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**Anzac Day as Australia’s All Souls’ Day:
Canon David John Garland’s Vision for Commemoration of the Fallen¹**

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Apart from very few aficionados the origin of Anzac Day is shrouded in mystery. Most people, if asked to think about it would probably answer that it was started by the RSL. In fact the very first Anzac Day Commemoration Committee was formed in Brisbane on 10th January 1916 at a public meeting chaired by the state premier, T.J. Ryan, with members of the Recruiting Committee, Church leaders and the State governor. It was essentially a civilian initiative though the guest speaker was General James M’Cay recently returned from Gallipoli. He was mainly interested in keeping up recruitment in spite of or rather because of the disaster of the recent campaign that had cost the lives of so many Brisbane and Toowoomba families their sons. M’Cay’s point was that it did not suffice now to cheer from the sidelines those troops left who were to be sent to France for further fighting. Their numbers had to be kept up until the “Prussian menace” was disposed of. But the loss of so many Queensland men – they were the first ashore at Gallipoli – also suggested the idea of commemoration whereupon a member of the Recruiting Committee, one Thomas August Ryan, (not to be confused with the premier) a Brisbane auctioneer whose son had served at Gallipoli, suggested that the 25th April be set aside for a day of solemn remembrance.

¹ This paper represents the distillation of a number of previous research publications in a variety of refereed journals. See the following” “Canon David John Garland and the ANZAC Tradition”. *St Mark’s Review* 154 (Winter, 1993):12-21; “Anzac as Religious Revivalism: The Politics of Faith in Brisbane, 1916-1939” in Mark Hutchinson and Stuart Piggin (eds), *Reviving Australia* (Sydney, Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994) 170-84; “Canon David John Garland and the Problem of who Leads” [with Alex Kidd] in *Episcopacy: Views from the Antipodes* (Adelaide: Anglican Board of Christian Education, 1994) 151-69; “Canon David John Garland (1864-1939) as Architect of Anzac Day” *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal* vol. 17 no. 2 (May 1999): 49-64; “The Struggle for Anzac Day 1916-1930 and the Role of the Brisbane Anzac Day Commemoration Committee” *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*” vol.88, no.1 (June 2002) :54-74; “Was there an Anzac Theology” *Colloquium* 35/1 (2003):3-13; “Anglicanism and Anzac Observance: the Essential Contribution of Canon David John Garland” *Pacifica* vol. 19 (February 2006): 58-77.

Canon David Garland, the secretary of the committee, had spoken eloquently in support of this emphasizing that despite the failed campaign, the men had fought valiantly under appalling conditions and had demonstrated extraordinary character and devotion to duty, and so deserved to be honoured. The meeting then unanimously elected the Dublin-born Canon Garland, an Anglican priest, who already had an extraordinary track record of public service, to convene an Anzac Day Commemoration Committee, and to design what amounted to a liturgy of remembrance. And this he did by inviting all church leaders including the local rabbi to participate. The ex-officio chairman was to be the premier of Queensland, and he/she still is. Garland was undoubtedly the driving force, and he remained so until his death in 1939. A joint secretary, Colonel E. R. B. Pike, was appointed when Garland left in 1917 at the age of fifty-three to become a chaplain in Egypt to Australian forces with a brief from the then Minister of Defence, George Pearce, viz. to report on the war graves situation and to report on troop welfare, especially the problem of venereal disease. On his own initiative, with money collected in Queensland, he also set hostels for Anzacs in Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Jerusalem and Damascus. Garland even managed to accompany the Light Horse into action. He continued to make himself useful in various projects in the Middle East until early 1919.

All contemporary sources bear witness to Garland's essential shaping influence on the way in which Anzac Day was and has been observed ever since. The other ministers of religion on the ADCC clearly deferred to Garland as the one of their number who knew how best to plan a public event which amounted to a *secular requiem for the fallen*. As indicated, Garland was without doubt the most high-profile clergyman of any denomination, certainly in Queensland. But prior to his arrival in the Brisbane diocese he had already ten years highly active apprenticeship in Perth first as Diocesan Secretary and sometime Administrator, chaplain to the Boer War contingent, editor of the church paper, the *West Australian*, mission priest and trouble shooter to run-down parishes, as well as becoming a doughty advocate for aboriginal emancipation. In addition, Garland led a most successful campaign to have the state education act changed to allow Bible lessons to be conducted in government schools, and it is that which gave him nation-wide acclaim, in all non-RC churches, it must be added.

