is good and what is evil” (ST. 1-11, Q. 91, Art. 2). In this, Aquinas gives us the first principle of natural law, the knowledge of good and evil.

Aquinas draws on Augustine’s proposition that human law that deals with temporal matters is a “dictate of practical reason” (Long, 2005. p.3). Speculative reason seeks to draw conclusions from suppositions by means of reason and in the same way human reason proceeds to

particular determinations in matters. These particular determinations form the basis of human law.

The final category of law treated by Aquinas is divine law, which is the source of infused virtues. He describes divine law as God's will as it is revealed to man through the scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments. Aquinas cites four motives for divine law; first, humans need specific divine guidance to perform acts in view of the last end; second, the lack of certainty in human judgement needs a check; third, the need we have for insight into areas that are beyond the human capacity to comprehend, for example, the interior movement of the mind. Aquinas notes that it is only on "exterior acts which appear" (ST. 1-11, Q. 91, Art. 4) can judgements be made.

...and yet for the perfection of virtue it is necessary for man to conduct himself aright in both kinds of acts...human law could not sufficiently curb or direct interior acts (ST.1-11, Q. 91, Art.4).

And last, Aquinas suggests that because human law cannot punish all evil deeds, God will, through divine law, punish transgressions that go beyond the ability of human law to penalize. For many Christians through the ages this knowledge that God is all-seeing and all knowing, has, rather than providing comfort, been an incentive to do the right thing, albeit a negative incentive.

According to Aquinas there are three ways in which to prove that virtue is a power of the soul. First, virtue implies perfection and that perfection is a power of the soul. Second, virtue is "an operative habit" and all operation or action proceeds from the soul by means of some power, and third, virtue disposes a person to goodness in action and that goodness becomes the end. It is from the power of the soul that virtue is born.

Aquinas believed virtue is a habit, one by which a person develops well. This virtue has two expressions, an aptness to do good and to do well. The example he offers relates to grammar. The habit of good grammar allows a person to speak correctly. But it is not just the facility with

grammar that makes a person speak correctly. The second aspect of the use of habit, regards right use. As well as aptness to act in a certain way, what is required is the right use of the aptness. He expresses this distinction when he says "Justice not only gives man the prompt will to do just actions, but also makes him act justly" (ST. 1-11, Q. 56, Art. 3). It is this combination of virtue making its possessor good and making his actions or work good that gives insight into the effect of virtue. Aquinas regards this as virtue 'simply'. By 'simply' he means virtue as it actually is, rather than "what it is potentially" (ST. 1-11, Q. 56, Art. 3). He makes another delineation when speaking of those who are gifted in a certain area, for example art. The one spoken of is said to be good, not simply, but relative to the work produced. Aquinas says this distinction causes art to be divided against virtue in some instances and called virtue in others. It is the will, or some rational power that moves the will that is the subject of the habit that stirs a virtue simply. So as well as having the aptness to good it is the will that moves a person to good actions.

### **Virtue | Intellect | Reason**

Aquinas describes two aspects of intellect, practical and speculative, which both subordinate the will. He believes that it is through the speculative intellect, or reason, that the assent to faith can be made, for it is the intellect being moved by the command of the will that makes this possible. Augustine said, "...no man believeth unless he will" (Tract xxvi, in Joan ST. 1-11, Q. 56, Art.3).

In the *Nicomachean Ethics* the practical intellect, or prudence, is understood to be right reason for acting. The prudent person must possess the disposition to know the right principles that underpin the reason for acting. Aquinas calls this "their ends" (ST. 1-11, Q. 56, Art. 3). It is through the rectitude of the will that a convergence of the principles of speculative truth and the active intellect occurs. Prudence becomes the practical intellect in relation to the right will.

Aquinas held that truth is the *telos* of intellect. The good act that enables reaching that end is the good work of the intellect. The habit that perfects the intellect in regard to knowledge of the truth he calls a virtue. This applies for both the speculative and practical intellect. He says of this virtue, "For virtue is a perfect habit, by which it never happens that anything but good is done; so virtue must needs be in that power which consummates the good act" (ST. 1-11, Q.56, Art.5). He notes that where the will is challenged by a good that surpasses its capacity, the will requires a virtue. These are the virtues that Aquinas says, "direct man's affections to God or to his neighbour and are subjected in the will, as charity, justice, and such like" (S.T.1-11, Q. 56, Art. 6). In other words, it is each person who has to will the possession of these virtues, as one is not charitable or just or in relationship to God through the power of the will alone. The intellectual virtues are those powers that perfect a person's intellectual capacity. Both Aristotle and Aquinas separate the abstract work of the intellect from its practical activities. The abstract or speculative intellect considers truth, the certainty about things that cannot be otherwise. The practical intellect takes as its object truth about actions performed or things made. Three virtues, understanding, science and wisdom perfect the intellect in its speculative activities. Aristotle believed these three virtues are acquired through instruction from a person who already possessed those virtues.

Aquinas proffers that it is the habit of the speculative intellect that confers aptness for good work, with contemplation of the truth being that good work. In this sense, this habit can be called virtue. However, aptness is not a virtue, rather it is through the action of the will, not virtue, that a person makes use of knowledge. A virtue is about its object. A virtue is about its acts.

Both Aristotle and Aquinas look to three habits of the speculative intellect; wisdom, science and understanding whose end and good is truth. Truth has two parts, the principle as it is known in itself and as a habit that "...perfects the intellect for consideration of the truth"

(ST. 1-11, Q. 57, Art. 2). This habit Aquinas describes as understanding and he is speaking here about a habit of principles. As well, truth relates to the understanding of a particular thing, as well as the wider definition that refers to all human knowledge. Those habits that perfect the speculative reason to the *telos* of truth are virtues. The *telos* of truth is known first and foremost through its nature and in nature there is order and knowledge of that order. This is accepted as wisdom.

The intellect employs the habit of science to interrogate knowable knowledge, with different habits of scientific knowledge employed according to the subject at hand. While there are many habits of science, there is only one wisdom. Wisdom, like science, does establish conclusions from principles, but it encapsulates all conclusions according to their first principles. In this way Aquinas concludes wisdom a more perfect virtue than science.

As has been stated, the good of intellect is truth. Opinion and suspicion are employed as a means of coming to truth and seeking out falsehood. Both Aristotle (*Ethics* vi.3) and Aquinas examined the place of opinion and suspicion and both agreed that they did not fall under the umbrella of intellectual virtues.

Prudence is aligned to the use of powers and habits, as art is to making. As science depends on and pre-supposes understanding, which is the habit of principles, the prerequisite for prudence is perfection and rectitude of reason, meaning that teleological principles must be known. Prudence is necessary for a good life and the prudent person is of good counsel about matters regarding their entire life, as well as in matters teleological. Aquinas appeals to Divine Wisdom in stressing prudence, quoting from the Old Testament Book of Wisdom, "it is she who teaches temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude; nothing in life is more serviceable to men than these" (The Jerusalem Bible, Wisdom Ch 8, V 7.). These four virtues of the Greek philosophers became the 'cardinal' virtues of Christian theology.

For the person whose life is characterised by good deeds, how

one carries out an action is just as important as what is done. To be virtuous, actions must have their genesis in right choice, not impulse or passion. Choices then must be guided by right principle and established to a due end. To ensure choice is characterised in this way a person must be rightly disposed by a habit in his reason, because counsel and choice are acts of reason. Prudence is the intellectual virtue that perfects the reason in this regard.

### **Reason | Moral Virtue**

Aquinas divides reason into three components - counsel, judgement and command. Counsel and judgement correspond to inquiry and judgement in the speculative intellect. Command, on the other hand, is proper to the practical intellect, and is aligned to action. Placing these components of reason in order Aquinas places command as the principal act with prudence the virtue that perfects the command. In his writing about moral virtue Aquinas again takes as his introduction the writings of Aristotle, who said, "For in speaking about someone's character, we do not say that he is wise or comprehending but that he is gentle or moderate" (NE11039a7-8), emphasising that wisdom and understanding are virtues, but not moral virtues.

The word 'moral' comes from the Latin word 'mos', which bears two meanings, as 'custom' and also as a 'natural inclination to do some particular action' (ST 1-11, Q58 Art, 1). The latter sense is most often applied to the natural inclination of animals. However, it is the combination of both meanings that give explanation to moral virtue being called 'mos' in the sense of a natural inclination to action. Custom becomes second nature, producing an inclination similar to a natural one. Such inclination to action rightly belongs to the appetitive power, whose function is to move all the powers to their acts. It is the virtues in the appetitive faculty that are the moral virtues.

Reason, Aquinas tells us, is the first principle of all acts. Other

principles also guide our actions. Since virtue is a habit perfecting a person through their good actions, it would follow that if reason were the principal movement then there would only be intellectual virtues. Aquinas quotes Socrates to demonstrate this belief when he says, “every virtue is a kind of prudence” (ST. 1-11, Q. 58, Art. 2). This belief of Socrates led him to maintain that while man possessed knowledge, he was incapable of sin, and for those who succumbed to sin, it was the result of ignorance. Aquinas believed this position was false because the appetitive faculty, while obeying reason, does not do so blindly. He quotes Augustine,

...‘that sometimes we understand (what is right) while desire is slow, or follows not at all’, in so far as the habits or passions of the appetitive faculty cause the use of reason to be impeded in some particular action (Ps. cxviii. serm. 8 cited in ST. 1-11, Q. 58, Art. 2).

In summary, for a person to do good deeds two elements are required: first, a disposition by means of a habit of intellectual virtue and second, a disposition to a habit of moral virtue. Aquinas acknowledges moral and intellectual virtues differ, in a similar way as appetite differs from reason. It is the appetite that controls the movement to action, but to do so, right reason must be employed. It is because of this relationship between the appetitive faculty and reason that moral habits can be considered virtues.

Aquinas makes particular note that, right reason, through prudence, is an essential element of all the moral virtues. He says

Right reason which is in accord with prudence is included in the belonging by way of participation to all the moral virtues, in so far as they are all under the direction of prudence (ST. 1-11, Q. 58, Art. 2, ad. 4).

Two principles guide human actions, the intellect or reason and the appetite. As a result, every human virtue must be a perfection of one of these principles. For a person to do good deeds the perfection of the

speculative or practical intellect can be described as intellectual virtue. On the other hand, perfection of the appetitive faculty is the result of moral virtue. Prudence holds a place in both intellectual and moral virtues, amongst the intellectual virtues because of its relationship to reason and amongst the moral virtues because it is right reason about things to be done.

Moral and intellectual virtues rely on each other. Aquinas says that because prudence is a habit of choosing well, it is requisite to the exercise of all moral virtue. Moral virtue may not require the intellectual virtues of wisdom, science and art, but prudence and understanding are necessary for right choice. It is through the virtue of understanding that the principles that guide action are recognized. He declares this recognition, coupled with intention being directed at a good end, as the two necessary elements involved in good choice with choice being indispensable in both speculative and practical matters.

Aquinas identifies the natural inclination towards good, a beginning of virtue, but more is required to bring virtue to perfection. He warns that the stronger the natural inclination, the more risky one's choices become unless inclination is guided by right reason. His simple example is clearly illustrative of this point. "Thus if a running horse be blind, the faster it runs the more heavily will it fall, and the more grievously will it be hurt" (ST. 1-11, Q. 58, Art. 4, ad. 3). It is reason that provides equilibrium to natural inclination, so that choice, once made, leads to a good end.

Prudence and moral virtue also share another relationship. Prudence assists a person to be of good counsel, to judge well and to command accordingly. Passions are any movement of the sensitive appetite and while passions can limit judgment and the command of prudence, it is moral virtue that ensures this impediment is removed. Passions are neither good nor evil, as reason is required to assign such descriptions. Aquinas treats this issue of the passions to emphasise that they cannot be called virtues because in themselves the passions can find demonstration in good and evil. As virtue can only describe good, the passions cannot be described as virtues.

The movement of the passions commences in the appetite, that faculty that moves all the powers to their acts and ends in reason, as opposed to the movement of virtue that commences in the reason and ends in the appetite. Aristotle described it this way, "Virtue, therefore, is a characteristic marked by choice, residing in the mean relative to us, a characteristic defined by reason and as the prudent person would define it" (NE 1107a1-3).

However, Aquinas recognizes that there are some passions that have only good as an end, emphasising that such passions can be a virtuous. He acknowledges that both Cicero and Augustine cite pity, or 'sorrow for another's ills' as an example of a variance to the principle that passions cannot be virtues. Aquinas qualifies his agreement by quoting Augustine.

...in so far as that movement of the soul is obedient to reason; viz., when pity is bestowed without violating right, or when the poor are relieved, or the penitent forgiven (ST. 1-11, Q. 59, Art. 1, ad. 3).

Pity calls forth emotion but it may not lead to action. By comparison with pity, compassion requires both feeling and action from the one showing compassion. And what of the place of sorrow? While sorrow reflects some evil present, Christ himself, perfect in virtue, said in the garden of Gethsemane, "My soul is sorrowful to the point of death" (The Jerusalem Bible, Matthew, Ch 26, V 38). While sorrow reflects some evil present and fear anticipates evil to come, pleasure reflects some good in the present, and desire anticipates a future good. Through virtue our sensitive appetite is conformed to reason and it follows reason's rejection of what is evil and in turn sorrows for that evil. While evil is incompatible with virtue, Aquinas says that "moderate sorrow is the mark of a well-conditioned mind 'virtue sorrows moderately for all that thwarts virtue, no matter how'" (ST. 1-11, Q. 59, Art. 3, ad. 3).

Aquinas divides moral virtues into two categories, those that are about passions and those that have as their focus what he calls 'operations'.

Aristotle and then Aquinas propose justice as the greatest of the moral virtues. It is the action of reason that moderates both the passions of the sensitive appetite and the actions of the intellectual appetite. Aquinas is careful to maintain the rightful place of the passions, not diminishing their task of drawing us to action. His use of the example of justice, which he calls an operation and not a passion, at first reading, presents a contradiction, but it is the result of action that engages passion. In the following passage the reader clearly sees the worth of passions and their relationship to action.

Those moral virtues, however, which are not about the passions, but about operations, can be without passions. Such a virtue is justice: because it applies the will to its proper act, which is not a passion. Nevertheless, joy results from the act of justice; at least in the will, in which case it is not a passion. And if this joy is increased through the perfection of justice, it will overflow into the sensitive appetite; in so far as the lower powers follow the movement of the higher....Wherefore by reason of this kind of overflow, the more perfect a virtue is, the more does it cause passion (ST. 1-11, Q. 59, Art. 5).

### **Theological Virtues | Sharing in the life and grace of God**

The quartet of virtues, prudence, justice, courage and moderation, known as the cardinal virtues, date back to Plato and are mentioned as well in the Book of Wisdom in the Old Testament. Both Aristotle and Aquinas treated these virtues. To the cardinal virtues Aquinas adds the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, which had been placed together in the famous passage of St Paul. (The Jerusalem Bible, 1Cor.13.13) The theological virtues reflect man's sharing in the life and grace of God.

Believing that the scriptures revealed divine law Aquinas took the following passage from the Old Testament book of Ecclesiasticus as his starting point in his reflection on the theological virtues.

You who fear the Lord, trust him,  
and you will not be baulked of your reward,  
you who fear the Lord hope for good things,  
for everlasting happiness and mercy. (Chapter 2, Verses 8-9)  
...and those who love him find satisfaction in his law (The Jerusalem Bible Ch 2, V19).

Man is perfected by virtue, and those actions that are virtuous move him to happiness. Aquinas proposes that this happiness has two parts: the first is the happiness a person attains by effort of his natural principles. The second form of happiness is beyond the nature of man, and is obtained through the power of God. This is described in the following New Testament passage.

By his divine power, he has given us all the things that we need for life and for true devotion, bringing us to know God himself, who has called us by his own glory and goodness. In making these gifts he has given us the guarantee of something very great and wonderful to come; through them you will be able to share the divine nature... (The Jerusalem Bible, 2 Peter, Ch I, V 3-4).

Aquinas believed that it is through the action of Christ that people are able to partake in the divine nature of God. Because such happiness is beyond the capacity of the human nature of any individual it is necessary to receive some additional gifts whereby supernatural happiness could be attained. Aquinas does not diminish human nature or the efforts to achieve the connatural end, but he does highlight the divine assistance necessary to achieve fullness of happiness. The object of the theological virtues is God. He outlines three ways that this is evident; first, in the way that these virtues direct us to God, second, by the way they are inculcated in people through the action of God, and third, in the way that these virtues are only made known through divine revelation, which is contained in the scriptures. Aquinas uses a metaphor about the connection between wood and fire to describe the connection of human nature to a sharing in divine nature. He says "As kindled wood partake in the nature of fire, thus after a fashion, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature" (ST. 1- 11, Q. 62, Art. 1, ad. 1).

It is through these virtues, that Aquinas calls 'divine' that God directs people to him and makes them virtuous. These virtues surpass what it is that we are able to comprehend through the moral and intellectual virtue that can be grasped through the use of reason. The theological virtues relate to supernatural perfection.

Aquinas offers two means through which people reach their

connatural end. First, through reason, which gives the power for first principles to be grasped, first principles that are the starting point in both speculative and practical questions. Second, through correct tendency of the will which is drawn naturally to good. But this falls short of supernatural happiness, as this biblical passage affirms, "...the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him" (The Jerusalem Bible, 1 Corinthians Ch 2, V 9). It is only through receiving additional supernatural gifts that a person is able to grasp a supernatural end. To receive the gift of faith the intellect must be able to grasp supernatural principles that are held 'by means of a divine light'. The will is then directed to this end, an end that is known to be attainable through hope. Where the will is transformed to this supernatural end then charity is found.

Aquinas sees significance in the order of the virtues as presented by St Paul. He reasons that it is through faith that the intellect is able to grasp the object of hope (God) and charity. In the same way that we place our hope in a person we may then come to love that person. However, in the order of perfection of the virtues charity come first. It is charity that accelerates both faith and hope, and through charity, faith and hope come to fullness as virtues in their own right. Aquinas says, "...charity is the mother and root of all virtues, in as much as it is the form of them all" (ST. 1-11, Q. 62, Art. 4).

The cardinal virtues, prudence, justice, courage and moderation, form the entrance to the other virtues, and the theological virtues form our exit. It could be said that the moral virtues perfect the active life and provide access to the contemplative life. Selman (2007) summarises this complementarity. "As St Thomas says, a person attains right reason through prudence, but God through charity. Prudence unites the natural virtues, as charity unites the supernatural virtues" (p.128). The virtues for Aquinas then are those perfections where reason is focussed on God and the inferior powers are moved by reason. Virtues, like charity and justice, Aquinas tells us, do not involve imperfections.

Aristotle did not rely on a higher authority as Aquinas did, maintaining the highest good could be attained by reason alone. Bartlett and Collins (2011) quote from the prophet Micah (p.237) to highlight the basis of understanding of goodness and right living within the Hebrew/Christian tradition. Micah says “And this is what Yahweh asks of you; only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God” (Chapter 6, Verse 8). This one verse of Hebrew scripture provides a synthesis of the message of three Old Testament prophets: the justice demanded by Amos, Hosea’s call for covenant love of God and each other and Isaiah’s call for the quiet faith of the humble.

Aquinas has taken the language and structure of Aristotle’s virtues and provided another image of the deepest human realities. Relationship with God underpins Aquinas’ understanding but does not diminish the importance of relationships between people. This inquiry requires an examination of faith within the ambit of virtue to enable its inclusion as a fundamental element in this inquiry.

The next chapter takes up the development of the design for the inquiry with the focus being the distillation of the distinctive threads that have emerged in the examination of virtue in Aristotle’s *Ethics* and Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*. These threads will be used to interrogate John Williams’ narrative.

## CHAPTER 4 | A design approach | Questions for the Inquiry

My study of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and St Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* has brought into focus key elements about the nature of virtue. Aristotle and Aquinas share many common threads. However Aquinas' own stamp is firmly placed on his writings, making clear divergences from Aristotle in a number of areas, with two, in particular, that concern this inquiry. The first is about what he terms "perfect happiness" which comes after this life, placing one in the company of God. The second concerns infused virtue, which is only possible where faith is present. Aquinas proposes that "Virtue is a good habit of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us" (ST. 1-11, Q.55, Art. 4). This focus on man's relationship with God is essential to this inquiry into the living experience of becoming virtuous, an inquiry posited within John Williams' own narrative.

Aristotle adds a number of particular characteristics to dispositions that are necessary if an action is to be described as virtuous. We read

But whatever deeds arise in accord with the virtues are not done justly or moderately if they are merely in a certain state, but only if he who does those deeds is in a certain state as well: first, if he acts knowingly; second, if he acts by choosing and by choosing the actions in question for their own sake; and, third, if he acts by being in a steady and unwavering state (NE 1105a28-35).

In designing this inquiry I found the insights of both Aristotle and Aquinas can be applied to a person's lived experience. I propose to focus on three elements; reason/intellect, character/*hexis* and faith, all touchstones to the acquisition of virtue. Both Aquinas' description of virtue and Aristotle's description of the steps towards right action have influenced my choice of these three areas as key to an understanding of what elements constitute the progress to virtue. Each element deals with personal action and I intend to scrutinize the influences around action, because virtue is not possible without action of the intellect, *hexis* and belief. The narrative

that follows will be the setting for this analysis. Action of intellect through engagement of reason; the action of *hexis* as a means of developing character and the conduct of life in the light of faith all point to setting a framework for virtuous acts and of becoming virtuous.

This chapter is specifically investigating reason/intellect, character/*hexis* and faith. This examination of the nature of each element is the background to the development of nine questions that will be applied to John Williams' narrative, with the intention of giving clarity to one person's lived experience. In general terms, this specific task can provide a springboard to understandings of the lived experience of becoming virtuous.

### **Reason | Intellect**

For both Aristotle and Aquinas, reason and intellect stem from their understanding of the soul. To speak of the soul today is less than fashionable; in fact, in the modern era 'soul' has been replaced by the word 'mind', a concept more easily accommodated within a scientific construct. While Aristotle could be said to ground his description of the soul in a biological representation, he does, in the final book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, provide a more transcendental view with this description.

But a life of this sort would exceed what is human. For it is not insofar as he is a human being that a person will live in this way, but insofar as there is something divine present in him. And this divine thing is as far superior to the composite thing as its activity is superior to the activity that accords with the other virtue (NE 1177b26-29).

Aristotle's own definition of soul is, "The soul must, then, be substance qua form of a natural body which has life potentiality" (De Anima 412a19-20, in Glendlin, 2012 p.64). He deliberated about what it was that was common to all living creatures, humans, animals and plants, describing in the following line the particular nature of the human soul.

...we must examine the virtue distinctive of a human being is clear, for we are seeking both the human good and human happiness. We mean by "virtue distinctive of a human being" not that of the body but that of the soul, and by "happiness" we mean an activity of the soul (NE 1102a14-16).

Aquinas was in agreement, also proposing that living beings possess a soul. Aristotle provides a metaphor for the power of the soul, suggesting "if an axe were a living body, its power to cut would be its soul; if an eye were a whole animal its power to see would be its soul" (Kenny 2010, p.192). As well as giving form to the body, it is from the soul that change and motion emerge, and above all, it is from the soul that one is given teleological direction. Aristotle divided the soul into parts that he called faculties, but not like parts of the body. The way they differ from the parts of the body is by their object. Only humans have the capacity to reason and think and it is this capacity which Aristotle calls a rational soul.

### **The Soul | *Senses* | *Emotions* | *Mind***

First, in this division of the faculties of the soul are the five senses, as well as the inner senses: common sense (nous), estimative and memorative powers and imagination (phantasia) (de An. 3.3.427b28-429a9). Second, felt emotions are within that part of the soul that contains passions and desire. Aristotle believed that it is through the application of reason that these emotions can become virtues. The previous chapters give a detailed description of the result of the application of reason to the passions, providing the capacity for the exercise of the moral virtues. The third faculty of the soul, and uppermost in the hierarchy, is the mind and reason. From this faculty comes thought and understanding. In the following passage Aristotle defines two forms of reasoning, the practical or deliberative part deals with human affairs, and the scientific part is concerned with eternal truths.

For when it comes to beings that differ in kind from one another, the part of the soul that naturally relates to each is also different in

kind, if in fact it is by dint of a certain similarity and kinship that knowledge is available (to the rational parts of the soul). And let it be said that one of these is 'the scientific,' the other 'the calculative.' For deliberating and calculating are the same thing and nobody deliberates about things that do not admit of being otherwise.... (NE 1139a9-14).

The soul, too, is central to Aquinas' philosophy of the mind, as well as to his moral philosophy. Like Aristotle, he believed the soul held powers and appetites and it was through the virtues that these powers and appetites were directed. He states, "We cannot arrive at a perfect knowledge of ethics if we do not understand the powers of the soul" (St Thomas's commentary on the *De Anima* of Aristotle, 1 lect.1).

Aquinas believed that the soul was the primary principle of life, not a principle as an eye is the principle of sight because in his mind that would mean that all bodies would have life, and this is not the case. He calls the soul an "actuality", because it provides the potential for the body to actually have life (Selman 2005, p.94). As a primary principle, the soul gives the body its form or nature. Human nature is ours through the activities in which we engage, with the capacity for thought differentiating humans from other life forms.

Aquinas originally came to prominence in Paris because of his criticism of Averroes proposal that the intellect belonged to some separate power. Aquinas suggests that while the soul is not a bodily organ, it is not separate in existence, it is what makes us who we are as individuals, with mind and senses working in concert, and this relationship is different for each person. The embodiment of soul and body he called the rational soul. Aquinas further believed that the soul has no power other than that which is exercised in union with the body.

A reason Aquinas gives for the immateriality of the soul is that if it were an organ its very nature would be determined, thus precluding the power of thought. Because humans are able to think, in particular, as well as in general ways, the mind does not need a bodily nature. He explains

From knowing the universal nature of things, the human soul perceives that the likeness by which it thinks of something is immaterial; otherwise this would be individual and this would not lead to general knowledge of things (De Veritate 10:1 ad 4).

General knowledge is acquired through the capacity to abstract material from matter. To think of horses, for example, becomes a general notion of horse rather than thinking about a particular horse. Both Aristotle and Aquinas believe this ability to generalize is the work of the active intellect, where ideas are received and then stored in the receptive intellect. The mind has to gather ideas to allow the process of formulating new knowledge. Aquinas called this receptive intellect the 'possible' intellect. However, both parts are within one intellect which each of us holds. This is contrary to the thinking of Averroes who believed the intellect belonged to "a single, incorporeal substance". "He reached the conclusion that neither the agent intellect nor the receptive intellect is a faculty of individual human beings" (Kenny, 2010, p.432). Aquinas believed soul and body are not separate in their existence, but only in their function, after all a person would not have the capacity for thought if the mind was separate from the body. Aquinas was sure the power of the brain as a bodily organ was also necessary to enable the experience of sense-impressions which images in the mind, that he called 'phantasmata'. Images are necessary for us to envisage ideas, "...for the phantasm is to the intellect what color is to the sight" (ST. 1, Q75, Art. 2, ad.3). Our idea of 'horse' is drawn from our image of horses that we have seen, with many people seeing a mental image of the focus of thought. While the brain is needed to provide a sense impression, it is the intellect that enables abstraction.

Since the soul does not require the body for its existence the essence of the soul can be termed 'subsistent', that which is in its own right. In proposing this, Aquinas also pointed out that it was only human souls that are subsistent. In the *Summa Theologica* Aquinas speaks of the soul as incorruptible, rather than immortal. Strong within his belief system is the reunification of body and soul following death. Aquinas gives three reasons

for the incorruptibility of the soul. The first is that the soul is immaterial, so there is nothing there to corrupt. Second, the soul can subsist without the body, or as he describes it “But it is impossible for a form to be separated from itself; and therefore it is impossible for a subsistent form to cease to exist” (ST. 1. Q.75, Art.6), and, thirdly, even though the union of body and soul is corrupted through death, the soul remains because there is no opposition of two things in the intellectual soul. Aquinas points to this in the following explanation.

Now there can be no contrariety in the intellectual soul; for it receives according to the manner of its existence, and those things which it receives are without contrariety; for the notions even of contraries are not themselves contrary, since contraries belong to the same knowledge. Therefore it is impossible for the intellectual soul to be corruptible. Moreover we may take a sign of this from the fact that everything naturally aspires to existence after its own manner. Now, in things that have knowledge, desire ensues upon knowledge. The senses indeed apprehend existence absolutely, and for all time; so that everything that has an intellect naturally desires always to exist. But a natural desire cannot be in vain. Therefore every intellectual substance is incorruptible (ST.1.Q.75, Art. 6).

Aquinas goes on to give an explanation of the intertwining of reason and understanding. The depth of the movement of reason and intellect are different within all of us. Some have a finely tuned capacity for reason that results in great intellectual endeavour. Such capacity, when put at the service of others, is greatly admired and is termed virtuous. The following two extracts from Aquinas give a clear explanation of his theory about reason, intellect and intelligence.

Reason and intellect in man cannot be distinct powers. We shall understand this clearly if we consider their respective actions. For to understand is simply to apprehend intelligible truth: and to reason is to advance from one thing to another, so as to know an intelligible truth... man arrives at the intelligible truth by advancing from one thing to another; and therefore he is called rational. Reasoning, therefore, is compared to the perfect and the other to the imperfect. And since movement always proceeds from something immovable, and ends in something at rest; hence it is that human reasoning, by way of inquiry and discovery,

advances from certain things simply understood – namely, the first principles; and again, by way of judgment returns by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found (ST. 1. Q.79, Art.8).

This word intelligence properly signifies the intellect's very act, which is to understand...but in works translated from the Greek, they are called intellects or minds. Thus intelligence is not distinct from intellect, as power is from power; but as act is from power. And such a division is recognized even by the philosophers (ST. 1, Q.79, Art.10).

Thomas Aquinas defines virtue as an act in harmony with reason, with the application of reason enabling a person to grasp an end. He sees reason as the strongest of our powers, because it guides all others. The intellect apprehends intelligible truth, and reason advances from one understanding to another, so reason and intellect are not distinct powers. This is speculative intellect. Practical reason, on the other hand, is the movement of one understanding to another. This movement is called prudence.

Aristotelian ethics pays particular attention to the place of reason in moral action. Aristotle demonstrates that the foundation of moral knowledge is *orexis*, which translated refers to 'striving' or 'longing', with its development dependent upon *hexis*, 'character'. The idea that virtue must be the result of practice is provided in the use of the word 'ethos' translated as 'habit'. Human communities are different from the animal world, most notably because of the capacity of people to exercise choice in ways of acting and thinking. With this facility humans are outside the laws of nature that focus on survival. The New Oxford American Dictionary (2010) definition of reason points to "the capacity human beings have to make sense of things, to establish and verify facts, and to change or justify practices, institutions and beliefs" It is this capacity to reason that characterizes human beings and suggests our lives are more than the quest for happiness. Reason allows a person to make judgments that will vary, depending on the circumstances, enabling individuals to know and decide. Aristotle does not provide a set of rules for his listeners, but rather the challenge to use reason to decide action. Such a capacity is nurtured through education, modeling and

personal practice. Because reason involves action, our own responses are totally personal, so it is not possible to stand outside personal knowledge and understanding. Gadamer (1975) alludes to this in the following passage.

For moral knowledge, as Aristotle describes it, is clearly not objective knowledge - that is, the knower is not standing over against a situation that he merely observes; he is directly confronted with what he sees. It is something that he has to do (p.312).

### **Character | *Hexis***

*Our ordered and stable states of soul that mark us as the kind of persons we are and permit us to act as we characteristically do*  
(Bartlett & Collins, 2011, p.306).

The second area for consideration within the three areas of focus is disposition and character. Aristotle regarded disposition or character as that part of the soul from which virtue emerges. Of character he said, "...are those things in reference to which we are in a good or bad state in relation to the passions" (NE 1105b25). Habit is a key to developing character, and Aristotle gave emphasis to this. "It makes no small difference, then, whether one is habituated in this or that way straight from childhood but a very great difference - or rather the whole difference" (NE 1103b23-25).

Disposition is the genus of habit. At the same time disposition can be divided against habit and a habit can be lost. While habit implies lastingness, disposition does not. Habit is fundamentally related to will, because habit is employed when a person pursues an action of will.

Virtues are not passions or faculties that form part of the soul; rather they are the disposition to behave the right way and everyone has the potential to be virtuous. Habits that are regularly practised can become deeply ingrained patterns of behaviour. The dictionary defines habit as being "of a settled or regular tendency or practice" (New Oxford American

Dictionary, 2010). Sachs (2005) believes that when discussing virtue, habit is a poorly chosen term.

These interpretations of Aristotle's *ethics* are the result of imprecise translations from the ancient Greek text. Aristotle uses the word *hexis* to denote moral virtue. But the word does not merely mean passive habituation. Rather, *hexis* is an active condition, a state in which something must actively hold itself (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>).

Sachs perceives 'habit' like a person working on "automatic pilot" not requiring thought or choice. The difficulty he alludes to is one of translation. The Latin *habitus* is an accurate rendition of the Greek *hexis* but to deduce the English word "habit" from that diminishes the richness of its meaning. A closer sense of *hexis* relates to the active condition of knowledge, not mere possession, like collecting china and placing it in a cabinet, with the Greek word for that form of possession, *ktêsis*. Sachs (2005) paints *hexis* as "the kind of having and holding that is never passive but always at work right now" (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>). It is this active state of knowing and sensing that Aristotle believes is moral virtue, "that receptivity to what is outside us depends on an active effort to hold ourselves ready" (Sachs, 2005 <http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>). In Book VII of the *Physics*, Aristotle gives an example that makes clear this concept and he draws it from the way children learn. Very young children are not trained or acted upon by anyone, but it is they themselves that get into an active state to learn. This is most easily observed in the acquisition of speech, or indeed learning to crawl or walk. It is a process of coming to make sense of their environment, where order replaces disorder and distraction (Book VII, 247b, 17-248a, 6). It is a form of settling into knowing, a different concept than that which comes to mind when we speak of habit. (Sachs 2005 <http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>) In the *Ethics* Aristotle defines moral virtue as a *hexis* in the following way.

But whatever deeds arise in accordance with the virtues are not done justly or moderately if they are merely in a certain state,

but only if he who does those deeds is in a certain state as well: first, if he acts knowingly; second, if he acts by choosing and by choosing the actions in question for their own sake; and, third, if he acts by being in a steady and unwavering state (NE 1105a29-34).

Aristotle is clearly saying that the goodness is in the person acting rather than in the action itself. Virtue becomes visible through action, but only those actions in which one is holding oneself in a particular way. This holding, when acting, is the foundation of *hexis*. Virtuous action is only possible if one is held in a steady and unwavering state, so that the action can be knowingly and rightly chosen. Sachs (2005) says that, “this stable equilibrium of the soul is what we mean by having character. It is not the result of what we call ‘conditioning’” (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>). Habits are acquired in a number of ways, through training that is imposed by oneself or by others, or we can “slip into” a habit quite unconsciously. This can be the case in the inclusion of a word or phrase into one’s everyday speech, having heard it and then making it one’s own.

In Greek *ethos*, meaning habit, and *Íthos*, meaning character, only differ slightly, however the progression from habit, to disposition, to character is significant. Habits can be good and bad, dispositions can change, but it is character that really provides the stability that one can use to influence behaviour to such a degree that a person can become virtuous. Aristotle believed that we have to work at the virtues.

It is well said, then, that as a result of doing just things, the just person comes into being, and as a result of doing moderate things, the moderate person; without performing these actions, nobody would become good (NE 1105b10-11).

Infancy is characterised by desires and impulses, as a baby cries out when hungry, or cold or uncomfortable. Through the application of habits and concentration, for most of us, in time, these impulses are moderated, but we have to work at it. We have to face frightening experiences to show courage, it is not just the disposition or the good intention that will enable us to be courageous. Then again, not every person who is placed

in a situation that requires a courageous response is able to respond accordingly. Sachs (2005) suggests, “the linchpin to the Ethics, the spot that marks the transition from the language of habit to the language appropriate to character” (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>), is revealed by Aristotle when he says “Hence we must make our activities be of a certain quality, for the characteristics correspond to the differences among the activities” (NE 1103b24) (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>).

In Greek, a *hexis* is dependant upon an *energeia*, translated to mean ‘being-at-work’. This makes sense if we regard what personal changes must be scaffolded onto our natural inclination towards pleasure, in order to grow from infancy to adulthood, and to become contributing members of a community. There is a natural move from habit, to ‘being-at-work’, to the active state of *hexis*, where a person is consciously directing their life and in so doing giving their soul a moral structure. Sachs (2005. p.3) suggests that without such ‘being- at-work’ and activity, moral structure would be replaced by customs (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/>). Aristotle makes this clear when he says, “Are there then certain works and actions of a carpenter and shoemaker, but none of a human being: would he, by contrast, be naturally ‘without a work?’” (NE 1097b27-30).

As artisans have work to do concerned with their craft so, too, do human beings, and that work is to use the power of reason to act for good. Such a work supports virtuous behaviour. Aristotle describes man’s work concerning personhood in the following way.

... and we posit the work of a human being as a certain life, and this is an activity of soul and actions accompanied by reason, the work of a serious man being to do these things well and nobly, and each thing is brought to completion well in accord with the virtue proper to it -if this is so, then the human good becomes an activity of the soul in accord with virtue...(NE 1098a12-17).

The process through which people engage in the action to which *hexis* applies could be described as seeing, judging and acting. The influence of nature, parents, teachers and others allows for a child to grow in a

certain way, but Aristotle firmly places the activity of the soul at the feet of the individual, reiterating this when he says

...we ourselves are somehow joint causes of our characteristics, and by being a certain sort, we set down this or that sort of end (NE 1114b23-24).

Aquinas followed Aristotle in his thinking around the concept of *habitus* (*hexis*), which he expanded into five questions within the Summa, and through these questions the notion of virtue is introduced. Aquinas examines what it is that characterises a human, as distinct from plant and animal life. Kenny (2010) suggests examples of *habitus* include, “virtues like temperance and charity, sickness and health, beauty and toughness, knowledge of logic and science, beliefs of any kind and the possession of concepts” (p.406). It is easy to see that the word ‘habit’ with the meaning attached to it does not accommodate the meaning both Aristotle and Aquinas attached to “*habitus*”. Kenny suggests the word “disposition” is closer to enabling an understanding of the capacity and action of people, a capacity that is far different to that of animals, for example in the ability of people to be charitable. If a person is referred to as charitable, it does not mean that the person is doing something charitable at this moment; but it does reflect that the person may exhibit more charity than one might experience from the general population. Aquinas calls this state of being charitable, a disposition. It is that state that lies between capacity and action. Aquinas explains,

Moreover he says expressly (De Anima iii., text. 8, 18) that when the possible intellect is thus identified with each thing, that is, when it is reduced to act in respect of singulars by the intelligible species, then it is said to be in act; and this happens when the intellect can act of itself, i.e., by considering; and even then it is in potentiality in a sense; but not in the same way as learning and discovering (ST. 1-11, Q.50, Art.4).

Aquinas did not hold that all activities required a disposition, including God’s thoughts, the movement of the planets and other natural causes.

Natural causes do not require dispositions to perform their activities. Kenny (2010) offers the example of fire heating, which is its natural capacity, in fact, the only activity for which it has capacity. In God, capacity and activity are identical so disposition is irrelevant.

An understanding of *habitus* or *hexis* provides an outline to appreciate the space between capacity and action. Depending on disposition and habit (in the traditional sense of the word) the essential characteristics of each person are illuminated. Bartlett and Collins (2011) suggest an understanding of the notion of *hexis* is integral to an appreciation of the expression of character. In the following passage they offer an explanation of this concept.

CHARACTERISTIC (*hexis*) A central term and notoriously difficult to translate. It is related to the verb *echein*, meaning to have, hold, or (with an adverb) to be (of a certain character or in a certain state). The noun *hexis* is of fundamental importance to Aristotle's account of virtue: our *hexeis*, or characteristics, are our ordered and stable states of soul that mark us as the kind of persons we are and permit us to act as we characteristically do. Our characteristics, in this sense, display our character, the habits of body and mind that have been formed through habituation and that constitute a certain way of holding oneself toward the world, so to speak. Other possible translations are "condition," "active condition," "disposition," "state," and "habit," though no single English word can capture the full meaning of the Greek. (p.306)

## Faith |

Many of John Williams' life choices have been made in the light of personal faith. Within a definition it is accepted that "faith" is that complete trust or confidence in someone or something. This would have led Donald Horne (2007) a non-believer, to say, "I began by saying that everyone has faiths of some kind-without them we can't think or act. I also said that faiths are in no way exclusive to religion" (p.242) or in the words Australian Humanist David Milan, cited with other reviews printed on the inside cover of Horne's memoir, "Horne's believed faith was as an attribute common to all mankind; it is the engine driving thought and actions".

Beckett (2006) presents a clear picture of the integration of faith and life.

In the religious sense, faith is that essential virtue that enables us to cling with trust and love to that which we cannot see and of which we can never have material proof. It is a virtue so deep and all-encompassing that I find it difficult to write about. Those who belong to a religion will understand both my reticence and my gratitude for such a gift. However, the religious meaning is by no means the only significance in our lives of faith. There may not be other occasions when there is such an absolute absence of proof, but we meet at every turn occasions for human faith. So many aspects of our lives do not fall under our own control. To a certain extent we must take our teachers, our doctors, our lawyers, our governing bodies on faith. We must have faith in the untried potential of our own children, because unless they feel we believe in them, they may be damaged in their progress (p.115).

The notion of faith for a humanist is perhaps easy to understand in one sense. Faith in this inquiry concerns religious faith, expressed through a relationship with God, and for this inquiry it will be the thinking of Aquinas that forms the basis for this elucidation.

While the theological virtues are treated elsewhere, and faith is one of those virtues, I consider questions around faith need to be applied to John Williams' narrative because his intellect, character and faith form the keystones to his life.

Kenny (2010) suggests that Aquinas' great contribution to "medieval epistemology" was his treatment of the difference between what can be grasped by natural intellect and those things that can only be grasped by the supernatural light of faith (p.383). Natural reason provides the capacity for a person to grasp the notion of God, and further, to come to belief in God. Aquinas calls this a preamble of faith. However, the doctrine of the Trinity (three persons in one God) and the doctrine of the Incarnation (that God became man in the person of Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine) are central to any assent of faith, yet are beyond man's natural powers of reason.

Aquinas regards faith as an intellectual virtue, with God as its object. Even as he calls faith an intellectual virtue he does not perceive

faith as a cognitive activity. For most cognitive activities, for example in the case of a ball being round, the truth is obvious. There is no choice in believing because of the self-evident nature of the evidence. Faith, on the other hand requires a voluntary action of assent on behalf of an individual, an action that requires both intellect and will. Aquinas describes the will as “a native desire or love for what we think contributes to our happiness” (Floyd, 2010). While a person may be attracted to any number of religious truths, according to Aquinas, assent to them does not equate to faith. Only when a person actively seeks God can they be said to have faith. So faith is not just about belief, but also about a love of God. It is this action of love that distinguishes faith from belief in theological truths.

Faith involves longing. The will moves us to God as the source of happiness, which raises the question of what moves the will to desire God? In answering this question, it should be kept in mind that Christianity teaches that through the ‘original sin’, our will was corrupted and so did not always desire what was good. Therefore, our will needed to be changed so that we can love God. Aquinas proposed that our will could be altered through the action of grace. In *De Veritate*, we read

Grace is a certain splendor of the soul winning holy love... for God’s accepting or loving someone (for they are the same thing) is nothing else but His willing him some good. Now God wills the good of nature for all creatures; and on this account He is said to love all things: ...”And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good” (Genesis 1:31). But it is not by reason of this sort of acceptance that we are accustomed to say that someone has the grace of God, but inasmuch as God wills him a certain supernatural good, which is eternal life...Hence it is written in the Epistle to the Romans (6:23): “The grace of God (is) life everlasting” (DV 27.1).

