Register for Chesterton Conference - November 1, 2025



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'I have found that humanity is not incidentally engaged, but eternally and systematically engaged, in throwing gold into the gutter and diamonds into the sea. . . . ; therefore I have imagined that the main business of man, however humble, is defence. I have conceived that a defendant is chiefly required when worldlings despise the world - that a counsel for the defence would not have been out of place in the terrible day when the sun was darkened over Calvary and Man was rejected of men.'

G.K Chesterton, 'Introduction', *The Defendant* (1901)

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Chesterton Academy

The Birth of a Grassroots Movement

by Emily de Rotstein



Emily de Rotstein

In 2008 a new independent Catholic school opened in the American state of Minnesota. Named the Chesterton Academy, its co-founder was Dale Ahlquist, President of The Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton. Dale spoke at last year's Australian Chesterton Conference on the remarkable expansion of Chesterton schools throughout America and internationally.

At this year's conference – on Saturday, 1st November, at Campion College – a key speaker will be **Emily de Rotstein***, Executive Director of the Chesterton Society in America and of the Chesterton Schools Network. Her husband, Nes, who is responsible at the Chesterton Society for developing international partnerships in education, will also speak at the November Conference.*

In this article, which appeared originally in Gilbert*, the official magazine of the Society of G.K. Chesterton, Emily explains the rationale of the Chesterton schools (now numbering more than 70 worldwide and 20 additional schools in development). She outlines their governing philosophy and daily practices. At a time when classical Catholic schools are growing in Australia, the visit by Emily and Nes is especially welcome.*

More than one hundred years ago, G.K. Chesterton pointed out that education was in a state of decline and disarray, and that everyone knew it. The astonishing thing is that schools were in far better shape at that time than they are now.

Most students studied Latin and the Classics. They were amazingly well-versed in Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare. They could write coherent essays with good grammar and sophisticated literary allusions. They could solve complicated math problems on paper, or even in their heads, that would cause most of today's students to look around for their calculators.

The inability to imbue even general knowledge to students has been compounded by an increasing emphasis on specialization, as students become narrower in their focus at very early ages. If a student shows an inclination toward the humanities, he is steered away from the sciences and vice versa. Subject matter has become increasingly fragmented and students are learning smaller and smaller bits of it.

Unfortunately, our schools suffer from serious problems beyond the lack of content in the curriculum. We have moved from a mere absence of moral unity to a more or less open assault on morality. One wonders if even the far-seeing Chesterton could have imagined high schools with metal detectors at the entrances and contraceptives openly provided to its students.

What Chesterton certainly did see is that the entire educational system was bound to keep falling apart because there was nothing to hold it together.

During the all-important high school years, young people are going through physical and emotional changes and grappling with life's biggest questions. It is a crucial time to learn the "permanent things," the genuinely unchanging standards by which everything else is measured and against which they can test every idea they encounter both now and later. The vast majority of today's high schools are doing nothing to serve young people in this giant task.

Rather than sit around complaining about this problem, two men decided they had to do something about it themselves. They had all the motivation they needed: they were parents.

Dale Ahlquist, President of the American Chesterton Society, and small business owner Tom Bengtson got together and founded a new high school. As Catholics, they knew that the faith must be the foundation of learning, that all knowledge must have an eternal reference point, and that every truth is connected to the ultimate Truth.

They also knew they wanted to restore classical learning and create an integrated curriculum, to put back together what the schools had put asunder, so that students could learn how to be complete thinkers (and speak in complete sentences). They wanted to counter the prevailing cultural trend that was anti-life and anti-family. And finally, they wanted to solve one of the most scandalous problems of modern education: its catastrophic costs. The Chesterton Academy was the result.

"Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another."

G.K. Chesterton

Naming the school for G.K. Chesterton was an obvious decision for many reasons, not just because one of its founders is more than a little connected to Chesterton. In Chesterton's prophetic view of education, he represents the ideal of the complete thinker. He is also a defender of the Faith, and of the very traditions that we have neglected to the point of our present demise. G.K. Chesterton epitomizes Catholic joy.

What is the Chesterton Academy model? It begins with a classical, integrated curriculum. At the risk of name-dropping, here are some of the people its students meet: Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Virgil, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Teresa of Avila, Dostoyevsky...and G.K. Chesterton.

They study the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, with some helpful exposure to the Church Fathers. History, literature, philosophy, and theology are braided together. But the sciences and the humanities are also intimately connected, so that the logic of math is seen in philosophy, and God's handiwork is seen in the sciences.

