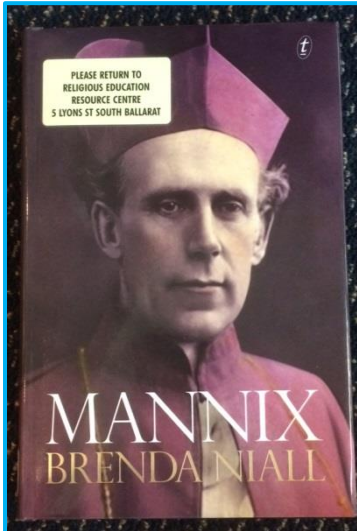


## BOOK REVIEW



### **Mannix by Brenda Niall**

If you want to brush up your knowledge of significant church and state events in Ireland and Australia during the past one hundred years you can do so by reading a recent book by Brenda Niall entitled Mannix.

With her book on the life of Archbishop Mannix, Brenda won Australia's oldest literary prize, the Australian Literature Society Gold Medal.

Brenda said there has been an enormous amount written about Mannix but he has been the trickiest of her subjects. He was an aloof and reserved character, "Archbishops kept themselves at a distance and private papers were very few. I had to look very hard to find any."

However, she found the man who was such a dominant public figure in Melbourne after being dispatched from Ireland to Australia in 1912, "witty and unexpected". "His views on all sorts of things that are important to us now hadn't really been known or thought about much, for example, his opposition to the White Australia policy. He was ahead of everybody. As he was in being a champion for the Jewish people."

At the time of the first World War, 1914 – 1918, Mannix was in bitter public conflict with Australia's then Prime Minister, Billy Hughes about the conscription issue. Mannix said NO. After the war, Mannix and Hughes were reconciled at a personal level.

His support of Santamaria is still an issue that divides the Australian Catholic church, though less so now than was the case in the past.

Archbishop Mannix, he never retired, died in his Raheen home on Melbourne Cup day, Tuesday, November 6 1963. He was 99 years old, nearly 100.

Dan Mannix can be of special interest to Australian/Victorian Catholics as we seek a better understanding of our history, thus helping to answer the question: why we are as we are. Not that he was infallible but he had a definite vision of a better future and a very sharp wit. We can be entertained as we continue to learn from him. It is a solid book but clearly written. I found the reading of it an enjoyable experience.

*Fr Kevin Murphy*