



Quarterly magazine of the National Council of Priests of Australia

# The Swag

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## ABOUT THE NCP

The National Council of Priests of Australia, founded in 1970 in the spirit of Vatican II, is a voluntary association of bishops, priests and deacons. It is committed to the fraternity and further education of clergy and to representing all clergy in the public forum. The NCP is acknowledged by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

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## James Clarke



In his op-ed piece in La Croix International, Michael Kelly spoke of the Church living in a change of era, rather than living in an era of change. He based this on the leadership initiatives of Pope Francis. It is an interesting viewpoint which Kelly places before us. We speak of change happening all around us – climate change, political change, economic change and social change.

We in the Church are experiencing this change of era as Kelly states. We are in the process of moving from the bastion of “Fortress Catholicism” promulgated during the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Pope Francis is endeavouring to usher in a more collegial and co-operative model of pastoral governance. Pope Francis is reviving the concept of subsidiarity initiated at Vatican II. He wants the bishops of the particular churches to identify the issues confronting them and to respond to them at the local level, rather than wait for a directive from “head office”. Bishops are leaders and “shepherds” in their own right.

Another indicator of the change of era identified by Kelly is the attitude towards religion and people of faith by the secular authorities and society in general. There is a distinct mood of anti-religion. The voice of faith is being drowned out in public

debate. People of faith and those representing faith based organizations are being sidelined as irrelevant. This raises the issue of religious freedom, or lack thereof. This issue is highlighted in the ongoing debate over whether priests should be compelled to reveal what is told to them during sacramental confession. Specifically, matters of criminality.

At the 2016 NCP convention held in Melbourne, eminent canonical jurist and arguably Australia’s foremost canonist, Fr Ian Waters, Professor of Canon Law at Catholic Theological College, Australian University of Divinity, gave a workshop on the canons relating to the administration of the sacrament of Penance. Ian stated that when a penitent comes to sacramental confession and they confess their wrongdoing, i.e. their sins, and demonstrate genuine contrition, what they have told the confessor is privileged information. It is protected under the sacramental seal.

Ian further stated that if a person during the course of a sacramental confession disclosed the sin or wrongdoing of another person, then that information was not bound by the sacramental seal. The individual is not confessing their personal sins but the sins of someone else. E.g. if a child during sacramental confession reveals that an adult either a family member, friend or other is interfering with the child in an inappropriate manner, then the information divulged by the child is not bound under the sacramental seal. The confessor /priest can reveal to the relevant authorities the information received from the child. To avoid any confusion Professor Waters suggested that the priest meets with the child outside of the confines of the confessional and asks the child for further information.

Psychologists have explained that a condition pertaining to the pathology of the paedophile or sexual abuser is that they do not believe that are doing anything wrong. They persist in their delusion that the child/victim approached them and that the activity they entered into was desired and consensual. Given this clinical diagnosis it would be logical to conclude that no sexual abuser

would be seeking sacramental absolution for their actions. Therefore a confessor would not be in a position to reveal or report any criminal behaviour.

However, should such an unlikely scenario present itself, then as confessors we would require the penitent to report themselves to the police as a demonstration of their contrition prior to them receiving absolution. In some cases the confessor may offer to accompany the penitent to the police station and instruct the penitent to inform the relevant person what they revealed during their confession.

The issue of forcing priests to reveal what they hear under the sacramental seal is a “red herring”. It will not aid in the protection of minors or vulnerable adults from the depredations of sexual abusers. It is an attack on the religious freedom and practices of Catholic sacramental liturgy. It is an action indicative of the change of era in Australian society. One of the unintended consequences of the Royal Commission has been to make anti-Catholicism the last legitimate prejudice in Australia. The Catholic Church is “fair game”. An intended consequence of the Royal Commission has been to make the Church acknowledge its failure of leadership in the past, its culture and conspiracy of silence and its cover up of criminal activity.

We are the largest Christian denomination in the country. Our schools, hospitals and welfare agencies contribute to the common good of our society. Our voices need to be heard because our message is worthwhile and positive.

We look to our leadership for guidance and support as we engage in our ministry. Our people look to us for leadership and guidance. The Lord has assured us, “I will not leave you orphaned. I will be with you until the end of time”. Under the leadership of Pope Francis we have been emboldened and will continue to strive for the freedom to express, practice and live our faith.

Yours in His Priesthood. ☩

*We pray for life giving rain.*

*For the men and women who grow crops and care for animals that produce food.*

*For all children who live in drought areas who may not have basic needs being met at this time.*

*For all in drought affected areas who suffer depression and anxiety because they have lost hope.*

*For ourselves that we will generously support our neighbours battling drought.*



**A troubled Australian church**

Last year, *The Swag* received some feedback that suggested we were publishing too many articles on the Royal Commission into

Institutionalised Response to Child Sex Abuse. I responded that, as it was very much on the minds and hearts of many of our readers and those who write for us, it was unlikely to wane anytime soon. This edition gives voice to that prediction. There is much in this edition concerning the Commission, its recommendations and the issues related to the abuse including the conviction of Archbishop Wilson and the seal of confession.

There are concerns that the leadership in the Australian church is not in touch with the reality we share in the pews, and sadly more and more have moved right out of the pews, if not the church altogether. I recently received an email from a friend who wondered if he could continue to call himself a Catholic because he felt it was colluding with an organisation that he felt was corrupt, uncaring and still trying to evade, avoid and deflect responsibility.

In the pages of this edition you will find commentary on all these issues and much more as priests and people try to navigate their way through this difficult time. There are some wonderful offerings that seek to move the conversation along, including a piece by Bishop McElroy that is looking at the positive as we learn by reflecting on experience.

There are a number of comments on the Plenary Council 2020. The efforts of some to contribute to this event are growing dim as they are ignored, dismissed or summarised into compliance. The bishop's cry, *everything's on the table*, already seems a distant hope for some who have tried to get something on the table. People are slowly losing hope as details emerge such as who will be present, how they will be chosen and only bishops get a vote. The church is not a democracy and if we were unsure about this, many fear the plenary council will underline this.

Much of the sabre rattling about the Seal of Confession seems to me to be part of the culture wars around the current changes in civil laws concerning marriage equality and discrimination that some interpret as impinging on religious freedom. Some of our leaders' statements make the institutional church look like we are playing the victim card. It seems ironic to many that the church institution could be the victim, and it only increases our already depleted stocks of credibility.

Ted Kennedy, parish priest of Redfern at the time, said about 20 years ago that the Sacrament of Reconciliation needs to be abandoned altogether for at least 50 years if it is to recover its true meaning. Ted was saying it has been so distorted that it can't recover without being divorced from its recent (1,000 year) decline.

If the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to be rescued from its current poor ratings, it is on the grounds of a communal celebration of God's mercy and a place of awareness for transformation. This is its primary meaning in theological terms. The sacrament is about announcing the good news of a merciful loving God. The impact

of Confession as a place where one's deeds are judged, still common in some of the faithful, if not some priests, leads to Confession being distorted. It can become either some form of punishment with the emphasis on penance for sins committed, a place for problem solving, or even a suggestion of therapy for the 'damaged'. The Sacrament can be reclaimed if we emphasize it as a communal prayer celebrating the mercy and love of God. Then it can be a spiritual support and source of nourishment rather than a place of judgementalism and scrupulosity.

This edition of *The Swag* also has some marvellous stories about priests that have enhanced the Australian church including the tributes to Brian Yates, recently deceased, and Bill Morris, still very much alive, on the occasion of his 25 years as a bishop. You might also enjoy reading the thoughts on women in the church by Susan Ryan, Sex Discrimination Minister in the Hawke Government given at the launch of Chris Geraghty's latest book, *Jesus, the forgotten feminist*.

The book reviews might be too far down the back of the magazine to get to sometimes, but don't miss this time. There is a review of John Ryan's *A Priesthood Imprisoned*; Anthony M Maher's book on the Jesuit theologian, Tyrrell; Race Mathew's look at the Catholic influence of Australian politics; three short books by Australian spiritual writers, a Jesuit, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart and a Cistercian monk; and a look at the musical *The Book of Mormon*.

These and many more topics are discussed in the pages of this edition. Enjoy. ☺

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**The Swag Summer Edition**

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# Bill Morris – 25 years a bishop

PETER DORFIELD

**Peter Dorfield, Toowoomba priest, gave this tribute on 26 June, 2018 at the Silver Jubilee celebration of the ordination as bishop of Bill Morris.**

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Jarowair and Giabal peoples, and their living culture. They are the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather, land which was taken from them without their consent, treaty or compensation. I acknowledge local Community Elders past and present and those emerging in our own day and midst.

May I introduce this Jubilee Toast to Bill Morris with a familiar prayer from the Hymn of the Office of Readings, Thursday Week 4, familiar to us all, if not known by heart. I'm hoping that my words will resonate with this prayer: Where true love is dwelling, God is dwelling there; Love's own loving Presence love does ever share. Love of Christ has made us out of many one; In our midst is dwelling God's eternal Son. Give Him joyful welcome, love Him and revere; Cherish one another with a love sincere.

I wish to thank Bill for the privilege of offering these few words of appreciation of him personally and of his years of pastoral ministry in our midst. Thank you Bill for many years of valued friendship and shared ministry.

Most of us came to know Bill in seminary days as a comparatively quiet and unassuming fellow student. He is a classmate of Brian Connolly and Jeff Scully. My first immediate and friendly contact with Bill came when I spent three months on a pastoral placement in the Sunnybank parish in Brisbane with the larger than life Tom Hegarty. Bill was the Assistant Priest in the parish, in the language of the day, the curate. And as well, there was Tom's Alsatian dog who sat outside the door of my room every morning and who joined us at table for lunch each day. I might add, the pecking order in the house was quite clear.

Bill was ordained a priest in St Stephen's Cathedral Brisbane on 28 June 1969. Early years in parish life in Sunnybank, Nambour and Mt Gravatt were followed by six years as Secretary to Archbishop Frank Rush and as the Diocesan Director of Vocations. Then he returned to eight years of parish ministry in Goodna and Surfers Paradise.

When William Martin Morris was appointed the fifth Bishop of Toowoomba in 1992, then ordained as Bishop here in St Pat's on

10 February 1993, he brought many years of pastoral experience to his new office. He embraced his new responsibilities with prayerfulness, humility and truthfulness and with a well-grounded respect and regard for people, both within and beyond the community of faith.

His early days as Bishop were not easy. There was a measure of uncertainty to be addressed: he was unknown to many of the people in the diocese and some of our priests were hesitant in their immediate response. But Bill remained gentle, smiling and unassuming. He reached out with openness to everyone and his door was open to visitors. He travelled extensively throughout the diocese and quite quickly got to know people and to be remembered and welcomed on his return. You need only speak to those who were, in their younger days, the kite flying children of Quilpie, to be reminded of these valued memories held in local communities.

Throughout his eighteen years of pastoral ministry as Bishop of our diocese, Bill ministered prayerfully and humbly, truthfully and respectfully. He chose to work collaboratively with the priests and with those in leadership in diocesan agencies and ministries. While he was willing to listen and discern, he was also prepared to act with firmness and clarity when necessary.

Bill did not hold himself out as an academic with theological expertise. He readily consulted those with competence for advice and guidance. Bill's primary pastoral expertise lay elsewhere: he was and remains an expert in humanity, affirming goodness and generosity, offering forgiveness and understanding, speaking the truth with gentle firmness.

Bill's pastoral ministry throughout his eighteen years as Bishop was expressed through his commitment to prayer and liturgy, faith education, ecumenical partnerships and friendships, spirituality, social justice, pastoral leadership in local faith communities and overall governance of the diocese.

In all of these pastoral areas of ministry, Bill returned to his core values: be prayerful, be humble, be truthful and be respectful of people. Members of our diocese experienced directly his pastoral

encouragement in their parish communities and in their involvement in diocesan responsibilities.

People were touched by his appreciation and trust in them, in their humanity, in their commitments.

Bill excelled in his pastoral care of the priests of the diocese: parish visits, phone calls for birthdays, anniversaries of ordination or times of personal difficulty, hospital visits and finally funerals: all were expressions of genuine fraternal compassion and respect: Cherish one another with a love sincere.

Bill's core pastoral values were no more clearly expressed than in his involvement in addressing the sexual abuse that occurred in one of our local primary schools in the years immediately prior to the arrest of the offending teacher in November 2008. This sexual abuse and the inadequate response of school leadership, both local and diocesan, was the subject of Case Study 6 of the Royal Commission and involved the Public Hearing that took place in Brisbane in early February 2014.

Bill's truthful and pastoral response to the children and their families was probably the only credible positive action taken by the diocese at the time. His decision to engage a Brisbane law firm to investigate the systemic mishandling of the sexual abuse and his readiness to follow their advice in subsequent action with education staff was commended by the Royal Commission. His further decision to engage a Brisbane Judge to mediate the civil claims of those families who wished to take action at that time, and his willingness to accept the recommendations of the Judge without adversarial contest, brought relief and heartfelt appreciation from the families involved. In the ensuing couple of years, Bill met personally with many people whose lives were impacted by the sexual abuse and the related criminal and civil procedures.

This was Bill at his pastoral best.

When Bill faced the painful experience of his removal from office on 02 May 2011, he did so prayerfully, and with humility, truthfully and with respect for all involved, those who supported him and those who opposed him. Bill has lived with an unshaken trust in the Church and in the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit. There has been no trace of resentment or bitterness in Bill over his removal from office, not then, not now.

