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# Discovering ‘A.J.M.’ (Fr Arthur J. McHugh), A Visionary of Catholic Universities in Australia

Glenn Morrison\*

## *Introduction: ‘We Need the Spirit’s Prompting’*

How do visionary or provocative voices emerge to be as leaven in the world? What being or energy prompts such bold voices to enter the struggles and hopes of humanity? Approaching this mystery, we might begin to reflect on the nature of the Holy Spirit. For St Paul, the Holy Spirit is a ‘divine field of energy’ pouring forth God’s love into ‘our hearts’ (Rom 5:5).<sup>1</sup> Given such divine energy of the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 8:11), humanity too has been offered a gift to receive the Spirit and become ‘children of God’ (Rom 8:14). This means that God’s Spirit may ‘dwell’ in us to pursue the life of faith to be ‘led’ (Rom 8:14) by the Father’s will. Paul writes, ‘And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God’ (Rom 8:27). The sense of the ‘mind of the Spirit’ can further suggest the gift of *parrhesía* or boldness. Here, Pope Francis reflects:

We need the Spirit’s prompting, lest we be paralyzed by fear and excessive caution, lest we grow used to keeping within safe bounds. Let us remember that closed spaces grow musty and unhealthy. When the Apostles were tempted to let themselves be crippled by danger and

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1. Anthony Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 64.

threats, they joined in prayer to implore *parrhesía*: ‘And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness’ (*Acts* 4:29). As a result, ‘when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness’ (*Acts* 4:31). (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, n. 133)

A hundred years ago, there was no Catholic university in Australia. However, transcending the ‘musty and unhealthy’ ‘closed space’ of despair, a provocative voice appeared in a newspaper article. Published on 5 January 1922 in *The Freeman’s Journal*, the voice revealed itself as ‘A.J.M.’ who wrote with a spirited boldness on the subject, ‘If Australia Had a Catholic University: What It Would Mean to the Laity’.<sup>2</sup> Such a visionary voice deserves not to be left in the ashes of memory. Could it also be that A.J.M.’s voice was led by the Spirit of the Father to hope, to ‘wait ... with patience’ (*Rom* 8:25), for a Catholic university in Australia?

The major focus of this article is the search for the author’s (A.J.M.’s) identity and, in conclusion, to relate his message for Catholic universities today, to renew the boldness and promptings of the Spirit. His message, to ‘create a reverential knowledge’,<sup>3</sup> speaks as a deposit of grace, that is to say, as an archive to be remembered and shared today and for future generations lest we forget the boldness of spirit that initiates and carries forward the foundation of Catholic universities. By way of ‘methodology’ of the ‘Spirit’s prompting’, we begin then to give voice to the archive and to the person behind the memory walking a century in silence through time, to discover a command, an obligation, and an archive surprise awaiting.

### *An Archive Surprise*

A fortunate discovery can take many forms, even as an archive surprise that speaks as a command and obligation to listen, and in this case to listen to A.J.M.’s ‘music’ of his pioneering mind, to play again his symphonic message for today. A word first on the meaning of ‘archive’. Jacques Derrida explains:

the meaning of ‘archive,’ its only meaning, comes to it from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded. ... The archons are the first of all document guardians. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives.

2. Arthur J. McHugh, ‘If Australia Had a Catholic University: What It Would Mean to the Laity’, *The Freeman’s Journal*, 5 January 1922, 10, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/116780925?searchTerm=If%20Australia%20Had%20a%20Catholic%20University>.

3. Mcugh, 10.

What if a book stores a hidden archive, becomes a home for a burning memory? There are discoveries within books that remain as gifts. People like to keep sacred memories like holy cards or newspaper clippings within the pages of books. These are archives and remembrances of the past that signify sacred values, experiences and hopes. Back in about 2009, there was such a surprise discovery and encounter. A theological college from Sydney (the Catholic Theological Union, Hunters Hill) had donated books that had found their way to the University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle campus, School of Philosophy and Theology. Staff were free to take the books and find a good home for them. There was one old hardback book, with its binding burgundy in colour and its pages gilt-edged, begging for attention. Its condition looked 'good' in its plastic book covering. The title of the book was *Solemnities of the Dedication and Opening of the Catholic University of America, November 13th, 1889: Official Report*, and it was published in 1890 in Baltimore by John Murphy and Co.