Aquinas draws a second distinction between what truths we can know of God through our natural powers and this he calls ‘natural theology’ and those mysteries of faith that he terms ‘revealed theology’. The distinction he draws in relation to these two arms of theology is that natural theology is hallmarked by logical relationships, the way reason reaches its conclusions, and with revealed theology where unaided reason is assisted by grace a

move is made to causes. These distinctions marked a turning point in epistemology and according to Kenny (2010), “Aquinas’ works sharpened the distinction between knowledge and belief; more than any of his predecessors he emphasized that a Christian’s grasp of the mystery of the Trinity was not a matter of knowing or understanding, but of faith “ (p.384).

If a person seeks God, it can only be because God has moved that person’s will through the conferring of grace. Faith involves “the intellectual assent to the Divine truth at the command of the will moved by the grace of God, so that it is subject to the free-will in relation to God...” (ST. 11-11, Q.2, Art. 9). The voluntary nature of faith on the other hand, if dependent on God changing the human will, is a subject of debate. The act of faith has both an internal and external cause. The external cause may be the act of hearing a sermon or the rhythm of religious practice in a family or some persuasion concerning religious truths. The internal cause is the action of grace on the will. Aquinas describes it this way.

As regards the second, viz. man’s assent to the things which are of faith, we may observe a twofold cause, one of external inducement, such as seeing a miracle, or being persuaded by someone to embrace the faith: neither of which is a sufficient cause, since of those who see the same miracle, or who hear the same sermon, some believe and some do not. Hence we must assert another internal cause, which moves man inwardly to assent to matters of faith (ST. 11-11, Q.6, Art.1).

While love of God is the catalyst for moving a person to faith the form that it takes is charity. The word has altered somewhat in meaning since Aquinas used it. He understood charity as “the love of God” with its more current etymology focussing principally on “love of man” through good works. The foundation of faith has to be a love of God. For Aquinas

The act of faith is directed to the object of the will, i.e., the good, as its end; and this good which is the end of faith, viz., the Divine Good, is the proper object of charity. Therefore charity is called the form of faith in so far as the act of faith is perfected and formed by charity (ST. 11-11, q.4, a.3).

Faith that is formed by love of God changes the will to be open to revealed truths, those truths that are beyond our natural understanding. Aquinas says "...for he is moved by the authority of the Divine teaching...and, what is more, by the inward instinct of the Divine invitation: hence he does not believe lightly" (ST. 11-11, q.2, a.9. ad. 3). Rather than ignoring the voluntary nature of personal will, the infused disposition to love of God, opens a person to a free faith response. Aquinas warned that if sacred doctrine could be understood through human reason, the need for faith would be obliterated.

In an effort to explore reason/*nous*, character/*hexis* and faith as they relate to John Williams I have devised three questions for each element, questions that seek to bring these concepts into John Williams' lived experience. They should be kept in mind as his story unfolds.

The development of three areas of inquiry, intellect *nous*/reason, character *hexis* and faith have emerged as requisite to becoming virtuous. In coming to understand how these three elements can be identified I have undertaken an inquiry of John Williams' lived experience. As previously noted, the foundation of this thesis is ontological rather than biographical and narrative has been employed to capture aspects of the lived experience and as a means of understanding the development of virtue within one person's life. A set of nine questions has been designed to interrogate John Williams' lived experience and provide the basis for an examination of reason/*nous*, character/*hexis* and faith, the acquisition of which I propose is the foundation of becoming virtuous.

The being of the person is the focus of an ontological study. Becoming virtuous is an ontologically occurrence taking place in the very depths of personal being. A biographical study on the other hand is primarily concerned with the examination of a person's life story. As Van Manen (1990) believes that by bringing understanding to lived experience, reflections are "fixed" in some way. He employs the phrase "mining meaning".

Most insightful people can recognize a person who can be called

'virtuous'. More challenging is to isolate broad requisites for 'becoming virtuous', to come to an explicatory understanding of becoming virtuous. Seeking this essence of 'becoming' has challenged me to find a means of making explicit the very structure of the path to virtue. The method of inquiry I have selected that I believe offers a richness to the exploration of this inquiry is through a series of questions that seek to "mine for meaning" in John Williams' lived experience. It is life and its complexity of personal experiences that narrative brings forth, as well as the performance of meaning. Through my interaction with John Williams' narrative clear themes of meaning have emerged and the interpretation of a series of questions allowed understandings about becoming virtuous to become apparent. The interaction between the narrative and the interpretive tool, that is the primary texts, allowed these understandings to become clear. The narrative brings forth life played out in the complexity of personal experiences, and in so doing becomes a performance of meaning.

The ontological underpinning for this inquiry deliberately eschews quantitative analysis or experimentation, but as described by Van Manen "involves description, interpretation, and self-reflective or critical analysis" (p.4). How virtue becomes part of the very humanness of an individual is at the axis of this inquiry. That in turn has demanded a robust methodology. Narrative provides the keystone for this interrogation with this narrative juxtaposed against the primary sources, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*.

I have sought to interrogate the narrative for examples of these three elements that I regard as foundational to the acquisition of virtue. This thesis uses narrative to concretize particular elements of being necessary to become virtuous, elements that only find expression through life.

My nine questions are designed to provide life examples from the narrative and in turn scrutinize the examples to ensure they are consonant with the principles held by Aristotle and Aquinas'. It could be suggested this method is in accord with Hans-Georg Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic rule, by which "we must understand the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in

terms of the whole” (p. 291). These questions seek to interrogate not just how a person is acting but how that person is being in their world. To understand more fully the underpinning of John Williams’ actions I conducted a series of interviews in the style of those most often used in human science research with a theme or single question to open the interview and the interviewee then encouraged to speak at length. In this research I conducted interviews of this type around family, education, priesthood, equity in education and parish life.

This research method employed to interrogate John Williams’ narrative assists in elaborating a philosophical understanding about becoming virtuous.

## Questions for the Inquiry | Exploring lived experience

- ✦ In what ways does John Williams' life story reveal the development of a speculative intellect?
- ✦ In what ways does John Williams' life story reveal the development of a practical intellect?
- ✦ What role has the intellect played in John Williams coming to be a virtuous person?
  
- ✦ What habits has John Williams formed that reveal particular dispositions?
- ✦ How are these dispositions revealed through his story?
- ✦ What characteristics best reveal John Williams' character?
  
- ✦ How did John Williams' experience of other people impact on his personal faith development?
- ✦ John Williams willingly accepted to fulfil a role in education for 24 years, a role that many saw as being outside the role of a priest. What did this work have to do with priesthood?
- ✦ Priesthood is a public faith declaration. How has John Williams' life revealed his faith?

## CHAPTER 5 | NARRATIVE

### **The Williams Family | A foundation**

The first record of John Williams' family in Tasmania is of Uriah Williams and his wife Elizabeth (Betsy) nee Beech. They arrived in Tasmania on 31 March 1842 on the vessel 'Arab' having set sail from Plymouth, Devon, in the United Kingdom.

This narrative, however, begins not with Uriah and Betsy but with their grandson, William Jonas Lucas Williams. William was born on 6 May 1870 in the northern midlands town of Cressy. His future wife, Mary Louisa Forsyth was born in 1877 at Bishopsbourne, sixteen kilometres away. She commenced school aged nine attending the dame school at 'Brickendon', a farming property established by William Archer in 1824, and still farmed today by the Archer family. The school at 'Brickendon' was possibly established to cater for the educational needs of the Archer children as well as the offspring of farm workers. Dame schools gradually died out as compulsory education became widespread in Australia.

For his part William Williams had little education prior to being apprenticed to his future father-in-law as a blacksmith. Lack of opportunity rather than ambivalence to learning urged him on to a life long quest for the acquisition of knowledge. As a young married man he purchased a set of Encyclopaedia Britannica, consulting the volumes to expand his knowledge.

William and Mary Forsyth were married on 20 April 1898 in St Augustine's, the Catholic Church at Longford, and the principal town in that area. While not a Catholic, William did make a commitment to Mary before their marriage, that any children would be raised as Catholics and sent to Catholic schools, "and he stuck by it" (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003). They settled in Launceston in a rented house with workshop in William Street. Mary

Elizabeth (May), the first of their eleven children, was born there in 1899. The growth of the family was the reason for the move to a larger house at 10 Burn Street, Invermay. In 1916 the property on the corner of William and Shields Streets, 14 Shields Street Launceston, was purchased to accommodate the growing blacksmithing operations that William had expanded to include the services of farrier, coachbuilder and wheelwright. At the time, the property was the Commonwealth Coffee Palace. The façade of the building still stands after being converted to a grain store.

By 1916, Mary Williams had given birth to nine children with Jean, their third child dying at three weeks. To house this large family a more substantial home was built at 56 Mayne Street, Invermay. It was here that the two youngest, Roderick and Joan were born. The Mayne Street home came to be a foundation stone for the Williams clan, both as a place of meeting and to the strong familial connection that bound them.

Of William and Mary's eleven children, only the youngest, Joan is still living, however I had the opportunity before his death to interview Roderick (known as Rod) with Joan. Both were straightforward in their approach; the characteristics of the Williams family were certainly evident in our conversation. They described their mother as having great strength, "in a very quiet way" (R. Williams and J. Dineen (nee Williams) personal communication, 18 November 2003), her life being spent around the home with the many demands of a large family.

The Williams' family are very loyal to each other and in that generation there was "an atmosphere of wanting to learn and to find out" (R. Williams, J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003). May was the eldest child of the eleven, living until a few months short of her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Her siblings in order of birth were Bernard, Jean, George, Beryl, John (known as Jack), Jesse, Kenneth, Helen, Roderick and Joan, the youngest child of the family. It is easy to appreciate that the siblings were almost two separate generations, the older ones reaching adulthood before Rod and Joan were born, however they did have some years together before Bernard, the first to marry, left home.

William became a successful blacksmith providing for and educating his children during the difficult years of the Depression. At its peak the blacksmith shop in William Street employed seven workers skilled as wheelwrights, farriers and general blacksmiths, and they built bakers' and other carts as well as everything from wheels to pick handles, with a knife sharpening service also offered.

William was a keen gardener, enabling his family to live from the fruits of his labour with fruit and vegetables plentiful. This made a significant difference during the difficult Depression years. This enthusiasm for horticultural pursuits was engendered in his children who all became keen gardeners. William was a loyal man with particular fidelity to the Launceston Horticultural Society, of which he was a life member. Following his death the Society planted a Sequoia (American Redwood) tree to his memory in the Queen Elizabeth Gardens at the corner of Invermay Road and Forster Street. The tree still stands.

Chrysanthemums and gladioli were his real love, winning many trophies with his specimens. He regarded vegetables as a mere necessity. William was "hard to know" (R. Williams, J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003), because he didn't talk a great deal. In William is evident the beginning of that characteristic of taciturnity that will reappear when describing different members of the Williams' clan. However, there are different ways to "know a person" and William enjoyed "deep respect" from all the family. His very presence meant a great deal to his children (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003).

As a young boy, Rod used to visit the blacksmith shop on Saturday mornings just to be near his father. On trips to town, the girls used to ask to travel home via the shop to see what was going on. No doubt, the weight of keeping a business going and the ordinary demands of a home with ten children would have precluded William from engaging in many additional activities including recreational time with his own children. As an old man Rod Williams reflected on the time spent with his father, "I sailed and did things with my children outside the

home, because I had the idea that I would have liked my father to have done more things with me" (R. Williams, personal communication, 18 November 2003).

William Williams' taciturn nature was shared by his sons, as Rod said "we've all got those similar traits in our character, we were all pretty similar" (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003). William was also in charge, both in his workshop and in his home. Rod noted in an aside, "we wanted to be the boss, the same as the old man" a trait shared with the women in the family, as the eldest child May considered herself "the boss" all her life (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003).

The Williams' children enjoyed good educational opportunities. The girls attended St Finn Barr's, a Catholic school at Invermay run by the Presentation Sisters. George won a scholarship to Sacred Heart School, a Catholic co-educational school run by the Presentation Sisters in central Launceston. Jack, Ken and Rod all completed their Leaving Certificate at St Patrick's College, which had been established in Launceston by the Christian Brothers. Jack, a foundation day student commenced his education with the Brothers on 3 February 1919, with Kenneth and Roderick following him to St Patrick's. These three were the only ones young enough in the Williams' clan to go all the way through this new College.

On completing her secondary education May, the eldest of the Williams' children undertook training at Zerco's Business College, her next sibling Bernard, was apprenticed as a builder to Hinman, Wright and Manser, still a prominent construction firm in Tasmania. Beryl (Beb) became a telephonist at the Telephone Exchange and Jesse, too, attended Zerco's before gaining employment at Genders, general wholesalers in Launceston. Jack became a fitter and turner, Ken a teacher and Rod a workshop supervisor. Helen (Nell), the third youngest in the family stayed at home until the war. She had suffered serious illness as a child and, because of this had been somewhat indulged by the family. Her siblings proposed this past illness as the reason that she had not joined the workforce.

Joan, the youngest had a long career as a nursing sister. An atmosphere of learning permeated the Williams' family life and evenings found everyone with a book. Reading was coupled with their enjoyment of music. While at St Finn Barr's, the girls had become proficient pianists so the family often gathered around the piano for entertainment. During the Depression, many people could not keep their children at school for secondary education. In this respect the Williams children differed from many of their contemporaries.

As they grew, the children pursued various sporting interests; Bernard and Jack were rifle shooters with Jack becoming a very good shot, going on to win the 1938 Launceston Rifle Club Trophy. Ken pursued football and cricket, moving onto bowls in his later years. With a friend from Mayne Street Rod began sailing, and after only two outings on the water, decided it was the sport for him. His father encouraged him in this pursuit. Sailing gave him great pleasure over many decades with his own children eventually sharing a passion for nautical activities. George was the only one of the boys not involved in any sporting pursuit. (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003).

There was a strong bond between all the children and if anything went wrong the family quickly closed ranks. An individual's trouble was a trouble shared by them all. Friendship is a challenging virtue to cultivate, however, the relationship of interdependence amongst William and Mary's children was sturdy. The girls shared a strong bond and the brothers too spent a great deal of time together. Ken as a teacher worked away from Launceston, but when he was in town he would join his brothers when they met for a weekly drink together.

Bernard (known as Brickie) was the first of the Williams children to marry, and the birth of his son (also named Bernard) coincided with his youngest sister Joan, starting school. As a young father of two children Bernard became ill, succumbing to bowel cancer by his thirty-sixth year.

As the Williams' children married and moved away, the family gathering each Sunday at the Mayne Street house, became a ritual.

Competitiveness marked the games of checkers and chess played each week while the grandchildren climbed the big hedges on the double block. Every family gathering for many years included stories of Mayne Street. William was a generous father, building homes for a number of his offspring. This generosity was reciprocated by his children's commitment to repaying, over time, the cost of construction. Not having a bank mortgage with its attendant interest rates was a gift in itself for his offspring. Ken did not benefit from this parental largesse, purchasing his first home when he retired as a Headmaster having always lived in Education Department owned premises.

William Williams, the patriarch of this large family died on 6 October 1947. Father George Cullen, Parish Priest of St Finn Barr's Catholic Church conducted the service for this member of the Church of England. Such an ecumenical gesture at that time was unusual, with each religious denomination caring solely for the members of their own flock. As William's wife and children were Catholics, this action on the part of their Parish Priest would have meant a great deal to them and the family perceived this as a mark of respect for this man. He was buried from his home at 56 Mayne Street. William's wife Mary died eighteen years later on 8 June 1965 with her grandson John, now a priest himself, conducting the ritual.

The Mayne Street house was eventually demolished to make way for the construction of Launceston's Northern Outlet Road that connected Launceston to the port of Bell Bay to the north. Onto the next generation the family has cherished memories of the home at Mayne Street.

### **The Mackey Family | A further foundation**

John Williams' maternal grandmother was born in 1867, growing up at 'Langollan', a property in Colebrook in the southern Tasmanian midlands district. Her name was Bridget Halley, the daughter of a blacksmith, she was educated at St Mary's College in Hobart, where as a

boarding student she continued her schooling until 1883. Bridget went on to become a secondary school teacher of some repute. Her family was concerned when she and Michael Mackey, the policeman from Kempton, announced their intention to marry. Her granddaughter commented, "Her family felt she was marrying beneath herself" (J. Kile personal communication, 11 May 2009). Michael Mackey, ten years Bridget's senior, was a policeman in the days before the establishment of the state wide Tasmania Police force, at a time when officers were employed by the local council. Bridget Halley was a clever, strong woman with a keen sense of justice and her influence on her family would be long lasting. Father O'Regan married Bridget Halley and Michael Mackey at the Catholic Church at Brighton on 9 May 1888.

Michael Mackey's final posting was at Lefroy, north east of Launceston, the site of the first gold mine in Tasmania in 1869 at Nine Mile Springs. 'The Den', renamed Lefroy in 1881, and just forty kilometres from Launceston, thrived until mines were worked out in 1896 (Gold Rush Tasmania (n.d.)<http://tysaustralia.com/goldrushtasmania.html>) Retrieved 16 April 2012). This downturn in the fortunes of the district meant a full time policeman was no longer required to keep law and order. Michael bought two houses in Lefroy and transported them to a river flat orchard at Bangor, twenty- five kilometres away. Michael was fifty-five years old when he embarked on this career change converting the river flat property to mixed farming.

As a teacher Bridget Mackey had experienced educational opportunities not shared by many of her neighbours in this country district. Amongst the residents of Bangor she was known as the "local lawyer" because she assisted her neighbours in the district by writing letters for them (J. Kile and K. Binder, personal communication, 11 May 2009). She was extraordinarily generous, cooking for those in poor health or in financial hardship. She often made an additional pair of trousers for a child in need when she was sewing for her own children. Bridget and Michael shared a deep faith, providing hospitality, rest and recuperation for many

priests, particularly the Irish priests. Their love of literature and their substantial collection of books were housed in a room known as “the library”. This love of reading was certainly passed on to their children and into the next generations. Bridget’s own career as a teacher would have been a significant influence on the career choice of four of her daughters who followed that path. Education for the children was a priority for Bridget and Michael, sending their children to boarding schools to enable them to have a secondary education. The flow of their family life centered around their faith, care of each other and their obligation to the community. Listening to the 7.00 p.m. evening news by the big fire in the dining room was followed by everyone settling to a book with the older children often reading to their younger siblings. Bridget and Michael had ten children, Nell, Winifred, Kathleen, Irene, Francis, Edith, Josephine and Terrence with two others dying as infants. Interestingly only three families were formed in the next generation. Perhaps this is a reflection of country society between the First and Second World Wars. John Williams’ mother, Edith Honorine Mackey, was the third youngest of the family. During her schooling the family lived at Patersonia, a town near Scottsdale. She was a boarder at Sacred Heart Convent in Launceston and at St Mary’s College in Hobart, completing her education at Launceston High School because she wanted to be a teacher. It was during her teacher training that her mother Bridget died suddenly. Terry, the youngest child was only eleven years old.

Edie, as she was known, taught at Sulphur Creek and Patersonia and Invermay State School before her marriage to Jack Williams on 20 January 1932. In her choice of career she followed in the path of a number of her sisters and, as was the custom at that time and for many decades following, she was obliged to resign from her teaching position when she married, in effect ending her professional aspirations. It was only for a brief time that she did some relief teaching at Invermay Primary School when her own children were still at school.

Michael Mackey was not a natural farmer and eventually convinced his son Frank to leave his clerical position with the Department of Main Roads to

return home to run the farm. This Frank did for at least thirty years. It was a strange set of circumstances with neither Michael nor his son knowing much about farming. Frank did what had to be done without displaying any evidence of enjoyment of the work he had undertaken. Michael Mackey was a well-read, but apparently lazy man, seemingly not lifting a finger, in the home, or on the farm. By the time his grandchildren knew him he was an old man. The future life patterns of a number of the Mackey children were significantly influenced by their sense of duty of what was required of children caring for their father.

Michael Mackey died on the 23 September 1947, a week before his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Daughter Nell never married. She was a teacher, but left education to return home and care for her father when Josephine (known as Jose), the youngest daughter married and left the farm at Bangor. Win, the second daughter married Joe Griffin. The Griffins lived about five miles from the Mackey farm. Win and Joe had eight children, including twins who didn't survive and a daughter Mary who died as a young child. The next daughter Kath was also a teacher, mainly in one-teacher country schools including Relbia, Howell and Nile. She was much loved wherever she went (J. Kile and K. Binder, personal communication, 11 May 2009). As a single person she remained in teaching until her retirement when she returned to the family home at Bangor to care for her sister, Nell, and her brother Frank. By this time Michael Mackey had died.

Upon leaving school the fourth daughter, Irene, known as Rene, joined the Presentation Sisters and commenced her training as a religious sister. The Presentation Sisters ran Sacred Heart School in Launceston and St Mary's College in Hobart with other schools in city suburbs and country districts. Like her sister Kath, Rene spent most of her teaching career in country schools mainly around Karoola, Beaconsfield and Lilydale. When she retired from the classroom she became the Parish Sister on King Island, off the north west coast of Tasmania. Her name in religious life was Sister Finn Barr and she held a special place in the hearts of her family down through the next two generations. She was a very gentle lady, only speaking when she had something to say, loyal to her family and content

with her place in life. The Presentation Sisters were a semi-enclosed religious order that meant their life beyond the school was spent within the convent. Their rule prohibited access to private homes, even the homes of parents and siblings.

Frank was the older of the two boys in the Mackey family. He had been one of the first boarders at St Virgil's College that had been established in Hobart by the Christian Brothers in 1911. He, too, never married. Frank had left a clerical position in the Department of Main Roads to work the farm at Bangor. This position equipped him to fill the role of returning officer for the Bangor.

district for municipal, state and federal elections, a talent reminiscent of that displayed by his own mother who wrote letters for her neighbours. He was a very quiet man, an avid reader who drove to Launceston to change his library books (M. Freeman, H. Johnston and J Williams, personal communication, 16 April 2009).

Josephine, known as Jose, continued the family care of their father by returning home on completion of her education. She remained at Bangor until her marriage to Claude Watkins, a cartage contractor who lived on the farm next door to the Mackey's.

Terry was the second son and youngest Mackey child. Following his schooling at St Virgil's College, then worked for the Tasmanian Taxation Department. Following his marriage he moved to Fiji in a position with the New Zealand Government. A decade later they returned to Sydney and Terry worked for the New South Wales Education Department as a manager of the examination system in that state. Terry and his wife Odelia did not have children. In many respects Terry was the only one of the Mackey's who escaped the obligation to provide some care for their father.



*William and Mary Williams (centre) with their children in 1917  
L-R (standing) Beryl, May, Bernard, George, Jack,  
Front Row: Kenneth, Rod, Nell, Joan (in her mother's arms) and Jessie.*



*On the occasion of his 80th Birthday Michael Mackey (seated) is surrounded by his children.  
L-R Frank, Edie, Kit, Jose, Win, Nell and Terry.  
Rene (Sr Finn Barr) had by this time joined the Presentation Sisters and was not present on the day.*

## The Next Generation | Jack and Edie Williams

Following their marriage at Sacred Heart Church, Karoola, Jack Williams and Edie Mackey set to establishing their life together. They moved into a house in Henty Street, Invermay that had been built by Jack's father. 7 Henty Street was home for their married life. Edie became a good homemaker. Mary was their first-born with Helen arriving just twelve months later. There was a gap of four years before John's birth, followed by the arrival of Edith just short of a year later.

No doubt Jack and Edie's children were influenced by the example of the extended Mackey family. During her teaching days Edie's sister Kathleen, known as Kit, spent many of her weekends at Henty Street. Like the Williams' family, the Mackey's all enjoyed each other's company, getting on well with each other as friends do. They were loyal to each other, sticking together in the rough and smooth of life.

With their young family Edie and Jack became involved in the community around their home in Henty Street, Invermay, with the life of the local parish looming large in their round of activities. Edie became the local correspondent for the Catholic weekly newspaper, *The Standard* and each Sunday evening her son, John, would post off her account of the happenings within St Finn Barr's Parish. As well, she was secretary of the local branch of the Catholic Women's League. The League had been established in Launceston in 1941, and grew out of the Catholic Women's Social Guild that had been running since early 1936. The aims of both the Guild and later the Catholic Women's League were threefold: friendship, faith and Christian works with a focus around 'support of the family, the sanctity of life and the dignity of all people' (Catholic Women's League Tasmania (n.d.) <http://www.cwla.org.au/member-organisations/tasmania.html> Retrieved 13 April 2012). The importance of educating women to take their place in public life has remained a core direction for members of the Catholic Women's League. Edie Williams had confidence in her own abilities and her place in the community. In her mother, Bridget Mackey, she had the example of

giving to the community and she was happy to use her talents in the same manner, particularly her capacity to write clearly. She was a shrewd manager of the family finances, a responsibility not given to, or shared by many women in the 1930s. Edie Williams was at ease with her own capacities with the attendant freedom to engage in activities that both exercised her talents and supported the common good.

While she was “easier to get around” than her husband, Edie was quick to let her children know if they had overstepped the mark, but always giving praise when it was due. On one occasion when she had taken the children to visit their Williams grand parents, Helen was taking John and Edith across Mayne Street when a motorbike roared towards them. Helen could feel the shock of it reaching for her younger brother and sister. That evening her mother said, “I told Dad how proud I was of you the way you looked after John and Edith”(M. Freeman, H. Johnston and J. Williams, personal communication, 16 April 2009).



*Williams Family Home  
Henty Street, Invermay*



*Shopping in Launceston.  
Edie Williams with Edith  
and John 1942*



*Williams children.  
Helen, Mary, Edith  
and John 1942*

*Michael Williams (cousin)  
Edith and John 1943*





*First Communion Day  
10 December 1944  
Aged 6*



*Best friends.  
John and Edith 1944*



*Jack Williams spent his whole working life with Glasgow Engineering and was foreman of the Fitting Shop.  
(Photo 2007)*

## Family Tragedy | Death of Edith Williams

On the evening of 3 July 1945 Edie and Jack Williams' youngest child Edith died. She had been suffering from Leukemia for some months. Less than one year younger than John, Edith was just six and half years old. Like any family who has lost a child, a profound change took place. Edith's death changed her family forever.

Being close in age John and Edith had shared a bedroom in their early years. They both had three wheeler bikes and Henty Street was part of their playground. Like many streets in Launceston at the time, the side that received the most sun was not sealed, with gravel laid and renewed at intervals. This was the case outside the Williams' house. While very few cars travelled up and down the road, John and Edith were only allowed to cross to the other side to ride on the sealed footpath, if their mother was supervising from the front veranda.

On commencing school at the beginning of 1945 Edith had moved into a bedroom with her older sisters Mary and Helen. A placid child, she became sick after she started school at St Finn Barr's, Invermay. John remembers very clearly the anger he felt on one occasion when approaching Edith's teacher to inform her that sickness was the cause of yet another absence for his sister. The hapless teacher had suggested to John, only in the second grade himself, that Edith may have fabricated her illness. Even as a shy seven year old he told the teacher very firmly that this was not the case.

Edith's stay in hospital was only six weeks and the day she left Henty Street was the last time her siblings saw her. Hospitals, like most institutions in those days, were somewhat rigid in their rules and children were precluded from visiting. Parents were not able to stay overnight with their sick child, nonetheless Jack and Edie made constant and long trips to be with her. When Edith died, a phone call from the hospital came through to a neighbour, to inform the family of her death. Jack and Edie, unable to stay overnight from the hospital, were not with little Edith when she died. Jack and Edie did not tell their other children that night,

as they were all in bed. The next morning Jack and Edie woke Mary and Helen early and took them to morning Mass.

Edith died on a cold, wet July night and when John woke the next morning he found only he and Hargie in the house. Hargie had spent time at Bangor helping to care for Michael Mackey and she had come to Henty Street during Edith's illness to assist in the house. John felt abandoned when she told him that his parents and sisters had gone to morning Mass because Edith had died. John asked his parents on their return, "Why didn't you wake me up?" (M. Freeman, H. Johnston, J. Williams, personal communication, 16 April 2009) He was frightened and shocked that Hargie, a person for whom he had no fondness, imparted the news. For Mary, the heavy rain and the overflowing gutters on the walk to Mass became the image that marked her sense of shock in losing her youngest sister.

That day Mary, Helen and John were taken to Jim and Beryl Millburn's house. Beryl was Jack Williams' sister and the children stayed with the Milburn's until after Edith's burial. Like rules about hospital visitation the practice of keeping children away from a home at the time of death was accepted. The Catholic Church, as well, had its own institutional practices that reflected the era and took little account of our present understanding of the needs of people suffering grief. The Catholic Church believed that a Requiem Mass offered the opportunity to ask forgiveness for the sins of the person who had died. As a child Edith was thought incapable of sin, so the Church did not require a church ceremony to bid her farewell. This would have been strange for the Williams' family as their experience of death would have been within the rituals of the Catholic church, which for so many, bring comfort in time of sorrow. In Edith's case, she was brought from the hospital back to their home in Henty Street and with the local priest present, she was farewelled from there and buried at Carr Villa Cemetery in Launceston.

Following the burial Mary, Helen and John returned home. At the time, and as time passed, John grew resentful at not having been involved

in what took place following Edith's death. Our present insight into how people cope with grief tells us that the involvement of children in the rituals of death, assist in removing many imagined fears. As well, it brings a connectedness within the family, at a time when parents and children most need each other. The Catholic Church, too, has grown in its understanding that a ritual of farewell, as well as praying for the person who has died, provides a vehicle by which those who are left behind can receive the support of the community at the most difficult time of separation and grief. As Invermay parishioners, Edie and Jack Williams must have found it difficult not to have the experience of support as they buried their youngest child. As John's own understanding grew of how things happened in those days, his anger with his parents dissipated (M. Freeman, H. Johnston, J. Williams, personal communication, 16 April 2009).

Edie Williams was more overt in her grief than her husband Jack, who was stoic about things that had to be faced. As an adult John Williams realizes his father would have grieved deeply for Edith, but with Jack's very practical outlook on life the task of continuing to nurture his family would have been a priority. Their mother did not weep in the presence of the children, but they were in no doubt that she shed many tears over the loss of her child. As Edith's illness progressed her parents knew their youngest child was going to die. In hospital she received regular blood transfusions, not to provide a cure, but to "keep her alive in case we can find a cure", was the message the medical staff continued to give. Her parents knew the transfusions were forestalling her certain death (M. Freeman, H. Johnston, J. Williams, personal communication, 16 April 2009).

Edith continued to be part of the family, her photograph was always displayed and she was spoken about quite naturally. There was never pretence that this terrible tragedy had not befallen them. John and Edith were close and he has missed her for more than six decades, her photograph still displayed on his dressing table. The Williams' family responded to Edith's death through the eyes of faith. They believed that she was enjoying eternal life and they believed also that through faith, they would receive the

strength to live with this tragedy. Their strong faith did not negate the grief they experienced, but it did provide a framework for coping with their loss. The family recovered, but this tragedy removed their innocence.

The turning point in the family's grief came two years later when Edie Williams again fell pregnant. Robert was born on the 19 November 1947, some few weeks after Michael Mackey's death. As the family prepared for the arrival of this new baby Grandfather Williams built a small chair for his four foot, eleven inch tall daughter-in-law to enable her to nurse the baby with her feet on the floor. The chair remained in the house for the next forty years standing as a reminder of Robert's welcome arrival. As an eight year old John viewed his new brother as a replacement for Edith.

There was never any morbidity in the family over her death, certainly acute sadness, but never morbidity. When the children played up, Jack Williams used to say. "I'd be much more sure that I've got her to heaven than I'll ever get you lot there"(M. Freeman, H. Johnston, J. Williams, personal communication, 16 April 2009). Whatever about their own grief Edie and Jack didn't allow Edith's death to distort the affection they had for their other children. Some sixty-six years later John Williams reflected

There are still times when I miss her, I wonder how she would have grown up. We were pretty close, just less than a year apart. For all her life we played together, shared a room and walked to St Finn Barr's together for the three or four months that she went to school (J.M. Williams, personal communication, 27 June 2011).

Because of Edith's death, and quite understandably, the youngest child Robert, was indulged. John welcomed having a brother, however, the nine-year age gap was significant and by the time Robert himself completed primary school he was the only one of the Williams children living at home. After completing Matriculation John moved to Melbourne to begin his seminary studies. Helen, a nurse, was required to be resident at the hospital during her initial nursing training and again when she completed her midwifery certificate, while Mary remained at home until her marriage to George Freeman. His siblings suspect that as he

grew, Robert became quite lonely. His sister Helen and her future husband Noel Johnston used to take him for walks during their courting days. (M. Freeman, H. Johnston, J. Williams, personal communication, 16 April 2009).

In the month following Edith's death the Williams' children, Mary, Helen and John were fascinated by their mother's behaviour on VP day, 15 August 1945. VP (Victory in the Pacific) is the day 'that commemorates Japan's acceptance of the Allied demand for unconditional surrender on 14 August 1945.' For Australians, it meant the end of the Second World War' (Australian War Memorial "VP or VJ Day/" Wartime 2 (2003) 5. Retrieved 13 April 2012, from [http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/vp\\_day.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/vp_day.asp)), and led to celebrations across the country on the following day, 15 August. The tram from, Invermay into town, for the spontaneous community celebration, was full to overflowing. This did not stop Edie as she loaded Mary, Helen and John into the back driver's cabin on the single bogie tram, lurching around corners, pitching and jerking when the brakes were applied. In normal circumstances the driver's cabin was strictly out of bounds for passengers. Their mother's daring added to the excitement of the occasion. For Catholic school students 15 August was already being celebrated as a holiday to mark the Feast of the Assumption, a practice no longer part of the Catholic school calendar. The next day, too, the 16 August was also a holiday across Australia and Jack Williams and Frank Mackey took the children to the cinema at the Majestic Theatre.

In the wider Williams' family Edie held her place and she was able to present her own opinions. She was a determined and independent thinker. Like his own father William Williams, Jack was taciturn. His brother Rod said of him, "Jack was loyal, loyal to Glasgow Engineering where he worked, a man of integrity" (R. Williams and J. Dineen personal communication, 18 November 2003). Rod and Joan both used the word 'loyal' to describe the integrity that characterized their brother. He was a competent tradesman, quickly promoted to leading hand in the engineering works. He was not a man to harbour resentment of any kind and always being loyal, became a very faithful and hardworking employee. "A fair day's work for a

fair day's pay" was the maxim by which he conducted his working life (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003).

### **Community Engagement | Justice for all**

As well, Jack worked hard for the St Vincent de Paul Society, though few would have been aware of his activity. With a commitment to those citizens on the margins, members of the St Vincent de Paul Society assisted families in a very practical way, most often with food and clothing and housing assistance. (Duffy, (n.d.) St Vincent de Paul Society, retrieved on 13 April 2012 <http://www.vinnies.org.au/social-justice-national?link=55>). When Jack Williams joined the St Vincent de Paul Society one of his roles was home visitation. He was known as a person who could keep his counsel, a quality sought after where friends and neighbours may have been amongst those seeking assistance through the Society. Friends he made were real friends. Some may have interpreted a personal reserve and the sense of "keeping one's own counsel" as an aloofness that was hard to read, a family characteristic that goes back to William Williams (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003).

Jack was the only one of the Williams' boys to become involved in the union movement and his involvement was significant and encouraged within his workplace. He was a natural leader. On completion of his apprenticeship, Glasgow Engineering could see they had a good machinist in their employ and he soon rose through the ranks. As well, he became a leader in the Society of St Vincent de Paul and the sense of working for justice that inspired his work in the Society was carried into his union involvement. He believed his involvement was to support his fellow workers, which he did as the union welfare officer, not just to bargain for higher wages or "getting an extra two and six a week" (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003).

During the 1940s Jack Madden, the Labor Member for Bass in

the Tasmanian Parliament (1936-1954), was at the height of his power and it was through an association with Madden, that Jack Williams became politically minded. It was not long before he was Secretary of the Union and, from that point in time, always held executive positions.

When Jack Williams began work there was still discrimination against Catholics, particularly in employment. The Knights of the Southern Cross, a Catholic men's group formed in 1919 sought to redress this employment discrimination by both finding and creating employment opportunities for Catholic men (Knights of the Southern Cross Australia 2004 Retrieved 15 April 2012, <http://www.ksca.org.au/who.htm>). The focus of many of their activities was to counter the work of the Freemasons "a secret secular society that evolved in the Middle Ages and was opposed by most organized religions, especially the Catholic Church" (Henderson, G. (2002) *The secret we should all be let in on*. Retrieved 15 April 2012, from <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/index.html>). Catholic men were not permitted to practise freemasonry. Jack was one of the first members of the Knights when it was established in Launceston, however his membership was short-lived because he strongly objected to the secrecy that surrounded their pursuits. While he was very keen to see justice for all, he also understood that the means used to achieve justice must be above reproach. The same commitment to ensuring justice both in the outcomes achieved and in the methods used in their achievement has come through in John Williams' work. While his father sought justice in his workplace and the local community, John Williams sought justice in the educational provision for children in Catholic schools.

Jack became involved in the Democratic Labor Party, "right in the thick of it" like many of his Catholic contemporaries (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003). While this interest in politics was shared with his brother in law, Eric Dineen, his own brothers were not as interested. Discussion and debate were commonplace at home so John grew up with a healthy interest in politics. However, "if Jack Williams decided not to talk, that enough had been said, then that

was it, no further discussion was entered into. John has inherited the same capacity” (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, 18 November 2003).

### **Education | St Finn Barr’s School | St Patrick’s College**

Jack and Edie’s son John commenced his formal education at the beginning of 1944 at St Finn Barr’s, the Catholic primary school in Invermay, just a seven-minute walk from his home in Henty Street. In those days children started formal schooling in Grade 1, with no Kindergarten or Preparatory year preceding. John loved his teacher Sister Kevin, a statuesque, blue eyed, pretty Irish nun. She was a gentle lady and competent teacher and she certainly made an impression on him. This good and kindly teacher was a significant influence on his attitude to school.

Nancy Dunne, as a nun known as Sister Kevin, came to Tasmania as a seventeen year old to join the Presentation Sisters. A Catholic congregation of women, the Presentation Sisters had their beginning in Ireland in 1775 in the slums of Cork. Nano Nagle, their founder, was born in 1718 in Ballygriffin, Ireland during the persecution of Catholics under the English penal laws. Returning to Ireland after a number of years on the Continent Nano found the people of Cork living in poverty with all the social ills that accompany such a society. Her efforts to establish schools was framed within her religious commitment and she soon gathered other women to join her in this endeavour and several foundations were established. The Sisters had a special charism to teach the poor and it was not long before their work spread beyond Ireland. A number of young women came to Australia to join religious congregations, along with Irish priests who also came here in significant numbers. Australia at that time was regarded as a missionary country. The first Presentation school in Australia was established in 1866 and located at Richmond, in Tasmania. (Presentation Sisters of Australia and New Guinea, (n.d.) <http://www.pbvm.org.au/history.html>). Retrieved on 15 April 2012,

In 1945 John's little sister Edith, joined him at St Finn Barr's, entering Grade 1. John moved into the care of Sister Lucy in the Grade 2 classroom. Grade 2 was a special year in the life of any Catholic child at that time. It was presumed that by seven children had reached the 'age of reason' and were thus able to understand the nature of sacrament. John made his First Confession (as it was then called) and received his First Holy Communion on the 10 December 1945. All the students in John's Grade 2 class were Catholics so this was a celebration that belonged to all. The girls wore white dresses and veils and the boys wore their navy school shorts and white shirts. Much of the religious instruction during the year was in preparation for the reception of these sacraments.

Invermay Parish Priest Father George Cullen presided at the First Communion Mass. An Irishman, Father Cullen was a regular visitor to Henty Street, often bringing his friend Father Peter Murphy, another Irishman from New Norfolk. Naturally, so far from home the Irish priests congregated and recreated together and Jack and Edie Williams always offered hospitality to the local clergy. Certainly their presence in the Williams home was an influence on John's own decision to consider life as a priest (J. Williams, personal communication, 24 November 2008).

St Finn Barr's has a distinctive construction. The ground floor of the building was occupied by the Parish church and could be readily transformed into a hall for fairs and dances. The first floor contained all the classrooms. The children tended to congregate in the schoolyard before classes and for play. Even school assemblies were held in the schoolyard. Boys played marbles, chasings and football. With a long lunch hour many of the children walked home for lunch returning to school for the last half hour of the break, in time to organize and enjoy games. As well, there were separate shelter sheds for the girls and the boys, however, the boys' structure was not as big as most of the boys moved onto St Patrick's College at the end of Grade 3. Some boys stayed at St Finn Barr's through to Grade 9 when they were able to leave school. John's sisters, Mary and Helen remained at St Finn Barr's until the end of primary school when they

moved to Sacred Heart College, also run by the Presentation Sisters.

John's third grade teacher, Sister Genevieve Woods, had a great reputation amongst the Presentation Sisters for being able to raise money. She was in charge of the Convent, but not Principal of the school, and she managed to teach thirty or more children for the whole year without ever moving from her desk on the platform at the front of the room. In John's eyes she was "tiny and ancient" (J. Williams, personal communication, 24 November 2008). Her fellow religious sisters regarded her as a shrewd old lady, keeping all money she managed in a tobacco tin. Commenting on Sister Genevieve, Sister Norah Donnelly said "Those old timers could put us to shame with how they got things done" (N. Donnelly, personal communication, 25 November 2008). Having received his First Communion John could be trained as an altar server, assisting the priest at Mass and this brought with it a level of prestige, especially amongst the boys. Girls were not permitted to assume such roles in liturgical celebrations.

Martin Jones, from Invermay, and Peter Sulzberger, from the adjoining suburb of Mowbray, were John Williams' good friends. Martin joined the others at St Patrick's but left school at the end of Grade 10 before joining the St John of God Brothers who ran psychiatric hospitals and schools and homes for boys with intellectual disabilities. Peter Sulzberger went on to become a teacher with the Education Department.

Immediately after Christmas each year the Williams' family went to the Mackey farm at Bangor, north of Launceston. The ten days on the farm coincided with Jack Williams' annual leave, taken at the same time each year when Glasgow Engineering was closed after Christmas. Other cousins, the Griffin's lived on the Second River Road at Bangor and the Watkins cousins, lived about half a mile from the Mackey homestead, providing the Williams' children with a large group of playmates. Their presence so close to the farm made the holidays exciting.

Harvest time at Bangor which had, as one of its boundaries, a tributary of the Piper River, provided all the excitement a young lad of that time could hope for, cutting clover, baling, cutting oats into chaff for the horses and

fishing. At least once each holidays the children were taken fishing at night, in the early days with lantern and later with torches, catching trout, blackfish and eels. It was on these night-time expeditions that John Williams experienced total darkness, an occurrence that gave him some understanding of personal vulnerability. "If there was no moon visible, you could not see your hand in front of you" (J. Williams, personal communication, 24 November 2008). The family ate what fish they caught.

At Bangor the Williams and the Watkins children played together with the Watkins family separated from Michael Mackey's farm by a mere two paddocks. Kath Watkins was close to John in age having been born at the end of 1938. Michael was a bit younger again. The Watkins' had land on both sides of the road so had access to another river, with swimming always a popular pastime.

In February 1947, after three years at St Finn Barr's, Invermay, John Williams commenced Grade 4 at St Patrick's College. No doubt there would have been excitement at this rite of passage experienced by young Catholic boys in Launceston. Gone were the days of walking home for lunch with John now joining other local children in the playground. With Brother Dunne his Grade 4 teacher, John Williams gained second place in his first round of exams. His thespian talents were tested when he starred as Jill in the 'Wedding of Jack and Jill' in the annual St Patrick's College concert. He was often in the pyramids created by the gymnastic class and because of his small size often found himself at the top of the pyramid, on one occasion even above the curtain and out of sight of the audience. He was not a natural athlete, but under Brother Murphy's tuition he was able to conquer the vault known as 'the Mickey', which involved a full somersault over the horse without touching it. He was very proud of this achievement.

The Christian Brothers staunchly guarded their teaching standards through a program of internal examinations for boys in Grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 in all their schools in the Victorian Province, which included Tasmania.