*Continued page 6*

Many of us have carried a deep anger and a lasting disappointment about the treatment of Bill, an anger that has only been mollified by the refusal of Bill to hold or express any personal resentment or bitterness himself and by the many lay people of our diocese who have expressed appreciation of Bill throughout the past seven years since his formal removal from office. Many of us would be delighted if there were an apology from Francis over the manner and timing of Bill's removal.

Bill has continued on a path of decency, of prayer, of thoughtful reflection and of truth. These are characteristics of both his eighteen years as appointed bishop and though the seven years since removal from office. In our midst for these twenty-five years, Bill has been both memorable and remembered, at times inspiring. Bill remains a true and valued member of our diocese and of the wider church. His integrity has enriched all of our lives over these many years.

On Sunday morning I was reading an article in the Tablet (June 2 2018), an interview with Tom Wright, biblical scholar, former Anglican Bishop of Durham, currently the professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St Andrew in Scotland. The interviewer, asked him: Is the Church of today having a problem finding its voice? Tom Wright replied:

'I think the Church has always had a problem finding its voice. But again and again through history, it's been remarkable how, from a Christian point of view, God has raised up people to speak new words. Think of Pope Francis. Nobody saw that coming. Think of Mother Theresa. Nobody saw that coming.... What does the trick in communicating in Christian terms, is meeting a real human being, who can look at you and pray with you and hug you and smile with you and weep with you.'

May I suggest that Bill Morris is one of those real human beings. ☪

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# Pastoral Theology for a Post-Modern World

ROBERT MCELROY

**This is the text of a speech delivered by San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy at the 2018 assembly of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests meeting in Albuquerque in June 2018. It explores the pastoral theology of Pope Francis.**

**W**e are living in a wonderful moment in the life of the church. The authentic renewal of the Second Vatican Council remains the foundation and the challenge for those who seek to deepen the theology of the church and bring it into the life of the world. The call of Pope John Paul II for the church to constantly witness to Christ and the challenge of Pope Benedict to confirm the truth in an age of relativism guide the Catholic community in its discernment and its action. The call of missionary discipleship frames the vocation for every Christian woman and man, and the depth and the mystery of God's continuing presence in all of the created order assures humanity that the final note of our existence is not pain, suffering and despair, but the fullness of joy and peace which lies in the love of a God who has brought to us every blessing which exists.

We are privileged to witness this moment in the church's life, and to recognize that it is a moment of explicit theological renewal that will contribute enormously to the spread of the gospel in this new millennium. For we are seeing an emerging pastoral theology at the very heart of the life of the church which both links us to the pastoral action and ethos of the Lord himself and yet is highly attuned to the challenges and cultures of the Twenty-First Century. This pastoral theology calls for pastoral action to take its rightful place in framing the life and belief of the universal church, in concert with the traditional theological enterprises of dogma, scriptural studies, moral theology, ecclesiology, liturgical and spiritual theology.

### Pastoral theology of Vatican II

Indeed, the emergence of this pastoral theology in the present pontificate bears striking resemblance to the renewal of theology in the years preceding the Second Vatican Council. During the post-war period the growth of scripture studies informed by historical-critical method, the recovery of the historic liturgical life of the church as a font for the deepening of contemporary sacramental celebrations, and the sustained reflection on the nature of the church itself were part of a broad theological inquiry that allowed the bishops of the council to reflect upon the

challenges of the church in the modern world armed with robust insights central to the proclamation of the gospel in the Twentieth Century.

Similarly, the growth of a comprehensive pastoral theology that we are witnessing today parallels the flourishing of ecumenical and moral theology in the post-conciliar period, and the continuing expansion of the church's social doctrine formed within a truly global church.

These were movements of intense theological richness for the Catholic community in the Twentieth Century, and continue to yield crucial insights about the fullness of the salvation which has been bestowed upon us by the Lord Jesus Christ.

But in a very real way, the pastoral moment that we are witnessing today in the life of the church is different from any of these prior theological renewals, for each of them took place within a recognized field of specifically theological reflection. The challenge of pastoral theology is not only to delineate the substance of its insights into the gospel and the life of the church, but also the challenge to demonstrate that it is a significant branch of theology at all.

For most of the history of the church, pastoral theology did not exist as a distinct branch of theology. There were splendid pastoral teachings in the Catholic theological tradition in every age, of course, but these writings were not considered a distinct branch of theology. It was in the period after the reformation that a specific Catholic pastoral theology emerged as a major element of the reform of the priesthood and ecclesial life.

But the nature of even this post-reformation pastoral theology was very limited. It was to a significant degree a derivative branch of theology, confined to the application of the fruits of the other branches of theology to the practice of the salvation of souls. Moreover, pastoral theology was envisioned as primarily the work of priests. It was also instrumental in nature.

### Lived experience central for Pope Francis

In his teachings, Pope Francis points to an understanding of pastoral theology which is far more robust. This pastoral outlook

demands that all of the other branches of theology attend to the concrete reality of human life and human suffering in a much more substantial way in forming doctrine. It states that the lived experience of human sinfulness and human conversion are vital to understanding the central attribute of God in relation to us, which is mercy.

It demands that moral theology proceed from the actual pastoral action of Jesus Christ, which does not first demand a change of life, but begins with an embrace of divine love, proceeds to the action of healing and only then requires a conversion of action in responsible conscience.

The pastoral theology of Pope Francis requires that the liturgical and sacramental life of the church be formed in compassionate embrace with the often overwhelming life challenges which prevent men and women at periods of their life from conforming adequately with important gospel challenges. And the pastoral theology of Pope Francis rejects a notion of law which can be blind to the uniqueness of concrete human situations, human suffering and human limitation.

In these enormously important ways the vision of pastoral theology embraced by Pope Francis is a rejection of the tradition which sees pastoral theology as primarily derivative and the application of the other branches of theology. Rather, the use of pastoral theology in the teachings of Pope Francis points to an interactive role between pastoral theology and the historic disciplines of the Catholic theological tradition. In this way, pastoral realities are a significant font for theological reflection and development in all areas of our doctrinal life.

Just as importantly, the pastoral theology of Pope Francis rejects the traditional prism which focused pastoral theology on the work of priests, or even on a more generalized notion of pastoral ministry in the internal life of the church. In a very real way, the architects of pastoral theology in the writings of Pope Francis include the whole body of the faithful in relationship with God, and the datum of pastoral theology is the lived experience of the faithful in the concrete call of their discipleship.

### A new Ecclesiology

There are three fundamental foundations for this pastoral theology. The first foundation is the assertion that not only the activity, but the very nature of the

church involves at its heart pastoral action to heal the hearts of men and women who are suffering.

Pope Francis outlined this ecclesiological assertion in his beautiful description of the church itself as a field hospital: *I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars. You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds. And you have to start from the ground up. This is the mission of the church: the church heals, it cures... the mission of the church is to heal wounds of the heart, to open doors, to free people, to say that God is good, God forgives all, God is the father.*



One of the most beautiful elements of the Second Vatican Council was its magnificent theological images of the church: the church as the salvific sacrament of Christ's unity and mission, the church as the pilgrim people of God journeying together in this earthly life, the church as the mystical body, with its complementarity among members and headship in Christ. Each of these images conveys powerfully key elements of the sacred identity and ministry of the community which Jesus founded to sanctify the world.

So too the image of the church as a field hospital stands as a powerful testimony to the nature and role of the community of faith in the world. It speaks to the centrality of God's action in the life of the church, an action which begins as Jesus did, by healing women and men in their

brokenness, thus opening them up to receiving the grace of God in their hearts even as that grace is made manifest.

The image of the church as a field hospital points to the reality that the church is never remote from the human experience, never self-referential if it is to be faithful to its mission. Rather the church must always be enmeshed in the real lives and sufferings and challenges and joys of the people of God and the whole of humanity.

The image of the pilgrim people of God emphasized the common journey in grace of those in the church. The image of the church as sacrament emphasized the nature of the church as a reflection of the transforming power of God in the world. The image of the mystical body emphasized the complementarity of all within the life of the church, and the subjection of all to the person of Jesus

Christ. The image of the field hospital emphasizes the explicitly pastoral identity of the church reaching into the lives of men and women precisely in their greatest suffering to reveal the multiple dimensions of the saving love that comes from God.

The image of the church as a field hospital has none of the elegance or beauty of the image of the mystical body or church as sacrament. The image of the field hospital is earthy, rough-hewn, much like the stable in Bethlehem where our lord revealed himself to the world. Most importantly, the image of the church as a field hospital testifies vividly to the pastoral dimension that lies at the heart of the church's identity and its mission in the world.

### The Jesus method of encounter

The second foundation for the pastoral theology that Pope Francis is pointing to lies in the recognition that the church should mirror the pastoral action of the Lord himself. It is the pattern of Jesus Christ who walked the earth which we are to incorporate into every element of ecclesial life. This enduring truth is the foundation for a series of pastoral imperatives that Pope Francis has presented to the church during the last five years.

One of the most important of these imperatives is the call to accompaniment. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis beautifully expresses both the depth of commitment and the openness that must suffuse pastoral life and action in the church: "We will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this art

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## FEATURES

of accompaniment which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other.’

When the Lord encountered Zacchaeus in the tree, he was encountering a man despised for his theft and victimization of others. But Christ’s piercing compassionate embrace, conveyed in the call to eat at the house of this sinner, was sufficient to transform this hardened sinner. In patterning the church’s life after the ministry of Jesus Christ, the starting point is the drive to see and treat every human person as God sees them, an incredibly precious soul, individual in its nature and identity, yet equally treasured by the lord.

A second pastoral imperative of the pastoral theology of Pope Francis urges us to model our pastoral action on the three steps that formed Jesus’ encounter with those who were suffering or estranged in the gospel. First the Lord embraces the person, then he heals them. Then he calls them to reform. Each of these elements of the saving encounter with the lord is essential. But their order is also essential. Christ first reveals the overwhelmingly merciful and limitless love of God. Then he moves to heal the particular form of suffering that the person is experiencing. And only then does he call the person specifically to a change in their life.

This pattern must become ever more deeply the model for the church’s proclamation of the faith and healing action in the world. This must be the *imitatio Christi* for a pastoral church in an age that rejects formalism, authority and tradition.

The call to change one’s life to conform more fully with the gospel is essential to Christian conversion and the achievement of true happiness in this world and the next. But that call must be encased in the tender, healing face of a church which ministers as Christ did, in order to take root in the present age.

As a consequence, the pastoral church must be a non-judgmental church. There is no sin which Jesus mentions more frequently in the gospels than the sin of judgmentalism. For it is a sin so easy for all of us in our humanity to fall into. It is a mystery of the human soul why men and women feel better about themselves when they can point to the faults of others. It is a mystery, but also a reality, both for our humanity and the life of the church. Thus we must imitate Christ, who consistently spoke of the standards of the gospel without compromise, but did not reject men and women for their inability to live the fullness of that gospel. We must banish

judgmentalism from the life of the church, and replace it with the constantly affirming love of Jesus Christ. And in doing so, we will become the truly inclusive community that the church, both by its charter and its intrinsic mission, was always called to be.

### Connecting to the real life situation of human beings

The final foundation for the pastoral theology that Pope Francis is delineating for the life of the church is the assertion that the church’s pastoral identity and action must be rooted in the life situations that men and women actually experience in the world today.

It is impossible to build up a pastoral church without explicitly investigating the signs of the times and then integrating the results of that investigation into the very core of the church’s mission today. Thus it is essential that pastoral theology be explicitly and thoroughly inductive in its method.

The church of Latin America has contributed enormously to this dimension of the church’s life by its adoption of the see-judge-act methodology as a pathway for understanding every element of the life and work of the church in the world. This method is rooted in the world as it is, rather than in the world as it is imagined to be.

The see-judge-act methodology begins theological reflection with the reality that confronts us, then ponders the implications of that reality for faith and the gospel, and finally promotes action in concert with those implications.

As the final document of the Latin American bishops at Aparecida states: *this method enables us to combine successfully a faithful perspective for viewing reality, incorporating criteria from faith and reason for discerning and appraising it critically, and accordingly acting as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.*

It is this commitment to inductive method informed by faith and theological reflection that was at the heart of *Amoris Laetitia* and *Laudato Si’*.

The lived reality of men and women and children and families was the starting point for the church’s reflection on marriage and family life, not merely the application point for pre-made theological reflections.

Similarly, the degradation of the planet which undermines so many elements of human dignity and the future of the earth itself, was the starting point for a Catholic theology of the environment, not merely

an insertion point for the rich Catholic tradition on creation.

It is through this inductive pathway that the whole of the Catholic community becomes in an active sense architects of pastoral theology. For the sphere of pastoral theology is the very encounter of God with men and women in their ordinary lives, their dreams and hopes, their sufferings and wounds, their joys and accomplishments.

Pastoral theology seeks to recapitulate and replicate the saving encounter of Jesus Christ with the saint and the sinner that resides in every human soul, touching every dimension of human existence in the real world.

We are privileged to be living in the pastoral moment of the post-conciliar church. We are gifted with the image of the church as a field hospital, focused precisely on the specific wounds that weigh down the men and women of our age, as well as ourselves.

We are called in our identity as priests of the church and disciples of Jesus Christ to form an ecclesial community patterned on the pastoral action of our Lord and savior when he walked on our earth. And we are called always, always to root our mission of healing and conversion in the lived experience of those whom we love as our sisters and brothers in Christ.

It is frequently said by those who have opposed elements of the pastoral mission of Pope Francis that doctrine cannot be superseded by the pastoral. It is equally important to recognize that the pastoral cannot be eclipsed by doctrine.

