

Commencement of Law Term ceremonies 2019

A photographic essay by Mark Maconachie



Introduction

The 2019 Law Term commenced on 29 January 2019. To mark the occasion religious ceremonies were held at St Mary's Cathedral, St James' Church, the Great Synagogue, the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, the Pan Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation, and St Patrick's Cathedral, which celebrated the inaugural Red Mass at Parramatta. With the exception of the Pan Orthodox and Parramatta celebrations, each of those events was photographed for *Bar News*. Unfortunately schedules for the Pan Orthodox and Red Mass Parramatta ceremonies became known too late for arrangements to be made to record those events.

Red Mass – St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney

The Red Mass was held early on the morning of 29 January, presided over by the Most Reverend Anthony Randazzo, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney. Mass was sung by Capella Sublima, the lay clerks of the choir of St John's College, under the direction of Richard Perrignon. The organ was played by Mr Thomas Wilson.

The Red Mass takes its name from the red vestments worn by the celebrant, which symbolise the flames that descended upon the apostles at Pentecost, causing them to speak the languages of all the nations under heaven. The name also references the scarlet robes of the royal judges attending the Mass in the early 14th century in England. The tradition continues today, with a Red Mass being celebrated annually at Westminster Cathedral. A Red Mass has been celebrated at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney each year since 1931, and is organised by the St Thomas More Society – a guild of lawyers with the purpose of extending within the legal profession the highest ideals of culture and morality.

New South Wales judges and magistrates, Federal judges, the Attorney General of New South Wales, other members of Parliament, and members of the Bar robed in the crypt below the cathedral. They followed the Chief Justice of New South Wales in procession up



St Mary's Cathedral Red Mass



the spiral staircase and into the body of the cathedral. The legal procession met up with the procession of clergy, led by Bishop Randazzo, and was led down the aisle following the clergy.

A homily given by Bishop Randazzo emphasised the grave responsibilities upon those who make and administer the law. The homily also reflected upon Christian notions of re-



pentance and forgiveness. Bishop Randazzo spoke of how the good must strive to maintain their good conduct and not rely on past good conduct to justify wrong. He also stressed that the wicked may be forgiven upon repenting.

Prayers were offered for members of Parliament to work diligently and honestly, for judicial officers to dispense justice with integrity, and for lawyers to act always with

upright conscience.

Following communion the clergy led the legal procession out of the cathedral and morning tea was served.

Thanks to Father Don Richardson, Dean of St Mary's Cathedral, for permission to photograph the Red Mass, and to Mr Michael McCauley of the Bar, President of the St Thomas More Society, for arranging access to photograph the Red Mass.

St James Church, Queens Square

Shortly after the conclusion of the St Mary's ceremony, the bells of St James' church rang out inviting attendance to the Anglican ceremony at the oldest church in Sydney.

The Chief Justice's Procession, again in ceremonial robes, led the Archbishop's Procession into the Church.

The St James' ceremony was presided over by the Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney. Hymns were led by the Bar Choir, conducted by the Honourable Peter Hidden AM, a former judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. The organist was Mr Alistair Nelson.

There were readings by the President of the Law Society of New South Wales, Ms Elizabeth Espinosa, and the then Senior Vice-President of the Bar Association, Mr Andrew Bell SC (as his Honour, the President of the Court of Appeal, then was).

Archbishop Davies gave a sermon considering chapter 33 of the Book of Ezekiel, and the reception of the idea of personal responsibility for one's own actions over the Israelites' earlier notion of corporate or collective responsibility. He explained that the earlier idea of collective responsibility had led to the Israelites being cast out of the Promised Land for the sins of their ancestors. The Archbishop reflected on the importance of personal responsibility in both the Christian tradition and the common law legal tradition, and echoed some of the sentiments considered by Bishop Randazzo in respect of the good not hiding behind past deeds to justify later wrongs.

Prayers were offered by the Reverend Dr Paul Logan OAM, the Honourable Justice Margaret Beazley AO (as her Excellency the Governor-Designate for New South Wales then was), the Honourable Justice Derek Price AM, Chief Judge of the District Court of New South Wales, his Honour Judge Graeme Henson AM, Chief Magistrate of New South Wales, Mr Gregory Burton SC and others.



St. James' Church, at the opening of the law term service



At the conclusion of the service the Archbishop's Procession led the Chief Justice's Procession from the Church, and members of the profession gathered with members of Parliament and members of the clergy in the

foregrounds of the church on a beautiful Sydney morning.

Thanks to Reverend Andrew Sempell for granting permission to photograph the Anglican service, and to Mr Tony Papado-



polous, Facilities Manager at St James', who provided access to photograph the service, including a tour of the St James' bell tower (while not in use).