*St Finn Barr's 2007*



*Grade 4 Dux of Class  
Speech Night Photos  
1947*



*Jack Williams with his two sons,  
John and Robert 1947*



*Edith and Jack Williams  
(n.d.)*

This system of examinations was in place from the 1940s through to the end of the 1950s and in any one class grouping across the two states some 400 to 500 students competed at each year level (J. O'Halloran, personal communication, 16 October 2009). In 1948, John Williams achieved first in the Grade 5 Examination. He was beginning to exhibit the intellectual gifts that came to be acknowledged and appreciated by others in the years to come.

The following year, 1949 was John Williams' final year of primary schooling was spent under the watchful eye of Brother Murphy. As well as being class dux, Southerwood (2008) notes "he completed First Year secondary exams, with credits in English Expression, Social Studies, Commerce, and passes in English Literature and Arithmetic" (p.28). The foremost emphasis of the English Expression curriculum was parsing, a mathematical process requiring the level of analysis that John Williams enjoyed.

As well as the internal Christian Brothers examinations, John Williams and his classmates sat external examinations set by the Catholic School's Association of Tasmania. He also topped these examinations in his first year of secondary schooling. Brother McSweeney, the Principal of St Patrick's College was John Williams' Grade 8 teacher. Brother McSweeney fell ill during the year and the famous Brother Jim 'Basher' Hessian came from St Virgil's College in Hobart to run the College. With the demands of the principalship he was often absent from class. Upon his return he would write a number on the back of the free standing blackboard and the six students who picked the number closest to the one he had scribed would be given the strap as punishment for the noise made during his absence. He would occasionally extend the process, putting up another number and going for a second round. John Williams remembers one occasion when he tired of this process and said, "right, you can all come out" (J. Williams, personal communication, 24 November 2008). Serious offences attracted six 'cuts'. The strap was part of life in a Christian Brothers School and, for the most part accepted in a way that the boys did not

resent it. “Basher Hessian” was a New Zealander and a very good teacher, a mathematics and science man. John Williams liked him very much (J. Williams, personal communication, 24 November, 2008). Brother Conolle and Brother Quane taught John Williams’ group in Grade 9 and 10 and again in Grade 11, the final year of school.

Only fifteen students made up the Schools’ Board class at St Patrick’s College in 1953, and while sharing a room and teacher with the six or seven who had gone on to Matriculation the class grouping was a far cry from the primary classes of thirty or more. This reflected a community perception at this time about the benefits of senior secondary education. Post war employment was plentiful and for those who did not exhibit academic strength there was encouragement from schools and families to join the workforce.

During Schools’ Board (Year 10) John Williams joined the Young Christian Students’ Movement, an offshoot of the more famous Young Christian Worker Movement originally founded in Belgium by Cardinal, Joseph Cardijn. It is an international youth movement that encourages students and workers ‘to see themselves as active participants in life, to have ideas and opinions and to take actions that change their own lives and the lives those around them by following the example of Jesus Christ’ (Australian Young Christian Students (n.d.). Retrieved 16 April 2012 from [www.aycs.org.au/Content/Who-are-we.html](http://www.aycs.org.au/Content/Who-are-we.html)). With the support of an adult member or chaplain, the group experience encourages young people to challenge social exclusion and take action to bring about change in their home or school. There is an outward focus to the movement that has caught the imagination of thousands of students worldwide. Even in the present time when overt religious expression is less attractive to young people, the Young Christian Student’s movement has a worldwide membership of two and half million. John Williams was not convinced that the aims of the YCS were met at school level and at times found the actions, such as cleaning the grounds of St Vincent’s Hospital in Launceston, contrived and not reflective of the more progressive aims as

espoused by Joseph Cardign. When John Williams commenced his seminary studies he was joined by a number of young men who had been influenced by this Movement.

The final term of John Williams Grade 10 year was interrupted by a bout of Glandular Fever that kept him away from school for the first six weeks of that term so he approached the final exams with some trepidation, though he still managed to be awarded equal dux.

John Williams and his friend Martin Jones continued as altar servers through their years at school, with John continuing this commitment until he went to the seminary. During their secondary years Sister Norah Donnelly (then known as Sister Luke) was the Sacristan at St Finn Barr's, with Fr Billy Ryan, the demanding Parish Priest. She appreciated the support of these two senior servers, especially for big ceremonies that required some organization. Sister Norah said, "They saved my life when Billy Ryan was screaming!" (N. Donnelly, personal communication, 25 November 2008)

There were eight in the 1954 Matriculation class at St Patrick's, two of whom were repeating that final year. The group comprised John Williams, his friend Peter Sulzberger and Peter's brother Paul, Freddie Forstener, Frank Vincent, Terry Southerwood, Karl Maeder and Barry Russell. Influenced by his decision to apply to go to the Seminary in the following year John Williams chose to study Latin, Mathematics, Chemistry and Geography. At that time it was not compulsory in Tasmania to study English at this level, provided a higher-level pass had been achieved in Grade 10. Brother Kevin Quane, the Principal of the College, and Brother Pat Connole, taught all subjects, with Brother Quane teaching Mathematics, Science and Latin and Brother Connole, English and Geography.

St Patrick's was not strong in languages. When John Williams was in first year of high school Latin was the only language offered. By the time he reached Grade 9 French was introduced, and John Williams and another boy undertook the Year 7, 8 and 9 curriculum simultaneously, but both

withdrew after a month. The College had an emphasis on mathematics, science and English with physics also offered. John took a subject called Mathematics A, a general mathematics program. Pure and Applied Mathematics and Calculus were also offered.

The small group that made up his class at St Patrick's all went on to successful and varied careers. Of his fellow students Peter Sulzberger became a schoolteacher, his brother Paul, having successfully matriculated trained as a catering officer in the Air Force. Freddie Forstener went into business, first as an hotelier with his father and then into Real Estate. Terry Southerwood studied for the priesthood and was ordained with John Williams. His interest in writing and history saw him at various times as the Editor of the Catholic paper, *The Standard* and author of a number of books, all concerning various aspects of the history of the Church in Tasmania. He has always been involved in Parish work. Frank Vincent became a prominent jurist and Judge of the Supreme Court in Victoria. Barry Russell continued his studies and became an Agricultural scientist with the Department of Primary Industry. Karl Maeder became a ladies hairdresser opening his own salon in Freemantle, Western Australia. Karl's education had been interrupted by bouts of illness and he died aged thirty-two leaving a wife and two young sons (P. Maeder and V. Julian, personal communication, 16 April 2012).

The style of teaching experienced by this small group may well have assisted them to become independent in their learning and better equipped to make their way in their chosen career paths. As well as working around the one table in the Brother's library each of the group had a desk in the Grade 10 classroom. The day was planned on the basis of each subject being taught once a day with each of the eight students having undertaken four subjects. The style was one of a directed reading program with discussion following. Those not studying the subject under discussion at any point in the day were expected to remain in the room and pursue their own work.

John Williams had access to the chemistry laboratory, one that had

been part of the College since its foundation. He was required to do ten or twelve experiments and write them up in a book detailing what he had completed with submission of the work as part of the examination process. Most of his work in this subject was completed largely unsupervised. There was certainly cross interest in the subjects being studied with additional learning happening as the group spent the whole teaching day together, however, with a class continually in progress there was still an opportunity for discussion. John Williams worked closely with Frank Vincent and Peter Sulzberger in mathematics. Terry Southerwood and Barry Russell did Geography with John. The style of instruction was more like a tutorial experience than a lecture situation, with what was going on around them much broader than the subjects each student was studying. It was an experience different to the average classroom. As well, the eight spent considerable time without supervision. Both Brothers Connole and Quane also taught Year 10 classes and Brother Quane had the additional responsibility associated with the principalship. On these occasions it was up to the group to decide whether to study or not.

John Williams was educated in a system where all students undertook the same subjects and achieved set outcomes, however his final year at school with this small group provided an experience that encouraged some specialization and demanded more self-paced learning. Assessment was via external examinations sat at the Albert Hall in Launceston. Geography demanded a great deal of writing. Mathematics problems were completed from textbooks, as was Latin. Access to library facilities was limited, but, the teaching was principally centered on textbooks and the requirement of extensive library facilities did not match the pedagogy. During this final year of secondary schooling the matriculants had access to the Brothers library, particularly for encyclopedias and for English. As well the boys made use of the public library in Launceston.

If in the final year students were not interested in sport they were allowed to leave class. However, for the rest of the school, sport was compulsory. John Williams participated in sports activities but not with

great skill. At that time every Christian Brothers School in Australia had handball courts and playing this sport was a popular pastime during recess and lunch breaks.

St Patrick's College was in close proximity to the Catholic girls' college, Sacred Heart, with dances the main social activity that brought both Catholic and independent school students together in Launceston. The Christian Brothers had very strict rules about single sex education so it was surprising then that John Williams sister Mary, five years his senior, when a student at the girls' school, Sacred Heart College, completed Matriculation Chemistry and Mathematics at St Patrick's in preparation for a Pharmacy course.

Two factors were operating in John Williams' choice of subjects, first the requirements of the seminary, and second his enjoyment of the branch of learning, with his choice of Chemistry and Mathematics in this category. History was popular and he chose Geography, because it was a generalist subject, to make up the fourth subject choice requirement. The whole group matriculated. The Brothers devoted great time to the class and were keen for them all to do well. John Williams continued his academic success and was Dux of St Patrick's in his final year, having also been dux in Grades 9 and 10.

Up until the end of Year 10 the style of education he experienced was highly competitive, to get ten out of ten was important. The tutorial type situation that existed in the Matriculation year opened for the boys the realization that two people could share the same knowledge and it was not about knowing more than the rest of the group. This realization was one of the positive things that John learnt through this process. Up until this stage places in class were determined by test results and speech nights consisted of the "the brainy kids getting prizes but with little recognition of others in the class. Being able to hear other learning going on around you became a broadening experience" (J. Williams, personal communication, 24 November, 2008).

*John, Edie and Helen 1954*



*John Williams (left)  
with Daryl Talbot 1954*



*Williams Family photo.  
Standing - Mary, Helen, John,  
Seated - Jack, Robert, Edie.  
6 January 1956  
(Taken the day before Mary's  
marriage to George Freeman)*

John Williams learnt by listening, and that would have enhanced his capacity to learn in such a group. He did not begin university studies for another thirteen years, however, he noticed that once into his undergraduate course, he took few notes because he trusted his own capacity to listen and retain information.

### **Passage to Priesthood | Corpus Christ College**

John Williams decided he wanted to be a priest when he was twelve years old. His desire to follow this path was common knowledge amongst his family and school friends, he says “it was quite an accepted vocation in those days” (J.Williams, personal communication, 2 December, 2008). His Parish Priest, Father Billy Ryan certainly knew of his intention and fostered John Williams move to study for the priesthood. Father Billy Ryan was good friends with Archbishop Tweedy, Tasmania’s Catholic Archbishop at that time, and he made sure the Archbishop also knew about this bright lad. Because of the longstanding public knowledge about John Williams’ future intentions, no formal application to go to the seminary was required. In 1954, John Williams’ final year of school, the new Coadjutor Archbishop, Guilford Young, interviewed both he and his classmate Terry Southerwood. Guilford Young was to become Archbishop of Hobart in the following year. Psychological testing of candidates, while a requisite now, was not required then. John Williams had a medical examination to determine good health and the only other requirements for entry that he perceived, was an assurance of good character and his possession of the intellectual capacity to complete the eight years of study.

Jim Sullivan, a Launceston lad, had completed three years at the Seminary by the time John Williams and Terry Southerwood were preparing to commence their priestly studies. In the period immediately before leaving for the seminary, from the time school finished until March 1955, Jim Sullivan was a great support, spending time with John and Terry, providing all the

information they needed before taking this momentous step. It was during their first year in the seminary that Jim Sullivan returned to Tasmania after being diagnosed with Leukemia, dying the following year. Two other Tasmanians commenced seminary studies with John Williams and Terry Southerwood. Graeme Howard hailed from Zeehan on the west coast and Adrian Doyle from Hobart.

Students from Tasmania undertook their preparation for priesthood at Corpus Christi College, Werribee, and situated thirty-five kilometres to the western side of Melbourne, Victoria. Victoria's most famous and long standing Archbishop was an Irishman, Daniel Mannix who, following his arrival in Australia in 1913, had wanted to establish a national seminary with the same standing as St Patrick's College, Maynooth, where he himself had undertaken his seminary training, in Ireland. New South Wales already had its own seminary, St Patrick's at Manly built with the original intention that it would be developed and nationalized. In October 1922 the Bishops of Australia received the news from Rome that this move did not have support and the Holy See instead preferred the development of seminaries at regional levels. Tasmania, being a small state has never been able to run its own seminary and before the establishment of the Victorian seminary students for the priesthood from Tasmania studied at St Patrick's, Manly.

In December of that same year 1922, Werribee Park outside Melbourne was offered for sale. Home to the Churnside family, the one thousand acre property had a large home thought suitable as a house of studies. Archbishop Mannix purchased the property for £70,000, with the establishment of Corpus Christi College being announced on Christmas Day, 1922. It had originally been thought that the land could be farmed, thus making the seminary self sufficient, however, that never came to pass with only limited horticulture, bee keeping and carpentry activities available for the seminarians. Ten thousand people attended the ceremony of blessing and opening with the first students commencing at Corpus Christi on 19 March 1923.

Archbishop Mannix invited the Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuits, to staff the College. It was not long before the number of seminarians was on the rise and another wing was commenced in 1925 with further extensions in 1937. In 1940 the decision was taken to move the Tasmanian seminarians from St Patrick's, Manly to Corpus Christi College. The first Tasmanian students commenced at Werribee in 1941 and they joined students from Victoria as well as men from religious orders and diocesan seminarians from Brisbane, Townsville, Rockhampton, Wagga Wagga, Wilcannia-Forbes, Adelaide, Perth and Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

By 1954, Werribee had 131 students and rather than embark on further extensions, the decision was made to build another campus that would serve as the house of studies for theology studies. With the seminary course divided evenly between four years of Philosophy and four of Theology the plan for Glen Waverley was to keep the 'philosophers' at Werribee and house the 'theologians' at the new facility at Glen Waverley. An ambitious construction was commenced at Glen Waverley, an outer eastern suburb of Melbourne, opening on 12 September 1959. By that year there were 177 students living at Werribee with the number dropping to 115 in 1960 with the move of the 'theologians' to the new facility. The student population at Werribee never again exceeded 130 (Corpus Christi College (n.d.) Retrieved 20 September, 2008 from <http://www.corpuschristicollege.org.au>).

The seminary provided new students with a list of required clothing and books. The arrangement in Tasmania was that the Archdiocese paid the seminary fees and the students' family contributed to the Archdiocese what they could afford. Being a very direct man, John Williams' father was not frightened to say, "this is what I can afford", contributing that amount to his son's seminary costs (J. Williams, personal communication, 2 December, 2008). Prior to leaving Launceston for the commencement of his studies John Williams visited all his Launceston relatives, and, as could be expected, his nervousness grew. Jim Sullivan arranged for he and Terry Southerwood to fly to Melbourne with him,

enjoying a meal on their arrival at 'Elizabeth Collins' the fine dining restaurant. They then joined some one hundred and fifty students at Flinders Street Station to board the grey buses that took them to Corpus Christi College, Werribee.

John Williams came home from the seminary twice each year with the first break for a week in July, which coincided with ordination ceremonies in Victoria and in some years in Tasmania. Summer provided a three-month vacation. Airfares to and from Tasmania for these twice-yearly holidays were borne by the student or their family. Once in the seminary John Williams worked to meet these costs by working during the long Christmas vacation.

On arrival for the first time at Werribee tea was served before the students' were required to line up outside the Rhetorician's Prefect's room for room allocation. This was done strictly according to seniority by age. Being the second youngest in an already overcrowded institution John Williams found himself with seven others sleeping in a classroom, which at one time was used for table tennis and known at the seminary as the "ping pong room".

Each seminarian had a bed, a desk and a small wardrobe. A significant learning for John on that first night was that from the conclusion of night prayers prayed in the College Chapel, until after breakfast the following morning all were required to adhere to the "Magnum Silentium". Lights were out at 9.45 p.m. This was very difficult at first for some of the older students commencing studies. Each day began at 5.55 a.m. and at 6.25 a.m. on Sundays and Thursdays. There were no classes on Thursday, timetabled as a recreation day or on Sunday, however, they were obliged to attend classes on Saturday mornings.

John Williams was one of 34 students in his year, the cohort reducing to 33 on day five, with John Finnigan the first of their group to leave. This had some significance for the eight in the "ping pong" room, with each one who left making way for the most senior resident of the classroom dormitory to move into a shared room.

From the intimate group of eight in the matriculation class at St Patrick's in Launceston, John now moved in a very different circle. The Victorian students had completed two years of senior secondary study, known as 'Leaving' and 'Matriculation' and so were all one year older than their Tasmanian counterparts. One of John Williams' fellow students had completed a law degree and another was a practising pharmacist prior to coming to Corpus Christi, others had been in the workforce and undertaken university and other studies and training. Years and experience bring with it a maturity that enables a broader approach to life.

First year seminarians were known as 'Rhetoricians,' for the simple reason that they studied Rhetoric. Acquiring an effective speaking technique was certainly necessary for them in the future days when they would be saying Mass and preaching. Rhetoric was studied for the full eight years of the seminary course. The focus of study in the first year was English, Latin, History, Italian and Chant. John Williams got the prize for Chant, even though he was not musically inclined. The interesting aspect of this subject, given its title, was that the students had to sit a written exam, not an oral one. Gregorian Chant is mathematical in its composition, using only one octave and its study suited John Williams, because in effect the course was a mathematical rather than musical exercise. In the second year the seminarians became known as "First Philosophers" and "Second" and "Third Philosophers" over the following two years. In their final four years of seminary training they were known as "Theologians" reflecting the change in the principal subjects studied.

John Williams enjoyed his studies and was certainly able to keep pace with his classmates. The teaching experience was more like a university lecturing situation, although without tutorials. As well, there was a strong focus on the use of textbooks. Lectures delivered in Latin resulted in huge energy being focused on understanding the language and lesser energy on understanding the content. The delivery of lectures in Latin lasted for some years, however, some lecturers were either not able, or were unwilling to use the practice.

John Williams particularly enjoyed the teaching style in philosophy because the thesis form was employed: a proposition was presented and that proposition was then defined. What followed was the task of reading the philosophers who supported the proposition and reading those who were opposed to it. It was a highly structured process that again suited John Williams' logical mind. The poverty of the style was that the thesis was learnt by rote. In later years some theology was studied using the same process.

The students cleaned their own rooms as well as the whole College. Six Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny also lived at the seminary, providing meals, with one of the nuns, a nurse, managing the Infirmary. The Sisters had the benefit of some modern conveniences in the kitchen, industrial ovens, potato peeling machines and automatic dishwashers. The students waited on the tables and took turns to operate the dishwashers.

Reading during both the midday and evening meal was a tradition at Corpus Christi with students rostered for the task, a practice employed to develop skills of rhetoric. The Professors, seated together at a table at the top end of the refectory, corrected any mispronunciation by the reader with the simple intonation, "again." In John Williams' first year some hapless student was reading a book about Ireland and read "Con-nem-ara," with the accent on the second syllable instead of the third. Rector, Father Charles Mayne, who came from Connemara, was the one to correct him. It was the expectation that each reader, without the amplification of a microphone, would be heard over the clatter of one hundred and seventy sets of cutlery.

Father Charles Mayne was a highly intelligent, well-read man, a good man who enjoyed the respect of the student body. As a student of the Church, he was aware of the various movements that were influencing what became the great gathering of the Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council. He brought speakers into the seminary, speakers of exceptional quality, like Joseph Cardijn, founder of the Young Christian Workers movement. The theme of many of the guests was the place of the laity

within the Church. This idea was revolutionary in its own way and meant lay people having a role in the Church, a role to influence their own communities and the wider world. This was seminal in the late 1950s Catholic Church. Father Charles Mayne supported the positive use of psychology, for instance, teaching the students that they could have a different view, that there could be different views of the Church and this, at a time when the Bishop's authority on issues was a dominant view for many. Interestingly, Father Charles Mayne enjoyed the strong backing of Archbishop Daniel Mannix but was opposed by his successor, Archbishop Justin Simonds. There were ambitious plans for the theologate at Glen Waverley, a seventy acre site that boasted magnificent views of the city, Port Phillip Bay, the Mornington Peninsular and the Dandenong Ranges. It was certainly one of the highest geographic points of Melbourne and when the Chapel was constructed the impressive tower, visible from miles around, became and remains a landmark on the eastern side of Melbourne.

The chapel was designed to accommodate five hundred people with a tower reaching four hundred and ninety metres skyward. Constructed on two levels, thirty-four altars surrounded the High Altar. This multiplicity of altars accommodated priests who returned to the seminary for four months immediately following ordination. The new priests celebrated Mass each day with a seminarian acting as a server or assistant. Prior to the Second Vatican Council 'saying Mass', (as Catholics colloquially refer to the celebration of the Eucharist) was an individual activity. Following the Council, whenever a number of priests are together for the Eucharist they concelebrate the Mass. John Williams was one of thirty-one priests who were ordained in 1962, justifying the extraordinary capacity of the chapel at Glen Waverley.

In front of the chapel was a five-storey administration block that also provided the living quarters for the professorial staff. The south wing was a four-storey construction and comprised refectory, kitchen, staff accommodation, library and classrooms on the ground floors with student

accommodation and infirmary on the upper floors. Music and meeting rooms connected the south wing to the chapel block. The planned north wing and separate convent for the Sisters was never built.

John Williams was in the group of seventy-three seminarians who arrived at the new Corpus Christi College, Glen Waverley on 1 March 1960, it was his sixth year of studies. All four years of those studying theology made the move to the new College. The custom at Werribee had been that the students packed all their belongings at the end of each year to allow for a reallocation of rooms the following year. In the 1960 holidays the personal belongings of the theologians were transferred to Glen Waverley. Single rooms with hot and cold water in each room, not to mention the central heating, were a welcome feature after five years of cold winters with no heating at Werribee. The chapel walls were in place when the first group arrived, but workmen spent another year on site completing the building with one of the classrooms utilized as a temporary chapel. While the seminary had been designed ambitiously to accommodate two hundred students the number who actually studied at Glen Waverley never exceeded seventy-three, the number that commenced in 1960.

The lack of any sporting facilities provided the catalyst for the students to build two outdoor basketball courts as well as develop an oval. In these early days the main source of exercise was running with the students organized into mixed ability groups of seven. A complicated handicapping system, based on the skill of each runner was developed and the groups would set off around the streets of Glen Waverley and surrounding suburbs. Twice a week there were races of varying lengths from three to seven miles. As had been the case at Werribee, sport was compulsory, with activities organized on Tuesdays and Saturdays. John Williams too, became a runner, developing a positive regard for his own ability. Team competitiveness drove many to train for these races, ensuring the fitness level of the seminarians was excellent. John played basketball and also enjoyed umpiring, an activity that suited his penchant for exactitude.

In his first year at Glen Waverley John Williams was part of a team

that built a fowl house that accommodated 200 domestic chickens. A team of seminarians, known as “the chook men” managed this enterprise. Towards the end of the year day-old chickens were purchased and reared under lights until they were over the precarious early stages of maturation. This point coincided with the summer break when seminary employees took over responsibility for their care. John Williams’ colleague and friend, Tom Doyle, who later became Director of Catholic Education in Melbourne, was “head chook man”. While John Williams’ maintenance task at Werribee had been as a “painter”, this skill was not required in the new building at Glen Waverley. He and fellow student Tony Hally would ensure the chooks were bedded down each night, with this task providing the perfect opportunity to enjoy a quiet cigarette, a pursuit still strictly forbidden by the seminary authorities.

The focus of these years was the study of dogmatic and moral theology. Scripture, canon law and church history rounded out the study program. As well students commenced preparing and delivering sermons in the classroom setting. In a quite extraordinary feature of seminary life, the students were not exposed to the art of preaching, as the sermon was not part of the Mass at the seminary. The object of the sermon, or homily as it is sometimes called, was to open the message of the readings for those in attendance, readings all drawn from the sacred scriptures. The importance of scripture was recognized in the seminary, being the only subject studied for the full seven years and the sermon was certainly a feature of every Sunday Mass attended by the lay faithful. Many priests are remembered for the quality and length of their sermons. During John Williams’ seminary years the language of the Mass was Latin. It was through the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council that the language of the Mass changed from Latin into the vernacular. His first experience of celebrating the Mass in English came as a curate at Smithton.

Arrival at Glen Waverley meant the students re-acquaintance with Father Charles Mayne SJ, who had spent a year at Glen Waverley in preparation for the opening of the new facility. Their year’s experience with

Father McInerney SJ as Rector at Werribee had not been a happy one. Father Charles Mayne taught John Williams second and third year Philosophy at Werribee, as well as Natural Theology, a branch of metaphysics that examined, by use of reason, the nature and existence of God and his relationship to the world. This was achieved without appeal to any form of divine revelation (Brent, J. (2008) *Natural Theology* Retrieved April 18, 2012 from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/theo-nat/>). The work of St Thomas Aquinas, formed the basis of this course.

Father John Meagher SJ, a gentle, older theologian was well liked, so too Father Peter Little SJ, regarded as quite young for a Jesuit, who spend up to fifteen years in training prior to ordination. Father John Phillips SJ, originally from Launceston was a scripture scholar and affectionately known as 'Eli'. Father Harry Norrie SJ taught Moral Theology and Canon Law, the study of the laws of the Church. The Code studied was written in 1917.

Texts studied at Glen Waverley were still in Latin, however an increasing number of lectures were delivered in English. While John Williams was at Glen Waverley an edict from Rome demanded the use of Latin for teaching. In response, some lecturers endeavored to return to the practice, but it gained no real currency.

During these final years of study many of the students purchased the four volume set, 'Moral and Pastoral Theology' by Henry Davis SJ, principally because it was in English, apart from about twenty pages pertaining to the sixth and ninth commandments that were printed in Latin. This would have been a directive from Rome when the author sought an imprimatur for the work. Catholic moral theology as it relates to the Church's law on marriage, required quite detailed knowledge of the degrees of consanguinity. This study certainly appealed to John Williams' logical mind and he is still able to differentiate between a first cousin once removed and a second cousin or indeed a first cousin twice removed and beyond that. These priests in training needed to understand this important legal concept, when deciding whether two individuals were

free to enter into marriage.

John Williams' seminary holidays were spent at home in Tasmania, a week following the July ordination ceremonies and then the long Christmas break. He worked as a mail sorter at the Launceston General Post Office prior to Christmas, and then as a kitchen hand and mess waiter during January at the Fort Direction army camp, south of Hobart. As a school student he had attended cadet camps at the Brighton Army Camp, however, the Fort Direction Camps were for school cadets aspiring for promotion to gain the necessary skills required for rank. Seminarians were encouraged to work over the summer vacation, not just to provide money for the year ahead but

...to deepen their understanding of how the people they are going to serve live; mixing with people of all types and temperaments helps them to become all things to all men. (The Priest, 1955. Publication of Corpus Christi College p.28).

This holiday employment was sufficient to relieve some of the cost burden on John Williams' parents for the expenses incurred during the year. One formal meeting with Archbishop Young took place during this time back in Tasmania, but there was no requirement to undertake any 'church' duties in the parish. In fact, in eight years of seminary study no 'hands on' experience in parish work was provided nor required.

Many life long friendships were made in the seminary, a natural consequence of the life that bound this institution. Noone (1999) says, "The seminary was in many ways a total and closed system..." (p.2). July ordinations were a focus of College life with those presenting for ordination being so well known by the student body. All shared in this deeply significant time.

The design of the Glen Waverley complex meant that the students lived in the same proximity to their fellow year level. This was different from Werribee, where overcrowding meant that students were accommodated where a space could be found. The proximity the students now shared was governed by the one of the strictest rules of the seminary, the

'threshold rule', meaning no one was allowed to enter another student's room. Even when the eight were in the 'ping pong' room at Werribee, they were the only eight allowed in that room. The consequence of breaking the 'threshold' rule was dismissal.

The late 1950s and early 1960s saw the Catholic Church on the cusp of great change. Cardinal Roncalli had been elected Pope on October 29, 1958 and chose the name John XXIII. His plans for a General Council were announced without warning on 25 January 1959. During his pontificate the Church experienced change akin to a revolution. Noone (1999) described it as "...the epoch-making review of Church teaching and practice at the Second Vatican Council" (p.2). For John Williams, eight years of study with an emphasis on restriction, was to be challenged immediately following ordination, as the great changes of the Council began to filter through. Crittenden (2008) notes a number of areas that came to notice as a result of the Council.

A new spirit of theological inquiry, the remarkable advances in biblical studies, the liturgical and pastoral movement, the catechetical movement...the realization of the place and role of lay people in the Church, the ecumenical movement opening windows to the separated Christian Churches and beyond, the deepening sense of common hope and fear with the contemporary world...(p.195).

The wise Father Charles Mayne SJ had continued to invite national and international speakers to the seminary. These people revealed a wider perspective at a time when students did not have strong community access. Noone (1999) believed that

...he was a reformer who promoted new ideas with an emphasis on lay initiative and social justice. An avid reader he was ahead of most on psychology and sociology. Irish-born, he kept a Clancy Brothers recording of rebel songs in the seminary collection (p.18).

In John Williams' first three years at Werribee newspapers were not permitted, however, where possible, the students largely ignored this rule. By 1958 the rule was altered to allow access to the first two pages of the

Melbourne daily, 'The Age'. This was not considered a concession.

Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne ruled the Archdiocese with an iron fist, yet interfered little in the running of Corpus Christi College, even handing over to the Jesuits the task of selecting the students. This was not the practice in Tasmania where Archbishop Young reserved this right to himself. Werribee boasted three libraries, Philosophy, Theology and the main library, regarded by the students as the 'real' library. Students in the first four years only had access to the Philosophy library. From the fifth to eighth year they had access to both the Philosophy and Theology collections. Strangely, in an institution that was endeavoring to provide education the students were only able to access to the main library for one week each year, during that period around Ordination celebrations that was colloquially known as 'July Week.' When the move was made to Glen Waverley, a significant portion of the main library was transferred there, coinciding with better, but not open access for the students. The restricted use of library facilities, in effect, 'protected' the students from access to a rich literary heritage. From a contemporary stance, it seems a very limited worldview for an institution of learning. Noone (1999) comments,

Seminary rules were designed to control what students read. The dean of discipline required a list of all books bought into the seminary by students and among those confiscated for breaching the seminary code were Westerns, a book on the philosophy of David Hume and, around 1961, Teilhard de Chardin's *Phenomenon of Man*. Nonetheless, there was an underground sharing of books. Among the novels in the late 1950's, it seems to me that detective stories, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Cronin, Marshall, Ethel Mannin and Morris West's *Children of the Sun* were especially popular (p.15).

John Williams' opportunity for further access to higher education came nearly five years after ordination, when, in 1967, he commenced study at the University of Tasmania. He would acknowledge however, that he had already learned many things, the most significant being a grasp of his own capacity to 'think through' and value knowledge (J. Williams, personal communication, 6 February 2009). During his studies John Williams was working at the

Catholic Family Welfare Bureau so a study of Psychology seemed a natural choice. His choice to study Philosophy flowed from his own desire to continue to interrogate ideas. As his priestly and professional life unfolded he was given the opportunity to pursue his intellectual strengths.

The examination process for all eight years of seminary studies was essentially an ongoing assessment of what was learned by rote, with many of the exams in Latin. This system imposed a restriction on the extent of knowledge that could be accessed by the students particularly for those who had no previous experience of Latin. A number of the professors acknowledged the inadequacy of the teaching style, and they worked in other ways to assist the students in their studies

Authors such as Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh influenced John Williams' thinking during the Glen Waverley years. He continues to subscribe to "The Tablet", a weekly English theological opinion magazine. Whatever the style and times of his seminary training, it did nurture within him a continued commitment to learning, as well as nourish a capacity to change, essential following ordination and with the challenges of the Second Vatican Council.

### **Ordination | Priesthood**

The path to ordination involved a number of clearly defined steps called minor and major orders. John Williams was ordained a Subdeacon on 8 December 1961, a major order before Diaconate, which preceded ordination to the priesthood. With this order came the obligation to recite the Divine Office, that group of prayers based around the Psalms that had their genesis in the monastic tradition. Known as the Hours, the psalms are recited in the morning, evening and night by religious and priests worldwide.

To receive this order John Williams was also required to take an oath against Modernism. The Catholic hierarchy regarded many new ideas being promoted by theologians, philosophers and biblical scholars as erroneous.



*First Year Seminarians  
Corpus Christi College 1955.  
John Williams (second from  
right, front row)*



*Corpus Christi  
College Werribee*

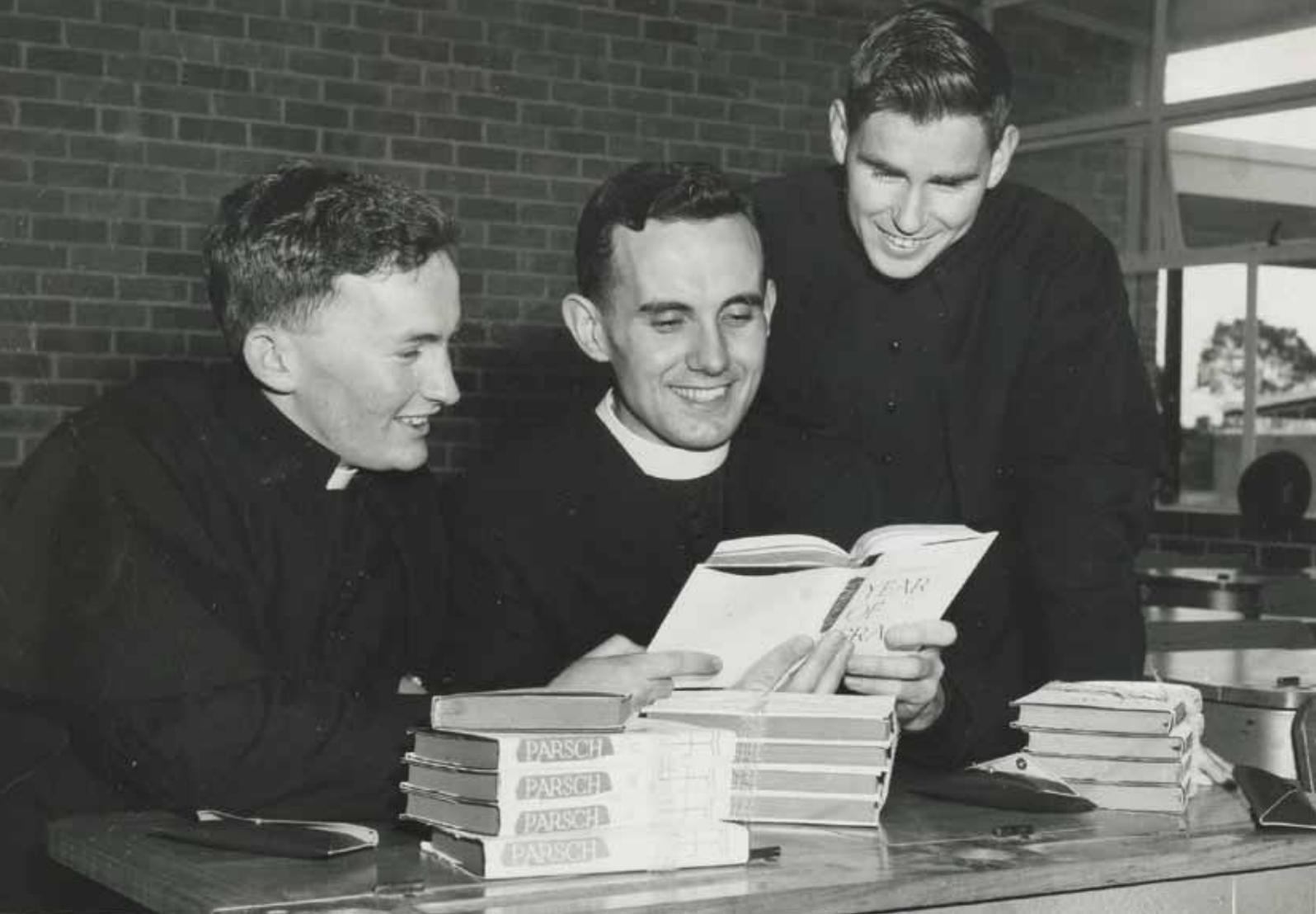
*First Year Seminarian  
1955*



*Sports Committee Werribee 1957-58 Michael Parer, Bill O'Connell,  
John Williams, Peter Foley, Joe McMahon*



*Corpus Christi College Glen Waverley (Opened 12 September 1959)  
John Williams was in the first group at Glen Waverley*



*John Williams, Terry Sullivan  
and Terry Southerwood  
during Ordination Week  
July 1962*



*Following his First Mass with  
his aunt Sr Finn Barr Mackey  
21 July 1962*



*John Williams with family following his First Mass  
at St Finn Barr's Invermay  
L-R Noel and Helen Johnston, Jack and Edie Williams,  
Robert Williams, Mary and George Freeman.*

*21 July 1962*

These erroneous ideas were outlined in the document 'Lamentabili'. Published in 1907 this document marked the beginning of a restriction of modern scholarship in the areas mentioned. A response to this perceived crisis was an even closer supervision of texts used in seminaries, Catholic universities and religious houses. It took another four decades for some loosening of restrictions and this came in 1943 when Pope Pius XII issued an encyclical letter entitled *Divino afflante Spiritu*, which grasped a new approach to literary criticism for use in biblical studies. By the 1950s the restrictions from Rome were still evident in Australian seminaries, but there was a sense that a new loosening was being applied to the shackles that had kept scholarship bound for half a century (Crittenden 2008).

The Subdiaconate ceremony took place in the College chapel without fanfare or even the presence of visitors. As with all significant ceremonies prior to, and including ordination, preparation included a six-day retreat. From the time of Subdiaconate formal priestly dress became a black suit and Roman collar. A black hat completed the picture.

The Christmas break followed Subdiaconate with the students in John Williams' year returning to the seminary on 1 March 1962 for what was to be a significant year. A six-day retreat concluded on 19 March, the Feast of St Joseph, with the ordination to Diaconate celebrated that day, again in the College chapel and without family to celebrate and witness the ceremony. The obligation of celibacy for life is a significant requirement of this order. As well, Deacons are able to baptize and bury the dead, but are not able to celebrate the Mass.

As fourth year Theology students the Deacons continued their studies until July, when another retreat, conducted by a visiting Jesuit, was undertaken in immediate preparation for Ordination. As Deacons, the students attended classes to learn the rubrics of celebrating the Mass, with the added requirement of a 'Mass examination' in Latin. Preaching, too, was given additional attention in elocution classes. As well, through each year of Theology the students were required to preach to their own group at least twice a year. Bill Peach, a well-known current affairs presenter on ABC

television conducted the elocution and public speaking classes during John Williams' seminary training. It had proved a great advantage that the students had been rostered to read in the refectory in four day blocks that occurred six or seven times each year.

John Williams returned to Launceston for his ordination. Fellow Tasmanian seminarian Graeme Howard was ordained at St Mary's Cathedral in Hobart on the evening of 19 July, 1962. John and his St Patrick's College classmate Terry Southerwood attended Graeme Howard's ordination before returning to Launceston the next morning for their own ceremony that evening. Archbishop Guilford Young ordained John Williams, Terry Southerwood and Terry Sullivan in the Church of the Apostles. Terry Sullivan, also from Launceston belonged to the Blessed Sacrament Order. It was a freezing Friday night. John Williams' emotions oscillated between nervousness and excitement, a quite natural reaction before making a life-long commitment. He recalls experiencing a real sense of achievement having completed eight years of study and preparation, a long road for any career choice (J. Williams, personal communication, 9 February, 2009). The experience of ordination John Williams described

... as the culmination of what you set out to do, however, later in life you see it as a step. It is the final act of the Church in recognizing that you could live and work as a priest in the Catholic Church (J. Williams personal communication, 9 February, 2009).

John Williams' cousin, Carmel Milburn, arranged for the making of the vestments he wore at his ordination. Carmel was a member of the Poor Clare Sisters congregation in Sydney, with the making of vestments one of the business activities that supported this contemplative religious order. John Williams has kept and still occasionally uses this set of vestments and as is the custom for Catholic priests he will be buried wearing them.

The Launceston Catholic community really celebrated the ordinations of three of its own, with the families of the ordinands fiercely proud of their sons. John's uncle, Terry Mackey, flew from Fiji to join the family. John

Williams celebrated his first Mass at St Finn Barr's at Invermay, where he had received the sacraments, served at the altar and been part of the community that supported him in his journey to priesthood. His old Parish Priest Father Billy Ryan who assisted him at his First Mass continued saying, "don't worry laddie" (J. Williams, personal communication, 9 February, 2009). John thought Father Billy Ryan was more nervous than he. As is the custom following the ordination ceremony and the First Mass, people lined up to receive a personal blessing from the newly ordained priest. A large group of relatives, and many Invermay people, attended the Ordination breakfast, following John Williams' First Mass.

John remained in Launceston for the week following his ordination. The next day he celebrated the Sunday Mass at St Finn Barr's and then in the following days masses for St Patrick's College, St Finn Barr's School, the Carmelite Sisters at their monastery at Longford and at Karoola in the church where his parents had been married and the district where many Mackey relatives still lived. Jack and Edie Williams accompanied their son on this round of masses.

The Victorian men in his class were ordained two days after John Williams on the Sunday morning at St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne. It was Archbishop Young who commenced the tradition of evening ordinations and also of ordaining men in their own district, rather than always at the Cathedral in Hobart. This certainly allowed greater involvement of the local community whose support for seminarians during their years of preparation meant so much.

Following this week of celebrations, which always occurred in July, the newly ordained returned to the seminary with a sense of excitement and ongoing celebration. "All the fellows would kneel and ask for your blessing the first time they saw you" (J. Williams personal communication, 9 February, 2009), with the newly ordained taking turns to celebrate the community Mass with the others celebrating at the many side altars that ringed the main chapel. The professors treated the new priests no differently and the return to lectures was swift. They still needed to

complete the *'ad auds'* (for the hearing) the examination that satisfied the seminary staff that you were able to hear confessions in a competent way. To test each new priest in this area, professors would assume the role of penitent, placing various scenarios before the confessor. The fact this aspect of training was completed post ordination remained a mystery for these new priests. In the instance where the *'ad auds'* was failed the examination was repeated.

The seminary could easily be described as a religious community governed by rules and timetabled exercises including prayer, which stretched from morning until night. This life was very different to the life experienced by a working priest. While it is easy to imagine that the habits formed during these eight years would stand them in good stead for life, the practical formation for living and working as a priest appeared to be the weakest part of the formation program. John Williams thought it so poor it was "almost negligent" (J. Williams, personal communication, 9 February, 2009). This could and did result in some priests experiencing difficulty adjusting to their role both within the Church and in the wider community.

### **Parish Appointments | Cathedral | Circular Head | Devonport**

One concession for the newly ordained was that they finished at the seminary a week before the other students, but with the requirement that they return to the seminary to rejoin the other students, staff and diocesan Bishops for the ceremony to mark the close of the academic year. During this week John Williams and others took the opportunity to go to the First Cricket Test in Brisbane. He travelled back to Melbourne for the final seminary obligation and then returned to Tasmania to commence work on the Sunday before Christmas 1962, having been appointed to the Cathedral *'pro tem'*. Towards the end of March 1963 the Cathedral Administrator, Father Bernard Rogers told John his ongoing appointment would remain at the Cathedral. However, two weeks later he was appointed curate at

Stanley, a picturesque town on the north west coast of Tasmania.

The wider area in which Stanley was located was known as Circular Head. John Williams' Parish Priest in Circular Head was Father Patrick Hanlon. He was born in 1911 and grew up in the district, his father having been a school principal in the district. Highly intelligent, it was not a surprise that he was one of the first Tasmanian seminarians to be selected to study at Propaganda Fide College in Rome. Seminary studies in Rome were reserved for those who demonstrated particular strengths, not least academic aptitude. Guilford Young was a student in Rome when Pat Hanlon was ordained there in 1934. Adrian Doyle, recently retired Archbishop of Hobart and another Tasmanian in John Williams' year at Corpus Christi was sent to Rome following his third year of study at Werribee, not returning to Australia until the completion of doctoral studies ten years later.