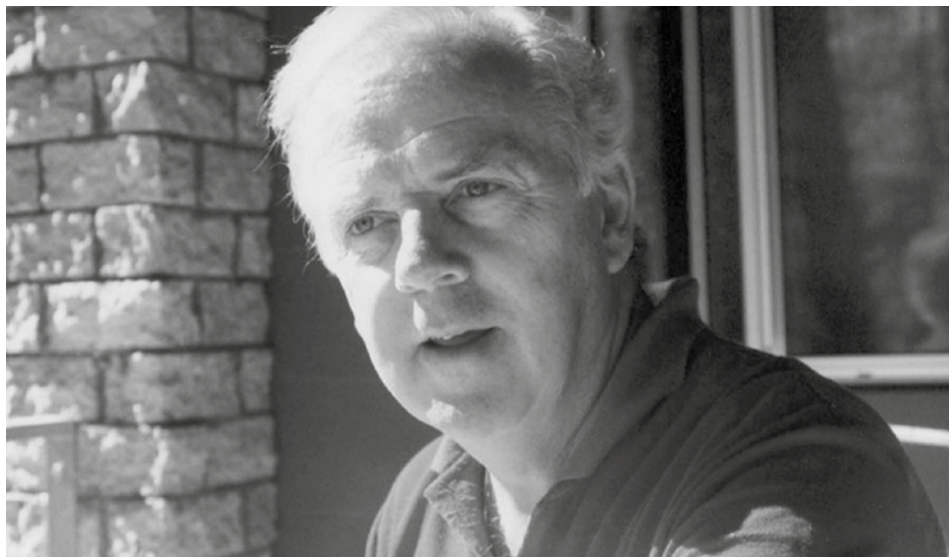
For the pastoral ministry of Jesus Christ stands at the heart of any balanced understanding of the church that we are called to be. And pastoral authenticity is as important as philosophical authenticity or authenticity in law in contouring the life of the church to the charter which our Lord himself has given to us. ☪

**We are priests best  
when we are  
priests together.**

## Brian Yates: Spiritual guide to many priests

BRIAN YATES

**Brian Yates, Sydney priest and spiritual director, died on July 2. John Ford, Brian's classmate, delivered this homily at Brian's funeral on 5 July at North Sydney. Readings at the Mass were 1 Kings 19:1-8; 2 Corinthians 4:7-15 and Luke 7:36-38.**



**B**rian was very definite in telling us that his funeral should be simple, without fuss. He did not want us to use the Pall. He chose the scriptures, the hymns and the prayers, and he did not want us to have any eulogies. No frills as he would tell me.

After being friends, all of us, for so long it is not easy to know where one should start or end... so many stories, events, happenings one could tell. He would tell to me 'just say a few words'. But if I mention parts of his life, he will understand, I am sure.

The three readings he chose tell us about him. Elijah's story reminds us of the problems and difficulties of life. 'He asked that he may die' yet the angel touched him and said: Get up and eat. He ate and drank and went to the mount of God.

Brian's early life, afflicted by the polio he suffered from the age of four, saw him cope with hardship, suffering and pain and this continued up until his peaceful death. He coped with his afflictions and through them was a source of encouragement to others. He overcame so many difficulties but in so doing he understood the need to encourage and help others. His wide family ties have always been a very important part of his life.

After ordination in 1958 and some difficulties in a couple of parishes, Brian was invited by Jimmy Carroll to go to Woollahra with our two classmates, John

Heaps and Peter Harrington. They lived life to the full and ministered with concern to the people of the parish.

It was here that he really started his life of hospitality with the establishment of Number 80. Here he was able to seek out people who were in need. He sometimes called in at the Police Station to see if there was someone in trouble. No 80 became a place of refuge for them. It was the beginning of a long road involving 'The Other' and their needs in mind, body and spirit. As St Paul says in the second reading: an extraordinary power which belongs to God and does not come from us. And though afflicted we are not crushed – and we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also.

On New Years Eve in 1970, he was appointed Spiritual Director, at St Patrick's College, Manly and there he continued with this same spirit of helping others, the students in particular, but also in giving retreats and conferences to priests, religious and lay people, all over the world. It was a time of joy, anxiety, affliction and reward. A lot of us here shared that time with him and have remained true friends, influenced by his spirit and his insight.

He founded Galilee House in Blair St. Bondi, in 1986. It was his idea to have a place of hospitality especially for clergy and religious who were having difficulties. For the next sixteen years he worked, often with great difficulties. It is estimated that

during that time he cared for over 23 nationalities and provided over 15,000 bed-nights, mostly all by himself, making beds, cooking and cleaning – sometimes with the help of one or two others where possible. He always said to me: I never ask what the problem might be. I provided hospitality and we would have Mass at 5pm if anyone wished to come and then a drink or two before dinner. The rest just worked itself out. There are many here who spent a night, a week or a year or more with him there. They will tell you how it was and what it meant to them. It was like Jesus taught. They accused him of eating and drinking too much.

In 2002, he left Bondi and retired to Merton on Miller, North Sydney. He again made friends and offered hospitality to others. He had many, many visitors. He loved to have people come and see him, eat with them, share his spirit with them and listen, listen.

He became known over the last sixteen years as Father Lunalot. He would say I am going to the pub. I have done enough cooking. In our Gospel story the woman washed the feet of Jesus. She was the one who loved much. Jesus washed the feet of his friends and told them to do the same. Brian in his final years was doing this in a different way perhaps but with the same result. 'As I have done, you also should do' were the words Jesus told his friends on the night before he died.

At one or other of these places we knew him. We have all shared with him a story of goodness and care of others. A story of hospitality. A true Jesus story.

It would be a difficult thing to be able to live up to what Brian was able to achieve in his life. His spirituality, compassion and hospitality are legend. But he has given us an example and we would do well to think about his life and story and try and follow what he has taught us.

He lies here before us, a man who having suffered greatly during his life, overcame great adversity and managed to be truly a special person whose spirit will surely live on and enable us as we try to follow the way of the Lord to be people of faith, truth, compassion and justice.

He knew the way of the Lord – we are urged to follow. He lies a great and good man and his reward will be to know the face of his God. Brian, dear friend of all of us, be now with our God. May he rest in peace. ☪

# First Plenary Council of Australasia, 14-29 November 1885

PETER WILKINSON

This is Part 2 of the article by Peter Wilkinson examining the 1885 First Australasian Plenary Council which brought the Church in Australia and New Zealand together for the first time. Part 1 appeared in the Winter 2018 edition. It is also the fourth in the series looking at the particular (provincial and plenary) councils of the Catholic Church held in Australia between 1844 and 1937.

## New major diocesan seminary at Sydney

Central to Moran’s vision for the Church in Australia was the establishment of a new major diocesan seminary at Sydney with a national reach. He had decided this in 1884 without consulting anyone, and intended use the 1885 Plenary Council to win endorsement.

Prior to 1885 nine seminaries had opened in Australia, operated for a while, and all closed (Table 2) except one, St Charles Borromeo at Bathurst, opened in 1876. None produced significant numbers of priests. Moran, planned to build his seminary at a magnificent site at Manly in Sydney, and the foundation stone was laid on 19 November 1885, during the Council.

2 years of Scholastic philosophy, the best professors available, sound text books, and teaching in Latin. It would be the Sydney ‘diocesan’ seminary, completely under Moran’s control and authority – setting the rules, hiring staff, assessing candidates for ordination and ordaining them – but would be open to all the other bishops wanting their own seminarians formed in Australia.

The Council agreed that it was ‘highly desirable that each diocese have its own major seminary, [but] given that the state of the Provinces and Dioceses did not permit this as yet, [and as] the Metropolitan of Sydney has proposed to erect a Major Seminary worthy of the Australian Church and in keeping with the demands of Propaganda, every effort should be made to ensure this seminary

**Table 2. Early Australian Seminaries and priests ordained, 1838-1906**

Seminary	Years functioning	Priests Ordained	Australian-born
St Mary’s Seminary, Sydney	1838-1857	28	2
St Mary’s College, Lyndhurst, Glebe	1858-1877	7	5
St Mary’s College, Hobart	1854-1860	34	2
St Francis Seminary, Melbourne	1848-1854	4	n/a
St Patrick’s College SJ, East Melbourne	1855-62; 1875-79	224	5
St Aloysius College SJ, Sevenhill	1856-59; 1875-85	21	n/a
St Charles Borromeo Seminary, Bathurst <sup>1</sup>	1875 -1891	27	11
Marist Seminary, Clydesdale <sup>2</sup>	1859-1869	0	0
St Kilian’s Seminary, Brisbane <sup>3</sup>	1874-1906	4	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>116</b>	<b>27 (estimate)</b>

Notes: 1. St Charles Seminary in Bathurst merged with St Stanislaus College, Bathurst from 1888; 2. None of the students were Australian-born and no student was ever ordained during the life of the seminary; 3. Brisbane had 6 seminarians in 1878; 4. Most of these priests completed only part of their studies at a single seminary, most studying at two or more seminaries during their 6 year training, either in Australia or overseas.

The Manly Seminary would be totally Tridentine, with 4 years of theology.

flourishes’. It also proposed that those bishops who did not have their own seminaries be ‘most urgently exhorted to send their ecclesiastical students to this new seminary’.

However, as some of the Irish bishops also wanted some of their seminarians to receive a Roman education, the Council petitioned Pope Leo XIII and Propaganda to support an Australian National College (seminary) in Rome, which the Manly seminary would not interfere with, but serve as a ‘feeder.

## Governance of non-clerical religious congregations

Another contentious issue at the Council concerned the governance of non-clerical (especially female) religious. It centered on whether it should be ‘diocesan’ or ‘central’ (i.e. not by the local bishop), Mother Mary McKillop having insisted that central governance was essential for her congregation of Josephite Sisters. A vote of 14 to 3 went in favour of diocesan governance, which seemed to have settled the matter conclusively, but when Propaganda reviewed the decrees, it insisted that the one requiring congregations of religious women be subject to the local bishop be suppressed.

## Catholic education

In the years following colonial legislation on education funding, financial support for Catholic schools was progressively withdrawn: in SA in 1851, Tasmania in 1854, Victoria in 1873, Queensland in 1880, NSW in 1882, and WA in 1895. At the same time, the various governments began establishing a mainly secular curriculum in the national or public schools, with or without compensatory rights for the churches to provide some denominational teaching, or non-denominational scriptural reading/instruction. While their aim was to establish a modern Australian public school system providing ‘free, compulsory and secular’ education, the interpretation of the aim was sometimes murky.

From the outset, the Catholic bishops had opposed a national secular education system, and even more so when state aid began to be withdrawn from Catholic schools. In NSW Archbishop Vaughan, convinced that there would be ‘godless’ secular education ‘in the end’, proposed that Catholics must set about funding their schools from their own resources. But the other bishops were wary and distrustful, until Bishop Matthew Quinn offered to cooperate. All the bishops then authorised Vaughan to write a joint pastoral letter titled *Catholic Education*. Published in July 1879, it condemned all schools founded on ‘secularist’ principles as ‘seedplots of future immorality, infidelity and lawlessness’, and precipitated fierce sectarian conflict. NSW Premier Parkes used the pastoral letter to abolish state aid, but it was the occasion not the cause of the 1880 *Public Instruction Act*.

Four issues confronted the 1885 Plenary Council: i) how to make Catholic parents send their children to Catholic schools; ii)



how to get the Catholic community to finance a Catholic school system; iii) where the schools should be established; and iv) how to find sufficient and suitable teachers.

The Council first restated the principles agreed at the 1869 Provincial Council and added another: 'parents and guardians of children have the natural right and duty to educate their children, either personally or through others' (Decree 235). Propaganda, in its review, added one more: 'it is the Church's right and duty to teach the faith in its entirety and to condemn error and false philosophies' (Decree 234). The Council then insisted that there be a Catholic school in every 'mission' (a subdivision of a 'district', akin to a parish), that it be supported by mission revenue, and that the school be built before the church and used as a chapel in the meantime (Decrees 239-240). To put pressure on parents, the Council decided that 'sacramental absolution is to be denied to those who contumaciously neglect their children's religious education or send them to unsuitable or public schools without good reason or safeguards' (Decree 238). Other decrees concerned teaching the deaf, selecting text books, and paying teachers' salaries.

In 1869, teachers in the more than 250 Catholic schools were mostly lay. The 15 religious teaching congregations of priests, sisters and brothers then in Australia had few members and foundations in just 6 dioceses. The Christian Brothers had only 4 members in Melbourne. By 1885, however, while the schools still heavily relied on lay teachers, 14 more religious teaching congregations of priests, sisters and brothers, mainly from Ireland and

England, but also from France and Argentina, had made foundations and were providing some 1450 sisters and 150 brothers to the now more than 600 Catholic schools.

For religious instruction in Catholic schools, and elsewhere, the Council mandated the *Maynooth Catechism*, which emphasised authority and prescribed obligations, and promoted the Irish model of faith and spirituality and Irish devotional practices. The Irish influence at the Council was also evident in the elevation of St Patrick's feast to the highest liturgical rank, and 22 other Irish saints being added to the liturgical calendar.

### Mixed marriages

No substantive changes were made to the 1869 Council legislation on mixed marriage, but Propaganda insisted that the faithful be carefully instructed on the difference between 'mixed religion' and 'disparity of cult' as they related to marriage, and that the *cautiones* must never be dispensed, and always followed up.

### Evangelisation of the Australian Aborigines

Of the first four efforts to evangelize Australia's indigenous peoples – at Stradbroke Island (QLD) in 1843, at Albany (WA) in 1846, at Port Essington (NT) in 1846, and at New Norcia (WA) in 1846 – only the Benedictine mission at New Norcia was functioning in 1885.

