

Acknowledgements

Help and encouragement have come from many directions to sustain and enliven this project. My deepest debt is to the people who have shared their stories and photographs, inviting me into their memories of life as a Benedictine sister or a child in care at St Joseph's, usually over several conversations. Those interviews have been a privilege. Three stakeholder communities enabled the work and facilitated connections. I am grateful to the New Norcia Aboriginal Corporation, especially the members of the executive, Mary Nannup, Margaret Drayton and Paul Willaway, and to Mae Taylor whose careful initiative prompted the reunion of 2001. The Benedictine Missionary Sisters of Tutzing have been gracious hosts in Kalumburu, Madrid and Nebraska, where Sr Winfrieda Bugayong, Sr Maria Gratia Balagot, Sr Margareta Wegscheid and Sr Pia Portmann made further introductions to the house of oblates in Barcelona, the Cistercian community in Valladolid, the Benedictine community of San José in Burgos, and to the families of the sisters. The generosity of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia also underpins this book. Abbot Placid Spearritt responded warmly to an initial enquiry with an invitation to 'come and see' what the archives might yield about the Spanish sisters. His vision for scholarship at New Norcia enabled the early stages of the project, and the hospitality of both the archives and the guesthouse of the Benedictine Community of New Norcia have remained a mainstay under the more recent leadership of Abbot John Herbert. Bernadette Taylor and her team at the guesthouse always smoothed the way, and the community's archivists Wendy McKinley, Leen Charles and Peter Hocking have contributed countless hours of professional expertise, regularly going the extra mile with patience and good humour. In particular, Peter Hocking's cheerful help and acumen, across a continent and three time zones, has been invaluable.

Research over decades is a rare freedom in contemporary academia. At the outset I was a member of the History Department at the University of Adelaide where a period of study leave made the first steps possible. The project was both fruitfully disrupted and ultimately enriched by my move to the United Faculty of Theology, and more recently Pilgrim Theological College, within what is now the University of Divinity in Melbourne. In a context where small group teaching is still valued and possible, students in the New Norcia intensives have engaged with the Benedictine story and the mission town, and expanded my understanding of how the site itself speaks. Along the way friends and colleagues have read and improved drafts, responded to papers and answered queries. I'm especially indebted to Edmund Champion, Graeme Davison and David Hilliard who read and discussed the full draft with typical generosity and insight, and to Kellie Abbot at the National Archives of Australia, Sally Douglas, Sarah Gador-Whyte, Stefano Girola, Anna Haebich, Andrew Hamilton, Kerrie Handasyde, Margot Harker, John Kinder, Margaret Malone, Lauren Mosso, Jill O'Brien, Carmel Posa, Randall Prior, Sharne Rolfe, Howard Wallace, David Whiteford at the State Records Office of Western Australia, and Naomi Wolfe, Indigenous Theologies Project Officer at the University of Divinity. Carlos Lopez, Kerry Mullan, Teresa De Castro and Fr David Barry translated material from historic handwriting. Stuart Fenner and Adrienne Maloney transcribed recordings. Joe Courtney made time to draft the maps and Alejandro Polanco Masa brought them expertly to life. Mary Nannup, Margaret Drayton, Paul Willaway and Sr Veronica Willaway advised on photographs and sought permissions. Merryn Gray, Carl Rainer, Lauren Murphy and Geoff Hunt brought technological magic and eagle eyes to the manuscript. The ANU.Lives editorial board and the editorial team at ANU Press were consistently perceptive and professional. Vivienne Halligan shared her family's stock of the sisters' embroidery. Patricia Weishaar with James Wahl and Chase Becker managed transport from Minnesota to Nebraska and back; and Helena Kadmos and Kevin Crombie made key trips to New Norcia to assist. Anne and Joe Courtney regularly made space for a visiting researcher in their home, and so did Sue Chapman, Helen Brash and Tim Featherstonhaugh, Phil and Imogen Garner, Tom Sutton, and the Fenner-Kadmos household. Kai Jensen, Jane Kelly, Kathleen Troup and Carole Carmody were always interested and insightful. The Dalton McCaughey Library is an ecumenical collection of visionary breadth and depth, resourcing conversations across the disciplinary boundaries. It has been a pleasure to share that conversation with good colleagues at Pilgrim

and in the Catholic history seminar at the University of Divinity. I have also benefited from discussion with colleagues at the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences symposium on women and missions (Brisbane, June 2013), the University of Notre Dame symposium on the *Nun in the World* (London, May 2015), the US Conference on the History of Women Religious in St Paul (2013) and Santa Clara (2016), and the Third and Fourth International Monastic Symposia at Sant'Anselmo, Rome (2011, 2016), supported by funds from the Research Office at the University of Divinity and the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

Some time before this project began I met my husband John H. Smith at a land rights demonstration. Later, we got to know each other at the monastery. He has been the sustaining constant through all the phases of this project. He has kept the kitchen humming and the household ticking beyond any rational accounting of tasks, while his commitment to good scholarship and to the Rule of Benedict informs and inspires my own. It is no platitude to say that without him this book would not have been completed. For this and for all, I am so grateful.

Katharine Massam

This text is taken from *A Bridge Between: Spanish Benedictine Missionary Women in Australia*, by Katharine Massam, published 2020 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.