He was always pleased to be in Circular Head where he knew everyone. By the time John Williams was appointed to Stanley in 1963, Father Pat Hanlon was a hard working country pastor with no desire beyond that appointment.

Father Hanlon had always finished celebrating morning Mass before the mid morning arrival of *The Mercury*, Hobart's daily newspaper. He also set aside time each day to devour the contents of *The Advocate*, the regional paper of the north west coast, as well as finding the opportunity to watch the television news. It was from Father Pat Hanlon that John Williams learnt the importance of reading the local paper.

Father Hanlon had the capacity to be really gentle with people, yet maintain his own firm views. This was a significant learning for John Williams as he observed his parish priest interacting with others. John Williams recalls a visit by Peter Lyons, who at the time was on the staff of the Archdiocesan Church Office. Son of former Australian Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, he had come to Stanley to speak to the parish priest and his curate about the Democratic Labor Party, the right wing party that was in its beginning, a splinter of the Australian Labor Party.

Father Hanlon was polite to their visitor, but following his departure he remarked to his curate "How dare he come and ask us to tell people how to vote" (J. Williams, personal communication 9 February, 2009). At a time when some priests freely dispensed such advice from the pulpit, Father Hanlon's reaction provided a lesson for John Williams that he did not forget. Perhaps, more importantly in future years when John worked in the political sphere, he determined that others would not know his voting preference. This was certainly a wise judgment during negotiations with government ministers and opposition members.

When John Williams worked in Circular Head, Marjory and Jack Tierney and their eight children lived at Forest. They owned the general store and Jack's mother Mary, "a highly intelligent, gracious woman" lived across the road from the store (J. Williams, personal communication, 9 February, 2009). Jack and Marjorie welcomed John Williams into their family and he regularly enjoyed their hospitality at Sunday lunch following the Mass at Forest. Families like the Tierney's had a huge influence on his early priesthood, as they reflected an understanding of family life at one with his own. At his next appointment in Devonport he met Marjory Tierney's sister, Audrey White, who with her family offered hospitality to the local clergy.

The life of a country priest brings with it tasks and opportunities not experienced in a city environment. John Williams became the 'reserve' school bus driver, responsible for transporting the children from Stanley and Forest through to St Attracta's, the Catholic primary school at Smithton. This was a government-subsidized service and John Williams' maintenance of a 'heavy vehicle' licence gives a clue to his active community engagement.

Having spent many childhood holidays at rural Bangor John Williams knew country people and at Circular Head he enjoyed the country life. His round of activities included daily Mass, home and hospital visitation, and a significant amount of time spent at the Catholic school. He worked with parents to upgrade the school building when they

were lining a number of the corridors and classrooms.

Additional to the hospitality of strong Catholic communities in Forest, Irishtown and Stanley, John Williams enjoyed the company of his brother priests. Irishman, Father Michael Flynn lived at Wynyard and John visited him on a weekly basis. The priests stationed on the north west coast would travel through to Launceston for a Monday round of golf, or the Launceston priests would come to Devonport for a game then have a meal together and a game of Solo. With their church commitments spanning weekends it has been traditional for priests to take Monday as a day of recreation. John Williams also had the opportunity to visit his family in Launceston, making up for the restricted opportunities afforded during his eight years in the seminary.

In September 1965, two and a half years into his Stanley appointment, John Williams received a letter from the Archbishop informing him of his transfer as curate to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Devonport. His new parish priest was an Irishman, Father John Griffin. Having enjoyed his time at Stanley, John Williams was somewhat ambivalent to the move, however in those days young priests were moved reasonably frequently to ensure pastoral experience in a variety of environments.

Even amongst the large cohort of Irish priests in Tasmania John Griffin was a loner. A secretive man he found it almost impossible to trust others and as a result his standing within the Archdiocese could well be described as being "without influence" (J.Williams, personal communication, 9 February, 2009). John Williams arrived in Devonport amidst a biting September frost.

The Devonport Parish had its boundary between the Mersey and Don Rivers and back to Spreyton. Religious instruction classes at Spreyton and a fortnightly class with the senior girls at Our Lady of Lourdes School formed part of his responsibilities. These classes were totally unstructured, but Our Lady of Lourdes teacher Sister Angela Noonan had the class well primed with questions. Administered and staffed by the Sisters of St

Joseph, Our Lady of Lourdes offered classes through to Grade 10. The other Catholic school in Devonport was St Brendan's College that was in the hands of the Christian Brothers, teaching boys from Grade 4 through to Grade 10.

Living without a housekeeper at Stanley, the priests were regular meal guests across the parish so having a live-in housekeeper at the presbytery in Devonport was a new experience for the young curate. Mrs Holmes' presence in their Devonport home meant that fewer meals were enjoyed with local families. A number of younger families, many with children in the primary grades, became the focus of John Williams' pastoral work. It was this younger brigade of families who purchased a car for the nuns at the school, an initiative that did not sit easily with the controlling Father John Griffin. John Williams undertook the sometimes-perilous task of teaching a number of the sisters to drive. The group were women in their thirties, with all lessons commencing on the wide area of the school playground, before any sister, as well as their teacher, was game to venture onto the streets of Devonport. Getting to know the Sisters of St Joseph opened for John Williams, interaction with religious women, at a different level. He was welcomed for meals with the Josephites, unlike his boyhood experiences with religious sisters, especially the memory of his mother and aunt talking over the front gate because his aunt Sister Finn Barr, as a Presentation sister, was not permitted to come inside their home.

As Father John Griffin prepared for his annual holiday he told his curate, "If anyone asks where I am tell them I'll be back in a couple of days." He was gone for five weeks (J. Williams, personal communication 9 February, 2009). John Williams had no idea where he had gone or how to contact him. Some months later over a quiet whisky he revealed an insight into his secretiveness. As a three or four year old in Ireland he had experienced raids of his home by the British occupying forces, known as the Black and Tans. Knowing that two or three uncles were hiding in the rafters, the young John Griffin was told, "if the police come you know nothing".

## A new assistant for the Family Welfare Bureau

FATHER J. WILLIAMS has been appointed by Archbishop Young to assist the Director of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau (Father C. Kilby).

His place as assistant priest at Devonport will be taken by Father P. McAnany, who has been on the staff of St. Mary's Cathedral, Hobart, for the past two years.

Both Father Williams and Father McAnany were ordained in 1962.

They take up their new posts this week.

Father Williams, who will also be a part-time student at the University of Tasmania, will reside at Holy Ghost Presbytery, Sandy Bay.

Father McAnany was fare-

welled by a gathering of 21 fellow-priests on Tuesday night.



Father Williams

Father McAnany

*The Standard 3 February 1967*



*Ena Waite - Catholic Women's College, University of Tasmania  
Seated in second row: Academic and Poet Professor James McAuley,  
College Principal Sr Cyprian Lane OP, Tutor Mrs Williams  
and Chaplain Fr. John Williams  
Hobart 1975*



*Graduation University of Tasmania  
28 March 1972*

His habit of secrecy had first been learnt, and practised, for protection. While John Williams understood something of his personality, he never felt any closeness to John Griffin.

In the 1960s the relationship between parish priest and curate was not one of equality and John Williams' relationship with John Griffin exemplified this. During his appointment in Devonport the establishment of Shaw College, a girls' senior secondary college was under discussion. John Williams was not invited to be present at any of the meetings. Father Laurie Hoare, then curate at nearby Ulverstone, was also not party to any discussions.

John Williams' friend, Father Philip Green, as well as Church Office staff, Peter Nichols and Max Coghlan, kept him informed about the progress of the negotiations (J. Williams personal communication, 9 February, 2009).

### **Move to Hobart | Catholic Family Welfare Bureau**

Between Christmas and New Year 1966, John Williams was staying with his family in Launceston when he received a phone call from Father Clem Kilby, Director of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau in Hobart, inviting him to meet him at the Perth Hotel, some twenty kilometres from Launceston. During their meeting Father Kilby asked John Williams to consider a three-year appointment to the Bureau while he undertook post-graduate Social Work studies in Chicago, USA. He wanted John Williams to start immediately so they could have some months working together prior to his departure for the US planned for mid-way during the following year.

In 1959, at the request of Archbishop Guilford Young, Father Clem Kilby established the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau as the Church's welfare agency in Tasmania. The initial focus of the agency was adoption, marriage and relationship counselling. A prime focus was the deinstitutionalization of welfare, with a particular emphasis on children.

In the early 1960s deinstitutionalization was occurring in many areas of society and the emphasis of the work of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau shifted from orphanages to family group homes, where professionally trained foster parents could care for children in a family setting. (Vile, 2000).

There was already a move to ensure John Williams commenced some tertiary study and an appointment to the Bureau would allow that, indeed, it would be a requirement of the position. Dean William Upton, one of the Archbishop's Consultor's agreed, and told John Williams that he "should do tertiary studies" (J. Williams, personal communication, 3 October, 2006). John Williams was happy to go to the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, not because the work drew him but primarily because he could begin university studies and because he would be moving away from Father John Griffin.

The move to Hobart was made during January 1967. John Williams became a boarder at the Sandy Bay presbytery with his only parish duty the celebration of Sunday Mass. From living with Father John Griffin who was so secretive, John Williams moved in with Father Gerry Fitzgerald, a man with his own eccentricities. He rode a motorbike until he was over seventy and was known for a great act of bravery following the breaking of the dam, and flood of the Briseis Tin Mine and surrounds, at Derby in the north east of Tasmania, on April 4, 1929.

In 1969, Father Pat Hanlon was appointed Parish Priest of Sandy Bay. After so many years in Circular Head the move was challenging. This city parish was a very different environment for the country pastor. He suffered a coronary on 6 July, 1974, dying that evening, a relatively young man at sixty- three. John Williams reflected "I believe that I started to mature through my experience with Pat Hanlon, before being placed in the position, as a real youngster, as Acting Director of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau" (J. Williams, personal communication, 9 February, 2009).

Contact between the young clergy and Archbishop Young was more incidental than formal and mostly occurred when the Archbishop

came for 'Parish Visitation', a formal period for parishes to give account of their activities and an opportunity for the Archbishop to meet with parishioners, visit schools, the aged and sick and celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. When John Williams lived in Hobart the Administrator of the Cathedral welcomed the priests to lunch on Fridays and Guilford Young often attended those occasions. The tradition then turned to a Saturday lunch that preceded going to the football. The Archbishop became converted to this practice and this regular social contact enabled John Williams to get to know and like his Archbishop.

His arrival at Sandy Bay heralded a new era for the Parish. For years after, a number of priests working in specialist positions, boarded at Sandy Bay. To mark his arrival, Fr Gerry Fitzgerald employed a live-in housekeeper. For a man who rarely entertained, the dining table that comfortably seated fourteen was something of a contradiction. Father Gerry Fitzgerald sat at the head of the table for meals, with John Williams seated at the side.

The young priest gradually found other places in Hobart to celebrate daily Mass, firstly for the Christian Brothers community at St Virgil's College and then at Ena Waite College, the Catholic girls' residential college attached to the University of Tasmania. In time, John Williams was appointed chaplain to Ena Waite College.

Work at the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau commenced for him on Monday 6 February 1967. The staff consisted of Father Clem Kilby, Director, Mary Cox, secretary/welfare worker and John Williams. During the 1960s the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau was the only private adoption agency in Tasmania. Mary Cox would assist in this work by transporting babies from the hospital to short-term foster care placements or directly to adopting parents. When John Williams commenced at the Bureau around twelve to fifteen adoptions were arranged annually.

On the second day of his new appointment, Tuesday 7 February, 1967, John Williams returned to the presbytery at Sandy Bay for lunch, the main meal of the day. Driving back to work he heard on the radio

that fires were threatening a number of areas, including the suburb of Taroona, where Mary Cox lived. He drove to the office, collected Mary Cox and drove her home. He then went to St Joseph's Family Group Home, also in Taroona, where he found six children in the care of two young women. He stayed with them until the fire threat passed. The full extent of the horror of the Hobart bushfires that claimed the lives of sixty-two of its citizens was not fully understood until later in the evening. The news that the fires had burnt two hundred and sixty-four thousand hectares in southern Tasmania and destroyed twelve hundred and ninety-three homes and seventeen hundred other buildings took some time to emerge (Barry, 2008). The Catholic Family Welfare Bureau became fully involved in the relief process that followed the bushfires with John Williams representing the Bureau on the organizing committee set up to manage the provision of assistance for those affected.

After this 'baptism of fire' John Williams' introduction to the work of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau came through reading, talking with Father Clem Kilby and sitting in on counselling interviews. As well, Father Kilby had trained five volunteer counsellors and John Williams became a part of their ongoing formation. These volunteers were used solely for marriage counselling and were all intelligent, good, happily married individuals.

## **University Studies |**

In March of that same year John Williams commenced an Arts degree at the University of Tasmania. His studies were undertaken on a part time basis, with majors in Psychology and Philosophy and a sub major in Political Science. John was particularly influenced by Professor Malcolm McCrae, who completed most of his teaching of Australian History at the University of Tasmania. He was one of the first Australian historians to delve into the culture of Tasmania's first people and John came to admire him greatly. One of McCrae's phrases reflects the feeling he had for the plight of

Aboriginal people in Tasmania. 'Tasmania is a bloody sad place...you can still hear the Aborigines crying in the wind' (McClelland 1996).

The balance of study and work was made easier by the fact that Bureau appointments could be built around John's university timetable. Another personal advantage was that he was twelve years older than most of the students in his classes and he had studied for eight of those twelve years. John clearly knew the obvious advantage of age when, for example, he studied the 1955 Labor Split, as this period held strong memories for him, while others in the class were not familiar with this significant political fracture.

Even at the time, John Williams believed the training offered at the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau was inadequate to enable him to help those who presented for assistance. The style of counselling offered followed the non- directive approach. John Williams commented "I would say while I appreciated the theory, many that knew and understood me would say that being non- directive has not always been my forte" (J. Williams, personal communication, 20 February, 2009). There was never any real opportunity during his three years at the Welfare Bureau for specific training in counselling theory and practice, with the consequence that John felt a certain inadequacy about the job he had been given. In time, John Williams realized that during the three years he had, in fact, learnt a great deal about counselling.

The most enjoyable part of the Welfare Bureau appointment was the adoption process, both working with the mother during the pregnancy and then with the adopting parents. A significant part of the process was identifying appropriate foster families to care for the child until placement with the adopting family and supporting them during this period. One could hardly have worked with people through all manner of life crises without personal sensitivity becoming razor sharp. Consciously or otherwise the skills John Williams accumulated during these three years were then utilized in his position as Director of Catholic Education, eventually dealing with office staff, school principals, Boards of

Management and leadership teams in Catholic schools in Tasmania.

By the time Father Kilby returned from the United States in late 1969 John Williams had already decided that he would seek another appointment in the Diocese for the beginning of 1970. The personality interplay between Father Clem Kilby and himself led him to believe that working together for a long period would not be a happy experience for either of them. He remained at the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau for just three months following the Director's return.

## CHAPTER 6 | CATHOLIC EDUCATION

*Can one be passionate about the just, the ideal, ...and yet commit to no labour in its cause?  
I don't think so... Mary Oliver*

In December of that same year, 1969, John Williams was asked to “look after” the Catholic Education Office while the Director, Father Philip Green, went overseas. This temporary appointment was to be for twelve weeks.

John Williams’ principal role during his twelve-week secondment was to oversee the planning and arrangements for a conference to review Catholic education in Tasmania. The conference was planned for May 1970.

At the end of the secondment, discussions commenced concerning John Williams remaining at the Catholic Education Office, in the first instance, to see through the management of the May Conference. These discussions were between Archbishop Young and Father Green with the result being a decision taken for a more permanent appointment for John Williams at the Catholic Education Office. The following notice that appeared in the “Official Notices” in the 3 April, 1970 edition of the Catholic paper, *The Standard*.

Archbishop Young has officially announced three new appointments of priests in the Archdiocese of Hobart. Fr J M Williams has been appointed Associate Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania. Fr Williams, who was ordained in 1962, has worked in the parishes of the Cathedral, Stanley and Devonport. He was Acting Director of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau in Hobart for two years. He resides at Holy Spirit Presbytery, Sandy Bay (p.2).

One outcome of the Conference was a decision to expand the activities of the Catholic Education Office. At that time the full complement of staff included Father Philip Green, Father John Williams and a secretary. On Father Green’s return from overseas, he and John Williams shared a desk, easily the largest piece of furniture in the office, located within the Church Office, at 68 Macquarie Street, Hobart. John Williams still had two years of his university studies to complete when he joined the Catholic Education

Office, known in Tasmania as the CEO.

Both appointments, first to the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, and then to the Catholic Education Office, occurred without preparation. The appointment to the CEO held more promise for the young priest because insight into his particular talents and skill level had been sharpened through the previous three-year appointment in welfare. As well, he had developed an interest in education at two levels, the first being his parish experiences where he saw primary and secondary schools first hand. The second was beyond the school, and young families whom he had contact with both at Circular Head and Devonport. John Williams had been a keen observer of the negotiations around the development of the regional college at Devonport, and he knew well the financial struggle parents had to educate their children in Catholic schools. The May 1970 Catholic Education Conference was a significant event within the Church in Tasmania. Run over three days the Conference was held at St Virgil's College, Austins Ferry an outer suburb of Hobart. Participants included all priests working in parishes, as well as all Catholic school and college principals, representatives of Boards of Management and Parents' and Friends' Associations, representatives of the catechetical apostolate in government schools, and members of religious orders teaching in Catholic schools and colleges, with two hundred delegates altogether.

The aim of the Conference was threefold: to review the provision of Catholic education within and beyond Catholic schools; to ensure the Catholic community was made aware of the dire financial state of Catholic schools in Tasmania, and to begin the process of drawing schools together, so that rather than operating as individual entities they would begin to operate as a school system. Archbishop Guilford Young, Sister Valerie Burns SSJ, Sister Delphine O'Shea MSS, Peter Nichols, Peter Jeffries, Hugh Campbell and Jim Brophy delivered papers addressing these issues.

In the years preceding the Conference Catholic school enrolment had grown from around nine thousand students to fourteen thousand. The

overall increase was largely attributed to two factors, first, the growth in the professionalization and education of Catholic school personnel, and second, the introduction of some Commonwealth government financial support for Catholic schools, that enabled capital works and recurrent funding to ensure appropriate staffing levels.

Later in 1970, the Catholic Education Office moved into its own premises at 430 Elizabeth Street, North Hobart. The employment of two additional staff added to the complement, another administrative person and a religious sister whose brief was religious education provision for Catholic children in government schools.

John Williams and Father Philip Green worked together as Director and Associate Director until 1972. In March of the same year Father Philip Green was appointed Administrator of St Mary's Cathedral, and at the same time John Williams was appointed Secretary to Archbishop Young. Both men held their positions within the Catholic Education Office, however by October 1972, Father Green relinquished his appointment as Director and John Williams was appointed his successor.

In his role as Secretary to the Archbishop, John Williams was required to move to the Archbishop's residence at Fisher Avenue, a private home in the Hobart suburb of Sandy Bay. In a confusing use of terminology, both John Williams and the person tasked with secretarial duties were referred to as 'Archbishop's Secretary'. The focus of John Williams' role was to provide the Archbishop with personal support and companionship. He often accompanied him to functions, and each day travelled from the CEO to the Sandy Bay house to join him for lunch. The Archbishop Young regularly entertained guests for lunch, many from interstate and overseas, as well as representatives of various bodies from both Church and community. John Williams also provided liaison between the Archbishop and the priests, Federal and State government politicians and other church leaders, a position somewhat akin to that of advisor to a government minister. If he was not saying a public Mass, the Archbishop celebrated daily Mass in his private chapel within the house; however, John Williams continued to say

Mass either at St Virgil's College Chapel or at Ena Waite College.

Many priests thought Archbishop Guilford Young unapproachable. John Williams believed the problem of the relationship between the priests and the Archbishop flowed from a misinterpretation of his forthright speech, his keen intelligence, his tendency to talk over people and his quite extraordinary physical presence. John Williams liked to think that he encouraged the priests, particularly the younger priests, to be open with the Archbishop, knowing that the Archbishop would have welcomed such interaction. Guilford Young knew that many people, including some of the priests were reticent in his presence and Guilford did not always set out to allay their fears. John Williams' role as 'interpreter' between the Archbishop and the priests grew from approaches many priests made to him about their own relationship with the Archbishop. John himself, even with his own taciturn personality, was never frightened of Guilford Young.

One of the regular visitors to the Archbishop's home at 31 Fisher Avenue, Sandy Bay, was Frank Rush, Archbishop of Brisbane and friend of Guilford's since their student days in Rome. He came to Tasmania for two weeks each year. Many other visitors and meal guests were Tasmanian priests, especially those who lived outside Hobart. This aspect of life with the Archbishop gave John Williams the opportunity to get to know the local priests, to hear their concerns and know their interests. During this period, Guilford Young became a major influence on John Williams.

Tasmania's size brings with it limited choice and the Catholic Church suffered from this in the same way as many other organizations. One of the unfortunate elements of the management of the Archdiocese arose from the limited spread of leadership amongst the clergy in high profile appointments amongst the clergy. Father Philip Green moved through the positions of Director of Catholic Education, Administrator of the Cathedral and then full time Secretary to the Archbishop. As a young priest, Father Clem Kilby was appointed Director of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau and John Williams Secretary to the Archbishop and Director

of Catholic Education, at a relatively young thirty two years of age. Among their fellow priests these three became known as 'the triumvirate'. John Williams believes this title reflected the perception that these three had ready access to the Archbishop, were able to disagree with him and at the same time retain his respect. Each of these perceptions was correct, but the inference of excessive power held by the three was far from the truth. They enjoyed the support of Guilford Young because they were capable of doing the jobs they were assigned. Perhaps part of the disquiet arose from the lack of ease many of the priests experienced in relating to the Archbishop. There may have been a perception that their roles had removed them from what would be considered normal priestly activity. Even John Williams' mother once asked him, "When are you going to start doing what you were ordained for?" (J. M. Williams, personal communication, February 20, 2009). Many held this opinion until Archbishop Young's death. Certainly for John Williams and, to some extent with Fathers Green and Kilby, the amount of interstate travel that was required of their positions led to a picture of glamour, not experienced by priests involved in parish ministry.

Both Fathers Philip Green and John Williams developed a real friendship with Archbishop Young, aided by both men living with the Archbishop, getting to know him in a way that others did not. Archbishop Young and John Williams became very good friends, not just co-workers, and John's six years as Secretary were important years in his personal development.

John Williams knew that Guilford Young believed in him, trusting him to complete any task to which he was assigned. This became a significant factor in developing John Williams' sense of self in relation to a larger than life person. That he was not overwhelmed by Guilford Young, as some others were, points to a level of self-integration, together with a level of intellectual understanding that provided them with a meeting point. An insight into the Archbishop's judgment of John Williams, and of their relationship, was evidenced by Archbishop Young's words at a Mass of Thanksgiving to

mark John Williams Anniversary of Ordination. Altogether, four Tasmanian priests shared in this celebration on 20 July 1987.

John Williams has been gifted with a mind like a razor, who feels deeply but hates to show it, who's so different from his boyhood fellow classmates by his insistence on clear definition and near mathematical distinction. He detests injustice and has been and is so often a corrective irritant to minds like mine....That this man of these qualities could have given me, a man so different, a loyalty and obedience so true across 25 years, is a measure of the strength of his faith, the clarity and conception of the wondrous mysteries of the Church - divine and yet so wounded.

It had been his lot to play a part in one of the most complex, demanding, exhausting and highest of the Church's services to humanity. So well has he done it, that not only you and I thank, but are proud and feel honoured as his brother priests of the Church of Hobart, that the Bishops and the Church round Australia value him and his work so highly. I believe that he will leave his mark, a strong mark on the overall educational story of our country because of his strength, comprehension and grasp his mind has of this radical ecclesial and social reality.

Father Williams possesses an intellectual grasp and comprehension allied to more than ordinary capacity to negotiate and manoeuvre, albeit with an appreciation of the good and the true in the position of an opponent, arising from his keen sense of justice and honesty.

In March 1988, when Archbishop Young collapsed, he was transferred by air ambulance to Melbourne. It was John Williams who flew to Melbourne to be with him, seeing him off to the theatre for surgery and remaining with him, as he died that evening.

For twenty-four years John Williams' energies were devoted to his role in Catholic education. He played an important role in changing the way individuals and groups perceived the issues of government funding, access and educational provision for students within non-government schools. The manner of his influence was multi-layered and included persuasion within the Church, at state and federal government level, within the wider non-government sector and in the general community. At no time was the exercise of this influence or his intent solely concerned with students in

Catholic schools (P. Tannock, personal communication, 7 April 2005).

John Williams' work in education must be viewed within the context of education provision in Australia. White settlement in Australia occurred in 1788 and in the years that followed some colonies provided assistance towards the payment of teacher salaries. Once education became compulsory, the legislation required it to be free and secular, so those who desired an education in non-secular schools were excluded from funding. As a nation we chose not to fund the education of a significant proportion of our children. A 1997 radio broadcast spoke of the division this caused in the community.

From the earliest days of European settlement of Australia, mistrust and bad feeling between Catholics and Protestants was a significant part of Australia's social and political life. Sectarianism was central to the relationship between convicts and their colonial master. This sectarianism found voice in future battles, namely conscription during the First World War and the Australian Labor Party Split in the 1950s (which saw the creation of the Democratic Labor Party). In the 60s, the focus was the fight for State Aid to non-Government schools (G. Shirley, 10 April 1997). [Radio Broadcast]. Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The latter half of the nineteenth century brought with it great debates on education and eventually resulted in legislation which determined that education would be free, secular and compulsory. From the earliest days of white occupation in Australia, private individuals and religious groups have provided schooling. The second Catholic school in Australia, and first in Tasmania, was established in 1823, with convict John Wade the resident teacher (Southerwood, 1988. p.54). The free, secular and compulsory legislation meant the establishment of state-run departments of education and also meant the cessation of any funds to schools conducted by individuals or the Church. The 'Education Act', was passed in Tasmania in 1868, making it the first colony in Australia to introduce a compulsory state education system. In New South Wales, in the same year, politician Henry Parkes, later to become known as the Father of Federation, passed a 'Public Schools Act' by which a Council of Education disbursed public funds to both denominational and national schools.

It was a time when less than a third of New South Wales' 150,000 children received schooling. But in the bitter sectarian atmosphere of the time, which was to disfigure the education debate for the next century, the system was assailed on all sides (Carr, 1996, p.2).

Still in New South Wales, it was in 1880 that Parkes' *Public Instruction Act*, which created the Education Department, was passed. All aid to denominational schools was withdrawn and the system of free, secular and compulsory education took hold in that colony. Carr (1996) says that "While this legislation achieved its objective in providing access to free schooling for all, the divisions within the community were to be felt for the next century" (p. 2). Similar legislation followed in all Australian colonies. Kenny (1996) explains the Catholic response.

[In spite of this] Catholic parents, teachers, clergy and bishops resolved to maintain their own school system. They made this decision despite the fact that government grants, on which Catholic schools had come to depend for the payment of teachers' salaries, were no longer available. At the time of the passage of the Victorian Education Act in 1872, most Catholic schools were staffed by lay teachers. Many of these teachers remained in the Catholic system... some accepting reduced salaries. Gradually, as new schools were established and lay teachers retired, members of religious congregations took over both teaching and school administration, so that by 1900 there were more religious than lay teachers in Catholic schools across Australia (p.1).

The Australian Catholic Bishops were committed to Catholic education and outlined their thinking in a pastoral letter to all Catholic communities as early as 1862, well before the passage of free, secular and compulsory legislation. This interpretation of Catholic education is still upheld. The pastoral letter stated,

Catholics do not believe that the education of a child is like a thing or mechanism that can be put together bit by bit. Now a morsel of instruction on religion, and then of instruction in secular learning- separate parcels with as little reciprocal action as have two books on the shelves of a library. We hold that subjects taught, the teacher and his faith, the rule and practices of the school day - all combine to produce the result which we Catholics consider to

be education and that this desirable result cannot be looked for without such combined action (*Joint Pastoral of Bishops, 1 November, 1862 cited in ( O'Kane Hale, 1986, p. 17).*

Supported by the Catholic people, this led to an extraordinary century of development of religious teaching institutes that formed the basis of Catholic education as we know it today (Carrigan, 2005). Religious sisters, priests and brothers answered the call of the Bishops and came to Australia from Ireland, England, Italy, Spain and France, accepting the invitation to provide Catholic education. As well, new religious orders were founded in Australia with education as their primary work. This arrangement of religious staffing and administration of Catholic schools remained largely unchanged from the late 1800s through to the 1960s (O'Brien, 1999).

Following the Second World War the Australian Government sponsored a Reconstruction Program, part of which was a federally funded immigration program. The vast majority of migrants that flooded into Australia as part of this wave of immigrants were from southern Europe, with a significant proportion of them Catholic. With the 'baby boom' of the 1950s, Australia's Catholic population doubled in twenty years. This put enormous pressure on school and church resources, the majority with poor facilities and overcrowded classrooms. By 1960, self-funded Catholic schools, which were struggling, were almost at crisis point. Unless some assistance from the government was forthcoming, the Catholic education system was facing collapse. The states did not have the funds and had the Catholic school system buckled, government schools would not have been able to cope (Bourke, 1975).

In the New South Wales town of Goulburn, what would have been regarded as a trivial circumstance ignited the debate about State Aid to non-government schools, and placed the issue firmly on the national agenda. Government health inspectors demanded the installation of three extra toilets at the Catholic primary school. This was the last straw for the local community, as no funds were available to meet this additional requirement. The local Auxiliary Bishop, John Cullinane, decided to take a stand and called

a meeting of parents. A 'strike' was mentioned and the idea soon gained momentum. At a subsequent meeting the majority present voted to close Goulburn's Catholic schools and send the students to the local government schools, effectively flooding them.

On Monday 16 July 1962, one thousand children from the Catholic schools sought to gain entry to Goulburn's Education Department schools, which, of course, were unable to accommodate more than half the cohort. The happenings in Goulburn became the focus of national media attention. Sectarian feelings and Australian humour found a voice in the graffiti on a toilet wall in Goulburn High School, 'No tykes in our dykes'. More serious was the anger of some members of the public who made threats against the lives of the action organizers. While the action was over within a week, the point had been made. State Aid, was firmly on the national agenda. Historian Michael Hogan observes:

The Goulburn school strike was important at this stage... it clearly became a decision of Menzies' (the Liberal Party Prime Minister) not so much to get involved in education, but to try and separate Catholic voters from their traditional support for the Labor Party (Shirley, 1997, p. 3).

From the late 1950s, when State Aid was first mooted, many of the Protestant church leaders were outspoken in their opposition, believing that State Aid was "tantamount to aid for the [Catholic] Church in its teaching and propaganda" (Moyes in Harman, 1975, p. 177). Many Protestant independent schools had strong financial foundations and saw themselves as very different from their much poorer counterparts in the Catholic system.

In 1963, Bob Heffron's Catholic-backed right wing New South Wales Labor Government, proposed funding for science laboratories for non- government schools. His proposal was defeated at the national level of the party and Liberal Party Prime Minister, Robert Menzies saw his opportunity, and made State Aid for science blocks and Commonwealth scholarships for students at government and non-government schools, part

of the platform on which the 1963 federal election was fought. The Menzies Government had a resounding victory at the polls.

By 1967 every state parliament had legislation for State Aid in place, offering modest direct grants to non-government schools. However, other factors ensured these schools were far from over the troubles of the previous ten years. Catholic schools needed far more than science laboratory grants to bring them back from the brink of collapse. Other issues also impacted on Catholic schools at that time. From the 1950s and through the 1960s there was a sharp rise in the population of Catholic children of school age, for the reasons already cited. Coupled with this was the significant decline in the number of religious sisters, priests and brothers available to staff Catholic Schools. This resulted in escalating salary costs for all schools. Religious congregations had provided teachers for Catholic schools for a pittance compared to a lay teacher and this had been a significant factor in the operation of Catholic schools since the 1880s. Over a fifteen-year period, commencing in 1970, the Catholic education system was largely laicized, restructured and reformulated with a new set of systems, processes and policies. The metamorphosis of Catholic education over this period was the most significant change for one hundred years. The two new players in Catholic education were government and the laity. By 1985 it was transformed (P.Tannock, personal communication, 7 April 2005).

A number of factors assisted this transformation, not least the election of the Federal Whitlam Labor Government in 1972. One of the earliest actions of the new Prime Minister was the creation of the Australian Schools Commission, with Professor Peter Karmel, appointed Chair of the Interim Schools Commission. Their brief was to report on the educational needs of all Australian schools. In the 1973 report "Schools in Australia" the state of some Catholic schools' reflected the considerable need for assistance. The following two examples were among many cited.

A Catholic primary school on a very small asphalt site. The building was old and in poor repair and equipment minimal. Migrant English classes were conducted in an ill-lit, poorly ventilated,

small shed in the nearby convent, with books and equipment balanced on boards over a bathtub.

A Catholic boys' secondary school where the desks had literally been salvaged from the junkyard rejects from government and more affluent non-government schools (P.Karmel, *Schools in Australia*, 1973 p.46).

A common resource standard for all schools and general recurrent funding which took account of need and equality were recommended. This resulted in a desperately needed injection of funds into all schools, and into Catholic schools in particular.

The 'Karmel Report' as this report became known, led to the formation of the Commonwealth Schools Commission that was responsible for major public policy changes in education. The Commission tripled federal funds for all schools, government and non-government.

At the same time the National Catholic Education Commission was established. According to its own definition it is

...the official body appointed by and responsible to the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference for developing, enunciating and acting upon policy at the national level for the Church's work in education.

The NCEC is the focal point for ongoing discussions and negotiations with the Commonwealth Government and other national bodies involved in education. The Commission is also a national forum for discussion and debate on significant matters of interest and concern to Catholic education in Australia (NCEC Annual Report, 2005, p.4).

The annihilation of the Whitlam Government in the Federal election of 1975, and complementary repudiation two years later, was a turning point for all involved in the major changes that the Whitlam years had brought. The Fraser Liberal Government resisted the temptation to "slash and burn" and the thrust of the Labor education policy continued under the ensuing Liberal Government (P.Tannock, personal communication, 7April 2005).

In 1978 the Attorney General of Victoria consented to make an application on behalf of the anti-State Aid lobby to take to the High Court,

an action to test the Constitutional validity of federal assistance to religious schools under Section 116 of the Constitution. This group, the 'Council for the Defence of Government Schools', became known as 'The DOGS'. Formed as a pressure group in the 1960s, the DOGS was a coalition of some anti-Catholic Protestants and a larger group opposed to government financial assistance of religious schools. The purpose of their move was to establish the point that a substantial part of federal funds was used to finance religious, rather than secular subjects. When the first submission went before the High Court it was considered such an important matter that it was referred to the Full Bench of the Court for hearing and decision. Section 116 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act states

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth. (2003)

The DOGS point was that funding would support "establishing any religion". The Australian Catholic Church was deeply concerned, and many groups, particularly Catholic education administrators at the State level, contributed substantial funds and other resources to the action brought against the Commonwealth (M. Coghlan, personal communication, 12 January 2004). The judgement was 6:1 against the DOGS with only Justice Lionel Murphy dissenting.

It was immensely important when the decision was handed down in 1982. When you look very carefully at it there were numerous strategies in place to deal with the problem if there had been an adverse finding. To have the High Court come down firmly in their resolve was very helpful and important psychologically apart from anything else. Politically at that time both sides of politics had committed themselves to funding schools (P. Tannock, personal communication, 7 April 2005).

The High Court case and the election of the Hawke Labor Government the next year, with their commitment to funding policy, was the end for the

Council for the Defence of Government Schools.

During this period a number of individuals emerged who were able to develop and enact policy, guide new administrative frameworks, negotiate with the government and build relationships with other stakeholders in education. As well, they were able to influence decision makers within the Catholic Church, particularly the Bishops. The old sectarianism in Australia saw differing faith groups aligned to particular political parties. These individuals were keen to operate beyond those political constraints for the underpinning, continuance and progress of Catholic education in Australia.

Key figures in Catholic education in the last three decades of the twentieth century included Archbishop James Carroll from Sydney who was Chair of the Federal Catholic Schools Committee from 1967 until 1973; Father Frank Martin, Director of the Melbourne Catholic Education Office and a member of the Karmel Committee and of the Commonwealth Schools Commission from 1973-1979; Father Tom Doyle who followed Father Frank Martin as Director in Melbourne. Father Doyle held this position for twenty-two years. As well, he was a member of the National Catholic Education Commission from 1974. Peter Tannock, Professor of Education at the University of Western Australia, Chair of the Commonwealth Schools Commission from 1981 to 1985 and then Director of Catholic Education in Western Australia until 1993. He became Vice Chancellor of the University of Notre Dame Australia. Alan Druery, also a layman, came from Queensland, and was the Executive Director of the Catholic Education Commission of Queensland. Father John Williams completes this group with membership of the Federal Catholic Schools Committee preceding membership of the National Catholic Education Commission from 1974 until 1994. He was Chair of that group for six years from 1979. As well John Williams was a member of the Commonwealth Schools Commission for three years from 1980. What this group shared was the influence they were able to bring to the Federal Catholic Schools Committee, the National Catholic Education Commission and the

Commonwealth Schools Commission. As well, they were all able to exercise influence in the growth and management of Catholic education in the states in which they were domiciled. John Williams' own narrative drew together the important influences of family, education, priesthood, and in particular, the impact of Christian social ethics, and impelled him to become involved in this issue of funding support for students in non-government schools. Equally important was his commitment to work within the context of the Church, often finding himself at odds, with some within the Church, over funding issues.

French philosopher and novelist Julien Benda, now remembered for his 1927 book 'La Trahison des Clercs' (The Treason of the Intellectuals), offers the following reflection that illuminates a certain quality in the men mentioned, a quality shared by John Williams.

At the opposite end of the definitional spectrum is Julien Benda's characterization of intellectuals as a small group of extraordinarily gifted and morally endowed philosopher-kings who personify the conscience of humankind. Benda's religious term for intellectuals - clerics - denotes a status and performance that distinguishes the intellectual from the laity, those ordinary citizens who spend their lives busily pursuing material advantage, status, advancement, and sometimes, close relationships with those in power. Authentic intellectuals, Benda reminds, are not in pursuit of practical aims. Authentic intellectuals seek pleasure in their art or science without regard to material advantage, and by doing so they communicate: My kingdom is not of this world (Pinnar, 1998, p. 110).

To grasp the notion of what it was that motivated John Williams to pursue this course, in which he believed so strongly, can be grasped through an examination of his character. In personality, the men mentioned are all vastly different, but in terms of character there is a meeting point. In John Williams' case the understanding of his motivation and subsequent action is dependant upon understanding him as a priest. He had a realism about the world, utilizing serious analysis while maintaining what Leech (1997) described as "outrage and passion, hope and vision and strong political commitment" (p. 13). Analyzing a century of Catholic social teaching is the key to understanding the influences and culture that formed

John Williams and shaped his understanding of the world and his place in it.

A particular quality that John Williams possesses is his openness to conversation and meeting others 'in-between'. While he engaged in the 'cut and thrust' of negotiations, he was open to what others brought to the table. He believes strongly in the good intentions of those with whom he is dealing and a Christian ethic guides his exchanges.

### **Hobart | 1970 Catholic Education Conference**

John Williams was present at three events that opened for him a vision of what Catholic education could provide. The first event was the May 1970 Catholic Education Conference in Tasmania. Having organized this Conference it is little wonder that its outcomes became a focus and force for his work. It was Archbishop Guilford Young who requested the organization of this gathering and the Archbishop was committed to working towards a common understanding of the goals of Catholic education in Tasmania, as well as a common program through which those goals could be achieved. The six keynote speakers, all Tasmanians, and all with a passion for Catholic education, presented papers that covered a range of issues. The core recommendations that flowed from the Conference addressed the issues that received attention. They included:

- An expanded central authority to plan for and co-ordinate Catholic education including the provision of necessary buildings.
  - The provision of appropriate religious education for the whole Christian people, including adults, both within and beyond Catholic schools.
  - The adequate formation of religious education teachers.
  - The establishment of 'Conditions of Service' for lay teachers.
  - The establishment of an association of lay teachers in Catholic schools.
  - The provision of the services of trained special education teachers within the Catholic system.
  - An expanded central authority to make representation to State and Federal governments
- J. Williams, (2011, March 24). [To mark the 50th Jubilee of the opening of the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office]. Speech presented at St Peter's Hall, Hobart.

## **National Catholic Education Commission | *Interim Commission***

The second event was John Williams' membership of the first National Catholic Education Commission, a group that only met on three occasions for one week each year from 1969 until 1971. One recommendation of that group to the Bishops of Australia was for the establishment of a permanent Commission. Monsignor James Bourke from Perth had been appointed to organize and facilitate these three initial meetings and he drafted the reports that emanated from the discussions. The reports were presented to the Australian Bishops Conference for their consideration and like many proposals for change, another impetus was needed before the Australian Bishops agreed to the recommendations of this non-permanent group.

Immediately following this initiative, another group was meeting, the Federal Catholic Schools Committee (1972-1974). Made up of a number of Bishops, together with a priest and layperson from each state and the Australian Capital Territory, the principal function of this body was to try to develop a unified stance for the Catholic Church in the fight for State Aid. Archbishop James Carroll from Sydney was an influential member, and being a strong Labor Party sympathizer, put himself at odds with a number of other Bishops. The Sydney Catholic church was staunchly Australian Labor Party in its leanings while the Melbourne church was strongly Democratic Labor Party. John Williams was a member of the Federal Catholic Schools Committee, an experience that taught him a great deal about the political machinations within the Australian Church.

## **The Armidale Conference | *To share ideas and plot a way ahead***

*(P.Tannock)*

The third event that was decisive in shaping John Williams' grasp of Catholic education on a national scale came at the 'Armidale Conference'.

The impetus for the establishment of a permanent National Catholic Education Commission came from this conference, held in September 1972 at the University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales. It was the first national gathering to examine the organization and administration of Catholic education in Australia. "It was organized by the Department of University Extension at the University of New England and was largely a result of the initiative of Professor W. G. Walker and Monsignor J. E. Bourke" (Tannock, 1975. vii#19). While not a Catholic, Professor Walker was an entrepreneur with good ideas about education. Further in the same document Tannock (1975) describes the impetus for the conference,

Catholic education and indeed all education sectors were facing significant administrative and organizational challenges and this conference sought to bring together people from all levels of Catholic education to share ideas of mutual concern and plot a way ahead. Catholic education was seen by the organizers as 'another major administrative unit in Australian education' (viii#19).

The Conference had a significant effect in that it drew together the management of Catholic education across the states and of the multiple dioceses within the larger states. John Williams was part of the Tasmanian contingent, joined by Father Philip Green, Father Kevin O'Leary SDB, Principal of Savio College, Sister Cyprian op, Principal of Ena Waite, the Catholic women's university college, Sister Valerie Byrnes RSJ and Sister Delphine O'Shea from the Missionary Sisters of Service, a congregation whose Sisters worked with country families well beyond the reach of Catholic schools. It was during this Conference that John Williams first met Peter Tannock, who at that time was Professor of Education at the University of Western Australia. He formed a close working relationship with Peter and with the progression of the years they formed a strong friendship.