Opening the book, the table of contents appeared inviting, speaking first of a dedication, a banquet, and presentations and addresses. The book was definitely hallowed as it was born out of ceremony and want of an American Catholic university to come into being, to give hope and a sense of beauty and truth for the future, for the education of seminarians and laity alike. In eagerness and a sense of wonder to discover more about the book, its 'archive' spoke almost as a 'command' and 'obligation'<sup>4</sup> bursting from the ashes of memory. There was something more 'in' the book: an archive within an archive, like a sonic or musical memory from the depths of history that enables 'an attentive, caring space', where 'memories are allowed to resound' and to 'provoke conversation, interest, concern and care, and enrich our understanding of the human condition as listeners and witnesses'.<sup>5</sup> Exploring the pages of the book, the archive surprise revealed itself: an old, oxidised, pale brown-yellow half-page newspaper clipping of an article from *The Freeman's Journal*,<sup>6</sup> dated 'January 5, 1922', written by 'A.J.M.', and entitled in uppercase letters, 'IF AUSTRALIA HAD A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY: WHAT IT WOULD MEAN TO THE LAITY'.<sup>7</sup>

What 'archon' or 'document guardian' had left such a newspaper clipping in the book from the library of the Catholic Theological Union? Perhaps the 'archon' was a Marist priest or brother, or another priest or seminarian, who valued A.J.M.'s vision of a future Catholic university in Australia. Most importantly, though, who was A.J.M.—this bold and audacious spirit, visionary

4. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 75.

5. I have adapted this insight from Joseph Toltz's theory 'around musical memory and testimony in conversations with Holocaust survivors'. See Joseph Toltz and Anna Boucher, 'Out of the Depths: Complexity, Subjectivity and Materiality in the Earliest Accounts of Holocaust Song-Making', *East European Jewish Affairs* 48, no. 3 (2019): 324-25, doi:10.1080/13501674.2018.1559695.

6. *The Freeman's Journal* (1850–1932) is known today as *The Catholic Weekly*, a Catholic newspaper published in Sydney.

7. McHugh, 'Catholic University', 10.

and pioneer who shared his passion in an article, leaving ashes of memory, now coming to life as the embers of an imperative of hope to remember? A.J.M.'s hope for a Catholic university in Australia remained symbolically and providentially safe and secure in a book of inauguration for the Catholic University of America. Such a prayerful placement was not without care or providence. The article had walked decades of silence as it was to await a time of new life on the 'fringes' of hope for a time of 'newness', 'an impulse to evangelize and to leave a mark in this world' (GE 129).

***Archive Fever: Answering for A.J.M., Fr Arthur J. McHugh(?)***

The spectre of the archive was patient, foreseeing a collision with the hundredth anniversary of the article itself. Being a bit tardy, it took a good decade to feel the stirrings of the archive and hear its command. Eventually the obligation to respond to the archive, to discover the identity of A.J.M., came as a command to share in the article's mission and boldness to create a sense of 'eternal newness' (GE 135). The author of *The Freeman's Journal* article was audacious and bold, cultured, scholarly and well-educated, and seemed to be an Australian priest of Irish background or heritage, given 'the loyalism of the priesthood' and the 'powerful force' of 'the traditional authoritarian Irish family' seeking a 'moral and social' order.<sup>8</sup> It was not surprising then that the learned A.J.M., having the energies of an Irish-Australian spirit and fervour, possessed a good feeling for a Catholic ethos or catholicity of a university and spoke in hope of 'the example from other countries'.<sup>9</sup> The first words of the article are appealing and inspirational. A.J.M. had written:

The foundation of a Catholic University is within the range of possibility. It is because great schemes have often appeared impracticable. The very audacity of an idea may be its inspiration. It may serve as the opportunity for a great venture of faith and of co-operation with powers that are more than human. Catholics, who have already achieved the seemingly impossible in this country, can find in the idea of a Catholic University a great stimulus to their enthusiasm. It would be fitting that, at the end of a century of wonderful development in Catholic life, a new century be inaugurated by an undertaking on a level with the achievements of the past.<sup>10</sup>

The ashes of memories and discoveries collide with the event and command to archive. To respond to A.J.M.'s prophetic vision, archived to remain a century in dormancy, became once more an ember of burning passion and memory.