In these matters Garland had made himself almost indispensable to the diocese. I say almost, because such energetic clergy inevitably collide with their bishops who see in them and their various initiatives a threat to their authority. In Garland's case he fell out seriously with his bishop, Charles Riley, a blunt Yorkshire man, who did not like his Anglo-Catholic ritualism, but mostly I suspect, his Irish temper, to which Riley's diary bears eloquent witness. Garland had only one answer to an issue and that was inevitably the right answer. This character trait resulted in collisions with at least three of his bishops. But Garland got things done. His Brisbane archbishop, St Clair Donaldson, referred to him a "Triton among the minnows".

As indicated, Garland had an unusual formation. He was born in Dublin but the family originated from an ancient "Orange" farming family of county Monaghan. The farm is still there and is a most flourishing enterprise exporting eggs to Europe, still in the hands of the family who also maintain a handsome bed and breakfast sideline. It was on this farm that the local Orange Lodge convened. The little hall is preserved today, having been shifted to a museum village outside Belfast. Garland's father, however, had left the farm to work in a non-academic capacity at Trinity College Dublin, finally as a library assistant. Surviving relatives in Belfast report that David Garland wanted to become an articled clerk. But for reasons unexplained Garland, aged twenty-two, left Dublin for Brisbane, and sought to pursue his vocation to the law in Toowoomba. It was there that the volatile young Orangeman came under the influence of a highly motivated Anglo-Catholic priest, Canon Thomas Jones, rector of St James', Toowoomba.

If one, as a historian, has ears to hear and eyes to see, this encounter between the Bible-believing Orangeman and the proselytizing Anglo-Catholic zealot has to have been of long-range significance. Why? Because Jones convinced the earnest Evangelical Irish youth of the *comprehensive* nature of Anglicanism; it was both catholic *and* evangelical, giving equal emphasis to scripture and to the sacraments. And of this Garland remained an ardent advocate for the rest of his life. One could not be a Christian without prioritizing the Word of God and at the same time elevating the sacraments, of which the Eucharist was the key component of Christian worship for the sacralising the world.

And here the point is that two traditions coalesced in Canon Garland; his Bible-based faith and his embrace of Anglo-Catholicism. This explains his life-long advocacy

of Bible classes in government schools on the one hand, and on the other, his energetic promotion of Anzac Day as “Australia’s All Souls’ Day”, the day when the nation . honoured its fallen. Those who gave their lives in the struggle against what was then regarded as the “Prussian Menace”, of which the German Kaiser was the incarnation, were veritable saints since they had made the supreme sacrifice in defending Christian civilization. Garland, as did not a few other leading persons at the time, understood the British Empire as the bastion of freedom, a power under God with the vocation to propagate and uphold that freedom from all Godless enemies. Indeed, many nation’s claimed to have God on their side, as notably the Germans did at the time (*Gott mit uns*), but they had a different idea of freedom from the British whose great apostle was none other than the famous liberal prime minister, William Ewart Gladstone. God had called Great Britain to cultivate and bestow her constitutional freedoms on all those parts of the world over which the Union Jack flew, and upon which the sun never set, and to defend those freedoms when and wherever they were threatened. Canon Garland was a great admirer of Gladstone, and robustly advanced his ideas.

Consequently, when, in the view of most British church men, the apostate Prussian-German Empire unleashed war in August 1914, Garland became a crusader for the cause of the British Empire; hence his promotion of recruitment and his energetic chaplaincy work among soldiers training in camp near Brisbane. In this regard he established the *Soldiers’ Church of England Help Society* and launched a so-called “Lavender Fund” to be raised from contributions from all Anglican parishes with the motto, “Nothing is too good for our Soldier Boys”. The money was spent on recreation huts and providing creature comforts for all recruits regardless of denomination. There was, of course, a chapel, and troops were prepared for Confirmation which happened in the cathedral prior to embarkation. They were also given Prayer Books. The parish donations were listed every month in the Brisbane *Church Chronicle*. And in this Garland was consciously competing with the YMCA and the Salvation Army as he did not think these agencies were adequately equipped to take care of the spiritual needs of the troops.

Before the Middle East experience, though, Garland had well and truly seen the establishment of Anzac Day in Brisbane and urged the mayors of all Australian and New Zealand cities to follow suit. He had fashioned a mode of commemoration that derived

clearly from the Orangemen custom of an annual march on the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne (12 July, 1690) and the Catholic ritual of celebrating requiems for the dead; a quite remarkable confluence of what one would have thought were mutually exclusive traditions. Garland's Anglo-Catholicism enabled him to do this.