With high quality speakers the Conference presented a vision for Catholic education in Australia, a vision that extended beyond the Catholic school. It was a seed for the involvement of the Church in the broader

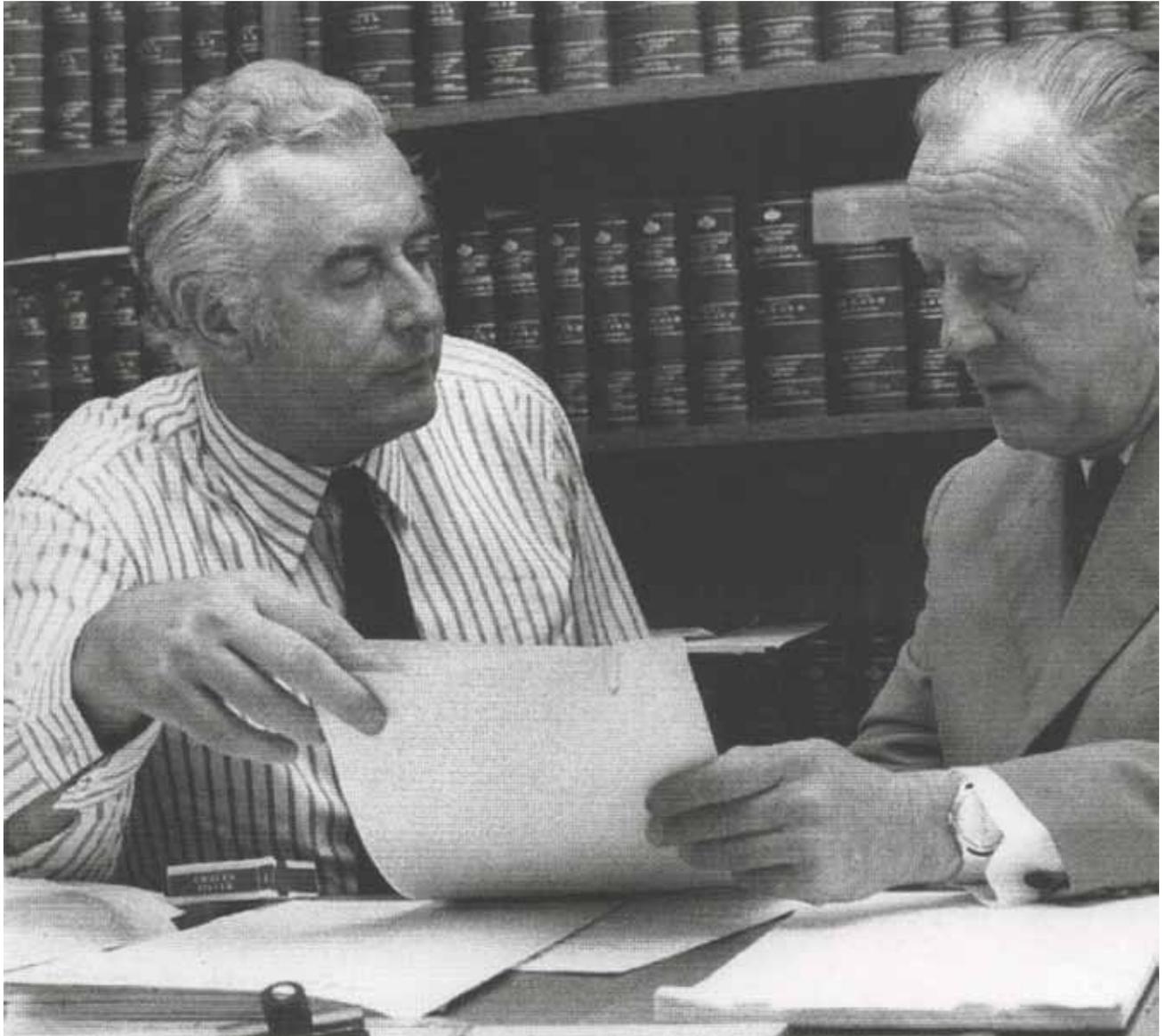
education field. In 1972 the limit of the Church's involvement in tertiary education were Catholic teachers' colleges, religious formation houses and seminaries.

The Armidale Conference was the first large gathering of Catholic educators in Australia. Peter Tannock's paper 'Quo Vadis' was regarded as a deeply questioning paper that called for real change. Tannock's address cemented his place as a person of influence in the Australian Catholic Church. He was appointed a member of the first Commonwealth Schools Commission and may well have been nominated for that role by Archbishop James Carroll, a good friend of the new Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Father Frank Martin, the Director of Catholic Education in Melbourne and a known Labor sympathizer was also appointed to the Schools Commission upon its establishment in December 1972 during that period when all Labor ministries were held by Gough Whitlam and his Deputy Lance Barnard.

### **National Catholic Education Commission | *A national approach***

The Bishops took time to digest and act upon the recommendations of the impermanent National Catholic Education Commission and it was not until 1974 that a permanent Commission (NCEC) was established. John Williams was an inaugural appointee to the National Catholic Education Commission, holding the position of Chair from 1979 until 1985. He remained a member of the NCEC until 1994 when he resigned as Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania.

Much of the early activity of the NCEC entailed discussions with federal politicians, both government and opposition, and to a lesser extent, with heads of independent schools. Most important were the negotiations with the Commonwealth Schools Commission. Membership of the Schools Commission was drawn from all sectors so any perceived conflict of interest was lessened. Those who sought the favour of Commissioners had to contend with some very tough negotiators.



*5 December 1972 News Limited*

*Prime Minister Gough Whitlam  
and his Deputy Lance Barnard  
assumed all Cabinet positions  
for 10 days following the  
1972 Labor Party victory.*

John Williams' first experience of the political realm was in discussions with Malcolm Fraser, later Liberal Prime Minister. A man well over six feet in stature, Fraser would stand very close to those with whom he was in conversation. This strategy immediately put others at a psychological disadvantage, a ploy John Williams believed was used to intimidate. When speaking with Fraser, John Williams always took two steps away from him. Of other politicians with whom he worked John Williams admired John Carrick (1975-1979) and Wal Fife (1979-1982), Ministers for Education in a Liberal government, and Susan Ryan (1983-1987) and John Dawkins (1987-1991), both Ministers for Education within Labor ranks.

Labor was in power federally from 1972 until 1975 with the Liberal Party then forming government until 1983. During this period John Williams was also negotiating with Tasmanian state politicians of both persuasions. One of his meetings with Tasmanian Labor Premier Doug Lowe, was held in the Premier's chauffeur driven limousine, during the trip to collect the Lowe's weekly order from the butcher. The Premier's chauffeur collected John Williams, delivering him back to the Catholic Education Office on the return journey. Only in Tasmania would such a scenario be played out.

### **Director of Catholic Education | *Tasmania***

As John Williams established himself on the national scene, his work as Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania developed in tandem. He still had to work within the maneuverings, of the local church, particularly with Archbishop Guilford Young's readiness to lead a fight for State Aid. At a parent meeting on the North West Coast Archbishop Young announced that unless an increase in Commonwealth funding was forthcoming the closure of a number of unspecified schools was imminent. John Williams was on the platform sitting next to the Archbishop, having no pre-warning of the announcement just delivered. He was then left to cope with the press

inquiries that followed, as well as the avalanche of concern expressed by parents all over the state. This was not an easy time. John Williams was inwardly angry with his Archbishop, but he was loyal to him, exercising tact in dealing with the situation.

A period of expansion commenced in 1970 when the Catholic Education Office moved to 430 Elizabeth Street, North Hobart. This move, and the growth that followed, was a result of a recommendation of the May Catholic Education Conference. The growth was not what could be described as significant; however, in percentage terms it was significant for an administrative body that had comprised three people. The Catholic Education Office staff soon grew to include a bookkeeper, a teacher to work with catechists who taught religious education in government schools, and an advisor to schools who covered both educational and financial matters. Herman de Souza, who performed this role, had been a principal of a secondary school in Singapore with an enrolment in excess of 2000 students. Herman always maintained the air of being in charge, occasionally inviting his colleagues to his club for lunch. As well, Frank West, brother of internationally acclaimed author Morris West, was employed as Deputy Director. The following year, former secondary school principal Father Kevin O'Leary commenced a one-year appointment to investigate and recommend the most appropriate ways to provide Catholic senior secondary education in the Hobart area. His report, endorsed by the Advisory Council on Education (forerunner of the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission), recommended the establishment of a single senior secondary college. The advice could not be implemented however, because two of the religious orders involved steadfastly refused to participate in such a change. The process of restructuring secondary education in Tasmania lasted for the next twenty years. The May 1970 Catholic Education Conference in Tasmania, the 'Armidale Conference' and membership of the National Catholic Education Commission provided the forums for John Williams to grasp the challenges, get to know the principal players, and find his own place within Catholic education in

Tasmania, and at the national level.

When Guilford Young was thirty-one years old he was consecrated a Bishop in Sydney on 15 July 15, becoming the youngest bishop in the world. Following an appointment to Canberra-Goulburn he was appointed Coadjutor Archbishop to the ageing Archbishop of Hobart, Ernest Tweedy. On September 20, 1955 Archbishop Tweedy resigned and his Coadjutor became the Archbishop of Hobart. Guilford Young's vision for the Church in Tasmania is central to understanding this narrative.

Tasmanian Catholics did not enjoy the community influence of Catholics in Melbourne and Sydney. Catholics in both those cities had risen to the top of the professions, also exerting influence in the political arena. Australian Prime Minister (1932-39), Joseph Lyons was a Catholic (National Archives of Australia); however, the relatively small percentage of Catholics in Tasmania compared with other eastern seaboard capitals meant that the sphere of influence was diminished. The 1950s was a period when employment could be influenced by denomination, and because of this, secondary students in Catholic schools were encouraged to seek positions within the public service. The state bank, Savings Bank of Tasmania, would not employ Catholics. The influence of the Freemasons and the Knights of the Southern Cross was significant at this time and contributed to the religious divide then present in Tasmania. Like other states Tasmania felt the effects of the post-war migration boom. Many Europeans who settled in Tasmania were Catholics and the burden on parochial schools revealed the incapacity of those schools to meet additional demands. Schools were not in receipt of any government funding.

Archbishop Guilford Young employed a number of strategies to strengthen the capacity of the Catholic community to become more self-sufficient in educational, welfare and financial provision. First he established the Schools Provident Fund to give the Church capacity to provide schools and parishes with low interest loans. The Catholic community supported the Fund, which still exists for the same purpose. Every parish and school in the state would at one time have embarked on

capital works with the assistance of long term, low interest loans, from the Schools Provident Fund.

The second arm of support for the Catholic and wider Tasmanian community came in 1959 with the establishment of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, which had as its mandate the provision of welfare and human services to the Tasmanian community. Now known as Centacare, the organization continues to deliver a broad range of specialized services.

The third arm of support established was the Catholic Education Office, opened in 1961. An American priest, Father James Dolan was invited by Archbishop Young to come to Tasmania to establish a management structure for Catholic education. Father Dolan was a highly intelligent, but volatile man. He introduced a levy on all students in Catholic schools, which was used to defray the costs of providing the Catholic Education Office, an initiative not welcomed by schools struggling for financial survival. Sadly, Father Dolan was involved in a car accident, sustaining serious injuries that precluded his return to his role in Catholic education. It was at this time that Father Philip Green was appointed to the Catholic education role.

When Father Green moved to the role at the Catholic Education Office, Archbishop Young changed his title from Director to Inspector of Schools, because Father Dolan had made some enemies, particularly with the nuns running the parish primary schools. In those initial days Father Green used to visit the schools, but had no control over curriculum, his was more a pastoral contact. A state parent body, known as the Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation was well supported by Archbishop Young and grew in parallel to the Catholic Education Office.

### **‘Sunday Conference’ | *A stand for justice***

At the State election of May 10, 1969, the one successful candidate for the Centre Party, Kevin Lyons MHA, aligned himself with the Liberal

Party, allowing the State Liberal Party to take power, after both the Liberal Party and the Australian Labor Party had won seventeen seats apiece. This was a significant event in Tasmanian politics, ending twenty-eight years of Labor government.

Prior to the election Peter Nicholls, then Manager of the Schools Provident Fund, had issued a précis of what State Aid was being made available to non-government schools at that time. This statement from Peter Nicholls was regarded in Labor circles as having come directly from Archbishop Young. With the Catholic community traditionally being Labor voters, this statement was perceived as having an influence on their loss at the polls. According to Max Coghlan, deputy to Peter Nicholls, the “statement issued regarding State Aid was purely from Peter’s pen” (M. Coghlan, personal communication 25 May 2009).

The issue of State Aid for non-government schools, and most particularly Catholic schools, was not one that was fought down party lines. The same pressures were brought to bear on all political parties because the financial state of Catholic schools was critical. Following the 1969 Tasmanian election, the Catholic Education Office, the Church Office (the administrative arm of the Catholic Church in Tasmania) and Schools Provident Fund personnel turned their attention to Angus Bethune’s Liberal government, with Kevin Lyons of the Centre Party, whose support gave power to Bethune and the Liberal Party.

In an effort to shore up the ‘Catholic vote’ for the 1972 election, Labor powerbrokers Mervyn Everett, Doug Lowe and Neil Batt invited Father Philip Green, Director of Catholic Education, his Deputy John Williams and Max Coghlan, Manager of the Schools Provident Fund, to a Sunday meeting at Parliament House. Merv Everett, a clever jurist, who eventually sat in the Federal Court of Australia was, from 1964 until 1969, Minister for Health in the Reece Labor Government in Tasmania. Doug Lowe was elected as a member of the House of Assembly in 1969, becoming Tasmania’s youngest ever Premier in 1977, aged thirty-five years. Neil Batt was also elected as a member of the House of Assembly in 1969. From 1972 he

was appointed Chief Secretary and Minister for Transport. Noticeably absent from this gathering was Bill Neilson, who had been Minister for Education in the previous Labor Government from 1958 until 1969 and then again from 1972 to 1974 in the next Reece Labor government.

Max Coghlan, Father Philip Green and John Williams knew they were dealing with the backroom power players, who were determined to regain power at the forthcoming 1972 state election. As well, they knew the Opposition was not confident of regaining power in the forthcoming state election. They did not want the Catholic community to form a separate block so this meeting was intended to placate the Catholic voters. Interestingly, Everett, Lowe and Batt had not the slightest interest in voters who sent their children to independent schools, as it was assumed they would not vote Labor.

Catholic schools were financially crippled. The Capitation Grant for a primary student from the previous Labor government was \$20 per pupil, per year. Under the Liberal-Centre Party government of 1969-1972 an increase of \$4 per pupil was granted. It is interesting to note that in subsequent years as the Capitation Grant amount increased the \$4 stayed, a stark reminder of the meanness of the Bethune Liberal-Centre Party Government.

The essence of the offer made during the Sunday meeting was that if the Catholic block were prepared to sacrifice the other Independent Schools, an incoming Labor government would virtually give the Catholic sector what they wanted.

While Max Coghlan, Father Philip Green and John Williams were clear that anything that comes to legislation must have a political solution, they were happy to play the political game, indeed this group of three relished it. Father Green had cut his political teeth as a boy listening to the Labor and strongly pro communist Senator Bill Morrow spruiking at the Domain in Hobart. Max Coghlan had grown up in a Labor household and John Williams remembers telling his mother how to vote as she completed a postal vote following the birth of the youngest child. John was nine years

old.

As they listened, they were conscious of the opinions of the Independent sector regarding State Aid. These schools charged higher fees than any Catholic school and generally had a far wealthier parent base. Richard Walsh, Chair of the Board at the Anglican boys' school, The Hutchins School, was in favour of State Aid, as was Bob Mather, Chair of the Board of the Friends School, governed by the Society of Friends, and Ray Ferrall, Board Chair at Launceston Church of England Boys Grammar School. However, there was an underlying mistrust of the Catholics and their push for a share of the public purse. Rev Dr Dudley Clarke, Headmaster of The Hutchins School was most prominent amongst this group.

The thought of being able to sacrifice these few Independent schools for a share of funds that would have made a significant difference to Catholic schools may have been a fleeting temptation. However, securing some financial reassurance for Catholic schools was not at the essence of the battle for State Aid. Rather, it was about securing a share of the taxpayer dollar for all students, government, Catholic and Independent. With a tactic that was reminiscent of Mervyn Everett's own style, Max Coghlan, Father Philip Green and John Williams lay out in very clear terms that what these powerbrokers offered would not be accepted. The meeting adjourned for half an hour. The Catholic representatives were resolved in their determination to stand their ground. When the meeting resumed, Everett, Lowe and Batt capitulated easily on the matter of including the Independent schools in the funding model proposed. On a Sunday morning at Parliament House the group worked out an acceptable figure for a capitation grant for students across the Catholic and non-government school sectors. John Williams reflected on the occasion

The advantage of them (Everett, Lowe and Batt) being very intelligent is that you could negotiate and when they made a decision they would stick to it (J. Williams, personal communication, 19 May 2011).

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S. COAST: Fire danger very high. Details — Page 14.

# The Canberra Times

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## ALP heads decide on Senate ticket

**By COLIN BRAMMALL**  
The national executive of the Labor Party used its rarely invoked plenary powers yesterday to force through Senate tickets in all States and Territories.  
The executive, which voted unanimously to use the powers, was seeking to end embarrassing party disputes in Queensland and Tasmania over positions on the tickets and, more practically, to finalise the tickets so candidates could be nominated in time.  
The national secretary, Mr Bob McMullan, said the executive had used the same formula in all cases except NSW.  
This required that sitting Members on six-year terms, where applicable, take the three long-term slots at the top of the ticket, and that sitting senators on three-year terms and other candidates fill the remaining three short-term spots.  
It had resulted in the Queensland and Tasmanian tickets being varied from those recommended by State councils, the Western Australia and South Australia tickets being imposed because State councils had not met, and in NSW Senator McClelland being elevated from No 3 to No 1, a move recommended by the NSW council but not in compliance with the formula.  
The Victorian, ACT and NT tickets were not affected.  
It was not clear last night whether the executive action would satisfy the factions in all States.  
Mr McMullan said the use of the plenary power should not be regarded as a precedent but as a "special initiative" to make sure the party was not distracted from election issues.  
The executive received word yesterday that the meeting of the Socialist International in Sydney in April had been postponed, at the ALP's request, to a date to be fixed later this year.

Mr Peter McGowan, 27, of Traralgon, has been pre-selected by the National Party to contest the seat of Gippsland, being vacated by the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Nixon. The Liberal candidate is to be selected tomorrow.

## PM attacks ALP on defence

**From TERESA MANNIX, in Brisbane**  
The Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, said yesterday that the Opposition's policies on defence and foreign affairs would leave Australia naked and defenceless.  
He told a news conference in Brisbane that the policies expressed by Mr Hawke made the fate of the ANZUS alliance doubtful under a Labor government.  
Mr Hawke had opposed the Sinai peacekeeping force only because the opinion polls had been against it.  
"Now I suggest that that's a travesty of a leader, a travesty of a political party that seeks to have the confidence of the people of Australia," he said.  
Everyone knew that Mr Hawke's personal convictions would have led him to supporting the Government's decision to establish the force, but because the opinion polls were against it "he didn't have the courage to do what his own convictions must have told him was right in the interests of peace in the Middle East."  
"And if a leader is going to look to the polls and say he can't take a certain course because it might make him unpopular, then I think that every Australian will understand... that that person would make a very, very bad Prime Minister."  
Mr Hawke would let the opinion polls lead him and lead Australia. "And that would be a disaster for this country," Mr Fraser said.  
The Labor Party's attitudes would make it impossible for Australia to sustain its relationship with the United States and the ANZUS alliance.  
"I can only say that the policies that have been enunciated, the attitude of Mr Hawke to the Sinai following the polls, is totally consistent with a non-aligned foreign policy."

**LATE NEWS**  
**42 arrests at cricket**  
SYDNEY: Police arrested 42 spectators at the first World Series Cricket final at the Sydney Cricket Ground last night.  
A police spokesman said all those arrested had been taken to Darlinghurst police station "by the truck load."  
All, with the exception of one man, were charged with causing serious alarm and affront, resisting arrest, assaulting police and malicious injury. He would appear in court on February 23.

## PSB to lose control of staff ceilings

# Hawke's plan for better PS

**By GAY DAVIDSON**  
A Labor government would "make better use of talent within and outside the Public Service", the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Hawke, said in Canberra yesterday.  
He was presenting Labor's "Quality of Government" policy.  
The talent would be better used by creating a special division of senior officers appointed by Cabinet, and promoting other senior officers to designated levels rather than specific positions.  
In other major policy changes: The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet would lose its second-guess or second-think role of recent years and split into two sections, policy and organisation, to become a service and co-ordination agency.  
The Public Service Board would lose control over staff ceilings to the Department of Finance, and departments would have more internal flexibility in "human resource budgeting".  
New functions would be placed in departments rather than new statutory authorities established, and existing authorities would be absorbed into departments where possible, to ensure greater control and accountability.  
The Freedom of Information Act would be expanded in the interests of more open government, the adminis-



The chairman of the National Catholic Education Commission, Father John Williams, left, is met by the Opposition spokesman on education, Mr Hurford, at Canberra Airport last night.

## Telecom function to be protected

The Government is to protect Telecom's role as Australia's main communications carrier, and it may be some years before private enterprise is allowed to enter the field.  
The announcement yesterday by the Minister for Communications, Mr Brown, was the Government's first response to the Davidson inquiry into telecommunications.  
Mr Brown said the Government had given preliminary consideration to the main thrust of the Davidson inquiry and the Bradley inquiry into Australia Post.  
"The Government is committed to maintaining the essential common-carrier roles of Telecom and Australia Post," he said. They were great national institutions that would not be put at risk.  
There would be no intrusion into Telecom's prime role of providing the national network.  
He emphasised that yesterday's announcement represented only a general reaction to the Davidson report. Detailed assessment of the 103 recommendations was still in the pipeline.  
The report called for Telecom to be placed on a competitive commercial footing with private enterprise, and for it to compete with outside competition in various fields. Under the Davidson plan, private operators would have been allowed to operate private networks, installation of telephone and terminal equipment, capital works and new data information services.  
"There is, of course, scope for the involvement of private enterprise," Mr Brown said. "In respect to the precise areas where competition will take place

## Freedom of Information Act to be expanded

# Hawke's plan for better PS

Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, had to be seen to be doing something, but that a charitable reading of the report showed the review to be inadequate.  
The Labor Party's policy paper is critical of the Government rather than the Public Service.  
It says, "After seven years of Fraser Administration the quality of public administration — through very little fault of the professional public servants — is at an all-time low."  
"The morale of the Public Service has been shattered by massive funding cutbacks, erratically applied staff ceilings, buck-passing by ministers who have refused to accept the blame for failures of policy direction, and the Fraser Government's ideological obsession with building up the private sector at the expense of the public."  
The policy on Cabinet and caucus seeks to streamline the first and ensure more involvement in decision-making for the second.  
Cabinet would have three coordinating committees and six policy-function committees, with as many decisions as possible made by committees rather than full Cabinet.  
And it will be recommended to caucus that the party committees "shadow" the Cabinet committees, with the intention that ministers will consult with the appropriate committee at the same time as submissions go to the Cabinet committee.  
Asked if this system would give rise to a leak problem, Mr Hawke good-humouredly said he could give an unqualified "Yes" to that.  
On the termination of ministerial appointments, Labor's four Leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate would have power to suspend a minister, who would be required to resign if called on to do so by the four.  
As well as requiring a public declaration of financial interests by all Members of Parliament and the staff of ministers and "shadow" ministers, the policy provides also for a review of the "indefensibly self-indulgent" parliamentary superannuation scheme, and would restrict payments to retired parliamentarians employed in public positions, such as diplomats.  
Mr Hawke commented that in making appointments on merit a government should not discriminate against former parliamentarians but it should not pay them twice.  
The policy paper ends with Labor's proposal for a referendum on a fixed-term Parliament with the term being four years. Mr Hawke said that in government Labor would move within the first six months to hold the referendum.  
Text of "Administrative machinery: the Public Service and public authorities". — Page 2.  
Editorial. — Page 2.

## Labor, Church in aid talks

**By ZENA ARMSTRONG, Education Reporter**  
The ALP, seeking to defuse criticism of its needs-based education policy, dissociated itself from the radical anti-State-aid policies of the teacher unions before meeting members of the National Catholic Education Commission in Canberra last night.  
The Opposition spokesman on education, Mr Hurford, met the chairman of the commission, Father John Williams, and the director of the Victorian Catholic Education Commission, Father Tom Doyle, for talks aimed at resolving the disagreement with the ALP.  
The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Hawke, has asked for briefings on the policy from Mr Hurford, and its engineer, Mr Dawkins, the former spokesman, has said he will enter into negotiations with the Church if it becomes necessary.  
Mr Hawke said yesterday there was "some room" for negotiation on the party's stance.  
The commission, which is committed to the provision of a basic grant for every child in private schools, has clashed with the ALP over its refusal to guarantee a basic grant to those wealthy private schools which operate above a recognised community standard.  
Under a Labor government, those Catholic schools in the Schools Commission neediest category would benefit from additional Federal funding, while some schools in the wealthiest category could lose such grants.  
Mr Hurford said that commission fears that such a policy would lead to the removal of Federal funding for all non-government schools were unfounded.  
Earlier in the day, he stressed that the ALP was "absolutely committed to help for non-government schools".  
While the party supported such groups as the Australian Teachers' Federation when they campaigned for improved conditions in government schools, it was "regrettable" that some parts of the federation were campaigning against State aid.  
The federation, which launched yesterday a \$190,000 campaign in support of those ALP policies it considers beneficial to public education, is opposed to all Federal funding for non-government schools.  
Opening the campaign, which is using the slogan, "Your children need to win this election," the president of the federation, Mr Van Davy, estimated that it was part of an overall election effort worth \$750,000 conducted by ATF-affiliated teacher unions in all States.  
The Minister for Education, Senator Baume, who labelled the campaign an "alliance of convenience" between the federation and the ALP, called on the ALP to dissociate itself from the campaign.  
"If it does not, then Australians can only assume that the ATF campaign, including its policy against State aid, is endorsed by the ALP," Senator Baume said.  
The ALP policy came under further attack from the official newspaper of the Sydney Roman Catholic Archdiocese, the *Catholic Weekly*, which advised the ALP to reassess it.  
The newspaper, which was distributed to NSW churches yesterday, said in an editorial that the ALP might have to rethink its education policy if it wanted to avoid problems on the State-aid front.  
Father Williams said that while the editorial correctly represented the commission's position on the base-grant issue, the commission was unlikely to mount a similar attack on the ALP even if last night's talks failed.  
Neither the ALP nor the commission was prepared to make any statement on the outcome of last night's talks.  
The commission is meeting in Canberra over the next two days to discuss what public stance, if any, it will adopt over the issue.

## Sorry at Bonner demotion: Fraser

**From TERESA MANNIX, in Brisbane**  
The Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, said yesterday he was sorry that Senator Bonner had been dropped to No 3 position on the Queensland Liberal Party's Senate ticket.  
Asked if he was disappointed at the decision made on Tuesday night, Mr Fraser said, "I don't normally comment on what my State divisions are doing in matters of pre-selections for the House of Representatives or the Senate. But in these circumstances, let me give a one-word answer to that. Yes."  
Although Senator Bonner had been dropped to No 3, the party would be fighting very hard to ensure that he was returned.  
Senator Bonner said yesterday that the Aboriginal cause would suffer if he was not re-elected.  
"There are some Liberal members who are upset at my stand on Aboriginal issues, but I didn't think they'd go as far as demoting me from the head of the ticket," he said.  
The Queensland secretary of the National Aboriginal Conference, Mr Steve Mam, said the decision had been made without a proper understanding of the Queensland electorate. Senator Bonner had shown he could come out a winner.  
His place has been taken by Senator Martin.  
The Leader of the Australian Democrats, Senator Chipp, said, "The unceremonious dumping of a man of Senator Bonner's outstanding calibre demonstrates clearly the stranglehold of [the Premier] Mr Bjelke-Petersen over the Liberal Party in Queensland."  
The Western Australian Liberal Party will decide on its Senate ticket tonight. The Attorney-General, Senator Durack, is understood to be likely to be moved down the ticket.  
The top spot is likely to go to either the Minister for Social Security, Senator Chaney, or Senator Withers, with Senator Crichton-Browne third. The other places will be fought out between Senator Durack, Senator Thomas and Senator Martyr.  
Asked about Senator Durack's chances yesterday, Mr Fraser said, "Again it's a matter for the organisation. I don't believe Senator Durack would be at risk. Not for a moment. But my West Australian colleagues might not see that line."  
The South Australian branch was due to finalise its Senate ticket last night.  
Liberal Party sources said the President of the Senate, Senator Young, intended to pave the way last night for an early retirement.  
He was due to ask for the fourth position on the ticket, instead of the top position which he normally occupies, to enable him to retire before a half-Senate election.  
After a double-dissolution election, those at the bottom of the ticket normally go to the polls after a half-term.

He doubted the Government's sincerity in announcing that it would not act on sensitive recommendations.



## On other pages

A Liberal MP who opposes the Franklin dam; Hail to the chief; 150,000 voters miss out. — Page 10.  
Brennan brings international experience to fray; Four-day sittings of Parliament planned by ALP; Labor offers cheaper petrol. — Page 11.  
Neither side has much scope to cut taxes; ACT branch of ACOA to oppose wage freeze; Mayor draws candidates' attention to Queanbeyan needs. — Page 20.

## Inside today

### NCDC scale-down urged by CARD

The Canberra Association for Regional Development has called for a scaling down of the National Capital Development Commission because its task has been fulfilled. — Page 3.

### Meeting in Israel

Israel's Prime Minister Mr Begin, his Government threatened by the findings of an inquiry into the Beirut massacre, convenes his Cabinet in a second emergency session to discuss its response to the commission's recommendations. — Page 4.

### St Vincent de Paul

150 years after its formation, the Society of St Vincent de Paul is now a world-wide supporter of the poor and afflicted. Its doorknock appeal in and around Canberra is on Sunday. — Pages 12-13.

### Negotiating for Nazi

Bolivia's expulsion of a convicted Nazi war criminal, Mr Klaus Barbie, to France was negotiated tactically by senior French Government ministers and officials, according to informed French sources. — Page 5.

### More seek jobs

The number of people registering with the Commonwealth Employment Service was more than 120,000 higher in the December quarter than a year before, according to government figures issued yesterday. — Page 20.

### Australia in lead

Australian cricket captain Kim Hughes returned to form with a fine 63 as his side took a 1-0 lead over New Zealand in the best-of-three WSC final series against New Zealand at the SCG last night.  
While Ewen Chatfield bowled well, New Zealand missed all-rounder Richard Hadlee and will be hoping his hamstring injury improves before the all-important second match in Melbourne at the weekend. — Back Page.

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# Who's who in the debate over State aid

## 'Hardliner' the voice of Catholics



Father Williams ... basic right.

FATHER John Williams, the chairman of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), personifies what many critics see as the new hardline posture of the Roman Catholic Church in Australia on the issue of State aid.

This headline, which has developed over the past few years, is simple: all children attending private schools, regardless of the wealth or income of the school or their parents, are entitled to a basic Government grant. Once this right is recognised, then we will talk about needs.

This, the critics argue, is radically different to the more conciliatory needs-based attitude taken by the Catholic Church in the late 1960s and early 1970s, just before the setting up of the Commonwealth Schools Commission.

But Father Williams, who has been chairman of the NCEC for the last five years and who has been involved with the Catholic education system for more than 15 years, says that there is nothing different or new about the NCEC's attitude to State aid.

The idea of a minimum grant entitlement to all children attending all private schools, he said, is a basic, long-standing Christian belief.

Father Williams has been described as both a hardliner (one of the principal architects of the Church's new policy), and as a progressive on curriculum matters. The man in question prefers to describe himself as "middle of the road", judging issues according to their individual merits.

There is consensus, however, from friends and foes, on one point: Father Williams, like the NCEC itself, is willing to use all of his considerable influence to make sure that the Catholic voice is heard along the corridors of Parliament House.

The first time this happened, at least in full public view, was early last year, only days before the Federal election which brought the Labor Party to power, when the NCEC made it quite clear to the ALP that its State aid policies were less than satisfactory.

Those policies, which have been implemented in part by the Hawke Government, called for the phasing-out of all funds to the wealthiest private schools and for the abolition of the basic grant to all children in private

schools. The effect of this was mainly felt by the top Protestant schools while the poorer Catholic parish schools, which make up the bulk of private schools in Australia, and which are the NCEC's natural constituency, benefited considerably.

But the response from the NCEC, and through it the Catholic hierarchy, was clear: an attack on just a few schools, whether Protestant or not, would be seen as an attack on all private schools.

The response perhaps said a lot about the fears of many in the Catholic hierarchy that the Labor Government was deliberately trying to open up the State aid debate along sectarian lines.

According to someone who was involved in those negotiations, if nothing else the row taught the Government that the Catholic lobby was certainly willing to push its weight around when the future of its education system was seen to be at stake.

The National Catholic Education Commission, which has an office and secretariat in Canberra, was set up in 1974 as the national lobby group acting on behalf of Catholic education. But its role is wider: the commission's main task is to co-ordinate policy for all States and territories over matters such as religious curriculum, teacher education and general overall planning of Catholic education in Australia.

While Father Williams agrees that the NCEC has some clout, he says that this may be no greater than the influence exercised by other groups involved in the State Aid debate such as the Australian Teachers' Federation (ATF), an organisation he clearly sees as bent on destroying the private education system in Australia.

Looking back on the past 15 years, Father Williams said that there had been a change in emphasis in the State aid debate with groups like the ATF becoming more active and less willing to compromise.

"I think their actions have become particularly bitter."

*"The State aid debate is a phony one, perpetuated by articulate, middle-class pressure groups which do not promote the best interests of either public or private schools."*

(Doctor Michael Hogan, author of Public versus Private Schools).

That may be too simple and too unkind an explanation of what the State aid debate in Australia in 1984 is all about.

But at times one cannot help wondering whether all the arguments, the rhetoric, and the bitterness is really about the principles behind the funding of

private schools, and the sacred right of parents to choose their children's schools as much as it is about personalities and their ideologies.

As Doctor Hogan said: "Trying to follow the arguments for and against State aid is rather like watching a game of tennis between long-time rivals who are competent enough to keep the ball in play but not good enough to win."

"Back and forth it goes until someone accidentally stumbles." The power and influence of the different pressure groups of course fluctuate according to a

set of variables, such as which party is in government.

The tactics also vary: some use their industrial muscle, others their natural or political connections with politicians and bureaucrats.

Over the past few months these pressure groups have been lobbying very hard in Canberra to try to influence the Federal Government, which is expected to announce its funding guidelines for public and private schools for 1985 and beyond on Tuesday.

LUIS M. GARCIA talks to the protagonists:

## Long-term issues ignored

THE last time the State aid debate hotted up, back in the early 1970s, the voice of teachers employed in private schools was scarcely heard and their opinions carried little, if any weight.

That is certainly not the case in 1984. The private school teachers have become a major force in the debate, and one that is expected to grow stronger as the number of nuns and brothers working in private schools continue to decline and are replaced by industrially-aware lay teachers.

The private school teachers are represented at the national level by the Independent Teachers' Federation of Australia (ITFA), which has about 21,000 members in State affiliates.

The federation's position on State aid is complex to say the least: it believes that the Government has a responsibility to fund the private education system, but at the same time it distances itself as much as possible from the hardline funding attitudes and principles of groups like the Australian Parents Council (APC) and the National Catholic Education Commission.

According to the president of the federation, Mr Michael Raper, these private school groups have only one purpose in mind - to totally privatise education at the expense of government schools. The type of rhetoric groups like the APC put out, he said, was divisive because it was invariably anti-government schools.

The federation has also clashed with private school groups, including Roman Catholic Church officials, over the ITFA's support for the Commonwealth Schools Commission's recommendations



Mr Raper ... cancer on society.

to make all private schools more accountable for the funds they receive from the Commonwealth.

In the past, the federation has criticised the Catholic Church, which employs the vast majority of the union's members, for being secretive about how it uses Commonwealth funds.

Mr Raper said that the problem with the State aid debate, which he described as a cancer on Australia society, was that no one was looking at the real long-term issues.

"The fact is that if all schools were to be properly funded by the public purse, then the combined Commonwealth and State education budgets would need to be substantially increased by a sum in the vicinity of \$700 million a year," he said.

"This not only should be done, but could be done. If the entire education community was to focus its collective attention and campaign finances to these questions instead of wasting millions on

divisive and ill-conceived campaigns then sufficient funds could be raised through the tax system to ensure that the community provides a proper education for all.

"The community must raise sufficient revenue to meet its responsibilities, and if this requires the introduction of a more progressive income tax structure, or the introduction of a death tax, a wealth tax, and a capital gains tax as well as becoming fair dinkum about stamping out tax avoidance, then this is what educators should fight for."

But Mr Raper said that his federation could not support its government school counterpart, the Australian Teachers' Federation (ATF), in its policy of freezing and eventually abolishing State aid to all private schools because this was "chaotic, incomplete and intellectually unsound".

"Any policy which argues for no community funding for a quarter of the student population must be exposed as an ill-conceived and misguided attempt to manipulate school funding to achieve other social and political ends," he said.

"Such an argument is anything but a rational approach to take when you talk about the 25 per cent of the school population of Australia who are currently, and have been historically, educated in non-Government schools".

He said the federation did not support moves by the Federal Government to phase out funding to the wealthiest private schools, a decision which he described as "a symbolic gesture" by the Labor Party. He admitted that there were divisions within the federation's leadership and the rank and file on this issue.

## Soft style, but a tough negotiator



Mrs Brown ... more pragmatic.

THE Australian Council of State School Organisations claims to represent the interests of the 2.3 million children in government schools throughout the country. That is a lot of children, a lot of parents and a lot of votes. If you are in government, you listen, respectfully, to what the council has to say.

While there is no doubt that the ACSO has considerable clout, it is also true that in the past it has been fairly reluctant to use its political muscle openly.

One suspects this is, in part, a realisation by the council's leadership that any nasty brawling out in the open would not be well received by many in the rank and file - the thousands of P and C associations and community groups scattered throughout the country which make up the ACSO constituency.

As a result the council has until recently preferred to put pressure on the Government using a softly-softly approach rather than the head-to-head confrontation tactics of the teachers' unions, or some private school groups.

That in any case is very much the style of the council's representative on the Commonwealth Schools Commission and its best known spokesperson, Mrs Joan Brown, a softly spoken but reputedly tough negotiator, who has been fighting for what she believes is the future of government schools and, in the long term, the future of Australia, since the mid-1960s.

Her credentials in defence of public education are certainly impeccable.

Her fight began as a member of the Baulkham Hills Primary School Mothers' Club, was eventually elected president of the ACSO in 1978 (the first woman to hold that position), and in 1979 Mrs Brown took her fight directly to Canberra when she was appointed a part-time member of the Commonwealth Schools Commission.

Earlier this year, Mrs Brown caused a few ripples in Government circles when she refused to endorse the Schools Commission's funding report to the Federal Government.

Instead she produced her own minority statement in which she criticised the Schools Commission in no uncertain terms, and called its advice

"inadequate and biased toward private schools".

That decision led to the council, and Mrs Brown in particular, being labelled militant and radical.

But she denies this: "I do not think we are radical or militant and if anything our policy on State aid has become more pragmatic over the years. We certainly are not out to destroy the private school sector as has been claimed."

The council, however, was strongly opposed to any suggestion that all private schools, regardless of their wealth or income, should be entitled to Commonwealth grants, she said.

The council believed that if a new consensus on education funding was to be reached, the Government should first of all make a clear statement of the principles behind its funding policies.

It also believed that the Government should declare a freeze on the funding of private schools for next year, leaving the subsidies for existing schools at present levels and providing nothing for new places.

According to Mrs Brown, government school parents have always opposed in principle any public funding of private schools because it is divisive. However, she said, "we recognise that political realities have established the practice of funding private schools, and in 1973 we supported that idea, as outlined in the Karmel report," she said.

"But there is a totally different position in 1984 from that of 1973.

"What we supported then was assistance for the existing poor private schools so that they could improve their standards. What we have now is an expansion of the private school sector at the expense of their own schools.

"The prospect we face if the Government accepts the Schools Commission's recommendations is that support for private schools is to become a matter of right, rather than a matter of human assistance."



*Blessing and Official Opening of additions at  
St Anthony's School, Riverside, Tasmania, 1987.*

*L-R Fr John Williams, Fr Peter Fraser OFM,  
Archbishop Guilford Young and Senator Michael Tate.*

# Non-government schooling trend

THE trend towards non-government schooling continued in Tasmania last year, despite an overall decline in the number of student enrolments.

Figures released yesterday by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that while overall enrolments fell by 0.6 per cent to 83,000 and government school enrolments fell by 649 [1 per cent] the number of students at non-government schools rose by 143, or 0.8 per cent.

Since 1976, enrolments in Tasmanian schools have fallen by 6.1 per cent and by 12.3 per cent in government schools, but have risen at non-government schools by 27.3 per cent.

In line with these trends, the number of full-time teaching staff fell by 238 to 5,862 between 1986 and July last year.

In government schools the number of full-time teachers fell by 253, but that was offset by a 1.3 per cent increase in non-government schools.

Participation in the final years of secondary school education is rising.

The retention rate from grade seven to grade 10 increased from 93.2 per cent in 1986 to 94.5 per cent last year.

Last year's retention rate to grade 12 was 33 per cent, compared with 21.9 per cent in 1982.

The director of Catholic education in Tasmania, Father John Williams, said a number of factors were responsible for the trend towards non-government schooling, including the establishment of private schools in areas where private education was not pre-

viously available.

He pointed out that recurrent funding from the Commonwealth and State governments already was linked to enrolment numbers but he argued that an increase in enrolments should lead to greater capital works funding.

The headmaster of The Hutchins School, Mr John Bednall, said the community unfairly believed that the trend was a reflection of the quality of education in government schools.

He linked the trend with problems outside school.

"Because of community-based problems such as family breakdowns, unemployment and drug abuse, people are looking for some sort of controlling mechanisms — and many believe these are to be found in private schools," he said.



*Computer training  
Catholic Education  
Office staff  
1990*



*John Williams presenting  
Gerard Davis with the  
Immaculate Heart  
of Mary Award  
1990*



*Catholic Education Office  
432 Elizabeth St  
North Hobart.*



*First Priest's Assembly 1984  
L - John Williams  
R - Ed Travers MSC*

This was a defining moment for Catholic education, not just because of the promised money, but because these three politicians at least, understood perhaps for the first time, the element of justice that was the underpinning of the negotiations. Max Coghlan, Father Philip Green and John Williams represented Archbishop Young at this meeting. Politicians were wary of Guilford Young and his perceived capacity, rightly or wrongly, to influence the Catholic vote, (M. Coghlan, P. Green, J. Williams, personal communication, 25 May 2009).

A Labor government was returned to power at the next State election on 22 April 1972. The power brokers within the party knew where they stood with Catholic education.

John Williams was thirty-three years old at the time of this meeting that he colloquially called 'Sunday Conference', after an ABC television program of the time, 'Monday Conference.' Such clandestine meetings with powerbrokers from all sides of politics, both state and federal, including Prime Ministers, were to become part of the fabric of John Williams' work on behalf of children in Catholic schools, and indeed, for students in all schools.

### **Commonwealth Schools Commission | *An equal playing field***

The establishment of the Commonwealth Schools Commission was a punctuation point in the history of Australian education. The Federal Labor Government, who chose the membership of the Commission, succeeded in bringing together people who had been fighting one another for years. The Commissioners had to learn to communicate with each other. As a tool for managing the process of policy development, the idea of the Commonwealth Schools Commission was brilliant. John Williams summarized the unique quality of the Commission.

By and large we quickly learned of the commonalities of the needs of all sectors, offering advice to the Commonwealth Government about the best way to assist all of them. That did not mean there

were not huge fights. But I believed we helped school education in Australia. Peter Karmel, as Chair, did a great job pulling it all together (J. Williams, personal communication, 9 July 2012).

Lyndsay Connors, former Commonwealth Schools Commissioner, said she “found it almost impossible at first to listen to some people” (L.Connors, personal communication, 30 August 2008). A champion of government schools, she felt John Williams always enjoyed policy development, and an argument. Commenting on her own role,

I like people who are willing to engage, to put their own ideas forward. He (John Williams) had that connection with how policies actually play out in schools, in a very direct way – it makes your views far more ethical and rational as well as being grounded in reality. People looked for a way to keep their own principles but to find a way to respect others. Having to sign your name to a report really brought out the respect for others. You couldn’t indulge in prejudiced, unsubstantiated behaviour (L. Connors, personal communication, 30 August 2008).