8. Patrick O'Farrell, 'In Search of the Hidden Ireland', *Journal of Religious History* 12, no. 3 (1983): 329-30.

9. McHugh, 'Catholic University', 10.

10. McHugh, 10.

A.J.M. had demonstrated a relation to the future as hearing the call to service: 'Yet the Lord calls us to put out into the deep and let down our nets' (cf. Luke 5:4). 'He bids us spend our lives in his service' (GE 130). Australian Catholic universities are thereby inheritors of a promise to remember such a call of service.

The question remained, 'Who was this visionary and "archon" who embodied a home for Catholic Universities'? The 'archive surprise' invited discovery and illumination.<sup>11</sup> An internet search revealed that A.J.M. could have published several book reviews during the 1930s in the American Dominican students' journal, *Dominicana*, in the section, 'Friars' Bookshelf'. For example, volume 20, issue 3, of September 1935, revealed that A.J.M. had authored the reviews of two books: *Four Independents*, by Daniel Sargent, and *The Angel of the Schools*, by Raissa Maritain.<sup>12</sup> A.J.M.'s diction appeared as equally expressive as that of *The Freeman's Journal* article. In other words, the *Dominicana* book reviews portrayed a similar voice appealing how Catholic teaching and scholarship would bring a higher moral and religious basis for society, and therefore they appeared consistent with the A.J.M. of *The Freeman's Journal* article.

A detailed search of the *Dominicana* archive (1916–1968) showed that A.J.M. was most probably not a Dominican seminarian or priest, as there were no articles by A.J.M., just book reviews.<sup>13</sup> The aim of the journal was to publish articles by Dominican student religious—'Dominican student brothers of the St. Joseph Province of the Order of Preachers' in Washington, DC.<sup>14</sup> Was it then perhaps more conceivable that the learned A.J.M. was an Australian priest who was also writing book reviews in the 1930s for a Dominican students' journal? After all, student journals were quite common at seminaries. Two examples at the Manly seminary, St Patrick's College, included *Manly* (1920–1971) and *The Patrician* (1943–54?).<sup>15</sup>

Looking at *The Freeman's Journal* article and the several book reviews, A.J.M. seemed to be a Catholic priest, likely of Irish background, resident in New South Wales, had perhaps been born in the 1880s and had died in the 1950s. The next step was to consult the List of Deceased Clergy in the *Australian Catholic Directory*<sup>16</sup> and to look through the 1950s entries, to see if there was

11. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 21.

12. See Arthur J. McHugh, review of *Four Independents*, by Daniel Sargent, and of *The Angel of the Schools*, by Raissa Maritain, *Friars' Bookshelf*, *Dominicana* 20, no. 3 (September 1935): 187–8, 202–3, <https://www.dominicanajournal.org/wp-content/files/old-journal-archive/vol20/no3/dominicanav20n3friarsbookshelf.pdf>.

13. *Dominicana* Archive (1916–1968), <https://www.dominicanajournal.org/dominicana-1916-1968-archive/>.

14. See <https://www.dominicanajournal.org/who-we-are/>.

15. In relation to the journal, Fr Mecham points out that *Manly* was a 'Publication of the Manly Union'. See Frank Mecham, *John O'Brien and the Boree Log: A Biography of Patrick Hartigan, John O'Brien* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1981), 336. A Notre Dame Library search revealed that *The Patrician* was 'a student magazine from the St. Patrick's College Manly. Articles were written by the seminarians'.

16. See <https://www.catholicdirectory.com.au/deceasedclergy>.

any name matching the initials, ‘A.J.M.’ For 1954, there was a matching entry with an Irish surname, ‘Rev Arthur J McHugh. Deceased 13 January 1954 (Campbelltown, etc, NSW)’. Another internet search revealed that a twenty-five-page book had been written by Marie Holmes about McHugh’s years as parish priest of one of the oldest Catholic Churches in Australia.<sup>17</sup> The book was entitled, *Arthur J. McHugh: St John’s Church, Campbelltown: 1931-1954*, and had been published by the Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society in 1998. It had been written as a souvenir for the ‘Eighth Annual Ivor G. Thomas Memorial Lecture’ night, 8 August 1998. The archives of the Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society was able to supply a copy, and the author, Marie Holmes, affirmed that ‘Father Hartigan or John O’Brien who wrote *Around the Boree Log*<sup>18</sup> and *Men of ’38*<sup>19</sup> was a close friend. Perhaps this encouraged his [McHugh’s] writing [of the article in *The Freeman’s Journal*]. My book was largely about his life here as Parish Priest at Campbelltown’.<sup>20</sup>