Though the 1869 Council had strongly denounced the injustices perpetrated against the Aborigines, its only decisions were to seek out another male religious

congregation for the evangelization of the Aborigines, and recommend to Propaganda that a new vicariate apostolic be erected in the northern section of the Brisbane diocese where many indigenous people were living.

### Vicariate Apostolic of Queensland

In 1877, eight years after the Council's recommendation, Pope Pius IX established the Vicariate Apostolic of Queensland, stating that it would be 'most favourable for converting the natives' and assigning it to Italian diocesan priests of the Seminary of Saints Peter and Paul for Foreign Missions. But they spoke no English, had little success, and in 1884 the vicariate was handed over to the Irish Augustinians. But neither the Italians nor Augustinians really attempted to evangelize the indigenous peoples, so the 1885 Plenary Council unanimously agreed that 'a [dedicated] prefect or vicar apostolic be appointed for the spiritual care of the Aborigines in Queensland', and that the new vicariate be entrusted to the Spanish Augustinians in the Philippines.

### Northern Territory Jesuit missions

Following the establishment of Darwin in 1870 and the construction of the Darwin to Adelaide telegraph in 1872, the Scottish priest and missionary in Australia, Duncan McNab, lobbied in Rome and London for the establishment of missions to the Aborigines in the Northern Territory. McNab had already worked among the Aborigines in Queensland since 1875, first at Mackay, then at Gympie, Kilcoy, Durundur and Bribie Island, and Bishop James Quinn had permitted him to work for their better social conditions in Brisbane. But when McNab was appointed a Commissioner for Aborigines, Quinn considered him a government tool and withdrew his support. In 1878, McNab appealed to Pope Leo XIII and in 1879 travelled to Rome where he succeeded in getting the pope to authorize a Jesuit mission to the Aborigines. Back in Australia, he persuaded the Austrian Jesuits in Adelaide to establish a mission in the Northern Territory, rather than in Queensland.

The Austrian Jesuits had arrived in Australia in 1848 and established their base at Sevenhill in the Adelaide diocese. After Pope Leo XIII authorized their mission to the Aborigines in 1882, four Jesuits travelled to Port Darwin (NT) and established what became known as the Jesuit Aboriginal Mission. Fr Anton Stele SJ, vicar general of the Darwin Diocese (1882-1904) and mission superior, set up St Joseph's Mission (1882-1891) at Rapid Creek, near Darwin, among the Larreikia and Woolner peoples, and by 1885 the mission had its first baptisms

Continued page 12

– 14 children. The next year, Queen of Holy Rosary Mission (1886-1899) was established at Daly River, a more remote area, among the Waigat and Woolmonga peoples, and at both missions the Jesuits used the ‘Reductions’ model of Paraguay, allocating private agricultural plots to each married Christian couple. The SA Government contributed £100 per annum, and other support came from various sources.

At the 1885 Council Fr Strele presented a glowing report on the Jesuit mission (in Latin), and used his visit south to raise funds. However, when he ran into difficulties with bishops refusing permission to fundraise, with McNab also collecting for a northern mission, and the Council’s decree forbidding no more than one collection annually for the ‘national mission to Aborigines’ (Decree 206), he sailed for America and Europe in desperation to raise money, but left his confreres in the Territory leaderless.

### **New Norcia mission in WA**

Rudesindo Salvado OSB, Bishop of Port Victoria (NT) – which he never visited – and Abbot of the New Norcia community of 58 monks, also presented a report (in Latin) to the 1885 Council on the Benedictine Mission to the Aborigines in WA. He and his Benedictine companion, Bishop Jose Serra, had established the mission in 1846 with the original aim of creating among the indigenous peoples of the Victoria Plains a ‘largely self-sufficient Christian village based on agriculture’. But after the local population’s decimation by introduced diseases in the 1860s, the mission concentrated on providing practical education to the Aboriginal children brought in from all over WA. The new aim was to ‘civilize and evangelize’ them, but with great sympathy for their indigenous culture. During the 1860s and 1870s the mission flourished: new buildings were erected, wells were sunk, and various crops harvested. The monks worked closely with the Nyoongar people, teaching them agricultural skills and supplying food. They studied the Nyoongar language and customs and recorded them in writing. In 1881 Salvado advised his fellow bishops that all the government officials wanted was for the Aborigines ‘to be kept quiet’. In 1885 ‘100 black aboriginals are lodged, clothed, educated and supplied with everything at the Mission by the Missionary Monks .... There are 2 schools for black children, one for boys and another for girls’ (*Catholic Directory for 1886*).

### **Kimberley mission in WA**

Although plans were being drawn up for another mission to the Aborigines in WA,

by 1885 they had not matured. Between 1882 and 1888 the Kimberley region experienced a massive pastoral land grab, and in 1885 rich new pearl-shell beds were discovered off the coast near Broome. Pearling ships, manned by Filipinos, Malays and Japanese pearlers, sheltered in the coastal creeks during the lay-up season, and the pearlers were developing close relations with the local Aborigines. This concerned not only government administrators, but propelled a new Catholic outreach, initiated by the new Bishop of Perth, Matthew Gibney.

As vicar general Perth, Gibney had investigated the possibility of a mission in WA’s North-West in 1878, and his bishop, Martin Griver, had asked the WA Governor for a 50,000 acre reservation to establish a Catholic Mission for the ‘Christian civilization’ of the local Aborigines, a principal policy objective of the British Government. In 1879 the WA *Catholic Record* called for a religious congregation to take on the task, or for an ‘apostle’ prepared to ‘labour to a great extent in vain’. The apostle was Fr Duncan McNab who, in 1883, had moved to Perth at the invitation of Bishop Griver and become the chaplain to Aboriginal prisoners on Rottneet Island. Both Griver and McNab wanted assistance and redress for the Aborigines, whose lands had been taken without compensation.

In 1884 McNab sailed north to Goodenough Bay, near Derby, to set up a personal ‘Native Mission to the Kimberley Aborigines’, and later that year sent Griver the names of several missionary congregations who had promised to evangelize the Aborigines. For a while he was joined by two other priests, but the mission was destroyed by fire in 1887, and McNab, exhausted, went to Melbourne where he died in 1896.

The Kimberley mission was discussed at the 1885 Plenary Council, which recommended the establishment of a new vicariates apostolic.

### **Policies on Aboriginal evangelization**

The 1885 Council produced 6 decrees (203-208) setting out the future policy direction for Aboriginal evangelization. They state that the Aboriginal peoples are capable of and willing to embrace Christianity, that land reserves should be set aside for them, that religious congregations should be recruited to instruct them in religious and practical matters, that an annual collection for the Aboriginal missions be held in each diocese, and that the bishops should protest against their persecution by the colonists.

### **Ecclesiastical discipline**

Councils always aim to correct abuses and the use of ‘reservation of sins’ – to a higher authority than priests – and ‘censures’ to enforce them, is common. The 1844 Council had reserved seven sins: premeditated homicide, abortion, perjury, bigamy, sexual solicitation, and attempted absolution of a sexual accomplice. The 1869 Council added mixed marriage before a Protestant minister or civil official. The 1885 Plenary deleted perjury. The 1844 Council had introduced the censure of ‘suspension’ for priests failing to record baptisms and marriages in their registers, and the 1869 Council imposed ‘excommunication reserved to the local bishop’ for two Catholics marrying outside the Church. The 1885 Plenary simply repeated the 1869 censure.

### **Administration of temporal goods**

The 1844 Council forbade priests from incurring personal debts, insisted that all church property be safeguarded with title deeds, and that debt on such property not be incurred without canonical permission. The 1869 Council mandated bank accounts, financial records, inventories, financial returns, personal wills for priests and bishops, clergy sustentation, and rules on mission debts, building contracts and building alterations. The 1885 Plenary introduced 9 more decrees, almost identical to those of the Irish Councils of Thurles (1850) and Maynooth (1875), mandating all church property to be held in trust in the name of at least 3 persons (including the bishop and 2 priests), the appointment of a diocesan secretary to supervise trust matters and, where church property valued at over £200 Stg. was to be alienated, the need to have written consent from the diocesan consultors and the Holy See.

### **Decrees, decisions, Pastoral Letter, other letters, and *recognito***

Following the close of the Council on 29 September 1885, the approved *Acta et Decreta*, arranged in 32 chapters, were sent to the Holy See for examination prior to approval. Propaganda reviewed them and sent its recommendations and comments to the Congregation’s full membership in November 1886. The Congregation, having considered all matters in March and April 1887, recommended that Brisbane and Adelaide be made metropolitan sees, that dioceses be erected at Grafton, Wilcannia, Sale, and Port Augusta, that the Vicariate Apostolic of Queensland be renamed Cooktown, and that two new vicariates apostolic be erected: Queensland for the Aborigines, and Kimberley. Minor

corrections and amendments were made to some decrees, and others were suppressed or deleted, including the one requiring religious houses to be subject to the local bishop. The 272 amended decrees and Propaganda's recommendations regarding the new territories were approved by Pope Leo XIII on 24 April 1887 and the *recognitio* (approval) issued on 1 May 1887. The decisions on the new dioceses and vicariates came into effect with the Apostolic Constitution dated 10 May 1887, though the Queensland Vicariate for the Aborigines was never formally erected. The 1885 Council also composed a

Pastoral Letter to all the faithful to be read at Sunday Masses throughout the nation. It set out the new regulations and explained the principles on which they were based. But whereas the 1869 Pastoral Letter had emphasized the danger of 'indifferentism', the 1885 Pastoral Letter had emphasized the danger of 'indifferentism', the 1885 Pastoral urged Catholics to 'better their station in life', foster 'family prayer', set up 'temperance societies', and for parents to acquire land which they could pass to their children, and encourage their sons to acquire a useful trade or profession.

In a gesture of solidarity and communion with other churches across the world, the

Council sent letters to the Pope, the Prefect of Propaganda, and the bishops of Ireland, the United States, Germany, Spain, and China.

*Acknowledgment:* In preparing this article many primary and secondary sources were consulted. However, special acknowledgment is given to the original research of Dr Ian B Waters in his unpublished doctoral thesis *Australian Conciliar Legislation prior to the 1917 Code of Canon Law: A Comparative Study with similar Conciliar Legislation in Great Britain, Ireland, and North America*, St Paul University, Ottawa, 1990. ☪



## Be kind to strangers lest they be angels in disguise

GLENN DE CRUZ CSSR

**Glenn de Cruz CSSR, is Vicar to the Provincial and Rector of the Redemptorist Community, Kew Vic. He offers his experience of ministry with prisoners and those living with HIV and AIDS in Melbourne**

One day, early 2014, I met with Sister Mary O'Shannassy SGS, Director, Catholic Prison Ministry in Victoria, at Knox Centre.

The purpose for the meeting was to see if there was a possibility for me to join the Prison Ministry in celebrating Mass for the inmates in any of the facilities here in Melbourne.

The meeting was a very amicable one far as I remember as Sister Mary is an easy person to talk with and since then I have been celebrating Mass at the Metropolitan Remand Centre, every first Sunday of the month, that's when I am in Melbourne. Sister Mary is a woman of faith committed to the spiritual wellbeing of the prisoners and the chaplains for many years.

During the conversation I mentioned that I was Chaplain to the Ministry for persons with HIV/AIDS in the Archdiocese of Singapore for about eight years in the nineties. On hearing that Sister Mary asked if I would be interested in meeting Marg Hayes co-ordinator of the Catholic HIV/AIDS ministry in Melbourne. My answer was obvious.

Since meeting Marg, a friendly and joyful person to have around, I have come to know a number of unique and interesting personalities at St Mary of the Cross, Fitzroy. Marg is also a woman of faith who has the spiritual and well-being concerns of the people with HIV/AIDS at heart. This homely place where people with HIV gather on Mondays, except public holidays,

is at 23, Brunswick St., Fitzroy. Sometimes, and even often as I would have liked, I find myself being absent, because of my other commitments as a Redemptorist.

Being a Redemptorist, I am always aware of the abandoned who may feel unwelcomed in our Church and perhaps stigmatised in society as well, noting that our charism, is "to preach the good news to the most abandoned". In many cases I try to do it implicitly, rather than explicitly from the pulpit. As Saint Francis of Assisi is thought to have said, "Preach always, sometimes use words".

In so doing it became a spiritual experience for me of *Meeting God Outside the Camp* (Chris McVey OP, *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 2004, Vol 41, number 1). In this article Chris McVey explains through his own experience of working in Pakistan for over forty years of meeting God not in the institution, not in universities, seminaries, or in books of theology, but as theology happens *outside the camp*. Outside the camp is the very matrix of theology. In the bible God spoke to Moses in a tent, outside the camp. Jesus went outside the camp where the outcasts were, the lepers, the women, the sick, and the lonely. In fact Jesus died outside the camp, according to the letter to the Hebrews. It's there where we meet God. But this comes at a price. Journeying outside the camp with Jesus is dangerous, so says McVey. For to love those outside the camp, outside the institution one takes the risk of being misunderstood. And I began to

understand, albeit it took a long time, that if I did not experience the mercy of God and hospitality and the welcoming spirit of those around, then by all means I need to steer clear of those who suffer. They have enough problems without someone around them gritting his teeth and wishing he were anywhere else.

After joining the group, and in some cases are outside the camp who gather at St Mary of the Cross on Mondays, I got to know some of them quite well and in particular a lovely lady by the name of Colleen Liddell who volunteers her service of preparing a meal every Monday. One Monday, I noticed that there were more people than usual, so I said to Colleen that I was not really hungry and she told me in no uncertain terms to go and sit down at table, there will be enough for everybody. And there was, even for seconds. By the way Colleen never knows how many will turn out on Mondays. It reminded me of the feeding of the five thousand in the Gospel. It's all about sharing and if you do there will be enough for everyone, sometimes even for seconds. And every time we have a meal, I believe it's eucharistic, by that I mean a thanksgiving to a God of love and mercy.

