



CAMPION'S BRAG

Catholic Learning in the Liberal Arts

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Trinity Term
at Campion

Philosopher Roger Scruton visits Campion

In May, the distinguished British philosopher **Roger Scruton** joined the faculty at Campion for several days, delivering lectures and conducting seminars on topics related to the Liberal Arts.

Dr Scruton has combined a career in universities, such as Oxford, St Andrews and Boston, with the life of an independent author.

He is himself an exemplar of the Liberal Arts, having first studied the natural sciences before branching out into music, art, literature and religion. In all these areas, he has written numerous books and articles, including *The Face of God* (2012).

During his visit, he addressed a Campion Appeal Dinner in the ornate Tea Room of Sydney's Queen Victoria Building. After an introduction by the well-known journalist Miranda Devine, he praised Campion College for embarking on the 'wonderful enterprise' of rescuing and passing on a cultural and religious inheritance which is despised by today's intellectual elite, but for which no alternative has been found that can inform people's perception of the world.

The most important thing about culture and religion, Dr Scruton argued, is that it is 'an act of consecration: it takes up the things of this world and shines its light upon them, and hands them back transfigured.'

The pursuit of the beautiful and the sacred go hand-in-hand, serving as 'windows on to the transcendental' which alone give meaning to one's life.

Passing on the culture

Dr Scruton stressed the importance of the university years as a time when a culture

should be passed on. Young people are about to enter the adult world and are hungry for a rite of passage into it – for ceremonies, for forms of knowledge, for relationships which mark the transition from the adolescent into the adult arena.

Yet these rites of passage have now been eroded, so that young people attending university are likely to encounter 'scepticism, play and transgression', and ways of falling apart and wasting time.

This time of adolescence, Dr Scruton noted, is also a time of judgment – when young people learn how to judge:

'They learn the difference between the good example and the bad example, not only in moral life but also in music, in art, in literature. They learn to judge and to recognize that some things are serious, some things not. Some have a lasting significance, some are merely transitory...In other words, it is a time when young people acquire a sense of the value of all that's around them, and what things they should be valuing.'

Intrinsic and Instrumental values

Dr Scruton drew a distinction between intrinsic and instrumental values – reflecting the intrinsic worth of certain things, which define what life is for, compared with the worth of other things that merely serve as means or techniques.

Present-day education focuses on techniques, seeing all knowledge as 'instrumental', a means to an end, and ignoring questions of ultimate value which are left for each person to decide individually.

The result, Dr Scruton pointed out, is to confine young people to an understanding of the world in which nothing is important to



Dr Roger Scruton speaking at the Campion Appeal Dinner (above) and at Campion College (below)

them except what they themselves decide. 'But they haven't been given,' he said, 'the intellectual and moral foundation to make that decision. They are simply driven along by the arbitrary winds of their own appetites, like a blown leaf in autumn.'

Present-day universities, he noted, no longer believe they should be imparting to young people a knowledge of the good, the true, and the beautiful.

They tend to devote their attention to denigrating our cultural inheritance rather than passing it on – and this is one reason why the humanities departments in universities are failing.

Students become bored and disillusioned, and many flee to the sciences where they see the study of technical know-how as the only legitimate pursuit. The result is that 'instrumental reasoning takes over from the realm of intrinsic value'.

Dr Scruton offered the droll compliment that Campion's efforts to preserve and pass on our cultural inheritance meant that 'it has no competition' in higher education!





The Catholic Vocation in Politics

Rev Dr Bill Miscamble CSC (pictured), an Australian-born Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame (USA), delivered the 2014 St Edmund *Campion Lecture* on the topic 'Catholics and Public Life in the United States and Australia'. The address provides a prelude to a book which Fr Miscamble is writing on the role of Catholics in America political life. This is an edited version of his Lecture.

Comparing the role of Catholics in American and Australian public – and particularly political – life is of instructive interest.

Many prominent names emerge, and while this might suggest that Catholics have played a very significant part in the public life of both countries, the impact is a mixed picture.