In this regard one has to appreciate Garland's theological sensitivity in his proposals for the Anzac observance. Obviously, if all Australians had been members of the Church of England, the method of remembrance would have been straight-forward. One celebrated a requiem Eucharist. And this actually happened on 10th June 1915 at St John's Cathedral, Brisbane, a time when the casualty lists from the Dardanelles were distressingly long. The newspapers published the names of the fallen and wounded every week, often with photographs. The Queensland public grieved, and the archbishop, St Clair Donaldson, was moved to celebrate a solemn Requiem Eucharist in the presence of the governor and the consuls of France and Russia. It was a Thursday morning, and over 600 attended, and one hundred made an act of communion. We know this exactly because the details are entered in the Cathedral service register. So that Eucharist was the very first in all of Australia for the Gallipoli fallen.

It would have been very unusual for a man with Garland's background and sensitivity not to be acutely aware of the religious and denominational theological differences that existed in the Australian population. Coming from an Orangeman family he of course would have been alive to the fact that in Australia there were many Irish people of Roman Catholic obedience as well as of various Protestant persuasions. And in the Anglican Church the age old debate between those of Evangelical conviction with others of a more Catholic mind was an ever-present reality. How to reconcile all these traditions in a commemoration of fallen soldiers was a challenge, but precisely this Garland was equipped, both by background and theological training, to meet and resolve.

We need to keep in mind that the ADCC was composed of representatives of most mainstream denominations in Australia, and some of them had been serving chaplains in the field, and had ministered to the dying and carried out burials. That was their common experience that enabled them to cooperate in what must be recognized as a genuinely ecumenical enterprise. But then we have to be aware that serious non-negotiable theological differences divided them in peace time. It used to be said that there are no

atheists in foxholes, and by the same token a ministering chaplain does not necessarily ask a dying soldier his denomination before administering the last rites. In dying for one's country all theological differences become somehow irrelevant.

A consultation of the files of the Brisbane ADCC indicates that all the chaplains on it were convinced of the need for a day of remembrance, certainly not a day on which war was glorified. On the contrary, the emphasis was on the sin that gave rise to international conflict and the nations' need to atone for that sin. One had also to remember the sacrifice of young lives in the cause of freedom with gratitude and to console the bereaved parents, wives, sweethearts and siblings of the fallen, not to mention the wounded. It was up to Garland and his committee to work out how this should be done, i. e., how should "Australia's All Souls' Day", as Garland termed it, be celebrated bearing in mind the variety of denominational traditions that had to be reconciled. On the Continent and in Roman Catholic countries generally, All Souls' Day is the day (2nd November) when all the faithful departed including fallen soldiers are commemorated. Certainly, in France the day was a public holiday. In Australia, Anglicans and Roman Catholics celebrate All Saints' and All Soul's Day in Church, and there are churches and schools' dedicated to both these days. ²

All this was planned by the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee whose guidelines were followed throughout the nation. Canon Garland, being the man he was, knew very well that Protestants could not pray for the dead and that Roman Catholics were forbidden to take part in any religious services at which non-Roman Catholic clergy were presiding. As well, there were Jews, atheists and agnostics among the participating troops to be taken into account. Consequently, the ADCC recommended that each denomination hold a service according to their own theological tradition, separately in

² My own Anglican school in Charters Towers, North Queensland, is called "All Souls' School" and, was founded as a war memorial school in 1920" by an English priest who later became Archbishop of Brisbane, Reginald Halse. I remember that we had to attend Mass two days in a row in that first week of November because All Saints' Day is the day before All Souls' Day. And, of course, on Anzac Day there was always a Requiem Mass in chapel and we then, as cadets, with those of the other schools, marched through the town with the AIF and the veterans in the RSL to the war memorial in Gill Street for an inter-denominational service, and then to Lissner Park where the Boer War memorial is located.

their own churches, and that for the public service to be conducted afterwards at the war memorial there would only be hymns used while they were clearly theistic did not mention the Trinity. So what was sung, and these are still sung at the War Memorial here, were, “O God our help in ages past”, “O valiant hearts” and Kipling’s “Recessional”. And when it came to remembering the fallen, Garland had devised the two minute’s silence.