The saying, *Be kind to strangers lest they be angels in disguise*, is of course a verse from the Letter to the Hebrews, 13:2.

The sign was brought by one of them who come on Mondays, and it has been put up on the wall. It represents what this place stands for. Believe me, I am far from being angelic and I am certainly no angel and I am not in disguise either, as people who know me will attest to. But every time when I can turn up on Mondays I feel welcomed, like the very first time I arrived as a stranger more than four years ago. ☪

# Time to act in the Australian Church

LEO F DONNELLY

**Fr Leo Donnelly is a retired priest in Lismore Diocese. He offers some reflections on the church of the future inspired by Pope Francis and a little more daring than present.**

I hesitate to take issue with an experienced Pastor like Eric Hodgens (*Melbourne's New Archbishop, The Swag* Autumn 18) and his hope for a new visionary leader for the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the hope that such a leader will restore the former public credibility of the church in Australia. He even thoughtfully provides him with a handy job profile.

The renewal and revitalisation of the Church will not take place at that level. The late Cardinal Hume famously said that if renewal is not taking place at the parish level it is not happening at all. And if we look at our present situation, following the devastating findings of the Royal Commission, it is obvious that it was at the parish level we have survived pretty well. A recent survey mentioned in the media indicates the while Catholics have lost confidence in episcopal leadership they, according to the report, surprisingly, trust their local pastors.

While it is true that many fair weather Catholics are missing during the storm, the tugboat Catholics have stayed the course. While it is also true that some parishes are weak or moribund many more are vital and active and that has helped us through the paedophile crisis. The attitude of the outstanding Catholic, Martin Sheehan, pretty well reflects the attitude of the bulk of Catholics. When asked about the child abuse scandal in the Church he responded: "What has that got to do with my personal faith in Jesus Christ?" Admittedly it is not quite the response one might expect from those who have been the victims of abuse.

The fact is that the real action in the church is at the level of the building blocks of the church and that is the local faith communities which make up the parish which, as Pope Francis says, is a communion of communities. It is not happening at the diocesan chancery. So what should the role of the diocesan structure be in these times? What Abraham Lincoln said about government can well be transferred to the Church of today. The diocese exists to help parishes to do what they are unable to do themselves. That means that a Bishop should be concentrating on resourcing the parishes of his diocese to make it possible for them to achieve their purpose, to be the faith powerhouse in their localities. That is where the real strength of a diocese is to be found

The prophecy Karl Rahner made about about sixty years ago has proven to be accurate. He said: *Christianity of the West has ceased to be a religion of growth. More and more the laity will be required to take primary roles, the clergy being deprived of their socially privileged status. The Church will continue to be missionary – to commend the gospel and seek to implement its values to the wider community in a spirit of dialogue rather than from a position of privilege formerly enjoyed by Christianity in the West.* Although masked by immigration in the West, the child abuse revelations in the Church have certainly hastened the fulfilment of that prophecy.

Pope Francis has given us and people in leadership positions in the Church, a great example of fearless and courageous leadership which means taking risks and also from time to time making mistakes. Having lived so long under the repressive rule of the Roman Curia, I think that episcopal conferences have become timid and in Australia, having had such a bashing from the Royal Commission, are down in confidence. Otherwise they would surely have taken steps, as the Pope has practically invited them to do, to deal with the scandal known as the Roman Missal with its assault on the noble English language. Is the Missal important? Only if you concede that worship is at the core of what we do. In our principal act of worship, the Eucharist, it is obvious that we need to have that worship expressed in the very best possible way and that is not happening at the moment in the English speaking church.

When we speak of a parish we tend to equate that with Catholics only. A true vision of Parish is inclusive of all the souls that inhabit the geographical area and this applies also to the diocese. The faith communities or congregations exist within this structure and are, or should be, the yeast in the dough of the wider community to reach out in service to the community in which it lives. A parish that looks only to its own needs and self preservation is a far cry for that church that was sent out to proclaim the gospel to all nations and people.

If the key to revitalising the Church in Australia lies with parishes, that demands quality leadership within those parish faith communities. And therein lays the problem, very well identified in the article by



Deacon Gary Stone in the autumn edition of *The Swag*. The shortage of priests has indeed had a negative effect on the Church. While the recruitment of priests from overseas has helped, it has had a downside. There have been cultural problems and in any case it could only be a temporary and partial solution. Raiding the churches of other countries seems to be a sort of ecclesial imperialism. The question is what is Plan B.

It has been said that it is a form of insanity to do the same thing over and over and expect a different result which is what we seem to be doing. The solution to the problem is a challenge to the episcopal conferences. Optional celibacy would be a beginning. Married priests of course would need to be paid a family wage and that is a problem but one that would require a greater financial sacrifice from our parishioners. This does not mean that celibate priests would be devalued when celibacy is chosen for the right reasons. It allows for total dedication to the mission whereas natural law would require that a married priest would have a primary concern for his wife and family. This would not make him a lesser priest but simply one with special family responsibilities and less availability for people. It is not an either/or but a both/and.

The call is to start doing things differently. There are duties that lay people or lay pastoral assistants can and should perform. Parish financial administration is one example, already quite common in many parishes. Small parishes cannot afford them but there is no reason that the service cannot be provided for a group of small parishes by the diocese. Funerals and weddings fall into the same category. The recruitment of *virii probati*, men in their fifties and sixties who have fulfilled their responsibilities to children and family, and also helpfully are financially independent, together with their wives could be a formidable partnership in the service of parishes. If they are to be ordained they would need to have some training of course. On the other hand they would have been listening to the Word of God for

most of their lives so one imagines they have a pretty good knowledge of church doctrine and practice. These things need to become the norm rather than the exception.

Like it or not the power that Canon Law gives to a Parish Priest, putting him in charge of all aspects of parish life, is a huge challenge in today's environment. The challenge is to use this power to empower lay leaders in the parish community. The empowering of parishioners can lead to an often untapped rich resource in most parishes. Too often the Parish Priest in the past has hugged this power to himself. I believe that an ordained pastor is always the best form of leadership for a parish but what is required is a different model of formation and preparation for priesthood. To ignore new approaches to ministry means the shortage of priests/pastors is to a large degree of our own making.

One of the disasters occurring because of closing down and amalgamating parishes is the loss of many small faith communities based on lack of numbers. It is interesting to look back at the regional church in Australia seventy years ago. The country parish I was appointed to had four masses on Sunday in four major centres. Two masses per priest was all that was permitted but there were eight Mass centres so the four smallest (called station churches) were serviced during the week and that is still the pattern in many rural parishes in Australia. It is not the Sunday that is the priority – it is providing the Holy Eucharist

to every Catholic who desires it. Canon Law includes that in the list of rights of Catholics and also defends the right of every Eucharistic community to exist, and the smallest have the same right as the largest.

Gerard Stoyles insightful article (*Sacraments of Initiation for children in the Australian Church, The Swag, Autumn 18*) raised many questions about the revitalising of the sacramental life in our parishes and the difficulties associated with the sacraments of initiation. There are two sacraments that are in trouble, reconciliation and confirmation. The first is often jammed in prior to First Communion and quickly forgotten about. Why is it mandatory before first communion given the age of the most recipients? The catechesis in our schools should allow a year each for Baptism, Eucharist. The actual sacrament of Reconciliation should be delayed to either Year six or seven when there is sufficient maturity in children to understand sin and forgiveness. This is not to preclude the early introduction to penance as virtue. It is also time that the communal celebration of reconciliation became a regular feature of Catholic life and practice – at least at the great feasts of Christmas and Easter. While there is no doubt that Christ gave the power to forgive sins to His Church, the delivery systems have been historically problematic.

Confirmation seems to be a sacrament in search of a theology. Perhaps the time has come for a very different approach from

the present where it is often mainly the occasion for a Bishop to meet his flock. Why not make it the sacrament of commitment to discipleship? After all we say that the promises of infant baptism only become real by decisions made at a later date. The formal response to the call to discipleship in its many forms in today's Church could be formalised by the reception of Confirmation. After all it has traditionally been a sacrament associated with missioning which is one good reason for a bishop to confer it. This would mean the emphasis would extend from *ex opere operato*, as at present, to *ex opere operantis*. So it would then be a challenge to a Catholic to make an authentic commitment to discipleship accompanied by this sacrament at some stage of his or her life. This would probably mean that many people would never be confirmed particularly the passive Catholics of which they are many. So what? Perhaps these two sacraments could be subjected to a radical rethink at the forthcoming Plenary Council

To misquote Dickens, these are the worst of times and the best of times for the Church. Retired at ninety I would love to be starting over again working within Pope Francis' vision of Church. Pessimism is out, optimism is in. The Pope has given us an appropriate theme for our times, *Gaudete et Exultate*. One would hope that the forthcoming Plenary Council will courageously address many of the problems that beset the Australian Church. To not do so would be a great opportunity lost. ☺



## The Seal of Confession: civil law, church law and conscience

PETER JOHNSTONE

**Peter Johnstone is an active committed Catholic and a member of Catholics for Renewal and Convener of the Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform. He believes the hype about the seal of confession is shielding more important questions of credibility.**



The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has recommended that Australian governments introduce criminal mandatory reporting of child sexual abusers with a criminal offence of 'failure to report'. That offence would apply to any failure to report to police in circumstances where a person knew, suspected, or should have suspected that a person associated with their institution had sexually abused a child. The Royal Commission wanted to ensure that, wherever possible, known paedophiles are not left at large, free to sexually abuse children. The proposed law is focussed on likely continued offending and is intended to get paedophiles off the streets.

In April 2010 the Holy See made an exception in the application of the pontifical secret in cases of child sexual abuse, allowing

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## FEATURES

bishops to report child sexual abuse by clergy to the civil authorities if they were subject to criminal mandatory reporting laws – a limited concession seen by many as no more than a means of avoiding the criminal indictment of bishops. The Commission has recommended that such laws be introduced throughout Australia and should include knowledge of paedophiles gained in confession. Criminal mandatory reporting laws in Australia applied only in NSW and Victoria at the time of the Royal Commission's report.

Governments now must decide whether to accept the Royal Commission's recommendation for criminal mandatory reporting. If governments legislate accordingly without exemptions, priests will be bound under civil law to report relevant knowledge, including from the confessional.

The response of some Catholic commentators has been a knee-jerk dismissal with little consideration of the serious issues addressed by the Royal Commission, despite the Church's stated commitment to the more effective protection of children. The reaction of some Church leaders to this and other findings of the Royal Commission seems to be, surprisingly, to play the victim rather than to offer a considered response to the grave findings of cover-ups and dysfunctional governance. This is a time for the Church to face the failings exposed by the Royal Commission and ensure effective renewal.

The Commission heard evidence of a number of instances where disclosures of child sexual abuse were made in confession, by both victims and perpetrators. The Commission found that confession is a forum where children have disclosed their sexual abuse, and where clergy have disclosed their abusive behaviour in order to deal with their own guilt. It also heard evidence that perpetrators who confessed to sexually abusing children went on to reoffend and seek forgiveness again.

Governments have a responsibility to act in the best interests of their society. This matter goes to the heart of church-state roles and relationships.

The arguments for exempting religious confessors from the obligation of reporting generally assume a strict interpretation of the Church's 'seal of confession'. They ignore or deny the harm to children that can arise from failure to report a paedophile who is at large. These arguments claim that the law would be ineffective because few paedophiles go to confession, their identity can be hidden from the confessor, and they might not confess if not protected by the seal. There is some inconsistency here as

paedophile penitents could continue to confess by hiding their identity from the confessor. If these conjectural arguments are valid, the proposed law would be irrelevant to confessors and there would be no need to seek exemption.

On the other hand, the failure of any persons to report knowledge of paedophiles at large has shocking consequences and could implicate them morally in any further abuse of children. They would be accomplices after the fact. That was the situation when Church leaders covered up the abuse and protected priest paedophiles in the past.

Though few Catholics today use sacramental confession, the seal of confidentiality remains critical to its central purpose. The extent of the seal's coverage has been discussed by canonists and bishops before the Royal Commission; the literalists claimed that the seal forbids a confessor from disclosing any material arising in confession regardless of the circumstances and consequences, even if a child tells of being sexually abused, clearly not the sin of the child.

Some canonists differ, arguing that matter not related to sin by the penitent is not subject to the seal and could be reported or followed up in some manner, at least to ensure support for a child who has been abused. On the critical issue of a confessing paedophile, many have proposed that absolution could be made conditional on the penitent self-reporting. It is not just about absolving the paedophile of past sinful (and criminal) abuse but ensuring that any future abuse is minimised in every possible way, given the known high frequency of recidivism.

Regrettably the Catholic Church's leaders have to date shown little inclination to address the real concerns identified by the Royal Commission, or even to release the report on the Royal Commission's findings from their own Truth Justice and Healing Council. Bishops have not raised the possibility of conditional absolution or given any indication that they have referred these matters to the Holy See. Canon law can be amended, and the sacramental seal has already been subject to considerable debate and some variation in Church history.

Persons who sexually abuse children are a continuing risk to children. Mandatory criminal reporting is based on substantial evidence of past failures by institutional personnel to report abuse and abusers; the consequences were predators remaining at large, and more children being abused. All Australian governments are now supportive of mandatory reporting, but politicians are

being pressured by church representatives claiming that any law which does not exempt matter learnt 'under the seal' would be an attack on religious freedom.