McHugh seemed to be the erudite type who could have written the 1922 article on the hope for the establishment of a Catholic university in Australia. Holmes’s book fuelled more ‘archive desire or fever’<sup>21</sup> as it evidenced the following nine memories to consider a match with A.J.M.:

- (1) McHugh’s parents were wealthy and well educated;<sup>22</sup>
- (2) His parents were of Irish heritage (father’s surname, ‘McHugh’, and mother’s maiden name, ‘Linane’);<sup>23</sup>
- (3) McHugh was also well educated, at one of the eight Sydney GPS schools (St Joseph’s College, Hunters Hill);<sup>24</sup>
- (4) He had an ‘outstanding proficiency in music’ and ‘singing’;<sup>25</sup>
- (5) He was gentle, friendly and hospitable, ‘yet also a shy man in his own way’<sup>26</sup>—perhaps such introversion could reveal a studious character;
- (6) ‘He contributed to the production of a memorial Volume for the Jubilee Celebrations’ at St Patrick’s College, Manly;<sup>27</sup>

17. Fr John Joseph Therry ‘offered the first Mass in St John’s Church, Campbelltown, 27 July 1834’. St John’s Parish, *Our Parish History*, <https://sjec.org.au/parish/campbelltown-parish/>.

18. This book was ‘first published by Angus and Robertson in 1921’. See F.A. Mecham [nephew of Fr Patrick Hartigan], ‘John O’Brien’, in John O’Brien, *Around the Boree Log: A Selection from ‘Around the Boree Log’ and the Parish of St. Mel’s*, illus. Patrick Carroll (North Ryde, NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1988), 6.

19. John O’Brien, *The Men of ’38 and Other Pioneer Priests* (Kilmore, VIC: Lowden, 1975). The book focuses on a ‘History of Irish priests who arrived in Sydney in 1838’. See <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/696936>.

20. Marie Holmes, email message to author, 18 August 2022.

21. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 30.

22. Marie Holmes, *Arthur J. McHugh: St. John’s Church, Campbelltown: 1931–1954*, A Souvenir of the Eighth Ivor C. Thomas Memorial Lecture, 8 August 1998 (Campbelltown, NSW: Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society, 1998), 1.

23. Holmes, 1.

24. Holmes, 1.

25. Holmes, 2.

26. Holmes, 2, 8, 11.

27. Holmes, 3.

- (7) He had an enduring friendship with the Australian 'poet-priest',<sup>28</sup> Fr (later Msgr) Patrick Joseph Hartigan (pen name, John O'Brien) (1878–1952), who would come to stay with him at his parish;<sup>29</sup>
- (8) He was the Patron of the Old Boys' Union of St Gregory's College,<sup>30</sup> and
- (9) He was well respected by 'many parishes of the Archdiocese'.<sup>31</sup>

The memories yielded no conclusive proof, yet there was enough evidence to fuel some further research into the significance of the association between McHugh and Hartigan. The question was whether this could lead to confirmation that McHugh was likely the A.J.M. of *The Freeman's Journal* article.

### ***Fr Hartigan: A Witness to Fr McHugh as A.J.M.?***

Hartigan had studied under the 'classical scholar',<sup>32</sup> Dr John Gallagher, later Bishop of Goulburn, and 'His poems and short stories regularly appeared, many in the religious journal, *Manly*'.<sup>33</sup> He also published articles in *The Australasian Catholic Record*,<sup>34</sup> and was renowned for his book of poetry (under the pseudonym, John O'Brien), *Around the Boree Log and Other Verses* (1921). Like the reference to A.J.M., he was referred to as 'P.J.H.' in an article in *The Bulletin*, in 1947, on the occasion he was given the dignity of the title of Monsignor. The article pointed out: 'The announcement that the ecclesiastical handle Monsignor has been tacked on to the name of Father Patrick Joseph Hartigan will delight thousands of his co-religionists; others may need to be reminded that P.J.H. is also known as "John O'Brien," under which name he published *Around the Boree Log*'.<sup>35</sup>

Hence, one could draw the following conclusions from the 'impression' left by Hartigan in his personal, cultural and religious setting:

- (1) It was common enough for people to be referred by their initials (initialisms);
  - (2) A.J.M. and P.J.H. were both scholarly and shared an affinity for poetry.
- The Freeman's Journal* article concludes with a reference to a stanza of

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28. Mecham, 'John O'Brien', 9.