Despite her own admission about struggling to listen to some people, John Williams has always admired Lyndsay Connors for her clear thinking, her willingness to engage, her capacity to see the big picture and her openness to the views of others (J. Williams, personal communication, 30 August 2008).

Some tension was present in the relationship between the National Catholic Education Commission and the Australian Schools Commission. Peter Tannock, then Chair of the ASC and later Chair of the National Catholic Education Commission proposed the notion of a community standard for funding, a move that would directly bind Catholic and government schools. At that stage the Bishops still believed that full funding was possible, which neither Peter Tannock nor John Williams supported. Much of the discussion and apprehension was to do with control. For the Catholic sector, the question was really about gaining access to government funds, while maintaining governance of their own schools.

John Williams is of the belief that when State Aid was introduced in Australia, the top level non-Catholic, non-government schools really would

not have worried had they not received aid because by accepting State Aid they were losing some freedoms. Their own planning reflected this possibility. This group, which represents five to six percent of the school population, seems to capture the attention of the public, particularly around election time.

The present system of government funding has allowed the Catholic sector to achieve both its goals: it still controls its schools and the system is substantially funded. The combined state and Commonwealth grants, in essence pays for teachers, with schools finding the remaining budget needs. Lyndsay Connors comments, “That offers a way to realign accountabilities and arrangements around that concept of equal access to quality teaching. Standards would be around staffing” (L. Connors, personal communication, 30 August 2008).

One of the significant issues that the Commonwealth has tried to grapple with is to provide some measure of equality to schools from varying socio- economic areas. Measuring socio-economic status, an SES score was assigned to each school according to postcode. This score recognizes that teaching a class in a lower socio-economic area may require additional staffing than in a school in an area with a higher score. Since its introduction, some difficulties have been encountered, particularly for schools that attract children from ‘out of area’. Some more wealthy schools are located in postcode areas that would attract higher funding. The student cohort that travel to these schools do not have the same level of need experienced by another school in the same locale. A school in a lower socio-economic area may require additional staffing for remedial education and English as a Second Language, as such areas attract new arrivals to Australia. The SES system does not take into account special programs that may be in place.

### **Directions for Tasmania | *Building a system***

In his address at the celebration to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Catholic Education Office in Tasmania, John

Williams outlined a number of issues that formed the basis of his work at the state level. Each manager or chief executive officer assumes a particular style and a focus of effort that reflects personal priorities. John Williams' priorities for action and his implementation style give insight into his person. To provide an historical outline of his twenty-four years work in Catholic Education is not the purpose of this inquiry. However, it is essential to make reference to both his priorities for action and his implementation style. Both provide a window into John Williams as a person.

### **Central Authority | *The nerve centre***

As already cited, the recommendations of the May 1970 Catholic Education Conference formed the agenda for John Williams' work over the next twenty-four years. First amongst these priorities was an expanded central authority to plan for and coordinate Catholic education. Peter Jeffries (1970) one of the speakers at the May 1970 Conference summarized the 'raisonnement' for a central authority.

Policy comes from the centre, ways and means are found at the intermediate level and action is taken by those at the front. But if there is no nerve centre to produce a plan or a policy the whole life system becomes paralyzed (p.14).

As a member of the Catholic Education Office staff for six years (1978-1983), I had the opportunity to experience John Williams' particular style and learn the underlying drivers of his priorities. While gentle of nature and forgiving of the shortcomings of others, John Williams was a determined employer and his staff experienced clarity in his expectations of them. As Archbishop Young trusted John Williams to administer Catholic education in Tasmania, John Williams himself trusted those he employed to manage their own portfolios. He could never be described as a 'micro manager'. Trust invested in employees reaped its own rewards in terms of productivity. In spite of this, there were occasions where trust was abused. This same trust he placed in the Principals, while challenging them if he

felt the schools and colleges were not living up to the highest standards. In his opening address at the 1986 Catholic Principals' Association of Tasmania Annual Conference, John Williams provided such a challenge to those present. Just prior to this Conference the Tasmanian Catholic Church had held its first state wide Assembly in Launceston. With the theme, 'Shaping Our Future' the four hundred present represented all parish communities, education, welfare, health and other special interest groups. The Assembly sought ways for the Church to speak the needs of our time. John Williams had been part of the committee responsible for the organization of the Assembly, as well as Chair of the plenary sessions. Those present were buoyed by the positive experience of this event. How the embrace of change applauded at the Assembly translated to the local level was the subject of his address at the Principals Conference that commenced just twelve days later. In his opening remarks he commented,

I think that the Assembly took on squarely the question of mission and maintenance, survival or growth, the status quo or development. The clear message for me was mission, growth and development (J.Williams, 1986. p.2).

He then went on to cite a number of instances taken from various Catholic schools.

- ✦ A religious (sister/brother) teaching in one of our schools is reported to have said, "I was teaching in primary schools before Guidelines were ever thought of."
- ✦ An Early Literacy Inservice Course tutor can report that talking to a group of primary teachers was about as useful as talking to a row of television sets. There was no way in which the teachers would hear what was said and certainly no way in which they would consider any alteration to their teaching practice.
- ✦ Some teachers at a recent school based seminar took the opportunity to correct work and/or read books.
- ✦ One group of teachers is in open revolt because the principal has suggested that the school should reconsider its discipline policy.
- ✦ A Religious Education Coordinator in one school is discouraging teachers from participating in any Tasmanian Pastoral Institute courses. According to that person they are a total waste of time (J. Williams, 1986. p.2-3).

If one has ever visited a school staff room, comments that give rise to the cited incidents will have been heard. John Williams was careful to qualify his remarks by acknowledging that not all Tasmanian Pastoral Institute courses “were without blemish” (p.4), and that not all Early Literacy Inservice Course tutors “have the answers to lower primary literacy programs”(p.4). He saw the resistance to change flowing from both “fear and...laziness” (p.4). Having dealt this criticism, he then detailed a number of initiatives that were both significant and prime examples of the capacity for many to drive change for improved educational delivery. He said,

In spite of all these and many more positive aspects I remain concerned and I share this concern with you as colleagues. I do this because I believe you must be the agents of change and development in our schools. Unless you are committed to a constant evaluation of your school, your curriculum, your staff, then it will not happen and the attitude which says that we can continue as we are, will become a characteristic of our schools (J. Williams, 1986. p.5).

This address continued focusing on the external funding pressures faced by schools at this time, with a process of “flattening out” of resource levels, predisposing many teachers to argue for maintenance of the status quo. John Williams challenged his audience to see themselves as one of “the chief agents to draw together your bursars and Boards, your money people, to work with your teaching people in finding the best ways to use these resources” (J.Williams, 1986. p.6). His attention then returned to core values, commenting that Catholic schools did mirror the virtues of faith and hope, “in the strong theological sense of those words” (p.6). Because the instances cited were counter-productive to the ideals of the Catholic school, it was incumbent on the principal to be the agent of change. His concluding remarks revealed the way he managed his own staff, a style imbued with hope, that working together we could move towards an ideal.

Finally may I ask you to be the severest critic of your own school, a critic who is critical because you love the school community and want it to be the best. A critic who will not shirk his/her

responsibility out of any false human respect but one who is prepared to try to change both people and things for the good of the whole community (J. Williams, 1986, p.6).

A number of themes emerge in this address, not least the notion of the common good, the need for courage when faced with structures and cultures that need improving, and justice, that virtue that requires that each receive their due. Within a school community this applies both to the educational quality received by students and the expectations of teachers. Reflecting on the 1986 Principals Conference Address John Williams holds firm that resistance to professional learning programs on the part of teachers has a negative impact on the quality of education provision, and as such, students and teachers would be the losers.

As well as the message delivered there is within the presentation style, a belief in the goodness of people, that quality that speaks to the heart of the listener, reflecting personal integrity and hope.

### **Religious Education | *Broader than the Catholic school***

The second recommendation from the 1970 Catholic Education Conference related to the provision of appropriate religious education for the whole Catholic community, including adults, both within and beyond Catholic schools, and the adequate formation of religious education teachers.

The population spread in Tasmania meant that not all those who wanted to attend a Catholic school were able to do so. Many small country communities had a Catholic school in the period when schools were almost totally staffed by religious. By the early 1970s when the number of religious began to decline the capacity of the system to staff isolated schools resulted in the closure of many of these schools. This left a challenge for the Catholic education system to provide education in faith in more isolated areas.

John Williams' commitment to the availability of faith education for all within the Catholic community was evidenced in the composition of his

staff from the beginning of his tenure as Director. A religious sister was appointed to the Catholic Education Office to work specifically with families in isolated areas, beyond the reach of the Catholic school. Her task was to develop and deliver faith education programs for families. Such an appointment within the Catholic Education Office continued until 2009 when the position was transferred to the Office of the Archbishop.

During my own appointment to the Catholic Education Office the responsibility to work with the wider Catholic community was part of my role, together with the obligation to support staff in Catholic primary schools across Tasmania. The Catholic Education Office developed and delivered short courses in scripture and theology, as well as programs to better equip parents to be the primary religious educators of their children. This thrust was complemented by the development of a Tasmanian Pastoral Resource Centre, a lending library housed within the Catholic Education Office, with audiovisual and print resources that served the religious education needs of the Church in Tasmania. Items were borrowed from every corner of the state and this resource centre continues with the same objective.

Increased involvement of the laity in the local Church meant that the ad hoc courses presented by the Catholic Education Office needed to be broadened and a formal structure was developed and became known as the Tasmanian Pastoral Institute. At the same time, a system of accreditation for teachers was introduced to ensure all those teaching religious education were professionally qualified to do so. Tasmania differs from other Australian states in that it has no Catholic tertiary institution, which meant teachers were unable to access the theoretical framework to equip them to offer robust and challenging religious education programs. Through John Williams' initiative this need for qualifications was met through attendance at the Tasmanian Pastoral Institute courses that were delivered regionally, to allow full statewide access. He ensured, as well, that those delivering these courses had the necessary qualifications, drawing upon the services of people well equipped in their area of expertise, with a number having completed post graduate studies abroad. The Tasmanian Pastoral

Institute courses were open to the wider community providing an accessible form of adult education. Significant numbers completed courses just out of interest in one subject, while a number of pre-service teachers undertook the modules to better prepare them for careers in Catholic education. John Williams' belief in the value of further education for the wider Catholic community pressed him to introduce a system of accreditation of teachers, to establish the Tasmanian Pastoral Resource Centre and the Tasmanian Pastoral Institute. These initiatives were unique in that while they were established in other Catholic jurisdictions, they did not always emanate from within the Catholic Education Office.

### **Conditions of Service | *Legitimate aspirations of lay teachers***

Jim Brophy, a teacher at St Patrick's College, Launceston, addressed the issue of conditions of service for lay teachers during his presentation at the May 1970 Conference. His prediction was that it would not be too long before fifty per cent of teachers in Catholic schools would be lay people. His prediction proved correct. In 1975 there were no lay Principals in Tasmanian Catholic schools but by 1992 there were fifteen. This is a significant shift in less than twenty years (Williams, 1992, p.3). Jim Brophy argued that by having good "conditions of service" the schools would be able to attract the best possible teachers. In 1970 he said:

...legitimate aspirations of lay teachers could not always be fulfilled....there was a need to provide for lay teachers to join a system rather than individual schools. This would allow the establishment of a system providing for superannuation, transfer between local schools without penalty, and promotion (J. Brophy, May 22, 1970 p.1).

An increase in the number of lay teachers in Catholic schools coincided with John Williams' appointment as Director. Within five years this increase was to become a flood. To help address the issues raised by Jim Brophy in 1970, John Williams introduced two initiatives.



*With Religious Education  
Co-ordinators Hobart 1984*

# Peace studies critics branded as 'insidious'

A MOVE by sections of the church to stop the introduction of peace studies into curricula of Catholic schools was insidious, according to the director of Catholic education in Tasmania, Fr John Williams.

"That is an anti-Catholic attitude," he said.

"The study of peace is an integral part of a Catholic school's education."

Fr Williams was speaking at the official opening of the annual Catholic principals of Tasmania conference at Shearwater.

There were moves Australia-wide to introduce peace studies as a separate subject.

However, largely because of fears such a subject would become politically-based it had been opposed.

Fr Williams said there were fears that such studies could become the preaching ground for disarmament.

"I believe students should be conscious of world peace," he said.

"But I believe peace should be taught in line with the Catholic gospel."

Fr Williams said the Catholic education system in Tasmania had endured a difficult year which was largely dominated by two issues - the accreditation of teachers and the negotiation of an award for employees.

Under the accreditation scheme, teachers employed at Catholic schools in Tasmania now have to have, or were in the process of gaining, a higher level of achievement in religious studies.

Guidelines stating the level needed to be gained

in religious studies had been introduced at the start of the year.

Fr Williams said that negotiations over the award with the recently-formed Tasmanian Catholic Education Employees' Association were well advanced.

In the past non-Government schools had not had a binding award and often wages were negotiated individually.

Fr Williams said the main advantage with the award would be that conditions for employees would have the backing of the law.

The award was expected to be in use next year.

The three-day conference is being attended by 54 principals from all parts of Tasmania.

*The Mercury 23 August 1984*

*Pg 31*



*Fr John Williams . . . A member of the National Catholic Education Commission's executive.*

## ***Honoured for education work***

Fr John Williams, the director of Catholic Education in Tasmania, has been made a fellow of the Australian College of Education.

The honour was bestowed on Fr Williams at a ceremony at the college in Melbourne.

Fr Williams was elected to membership of the college, a voluntary association of Australian educationists, in 1975.

He was one of several members drawn from all areas of education who were granted the honorary fellowship at the ceremony. The citation reads, in part:

"For his contribution to education, particularly education administration, as director of Catholic Education in Tasmania and through his membership of many State and national education bodies."

Fr Williams is chairman of the Teachers and Schools Registration Board of Tasmania, a member of the University of Tasmania's Centre for Education and remains a member of the National Catholic Education Commission's executive.

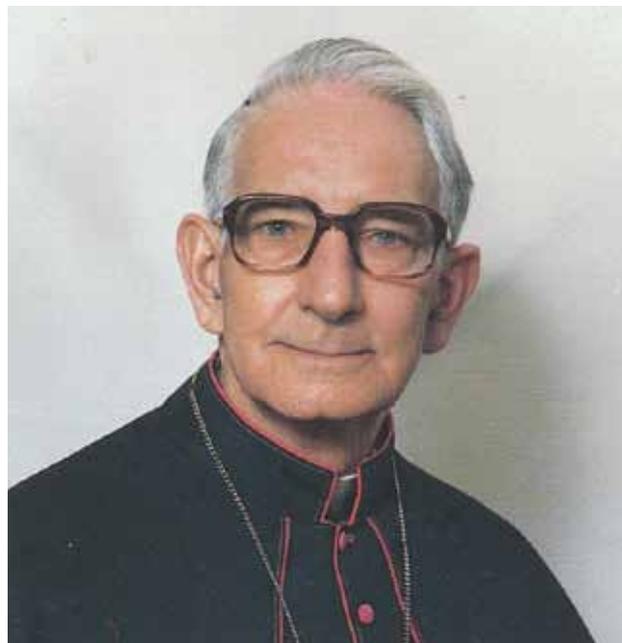
*The Catholic Leader 9 June 1985*



*Papal Mass Elwick Racecourse  
Hobart 1986*



*John Williams with  
Catholic Education Office Staff  
Christmas 1986*



*Archbishop Sir Guilford Young DD  
10 November 1916 – 16 March 1988*

The first was the establishment of the 'Archdiocese of Hobart Superannuation Fund' in 1973. Open to all employees of the Church, the largest member cohort were teachers. Joining the Fund, too, were a number of clergy, employees of Centacare, the welfare arm of the Church and Catholic Church Office employees. By 1988 there were one hundred and six members with the AMP Society, a national superannuation group, managing the Fund's investment portfolio. John Williams was one of two employer-nominated Trustees and he managed the Fund's day-to-day activities. It was under his hand that annual statements were furnished. He retained the position of Chair of Trustees until 1995 when the nexus with AMP was broken and 700 members voted to amalgamate from July 1, 1995 with the Catholic Superannuation Fund in Melbourne (J. Williams, Correspondence to members of the Archdiocese of Hobart Superannuation Fund, March 23, 1995).

The Archdiocese of Hobart Superannuation Fund was not just a service provided for employees, but a means by which employees could plan for the future on an equal basis to their counterparts working in the government and independent sectors. The capacity to offer superannuation meant the Catholic education sector had increased capacity to retain good teachers. Once compulsory employer contributions to superannuation came into being membership of the Fund multiplied.

For too long Catholic schools had relied on the personal generosity of its employees. In the early stages this had been required because of the desperate financial state of most schools. From the 1950s parochial primary school pupils paid in the order of two shillings and sixpence (twenty-five cents) each week by way of fees. For the few lay teachers working in Catholic schools during the period immediately prior to the granting of State Aid, their salaries depended on the success or otherwise, of collecting these meager fees. For lay teachers, conditions of service were agreed through an arrangement between the individual, and the school as the employer. These conditions, particularly in the area of salary varied from school to school.

The systemization of Catholic schools was required to make possible an agreed set of conditions for the employment of teaching and non-teaching personnel. This occurred initially within the primary sector, with order owned secondary colleges continuing to negotiate conditions within their own institutions. The initial impetus for this systemization came from the need to distribute Commonwealth recurrent funding, and eventually State recurrent grants. Tasmania was slow to offer state assistance to non-government schools. Interest subsidies, which had been introduced in Victoria and New South Wales in 1965, were not introduced in Tasmania until ten years later.

As reported in Tasmanian's weekly Catholic paper, the "Standard,"

The Melbourne Catholic Education Board is considering a proposal to set up a full time specialist staff to coordinate the Catholic school system in the Archdiocese. Fr Crudden, the Director of the Catholic Education Office, envisaged that the work of the specialist staff would cover the compilation of educational and demographic statistics, school finances, school administration, in-service training for teachers, and the hiring of teachers (19 September, 1969, p.7).

Victoria was in the same situation as Tasmania in seeing the need for a system to assist schools to operate in a rapidly changing environment.

### **A new era | *Teachers negotiating their own conditions***

John Williams understood the need for Catholic school and college teachers to form some association to commence the practice of negotiating their own conditions of service. It was through his initiative that a group comprising Catholic Education Staff and teachers were invited to investigate and eventually launch such an association. Established in 1983, and known as the Tasmanian Catholic Education Employees Association, this body went on to expand independently of the influence of the Catholic Education Office, developing a 'them versus us' culture that is sometimes a characteristic of employer/employee relationships.

John Williams had an understanding of industrial matters in his role

as Director and also as a member of the Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations. He knew that it was in the best interests of Catholic education employees to be able to bargain to reach agreed conditions of service that were just for both schools and their staff members. He was aware that inequities were present between schools and colleges and even between staff within the same institutions. This capacity building initiative had justice at its heart.

### **Special education | *Education provision for all students***

Up until the early 1980s children with disabilities in Tasmania were educated in special schools. Apart from one not for profit operator, these facilities were staffed by the Department of Education. The burgeoning group of students who had specific learning difficulties struggled to receive meaningful support in any sector. The adequate provision of education services for these children was a challenge that required a new response. Within the Catholic system the response of schools differed markedly. Principals had been known to refuse an application for entry citing 'lack of capacity' to cater for the educational needs of a particular child. I recall visiting Our Lady of Lourdes School in Devonport following the enrolment of a child who was blind. The efforts and adjustments made to staffing allocations to cater for the particular needs of that student were exemplary. However, without adequate funding, such adjustments were often made to the detriment of other students.

John Williams was certainly cognizant of these issues as principals turned to him for support. He understood the obligation of the Catholic school to provide for students with disabilities. Because the state has an obligation to provide for all students it would have been possible to step away from this issue, especially in schools that were financially stretched. However, that was not the way he dealt with challenging issues.

Commonwealth Recurrent Grants are the principal means by

which Catholic schools receive funding assistance. Within the Catholic system in Tasmania the central authority receives these grants and distributes the funds to systemic schools according to their own needs. Based on enrolment numbers, school contribution through fee collection, parent fundraising and capital repayments, a budget is set and agreed between the school and the central authority. John Williams worked to adjust the budget parameters to include the additional staffing needs in schools that were catering for students with particular educational needs. Even as Director he faced ongoing opposition from some within the finance department of his own office. For John Williams this was a justice issue, one that involved both access to Catholic schools and robust educational provision. All schools that faced these issues had to enter a whole change of mindset about the way education is delivered and Catholic schools were not exempt from this learning trajectory. During the 1980s and continuing, the Catholic Education Office committed funds to schools for special education, and to developing a learning services department that provided teacher, student and family support. John Williams helped drive this shift in development.

### **Restructuring of Senior Secondary Educations | *the final initiative***

The issue of providing adequately for students in the senior secondary years had been the subject of various reports for over twenty years. With the support of all the religious orders, apart from the Presentation Sisters, the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission took the decision to withdraw Grade 11 and 12 groups at each college and form one Catholic senior secondary college for students in the Hobart area. There was a commitment on the part of the Archbishop, Eric D'Arcy, John Williams and the Catholic Education Commission that this change would provide the best possible access to Catholic senior secondary education for the most number of students. The feelings, both for and against this restructuring were evident in the community. John Williams bore the brunt of the

aggression of a number of people against this initiative,

He faced many situations that tested his ability to remain moderate and steadfast to his own convictions. During 1992 he was the target of a period of negative, orchestrated and sustained public response to the “Restructuring of Secondary Education in Southern Tasmania.” To maintain balance during this period demanded the call on a number of virtues, both moral and intellectual. Being convinced of the issues that led to the need to restructure, John Williams’ capacity to focus on those issues rather than having his judgement compromised by the personal battering to which he was subjected was aided by what I believe was his strength of intellect and moral purpose, enabling him to navigate this difficult period.

### **Summary | *Closing the chapter on Catholic education***

John Williams was a key member of the National Catholic Education Commission, the central authority established to make representation to State and Federal Governments. He had attended the inaugural meeting of the National Catholic Education Commission in December 1969 at Ursula College, Australian National University. This Commission met again on two further occasions before a permanent National Catholic Education Commission was established in 1972. His intimate knowledge of the work of the Commission was advantageous for his work at the state level. His understanding of policy, his grasp of the intricacies of funding models, as well as a broad appreciation of curriculum development, provided a rounding that not every regional director would have experienced. Bruce Hartney, Chair of the Tasmanian New Schools Committee worked with John Williams on that Commonwealth Government group.

In the following correspondence he comments on John Williams’ capacity to embrace the complexity of educational administration.

Your logical thinking and your ability to find your way through

## FATHER WILLIAMS HONOURED



**The Director of the Catholic Education Office, Fr John Williams was recently farewelled at functions in Hobart.**

1,400 packed the Hobart City Hall for a special Mass to recognise Fr Williams' contribution to Catholic Education in the Archdiocese and the whole Australian Church, from 1969 till 1993.

Archbishop D'Arcy, who announced, earlier this year, Fr William's retirement at the end of 1993, paid tribute to his role in forwarding the educational apostolate of the Church. During Fr William's record term as Director

hundreds of lay teachers joined the staffs of Catholic schools in Tasmania.

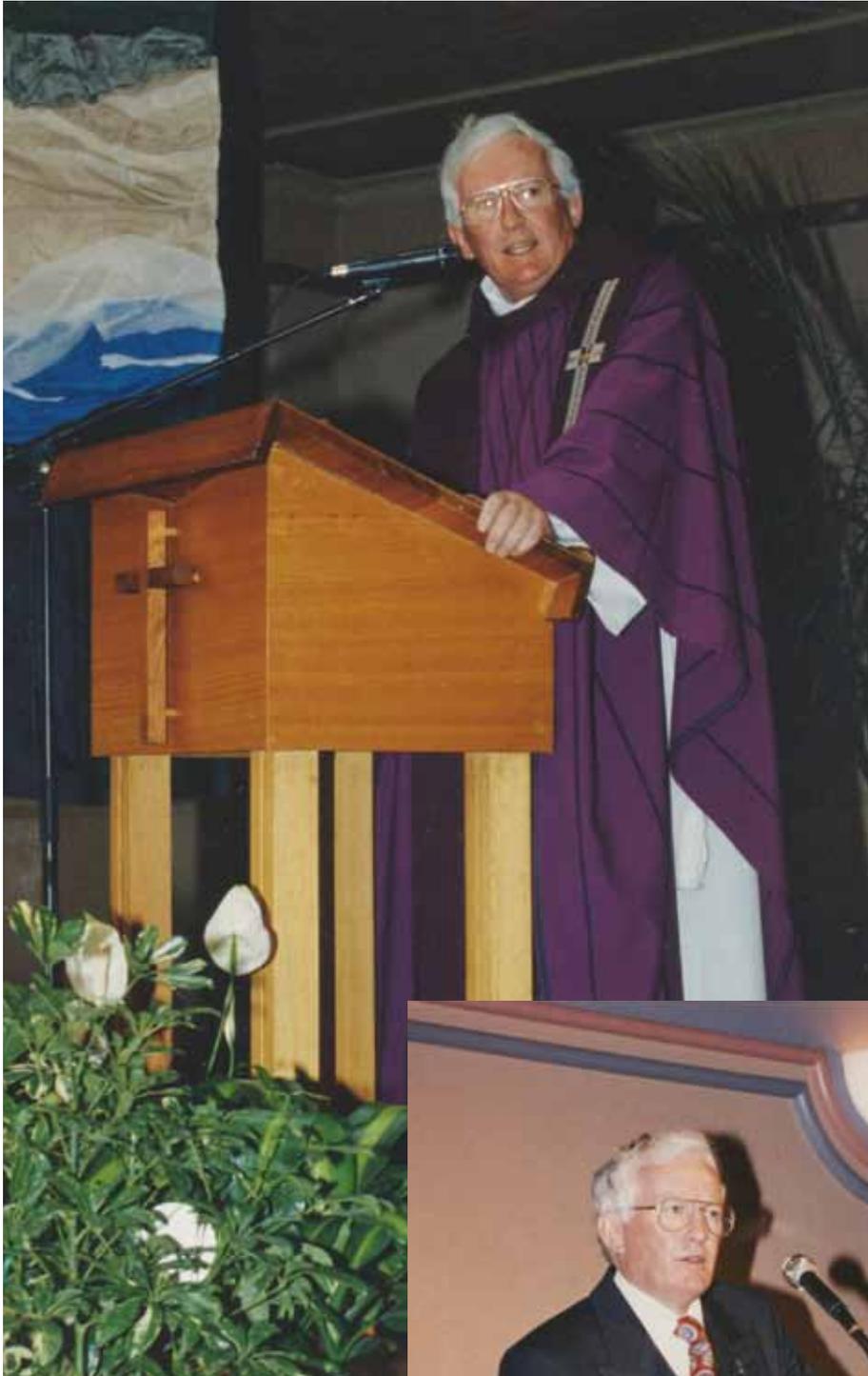
Features of the Mass, attended by representatives of Catholic schools around the State, were a 215-voice choir and the presentation of a gift to the outgoing Director to thank him for his dedicated work during the past 24 years.

A dinner at the Sheraton Hotel, attended by 250, heard speeches in praise of Fr William's educational achievement from the Director of Catholic Education in Melbourne, Fr Tom Doyle, and Mrs Margaret Morse, Principal of St Cuthbert's School, Lindisfarne.

Invitations to the dinner were extended by Archbishop D'Arcy as a testimonial to honour the retiring Director.

Organisers of the two functions included, Monsignor P. Green, Fr T. Rush, Fr B. Nichols, Fr P. Stevens, Mesdames E. Faux, T. Choroszy, M. Morse, J. Cotton, J. Miller, E. Doran, E. Eden and Misses P. Edman and P. Francis.

*The New Standard Dec 1993*



*The Catholic schools gathered for a Mass at the City Hall Hobart to give thanks for John Williams' 24 years in Catholic Education  
9 December 1993*

*Speaking at his Testimonial Dinner  
Hotel Grand Chancellor Hobart  
9 December 1993*



# Schools leader praised by friends and faithful

FATHER John Williams, the man who presided over Catholic education in Tasmania for the past 21 years, was praised yesterday as a man of vision, courage, wisdom and leadership.

Father Williams steps down as director of Catholic education at the end of the year and will take over as parish priest at Lindisfarne on January 8.

About 1300 students and teachers from all Catholic schools in Tasmania attended a mass at the Hobart City Hall yesterday and a testimonial dinner was held last night.

The Archbishop of Hobart, Dr Eric D'Arcy, who hosted the dinner, praised Father Williams as a priest and administrator.

"Father John Williams has made a completely unique contribution to Australian education, secular as well as Christian, national as well as Tasmanian," Dr D'Arcy said.

"For me, his crowning achievement has been the Catholic character of the schools throughout the state."

The Director of Catholic Education for the Melbourne Archdiocese and long-time friend, Father Tom Doyle, praised Father Williams's national contribution.



Farewell friend: Father John Williams being hugged by students from Bridgewater's St Pauls Primary School.

He was a member of the first national Catholic Education Commission and had been a member of the present national commission since June, 1974, and was its chairman from 1979 to 1984.

Father Williams also was a member of the Australian-Commonwealth Schools Commission from 1980 to 1983.

Father Doyle said: "At these levels, his contribution was enormously positive, clear-sighted and direct. We have much to thank him for."

"John always carried with him his sense of vision, his total commitment to the welfare of students in Catholic schools and their parents and his logic and sense of fun."

The principal of St Cuthbert's School at Lindisfarne, Mrs Margaret Morse, said: "Father John takes time to listen, his graciousness and calm demeanour are hallmarks of conversations with him."

"To all his duties, he brings a discerning judgment and informed opinion."

*The Mercury 10 December 1993*



*With Max and Grace Coghlan  
at his Testimonial Dinner  
9 December 1993*

## Fr Williams thanked for 24 years at C.E.O.

Archbishop Eric D'Arcy has paid a tribute of praise and gratitude for the dedicated work of 24 years of the director of Catholic Education in Tasmania, Father John Williams, who recently resigned.



• Fr J. Williams

The resignation takes effect from the beginning of next year (1994).

The new director will be his current deputy, Mr Paul Stevens.

The Catholic Education Office will advertise widely within the next few weeks for a new deputy director.

Fr Williams will continue his links with education by remaining Vicar for Education for the Archdiocese of Hobart and chairman and member of a number of the committees set up to implement the changes to secondary education in southern Tasmania.

He will also take on a more intensive parish involvement.

Fr Williams has resigned because of the changing demands of education.

Archbishop D'Arcy said that in Fr Williams' 24 year involvement with education, he had overseen enormous changes and

developments in education within Tasmania. In addition, he had considerable responsibility at a national level.

"The magnitude of his achievement defies summary in a brief statement," Archbishop D'Arcy said.

"We can be most thankful, however, that during these years of continuing national obligation, Fr Williams has continued to see the needs of Catholic education in Tasmania as his first concern.

"His years as director have been marked by an absolute conviction of the importance of Catholic Education.

"His priestly qualities have been his greatest strength. He has re-enforced the Catholic character of the whole operation, imbued the

principals of our schools with it and ensured that Tasmania has remained at the forefront of Australian Catholic education."

Archbishop D'Arcy said that Mr Stevens had a remarkable commitment to and knowledge of Catholic education.

"I have seen in his work as Deputy Director, and in his life as a parishioner at Cygnet, the very best qualities of the new generation of Catholic laymen and laywomen who are opening up new chapters of Australian Catholic educational history.

"I thank God for implanting in Mr Stevens such a vision of Catholic education combined with such a mastery of the opportunities and the needs newly arising before it."

• Continued page 2

### • continued from page 1 FR WILLIAMS THANKED FOR 24 YEARS AT C.E.O.

Fr Williams said he had resigned because the scale of developments in education now required a younger and more energetic person with different experiences to his.

"This is a good time for me to go," he said. "There are major changes occurring in education across the board. We are on the verge of a new era in education."

Mr Stevens said it was a "most exciting time for an educationalist" as there were important changes taking place in education for Hobart, for the Church and for the nation.

"To have an opportunity to become more deeply involved in working for the Catholic school communities of the Archdiocese of Hobart is challenging, particularly as the future holds such significant change," he said.

"Our focus as Catholic educators, however, will remain, as always, on the needs of our families and their children and how best to draw them into the great traditions of Catholic life in this part of Australia."

• Fr Williams was ordained a priest in Launceston, in 1962.

He has worked in the parishes of the Cathedral (Hobart), Smithton and Devonport and has been parish priest to one of Tasmania's smaller parishes at Lenah Valley (Hobart) since September 1989.

Fr Williams has worked in Catholic education for 24 years. He took over as director from the now Vicar General, Monsignor Philip Green, in 1972.

When he started work at the CEO in 1969, the office had a staff of three. Now there are 20. Also in that time the number of students in Catholic schools in Tasmania has increased from 10,500 to 13,200 and the number of teachers has increased from 380 to 750.

Within days of his appointment to the Catholic Education Office, he went to Canberra as a Tasmanian representative on the first National Catholic Education Commission.

He has remained a member of that commission and has been on the executive since its inception. He chaired the commission for seven years, from January 1979 until December 1985. He has travelled

widely in the interests of Catholic education.

He was a member of the Commonwealth Schools Commission for more than three years, from 1980-1983.

• Mr Paul Stevens, 41, is married with four children.

He is a graduate in Arts from the University of Tasmania and has a Diploma in Education.

From 1974 until the end of 1980, he taught in Tasmanian Government schools and was a Senior Master in 1980.

From 1981-1987, he was principal of St James College, Cygnet.

In 1988, he joined the staff of the Catholic Education Office.

He was assistant to the Director of Catholic Education from 1988 until his appointment as Deputy Director in August 1991.

He is already well-known to education personnel in other States; he has represented the Tasmanian CEO at national level. He has served on a number of Commonwealth Government committees.

# Temporary job leads to AM

WHEN Father John Williams agreed to a temporary stint at the Catholic Education Office he had no way of knowing what a long, rewarding career was ahead of him.

The 12-week stint turned into 25 years and today the former Director of Catholic Education will be honoured with a Member of the Order of Australia in the General Division (AM) for services to education.



**Father John Williams awarded an AM.**

Fr Williams said the highlight of his career was the reorganisation of Catholic secondary education in Hobart,

Launceston, Burnie and Devonport.

"It was changed quite dramatically during my time," he said.

Fr Williams played a major part on the issue of funding for non-government schools and has been committed to developing education generally in government and non-Catholic independent schools.

*The Mercury 26 January 1998  
Pg 5*



*3 February 1998*

*Derwent Entertainment Centre Hobart*

*Inaugural Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission  
Recognition Awards for Outstanding Contributions  
to Catholic Education*

*Recipients L- R*

*Fr John Williams AM, Sr Maria Wheeler RSC,  
Sr Valerie Burns SSJ, Mr Max Coghlan*

obscure legislation and convoluted guidelines proved invaluable to the committee over many years, and enabled it to function as effectively as any in Australia (B. Hartney, personal communication, 10 December 1993).

For the twenty-four years that John Williams was at the heart of the transformation of Catholic education in Australia his capacity to influence policy was not confined to this sector alone.

By 1993 his energies were spent. Repeating periods of ill health provided the catalyst for a review of direction. At the end of June 1993 John Williams wrote to his Archbishop, Eric D'Arcy, offering his resignation as Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania, to be effective from the end of that year. The Archbishop did not immediately accept his request, asking him to carefully reassess his decision over a period of some weeks. John Williams remained resolute and it was in a letter written by Archbishop D'Arcy on August 8, 1993 that John Williams' resignation was announced to the Tasmanian Catholic Principals. In the letter the Archbishop alluded to the fact that this decision was not taken lightly. "It was a matter of great seriousness for him, and great seriousness for me. After long prayer and reflection and discussion, I came to the conclusion that I should accept" (D'Arcy, personal correspondence, August 8, 1993). Not attempting to enumerate John Williams' contribution to Catholic education, the Archbishop said, "The magnitude of Father John's achievement as Director is quite beyond my ability to summarise in a single letter". Yet, he made two significant comments, one concerning John Williams membership of the Commonwealth Schools Commission and the other concerning his work as Director of Catholic Education. He said,

Father John was blessed to play such an important part in it (Commonwealth Schools Commission) at the very time when gifts of grace and nature such as his were needed to seize the new opportunities. At all times, however, the opportunities and the needs of Catholic education in this Archdiocese have been his first concern. His years as Director have been marked by the absolute conviction of the importance of Catholic schooling and Catholic education (E. D'Arcy, personal communication, August 8, 1993).

The time during which John Williams worked in Catholic education was a major period of development. Since 1989 he had also worked as a Parish Priest in albeit, a small parish, but nonetheless, one that required constant attention. Understanding his double portfolio his parishioners were sympathetic to his constant absences because of time spent working on national commitments.

John Williams' resignation from Catholic education was not to be a complete break. He remained Episcopal Vicar for Education in Tasmania. Each Bishop is able to appoint a Vicar General who has the task of assisting the Bishop with the administration of the diocese. Episcopal Vicars share in this role but their activity is usually confined to one particular area. In John Williams' case the role of Episcopal Vicar was to advise the Archbishop on the administration of Catholic Education. He retained this position until 2009.

A number of public occasions marked John Williams retirement as Director of Catholic Education. The words spoken reflected the admiration in which he was held and the deep appreciation for all that he had accomplished on behalf of Catholic education. Following his retirement John Williams was appointed Parish Priest of Lindisfarne/Risdon Vale, and in January 1994 he took up residence in the large sandstone presbytery overlooking Lindisfarne Bay.

### **Parish Life | *Coming full circle***

The move back into parish life on a full-time basis was not easy. The parishioners were somewhat nervous about their new pastor, who had been a bureaucrat for a significant part of his working life. It was at the first pastoral council meeting that they experienced his different style. "He was not dictatorial, he did not grab the seat of power" (A. Morton, personal communication, 12 July 2013). John Williams brought to his new parish a management style reminiscent of the style characterized by trust that he had exercised at the Catholic Education Office, the same relationship of trust

that he had experienced with Archbishop Young. For a number of parishioners this was a new way of working and they were surprised at this new measure of interaction. He gave the message that he did not expect to be consulted on every detail of parish life, rather he wanted the parishioners to take responsibility for their own actions.

John Williams' appointment to the Parish of Lindisfarne-Risdon Vale coincided with a period marked by the laity taking a more active role in the life of the Church. The impetus for this in Tasmania was the renewal program, "Call to Change". Each parish responded differently to this program with representatives meeting with other parish people at cluster meetings. As one of these parish representatives, Parish Secretary Adela Morton, noticed the variation in style with other parish personnel attending. "John Williams was happy to look to the future, he had a realism about the future of the church, and he knew there would be declining numbers of priests. He was a big picture person" (A. Morton, personal communication, 12 July 2013).

The parish encompassed three suburbs, Lindisfarne and Geilston Bay were comfortable areas and Risdon Vale, only a few kilometres away, was a public housing estate. John Williams worked hard to engage both ends of the parish. Risdon Prison, the only medium to maximum prison in Tasmania was also located in the parish. While it was not an apostolate that John Williams would have chosen, nevertheless, he visited the prison each week, celebrating Mass there three or four times a year. The demands of the role at the prison were, for him, a new experience of priesthood (J. Williams, personal communication, 15 March 2013).

It was an active parish. Teams of lay ministers took communion to Catholic residents in the three large aged care facilities in Lindisfarne, working on a roster that allowed John Williams to visit each resident at least once a month. The care group met regularly. Their concern was to visit the older parishioners in their homes, together with organizing social functions for the parish, and providing meals for the sick. The Review Group put on an annual dinner and theatre performance over three nights.



*First Communion group  
Immaculate Heart of Mary Lenah Valley  
1989*



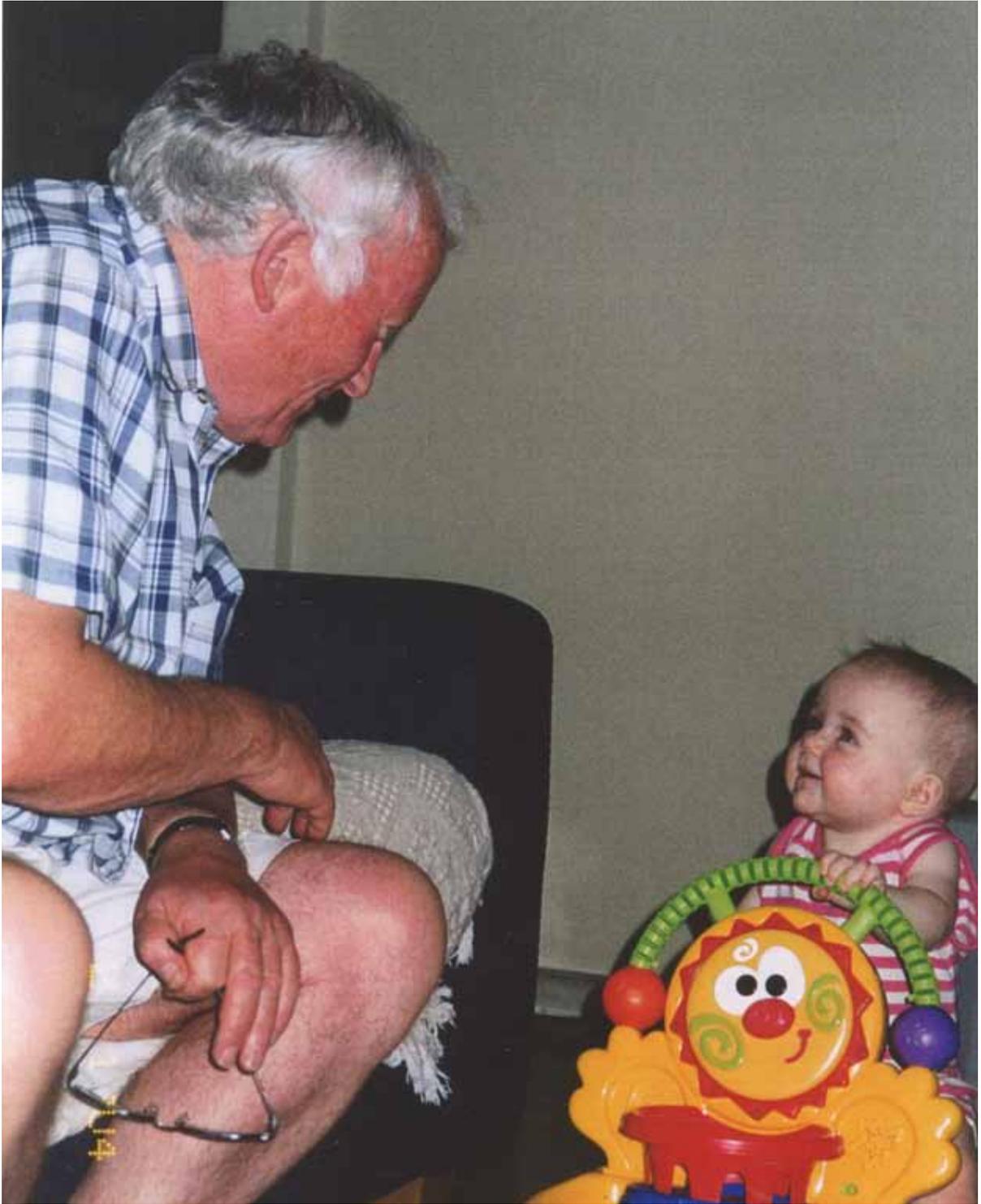
*Lindisfarne Presbytery, John Williams' home during two appointments to the Parish of Lindisfarne / Risdon Vale*



*Theology for Ministry Summer Session  
The American College,  
Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium  
John Williams standing left, second row  
July 1994*



*Investiture Government House  
Sir Guy Green congratulating  
John Williams following the conferring  
the award Member of the Order of Australia  
in the general division (AM)  
15 May 1998*



*'Old friends renewing acquaintance'  
John Williams and Prudence Roach,  
some months after her baptism in 2003*



*'Family gathering'*  
*L-R John Williams, Helen Johnston,*  
*Mary Freeman, Robert Williams.*  
*11 October 2003*



*Celebrating a wedding  
at Fort Beach, South Arm, Tasmania  
29 December 2006*



*John Williams' year gathered in  
Tasmania to celebrate 50 years since  
commencing seminary studies at Werribee  
1 March 1955 - 1 March 2005  
John Williams 3rd from front right*



*Parish gathering  
Lindisfarne Sailing Club  
2010*



*John Williams celebrated the marriage of his cousin  
Kevin Watkins to Pam Harris  
27 July 1963*



*John Williams with Kevin and Pam Watkins  
following a Mass to celebrate their  
50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary  
27 July 2013*

This initiative commenced as a Bicentennial Grant as part of the 'Community' grants program. The 'Review' attracted the involvement of at least one hundred people each year and successfully ran for a decade. The parish magazine, *Sidelights* was another avenue for connecting people and building community. John Williams allowed these groups to breathe and develop. "There was a sense of inferred permission, that's why they flourished" (A. Morton, personal communication, 12 July 2013). "The people were given keys and ownership of the parish, it was not his parish, it was our parish" (M. Hemming, personal communication 12 July 2013).