The records of the ADCC are quite clear that Canon Garland conceived of the silence so that each person present could pray, or not pray, in accordance with his or her individual beliefs. But the main point was that all faiths were there together mourning the fallen in their own way, giving comfort to the bereaved and being encouraged to reflect on the sin of humanity that led to the scourge of war. In Garland’s mind, all these elements were intended to gain expression in the ritual, and he hoped, as well, that the common experience of mourning would lead to a spiritual renewal of all participants, to cause people to refocus their lives on God. That is why he agitated for Anzac Day to be legally enshrined as a so-called *close public holiday* like Good Friday, and so it was. After a vigorous campaign lasting all through the ‘twenties Garland, with the solid support of the ADCC, lobbied throughout the Commonwealth and New Zealand for legislation to be enacted at both state level and federally that the 25th April be established as a *close public holiday*. And, indeed each State, the Commonwealth as well as New Zealand with which country Garland had maintained close contact over two separate visits, all, one after the other, enacted the requisite legislation so that by 1930, Anzac Day had become the nation-wide close public holiday that Garland and his committee intended it to be. And that meant a day of very solemn recollection on which there were no hotels, cinemas or race courses open and no organized sports at all.

Returned servicemen who lived within a 30 mile radius of Brisbane were allocated free rail passes on the day to come into town to attend the church services and to participate in the march. Afterwards, before retuning home, the veterans were given lunch at the various shire and church halls, prepared by the women’s auxiliaries. “Nothing was too good for our soldier boys”.

It should also be mentioned that Garland was the assistant secretary to the mayor of Brisbane who chaired a committee to plan the city cenotaph. Each of the State capitals

convened similar committees, and so a kind of competition developed throughout the Commonwealth as to which one would build the most impressive one, and how quickly. The files of that committee at the Brisbane City Council Archives, reveal the various designs for a memorial that were submitted from various artists and architects, even one from Sir Edwin Lutyens who designed the great cenotaph in London. His tender for Brisbane was, however, far too elaborate and expensive for the committee, and so they compromised, choosing the rotunda design in the middle of which is the “Eternal Flame” that has been in place since 1930 in front of Brisbane’s Central Station in Ann Street.

Garland had always from the beginning been the driving force for the building of fitting war memorials throughout Queensland, and in order to raise money for these an Anzac Day ribbon was sold, originally for one shilling, throughout the State. It was of lavender coloured silk embossed with the Lion of St Mark, because the 25th April is St Mark’s Day, and under which stood the words, *Audax at Fidelis*, “bold but faithful”. And this is a distinctly Pauline admonition expressed in the first Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 3, verses 11 and 12: “This was according to the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, *in whom we have boldness and confidence of access through our faith in him*”.

A further instance of the essential Christian element in Anzac commemoration is the Biblical verse “Their Name Liveth”. This you will find inscribed on the “Stone of Remembrance”, an example of which is to be found in front of the Australian War Memorial here in Canberra. Prior to the building of that Memorial, the ADCC in Brisbane had already for Anzac Day 1924, established the “Stone of Remembrance” in the Toowong cemetery where some three hundred deceased diggers are interred, and the “Cross of Sacrifice” stands behind it. At the 11.00 am Solemn Eucharist in St John’s Cathedra that Anzac Day, Garland was the preacher and he chose for his text, “Their Name Liveth”. These words are from the book of Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), chapter 44. It begins: “Let us now praise famous men and our fathers in their generation”. It goes on, in verses 13-15 to say “Their posterity will continue for ever, and their glory will not be blotted out. Their bodies were buried in peace, and their names live to all generations.”

That sermon and may not be considered today as entirely theologically invulnerable, but it encapsulated the then currently Anglo-Catholic theology of Anzac

Day. I shall return to that sermon at the conclusion, but first it is necessary to take issue with current secular views of Anzac Day

As has been demonstrated the day was conceived as a very religious event, but this has been ignored or challenged by a number of leading Australian secular historians, foremost of whom is Professor Ken Inglis in his extensive study, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* that first appeared in 1998, and has now been re-issued. There you will find no mention of Canon Garland at all, and the reason is that Professor Inglis appears to be at great pains to minimize the contribution of organized religion to the creation of Anzac Day. As well, it is implied that the men of the AIF had little time for Christianity. Anzac Day for Inglis and several others like him, was the result of the spontaneous desire of soldiers to remember their fallen comrades in a spirit the presumed Australian tradition and sentiment of mate-ship. Men simply had an innate sense of the sacred. And they even quoted the famous saying of Jesus, “Greater love hath no man that this, than a man lay down his life for his friends” [John 15:13] without appreciating or acknowledging from where it comes.

