Early Career Incentive Award


Dr Jo Brady rsj

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The project is a continuation of the doctoral thesis Sisters of St Joseph the Tasmanian Experience: The foundation of the Sisters of St Joseph 1887-1937 (Brady, 2005).

The project will enable a continuation of the earlier research on the Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania. The doctoral thesis (Brady, 2005) focused on the establishment of the Sisters of St Joseph at Westbury in northern Tasmanian and their growth and development to become responsible for the education of the largest number of Catholic schools in Tasmania. This study will examine the impact of the various movements operating throughout the period and their influence on the Sisters of St Joseph and their schools and the Tasmanian Church.

As historian Edmund Campion (1996) has argued, women religious played a major role in the development of the Catholic Church in Australia, yet Australian Catholic Church history has focused on the Bishops. Campion asserts that “the true creators of Australian Catholicism were the nuns”(MacGinley, 1996, p.vii). There is little evidence of historical scholarship regarding the Sisters of St Joseph in general Tasmanian Catholic Church histories. Noted Tasmanian Catholic Church historian Fr Terry Southerwood remains largely silent on the role of women in general and the Sisters of St Joseph in particular. In his various histories the focus is on the development of the parishes and the personalities of the male clergy (Southerwood, 1968, 1977). Southerwood treats the religious congregations of women as an adjunct to the central story of Catholic life in Tasmania, and by so doing underestimates the influence that these women have had on church life. The appropriateness of Tarnas’ comment is evident - “how deeply problematic consequences have ensued from masculine assumptions about reality, knowledge, nature, society and the divine”(Tarnas, 1991, p.408).

Apart from the doctoral thesis 1887-1937 there has been no detailed study of the Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania (Brady, 2005). The Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania have had only two minor publications in their 130 year history. These comprise a thin pamphlet, Torchbearers for Christ, published in 1966 (Burns, 1966.) and a photographic souvenir booklet, Sisters of St Joseph: God with Us 1887-1987, published on the occasion of the centenary, which gives a brief history of foundations and documents the ministries of the current membership.

A Masters study on the impact of Vatican II on the ministries of the Sisters of St Joseph was concerned with the post Vatican II period (Brady, 1997). Two minor theses in the form of Bachelor of Arts honours essays provide the only studies. Hollingsworth (1970) in the 88 page essay “Catholic Schools 1906-1967” examines the development of schools with some reference to the Sisters of St Joseph and Haley(1967) in the 54 page essay, “Catholic Response to the Educational Crisis, 1850-1900,” makes little reference to the Sisters of St Joseph.

Objectives of the project

The project aims to examine the experience of the Sisters who joined post 1938. The earlier doctoral study interviewed those sisters who had joined the congregation from 1932 to 1938. Sisters will be interviewed to provide oral life histories and hence provide data for a more complete history of the Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania in the twentieth century. This study will examine their motivation for joining, significant influences in their lives, and their religious and professional development as Sisters of St Joseph and as teachers. The project will explore the influence of the Bishop, the requirements of the Church, the influence of the Tasmanian Department of Education and the impact of the various movements occurring during the period.

This study seeks to gather data from those members who played an active role in maintaining the schools from 1938-1998. This data will provide a rich resource documenting the lives of those sisters, many of whom are now in retirement yet capable of recalling with clarity the years of their
apostolic ministry and able to trace the significant movements in the development of the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph centred in Tasmanian.

Based on the doctoral study (Brady, 2005) this project will seek to answer the research question how did the Sisters of Joseph respond in meeting the increasing demands for change wrought on them by society, educational institutions and the Church itself throughout this period and yet remain faithful to their founding charism. The study shall seek to determine their influence on the development of the Tasmanian Church and Catholic school system. By this study I would hope “to reinstate women’s presence in the past [providing] spaces for women’s voices and actions in the present”(Blackmore, 1999, p.23).

**Design and Methodology**

The design of the study is qualitative in nature, employing ethnographic techniques with a thematic approach to the narrative. In each stage, open ended interviews will be conducted to determine the reflections of the participants. The interviews will be video-taped and later transcribed.

The qualitative process was selected as this approach best suits the examination of values, beliefs and therefore the examination of the research questions. Jordanova states that the use of biography is more than hagiography but provides a focal point at which historical forces coincide. In a single individual’s life we see many factors operating such as political, social, and economic as well as kinship, friendship, leisure activities, and education. Jordanova indicates that reconstructing a life can be a form of a *histoire totale* on a limited scale (Jordanova, 2000, p.41) Through the use of the lives of the members, a complete understanding of the manner in which the Rule functioned and shaped the religious Sisters in their local communities can be constructed. Southgate quoting E. P. Thompson professed a concern “to rescue” some of “history’s losers” and to describe a process of self-discovery and redefinition (Southgate, 1997, p.72)

**Stage 1 (2007)**

A questionnaire will be sent out to all Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania (33). The questionnaire content will be similar in nature to the questions used in the original study (Brady, 2005). Sisters will be invited to participate in an interview reflecting on their lived experience within the Sisters of St Joseph.