He brought a new reverence to the liturgy and was strict about starting Mass on time, but the people responded. He walked slowly in the church and he encouraged others to do the same. His own appreciation of the liturgy was evident, speaking powerfully about his reverence for the most sacred of actions in the Catholic Church. John Williams was not musically gifted, but he did appreciate its part in liturgy, and insisted that the music chosen reflected the occasion.

The transition from the bureaucratic world into the parish primary school environment was a different set of circumstances. While he had an easy relationship with the principal and staff, he found it difficult for a time to talk to the children. Mary Hemming was the Religious Education Coordinator at St Cuthbert's, the Catholic primary school. She found John Williams most supportive and happy to be involved in the school. He was open to the kind of liturgy that was suitable for children, while still maintaining its integrity. He avoided the trap of oversimplification. His ease with the children eventually became more apparent. The sense of natural shyness was evident, both with the children and the parishioners generally. "He was not one to lean up at the bar, that was not his personality. Some found that difficult to understand" (M. Hemming, personal communication, 12 July 2013).

A significant proportion of the children completing their primary years at St Cuthbert's School with boys moving to secondary school at St Virgil's College, and girls to St Mary's College. Both these colleges were

against the changes implemented under the program to restructure Catholic secondary schools. St Mary's College was the only Catholic secondary college to withdraw from the amalgamation and that College continues to provide girls only education to Grade 12. The presence of one of the architects of these changes, now amongst this community as the pastor, became a source of unease for many within the school community. In that sense it was not unproblematic to develop a relationship with the school community.

In his role as Parish Priest, John Williams became a member of the School Board of Management. This involvement provided one avenue for allowing the school community to get to know him, and he them. The other avenue was the preparation of children for the sacraments. In time the parents warmed to him and trusted him with their stories.

He always helped those who were struggling with relationships or circumstances that they assumed would put them outside the laws of the Church. If they wanted their child baptised and they were living together he listened to them. Once they got over the initial barrier they knew John Williams listened to them. He had a totally non-judgemental and supportive attitude to people who came forward, he would not inflict punishment on a child because of the choices parents may or may not make. He once said to me, "What 6 year old can come to Mass on their own?" Once they got to talk to him the relationship changed (M. Hemming, personal communication, 12 July 2013).

In 2001, seven years after his arrival at Lindisfarne John Williams was transferred to the parish of New Town. John replaced a conservative priest who was elevated to the episcopacy and became the Bishop of a diocese in northern New South Wales. The atmosphere at New Town was quite different. It was a long established parish and the people really knew and cared for each other. The usual round of pastoral work marked the three years of this appointment.

A happy period at New Town came to a sudden end when the priest who had taken John Williams' place at Lindisfarne was charged with sexual assault of a young adult. The shock experienced by the

parishioners, and indeed the whole Catholic community, brought with it disbelief, anger, and a sense of betrayal. As well, this priest was John Williams' friend. John offered to return to Lindisfarne-Risdon Vale because he knew the people. His return was under very difficult circumstances. He supported his friend without making any excuses for him, which was not his way. Adela Morton explained

John did the right thing and showed extraordinary integrity, a lot of healing was needed in the community. The second time around the people were much more welcoming and warm, they understood him. It took a while for people to warm to him, it was his shyness rather than an aloofness. He came back under difficult circumstances and it was like a welcome home. He did not preach about it from the pulpit, but he supported people privately. He did talk to people, never avoiding the issue (A.Morton, personal communication, 12 July 2013).

For John Williams the return was also a homecoming and he quickly settled to the challenges that lay ahead of him, especially the need to rebuild trust in the Church. In a pastoral sense he worked in a different model to some other priests, being more self-effacing and quiet in his ways. He was welcoming, greeting the people after Mass, talking to them,

...no one was ever turned away from the door of the presbytery. It didn't matter about the fanfare; he lived what he believed. John Williams could be curt, if someone put forward an idea that had not been thought through (A. Morton, personal communication, 12 July 2013).

John Williams had a particular affinity with the elderly, the sick and housebound. His particular style and personality enabled him to relate easily with older people, offering time to sit and listen. The Masses and other services that he celebrated at the aged care homes were important to him, even organizing a regular Mass at the Freemason's Home.

Risdon Vale only boasted a small congregation, but John Williams never played a numbers game. He loved the people there and they reciprocated in kind. He knew, that if there were only masses at the main

parish church at Lindisfarne, many would be cut off from sharing in this essential aspect of parish life. For the great feasts of Easter and Christmas he maintained fairness by having masses at both ends of the Parish with the people of Risdon Vale not forgotten. One of the parishioners at Risdon Vale was profoundly deaf and being conscious of that John Williams made sure this lady had access to information. When he eventually announced his retirement, he made certain she had a typed copy of his words before he delivered them at the Mass.

As parish secretary Adela Morton was aware of the time he spent with families when there was a death. "The way he was with people showed his quiet compassion. Every funeral he conducted affected him deeply; it was never just another service. You could hear the emotion in his voice" (A. Morton, personal communication, 12 July 2013).

John Williams turned the presbytery into a home, distinguishing between his personal space and that utilised for parish activities. While Director of Catholic Education he organized what is known amongst the Hobart priests as 'Saturday Lunch'. For many years he was both coordinator and cook for this weekly event, attracting up to fifteen guests to the North Hobart home he shared with fellow priest, Father Clem Kilby. 'Saturday lunch' gave the priests as colleagues, an opportunity to gather in an environment of companionship and friendship. Over the years visitors from interstate and overseas were welcomed to eat with the group with the local Archbishop the occasional guest as well. With John Williams' move to Lindisfarne 'Saturday lunch' moved with him. John Williams reflects,

The majority of these men live alone, without the advantages of family life and the temptation to be personally isolated, ever present. These gatherings challenged isolation and helped many fellows feel connected, when disconnection could be an easy alternative (J. Williams, personal communication, 20 August 2011).

With the passage of the years, age and the decrease in the number of active priests 'Saturday lunch' now occurs half a dozen times a year with a different parish hosting each gathering.

Many remember some of the social events that took place at the Lindisfarne House. A dinner to acknowledge being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Australia Day Honours List of 1998 was an occasion of celebration, as did John Williams' 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday, where the guests drank champagne on the large veranda surrounding the Lindisfarne Presbytery.

By 2004, the parish merged with the neighbouring parish of Bellerive- Rokeby, and with that merger John Williams became Priest in Residence, with continued responsibility for Lindisfarne and Risdon Vale. When he submitted his resignation from the parish in 2012, he knew this would mean the end of being able to maintain the church at Risdon Vale. He and the small community shared this sad consequence of his leaving.

Two months after his retirement from parish life John Williams returned to Lindisfarne to celebrate 50 years of priesthood. His parish community joined with family and others from education to applaud a lifetime of service.



*50th Ordination Anniversary Mass  
Church of the Apostles Launceston  
July 2012*

## CHAPTER 7 | INTERROGATING THE NARRATIVE

*It is only when correct reasoning and right desire come together that we truly get virtuous action (NE 10. 8. 1178a16-18). The wedding of the two makes intelligence into wisdom and natural virtue into moral virtue (Kenny, 2010 p. 216).*

The previous chapter lists nine questions that form the basis of the interrogation of John Williams' narrative. The answers to these questions reveal key requisites of the lived experience of becoming virtuous. Intellect is at the heart of the first group of questions, 'hexis', or character, the second group, and faith the third group. During this examination a number of themes unfold. The first relates to principles and concerns respect for others. This in turn finds expression in care for and loyalty to others. Justice, too, is a deeply held principle that finds particular expression in John Williams' in his role in Catholic education, a role that extended for half his working life as a priest. The place of faith as a motivator for this work is examined in the final group of questions.

### **Intelligence into wisdom | *Natural virtue into moral virtue* (Kenny 2010).**

Both Aristotle and Aquinas scrutinize intellect according to two aspects, speculative and practical, and the questions posed seek to investigate these aspects. As well, the nexus between intellect and virtue is examined. An effort to separate answers to these questions develops an artificial divide, especially as examples of speculative and practical intellect cited from John Williams' narrative are closely interwoven. The only means of revealing the grasp of a principle is through demonstration, and that falls into the realm of the practical intellect. For this reason, the responses to the first three questions are grouped.

1. In what ways does John Williams' life story reveal the development of a speculative intellect?
2. In what ways does John Williams' life story reveal the development of a practical intellect?

3. What role has the intellect played in John Williams coming to be a virtuous person?

Thomas Aquinas deemed intellect as a power of the soul, dealing principally with the capacity to grasp truth. Simply, it is the facility to understand. Reason allows the intellect to move from one intelligible truth to another so as to know intelligible truth. Intuition and insight perhaps best reflect this capacity.

For it is the speculative intellect which directs what it apprehends, not to operation, but to the consideration of truth; while the practical intellect is that which directs what it apprehends to operation (ST 1. Q.79, A.11).

Aquinas turns to Aristotle to develop the relationship between truth and the intellect. He begins by saying

The Philosopher says (Metaph.vi), the true and the false reside not in things, but in the intellect...Hence, everything is said to be true absolutely, in so far as it is related to the intellect from which it depends...For a house is said to be true that expresses the likeness in the form in the architect's mind; and words are said to primarily reside in the intellect, and secondarily in things according as they are related to the intellect as their principle (ST 1, Q 16, A. 1).

Aristotle outlines three virtues that are contained within the speculative intellect, with that part of the intuitive mind able to grasp truths and lying at the heart of all knowledge, being the virtue of understanding. The second is science, *episteme*, is the capacity to come to conclusions from first principles. The third virtue within the speculative intellect is wisdom, *sophia*, the knowledge of principles and conclusions.

A montage of influences that provided John Williams' formative life experiences are outlined in the narrative in Chapter 5. Such influences cannot be underestimated in helping a person to form their own life direction as no one individual is merely just that, because the network of human relationships in family, friends and community has a profound and

ongoing impact as a person shapes a life.

William Williams, two generations before John, was a principled man. Although not a Catholic, he understood his wife was subject to certain demands of the Church. He promised to educate his children in Catholic schools and “he stuck to it” (R. Williams and J. Dineen, personal communication, November 18, 2003). William worked hard to provide for his large family and he gifted his children, with a thirst for knowledge.

Bridget Mackey was also a woman of principle with a strong sense of social justice. She was quick to help her neighbours, contributing her intellectual skills for the benefit of her family and the wider community. She helped the poor in very practical ways. Bridget and her husband Michael both valued learning and this provided significant influence on the future career paths of their children.

Both the wider Williams and Mackey families exhibited characteristics that permeated the way they related to one another and to the broader community. Both were loyal to each other and bonded in the highs and lows of life. The value of work and contributing to family and community was accepted. While these two families were raised at the end of the ‘Great Depression’, the benefits of education meant that work was available to them. Certainly after World War II employment was plentiful. Most notable in the Mackey family was the deeply embedded sense of doing one’s duty. This is exemplified in Frank’s sacrifice of career, then the youngest daughter Jose, then Nell and finally Kath as they cared initially for their father Michael Mackey and then for each other.

The marriage of Edie Mackey and Jack Williams provided the catalyst for a melding of the characteristics of both families, placing a particular stamp on their own union. Family, faith, education, justice, hard work and community were the pillars on which their family life was built. Such an influence would be impossible to discount, placing the family narrative at the heart of John Williams’ own story.

While a first principle such as loyalty is deeply embedded within John Williams’ character, other characteristics must be exercised for

speculative virtue to be operational. The capacity to make judgements based on truth was required during John Williams' appointment to the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. This organization was a registered private adoption agency and John Williams was responsible for arranging the adoption of a number of infants. The judgements that were required carried immense responsibility for the baby to be adopted, the birth mother and the adopting parents. In the 1960s, when adoption practices differed between institutions, John Williams maintained the tenet of the inherent goodness of all people, as the guiding principle for his decision-making. He avoided judgements about birth mothers, however he was required to make serious judgements about the capacity of the adopting couple to be good parents, good in terms far beyond the capacity to provide materially for a child. As a young priest, it was the truths about family and his own experience of family that provided the foundation for him to make these judgements.

The seminary program of studies, even with its shortcomings, provided the opportunity to think about the principles that subsequently informed his beliefs and actions. This eight-year program of study of philosophy and theology was an opportunity for a young man to learn about and reflect on the principles that form the foundations of Christian society. Central to his philosophy course, was the belief, that in God alone does absolute truth reside, and each individual's experience of the truth is one that is ever changing and 'in process'.

The challenge to care for each other within the community, particularly the most vulnerable, is known as the 'common good'. John Williams learnt this principle both in his home and in the extended family. His father's understanding of the principle of the common good was at the heart of his action as welfare officer for his workplace union and his involvement in the Society of St Vincent de Paul. This gave a young John Williams a life lesson that has guided his own actions. The experience of his uncle and aunts forgoing career to care for their father Michael Mackey, and then each other, was a striking example of the obligation to contribute to the common good. As an employer in Catholic Education,

and then a parish pastor, John Williams was constantly challenged to show care for others. The capacity to translate a principle into action is the practical intellect at work. A letter he received on 12 December 1993 following the announcement of his retirement as Director of Catholic Education illustrates something of this capacity.

John,

I thought I would try and put on paper my thanks for the many things over the last nine years (Yes it is nine years!).

Firstly, for being given so much trust and support in the work I do; - I remember Tony McCormack saying early on something to the effect that "the bugger trusts you so much that you end up working twice as hard"...true enough, and I couldn't have enjoyed it more. Furthermore, without your support the program would not be in operation today.

Secondly, for the way I have been treated personally. I arrived a fresh-faced bachelor and proceeded to acquire in succession a mortgage, a wife, an Anna, a Ben and more recently some grey hair. Over that time I particularly remember and appreciate things like the support received when Anna arrived and was in Intensive Care, when Sue's parents died, and at other times of sickness and worry. I appreciate always being made to feel comfortable (even when I had to be rescued after locking my keys inside).

Thirdly, for all you have taught me about commitment to principle, and about leadership by example. We have all seen you weighed down on many occasions by the demands of the job, but still able to find time for us, and still somehow knowing how our own work was going.

(V. Summers, personal communication, 12 December 1993).

This letter touches upon a number of themes that emanate from John Williams' grasp of principles. He has been able to use his intellectual capacity to draw conclusions from first principles. Peter Tannock was convinced that his reasoned grasp of issues contributed to the magnitude of his contribution at the national level, particularly in the area of school funding.

...I think it is really important to understand about John and his role and the success of all that push. It was a very complex issue,

there was a lot of technical complexity in this issue and he got on top of it, I thought that was pretty special. He was very competent quantitatively, a very good quantitative brain, and he got on top of it before most people, including the bureaucrats. He was able to engage with high-level officials as an equal. It was an extremely complex area and he got on top of it. It was only possible because he was intellectually strong, and he had a very good quantitative mind, and he needed it. He had good political judgement too (P.Tannock, personal communication, 7 April, 2005).

Aquinas placed the virtue of wisdom above understanding and science, “wherefore it rightly judges all things and sets them in order because there can be no perfect or universal judgement that is not based on the first causes” (ST. 1- 11,Q.57, A 2). Wisdom is equated with the combination of knowledge, experience and good judgement. As a young priest John Williams was influenced by the wisdom of his parish priest, Father Pat Hanlon, together with the influence of Archbishop Guilford Young, which was important and long lasting. Living in the same house as Guilford Young and working as his secretary provided John Williams with a richness of experience not shared by many of his contemporaries. Doyle noted, “Guilford Young put him in important positions, I think because of his personality. He was always a strong person, a strong personality” (T. Doyle, personal communication, 12 October 2006). John Williams’ position as a member of the Commonwealth Schools Commission and Chair of the National Catholic Education Commission called for a particular response. Many who could be described as clever were not able to achieve as much because of a paucity of understanding. Tom Doyle (2006) argues that John Williams was one of those people able to influence political stances because he had the attitude that he could work with government, not just fight government, and as a result a different sort of political advocacy resulted. John Williams was able to recognize that confrontation would not lead to change. He understood that finding common ground was the means to progress. Doyle described the result.

And you found out that you had a lot in common. In education you were all about the welfare of children. If your main thrust

is the welfare of children, and you take the two major parties, the Liberal Party and the Labor Party as a bottom line, both interested in the welfare of children, then there is common ground. You can start something. But if your fight is about political power then that's a more violent struggle. It is about power (T. Doyle, personal communication, 12 October, 2006).

Such an understanding is a reflection of wisdom. In describing John Williams' contribution at the national level Tannock says

He knew the big picture and he looked at the whole scene I think in quite a wise way. Wisdom was needed and a national perspective was needed and he had it. There were some great people involved at that time, people like (Archbishop) James Carroll, (Father) Frank Martin, (Father) Tom Doyle. To make the headway these people did, you needed to be credible with lay people, especially the politicians. They (politicians) had to see that you knew what you were talking about and your values were right. It is very interesting, be they ministers or prime ministers or premiers they won't be brow beaten by the alleged strength or influence of the Church, you've actually got to have a case, a good case, based on need and tradition and a contribution to Australia. I think these people were very good at presenting that. They were balanced, decent people (P. Tannock, personal communication, 7 April 2005).

The essential element outlined by Tannock is not one of technique, rather, it is the foundational motivation that directed John Williams' actions and that small group that shared a similar story at that time in the history of education funding in Australia. The work was never just about funding, it was always about the educational needs of children. One could argue that John Williams possessed a certain skill in this area, one that could be described as an art, *techne*. Aristotle examined this view, differentiating between wisdom in the arts and general wisdom. It can be assumed that one person can be the possessor of both expressions. He says

Wisdom in the arts too we ascribe to those who are most precise in the arts – for example, Pheidias was a wise sculptor in marble and Polycleitus a wise sculptor in bronze – signifying by “wisdom” here nothing other than a virtue belonging to an art.... It is clear, as a result, that the most precise of the sciences would be wisdom. The wise person, therefore, ought not only to know what

proceeds from the principles but also to attain the truth *about* the principles. Wisdom, as a result, would be intellect and science, a science of the most honourable matters that has, as it were, its capstone (NE 1141a10-13, 16-20).

In the following personal reflection John Williams touches upon these twin aspects of wisdom.

*I think I spent the most productive years of my life contributing to drawing together the wisdom of elected politicians and the wisdom of Australian educators (both Government and Non-Government) to some understanding of the need to complement each other. I think we have moved a long way. We all learned that not only was change possible, but it also required movement from both sides, and that when it came we would almost certainly, have better school education (J. Williams, 'Night-time musings' n.d.).*

The two virtues that are said to reside in the practical intellect are craftsmanship, *technē*, and prudence, *phronēsis*. Craftsmanship, *technē*, refers simply to the capacity to make things, while prudence, *phronēsis*, Kenny describes as “wisdom ...which deliberates about human affairs” (p. 215). This practical wisdom is inextricably linked to the practice of the moral virtues.

But it is only when correct reasoning and right desire come together that we truly get virtuous action (NE 1178a16-18). The wedding of the two makes intelligence into wisdom and natural virtue into moral virtue (Kenny, p. 216).

Prudence, *phronēsis*, is critical to choices made, choices that are at the heart of virtuous behaviour and cannot exist outside the moral virtues. Art, *technē*, on the other hand, knowing how to produce an object, has come to include a variety of mechanical, fine and liberal arts with grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music finding inclusion amongst the latter.

These two aspects of the practical intellect can be readily identified

in John Williams. Thomas Aquinas maintained that the speculative and practical intellects were not distinct powers. In the article on “Whether the Speculative and Practical Intellects are Distinctive Powers?” he argues

The speculative intellect by extension becomes practical (De Anima iii.10). But one power is not changed into another. Therefore the speculative and practical intellects are not distinct powers.... For it is the speculative intellect which directs what it apprehends, not to operation but to consideration of the truth; while the practical intellect is that which directs what it apprehends to operation. And this is what the Philosopher says (De Anima iii, *loc. cit.*); that the speculative differs from the practical in its end. Whence each is named from its end: the one speculative, the other practical - i.e., operative (ST 1. Q. 79, Art. 11).

I argue that intellectual capacity is a significant determinant in enabling a person to be able to grasp principles and then translate those principles into action. John Williams’ narrative provides clear examples of his capacity to achieve just that. His parents were a distinctive influence, demonstrating their personal values of family, faith, education, justice and the common good. As an altar server John Williams would see women in the district at morning Mass, yet his own mother, a devout Catholic, was not there amongst them. It took him some time to understand that his mother’s first priority was to attend to the family in readiness for the day’s activities; her husband to work and the children to school, a small example of her capacity to give practical expression to a deeply held principle. This definite measure of priorities was replicated through their daily life.

John Williams’ intellectual potential became obvious when he commenced at St Patrick’s College. As the years progressed his academic accomplishments grew. Mathematics was not studied at the seminary, but his ability to think mathematically came to the fore in his education portfolio. As Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania, it was the management of the system as well as negotiations with government that required a clear grasp of policy issues and their implementation. As Chair of the National Catholic Education Commission and a member of the Commonwealth Schools Commission

the principle of justice, which was planted deep within his psyche, found practical expression in negotiations for equal educational access for all Australian students. These negotiations, sometimes played out in hostile environments, challenged him to deal in a particular way with the negotiators and with competence in the negotiations. Tannock summarises John Williams' approach.

John had a lot of political nous. What's political nous? In some ways it's being able to engage with political leaders on terms that they understand. Another dimension is trust, it's terribly important if you are going to be successful in working with governments or with oppositions that you build trust, people have to know that they can trust you. You also have to be able to deal with both sides. It is ludicrous to be put in the position, or just a disservice to be put in the position that you are seen to be partisan or unable to relate to both sides of politics. You have to be able to relate to both sides of politics in this country. I think John Williams was able to do that.... He's also a strong person, he doesn't get pushed aside easily, a person of principle and conviction. And he will defend his principles and convictions to the end. A quite stubborn man, I don't regard stubbornness as a bad quality, he stuck to his guns and he would have had plenty of incentive not to on some issues (P. Tannock, personal communication, 7 April, 2005).

The capacity to grasp the importance of trust is formed in the speculative intellect and the capacity to make that operational is in the realm of the practical intellect. Unquestioning trust is the characteristic of a child, though quite different in type to that trust extended by a person who has grasped the knowledge of first principles. Trust at an adult level requires respect for people, recognizing the value of what each contributes. In John Williams' case this trust was offered to politicians, bureaucrats, leaders of other educational jurisdictions, as well as Church and Catholic education personnel. Personal intuition and political nous guided the trust he extended. In matters of trust it was practical wisdom, rather than blind faith, that was his guide. The trust he extended to others was reciprocated and is borne out in the following two pieces of correspondence received at the time of his resignation as Director of Catholic Education.

You have certainly borne the heat of the day, especially in the last few years and have done so with incredible dignity. I shudder to think where we would have been without you and the qualities of intellect and heart and innate authority you have brought to the position, John. In my opinion, your resignation is a huge loss to Catholic Education (B. Duggan, personal communication, 15 August, 1993).

Your great personal talent and enormous self-giving in most difficult times as well as in good times will always be an inspiration to me. You are a true 'son' of the dauntless Guilford, who 'braved the lions in the den' and 'fed the lambs' in the pasture with equal skill and strength of purpose....I'll miss your understanding ear, your sharp questions, your clear-sighted grasp of situations and your unfailing support of the Josephites in the schools....I'll always be grateful for the freedom and trust you placed in me when I worked in the CEO during more pioneering days (V. Burns, personal communication, 19 August, 1993).

If it is taken that knowledge of truth was integral to John Williams' pursuit of justice for students in Catholic schools, it must be assumed that it was his capacity to apply correct reason, *phronēsis*, that enabled him to know that the share of the public purse applied to Catholic schools was inequitable, and that this was not only an issue about education, but about commutative justice. His choices were made in a light of a habit of reflective practice. His intellectual antennae and skills were particularly attuned to issues around equality. A number of influences contributed to this faculty, including the nurturing he received within his own family, together with the influence of Archbishop Guilford Young, an early and vocal supporter of funding justice for Catholic schools.

A number of examples of the exercise of prudence are present in John Williams' story. His contribution as a member of the Commonwealth Schools Commission is a significant demonstration of his capacity to understand that action and change can be long term and can be found in unlikely situations. A Catholic priest amongst a group who were charged with making recommendations to government about ways to better provide for students in all sectors and levels of education throughout the country, membership of the Schools Commission required him to be able to deliberate in an open and inclusive manner. The action was the end that

led to a more just outcome for students across the country. Professor Peter Tannock, Chairman of the Australian Schools Commission from 1980 until 1985 gave the following insight into both that period in education in Australia and also John Williams' capacity to be an agent of correct reason.

I think that was a particular feature of John Williams in that very demanding and difficult period when the church and school system had to completely reconstruct itself and go down a whole different path and carve a completely different relationship from anything we had ever seen between church and state, to some extent between the church and school system. The other major parties were the government school system, the independent schools and the commonwealth and state governments.

It was a time of great policy turmoil, political argument and conflict, but there were also extremely complex issues to be dealt with, not just complex from a political or social perspective, but from an economic perspective. And I think that the church was lucky to have some of the people it had at that time, people who were able to engage with those issues, engage with them not only in terms of their nuances and subtleties but also their technical complexity – John was one of those. The church was fortunate to have him. (P. Tannock, personal communication, 7 April, 2005).

John Williams' exhibited considerable intellectual skill in his state and national roles in Catholic education. I have argued that the framework upon which he built his skill base was founded on principles that belong in the speculative intellect. Justice, loyalty, moral courage and commitment to the common good became clear expressions of deeply held principles. While John Williams experienced these virtues in others, something within him as a person was required to embrace this way of thinking and living, what might be called character, *hexis*.

### **Character | *Active and intelligent engagement***

Hursthouse (2007) believes that it is more than our actions that determines whether those actions are indeed virtuous. She would suggest that in the light of what Aristotle wrote, virtuous behaviour is something very deep within a person, a series of complex character traits that “go all the way

down" (p.2). This complexity of virtue goes to the very heart of a person as an individual and includes "...emotions and emotional reactions, choices, values, desires, perceptions, attitudes, interests, expectations and sensibilities" (p.2). In this framework I examine a number of John Williams' personal traits and it should be emphasized that the acquisition of virtue is a personal activity. Annas (2013) comments, "even in a society as traditional as Aristotle's he noticed that people seek to act and live well, not to produce a replica of their parents' lives". (p.39). Regardless of the sphere of influence character cannot be replicated. The next group of questions launch this quest, and like those in the previous group relating to intellect, a number of characteristics emerge that, when woven together, become a lens through which John Williams *hexis* is revealed. These include loyalty, honesty, trust, capacity to listen, personal responsibility, service, empowering of others, learning and prayer.

1. What habits has John Williams formed that reveal particular dispositions?
2. How are these dispositions revealed through his story?
3. What characteristics best reveal his character?

In the narrative we read of John Williams' loyalty to his younger sister when her teacher suggested Edith's illness might have been contrived. That loyalty, displayed so early, became a personal characteristic. Fellow Commonwealth Schools Commissioner, Dr Peter Tannock, commented, "I think he is a very loyal person. The mark of a loyal person is how they cope with disappointments, and he had some disappointments and he coped very well with them" (P.Tannock, personal communication, 7 April, 2005).

John Williams' nephew Mark Freeman, also a priest in Tasmania, proposed the toast as family and friends gathered to celebrate John Williams' seventieth birthday in 2008. Amongst other characteristics he spoke of this quality of loyalty.

...what are the sorts of things we would want to honour John for in celebrating his seventy years? A word that came to my mind, and I would expect every single person in this room has experienced this at some stage, whether growing up with John, knowing John through his work in education, experiencing John as a pastor in a parish, as a brother priest. The word that came to my mind is in fact, John's tremendous loyalty to people and his great devotion and care and selflessness to support people in any sort of situation and in any need. That great loyalty that is prepared to stand with people, to defend people, to care for them and even at times, and John has experienced this I know, and you will know this, his loyalty to people has brought him criticism. It is unstinting that loyalty and that love and care for people (M. Freeman, 18 January, 2008).

His efforts to be loyal have at times required real courage. When a close priest friend was charged with indecent assault of a twenty-two year old man, John Williams was personally distressed and repulsed by the actions of his friend. Many within the community abandoned this priest when he was charged and subsequently convicted. During the trial John Williams remained a loyal and vigilant companion, supporting his friend during what was a painful and frightening public fall from grace. This case attracted significant media attention and John Williams himself was caught up in the television coverage following sentencing. This show of loyalty drew many to conclude that in providing support John Williams may have condoned what had occurred, a conclusion far from the truth.

John Williams is a listener. His skills as an aural learner were honed as a secondary student around the table in the Brother's library, listening to other subjects being taught while he studied. In his appointment at the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau he listened and learnt from those who came for assistance and his university studies were made easier by his capacity to listen to, and remember, what was presented in lectures. This capacity was further tested during thousands of hours of meetings over twenty-four years in Catholic Education, meetings that required him to remain focussed in order to contribute. I suggest that this capacity has its foundation in natural intelligence and John Williams both recognised this personal endowment and used it to maximum benefit. Catholic principals in Tasmania, as well as his parishioners, placed great import on his capacity

to listen. Because he listened to them, he knew them, as individuals, as they were, where they were. Such a vantage point allowed him to challenge them to be better people and better leaders of their schools. John Williams' capacity to listen to others was a conscious decision, not a quirk of personality. He used this *hexis* as a vehicle to engage with others in a way that made transparent his deep respect for people. As a pastor, young parents warmed to him and trusted him with their stories. If a couple wanted their child baptized, and they were living together, unmarried, he listened to them. They knew he listened to them (A. Morton, personal communication, 12 July 2013).

Habits can be good and bad, dispositions can change, but it is character that provides the stability that one can use to influence behaviour to such a degree that a person can become virtuous.

How fortunate that John Williams was born into a family characterised by stability, one that had the capacity to provide both a loving family life and its material necessities. This environment in which John Williams grew, was conducive to adopting a desirable way to live, through the example and explicit teaching of his parents and particularly by his parent's personal characteristics and value system. Jack Williams was a man who had a seriousness of purpose, assuming responsibility with Edie for his family, working hard at Glasgow Engineering but ensuring enough time was available to support his fellow workers as the welfare officer within the union. This personal loyalty was further extended through his effort and commitment to the St Vincent de Paul Society and the local parish. Through the example and teaching of his father, John Williams made his own the characteristic of personal responsibility and care for others. The small responsibilities normally given to children to teach what is required to keep a home running smoothly, were part of John Williams' daily life, though not tasks that were overwhelming in time or complexity. The example of his parents working together in the home taught John Williams that the division of labour was not confined to gender. For a period as Director of Catholic Education, and then as a Parish Priest, he

was responsible for the management of his own home, developing his culinary skills to match those he exercised in the garden, the laundry and the supermarket.

As an eight year old John Williams became an altar server, committing to weekday and Sunday masses and maintaining this allegiance until he entered the seminary in his eighteenth year. This was not a light commitment, rather one that lasted a full decade. No doubt John Williams enjoyed it and no doubt the various priests of the parish also exercised some hand in providing both example and teaching of their own. Knowing these priests in their formal role and then seeing them in his own home relaxing at a meal and game of cards gave him a picture of priesthood that not all parishioners would have experienced.

An instinctive inclination present in people is to long for those characteristics that we admire in others. John Williams was no exception to this general rule. The dominant influences in his early life were his parents, extended family, local clergy, teachers and friends. Character, *hexis*, is dependant upon an *energeia*, translated to mean 'being-at-work'. Admiration of desirable characteristics in others does not equate to the adoption of those characteristics, there is no advantage in longing for something without that longing being accompanied by the necessary action. A shy person may want to be outgoing, but that is not possible if the desire is in conflict with that person's personality type. That does not mean to say that a shy person cannot learn strategies to allow an ease of interaction with others. John Williams, for his part, certainly learnt some of these strategies. The characteristics of which I am speaking are not personality quirks, but rather the characteristics that reveal a person's moral compass. There are a variety of ways through which individuals show courage, each according to the situation and in accord with individual personality. What is important is to be able to show courage when required, not to show courage in a particular style. It was this depth of knowing through experience and through others that allowed John Williams' own longing and 'being-at-work' for these characteristics to become his own.

Key among these habits was the habit of service that found expression in the care of others. The needy who knocked at the front door of the Henty Street house seeking assistance from Jack Williams would have been an important lesson for his eldest son, not just that people were needy, but that Jack Williams believed it important that his family contribute to the common good by taking some responsibility for people in their community. From the exercise of this responsibility John Williams also learnt about justice. In the case of the work of the St Vincent de Paul, it was distributive justice, where all have the right to share in the goods of the community. This particular understanding was enlarged for him as he grew and experienced the difficulties couples faced in relationships, where no blame could be apportioned in the case of a marriage break down, and if it could, what good would be gained. This was certainly John Williams' experience during his appointment to the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, and as has been noted in his work with a birth mother seeking to adopt her child. In these instances justice was inextricably bound with respect for the individual, something he had observed as a child when the needy called at their home.

This habit of justice is not always about taking an easy path. John Williams viewed the process of restructuring secondary and senior secondary education in Tasmania as a justice issue, with the reconfiguration providing access to the full educational provision for the greatest number of students in Catholic schools. Two secondary colleges in particular railed against the restructuring, principally for fear of losing their long-standing reputation as single sex colleges. The owners of these colleges were earnest about maintaining the status quo, more so than in their concern for those students struggling to access places with the full subject provision that would allow for post school graduate and training programs. John Williams shared the conviction, with many others, that the planned changes were the right action. Personal resources of wisdom, integrity and courage were required to see this process to completion. To find people outside his parish church after Sunday Mass handing out leaflets protesting the proposed restructuring called for a moderate response

that sought not to create an emotive situation but made known his belief that both the site and form of the protest was totally inappropriate (M. Hemming, personal communication, 12 July 2013).

One consequence of John Williams' personal commitment to the program of restructuring of secondary school provision in southern Tasmania was the toll it took on his health. While maintaining his resolve, he suffered a series of *transient ischemic attacks* (mini strokes) that are caused by a disruption of cerebral blood flow. These occurrences resulted in a number of hospital admissions and were personally distressing as these attacks are recognized precursors to a full stroke. The toll John Williams' work was taking was recognized by colleagues, and judged by them to be the result of the pressure he was under, over the restructuring of secondary education. Such a judgement could have been made. What may have been more accurate was the burden of twenty-four years of unrelenting work for funding justice, the development of a viable Catholic education system, both in Tasmania and nationally, and the day-to-day responsibility for Catholic Education in Tasmania. Tannock said of John Williams

(He was) ...one of the people who made it happen.... He worked very hard and probably damaged his health a bit along the way. He would have aged in this process. This period I'm talking about from 1975 to 1990 was a time of great stress, enormous pressure to deliver, to get on top of policy to make sure that things happened as they should have happened. Very few people would have an appreciation of the contribution that he made, there would be very little appreciation of what his life was like (P. Tannock personal communication, April 7, 2005).

Freeman puts it another way, "You have contributed beyond the call of duty and you have suffered in more ways than physically because of your generosity" (M. Freeman, personal communication, December 1, 1993). Those who worked closely with John Williams knew of his capacity for hard work, a capacity that was maintained during his entire appointment in Catholic Education. Tannock acknowledges this when he said,

In the 1970s and 1980s, a twelve to fifteen year period, where the system was largely laicised, restructured and reformulated, with a new set of systems, processes and policies. He (John Williams) was very much at the heart of it....a very big milestone in the history of Catholic education was its metamorphosis over that 15 year period. By 1985 it was transformed. He was right at the heart of that, he worked very hard and nearly killed himself. To make these things happen you've got to have passion and you've got to be relentless. There is no peace, you just have to keep pushing it, and near enough is never good enough. He has all those qualities, a special bloke, John (P. Tannock, personal communication, April 7, 2005).

Travel was such a feature of John Williams' work at the national level that he sought to maintain his output in Tasmania through working each Saturday, with parish commitments overtaking Sundays. A full day at the office on a Saturday was eventually reduced to the morning only, as John Williams began entertaining other priests at Saturday lunch. An open invitation was extended to priests in greater Hobart. This provided some much needed recreation and while meal preparation for ten plus guests each week could have been perceived as a burden, John Williams enjoyed the process, all the while advancing his culinary skills. The lunch was an important connection with his brother priests and was a key ingredient in him maintaining the links with those in parish ministries. His capacity for prolonged commitment to task, a result of his personal disposition of self-discipline, was also revealed in loyalty to task, to people and to the cause of Catholic education.

It could be argued that John Williams was ambitious, and in the best sense, he always wanted to achieve according to his skill and knowledge level. He did not seek wealth, an unlikely outcome for a priest, but he did seek respect, knowing that respect would only come through what he was able to contribute, not his position within the Church. As Tannock noted,

Be they ministers or prime ministers or premiers they won't be brow beaten by the alleged strength or influence of the church....and I think these people (Fr Frank Martin, Fr Tom Doyle and Fr John Williams) were very good at presenting that. They

were balanced, decent people (P.Tannock, personal communication, 7April, 2005).

Even John Williams' natural shyness did not inhibit his actions. His capacity to listen and learn may well have been sharpened through his reticence to be the centre of attention, however, when he has been on public platforms, this characteristic was not present, because he had learnt that thorough preparation allowed him to contribute in the public domain. His priestly duties required the delivery of weekly homilies, a habit practiced for half a century. John Williams' capacity to read, reflect and prepare his thoughts gave him confidence on the public platform, even when he was under attack. He knew his material. As a parish priest, he used the same method to prepare his homilies, which were crafted following reading and reflection and delivered, "...not in an overwritten way. You could sit and reflect on his homilies, there was something solid about what he presented. They were not over-simplistic, but rigorous and he expected people to rise to his level" (A. Morton, personal communication, 12 July 2013).

One approach that became his own was his habit of 'night time musings,' a self-coined term that describes rough notes, usually prepared at night, and made in preparation for an interview, a meeting, as a means of venting feeling, or a retrospective reflection. An example of the latter pertains to the work for funding for Catholic schools, providing an insight into his thought processes, with not a hint of hubris.

*My greatest error was to align myself and the system to the 'protection' of the elite Catholic schools - our strategy should have been much more closely honed - to the schools for the ordinary people.*

- we fought as strongly for the Xavier's (Jesuit Boy's College in Melbourne) and the other rich Catholic schools as we did for St Furseus at Zeehan. (Situated on the west coast of Tasmania, and at the time, the smallest Catholic school in the State). We missed the essence of the fight!!*
- It is quite extraordinary that we won the*

*fight for the poor!!*

- *We missed the real issue - so why did we win?*
  - i. *Because half of our time was a fight with the rich - the LCP (Liberal Country Party)*
  - ii. *The other half was with the poor - ALP (Australian Labor Party)*

*Perhaps they became as confused as we were?*

*I believe that the Tom Doyle's, Alan Druery's and John Williams' knew this - and perhaps that is why we won!!*

*Our greatest error was that we allowed those whose aim was to protect "rich" catholic schools to be aligned with us who wanted to protect the poor (as well!!)*

*We were distracted and hampered by the protagonists for the rich Catholic schools.*

*They had no concept of the stress of parents providing 'fees' at \$2.00 per week!!*

*The achievement of the "State-Aid" fight is not that Xavier and others still exist but that there are still small Catholic primary schools in Queenstown and Rosebery in Tas.!! (both small mining towns on the west coast of Tasmania).*

*At the end - the mistake of the official "Church" was to protect the rich and forget the poor!!*

*I hope that this may be one of the reasons why so many (Church hierarchy) didn't quite trust me - I was for the ordinary people!!*

*Perhaps the most hurtful thing is that most had no understanding of the real issue of the fight - the schools of the "ordinary people" had to be funded and if they were not funded no "government" money would go to the rich - and "so what"? (J. Williams, Night-time Musings, n.d.)*

This account reveals not only a style of reflection, but themes that are deep within John Williams' life, including his loyalty to the Church and his commitment to educational justice for the poor. He did not take his disagreements with Church hierarchy into the public domain. Tannock expanded on the tension for John Williams and others against the

## Church hierarchy over the funding of Catholic schools.

There was a tension in John Williams' relationship with the church over public policy on education. While that was inevitable because of the tensions in the Church over public policy, John was right in the middle of those controversies. There was a huge argument going on in the 1970s and indeed the 1980s, but particularly the 1970s over the basis for funding for Catholic schools and indeed non-government schools...one side of the argument people were saying: non- government schools are not entitled to any money at all. However, and this was the Whitlam argument, it's clear that there are many, many children in non-government schools, especially Catholic schools, that have great needs, therefore it is necessary for federal and state, but especially the federal government, to provide resources to ensure children in need are looked after. However, government has no obligation to support those who have no need, because their schools were already operating at a very high resource level.

On the other side of the spectrum were those who were arguing...with the Catholic bishops at the core of it, saying that every child has needs, and every child has rights and there is an intrinsic right to public funding for education, wherever you go to school, whatever your circumstances. The tension between those two arguments was very much swirling around the church in the early 1970s and John was in that. Some of the bishops were deeply suspicious...of Labor's bona fides...some of them saw its (Labor's) conversion to state aid as a convenience.

John got caught up in all that stuff.... I think overall, he handled it very well. He had to, in practical terms, engage with government, and come up with solutions that were acceptable, and he did. But he took some flack along the way....He certainly retained his integrity....There were plenty of times they (John Williams and Tom Doyle) were frustrated by the position that bishops had taken on this issue or that, that often happened and that's as it should be...what I never heard them do was be public critics of the Church, and I think they both understood, very, very carefully that was important...each in their own way, at various times, would have had cause to be disappointed with positions bishops had taken, or positions others in the church had taken, that they found difficult to accommodate or relate to. These people followed what I regarded as an immensely important loyalty principle. They dealt with these issues internally, not externally. And in a way, that's one reason they were so effective (P. Tannock, personal communication, 7April 2005).

One of the themes within Tannock's comments is John Williams as a 'Church man'. He kept his disagreements with the Church within the Church. His abiding characteristic for loyalty has enabled him to be true to

the community. This is demonstrated in the relationships with his own family, remaining part of their lives, now to the third generation after his. He possesses this same loyalty for his brother priests and to the collegiality of the presbyterate. This is not to say that he has not experienced personal frustration at decisions that are taken or what he would perceive as the unwise or misguided actions of others. Nevertheless, a profound love exists for the totality of the group. The same could be said for his attitude to the parish communities of which he has been a part, as well the Tasmanian Catholic Principals, and the National Catholic Education Commission. Astute in his assessment of people and events, there were times when his personal preference would have been other than the course chosen by others nevertheless, he maintained an attitude that embraced a deeper *raison d'être*. Preaching at a Mass to mark the leaving of the Principal of Mount Carmel College, Sandy Bay, John Williams said,

Why is she such a person who has influenced and helped so many to survive, to live, to grow, to enjoy, to love? I believe because she is a woman of faith. She believes that her God loves her and she responds as He does by loving those about her (Williams, 1997)

The same sentiment could be applied to John Williams himself and it is this 'hexis' of faith that has formed his worldview. If faith is the driving characteristic, it has been nourished through a habit of prayer that assisted him to develop a reflective disposition. For a small child, prayer is nurtured through saying prayers. Within the Catholic tradition there is a considerable anthology of prayers, many learnt by heart and prayed privately, or with the family, or during the celebration of the Mass and other liturgies, and in John Williams' case, at school. During secondary school he was a member of the Young Christian Students, a group who followed a method "See, Judge and Act", as a Christian way of responding to others. This may have been John Williams' first conscious experience of reflective practice. Students in the YCS would reflect on a passage of the Gospel, and then seek to respond to a need in their daily life, in a way that reflected what had been discussed about the Gospel passage. Many groups,

not just religious groups, use this method as a means of reflective practice, even in workplaces and personal situations. During his eight years at the seminary the acquisition of the habit of communal and private prayer was cultivated, as it is regarded as essential for spiritual nourishment, within priestly life. Over time, an emphasis developed on prayerfulness as well as saying prayers. By this I mean that attitude of heart and mind that is open to God, others and the whole of creation, providing an avenue to reflect on what is happening in one's life, and, through prayerful reflection, to more finely attune both attitude and practise to be in alignment with a gospel way of life.