As the Commission noted, religious freedom cannot be absolute. No society should lightly exempt religions from laws made for the protection of vulnerable people. The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* provides that religious freedom may be the subject of such limitations to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. Of course, a religion might oppose and indeed defy a civil law as contrary to its religious belief. This has been the stuff of martyrdom where Christians have heroically refused to comply with laws opposed to their faith, but it would be dubious heroism for a priest to go to gaol knowing that he was protecting a paedophile still at large in the community. Such a confessor might also carry a heavy weight of conscience.

Most Australians would hope that any citizen would alert police to any knowledge of criminal plans to harm society, be it a terrorist plot to blow up the MCC on Grand Final day or, in the present case, imminent danger to children. The principle is the same.

Arguments for this exemption for confessors bound by the canonical seal implicitly assert the innate superiority of church law over civil law. Church leaders apparently see no need to review canon law in light of the Commission's evidence and conclusions, or even to consider adjusting current practice within canon law. Bishops could show their genuine concern, without impacting the seal of confession, by immediately mandating all confessors to refuse absolution to paedophiles unless and until they have reported themselves to the police.

Governments legislate for the good of society, for all citizens. They should not be thwarted by customs or laws of particular religions which could threaten the wellbeing of others, such as the protection of terrorists or paedophiles. Arguments that seek to exempt anyone from a civil law that mandates the reporting of a known continuing danger to children must be questioned. Jesus made no exemptions when he said it would be better to be drowned with a millstone tied to the neck rather than harm a child. ☪

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and because of you!**

# Jesus the forgotten feminist

SUSAN RYAN

**Chris Geraghty recently published a book called *Jesus the forgotten feminist*. It was launched by Susan Ryan AO, architect of the Hawke government's Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and Australia's first Age Discrimination Commissioner 2011-2016. This is a summary of her speech made on 5 May, 2018, at the launch of Chris Geraghty's book. Books can be purchased via Garratt Publishing [www.garrattpublishing.com.au](http://www.garrattpublishing.com.au)**

The Church here, and globally faces a crisis of loss of support arising especially from its deeds and omissions in relation to appalling sexual abuse of children.

At the same time our secular societies are experiencing a massive epidemic of allegations and charges of sexual harassment and violation of women in their workplaces, be they on film and television sets, in the training of medical specialists, on university campuses, in major corporations, within churches, just about anywhere where men dominate women's employment prospects, which is just about everywhere.

These two terrible phenomena, the Catholic Church's failure to protect children, and our first world societies' failure to protect women, are connected. They are connected in ways that makes Chris' book highly relevant.

Faced with the torrential outpourings of these horror stories, we ask: where does this behaviour come from? When did it start? More urgently, how can it be stopped? Some of the answers are implied in Chris' book.

Chris has called this book *Jesus the forgotten feminist*.

He establishes two key positions: first, that Jesus Christ was a feminist. Secondly, that Jesus' feminism has been forgotten. Who forgot? He offers answers.

As far as his first position goes, that Jesus was a feminist, Chris is persuasive. I am persuaded. Speaking as a lifelong feminist, one educated in the catholic church, I would not have come to this position without Chris' arguments.

I parted company with the institutional church many decades ago. One of the major reasons for me, though not the only one, was that the church in which I was raised, the Catholic Church, regards women as inferior to men, treats them as second class, and excludes them from all important decision making.

The disregard and unequal treatment of Catholic nuns is a continuing reminder of the Church's dismissive attitude to women. The treatment of nuns is not only unjust, but also self-defeating and irrational. At a time here in Australia, when there are far

too few priests to service parishes, even on a part time basis, the church has within it capable, dedicated nuns, women whose vocation, like that of priests, is to serve the Church and its people, women who can and have run major church institutions with acknowledged success. But these women are rejected, judged unsuitable to run parishes.

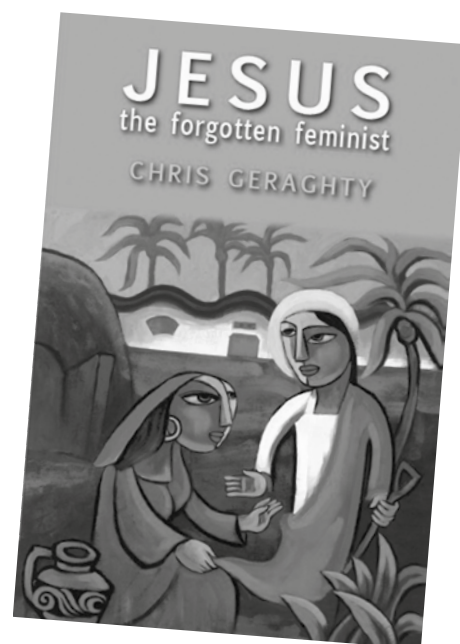
This rejection of course comes from the most significant manifestation of the Church's fundamental adherence to sex discrimination: the exclusion of women from the priesthood. Indeed, not only have women been excluded for over two thousand years, but the very idea of female ordination cannot be discussed. The papal prohibition of this discussion is in place, right now in 2018.

Does this insistence on the exclusion of women from ordination matter beyond the institution of the Catholic Church? It does.

Over the millennia, these discriminatory policies and actions by the powerful Catholic church have informed and upheld gender discrimination in broader secular cultures around the world. And those secular cultures, including here in Australia, continue to this day, despite some reforms, to harbour sexism and misogyny, without any serious challenge from the Church.

Even these days with the benign and humane leadership of Pope Francis, the Church excludes women from power. A recent telling episode was the refusal of the Vatican to host a conference mounted by the organisation *Voices of Faith*, an event the Vatican usually supports, because the key note speaker was Mary McAleese, former president of Ireland, noted theologian, distinguished lawyer, practicing catholic, but critic of the Church's relegation of women to powerlessness. The conference was held, but outside the walls of the Vatican.

So that is where women are now, outside the walls, as they have always been, except, according to Chris' engaging account, in Galilee for those few remarkable years when Jesus Christ was on earth. Jesus was the exception then, and tragically for humanity, as far as the Church is concerned, remains so.



Chris gives us a scholarly but accessible account of the known facts and reliable reports of the life of Christ, and what happened as the institutional church developed after the Crucifixion. His main sources are the four gospels and Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians

I should note here that Chris relies on his deep and expert knowledge of all the historical, cultural, and theological developments that inform his discussion. Happily, for the reader, he wears his scholarship lightly.

I must thank you Chris, as I think many readers will for the clarity and directness with which you set out what can be known from the New Testament about Christ's actions and words in relation to women.

Importantly you establish that Jesus welcomed women as followers, discussed serious matters with them, and recognised and assisted women whom society had discarded. Chris argues that there is no record of Christ excluding women, treating them harshly, or being repelled by them as dangerous seductive creatures. He never condemned women.

Instead his recorded dealings with his own mother, with Mary and Martha, with Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman by the well, the woman taken in adultery, and other women even further outside the norms of respectability, was kind, compassionate and inclusive.

And such dealings were truly radical. When placed in the context of his times, Jesus was, according to these actions, a feminist. The Greco Roman traditions up till then, and the practices of Judaism in relation to women were entirely different,

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## TARRAWARRA EUCHARISTIC BREADS



Tarrawarra Abbey is a contemplative, monastic community of the Cistercian Order situated outside Melbourne in the Yarra Valley.

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and hostile. These major traditions granted women no intrinsic dignity or independence. Women were expected to live in submission to their husbands or fathers and remain within their homes. They had no public role and no role in religious rituals even if they attended synagogue. They were regarded as unclean when menstruating and after childbirth, and as a source of terrible temptation to men. They were rarely afforded the opportunity to learn to read. In contrast, Jesus' approach was radical, and feminist.

Chris describes the new Kingdom that Jesus offered his followers. In this Kingdom all were included. There was to be no distinction of class or race, or between male and female. This kingdom was to be democratic, and every person was to be equally valued in his or her own right. This vision was dramatically different from what preceded him, but it was quickly abandoned in what followed.

Chris writes elsewhere of how the growing institution of the Church soon discarded Jesus' vision, and how Paul led this charge.

Chris writes: *Paul wrote his letters some decades before the earliest Gospel (most likely the Gospel of Mark) would appear. It is a curious fact that in these letters he never mentioned Jesus' mother by name, or referred to one of Jesus' colourful stories, or any of his wonders. He never quoted one of Jesus' sayings, or mentioned even in passing any of his friendships, with men or women. Women were certainly involved in some limited way in the life of the early churches and as the decades rolled by and became centuries, their roles and contributions become more organized. But their involvement was substantially different to and levels below what it had been in the life and ministry of Jesus.*

*Women were offered the dregs of ministry and no involvement in governance. They were given a status well below that of the men – with no authority, no freedom to organize themselves or to act with any independence. They were used – given minor work to perform – such as ministering to the bed-ridden, to the sick and elderly, the house-bound – and spending time in prayer of course. (Unpublished, 2018)*

So, what has changed?

In the secular world, through law reform, progressive politics, and grass roots movements, much has changed for women. For example, we have currently a female chief justice of the high court, we have had a female prime minister, a female governor general, and many heads of government departments and even some heads of corporations are women. I am pleased to note that just on 50% of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party is now female.

That is the secular world. Where are we when it comes to the Catholic Church?

There are no parallel reforms. Things are still as Paul of Tarsus proposed that they be. Ask Mary McAleese.

Yet according to Chris, it could have, certainly should have been very different. He writes out of a deep conviction and personal faith about what he believes the intent to have been, the idealistic vision of the new kingdom.

In this kingdom women would have an equal place, there would be no distinctions based on race, wealth, or class, no money power. No evil spirits. The prevailing mood of this book is a deep sense of loss of what might have been.

Is this loss permanent? There are loyal Catholics who still believe that reform is possible, that a new kingdom such as Chris attributes to Christ can somehow be built out of the ruins of failure and wrongdoing.

And in fairness it must be admitted that parts of the new kingdom have been realised, by Catholic priests, nuns, brothers, and lay people amongst others. Those who have dedicated their lives to educating and assisting the poor, the sick and disabled, who support refugees and asylum seekers and the victims of race and other discrimination; these are the people Chris would count as true followers of Christ. I would observe that the men and women who do this work are the main reason the Church still exists in any positive way, and the reason not all have lost faith.

But for the kingdom to be realised fully, huge reform is necessary. We would need reform of clericalism, of hierarchies, of authoritarian decision making. The Church would need to stop putting its wealth and power ahead of the needs of the vulnerable. All members of the church would be empowered to make decisions. We would need to see a complete rejection of those wrong and cruel teachings about women and men and their sexual natures. These teachings have no foundation in the new testament but have occupied so much of the official church's energy and time, and its communications with the world, throughout my entire lifetime.

Chris implies all these possibilities.

But the main message I take from *Jesus the forgotten feminist*, is this: reform within the church should start by the wholesale adoption of the feminist vision and practices of Jesus. Then the other necessary reforms might become possible.

It is a wonderful work of commitment and love. I hope it changes things. ☪

## 'Mass on Demand' is full of surprises

DAVEN DAY SJ

**Daven Day SJ, a Jesuit priest based in North Sydney, is at the forefront of advancements in online streaming technology he can use to spread the Word of God to those beyond the pews. Here he outlines how Mass on the internet can provide a service for many.**

Many priests are increasingly feeling the strain of providing Mass for all those who want it. There is a limit to what we can do alone. Already many are over stretched, some in poor health and some of us already in advanced years.

There is an answer that can go a long way towards satisfying the spiritual needs of all those who long for a daily or weekend mass.

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*Mass on Demand* is structured to fit the spiritual and age requirements of your parishioners. The week day Masses are about 25 minutes in duration and include a brief homily. The Sunday Mass is streamed from Saturday evening and continues to be available around the world for all of Sunday wherever you live. The Mass is about 50 minutes. It is lively with a packed congregation in the church who sing with enthusiasm.

### What is the theological and scriptural emphasis and who are the celebrants?

Yes, the Masses give expression to the world affirming spirituality of St Ignatius

Loyola, which Pope Francis espouses. They are celebratory and emphasise the positive hope of the Holy Spirit. The Masses aim especially to meet the needs of the sick. They are providing comforting blessings for the depressed and lonely and focus on the love and compassion of the Lord.

There are four celebrants, all mature aged who currently staff the three Jesuit serviced churches in lower North Shore, Sydney.

All four are currently palliative care chaplains at Greenwich Hospital, Sydney. Their pastoral experience covers many years working in India and across East Asia, as well as being responsible in Australia for the liturgical needs of students in Jesuit schools and university colleges.

### How can I join in the Mass and who does it serves?

Simply log on to your computer, tablet, or smartphone and go to [www.northsydney Catholics.com](http://www.northsydney Catholics.com) and follow the prompts. *Mass on Demand* is free and you do not have to subscribe.

If you do subscribe it helps us track participation. By subscribing you tell us

what country you are in, your age, and your gender. We know that you are in over 25 different countries around the world.

This is what we are doing at present. Some parishioners follow Mass on their tablets on the bus, train and ferry on their way to work. Some busy people attend part of the Mass at breaks during the day. Many of our retired parishioners have Mass at home on their tablets or computers, especially when the weather is unfriendly. Some parishioners set up the Mass on a tablet for their relatives and friends when they visit them in hospital and nursing homes. Australians are well known for being insatiable travellers – many have Mass on their tablets rather than facing the hassle of finding a church when on overseas holidays.