29. Holmes, 8–9.

30. Holmes, 11–12.

31. Holmes, 21.

32. Mecham, 'John O'Brien', 7.

33. G.P. Walsh, 'Hartigan, Patrick Joseph (1878–1952)' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hartigan-patrick-joseph-6593>.

34. Mecham relates, 'In the years 1943, 1944 and 1945 he produced in *The Australasian Catholic Record* a series of articles under the Latin title *In Deibus Illis* ['As It Was in the Beginning']. These told the story of the pioneer priests—mostly Irish—who opened up the back country in Australia. These articles were later gathered into a book *The Men of '38* (Lowden, Kilmore, 1975)'. See Mecham, 'John O'Brien', 12, and Mecham, *John O'Brien and the Boree Log*, 218.

35. Extract from 'Personal Items' column in *The Bulletin* (Sydney, NSW), 12 November 1947, <https://www.australianculture.org/personal-items-father-patrick-joseph-hartigan-1947/>.



Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem, 'In Memoriam'. Further, A.J.M.'s quotation of the poem also evidences a reference to 'music' that may well indicate a correlation to McHugh's affinity for music.

- (3) Illustrating a similar tone to A.J.M.'s article, Hartigan had written 'A Plea for Australian Literature' in *The Australasian Catholic Record*, appealing thus:

'We must recognise our literature in order that we may recognise our own land. We have a good country here, despite the hard things homesick exiles are continually saying about it. If it does not become great it is because we are half-hearted patriots mouthing empty nothings on every platform about a "rising nation" and "a glorious destiny" while at the same time we are pining after old world customs and old world traditions, and in our heart of hearts we wish were not Australians'.<sup>36</sup>

- (4) Given the friendship and similar mindset between Hartigan and McHugh, there is growing circumstantial evidence to suggest that McHugh is the A.J.M. of *The Freeman's Journal* article, and hence a pioneer in the vision of the establishment of Catholic universities in Australia.

Let us look at two more pieces of evidence: a photo and a 1932 article.

### ***An Irish-Australian Intelligentsia***

There is a key memory and photo of Frs McHugh and Hartigan with two other priests.



Fr Mecham provides the following description of the above photo: 'Narrandera visitors in the early 1920s: Father Arthur McHugh, with whom Father [Pat] Hartigan holidayed in Campbelltown, standing on the right of Father Frank Hartigan of Jerilderie. Seated on Father Pat Hartigan's left is Dr (afterwards Msgr) Pat Tuomey, banished to the bush of Mittagong-Bowral for

36. Mecham, 'John O'Brien', 9.

his stand on the 1916 conscription issue'.<sup>37</sup> One can presume then that Pat Hartigan and McHugh would visit one another at their parishes (Narrandera and Campbelltown, respectively). What is further appealing is that A.J.M. wrote his article envisioning a Catholic university for Australia in 1922, indicating that this photo could be a contemporaneous image of him.

Notably all the priests have Irish surnames. One could also discern from the photo a spirited fellowship of mutual support of four Irish-Australian Catholic priests coming together, an intelligentsia, if you will, binding the ashes of memory together. Fr Frank Hartigan was Msgr Hartigan's brother, the youngest boy of the Hartigan family and a priest of the diocese of Wagga Wagga<sup>38</sup> at Jerilderie. Rev. Dr Patrick Tuomey was a priest of some notoriety.

### ***Fr Arthur J. McHugh: A 'Cultured Man'***

A 1932 article on McHugh's silver jubilee of priesthood provided a more prima facie if not direct fragment of evidence of his erudition. In the section, 'Felicitations from the Clergy', there is a key and illuminating sentence about the quality of McHugh's character and intellect: 'Father McAuliffe recalled a long friendship with the jubilarian and his readiness to oblige when he was at Maroubra. A thoroughly reliable and cultured man, Father McHugh had outstanding proficiency in music and was excellent in the singing of High Mass'.<sup>39</sup> The word 'cultured' seems significant. McHugh had been parish priest at Maroubra for ten years, from 1922 to 1931, before his appointment to Campbelltown parish.<sup>40</sup> Before Maroubra, McHugh had been at the Picton parish (November 1917 until March 1922).<sup>41</sup> Hence, if indeed A.J.M. was McHugh, he would have written his 5 January 1922 article at the age of thirty-eight years,<sup>42</sup> whilst at the Picton parish.