Inherent in John Williams work for justice was a profound sense of personal justice, and this took many forms. On one occasion he had a meeting with Malcolm Fraser, who at the time was Opposition Leader in the Federal Parliament. Fraser was a very tall man, well over six feet. John Williams, at five foot six inches, is moderate in height. One of Fraser's ploys to intimidate was to stand over the person with whom he was meeting. This he attempted on this occasion with John Williams. For his part, John Williams kept moving around the room as Fraser approached him, keeping a distance that allowed him to maintain eye contact. Eventually Fraser gave up, inviting John Williams to take a seat as he moved to sit behind his desk. Such forms of intimidation would have been a game for Fraser, but one that John Williams understood and railed against.

Aristotle saw a place for anger in one's life, "The person who gets angry at the things and with whom he ought, then, and, further, in the way, when, and for as much time as he ought, is praised" (NE 1125b31-33). Peter Tannock thought John Williams was drawn to anger on occasions, sometimes because he found it difficult to suffer fools. But Tannock said, "often he wasn't dealing with fools when he showed the short fuse" (P. Tannock, personal communication 7 April, 2005). When you speak of a person becoming angry it is often aligned to a personal deficit. Both as an administrator and later as a parish priest John Williams displayed gentleness with others and it is gentleness that Aristotle cites as the mean

with respect to anger. Nonetheless, John Williams is capable of anger with people, and in situations, where he believes others are acting in a way contrary to what he believes is right, or in ways that would undermine a level playing field. His sense of fairness is acutely tuned. Aristotle tells us “what produces anger is manifold and varied” (NE 1125b30). In John Williams’ case the ability to control his anger so that it was only manifest when appropriate is a reflection of virtuous behaviour. While he has been known to be curt with individuals who promote ideas not well thought through, it is the case that even those some find difficult to suffer, find kindness when meeting John Williams.

There are a number of positive outcomes from a habit such as prayer but two, in particular, reveal dispositions characteristic of John Williams. The first is that he approaches people and situations with the belief that those, with whom he is working or negotiating, are sincere in their contribution. This was evidenced especially in his dealings with government bureaucrats and education system representatives. The second disposition that stems from this reflective ability is the capacity to examine issues, so that principles relate to action. While this is an act of the practical intellect, it would have been nurtured through prayerful consideration of matters.

As a participant at a Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Conference at St Cuthbert’s School, Lindisfarne, during the debate around the restructuring of secondary education in Southern Tasmania witnessed a lady verbally attack John Williams as he walked from the street to the conference building. She was among a number of people protesting the proposed changes. The majority of protestors were content to make their point via the messages on banners they held, however this lady was violent in her actions, and feelings were running high. Others entering the building, and perhaps even some of the protestors, were shocked by the vehemence of the attack on a respected priest. John Williams did not respond to the protestor, working out very quickly that any response could have turned the situation into something more ugly. An aspect of charity was also present in this response. Carrick (1993) touches

on some of these characteristics in the following letter, noting particularly the synergy between John Williams' intellect, personal style and Christian beliefs.

During my time as Commonwealth Minister for Education (1975-79), I had close contact with Father Williams and came to know and respect his skills and dedication as Director of Catholic Education.

His was no easy task. The challenge to achieve social justice in the funding of non-government schools has been a heavy one, indeed, one with which I have happily been associated over four decades and still remain so.

John Williams combined an attractive personality with a keen intellect, and a quiet persistence which signalled his sincerity and Christian devotion (J. Carrick, personal communication, 3 November, 1993).

The final characteristic, *hexis*, I examine is John Williams' disposition for learning. This deeply held characteristic has been significant in forming his life narrative. It is a characteristic that found its way into his life, like the natural flow of blood through a person's veins, always present, not an action consciously acknowledged. The encouragement to seek answers, and use knowledge, that was present in John Williams' life, reflects the family influence that was particularly evident in Bridget Mackey, and to a lesser degree, in her husband Michael. Both were voracious readers with their own library, Bridget used her abilities to assist those whose educational opportunities were limited. Her son Frank continued this tradition in the Bangor district. Four of Bridget and Michael's daughters became teachers, a quite extraordinary move into the professions for a country family at that time in Australian history. William Williams, on the other hand, experienced limited formal education, but he had a thirst for knowledge, satisfied in the first instance through the facts contained in his set of encyclopaedia. It could be argued that this thirst for knowledge was aligned to ambition, to make something better of life, also a valid intention, but the thirst for knowledge is, I would argue, something deeper, something aside from ambition, a thirst that is fundamentally for its own sake. William Williams recognised the value

of education and ensured all his children had the opportunity of secondary education, again at a time when this was not the norm in Australia.

John Williams was always asking 'why'. He would use syllogism to arrive at particular conclusions. Most famous in the family folklore is the story about him as a small child, adding wheat to the petrol tank in his uncle Frank Mackey's car. He incorrectly deduced that wheat, as a food source, would be as beneficial for a machine as it was for animals and people. The story has it that wheat was still being extracted from the petrol tank when the car came to the end of its life (M. Freeman, H. Johnston, J. Williams, personal communication, April 16, 2009). Jack and Edie Williams were readers, and a love of reading was fostered in the Henty Street home. They read to their children, and in turn Mary and Helen read to John and Edith and John read to Robert. John Williams had every opportunity to answer his many 'why' questions. The search of answers to his questions was encouraged at home and it married well with his desire to thrive at school. He became conscious of his own intellectual gifts once at St Patrick's College, where competition existed, especially in academic pursuits. However it was not just academic excellence that was a driver at this time, it was an intellectual keenness, and a genuine interest in learning. The fact that John Williams' intellectual capacity made learning easier was an advantage that fostered the pursuit of excellence.

Following ordination, the opportunity to attend university was a privilege not afforded every priest, and not one sought by every priest and John Williams was fortunate to have had others to advocate on his behalf. His taciturn nature would have been a disadvantage, when those who are offered opportunities are most often those who have been noticed. Fellow priest, Philip Green, paints the picture of John Williams' appointment to the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau and the beginning of university studies.

When I mentioned it to Gilly (Archbishop Guilford Young) he said, "John Williams, no, no, no, no." Kilby had suggested that he go up to the Uni and do a course. "Oh, no I don't think so", said Gilly. I said, "He did very well at the seminary, academically".

“Did he?” and then proceeded to get out his file and went through his record. It was this ‘shy business’ that was worrying Gilly. When he read through and refreshed himself with John’s results, “Ohh”. So I said, “he’d get over that, he’s got the intellectual ability and this is a good chance, he’s wasted up there.” So all credit to Gilly, because his initial reaction was this lack of an outgoing nature in John, which was the sort of thing that fellow students in the seminary would have seen in the early days. And the rest is history (P. Green, personal communication, 15 June, 2005).

John Williams understood the power of learning, he knew that it had enabled him to mature in a particular way and his work in Catholic education was directed to providing opportunities for students in all systems, but most particularly those in Catholic schools. His fight for equity was never confined to the public funding of Catholic schools, but where and how the Church provided for Catholic schooling, with his work focussed on quality schooling. It was this principle that propelled him to establish Catholic schools in state housing areas, characteristically perceived as areas of disadvantage. He knew education was the key to providing upward mobility for the students in these schools. He knew this, too, as a Commonwealth Schools Commissioner, visiting Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. It was John Williams’ own love of learning, coupled with his sense of justice, which impelled him in this direction, bringing to life this *hexis* within him.

**Faith** | *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen* (Hebrews 11:1).

A number of questions about intellect, *hexis*, (characteristics) and faith are central to understanding the progression to becoming virtuous. Central to John Williams, as a person, is the part faith plays in his life. The answers to the following questions help bring together the many faith strands that run through this narrative. Of particular interest, is the role he assumed in education, which became for him an authentic expression of priesthood. An authentic faith commitment finds expression in the manner of relationships, so the design of these questions aims to explore this central life

force that defines John Williams as a person. These questions explore the third element that I suggest is essential in the inquiry into this lived experience of becoming virtuous. The questions are as follows.

1. How did John Williams' experience of other people impact on his personal faith development?
2. John Williams willingly accepted to work in education for twenty- four years, a role that many saw as being outside that of a priest. What did this work have to do with priesthood?
3. Priesthood is a public faith declaration. How has his life revealed his faith?

Delivering the opening address at the 1991 conference for the Catholic Principals Association of Tasmania, John Williams quoted from an address given by Bishop Kenneth Untener to a conference of Priests' Councils held in Florida in April of that same year. He said

Wisdom means not only knowing the truth, but also knowing how to use it to achieve good...it is never enough to be right. You have to know how to use the truth. Beware of the unloving prophet.

John Williams went on to say,

I was attracted (to this article) because in a real sense I, and all priests are 'professional' prophets. We are called by our ordination to interpret the events of our world today in the light of being Christian. One of the mistakes that we priests can make, is that we confine our prophecy to areas which can clearly be said to be 'Church.' It is a temptation, which is strongly supported by a wide section of the community, which doesn't want Church people to challenge their ideas. One recent example of this is the reaction of the Prime Minister and the Liberal and National Parties to the document produced by the National Catholic Welfare Committee on 'consumption'. In this case the Church has been told to mind their own business - to keep out of politics. The politicians seem to be saying, "You may be prophetic about God but don't confuse him with people" (1991).

This reflection is particularly pertinent in the light of John Williams' life work that was largely outside what some would consider the role of a priest.

Both the Williams and Mackey families provided John Williams with experiences that impacted on his personal faith development, experiences that were different. From the Williams family he learnt that loyalty to each other was more important than accepted religious norms. In the 1940s in many Catholic families there were examples of ostracism of family members, who did not 'practice the faith.' In the Williams clan, John had an uncle who was married for a brief period during the Second World War. Following their divorce this uncle eventually married a second time, but not in the Catholic Church. In John Williams' experience this meant no change in the relationship the family enjoyed with his uncle. The fact that the family patriarch, William Williams was not a Catholic influenced this openness to religion. It was a valuable lesson in non-judgment for John Williams at a very early age, a lesson that remains with him and permeates his pastoral care practice.

The Mackey family were strong Catholics. Edie's sister Irene was a religious and knowing the sisters and priests in the parish gave John, even as a young child, the chance to see religious in a human light. As an altar server in the parish and a student in Catholic schools he experienced both strength and frailty in clergy and religious.

Jack and Edith Williams, through work for the St Vincent de Paul and Catholic Women's League, taught their son that faith without action is hollow. Edith's death confirmed that faith would not protect them from tragedy, but it would assist them to again live normal lives. John Williams reflected on this topic of suffering during *Evening Meditation*, broadcast on ABC Radio in 1967.

We see within us and about us the frightening presence of suffering and death. Such has always been the situation of man. Left to his own resources, man finds it impossible to fathom the meaning of this mystery....only faith can save us from despair. Peace, however, lies at the end of a long and difficult road. The man who knows suffering in his life ought not be surprised that he feels much closer to cursing God than to praising Him. However, he should at the same time believe with all his strength that God will help him one day, not only to understand the meaning of suffering, but also to accept his own personal suffering (J. Williams, 1967). (Appendix A)

As a young priest preparing these radio programs John Williams was able to draw on a faith that had been nurtured, a faith that had been challenged, and his own journey into suffering and death that brought an authenticity to his words. His faith was able to capture the human, not just appeal to the divine.

John Williams' faith developed in a way that drew him to priesthood. The seminary expanded his intellectual horizons and encouraged the habits of prayer and reflection that are necessary to be a faith person, to be a man of God. Green says, "He had a real love of the priesthood and part of that is the knowledge that you have to go out to others, to preach, and while he was reserved, he accepted that" (P. Green, personal communication, 15 June, 2005).

John Williams' relationship with Archbishop Guilford Young had a profound influence on him, both personally, and on his faith development. His position as Secretary to the Archbishop, as well as sharing the same home, meant their lives were entwined in a way not shared by other priests. He did not receive special treatment from Young, but they respected each other and were able to talk and work together. As a young priest John Williams was able to disagree with his Archbishop and Guilford listened to him. This relationship of respect and trust was grounded in the shared gift of priesthood.

John Williams willingly accepted a role in education that some perceived as being outside the role of a priest. But this was not the way John Williams understood his role. Priests were asked to exercise such roles because the Church judged that that was what was needed at the time. John Williams was presented with the opportunity to grow with the demands of the Church, and embracing this challenge was to define his priestly life for a significant proportion of his working life. Tannock observed, "this was the mission. My belief is that each of them (Williams, Doyle, Martin) would have seen this missionary engagement as highly consistent with their priestly vocation" (P.Tannock, personal communication, 7 April, 2005). When John Williams was appointed Director

of Catholic Education in Tasmania the majority of Catholic Education Offices around Australia were under the care of priests. It was a period in the Church before lay people had been empowered to assume leadership roles. Primary, secondary and tertiary institutions were owned and staffed by religious priests, brothers and sisters, with relatively few lay people employed. Well established in Australia was the practise of using priests to teach religious education, both in Catholic and government schools. The Second Vatican Council was certainly the foundation for new understandings, and amongst the broadening of thought that came from the Council, was a new visioning of the way priesthood could be exercised. This new grasp flowed first to the Catholic community, and then onto the wider public domain.

Government participation in the funding of non-government schools coincided with the realisation that Catholic schools needed to be systematized. What was required was a broader management of education, beyond a series of individually operated schools. The Bishops understood the urgent need to aggregate the schools into systems, and priests were the perfect choice as a conduit between the Bishops and the broader Catholic community. There were a number of skilled men amongst the priests. Many priests were managing big parishes and were responsible for both parochial schools and extensive building programs. There was an acceptance that a person could be priestly without being in a parish, as were priests who followed century old traditions of teaching in schools and universities, St Thomas Aquinas himself, a prime example.

John Williams saw his work as being on behalf of the whole of the diocese, bringing a particular understanding of why the Church was involved in education (J. Williams, personal communication, 8 July 2012). That period in the Australian Church is now at an end, while the appointment of priests to education was the right response at the time. There are now many lay people who are skilled in theology and management and education who have assumed the positions once held by priests. It was a process that only lasted for two generations. Not only did it happen, it

happened successfully. People saw these priest Directors as leaders who managed the systemization and laicisation of schools. Also during that period, the whole Church was being re-examined and renewed, and the catalyst for this was the Second Vatican Council. Just as it was learnt that it was appropriate to have lay people in senior management positions within the Diocese, it was legitimate for ordained priests to engage in activities other than parish pastoral work. In Tasmania when John Williams was Director of Catholic Education two priests had university lectureships, with another two, full-time in social work.

For John Williams' part he never worked in a way that diminished the fact that he was a priest, having appropriate relationships with people who did not know about priesthood. This is not to say that bigotry in its various forms was not encountered. Most confused by having to deal with a priest were people working within the government school sector. The question was often asked, "if your main professional training is in theology and philosophy, how can you know anything about schooling?" (J. Williams, personal communication, 9 July 2012). During that period of appointment to the Commonwealth Schools Commission and relationship with the Federal Education Department, there was always a 'wondering' about priests and religious. Tannock was clear in assessing the importance of the priests' role in Catholic education in Australia.

When I look at people like James Carroll, John Williams, Tom Doyle or Frank Martin, they were good priests. But they were very much engaged in the education business and the Church. I think each of them would have believed, correctly I believe, that Catholic education was critically important to the mission of the Church, and indeed for the survival of the Church as we know it in Australia, it was the linchpin of the mission of the Church in Australia, it's the point of contact (P. Tannock, personal communication, 7 April, 2005).

John Williams' very faithfulness to the education endeavour over so many years says much about him as a priest as well as an individual. He certainly enjoyed the intellectual stimulation of the people with whom he engaged, and he remained convinced about the importance of his

task. During his years as Director of Catholic Education he continued to share his own talents within the Archdiocese of Hobart, and list of committees of which he was a member, covers the broad scope of management within the church in Tasmania. The celebration of a parish mass each Sunday remained singularly important to him and is a sign of his priestly commitment. The following note touches on the reality of John Williams as priest.

What I admire most about you is your profound commitment to priesthood within the Church, especially within the Church of Hobart.... You are an exemplar of what priesthood is about. I thank you for your example. I honour your ceaseless generosity and am encouraged by the depth of your integrity....I don't believe you are perfect, not yet, any way. But I do believe you are a deeply committed priest...and in some ways that's more important than being perfect (M. Freeman, personal communication, 1 December 1993).

John Williams is in many ways a contradiction. I saw this demonstrated during a Mass of Christian Burial that I attended in his parish church at Lindisfarne. Bill Lawler, for whom we had gathered, was a long-standing parishioner, a generous parish worker, volunteering significant time to maintenance programs and book-keeping. During John Williams' appointment to the parish at Lindisfarne, he had come to both admire Bill, and value his friendship. Delivery the eulogy his voice reflected the deep emotion of the moment. The tough stand he would take with others when he was conducting the business of Catholic education was a long way from the gentleness he demonstrated as a pastor. In some respects, John Williams the administrator and negotiator called forth other aspects of John Williams, the priest. To celebrate the funeral of a parishioner was no easy task for him, though never hesitating in his priestly duties, the execution of these duties took their own toll. Some in John Williams' own family would see his shyness as a family characteristic, shared by other family members. This may well be the source of the contradiction. In some instances the celebrant at a funeral or other public church activity may well confine their comments to church belief or a reflection on the scriptures. However, John Williams does not resile from

some revelation of himself, with his very demeanour adding to the disclosure. It is a question of integrity. Even though it is difficult, and the passage of the years does not make it any easier, he believes it essential for such an occasion to reveal the person. In so doing he reveals himself. As the years have passed, his depth of feeling has become more evident.

Guilford Young, who knew John Williams so well, could not understand this aspect of his personality. I would propose that his deep love of people, that drew him to priesthood, is at the heart of his response in the most human of situations.

There have been three major transitions in John Williams' priestly life, the first the move from parish work in Devonport to the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau and then to the Catholic Education Office, a combined period of some twenty-seven years. The next major transition was the move from the Catholic Education Office back to Parish work, for another eighteen years, and then the most recent transition, into retirement.

When John Williams moved back into parish work, he had some concerns about the new relationship with people, having been away from pastoral work for so long. He believed the parishioners of Lindisfarne, the parish to which he was appointed, also shared his apprehension. They were not sure of this 'manager' being able to make the adjustment to being a pastor. What they had to learn was that his pastoral antenna had continued to be finely tuned over the previous twenty-four years in the hard-nosed world of the political cut and thrust. As this move was made, others had the opportunity to reflect on his contribution as a priest director. The following note says something about the integrity with which he lived these dual roles.

I honour him for his personal qualities of intelligence, integrity, justice and compassion, which I have seen him bring to his deliberations. I compliment him for his contemporary vision of education and for his understanding of the needs of children and families, especially as their world changes around them. I salute him for his priestly charity, for his loyalty and love for the Church and his willingness to endure despite many hardships. And, I congratulate him for his wise, astute and skilled

leadership as Director and the recognition many of us enjoyed because of the esteem with which he is held within and beyond Tasmania. But a human being he still is and like us all suffers from some imperfections. At another time I may be able to recall a few! (E. Riley, personal communication, 22 November 1993)

You have made a most significant contribution to the growth of Catholic schooling during the past quarter century. Your part in the story of Australian Catholic schools is, indeed, a distinguished one. At diocesan, state and national levels, you have played a major role in development (and coming of age) of Catholic schools (K. Canavan, personal communication 3 December 1993).

Priesthood is a public faith declaration and John Williams is proud to be a priest. As a child and then a young man, priesthood was a very desirable life that was accorded respect within the community. Now, fifty-one years after ordination, the level of community respect for the priesthood has diminished significantly. This is the result of a number of factors, most noteworthy being the marked decline in religious practice across all denominations, including other non-Christian religions. Clergy abuse of minors has considerably damaged trust between countless people and priests. John Williams himself has not experienced any negative response, but he remains conscious of the effect that this abuse of trust has had on many individuals, and on clergy generally (J. Williams, personal communication, 9 July, 2012). Priests now have to be courageous in their words and actions, as an ever-growing cynicism surrounds them.

Perhaps the most telling characteristic of John Williams' faith is his outlook on life. He views life from a faith stance. This is not to say that he is blind to life's realities, but his attitude is grounded in gospel values. It is the love and commitment to service of others that, for John Williams, is the most authentic sign of his personal relationship with God. He has the capacity to forgive, to be gentle, to take people as they are, even when he does not share their values or belief system. His commitment to justice, and his keen sense of the dignity of others, is strong within him. One could argue that these are the characteristics of a good humanist, and that is so. However, it is what provides the impetus for these characteristics that ensures the difference. For John Williams, belief in God provides the

punctuation point that is the keystone for his life. He had the natural skills and intellectual capacity to achieve in the commercial world, with many years spent working with people who commanded ample salaries. John Williams' commitment to priesthood meant foregoing such rewards. Without faith, his life would not have been sustainable.

### **Conclusion | *Unfolding understandings of becoming virtuous***

So what is virtue? What might it mean to become virtuous?

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* are the foundational texts upon which I sought to build an understanding of virtue and tease out the necessary elements that must be present in order that a person is able to be virtuous.

In designing an approach to use it was imperative that the inquiry was grounded in such a way that the mode employed could be applied across a range of fields of inquiry. I have a steadfast conviction in the power of narrative. MacIntyre (2007) says of narrative "It is because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives that we live out that the form of the narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others" (p.212). He further submits the hypothesis that the use of story becomes a resource in the search for truth (p.216).

In designing questions to interrogate John Williams' narrative, I purposely included elements that stood at the heart of his life experience. Most obvious is the section relating to faith.

Significantly, it has been the coalescence of grasping the building blocks of the essential elements of becoming virtuous, with one person's lived experience that has brought an understanding to my original question. This approach has proved rich and is certainly one that could be applied to any narrative.

New understandings were present across all areas of inquiry. Concerning the fundamental building blocks to virtue, intellect/reason,

character/*hexis*, and faith, emerged as essential. In John Williams' narrative faith was of a religious expression. In another narrative faith may well be described as some other form of 'meaning giving' appearance.

Virtue is more than the acquisition of values, be they moral or spiritual. In Aristotle's thinking virtue is not only about morality, what we might describe as doing the right thing. Central to his thinking is that all actions must aim at a good. He asks the question: "What is the good for man?" (NE 1097a15) Both Aristotle and Aquinas propose happiness as the goal to which people aspire and the key to happiness is the acquisition and utilisation of virtues, both intellectual and moral. In coming to understand the nature of virtue I have identified three elements that I believe are essential. The first element is intellect. The intellectual virtues, wisdom, *sophia*, scientific knowledge, *epistēmē*, intuitive understanding, *nous*, prudence, *phronēsis*, and skill, *technē*, are developed over a lifetime, culminating in the gift of wisdom. Wisdom is not acquired in isolation from the other intellectual virtues, rather because of them.

It is through intellect that a person has the means to grasp, nurture and use these virtues. Examples provided in the narrative demonstrate the importance of intellect to grasp the truths that guide our personal and communal lives. As well, a developed intellect guides self-reflection, a necessary attribute to enable a person to maintain seriousness of purpose and understanding. As a person acquires virtue the élan that enables this acquisition is something deep within. A level of natural cerebral giftedness is a key factor in assisting the evolution of *hexis*, that part of character that is continually at work. A person's character is not just the result of nature or nurture, but rather what each individual takes hold of in that quest to truly become the best person they can be.

Aristotle believed that intellectual virtues could be cultivated and encouraged by education, whereas training in habit was the key to acquiring moral virtues. He did not believe that the moral virtues were formed in us by nature. "...since nothing that what it is by nature can be made to behave differently by habituation" (NE 1103a20). Aristotle's five

intellectual virtues can be organised into the three categories of theoretical, practical and productive. In the group of intellectual virtues regarded as theoretical he includes *sophia*. *Sophia* could readily be described as philosophical wisdom that includes eternal truths. The capacity to use intellect to take hold of truths is key to understanding what behaviour would lead to genuine happiness. The use of reason to give practical expression to those eternal truths is moral virtue at work. Annas (2013) suggests, “practical reasoning has been developed as part of the development of a disposition to act” (p.28). I would call it ‘intelligent action’. For a person performing any action, then, knowing why those actions are performed, is basic to identifying behaviour as virtuous. Annas (2013) continues

The reasons have left their effect on the person’s disposition, so that the virtuous response is an intelligent one while also being immediate and not one which the person needs to consciously figure out (p.30).

Character, *hexis*, might be described as the calibre of a person; those qualities that bestow a stamp on who we are as individuals. Calibre has its etymology in the Greek word, *kalapous* meaning “shoemaker’s last”, from the Arabic *kalib*, meaning, “mould”. When used, the shoemaker’s last ensures that the shoemaker replicates the same size of shoe, even if the fabric, style or stitching is varied. Both Aristotle and Aquinas believed that personal character developed through the good deeds that were practised in an habitual way. To be courageous one has to do courageous things. One learns to be just by acting justly. The exercise of charity depends on many charitable acts, and the most lasting way to learn of such virtuous behaviours is through direct teaching and the example of those who most influence: parents, family, educators and others who provide positive and lasting influence on a person’s life. Through the exercise of good habits a person develops the capacity to acquire moral virtues. Yet, merely replicating the way others act cannot be called virtuous behaviour, good actions must emanate from deep within the individual, thus establishing their own *hexis*.

Reflection on action allows each individual to respond in a different way to each situation. In this way the actions of those who have most influenced us are not exactly replicated. Actions are characterised by the *hexis* of the individual, and because of this, each life experience is different.

The analogy of the “mould” could easily be applied to a number of influences in a child’s development. Key amongst these is family, both immediate and extended. Each person carries with them those characteristics that are embedded through nature and childhood nurturing. While there are countless examples of children who have risen beyond difficult and deprived family circumstances, this does not negate the formative power of family influence. In most cases where children have suffered deprivation in childhood, some deficit will be replicated in the next generation. This communication of influence is deeply grounded in the human psyche and in the normal intercourse of life is only acknowledged intermittently. In some circumstances there are those who experience difficulty articulating their beliefs, nonetheless they are evidenced in behaviour patterns. As evidenced in John Williams’ narrative, his parents articulated deeply held beliefs and the likelihood of transference was increased. The naming of desired virtues brings with it decisions concerning actions that support transference, for example the style and type of education chosen for a child, whether religious practice features in a child’s life and how the family relates to the community. A family who is totally focussed on the nuclear unit may fail to develop some of the virtues of which Aristotle speaks that relate particularly to the way citizens interact to the community. These include liberality, magnificence, friendliness, wittiness and tact, and most importantly, justice.

Influence beyond the family, if aligned with family beliefs, becomes another powerful means by which an individual is moulded. If influences beyond the home are in conflict with what has been experienced, a child is then placed in a situation of moving towards the most powerful of those drivers.

Religious belief and practice are equally powerful influences in a

child's development, made even more efficacious if a child can understand the synergy between what is stated and what is then experienced in action. For example, if a child is taught of a forgiving God, and then fails to experience forgiveness from others, the religious message assumes an insubstantial place within that child's belief system. It is most often through a lack of synergy between message and action that both children and adults alike extricate themselves from particular belief systems. Where there is an alignment of message, and its expression, the influence of religious practice on forming disposition to action, is significant. The lived experience interrogated in this inquiry demonstrates the power of this alignment.

The interplay of intellect, *hexis* and faith as necessary to underpin the lived experience of becoming virtuous is summarised in John Williams' own words.

I never doubted that my parents loved me. To emulate their behaviour occurred naturally. Both my parents were intelligent and were always ready to assist me. They never made learning seem unimportant. We'd talk about how to live, not necessarily about faith, but I eventually understood the connection between faith and life. That's why I have faith. In time, I worked out for myself that this was the best way to live (J. Williams, personal communication, 15 March 2013).

## Epilogue

*Why I am who I am now.*

*Because I spent most of my "real" working life away from the Church. Not because I lived away from the Church but because my unity/deep involvement with the Church demanded that I offered Church understanding, knowledge, compassion to so many non-believers who were politicians. I believe that my "Christian-ness" brought many of them to an understanding and accepting of the position of Catholics in Australia.*

*Often my task was to convince non-Catholic politicians that I/we were fair-dinkum about educational development in Australia.*

*I think I was a middleman, and perhaps that is why some think I stand aside from Church and often think I stand aside from political parties!! Neither is true.*

*I think I spent the most productive years of my life contributing to drawing together the wisdom of elected politicians and the wisdom of Australian educators (both Government and Non-Government) to some understanding of the need to complement one another.*

*I think we have moved a long way but our present educational situation may push us towards confrontation rather than cooperation.*

*I learned to work with people who had a very different idea of what was the best*

'schooling situation' for young Australians.  
Between us we moved to a new idea of what  
that should be. We all learned that not only  
that change was possible, but it also required  
movement from both sides, and that when it  
came we would almost certainly have better  
school education.

(J. Williams, *Night -Time Musings*. n.d.)



*Satis*

*It is enough*

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## APPENDICES

**Appendix A: Radio Broadcast *Evening Meditation* Australian  
Broadcast Corporation December 1967 written  
and presented by John Williams**

- A-1                      Talk No 1. 18 December 1967
- A-2                      Talk No 2. 19 December 1967
- A-3                      Talk No 3. 20 December 1967
- A-4                      Talk No 4. 21 December 1967
- A-5                      Talk No 5. 22 December 1967
- A-6                      Talk No 6. 23 December 1967

**APPENDIX A-1**  
**Evening Meditation**

Talk No.1

Monday, 18 December 1967

All too often man becomes the plaything of his circumstances because he no longer has any leisure time, or rather, he doesn't know how to provide himself with the leisure he needs to stop for a moment and take a good look at himself. He hasn't the time to become aware of himself as a person. Having resigned himself to this situation, modern man no longer even dares to recollect himself because he would have to face up to his responsibilities, and these frighten him. Running about wildly gives us the impression that we are still alive and useful. In point of fact we may be walking around in a daze. Man can become out of touch with himself and reduce his life to one of mere instinct. Hence, we as modern people can become unworthy of the name - man.

If we always drive our car too fast we will eventually ruin the motor. If we always drive ourselves too fast our physical and mental forces will eventually begin to flag. Because we are always on the run we never meet anyone anymore - not even ourselves. If you really want to get to know yourself again you must be prepared to stop for a moment. If you eat on the run you can't digest your food - you need to stop and relax. So too if you think on the run you will make a bad job of it, once again stop and relax.

The teacher who is discouraged with the progress of his class feels like giving up. The housewife who has neglected her home for some time can't bring herself to begin the work. The person who has lost contact with himself hates the prospect of what he might find if he looks inside again. It's like what happens if we fail to visit a friend for a long period - we keep away even longer because we fear being reproached.

You say that you haven't time to stop. Be honest with yourself, there are empty moments in every day. Don't hurry to fill them with noise, or the newspaper, or conversation. When you are on the bus, stop your

daydreaming and think about yourself.

A swimmer must raise his head from the water to take in a breath. You must stop your car at the service station to get petrol. We must stop to give ourselves the opportunity to refuel. When we stop it is so that we can take stock of ourselves, so that we can gather our forces together, put some order into our activity and give ourselves new purpose. Unless we stop for a moment we will never really get to know ourselves. Once you do know yourself you are already on the way to giving your best.

You will never come to full self-knowledge unless you see yourself as God sees you. We can only act effectively when we are acting in union with God. When you stop for a moment make contact with God as well as with yourself.

Throughout the day make use of all those moments you have - and they are many. God is there and he is waiting to help you in your reflection so that you can live your life to the full.

Goodnight and God bless you.

**APPENDIX A-2**  
**Evening Meditation**

Talk No.2

Tuesday, 19 December 1967

We see about us the frightening presence of suffering and death. Such has always been the situation of man. Left to his own resources, man finds it impossible to fathom the meaning of this mystery. Only the Christian faith provides man with the key to understanding it, and thus only this faith can save us from despair. Peace, however, lies at the end of a long and difficult road. The man who knows suffering in his life ought not be surprised that he feels much closer to cursing God than praising Him. However, he should at the same time believe with all his strength that God will help him one day, not only to understand the meaning of suffering, but also to accept his own personal suffering. In this way he will make suffering serve not only the interests of his own salvation but that of the whole world.

Why does the sea savagely devastate miles of coast? Why does the radio-activity see free by man have to destroy the lives of other men? Why does man's body corrupt? Why are our hearts beset by suffering just as our bodies are? What causes man's inhumanity to man?

If your car is not working properly, you naturally conclude that something is wrong with the engine. A car engine is built to a specific design, and if you put extraneous parts into it, you will either decrease its efficiency or stop it altogether. Man, through sin, introduced disorder into the plan of God. With this disorder came suffering and death. It is not owing to a decree of God that man suffers and dies, it is owing to our freedom.

Could God, then, have prevented man from sinning? Certainly He could have done this by taking away our freedom. But does a teacher show love for his pupils by telling the answers to problems lest they make a mistake? Or does a mother show her love for her baby by refusing to teach

him to walk, in case they fall over? Does a father show love for his son by forbidding him to go out, for fear that he will get into trouble. Would God have shown His love for man by taking away the possibility of a life of love freely chosen? When you love a person you don't take away his freedom so as to prevent his falling into evil, but rather you are willing to run the risk of error, of failure and of suffering.

God could not possibly have found pleasure in man's sin which is fundamentally a denial of God's love. Just as God does not find pleasure in suffering which is a consequence of this sin. Since suffering is not part of God's plan for us, we should never merely resign ourselves to it. We must do everything in our power to fight against it. We can prevent physical suffering by the use of medicine, hygiene, diet. We can help prevent suffering in other families by our charity. We can prevent some of the suffering coming to us from nature by our scientific research.

But we can never completely overcome this evil in our lives, therefore we must find a way to use suffering to our advantage.

Modern man makes increasingly extensive use of by-products. Even harmful waste products are now utilized for the good of man. We should try to make suffering - the by-product of sin - serve the interests of man's salvation. Ask Christ to show you how to make suffering, by the power of His love, the raw material of salvation.

Good-night and God bless you.

**APPENDIX A-3**  
**Evening Meditation**

Talk No.3

Wednesday, 20 December 1967

Each one of us wants to be happy. In fact, the history of the human race might well be considered as the story of a long and arduous quest for happiness. But happiness remains an elusive object. At the very moment that a man thinks that he has finally found it, he is able to measure its limitations, he sees it vanishing from its grasp, and he begins anew to look towards still further distant shores where he hopes happiness may be found. Man in his blindness seeks for happiness precisely where he is unable to find it; and so, finding himself checkmated at every turn, at long last he gives up and decides to abandon himself to the fleeting pleasures of the moment – or else, giving way to despair, he concludes that happiness is little more than a delusion. But true happiness does exist and you can experience it.

Your whole life is dedicated to the search for happiness, but you are like the runner who wants to win the race without knowing where the goal is. Stop for a moment and seek out the right goal.

We have all experienced pleasure and joy in our lives. Pleasure might be defined as happiness of the body, joy as happiness of the mind. Don't rest just content with pleasure – it will never fully satisfy you. If you feel unhappy it is because you are being torn apart by your hunger for pleasure, and the more you try to satisfy this hunger the unhappier you become. If you spend your life exclusively in the pursuit of pleasure, you are condemning yourself to endless dissatisfaction. The pleasure of the moment begins to wither almost as soon as it blossoms.

Joy, we said, was of the mind or spirit. Welcome it into your life and you will at the same time experience something of eternity. Your problems, trials, sufferings and even death should never be allowed to extinguish the joy of the spirit. Pleasure and suffering are incompatible companions but joy is able to transcend even the greatest of sufferings. We must realize,

of course, that pleasure is not wrong. Gratefully accept those pleasures which are the gift of God to help you on your way through life. But once you stop along the way to seek them out for yourself, your joy will evaporate into thin air.

The road that leads to happiness begins from you and radiates to others. You're unhappy? Why? Is it because no one has taken any notice of your work, your successes, your efforts? Is it because you have something to say and no one will listen? Is it because you feel unloved? Ask God to forgive you your melancholy and then turn your attention to others. Ask about their lives, listen to them, show some genuine interest in their work, admire their good points, take note of their accomplishments - and these others, without suspecting it, will free you from your own concerns and will hold out to you the gift of joy.

A conflict arises within each of us from the fact that our desires are infinite, whereas our ability to realize them is strictly limited. We must also realize that we can never be fully happy without God who alone can satisfy our infinite longing.

Good-night and God bless you.

**APPENDIX A-4**  
**Evening Meditation**

Talk No.4

Thursday, 21 December 1967

I am sure we have all experienced the frustration of waiting for some time for a bus or tram and then see it go past without picking us up because it is already full. But when we do have this experience do we ever stop, and quiet our annoyance, and think that maybe we are acting in a similar way towards those around us?

Constantly today we hear of the necessity for nations to establish contact with one another and most of us realize that this cannot be done unless individuals are prepared to do the same. Each of us have experienced in our own lives and in the lives of others this seeking for friendship. Some of us see this as a necessity, others a duty. Shouldn't we look on it as embracing both these ideas?

It is a necessity because not one of us can live our own lives to the full unless we establish relationships with those about us. Because of our modern means of travel and communication those about us include a wider and wider group of people.

We can see this as our duty when we remember that we have all been created by the one God – that we are all, in fact, brother and therefore we have some responsibility to each other.

We need to do more, though, than simply to realize the necessity of this contact. Each of us must make an effort to bring this facet of life into reality. We know that more than a mere acquaintance is necessary for true friendship. A man may have many contacts – with his drinking companions, his business associates, the other fellows at work – and yet not have a true friend in the world. What then is required of us?

Firstly, we must remember that to make friends we must be prepared to stop and notice the other person. We must be careful that we are not like that bus or tram and so full up – in our case filled with ourselves, that we don't

have room for any more people.

As well as noticing others, we then have to accept them into our lives. We are usually the ones that put up the barriers. It may be our pride, our egoism, our jealousy, our sarcasm or our gruffness that makes others draw back from us and think that we have no time to give to them.

Another barrier that we can place before others is that we ourselves expect too much from their friendship. If we are prepared to give ourselves to them they should be prepared to do as much for us. We give our time, our hospitality, our friendship to others in such a way that they feel obliged to give it to us in return. We must try to develop our generosity so that in giving to others we expect nothing in return.

Remember that we need friendship as much as the next person. Remember that Christ has told us that if we show kindness and true friendship to the least of his brethren we show it to Him. Let us not be the ones who place a barrier before those around us.

Good- night and God bless you.

**APPENDIX A-5**  
**Evening Meditation**

Talk No.5

Friday, 22 December 1967

When will I finally gain my freedom, the adolescent asks. Give us bread and freedom, the working class shouts, and in order to win this freedom or to defend it against attack, the worker is prepared to fight, and, if need be, to die. When society wishes to punish one of its members, it simply takes away his freedom. And yet, for the vast majority, what is freedom anyway? It's nothing more than the removal of every form of constraint, the opportunity to do whatever one wants, whenever and wherever he wants to. Clearly this is a mere caricature of genuine freedom.

In addition to the absence of every form of physical constraint, authentic freedom presupposes a complete detachment from self with a view to commitment at a higher level. On this regard we have to win our freedom. Human freedom is strictly finite. Only God is truly free. In this life it will be those who are genuine friends of God who experience the freedom we are all looking for.

Even if you were to find yourself paralyzed and confined to bed for the rest of your life you could still be free if you wanted to, because your freedom is not identical with mobility but with something much deeper. Only you can effectively limit your own personal freedom. If you want to be free, you have to struggle against yourself, you have to win your freedom.

If you stubbornly contend: it's not my fault, I'm just like that. I'm wrong but I'll never admit it. I can't get my work done, I spend all my time daydreaming, but there's nothing I can do about it. Why do I think like that? I guess because everyone else does. I didn't want to do it, but I finally gave in. You're not free, you're a slave. A slave to yourself, to the past, to the circumstances about you. You're not free until you're a man who can stand on his feet. You're not free until you can control your body, your emotions and your imagination.

A boat isn't free to move if only one rope is holding it to the bank, a balloon isn't free to fly if only one thread is holding it to the ground. You are not free while you remain attached to one thing that deprives you of control of yourself.

Freedom, however, doesn't mean indifference. It is quite normal and natural for you to find pleasure in the world in which you live, but you have to be careful about your joys, as well as your sufferings don't unduly influence you when you have to make a choice. You must be careful that these joys and sufferings don't prevent you going through with your decision once you've made up your mind.

Complete independence and the opportunity to satisfy all your personal inclinations, desires and whims are merely caricatures of real freedom. Real freedom comes to fulfillment through obedience.

It was through obedience to his Father and through suffering freely accepted that Christ won freedom for us. Let us accept this freedom won by Christ and resolve to play our part in bringing it to fulfillment.

Good-night and God bless you.

**APPENDIX A-6**  
**Evening Meditation**

Talk No. 6

Saturday, 23 December 1967

Each one of us finds himself tormented by worries of one kind or another and because we are in some sense infinite, we are always able to make room for some more. Many of these worries are, to put it simply, mis-directed and consequently have to be eliminated from our lives. At times, none-the-less, our worries are quite well founded and even noble in their concern for others, but we are too weak to bear them single-handed. Still less, are we able to solve them. Worry can paralyze, and if we live a full life we have to give our worries to someone else to carry.

Perhaps we have a headache, or ulcers. Perhaps you are tired or discouraged. Perhaps you have a teenage son or daughter who is a worry to you. Your life seems an endless maze of problems – I don't know where I will turn, I'll never know peace of mind – so you drag out your life and never know true peace. In large measure this is the case because you find yourself constantly disturbed by an army of worries, an army which grows each day, an army which is trying to annihilate you.

It is not so much the difficulties that you meet with in your daily experience which threaten to overcome you but rather those frustrations pent up inside you. Feelings of jealousy, which gnaw away at you each day. The rancor you feel because you don't stand out; your fear of some person, or something that is about to happen to you. Your fear of not making a good impression, or not being accepted. Your feelings of doubt – I won't succeed, that's impossible, that's too difficult for me.

Your regrets – if only I'd known, if only I could start all over again. This is the poison that finds its way, each day, into your conversation, your gestures, your plans. This is the poison that first affects you and then becomes a weapon against others.

Your potential for love is almost without limit and yet the possibilities are limited by your upbringing, by your own personal failures and inadequacies. All your past history is waiting to find expression in your life. Don't we often find ourselves drawing on the past for attitudes that we should have discarded long ago.

Food that has gone bad in the refrigerator can poison you and your family unless it is thrown out. A nail in the tyre of your car will puncture the tube unless it is taken out. Your past worries, the important ones and those which were not so important, can harm you now unless you do something about them.

We are all ashamed of some of the worries that have occupied our time in the past. We should ask God to forgive us for this waste when we try to eliminate them. There are, however, many things that we should worry about. We must concern ourselves with earning a living, with providing for the future, with the education of your children, with justice and peace.

These concerns you encounter each day. Should we accept them as part of life and dimly learn to bear them? No – more than this is needed. We must learn to share our worries with the one who is always concerned for us. We must share them with God.

Good-night and God bless you.