Faith and reason meet in every class. Equal emphasis is given to the arts, so that every student learns to draw and paint, sing in the choir, act on the stage, give speeches, and debate.

And learning Latin helps one learn English. Each year of studies builds on the previous, so that by the end of senior year (the final year of high school), students are articulate, clear-thinking, well-rounded, and, very importantly, joyful human beings. As Chesterton says, "Thereis a whole truth to things, and in knowing it and speaking it we are happy."

Each day at Chesterton Academy begins with Mass, and the calendar includes religious pilgrimages, spiritual retreats, pro-life activities, and fascinating guest speakers. The academy's ultimate responsibility is to the parents of its students; we administrators in turn rely heavily on their participation in the school.

The unity of purpose, the underlying delight in life and learning, the pervading sense of family in the whole operation, and the obvious and fruitful results of our efforts are, in a word, thrilling.

How do we do it? We have a clear idea of what we want. We know there is nothing more important than the souls of our children. We know that whatever we do must be done for the glory of God.

How do we make it affordable? We have a commitment to frugality. We do not spend money that we don't have.

In the early years, we rented classroom space from a school district in a first-ring suburb of Minneapolis. We keep parents actively involved. We have developed a large network of volunteers. We pay a core faculty full-time salaries, and we supplement this with part-time teachers who are willing and able to share their talents for less. The mix of full-time, part-time, and volunteers provides a constant freshness, as they all have to stay in close communication with each other to maintain the integrated curriculum.

We keep our tuition low, but we do provide financial assistance to those with proven need. And while we keep our costs low as well, we still need to supplement our revenue with donations.

We receive little to no support from the State or from the Church. This independence gives us the freedom to implement exactly the kind of curriculum we want. And we hope that by delivering impressive results, Chesterton Academy will prove to be a model that others can follow.

G.K. Chesterton once observed that "we are children of light, and yet we sit in darkness." It is time to start bringing light to what is today the darkest of all places: the classroom. ■

Combating Crime - Healing the Criminal

A Perspective on the Father Brown Stories

by Karl Schmude

Can the police safeguard the public, and the courts guarantee a society where rights are respected? These institutions are vital for the maintenance of social order and justice. But Chesterton's Father Brown stories suggest a more profound and delicate solution is finally required – that the criminal not only has to be caught, and then corrected, but also to be healed.

An American theologian, Steve Guthrie, has offered some fresh perspectives on the Father Brown stories, after reading Chesterton's first collection of Father Brown stories, *The Innocence of Father Brown* (1911). In a thoughtful – and thought-provoking – article, Guthrie sheds light on the underlying meaning and purpose of Chesterton's character:



Alec Guiness in the 1954 movie, Father Brown

"If there is an overarching theme to the Father Brown stories it is that the one best equipped to turn aside lawlessness and evil is not a detective, nor a policeman, but a priest.

"They suggest that, ultimately, a just and orderly society is upheld not by the power of the law but by the mercy of the church." ("The Thin Brown Line," *Plough Magazine*, April 1, 2025 - - https://www.plough.com/en/topics/justice/the-thin-brown-line).



Steve Guthrie

The Church has a distinctive part to play in promoting public safety and ensuring a safe and just society. Its role is not to rival or replace the role of police or the courts, but rather, Guthrie argues, "simply to recognise (and Father Brown nods in agreement) that while the state can help *enact* justice, without the wisdom of the church it cannot determine the *meaning* of justice. . . . [The state] is limited in its ability to address the root causes of wrongdoing or to bring about any real remedy."

Not a conviction but a conversion

What lifts the Father Brown stories above ordinary detective fiction is this ultimate vision of human reality. The solving of a crime is necessary, but it is not enough. The police and the courts are indispensable, but they are the first and second lines of defence. What is finally needed – and is so hard to balance in practice - is mercy and forgiveness as well as justice; the saving of the criminal, a soul to be healed, not just a guilty figure to be punished and rectified.

As Guthrie writes, Father Brown "confronts not crime, but sin. . . . The outcome he hopes for is not a conviction, but a conversion."

He goes on to highlight the contrast between the criminal and the healer in the Father Brown stories – on the one hand, Flambeau, "a criminal genius and a virtuoso of disguise", abounding in physical strength and daring, and on the other, Father Brown, the humble and apparently ineffectual priest, without earthly power, who overcomes Flambeau, "not by greater force and violence, but paradoxically, by the Christian virtues of innocence, meekness and wisdom."