If we all came on board together we could be providing Mass for thousands of ill and lonely people, busy home and office workers, and for students in primary and secondary schools. Would you consider making *Mass on Demand* one of your primary priorities? ☺

[www.northsydney Catholics.com](http://www.northsydney Catholics.com)

## Reform movements discuss need for change

IAN MCGINNITY

**Ian McGinnity, Parramatta priest, writes about recently attending the International Reform Conference in Slovakia.**

When it was mooted in the final days of our gathering in Chicago in October 2016, of what is now known as the International Catholic reform network (ICRN), that our next gathering may be in Slovakia I must confess I initially wondered: why there? Our previous gatherings had been in Austria (Bregenz) Ireland (Limerick) and the US. I had some understanding of the Catholic church in these places probably because there was plenty of available information in English about these areas but Slovakia, I must confess, I was ignorant.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn of the rich history of the Church in this country

and more specifically about the era of the underground Church operating during the Communist regime. We met in a town 20 km north east of Bratislava called Pezinok, once part of the kingdom of Hungary, it was a vineyard town that still produces quality wines (a bonus for our gathering!). We were wonderfully hosted by an organisation called ok21 (referring to the church in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century) an informal group of Christians mostly from the Roman Catholic tradition founded in 2014. However, the community roots go back to the underground Church, which operated during the Communist regime. Several founding members of ok21 were active members of illegal Christian

communities that were meeting in households or remote, non-public places who risked their lives to continue the faith. The experience of the authentic secret Church is rooted in the very DNA of this community.

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the integration of the underground Church into the official structures of the Roman Catholic Church again after many years of persecution and paralysis since 1948, did not go smoothly. Some had collaborated with the Communist regime, others offered passive resistance, others immigrated to the Vatican, others actively resisted with official church support from afar allowing what was known as the Mexican faculties to secretly ordain priests and bishops (some apparently married and even one or two women). Most of the clandestine team of priests and bishops had a secular university education, as well as a

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job in the field they had studied. Some were officially recognised by the Vatican others including a validly ordained underground Bishop who attended our conference, Dusan Spiner, were told to wait by John Paul II. The official church did not award him a canonical mission and registered him as Bishop Emeritus. He eventually worked as a university teacher until retirement in 2016. He now lives in the independent community of the third order of St Francis in Austrian Axams near Innsbruck. His was one of many fascinating stories about how the official church treated members of the underground church after the Velvet Revolution. The personal witness and analysis of this difficult time for the church in Slovakia stimulated conversation about some similar parallels to the difficult time the Church is experiencing now: between Catholics looking for reforms and those who resist them with almost totalitarian vehemence!

There were 49 registered participants at the gathering from many parts of the world (including new places such as Russia,

Korea, Bulgaria, Argentina et. al) that enriched our gathering. The common denominator was that all of them were involved in one way or another with Church reform issues. After the historical input, the gathering got down to the nitty-gritty of areas within our Church that required reform. Many of these issues had been raised at previous gatherings these included: the role of women in our church particularly their inequity in ministry and leadership (we seem to be waiting a long time for a decision regarding female Deacons and still do not formally acknowledge women to be Lectors or Acolytes, yet they do these jobs); the treatment by the Church of the LGB QTI community (for example the forthcoming World Meeting of Families in Ireland); the deprivation of Eucharist to communities because of a lack of priests and how that can be solved; and the need for a Charter of Fundamental Rights for all in the Church (particularly for those who have been treated abysmally by the institutional Church) and a better selection process for the appointment of Bishops were just some

of the arenas discussed in large and small groups. A press statement was issued at the end of the gathering which can be viewed at this link <https://icrn.info>.

The hospitality of our Slovakian hosts was extraordinary. The interaction between the various participants from many different situations and cultures was enriching. The heroism and bravery of many of the participants inspiring. Particularly the Slovakian members of the underground Church who risked life and some who endured prison; but also, some of our contemporaries like Helmut Schuller, Tony Flannery, Sister Jeannine Grammick who have endured sanctions from the official Church for speaking their truth. Our liturgies and prayer together were very moving. The source of our unity, our faith in Jesus Christ and our common endeavour to support Pope Francis in his work of much-needed reform of the Church to align us again to the Joy of the Gospel and our shared mission to proclaim it authentically. ☺



## Plenary Council 2020: A call to radical reformation or abundance in the midst of scarcity?

AENGUS KAVANAGH FSP

**Aengus Kavanagh, Patrician Brother, Ryde, asks how we are doing reforming the local church and what might help.**

A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE NOW GOING  
BACK TO CHURCH ONCE AGAIN



THIS IS USUALLY BECAUSE THEY  
HAVE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING LIKE  
THEIR KEYS OR JACKET OR GLASSES

Invitations from 'Team Plenary Council 2020' are a stimulus for all interested Catholics to think about a deliberate movement to a preferred model of church in Australia in order to avoid an unreflected drift towards a probable model.

Symptoms of decline abound, crying out for the discard of a 'business as usual' mindset and inviting creative imagination

of how things might be better. In this quest, care is needed lest the shadows of many existing laws, practices, traditions, etc. stifle such imagination. A starting point ought to be: 'What model of church will enable it to reclaim its mission to be authentic as the transforming presence of Jesus in a confused world?' Whatever gets in the way of this fundamental aspiration needs careful scrutiny and revision in the quest for reformation. In his rebuke to the Pharisees in their fixation on compliance with the letter of the law, Jesus outlines the priority that 'the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath'. (Mark 2:27)

In 2013, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis was provocative in his urgings for reform: 'I do not want a church...caught up in a web of sessions and procedures (n.49); 'my hope is that we will be moved by fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe (n.49); 'the biggest threat of all ... and a tomb psychology thus develops and slowly transforms

Christians into mummies in a museum' (n.83). His exhortation to the bishops of Brazil at Rio de Janeiro, July 2013 was a heartfelt plea for a church: 'capable of restoring citizenship to her many children who are journeying, as it were, in an exodus'.

On top of these Papal urgings, and in the wake of the Royal Commission, there is the chorus from church leaders, and from a concerned laity, for a significant re-culturing of the Australian Catholic church. Archbishop Mark Coleridge in an interview with the Catholic news service CRUX (18 June 2018, Rome), echoes a deeply felt aspiration among many thinking Catholics in Australia: 'You can talk strategy and structure all you like, but if it doesn't change the culture, you're really adopting a cosmetic approach'.

Despite the refreshing and positive fluidity in the church under the papacy of Pope Francis and despite the rhetoric of many other church leaders, what evidence is there of a grassroots culture change at diocesan and parish levels in Australia? Where are the instances of proactive church leadership in a campaign process to bring about changed mindsets, paradigm shifts, needed to re-fashion a church whose image will find resonance in the hearts of

the many disaffected who earnestly yearn for spiritual nourishment and for a religious faith attuned to their lived realities? The lament of Emeritus Bishop Pat Power highlights fruits of omission and indifference: There is a whole body of loyal and dedicated Catholics who have left the church in the past 50 years; many of them tell me 'I have not abandoned the church, the church has abandoned me'. (*Quo Vadis? The Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia*, 23 March 2018)

Shortly before his retirement, in August 2012, Pope Benedict XVI made a prophetic statement that again seems to have gone wholly unheeded. He said: 'The laity should not be considered as collaborators with the clergy, but as people truly co-responsible for the life of the church'.

Surely that co-responsibility of the laity, the baptised, for the life of the church has to be at the heart of a reformed and revitalised church in Australia? It is already beyond the time to move away from the current situation where the state of a diocese or parish is inordinately influenced by the personality and the ecclesiology of the current bishop or pastor. There is the need for fresh or revised policies and structures which enable an informed voice of the baptised to be a fixed partner at the table of co-responsibility for the life of diocese and parish.

This scenario invites a significant re-culturing characterised by a discerning and intentional letting go by the clergy, and a taking-up by the laity.

At parish level, the concept of Pastoral Council is a step in the right direction. Anecdotally, Pastoral Councils flourish or falter depending on the disposition and the leadership of the pastor. Commonly, Pastoral Councils have a low profile in the life of the parish; they are frequently viewed as a rubber stamp for the wishes of the pastor; confusions about alignment of PPC role and other ministry groups in the parish abound, and selection and tenure of PPC members are arbitrary in most cases.

All of these debilitating features are understandable in the absence of enlightened and actively promoted diocesan policies and practices in the setting-up and ongoing support of Pastoral Councils and in the formation and training of members, especially PPC Chairpersons. Does this dysfunction reflect a lack in serious commitment by current church leadership to develop and to promote a strong structure for meaningful lay co-responsibility in the life of each parish? Parishioners remain, pastors come and go. How are the stability, continuity, and story of each local faith

community institutionalised in policies and in structures? How are the gifts of each local faith community given greater recognition and expression in the mission of the parish?

### Empowerment of the Laity

Catholic Evangelist, Sherry Weddell, who has led workshops on parish renewal throughout the USA and in many parts of the western world in recent decades makes the bold assertion: *If we focus on making disciples and equipping apostles, the rest will follow. The disciples and apostles we form to-day will found and sustain our institutions tomorrow, and the Holy Spirit will gift and inspire them to do things we have never dreamed of* (Forming Intentional Disciples, p.96). In present circumstances in Australia, it is beyond the capacity of most individual parishes to organise and to present programs and experiences to enable the kind of formation envisaged by Weddell.

Sure, there are Catholic Universities and Institutes offering degrees and postgraduate studies in theology, but, in the main, their clientele are in pursuit of qualifications related to their careers or personal interests. Besides, such studies are generally more focused more on information than on formation and are generally lacking in a focus on attitudes and strategies to enable application in pastoral ministry.

To form and prepare the laity to assume a rightful place of shared ministry in the mission of the parish there is a crying need for Diocesan Centres for Adult Faith Formation and Ministry Training. Such Centres would offer a range of tailor-made programs and experiences, to deepen the faith life and the spirituality of participants along with the offering of knowledge, attitudes, and skills with potential to develop the competence and the confidence needed for pastoral ministry and for shared parish leadership.

The Centres need not be single locations and could assume a variety of configurations to align with circumstances. However configured, their presence and provisions are an essential platform for laity empowerment, and are as essential now as are seminaries for priestly formation.

The Centres would continually generate and disseminate prayer forms and other resources to support special roles and ministries in the parishes. The setting up of such Centres might be a challenge for some dioceses but if there is a conviction that the future of the church in Australia depends on a greatly enhanced role of the laity then commitment to creative structures and partnerships will emerge. Where there is a will, there is a way.

If on the other hand the conviction remains that flourishing seminaries and clergy from overseas will sustain the traditional models of parish leadership and ministry, the opportunity will be missed to respond to signs of the times as the Spirit seems to be calling. Besides, the overriding motive for greater lay participation in ministry ought not to be the present, and impending, shortage of priests, but rather a recovery of what was the norm in the early church.

As Bishop Vincent Long Nguyen OFM. Conv., Parramatta asserts: *There existed a variety of ministries in the early church... Yet over the centuries, this richness has been gradually concentrated in the ordained at the expense of the baptised. In effect, the priesthood of the ordained has assumed and usurped the rich and varied ministries of the baptised* (Address to Manly seminary alumni, August 30, 2017). A legacy of boom times in priestly vocations? As well as formation for the reclamation of these rich and varied ministries of the baptised, there is a consequent need for a prudent release in clerical control along with a welcoming induction into re-configured ministries.

### Green shoots

Depending on context, circumstances and diversity of settings, there are instances of local Catholic churches taking initiatives to respond to perceived realities in ways that have not become apparent in Australia. In many parts of Papua New Guinea to our near north there are numerous parishes that are rarely visited by a priest. In one diocese at least, Aitape, when required, a Sunday priestless ceremony is conducted by a team of three commissioned liturgy leaders, one for the general welcome and dismissal, one for the ministry of the Word, and one for the ministry of the Eucharist. The ministers are trained for these roles. For years, the parish catechist led the parish *lotu*-Scripture service, and continue to do so, in the absence of the priest.

The small rural diocese of Limerick in Ireland lists among initiatives flowing from its 2016 Synod: the training of more than 120 parish volunteers to lead public prayer; the training of 65 people to lead congregational singing; the training of 26 people for Baptism teams. Archbishop George Stack in Wales has commissioned 20 trained parishioners to lead non-Eucharist funeral services, a practice already common in some English dioceses.

The diocese of Dunedin in New Zealand runs a two year Leaders in Ministry

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program where 'over a two-year period participants will engage in spirituality and formation, theological studies, and a practical pastoral ministry that fits their gifting and fills a local need'. This trend is gaining momentum especially in western world dioceses seeking to compensate for diminishing clergy and seeking to bring a missionary thrust to the lives of parishes.

### Mobilising and embedding existing resources

It is probably true to say that while there is an acute and growing shortage of priests there has never been so many lay Catholics with qualifications in theology as there are now. Many of those who are thus qualified work, or have worked, in Catholic agencies, especially in Catholic education. In *The Swag*, Autumn 2018, there was a delightful reflection, *OMG how you have changed since I was a boy*, by retired Sydney school principal, Des Connolly.

Des engages in a gentle monologue with his Lord chronicling his transition from cradle Catholic through a range of inter-related phases in society, in church, and in his own life. Through it all, one senses a lovely maturing in his faith and spirituality and a longing for an 'evolutionary awakening where religious leaders are being challenged to throw off the mantle of power, authority and dogmatism and put on the more uncertain cloak of the spirit and the humble mystic, a call for a new understanding of the religious narrative'.

Des is in his early 80s now but his reflection gives a window into thousands of younger retired Catholic school leaders, principals, assistant principals, religious education co-ordinators, and teachers for whom their roles as Catholic educators has been a life vocation. Their experience of working and leading in Catholic schools has in most cases given them good interpersonal and organisational skills. Additionally, many have had retreat and other faith formation experiences and have been to the fore in promoting the religious and spiritual dimensions of Catholic schools, often in collaboration with parishes.

