

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
CATHOLIC SOCIETY

2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT



Contents

Introduction	p. 4
By the numbers	p. 5
Selected significant events	p. 6
Regular events	p. 10
Leadership team	p. 12

Introduction

The ANU Catholic Society is the home of Catholic students on campus. As a society with strong Dominican origins, our motto, *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), draws from St Thomas Aquinas. St Aquinas taught that rigorous intellectual inquiry and a life of deep faith are not opposing paths, but complementary pursuits that lead to truth.

In this spirit, the Society provides a nourishing Catholic community that supports ANU students as they both grow in faith and deepen their understanding of the world at university.

The Society organises a wide range of events, including weekly Mass, volunteering initiatives, social gatherings, and academic lectures. These activities provide opportunities for spiritual, intellectual, and personal growth, while strengthening the bonds of friendship among our members.



By the numbers...

15

*Catechumens
in the past two years*

57%

*of the Archdiocese's current
seminarians were associated
with the Society*

> 5500

Social media followers

70

*Current student
members*

Dominican Retreat

On Sunday 10 May 2026, Fr Anthony Walsh OP – an alumnus of both ANU and John XXIII College – led a retreat for the ANU Catholic Society.

Fr Anthony spoke about Dominican spirituality and the pursuit of truth, encouraging us to see our studies not as separate from our faith, but as a form of prayer. He reflected on St Thomas Aquinas' understanding of truth as the conformity of the mind to reality. To study creation seriously, then, is not merely an academic exercise, but an opportunity to grow in knowledge of the Creator Himself — the One who is 'the way, the truth, and the life'.

Before the retreat, many of us enjoyed lunch generously hosted by John XXIII College. The retreat concluded with Sunday Mass at the St John the Evangelist Chapel on Daley Road.



Jurisprudence and Theology Lecture by the Hon Justice Steward AC



On 13 May 2026, the ANU Catholic Society welcomed the Hon Justice Simon Steward AC of the High Court of Australia to deliver a public address on jurisprudence and theology. The event was held collaboratively with the ANU Law School and the Australian Catholic Students Association.

Around 200 students, academics, legal practitioners, and members of the general public attended the lecture.

Justice Steward spoke about the influence of theology on the development of equity, particularly in relation to the doctrine of unconscionable conduct. The lecture prompted rich discussion amongst attendees about equity, theology, and the role of normative standards in the law.



Visit by the Nuncio

The ANU Catholic Society welcomed His Excellency, Archbishop Charles Balvo, the Apostolic Nuncio to Australia, to campus on 17 October 2025.

His Excellency celebrated Mass in the Chapel for the Memorial of St Ignatius of Antioch.

Following Mass, the ANU Catholic Society, together with the ANU International Relations Society and the ANU Society for the United Nations, had the privilege of hosting His Excellency for an evening of conversation about his mission as the Holy See's representative to Australia.

Drawing on his decades of diplomatic experience around the world, His Excellency shared insightful reflections on faith, dialogue, and international engagement.



Feast of Pope St John XXIII

To celebrate the feast of Pope St John XXIII – the patron of the eponymous Catholic college at ANU – the Catholic Society welcomed Fr Laurie Foote OP on 12 October 2025. Fr Laurie celebrated Sunday Mass at ANU for the first time since 2022, on what was also the first feast day of newly canonised St Carlo Acutis, the Church's first millennial saint.

After Mass, Fr Laurie shared about the life of Pope St John XXIII, and how the saint's commitment to education and social justice is a legacy that the Dominican Order has continued at John XXIII College.



Regular events



Weekly Mass and Holy Hour every Friday

What's the use of Christianity?
Answers from St Augustine's *City of God*

Formation by
Fr Paul Rowse, OP
BTh, GCHE, MTS, MTheol, DPhil

18 March 2026
6.30 pm

Father Paul Rowse, OP is a Catholic priest of the Dominican Order. He teaches students about the New Testament at Catholic Theological College.

Amongst his other degrees, Fr Rowse holds a Master of Theology from the Melbourne College of Divinity. He also completed a doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford in 2022.

Faith formation with Fr Paul Rowse OP



Pizza and fellowship after Mass on Fridays



Weekly coffee catch-ups and women's group gatherings

Regular events



Commencement Mass and address by His Grace
Archbishop Prowse



Volunteering with *Caritas*
and *Vinnies*

Leadership team

Fr Eden Langlands

Chaplain

Kyle Petrusa

President

Leon Simonetti

Vice-President

Samara Hayes

Treasurer

Peter Woodhead

Secretary

Maria Rego

Communications

Enquiries: anucathsoc@gmail.com

*51 Daley Road, St John the Evangelist
Chapel*