Father Brown outsmarts Flambeau – not just by intellectual skill but by spiritual insight. As Guthrie emphasises, he "does far more than defeat Flambeau; he leads him to repentance."

Reflecting on the title of Chesterton's stories, "The Innocence of Father Brown," Guthrie concludes that innocence is not to be equated with naivete or gullibility. He recalls Chesterton's surprise, recounted in the last chapter of his *Autobiography* (1936), in coming across a pious priest, Father John O'Connor, who was unshocked by the salacious details Chesterton was including in an article he was writing on public morality:

"[T]his quiet and pleasant celibate had plumbed those abysses [of vice] far deeper than I . . . . And there sprang up in my mind the vague idea of . . . constructing a comedy in which a priest should appear to know nothing and in fact know more about crime than the criminals."

Guthrie comments: "Jesus told his followers to be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16). He might have been describing Father Brown." ■

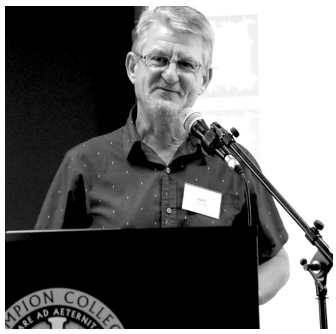


Peter Kreeft

Reflections on a Religious Conversion

the Peter Kreeft Story

by Gary Furnell



Gary Furnell

Peter Kreeft is an American philosopher and prolific author, having published more than 80 books over the past half-century. **Gary Furnell** *reviews his recent account of his conversion*, From Calvinist to Catholic (Ignatius Press, 2025).

Peter Kreeft's *From Calvinist to Catholic* is a partial autobiography, focused mainly on Kreeft's formative years, culminating with his entry into the Catholic Church. In his introduction, he states:

"The three best things I ever did in my life were (1) to become a Catholic, (2) to marry my wife, and (3) to have kids. This book is about the first thing."

Readers keen for a full autobiography will have to wait. Kreeft portrays his childhood, teenage and college years with lively detail, but his married and family life are largely left unportrayed. This is understandable: his wife, children and grandchildren have their own lives and a legitimate desire for privacy. But the omissions leave obvious gaps.

Also in the introduction, Kreeft admits:

"I wrote this book only because Mark Bromley, my Ignatius Press editor, never stopped politely badgering me to write it."

This alerts the reader that *From Calvinist to Catholic* is not a work driven by heartfelt desire; rather, it was born from obligation. You don't get this sense from the effervescent chapters retelling of his first few decades of life. Rather, it's only finishing the book that a slight sense remains of its being somewhat piecemeal. Interspersing some of the biographical chapters with philosophical chapters broke the narrative for this reader. For another reader, this pattern may be helpful.

Perhaps, too, tighter editing would have helped: deleting seemingly irrelevant anecdotes, flat jokes and accounts of charmless pranks, and changing some words for clarity's sake. Certain philosophers are twice described as "trustable", why not use *trustworthy* or *credible*?

Kreeft's recollections of the Dutch immigrant enclave in New Jersey are engaging. He had a joyful, stable, extended family. His grandparents and parents were admirable and conscientious. They were committed to Reformed Church teachings. He received good values and a solid education. He enjoyed significant freedom and benefited from appropriate responsibilities. His love for his parents shines. His respect for his teachers and his society is likewise fulsome.

One of the benefits of reading *From Calvinist to Catholic* is the reminder of how much has changed in a relatively short period. Kreeft is sensitive to these changes. The 1940s and 1950s, despite World War II and the threat of nuclear warfare, had qualities that seem to have greatly waned. In Kreeft's working-class neighbourhood, drugs were almost unknown; drinking was episodic and often moderate (but driving could be reckless); inflation, violent crime, gangs and unemployment weren't problems; divorce was rare, as were pregnancies outside marriage; identity and gender were accepted as givens. Suicide and self-harm were almost unknown. In retrospect, he says, some social expectations had restrictive elements, but they also provided security and direction.

Kreeft identifies the cultural and sexual revolution of the 1960s as the crucial era of change, mostly for the worse. He writes, "The fifties were far from perfect, but they were Eden compared to the about-to-come Sexual Revolution." The Enlightenment's simplifications had seeped into popular culture: "… scientific reductionism and a rationalism that lead to scepticism and then, atheism, materialism, relativism, subjectivism, utilitarianism, deconstructionism and nihilism."