In sum, there are gathering fragments of evidence to suggest that McHugh, 'a thoroughly ... cultured man', is A.J.M., the author of the article envisioning the hope for the establishment of a Catholic university in Australia. McHugh's Irish-Australian heritage, his education and gift for music, his friendship with the poet-priest, Fr Hartigan (John O'Brien), and the respect by other priests stand out. Nonetheless, one can affirm, 'how incomplete and tentative any conclusions must be in our reconstructions of ... history'.<sup>43</sup> Notwithstanding 'the

37. Mecham, 'John O'Brien' and the Boree Log, 151. Holmes provides a further detail of the photo indicating the source as 'J. Munro'. See Holmes, 'Arthur J. McHugh', 13. The photo is also found at The Institute of Australian Culture's article, 'John O'Brien (Father Joseph Hartigan)', <https://www.australianculture.org/john-obrien/>.

38. Mecham, 'John O'Brien', 7, 13.

39. 'Silver Jubilee of Rev. Father A. J. McHugh', *The Catholic Press*, 8 December 1932, 16, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/106350425?searchTerm=Fr.%20Arthur%20J.%20McHugh>.

40. Holmes, 'Arthur J. McHugh', 3-4.

41. Holmes, 3.

42. 'Arthur Joseph McHugh was born on 20 September 1883'. See Holmes, 1.

43. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 51.

incompleteness of the archive',<sup>44</sup> A.J.M.'s pioneering vision remains as a gift for today. The emerging traces and ashes of remembrance are like energies of grace, the hidden yeast and leaven (Matt 13:33) of the kingdom of God, initials of the Holy Spirit to inspire and direct hope.

***Conclusion: The Leaven of 'Reverential Knowledge'***

A.J.M.'s 1922 article invites a conversation to reflect on the vision 'to create a reverential knowledge'.<sup>45</sup> This concerns the identity and mission of Catholic universities in Australia to encourage the gospel ethic 'to leaven the whole community'.<sup>46</sup> In other words, how might Catholic universities develop a Christian charism (catholicity) of boldness (*parrhesia*) to interrupt and contradict the totality of the world with the leaven of 'reverential knowledge'? There lies a calling within the charism to build up the church's mission to nurture the tradition of faith and reason coming together in 'the search of truth' (John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n. 1).

Reflecting on a Catholic university's mission to 'leaven the whole community', A.J.M. writes:

The influence of a Catholic university would ... flow out beyond the bounds of the Catholic fold and leaven the whole community. It would do much to direct and control the exuberance of the new-born Australian sentiment. We have our institutions, social and political—many and varied. They are merely the expression of the corporate mind of the community. Behind all this outward show of activity there is a whole realm of thought. What a pagan writer had said of people individually—that 'What a man's thoughts are that he is'—is true of people in the mass. This hidden universe of thought decides a nation's character. Australia needs some power to direct and mould it to teach her to think aright.<sup>47</sup>

The grace of 'some power' is the transcendence, boldness and measure to be the nearly invisible 'leaven' in the world. A Catholic university open to all with 'the Spirit's prompting' (GE 133) is called to discover and communicate a 'hidden universe of thought', to be free to share the wisdom and passion of Christ. Alerting to such truth and beauty of God's glory in Christ demands a demeanour of boldness even to the point of making a stance to interrupt and contradict the totality and self-interest of society. How would a Catholic university 'in truth' need to respond to the grace of the Holy Spirit 'to direct and mould it to teach her to think aright'?

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44. Derrida, 52.