In both Australia and the USA, Catholic engagement with public life arose from similar roots – a shared Irish heritage – and took a similar path, being identified primarily with worker-based parties (the ALP in Australia and the Democratic Party in America).

Yet there have been differences as well. Catholics rose to prominence more quickly in Australia, and became embroiled in a bitter internecine dispute in the 1950s – to which there is nothing comparable in the history of American Catholicism – that culminated in the 1955 "Split" and the creation of the DLP that helped keep the ALP out of power for two decades.

A further difference has been financial support for Catholic schools – a signature issue for Australian Catholics which is now largely settled, but a cause which Catholics in America have not been able to advance in the face of the strict rulings by the Supreme Court on the constitutional separation of Church and State.

Election of John F. Kennedy

A key figure in the American Catholic story is John F. Kennedy, and a key episode is his election as President in 1960. At first it appeared to shatter the last political barrier to America's acceptance of Catholics, but in retrospect it can be seen as a decidedly ambiguous breakthrough, as it was conditional on Kennedy's commitment

to relegate his religion to a purely private status and not act on public policy in any recognisably Catholic way.

Kennedy effectively blazed a trail which many subsequent Catholic politicians in America have followed.

Ironically, a quite different course for Catholic politicians was chartered by the Second Vatican Council – notably, in *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World).

This decree developed a theme of openness to the world and approached very positively the issue of Catholics' participation in political life. It affirmed the need for an integration of professional and political activities with religious commitments, in a way that promoted the dignity of the individual person and the common good.

By the late 1960s, however, a series of cultural and religious changes swept through American society that transformed significantly and deleteriously the arena in which Catholic politicians would be called upon to work.

A new emphasis was placed on individual conscience to justify dissent from Church teaching, particularly on the life issues such as abortion, and prominent Catholic politicians – for example, Geraldine Ferraro in her run for the Vice-Presidency in 1984 – adopted a "pro-choice" position that appeared to flow, not from any well-considered argument, but from the political necessities for making her way in the Democratic Party.

Parallels and differences

The Australian experience offers some interesting parallels as well as differences. Catholic politicians in Australia seem to have abided by an unspoken agreement not to make too much publicly of their religious outlook, though there have been exceptions, such as the attention given the then Health Minister Tony Abbott's 2004 Adelaide University Lecture on "The Ethical Responsibilities of a Christian Politician".

A longer term perspective

Prospects seem dim for any rapid change which would reflect the integrated vision of personal belief and public action as set forth in *Gaudium et Spes*. Yet a longer term perspective is desirable, based on a deeper understanding of the teachings of the Council and of successive Popes since that time.

The task ahead is to dedicate ourselves anew to seeking to convey that one's religious convictions are not to be divorced from one's political actions.

Politics is a noble calling in a democratic society. Let us take St Thomas More as our guide – "The King's good servant,

but God's first"; or that great generation of genuinely Catholic European politicians – led by Germany's Konrad Adenauer, Italy's Alcide de Gasperi and France's Robert Schuman, who in the aftermath of two catastrophic world wars and European fratricide on a vast scale, sought to rebuild something from the rubble that was guided by their Christian convictions.

The full text of Fr Miscamble's *St Edmund Campion Lecture* is available as a booklet from the College at a cost of \$6.00 (incl. postage). It may be requested via the donation flyer.

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Australia – Recalling our Christian Roots

On May 22, an audience of more than 200 Catholic professional and business leaders in Brisbane heard the Sydney barrister, law lecturer and author, **Sophie York** (pictured), speak on 'Leadership and the Preservation of Australian Values'.

Sophie serves as a Director of the Champion Foundation and speaks frequently at the College. Her husband is the anaesthetist Dr Paul Dunkin, and they have four sons.



Sophie York began by recalling the occasion when Australia's wicketkeeper-batsman, Adam Gilchrist, 'walked' on his own initiative after being caught during the 2003 World Cup.

He was widely criticized for not waiting until the umpire gave his decision. It highlighted the difference in morality that is now widely evident in Australia – between traditional values of character and a new, collectivist approach which prescribes duty to one's team or group as more important than honouring one's conscience.