A key to Kreeft's young adulthood conversion was the beauty of Catholic cathedrals, including, later, the beauty of liturgy and its majestic music. He says his conversion involved assessing arguments and doctrines, but reasoning was only one part of a mesh of intuitions, insights, appreciations and spiritual appetites that worked together

to develop certainty that the Catholic Church was instituted by Christ.

In particular, church history convinced him that the Catholic Church alone linked with the apostles, and that the problems Protestants had with Catholicism had not troubled Christians for 1500 years. Perhaps, he realised, the problems lay with the perceptions of the Protestants. Gradually, he came to see that the unity and authority of the Catholic Church were determinative and vital. The thousands of Protestant denominations began to seem fragmentary and often contradictory.

Kreeft is careful to acknowledge the excellence of devout Protestants: they are good people who know the Scriptures, trust Christ for salvation, attend their church's services regularly, and sing great hymns with joy. Many cradle Catholics exhibit none of these qualities.

Kreeft encourages artists. He rates the impact of Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Dostoyevsky's artistry above the philosophical efforts of Aquinas, Pascal or Kierkegaard. He notes that artistic beauty has an immediate, unarguable effect. For many people, Catholic liturgy and/or architectural beauties are decisive attractants. Beauty is one of Kreeft's themes. Another theme is the integration of Kreeft's analytical faculties and his imaginative faculties: Catholicism honoured his imagination and rationality, his heart and mind.

The Church as a Hospital for Sinners

Throughout, there's a realistic view of the Church. Her history is a mixture of the grand and the gross: great saints and great hypocrites. The Church has been sometimes lethargic, sometimes enlarging, but always surviving, always enlivening, never retracting her doctrines. Only a divine institution could survive her crises for two millennia and remain coherent. Further, there's nowhere else for humanity to go for the help we need. Kreeft describes the Church aptly:

"As a Catholic, I see her as a hospital for sinners. In that hospital, her patients often fight with her doctors and nurses. In fact, the Church is a psychiatric hospital for the criminally insane. And I discovered I very much belonged in her."

The modern writers who especially helped Kreeft into the Church are identified: Chesterton, Lewis, Sheen, and Ronald Knox. In later chapters, the effects on his parents of his conversion are detailed: there was hurt and incomprehension, but the respectful, close relationship wasn't sundered: a credit to the family. He says the difficulties could have been lessened if he'd included his parents in his questions and thinking from the start, rather than presenting his conversion as a (shocking) *fait accompli*.

Once Kreeft was ensconced in the Church and then lodged comfortably among Boston College's academics (he taught there for 60 years), his story is foreshortened. He writes about his courtship and engagement, but shares little about married or family life. He reveals his joy of body-boarding, his dislike of committees and his frustrations with the digital realm. He devotes several chapters to a retrospective view of his life, listing important lessons. Then, he speculates about the afterlife and the purgatorial process.

I read *From Calvinist to Catholic* three times before writing this review. It was time well spent.

Kreeft's book is easy to read: brisk, personal—as you'd expect—and thoughtful. There is much on offer, including many life lessons to reflect upon and valuable perspectives on our age and the Church to ponder. These insights have added credibility because they are the results of decades of study and experience. ■

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Layout of 'The Defendant' designed by Jenna Fulop

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Combined subscription - $45.00

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From Modern TV Celebrity to Latter-Day Distributist

by Karl Schmude



Jeremy Clarkson - bemused but learning

Jeremy Clarkson is an English author and TV personality most renowned for driving fast cars and mixing with the glitterati in Monaco. But more recently, he has become known as the host of *Clarkson's Farm*, a TV series on a quite different subject – agriculture.

Surprisingly, it reveals Clarkson, in fact if not in name, as a Distributist. The American writer, Auguste Meyrat, argues that *Clarkson's Farm* offers a "new look at the Distributist dream."

In *The Stream*, an online Christian journal (June 19, 2025), Meyrat describes the economic and social circumstances that are making Distributism more appealing. Free market capitalism may have vastly increased wealth, and a state-controlled order may have imposed greater egalitarianism, but they have had various deleterious effects.

They continue to rely on a system of wage and debt slavery, not ownership and personal independence, as well as on centralised managerialism - a perverse alliance between Big Business and Big Government, now intensified by the corporate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As a result, Meyrat argues, work has become "all the more alienating and dehumanizing." He goes on:

"Now, people are no longer neighbours or citizens: they are producers and consumers. While living standards and technological innovation should not be taken for granted, today's globalized capitalist system has induced a widespread malaise in the developed world that might prompt people to reconsider the principles of Distributism."