What is evident here is a certain skittishness on the part of these historians, and others, in recognizing that an essential part of being human is the undeniable spiritual dimension. Instead, what they appeal to is what has been called, “Australian Sentimental Humanism”, a readiness to believe something but without theological rigor. None of them wish to confront this issue by taking cognizance of the discipline of theology. Can one seriously affirm along with such an historian as Bill Gammage, for example, that Australian soldiers have not been influenced in their lives by the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth? It is interesting that Inglis quite strongly believes that war memorials are *sacred places* and that the rituals that take place every 25th April around them are a response to that sacredness. But nowhere does he attempt to define “sacredness”. He is obviously quite unaware of the work of the famous German theologian, Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*. I, however, would like to suggest that the best explanation of what occurs on Anzac Day comes from Otto’s famous study. And Garland, as a priest, understood the need for a ritual, focused on a memorial, quite instinctively, because he would have been daily through the recital of the Divine Office of Morning and Evening Prayer, as well as the celebration of the Eucharist or Mass, sensitized to the holy. He

would have had, as a sensitive priest, a highly developed *sense of the numinous*, a concept developed by Rudolf Otto, meaning the spiritual dimension of reality. His sermon at St John's Cathedral at the 11.00 a m solemn Eucharist on Anzac Day 1924 refers expressly to the erection of the Cross of Sacrifice in Toowong cemetery already mentioned: He said:

The memorial in its noble dignity proclaims, as befits a Christian people, the great sacrifice of Calvary; and unites therefore the sacrifice of those who also laid down their lives for their friends. Its inscription is no less dignified than the memorial itself: Their Name Liveth for Evermore"...[He went on to express in characteristic fashion his theology of sacrifice]...On Anzac Day we gather collectively, and plead for them the Sacrifice of Calvary, to which they united themselves by offering their souls and bodies as a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice, after the example of Him who by word and from the pulpit of the Cross taught that "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Thus in the House of God, pleading at the Altar of God, we find the most comfort, not the sorrow of those without hope for them that sleep in Him, nor the swamping of our grief in noisy demonstrations; but by emphasizing in mind and thought the reality of that life beyond the veil where they live for evermore, and where some day we, too, shall meet them. Thus again there is no room for anything but a solemn observance of Anzac Day – the All Souls' Day of Australia – and so we come before God not in the bright vestments of festival and the joyous music of triumph; but with the tokens of Christian penitence and sorrow for the sin of the world which caused the sacrifice of those bright young lives, our dearest and our best."

This was the core of Garland's Anzac theology. Secular historians have no access to it. In vain would we search for a similar explanation of *why the day is sacred*. But people in the 'twenties and 'thirties seem to have understood this. The premier of Queensland, William Gillies, at the unveiling ceremony in Toowong paid the following tribute to Canon Garland:

To the credit of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee, of which body Canon Garland might well be described as the life and soul, Anzac Day has been observed in the State each year since the memorable landing on Gallipoli on 25th April, 1915.[...] Standing as we are today in the presence of the dead and their living friends and relatives, I feel it [...] is an occasion for humility and reverence, for silence and thought.”

It has been indicated that Garland was the secretary of the Lord Mayor’s sub-committee for the erection of the great Brisbane war memorial, completed in 1930. It has no overtly Christian symbols at all, yet the State Governor dedicated it in decidedly religious terms, namely to “the hallowed memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice, whose souls we commend to Almighty God”. It is certainly a *sacred place*.

Finally, Garland’s vigorous efforts to hallow the memory of the fallen soldiers through the public ritual of Anzac Day was acknowledged in 1935 when he was awarded the Order of the British Empire. It was publically announced during the annual Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane by the then Bishop administrator, Horace Dixon. In his speech of reply, Garland said modestly that if he had ever achieved anything it was really due to the shaping influence that Canon Thomas Jones had exerted on him when he served in Toowoomba as Jones’ young catechist. Garland may well have emigrated from Dublin to Brisbane, but in the process he had also migrated from one theological mind-set to quite another that led him to accomplish things he could never have imagined had he remained in Dublin. In assessing Canon Garland’s career, the role of his mentor must be seen as having been crucial.