**Stage 2 (late 2007- early 2008)**

Interviews to be conducted by Dr Brady in Tasmania within the communities of the Sisters. Transcripts of the interviews will to be analysed with the assistance of a research assistant. Extant material within the Sisters of St Joseph’s archives, State archives of Tasmania, archives of the Archdiocese of Hobart will be examined with a view to informing the research.

**Stage 3 (mid 2008)**

The researcher will utilise the research to categorise emerging themes identified in the interviews and these themes will be examined and discussed in relation to the other evidence.

**Stage 4 (late 2008)**

A preliminary paper will be prepared detailing the results of the research as prelude to the publication of the history of the Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania.

**References**


The role of the mentor:
Dr Rosa MacGinley Research Fellow of the Golding Centre has agreed to collaborate on the project assisting with advice, expertise and research assistance.
Dr Sophie McGrath, Director of the Golding Centre has given her support to the project and offered assistance (See attachment)

Statement from the mentor

“I have read through this project proposal on 'The Sisters of St Joseph Tasmania 1938-1998' and have accepted the role of Mentor. I am impressed by the project and its relevance not only towards enabling completion of an overall history of the Josephite Sisters in Tasmania for publication, but also for its own intrinsic worth in recovering the role of these women in the ministry, both educational and social, of the Catholic Church in Tasmania and for its contribution to women's history in that State and within the wider field of Australian history. Josephine Brady is a capable researcher of wide professional experience, with attested academic studies to her credit. I hence strongly recommend this project for acceptance” (Dr Rosa McGinley, personal communication, June 28, 2007).

Budget:

Hiring of research assistant:
Research assistant
HEWR 5.1: 40 hrs@ $27.17 + 16% on costs ($31.52) $1260.80

Travel:
Travel to communities within Tasmania $500
Air fares to Tasmania and Travel for mentor $1,800
Accommodation    $500

**Consumables:**
- Mini DVDs 30@ $8.30  $250
- Tapes                  $40
- Final report and
  Preparation for interviews  $647.20

**Total: $4998**

The hiring of a research assistant will provide assistance in the analysis of data from interviews. Travel will enable the researcher to interview the Sisters within their community setting as well as meeting with the mentor throughout the project and enable research within the Tasmanian archives.

**Support from Head of School:**
Dr Carolyn Broadbent is Head of School has indicated her support for this project. (See attachment)

**Curriculum Vitae**

**Josephine M Brady rsj**

**Current Employment**
- Lecturer Australian Catholic University Canberra
  - Teaching Effectiveness and Professional Practice
  - Teaching and Learning Preparing for Contexts in the Field
  - Catholic Education and Schooling
- Australia to 1890
- 1981-1986  Deputy Principal
  St Brendan Shaw College, Devonport, Tasmania
- 1987-1992  Principal
  St Brendan Shaw College Devonport, Tasmania
- 1995-2000  Principal
  Sacred Heart College, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2001-2004  Australian Catholic University  Melbourne
  - Doctoral student and sessional tutor and lecturer.
  - 2005 -  Australian Catholic University  Canberra
  - 2005  Lecturer and Co-ordinator of Secondary Programs
  - 2007  Course Co-ordinator Grad Dip Ed and M Teach (Prim) & (Sec)
  - 2007  First Year Experience Co-ordinator

**Qualifications**
- **Dip Teaching, B Ed, Grad Dip Admin, M.Min., Ph D**
- **Bachelor of Education**
  - 1969  Hobart Teachers College
  - 1972-1973  Signadou College of Education, ACT
  - 1981  University of Tasmania, Tasmania

**Graduate Diploma of Administration**
Master of Ministry
1994 – 1997 Melbourne College of Divinity, Melbourne
Doctor of Philosophy
2005 Australian Catholic University, Melbourne

Papers and publications


Conferences
2003 Workshop on Catholic Education and Schooling at the Conference of the Parramatta Catholic Education Office New South Wales


Statement of Research track record relative to opportunities
Having completed the doctorate in 2005, I presented a paper in June 2005 to a conference of Sisters of St Joseph of Australia and New Zealand entitled, “Wandering Josephites” a study on significant Josephite women. In July 2006 I presented a paper to the Australian Historical Association Conference at the ANU (see above). In July, 2007 I am presenting a paper to the Sisters of St Joseph History Conferences on “Letters from the Founder to the Westbury Community”.