Clarkson's Farm, now in its fourth season and airing in nearly 250 countries, shows the huge transformation that has taken place in Clarkson's life since he abandoned city life and has been operating a farm he bought several years ago in the English county of Oxfordshire. In Meyrat's words:

"From an unabashed capitalist in liberal England, ... he gradually morphs into an Old World conservative who grouses about the local council and poor weather. Instead of testing the new supercar on a road trip through the Swiss Alps, he is filing paperwork to buy a farm-to-plate pub and restaurant and organizing a local farming cooperative."

In the course of the series, Clarkson learns how difficult the work is, and how marginalised farming communities have become. A combination of government controls and global market pressures, Meyrat observes, have reduced so many farms to boutique indulgences no longer conducive to productive farming.

But Clarkson is determined to make his property operate as a true farm, and he relies on a range of experienced farmhands to help him. This injects various touches of humour, as well as realism, into each episode, particularly in the exchanges between Clarkson and a local no-nonsense farm boy he employs, by the name of Kaleb Cooper. Kaleb, as one TV reviewer has described him, "speaks to Clarkson with a complete and disarming lack of awe." (*The Guardian*, June 5, 2021)

Clarkson himself adds to the humour by not hiding his ignorance - and, despite his abundant self-confidence, revealing the self-mocking honesty of an English satirist.



Jeremy Clarkson and Kaleb Cooper

Auguste Meyrat suggests that *Clarkson's Farm* shows the practical potential of farming even today:

"For the vast majority of viewers who only know life in cities and suburbs, watching Clarkson drive a tractor and chase after pigs is nothing short of a revelation. There really is life beyond the online retailer, corporate hierarchies, and addictive algorithms of social media."

Meyrat cites a recent book by the American futurist, Peter Zeihan, *The End of the World Is Just the Beginning* (2022), in which he predicts that the world order will increasingly "deglobalise", forcing today's nations to rediscover the virtues of regionalism and localism. It chimes in with Dale Ahlquist's suggested renaming of "Distributism" to "Localism".

Such an outcome, Meyrat concludes, may indeed be too good to be true, but it may also be too attractive to ignore.

"Beyond making for good television, people today might come to realize that it makes for a good life." ■

The Most Famous Chesterton Quote - But Was It Chesterton's?

One of the most common aphorisms attributed to Chesterton speaks of the pervasive credulity of modern society arising from the abandonment of belief in God. It has been cited in various forms, perhaps most commonly as:

"When a man ceases to believe in God, he doesn't then believe in nothing, he believes in anything."

Seeking the origins of the statement tests the forensic enthusiasm of any reader of Chesterton. The Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton's Quotemeister has explored this at length, and it is detailed on the Society's website at http://www.chesterton.org/ceases-to-worship/. But the oft-quoted wording has so far eluded clear identification.

The puzzle of a 'sourceless' quotation was first raised by the Chesterton scholar, Aidan Mackey. Soon afterwards, the Chesterton bibliographer, Geir Hasnes, brought to light an interview with the Italian novelist, Umberto Eco, who said that he had based his novel, *Foucault's Pendulum*, on this very epigram.

Dr Pasquale Accardo of New York tracked the quotation back to its earliest known appearance - in the 1937 study of Chesterton by Emile Cammaerts, *The Laughing Prophet*, in this form:

"The first effect of not believing in God is to believe in anything."

While the quotation itself has remained untraceable in Chesterton's writings, there are various hints in his cavernous output of such an insight. Certainly it *sounds* like something Chesterton would have said.

And, if we consider how extravagant his talent was, how so many of his memorable insights did not appear in his 'greatest' books (such as *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*), and how difficult it has been – as Geir Hasnes has testified – to unearth all of Chesterton's output (perhaps especially such utterances that were made in his radio broadcasts, which have now been lost, and his off-the-cuff interviews), then we gain some idea of how an oft-quoted statement remains elusive.