Ms York provided other examples of how Australian values are being undermined by attitudes that obscure the rights and responsibilities of the ordinary citizen by denying the Judeo-Christian values that lie at the foundation of Australian society.

Various freedoms, particularly freedom of speech and of religion, are gradually being eroded. Traditional cultural practices reflecting the Christian roots of Australian culture – such as the public display of crosses in hospital chapels and bibles for use by patients, or the setting up of nativity scenes at Christmas – are being banned or hidden away on the grounds of avoiding offence to those of different or no belief.

Yet Australia, Ms York noted, has always allowed space for such practices. She suggested that Australia differs from the United States, in that governments here freely partner with hospitals, charities and schools – even if they are religious – when there is a public interest at stake. Furthermore, the Australian Federal Constitution allows for this.

Religious origins of Australian values
Highlighting values that are seen as deeply Australian, Ms York traced their religious origins, revealing how much they were originally inspired by a religious impulse.

For example, mateship is an 'embodiment of love, and manifested in service to others.' It finds expression in a high level of everyday volunteerism, when Australians help out during recurrent bushfires, droughts and floods.

Giving people 'a fair go' is an expression of egalitarianism – and an abhorrence of cheating and corruption. It is manifested in the principle that all are equal before the law, and it underpins the spirit of democracy in Australia.

Such values permeate our justice system, our hospitals, schools and universities, as well as our public discourses and social behaviours.

Ms York emphasised the broadly religious nature of the Australian people – with over 60% professing Christianity and around 20% comprising Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus and Jews. Only 20% declared 'no religion' in the latest national census (2011). Apart from the numerical importance of religious allegiance, Catholic and Christian schools have played a prominent role in welfare and education since colonial times. Mary MacKillop, for example, started 117 schools. The Catholic Church is the largest non-government provider of health and education services in Australia, and the largest of all aid organisations. Despite its secular character, Australia has never been a secular humanist society seeking to exclude religion. This is what is now being attempted – to

take Australia 'where we have not been before,' by 'experimenting with our culture and either ignorantly – or deceitfully – pretending not to.'

Whereas 'secular' might once have meant 'neutral', informed by multiple influences for good, the term now represents views that are anti-religious, anti-freedom, and anti-democratic.

In particular, there is what Ms York called an 'aggressive expunging of Christianity from the public square' – a situation calling for a fresh surge of leadership in Australia, which would be ready to preserve values and virtues that reflect strength of character and a desire to serve others.

She complimented Champion College for the emphasis it gives to leadership qualities in the formation of its students.

Campion Graduates

Earlier this year, two *Campion* graduates, **Conor Power** (2008) and **David Chua** (2011) – pictured, with Conor (left) and David (right) – entered the Dominican Order to study for the priesthood. David, who has taken the Religious name of Br Reginald Mary OP, reflects on his *Campion* experience and subsequent studies that prepared him for his vocation.



I look back to my time at *Campion* with much joy and gratitude, most of all because I see God using that phase of my life to bring me closer to Him, through the pursuit of truth.

In the friendships I formed and the classes I attended at *Campion*, I came to see that the pursuit of truth was in many ways a transformative experience, one that brought with it a glimpse of the truth, beauty and goodness in all things.

On graduating, I decided to pursue these newfound inclinations toward truth by pursuing an Honours year, then a Masters, at the University of Sydney's Philosophy Department. I also found some casual work as a research officer for the Parramatta Diocese and as a tutor at *Campion*.

Providentially, during this time I was led to a deeper awareness of two things – first, a growing conviction that the pursuit of truth found genuine fulfilment only in Jesus Christ, and in a life ordered to union with God as its principal end; and secondly, a realisation that my own life was very far from conformity to this goal. Although it was filled with good things – relationships, family, work and career aspirations – I

constantly tended to give first place to creatures and not to God, my Creator.