The Great Synagogue, Sydney

On the evening of 6 February Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton, Chief Minister of the Great Synagogue, Reverend Joshua Weinberger, Cantor of the Great Synagogue, and the choir of the Great Synagogue conducted by Mr Justin Green, officiated over the Jewish service to mark the commencement of the 2019 Law Term. In attendance were the Chief Justice of New South Wales, the Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia, the Attorney General for New South Wales, members of Parliament from all sides of politics, as well as leaders and members of the legal profession, and the local congregation. The foundation stone of the Great Synagogue having been laid in 1878, this ceremony was held in the Synagogue's 140th year. Ceremonies to mark the commencement of the Law Term have been held here since the end of the Second World War.

Members of the judiciary and of the Bar gathered prior to the ceremony to enjoy refreshments and to robe in the Sikkah – an upstairs room with a sliding roof which opens to celebrate the tabernacle, or harvest, festival. Bathurst CJ then led them downstairs in procession.

The Honourable Justice Stephen Rothman AM, President of the Great Synagogue, welcomed the congregation. Readings and prayers were given by distinguished guests, before the Torah Scrolls were removed from the Ark and carried around the Synagogue. At the conclusion of their journey around the room, the Ark was opened by the Honourable Justice David Hammerschlag, for the Torah Scrolls to be returned.

Rabbi Elton gave a moving address, in which he remarked about the Jewish Community being in a privileged 'inside' position in Australian society. This is especially so, he



The Great Synagogue, commencement of 2019 law term service

said, in contrast to that of other minorities, such as the Indigenous peoples of Australia. He remarked that this privileged position gives the Jewish community a great insight into the plight of such other minorities who have not always been included, and who suffer as a result. That position also gives the Jewish community an opportunity to help other disadvantaged minorities to transcend that disadvantage, the Rabbi said.

Rabbi Elton spoke of Jews elsewhere often having been excluded from mainstream legal and dispute resolution regimes until the nineteenth century, and observed that as a result Jewish communities often had their own legal and dispute resolution regimes. He observed, however, that in Jewish culture it was always the case that 'the law of the land is the law'.

The Rabbi also observed that Australia is one of only two countries in the world to have



had Jewish vice regal representation, head of the judiciary, head of the executive and head of the military.

Following the ceremony refreshments were served and the officials, the judiciary, members of the Bar and the local congregation socialised in the auditorium beneath the Synagogue.

Thanks to his Honour Justice Rothman for



granting permission to photograph the Jewish service, and to Ms Ilana Moddel, of the Synagogue's administration team, for providing an advance tour of the Synagogue and access to photographing the service.

The Auburn Gallipoli Mosque

On the evening of 7 February the Chief Justice of New South Wales and the then President of the Court of Appeal joined with other judges of the State and Federal Superior Courts, the District and Local Courts of New South Wales, members of the profession and of Parliament, and the local Mosque community for an Islamic ceremony to celebrate the opening of the 2019 Law Term.

The event was organised and hosted by the Muslim Legal Network (MLN) in conjunction with the Auburn Mosque Committee. The MLN is a peak professional association representing Australian Muslim legal practitioners and their communities since 2009. Its three core focus areas are advocacy for the Muslim community, legal education, and networking. An Islamic ceremony to mark the opening of the law term has been organised by the MLN each year over the past decade.

The Auburn Gallipoli Mosque is a stunning example of Ottoman style architecture, based upon the famous Marmara University Faculty of Theology Mosque in Istanbul. Its carpet, featuring congregational prayer formation pattern, as well as much of its decorative masonry and brightly coloured windows, were crafted by specially commissioned artisans in Turkey.

Beneath a glorious sunset the congregation enjoyed refreshments in a palm tree lined southern courtyard, before removing shoes and forwarding into the Mosque for the ceremony. The Islamic ceremony departed from the pageantry of ceremonial robes featured in the Christian and Jewish ceremonies, in favour of modest and formal attire. The congregation gathered in an intimate semi-circular formation, and in a break from tradition were pro-



Islamic ceremony to celebrate the opening of the 2019 law term

vided with seating in order to accommodate guests unaccustomed to the Islamic tradition of sitting and praying on the floor.

The congregation addressed by Mr Kamran Khalid, Co Vice-President of the MLN, who welcomed distinguished guests and discussed the MLN's work in the law and in the community. A visiting Imam then spoke of the relationship between Islam and the law. He told of the reception of the Sharia by the Prophet Mohammad directly from Allah. He explained that Sharia had shifting meanings, and is often interpreted as 'the way', 'the path' or 'the path to water'. It was explained that because Mohammad was illiterate and alone when he received instruction from Allah, Muslims have always understood that his teachings could only have been delivered to him directly by Allah and are beyond question.

As it happens the approximate direction of

Mecca lies to the west of the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque. As such, and given the time of day, late afternoon sun streamed into the Mosque as the ceremony progressed. Ever shifting beams of light created patterns on the intricate design of the carpet, illuminated the otherwise unlit chandeliers, and cast stunning patterns on the wall from the coloured windows of the high domes above.

Following the formalities the congregation socialised over a light meal and refreshments in a covered northern courtyard as sunset gave way to evening.

Thanks to Mr Bilal Rauf of the Bar for making arrangements to photograph the Islamic ceremony, and to Mr Kamran Khalid and Mr Aziz Abbas of the MLN for providing access to photograph the Mosque.