The American scholar, John Peterson, has argued that the quote is a blend of three separate passages:

"There may have been a time when people found it easy to believe in anything. But we are finding it vastly easier to disbelieve anything." *(Illustrated London News,* March 21, 1914*)*

"The nineteenth century decided to have no religious authority. The twentieth century seems disposed to have any religious authority." *(Illustrated London News,* April 26, 1924*)*

"A man who refuses to have his own philosophy will only have the used-up scraps of somebody else's philosophy." ('The Revival of Philosophy,' *The Common Man,* 1950*)*

An alternative suggestion has come from Robin Rader of Zambia - that the epigram emerges from two adjacent Father Brown stories:

"It's the first effect of not believing in God that you lose your common sense." ('The Oracle of the Dog,' 1923)

"You hard-shelled materialists were all balanced on the very edge of belief – of belief in almost anything." ('The Miracle of Moon Crescent.' 1924)

Certainly there is a coincidence of wording between Cammaerts' version and that cited by Ms. Rader. Both contain the words, '…the first effect of not believing in God…' Cammaerts was discussing this very story, "The Oracle of the Dog," when he quoted Father Brown:

"It's drowning all your old rationalism and scepticism, it's coming in like a sea; and the name of it is superstition.' The first effect of not believing in God is to believe in anything: 'And a dog is an omen and a cat is a mystery.'"

The elusive words, it is worth noting, lie embedded between two quotations. It is not presented as a quotation, but as a paraphrase. The switch is easy to miss in the original text.

In his 1970 book, *The Mind of Chesterton*. Christopher Hollis presents the epigram as:

"As Chesterton said, 'He who does not believe in God will believe in anything.' "

Hollis lists only 13 books in his bibliography of secondary sources, *The Laughing Prophet* being among them.

The Chesterton Society's Quotemeister believes that the source of the fugitive quotation is Emile Cammaerts. His ambiguous typography misled Christopher Hollis, and through him others (including, at last, all of the rest of us), into the mistaken conviction that a thought repeated over and over by Chesterton had a specific epigrammatic form that Chesterton never precisely gave it.

The Quotemeister further believes that the source of the fugitive epigram is 'The Oracle of the Dog,' as codified by Emile Cammaerts. And it notes a nice irony – that so many critics have chastised Chesterton over the years for misquoting other writers, and yet he is now himself the most misquoted writer of all!

Perhaps the irresistible conclusion is - to adapt Voltaire's famous statement about God – that, if the quotation were not Chesterton's, it would be necessary to attribute it to him! ■

This report on the Chesterton quote appeared in the Winter 2016 issue of The Defendant*, and is here reprinted because of the continuing popularity of the quote.*

AUSTRALIAN CHESTERTON SOCIETY



2025 CONFERENCE
"The Everlasting Chesterton"

8.30am-4.45pm, followed by dinner, Saturday 1 November
Campion College, 8-14 Austin Woodbury Pl Toongabbie NSW 2146

Conference and dinner package: Adult $150 | Student $95
Conference ticket only (incl. lunch and teas): Adult $90 | Student $45

REGISTRATION via the website: http://chestertonaustralia.com

As 2025 marks the centenary of publication of a Chesterton classic, The Everlasting Man (1925), the theme of this year's Australian Chesterton Conference is **"The Everlasting Chesterton".**

Various speakers will focus on subjects related to Chesterton's interests and accomplishments which reveal the enduring importance of his insights - as a Christian philosopher and historian, an educational thinker, a journalist, and a cultural and political critic.

It is of special value that we will welcome to this year's conference the Executive Director of the Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton, **Emily de Rotstein**. Emily has worked closely with the Society's President, Dale Ahlquist, on the flourishing network of Catholic classical high schools in America and globally - now also evident in Australia.

At the 2024 conference, Dale spoke on the founding of the first Chesterton School, and Emily will draw on her long experience to report on the rapid expansion of the Chesterton Schools Network in which she has played a leading part.

Other speakers will be:

- **Greg Sheridan** will discuss his third book on Christianity, which looks at how 21st century Christians can reclaim the inspirational grace and genius of 1st century Christians.
- **Karl Schmude** will explore Chesterton's contribution as a journalist who, in T.S. Eliot's words, always found the topical excuse for writing about the permanent.
- **Michael Cook** will reflect on his long-time editing of the Australian online cultural and religious journal, 'Mercator'.
- **David Daintree** will discuss the cultural purpose and value of the Christopher Dawson Centre in Tasmania.
- **Gary Furnell** will recall a French forerunnner of Chesterton, the 19th century Catholic writer, Ernest Hello.

2025 speakers include:



Emily de Rotstein - Executive Director, The Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton



Greg Sheridan - Foreign Editor at The Australian and noted book author



Michael Cook - Senior journalist for the Catholic Weekly (Sydney)



David Daintree - Former Campion College President, Director of the Christopher Dawson Centre



Gary Furnell - Book author and Secretary of Australian Chesterton Society



Karl Schmude - President of Australian Chesterton Society

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