Throughout this time the Dominican Order was distantly present in my mind. I was receiving the sacraments from the Dominican Fathers at the Sydney University chaplaincy on a regular basis – and, of course, I had encountered St Thomas Aquinas and other friars in the 'realms of gold' studying at *Campion*.

The inspiring witness of these Friars Preachers led me to investigate further the Dominican way of life.

Through the grace of God, I eventually came to see that the religious life of the Dominicans would save my soul because it was the means that would most fittingly order my life to union with God.

I have found great joy in entering the Order because I see that this life of grace, far from denying the natural inclinations of my heart for happiness and truth and beauty, in fact fulfils them.

Participants at the recent Faith Formation Seminar, with Campion organiser Michael Mendieta (right)



Faith, friends and learning

Since 2012 when the **Faith Formation Seminar** was launched during the July mid-semester break, it has grown significantly.

This year the three-day program attracted a record number of 44 participants, ranging from mature age professionals to high school and university students. Many travelled from interstate to attend.

In the words of Campion's mission statement, 'to form future leaders for society and the Church by a broad program of learning in the Liberal Arts that integrates the insights of faith and reason,' Faith Formation aims to form people intellectually in the faith.

It applies the College's core program in the Liberal Arts as a framework and focus throughout the three days, and the various sessions are designed to give participants the intellectual formation and rhetorical tools with which to articulate the Catholic faith.

Topics covered this year included 'God and Science', 'The Divinity of Christ', 'The Sacraments', and 'Homosexuality'.

Another popular vacation event is Campion's **Summer Week**, held each January.

Dubbed a 'wholesome alternative to Schoolies', the program is presented for students who are soon to leave school or have already done so. It offers a showcasing of the College's distinctive program in the Liberal Arts, combined with religious and social activities as well as opportunities for recreation and the forming of new friendships.

In 2015, Summer Week will run from **January 11 to 16**.

Anyone desiring more information on these two vacation programs – Summer Week and Faith Formation – may tick the appropriate boxes on the donation flyer.

A Founding Statement on the College

Campion's governing body, the Institute Board, has recently adopted a founding statement on the College which sets out the ideals and principles that have inspired its development.

Colloquially called the *Campion Gold Book*, the statement describes the background factors which led to a new Catholic Liberal Arts college being established in Australia, and explains the educational mission it is seeking to perform as a unique institution on the Australian university scene.

Various explanatory documents were produced during Campion's planning phase, prior to its opening in 2006. But the Board believed that, as the College is approaching its first decade of operation, a comprehensive statement of its nature and mission would serve an important purpose, assisting in the understanding of staff and students as well as the wider community of 'friends of Campion'.



Such a need is especially recognised as staff changes take place over time, and one generation of students succeeds another.

The Gold Book begins by outlining the cultural and religious developments in Australia from the 1960s which called forth a Campion response, and goes on to explain the factors that shaped the emerging institution. Other chapters focus on the philosophy of the Liberal Arts, the nature of a faithful Catholic identity, and the distinctive nature of the core academic program that the College has taught from the beginning.

Each section then concludes with a Statement of Principles that seek to crystallise the various aspects of the College's mission.

Copies of the Campion Gold Book are available on request by ticking a box on the donation flyer.

Christopher Dawson – Intellectual architect of Campion

A biographical booklet has recently appeared on the English historian, **Christopher Dawson** (pictured), whose insights into the living connections between religion and culture inspired the beginnings of Campion College.

Dawson realised that, in a secularized environment, the survival of a religious culture – a social way of life shaped by faith – depended to a critical extent on education; and that, in Western societies, it required a rebirth of the Christian tradition of a liberal arts education.

His influence on Campion's emergence is

reflected in his being recognized as the 'intellectual architect' of the College.

The work, *Christopher Dawson: A Biographical Introduction*, has been written by Karl Schmude and published by the Christopher Dawson Centre for Cultural Studies established earlier this year in Hobart (website: <http://www.dawsoncentre.org/>).

Copies are available from Campion College at a cost of \$11.00 (incl.GST), and can be requested by ticking the appropriate box on the enclosed donation flyer.



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