45. McHugh, 'Catholic University', 10.

46. McHugh, 10.

47. McHugh, 10.

A.J.M. provides a response, namely that he speaks of the need for universities 'to create a reverential knowledge'.<sup>48</sup> To this end, he quotes from Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem, 'In Memoriam', in the hope that Catholics will become less 'insular':

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,  
But vaster.<sup>49</sup>

An archive can speak like an imperative. From the ashes of the past, the 'archon', A.J.M., evokes a burning passion of an imperative 'to create a reverential knowledge', the 'music' of university education. How then might the symphonic promise of Catholic universities in Australia make 'vaster' music? As a visionary, A.J.M. composes 'a Catholic atmosphere',<sup>50</sup> a symphony of boldness to interrupt and awaken us from our slumber. Pointing to a challenge at odds today between secular and Catholic universities under the subsection, 'Students Leave Catholic Atmosphere', he writes:

At present, the Catholic student must enter the secular University if he would acquire the higher branches of learning. Accustomed hitherto to a Catholic atmosphere, he becomes subject to an influence that is non-religious, if not positively irreligious. His faith may be endangered. The rationalistic, liberal, speculative ideas of a university that has banished religion from its walls may carry him off his feet if his faith is weak.<sup>51</sup>

For A.J.M., Catholic universities have an obligation to create 'a Catholic atmosphere', to offer more than a 'mere' alternative to secular universities. This may well mean interrupting and contradicting secular society's association with the 'goddess of reason'.<sup>52</sup> The church remains called to be 'bold' to advance both faith and reason together and joyfully: '*Parrhesía* is a seal of the Spirit; it testifies to the authenticity of our preaching. It is a joyful assurance that leads us to glory in the Gospel we proclaim. It is an unshakeable trust in the faithful Witness who gives us the certainty that nothing can "separate us from the love of God" (*Rom* 8:39)' (GE 132).

The hunger and thirst for a Catholic university of visionaries like A.J.M. remains an enduring gift to be bold and audacious. There may be failure, yet this is where humility and hope begin. St John Henry Newman speaks of such humility

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48. McHugh, 10.

49. McHugh, 10.

50. McHugh, 10.

51. McHugh, 10.

52. McHugh, 10.

‘from the very first month of my Catholic existence, when I knew nothing of course of Catholics, wished for a Catholic University’,<sup>53</sup> by confessing:

In the course of years I have made many mistakes. I have nothing of that high perfection, which belongs to the writings of Saints, *viz.*, that error cannot be found in them; but what I trust that I may claim all through what I have written, is this—an honest intention, an absence of private ends, a temper of obedience, a willingness to be corrected, a dread of error, a desire to serve Holy Church, and, through Divine Mercy, a fair measure of success.<sup>54</sup>

Newman lists a number of healthy traits for educators, indicating the humility of honesty, selflessness, service and faith. Here, he witnesses to the leaven of confession ‘to create a reverential knowledge’, to build and form Catholic universities in Australia. If today, just a few of these traits survive, there is hope for a little confession to interrupt and contradict the world even with a word of joy. Where a Catholic university finds truth and beauty in the confession of Christ, one may then discover the grace of boldness witnessed in the ‘high perfection’ of the ‘writings of the saints’. A hundred years ago, in 1922, A.J.M. spoke of a future Catholic university that would nurture ‘Catholic Philosophy ... in perfect humanity with Catholic faith’ to orient a university’s ‘curriculum’.<sup>55</sup> Such ‘Catholicism’ would seek ‘to produce a different mentality ... knowledge with a Catholic mind’.<sup>56</sup>

A.J.M. imagined an enduring ‘Catholic atmosphere’ ‘to create a reverential knowledge’. One could well imagine that his prophetic words are a living witness of the *Confessio* of St Patrick travelling afar through the centuries to reach Australian shores:

In the knowledge of this faith in the Trinity, and without letting the dangers prevent it, it is right to make known the gift of God and his eternal consolation. It is right to spread abroad the name of God faithfully and without fear, so that even after my death I may leave something of value to the many thousands of my brothers and sisters—the children whom I baptised in the Lord.<sup>57</sup>

Even if these words make little sense today, they speak enough truth to allow the gentleness of the ‘Spirit’s prompting’ to recover the ashes of memory, that is to say, to ‘inherit the earth’ (Matt 5:5) and the care and humility ‘to create reverential knowledge’.

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53. Ian Kerr, *John Henry Newman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 462.

54. Kerr, *Newman*, 720.

55. McHugh, ‘Catholic University’, 10.

56. McHugh, 10.

57. St Patrick, *Confessio*, n. 14. See [https://www.confessio.ie/etexts/confessio\\_english#](https://www.confessio.ie/etexts/confessio_english#).