Throughout 2005-2007 I have been a member of the SiMERR ACT (Science, Information and Communication Technology and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia) hub as the Diversity Co-ordinator and have been actively engaged in collecting data, interviewing and assisting with report writing for of this national project. Collaborative projects have included “Utilising the information and communication technologies to build a professional learning community to enhance the learning outcomes of teachers and students in regional and rural schools.
in NSW and the ACT”, “The mathematical development of children with Down syndrome”. A paper from the former project will be presented by Dr Carolyn Broadbent at the PASCAL Conference, Hungary in September, 2007 and a paper from the latter project was presented at the Narrowing the Gap National Conference in April 2007 at UNE, resulting in an invitation for a book chapter. From the ECIA grant in 2006 I completed a pilot study of mentors within the pre-service secondary education program here in the ACT. A paper on this research is being presented at the Catholic Educational Leadership Conference in July 2007 and some journal articles will be developed. In association with Assoc Prof Catherine McLoughlin I am involved in the research of peer to peer e-mentoring with the Graduate Diploma Secondary students. A Teaching Development Grant was received for this project and a paper has been submitted to the AARE conference for November, listed above.

Faculty Strategic Direction

The project is in keeping with the strategic plan of the faculty “To provide a culture where research and scholarship inform the way Teaching and Learning is conceptualised and practised to foster flexible, responsive and collaborative authentic learning communities”(Faculty of Education Operational Plan, 2006, p.8). The understanding gained will provide material for use in two subjects for which I have responsibility - history (Australia to 1890) and Catholic Education and Schooling.

The project is also aligned with the goal of “[developing] and [sustaining] a culture of Community Engagement across the Faculty which is coherent and consistent with a national vision, while targeting and specifically attending to the needs of local communities” (Faculty of Education, 2006, p.16) The project provides research into the development of Catholic education in Tasmanian as well as providing further research on women’s history.

Proposed Outcomes

The research will contribute to more complete history of the Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania resulting in a publication. The research will provide data for several journal and conference papers for presentation at Catholic Education Conferences, the Australian Historical Association Conference and the Catholic Historical Association Conference. The project will be in collaboration with the Golding Centre for Women’s History, Theology and Spirituality and therefore strengthening research relationships beyond the faculty.
28 June 2007

To Whom It May Concern

Australian Catholic University is to be highly commended for encouraging by internal research grants recent doctoral students in their ongoing research efforts, which will contribute towards establishing a strong community of research scholars within the University. The Golding Centre for Women’s History, Theology and Spirituality strongly supports Dr Josephine Brady’s application for such a grant – an Early Career Incentive Award.

It is a truism that women’s history is neglected and that mainstream history, which is drawn upon for the making of important political and social policies, is inadequate as a result of this neglect. Women religious have played a significant part in Australian history in general and Australian Church History in particular. It would be a pity if their historical legacy was recorded merely in the hagiographical genre and not considered worthy of rigorous scholarly research within the wider historical context. It would be a regrettable if Dr Brady does not have the opportunity to bring her doctoral thesis on the Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania up to the end of the 20th century, which forms the backdrop to important current movements especially in the field of education within and without the Church. I would be happy, along with Dr Rosa MacGinley, to serve as a mentor for Josephine and share with her the resources of the Golding Centre, especially its wider network of scholars and fellow travelers.

Yours sincerely

Sophie McGrath

(Dr Sophie McGrath rsm
Director,
Golding Centre for Women’s History, Theology and Spirituality)
Dr Jo Brady’s research proposal is carefully constructed and purposefully builds on her earlier doctoral studies regarding the Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania. As highlighted in the proposal, the research project aims to further an understanding of the impact of the various movements and their influences on the Sisters of St Joseph, their schools and the Tasmanian Church throughout the post 1938 period. There is little documented evidence either of this period or of the work of the Sisters throughout their 130 year history. This increases the significance of this project in terms of: its historical value; its focus on the role and contributions of women at this time; and, in its contribution to the growth of knowledge in the area.

Engagement in this project will enhance the research profile and skills of the researcher through the development of DEST related publications. Of importance is the alignment of the project with the Faculty’s aim to strengthen and increase the research productivity of staff and build expertise across the Schools. The focus of the research is reflective of the strong interests of Dr Jo Brady and this augurs well for the development of productive outcomes and a heightened sense of professional purpose in both her research and teaching endeavours.

I fully support this research project proposal.

Dr Carolyn Broadbent
Head, School of Education (ACT)
5 July 2007