There are over 1,700 Catholic schools in Australia thus providing a rich reservoir of mature Catholics with potential to exercise significant ministry and leadership roles in parishes. Of course there are many, many women and men of faith, yet early in their active retirement years, other than those who have worked in Catholic schools and who likewise have potential to share in aspects of parish and diocesan leadership.

Not that all have to be retired, but it seems that there is agenda to be addressed in mining the rich vein of resources among these baptised for the revitalisation of the mission of Catholic parishes.

Earnest dialogue and a common front are essential in the addressing of this agenda so that emerging policies and practices are not left to the ecclesiology and personality of changing leaderships.

### Maintenance to mission

This has been the mantra which motivated Fr James Mallon in his dramatic transformation of his parish of St Benedict's, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Close to 2,000 'practising' Catholics, most of whom have participated in the Catholic Alpha renewal program, are Sunday regulars.

Fr Mallon is well known throughout much of the Catholic world through his conferences, his lecture tours and his 2014 book: *Divine Renovation: From a maintenance to a missional parish*. He says: *in a maintenance church, the primary concern is for the people you've got, keeping them happy. In a missional church, the primary concern is for the people you don't have*. From his book, one gets the impression that the vitality of St Benedict's owes much to the faith, vision, and dynamism of Fr Mallon without much input from the diocese. In recent times, while remaining available on a part-time basis to St Benedict's, he has been appointed as Vicar for Parish Renewal in his Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth.

According to statistics, an Australian parish that averages a week-end attendance of 1,000 is likely to have within its boundaries up to 9,000 baptised Catholics who have no ongoing affiliation within that parish. This statistic is more worrying in the knowledge that those under the age of 50 are, most probably, disproportionately represented in that 9,000. How have deafness and indifference been allowed to co-exist with this stark reality? Surely this scenario is crying out for a response, for an embrace of the 'field hospital' model of church advocated by Pope Francis. There is the need for earnest and creative planning to broaden the umbrella of inclusion, seeking to provide forms of religious experience adapted to the lived realities of millions of the baptised, Catholics at heart, who no longer find resonance of soul within many traditional institutional practices.

### Plenary Council 2020

As part of the consultative process leading up to Council 2020 interested groups are asked to engage in prayerful reflection and

dialogue on the fertile question: *What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?* Groups will enter in this reflection and dialogue in their own ways but given the foundational dogma of Catholic faith that Jesus Christ is God's revelation to the world it might be helpful to look to the life and teachings of Jesus for an answer to the question posed.

Jesus came to bring about the Kingdom of God, the reign of God in the hearts of people, and he died for this cause. His message was infused with values, or virtues, sadly missing in our world to-day: compassion, justice, integrity, courage, faith, mercy and hope, and encompassing all, love. So, it is hardly presumptuous to propose that God would want our church to review its ways of being in the world to bring it into closer alignment with this mission of Jesus. This will entail careful scrutiny of policies, practices, traditions and even canons that are seen to hinder the church in its mission to be a transforming presence of Jesus in the world, to be a bearer of the Good News of the Gospels. The forthcoming Plenary Council presents a graced opportunity to charter a hopeful future for the Australian church, freed from the shackles of indifference, denial, and defensiveness. ☪



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# Eucharist, Teilhard and the Cosmos

FRANK O'DEA SSS

Frank O'Dea SSS looks at the cosmic dimension of the Eucharist. Adapted from his online book, *Eucharist the Basic Spirituality*, found on: [theeucharist.wordpress.com](http://theeucharist.wordpress.com)

## Jesus Christ Lord of Creation

God said: "Let there be light and there was light." (Genesis 1:3)

When God speaks, things happen because God's word is so powerful.

John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being ... and the Word became flesh and lived among us. (John 1:1-3, 14)

These truths were formulated by the early Church Fathers into the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation. Father, Son (or Word) and Holy Spirit are one God.

The Son (or Word) became human, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. We call him Jesus. This Jesus suffered, died and was raised by the Father into a new life. He won the victory over sin and death and is now called the Christ, the anointed one.

Of him, Paul says: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him." (Colossians 1:15-16)

I find this a startling statement of cosmic proportions, a wonderful help to my understanding of the risen Christ.

My spirituality is further stimulated by what Paul says next: "He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything." (Colossians 1:17-18)

Paul now links the Christ of the cosmos to the Church, and through the Church to the Eucharist. The Church, the body of Christ, is formed by the gathering of people around the table when we remember Jesus who died and rose again. The Christ who becomes present to us in that gathering is the Lord of the extraordinary universe in which we live.

This Christ is also the human embodiment

of the Word (Son) who was with God from 'the beginning' (John 1:1). I understand 'the beginning' not to mean the moment when creation took place (called by scientists the 'big bang') but in the eternal now of the life of God, that is totally independent of the material universe.

'The firstborn from the dead' is Jesus who was raised from death into a new and more glorious life as the risen Christ. God started a new era when he raised Jesus from the dead, but the benefits of the death/resurrection event extend back into human history as well as forward and are applied to all. Christ is 'first' in so far as he is the one who is responsible for our new life; he is the prototype. Our usual ideas of time are stretched when dealing with these eternal realities.

I feel the Eucharist is the best means we have of gaining the fruits of the new life won for us by 'the firstborn from the dead'.

We could spend a long time reflecting on this magnificent hymn of praise, allowing the words to soak in, being open to the full implications of what they are saying – if that's ever possible! Many people have reflected deeply and extensively on these words and have come up with some surprising conclusions.

## Eucharist and the Lord of Creation

Among those who have reflected on these words is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Jesuit priest, mystic and scientist (1881-1955). For him the risen Christ is the cosmic Christ, the Lord of creation.

Reflecting on the words of consecration, Teilhard wrote: *When the priest says the words 'This is my body', his words fall directly on to the bread and directly transform it into the individual reality of Christ. But the great sacramental operation does not cease at that local and momentary event. Even children are taught that, throughout the life of each man [sic] and the life of the Church and the history of the world, there is only one Mass and one Communion. Christ died once in agony. (The Divine Milieu, Wm Collins & Sons, London, 1964, pp.123-124)*

He then points out that the individual acts of receiving communion by different people are the dividing up of one unique act in order that all may benefit from Christ's saving action.

*In fact, from the beginning of the Messianic preparation, up till the Parousia [the coming of Jesus in glory], passing through the historic manifestation of Jesus and the phases of growth of his Church, a single event has been developing in the world: the Incarnation, realized in each individual, through the Eucharist. (The Divine Milieu, p.124)*

This is a wonderful insight into the place of Christ in our lives, namely, that the Word of God became flesh in Jesus and now through the Eucharist becomes embedded in the flesh of each one of us. Teilhard then has this grand vision:

*All the communions of a life-time are one communion. All the communions of all men [and women] now living are one communion. All the communions of all men, present, past and future, are one communion. (The Divine Milieu, p.124)*

Pope John Paul II picked up this wonderful panoramic vision of the Eucharist. He tells of the many different venues where he has celebrated Mass: basilicas, chapels on mountain paths, lakeshores and seacoasts, stadiums, city squares. Then he says,

*This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation. (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 8)*

What a grand vision! 'On the altar of the world' gives me a picture of the blue planet with a large bread and a chalice of wine poised above it, and the risen Christ offering himself as spiritual food and drink for all the people. Then I see Christ as Lord of all creation lifting his eyes to include all the stars, all the galaxies, all the black holes, all the dark matter of the cosmos, all the as yet undiscovered material,

The Eucharist has a cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! When Teilhard was in China in 1923 on a scientific expedition he was unable to celebrate Mass, but his cosmic vision helped him to make up for the loss.

*Since ... I have neither bread nor wine nor altar, I will raise myself beyond these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the real itself. I, your priest, will make the whole earth my altar and on it I will offer you all the labours and sufferings of the world ... I will place on my paten, O God, the harvest to be won by this renewal of labour. Into my chalice I shall pour all the sap which is to be pressed out this*

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day from the earth's fruits. (*The Prayer of the Universe*, quoted by Fr Dr George Praseed IMS, *Vadyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection*, December 2006, p. 907)

At times when we are unable to participate in the Eucharist, we can always take time to pause and be aware that in many parts of the world, the Eucharist is being celebrated and we can be there in spirit if not in person.

### Garden: a Mini-Cosmos

I feel I have a mini-cosmos in my garden of Australian native plants. Here, the light of the sun, the nutrients in the soil, the alternation of night and day, the round of the seasons, the rain, all combine to produce an extraordinary diversity of plant life and a beautiful display of colour at almost any time of the year. In spring it's dazzling! The three hundred or so plants include all the principal genera such as Eucalypts, Acacias, Banksias, Grevilleas, Correas, Eremophilas...

Why am I talking about this in an article on Eucharistic spirituality? Because the Eucharist is so inclusive of all our activities. More specifically, because a garden is a work of nature and 'the work of human hands'. I'm too old now for gardening but

I used to enjoy it very much. With my hands I dug compost into the soil, inserted the plants, spread mulch, grew plants from cuttings and seed, pruned after flowering and pulled out the weeds. However, the actual growing is the work of the Creator Spirit.

Through the cooperation between the creator and evolutionary chance, we have a diversity of plant life that is astonishing, and perhaps Australia has the most diverse flora in all the world, much of it endemic to this land. I see my gardening as an extension of the Eucharist. I ask the Creator Spirit who transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ to help in planning the layout and in caring for the plants. The Creator Spirit can transform a dull suburban block into a work of art. 'Nature is the living, visible garment of God'. (Goethe)

Birds are an essential part of creation and of the garden, though, sadly, there are not many species in my garden. The dominant bird is the Noisy Mynah who is aggressive and chases other birds away. However, it is fascinating to watch a Mynah upside down feeding on a banksia flower. Occasionally a pair of Rainbow Lorikeets venture in to

feed on the flowers of the Mallee Gum. Magpies abound and their warbling is a delight to the ear.

There is a Grass Tree which is about a meter high with a spike about two meters high. It's quite spectacular. In a tub on the patio there is a Wollemi Pine which was only discovered about fifty years ago and is a relic of a cooler and wetter climate of thousands of years ago.

The earth, then, has a sacramental character: it symbolizes the divine that is present in it. Ambrose of Milan sees the Spirit not only as the Life-Giver but also as the one who brings beauty to creation. Beauty is a gift given by the Holy Spirit. Basil of Caesarea develops something of a Christian ecological attitude to creation when he writes: *I want creation to awaken such a profound admiration in you, that in every place, whatever plants you may contemplate, you are overcome by a living remembrance of the Creator.* (Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life, a Theology of the Creator Spirit*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll USA, 2004, p.128)

I read somewhere this sentence which beautifully summarises this article: 'The Eucharist is cosmic thanksgiving.' ☺

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## Jesus and Women

CHRIS GERAGHTY

**Chris Geraghty, theologian, former priest and former judge of the District Court of NSW, now living in gentle retirement, wrote a book called *Jesus – The Forgotten Feminist*. Chris offered these thoughts at the launch of the book on 2 May. The book can be purchased online: [www.garrattpublishing.com.au](http://www.garrattpublishing.com.au)**

I have long been interested in why the officers of the Catholic Church have been so reluctant to consider involving women in the governance of their institution and in its sacramental ministry. So I decided to write a book about it.

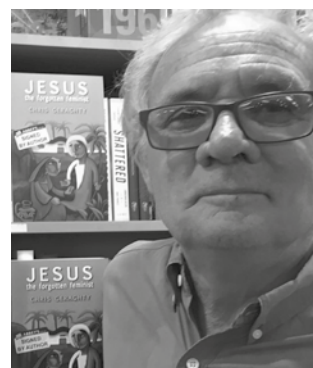
In prosecuting their case and to "explain" their antiquated unwillingness to even entertain the possibility, the popes and bishops have fallen back on a few old chestnuts. The church's theological hero, Thomas Aquinas, for example, used to teach his students that women could not possibly be ordained priests because they lack the pre-eminence which the office demanded. Female ordination was contrary to nature. Women obviously did not exhibit the necessary level of dignity, of gravitas which men were able to muster. Perhaps, in the light of the Royal Commission's findings, this consideration does not carry the same degree of persuasion today, but

those in charge don't want to abandon it – at least not yet.

Another old argument which is still trotted out is that Adam was created first, before Eve, that the woman was created from Adam's side, and she was the one tempted by the serpent and who led Adam into sin. Not a bad little argument. Adam was superior because he had been first on the scene. Eve had proved to be the evil one of the pair and a danger to her husband. So naturally, as descendants of Adam, men are superior to women and they have been infected with the same evil virus as their predecessor, Eve. Consequently, over the centuries they have been associated with death, the devil, sin, witches and sex. Though until as recently as the middle of the twentieth century Catholics were required to believe that Adam and Eve were real, historical persons, in fact they are (and have always been) purely

mythological figures. Figments of a storyteller's imagination. Like the characters in Alice in Wonderland, the Three Bears, or Tinkerbell and Peter Pan. The men in charge need to surrender their reliance on this bogus argument.

The most popular contemporary argument simply states that Jesus chose and commissioned men. His policy was men only. He commissioned twelve male apostles to be in charge, and that's the end of the discussion. QED. Jesus closed the door on women and we should not be talking about a female share in governance or their participation in the upper echelons of ministry. But were there in fact twelve men commissioned by Jesus? Or less? Or more? And did he commission only men to carry on his work? And if he did, so what?



Is that authority structure written in stone, forever?

The world, at least the western version of the world, is vastly different now than it was in Jesus' day. In lieu of the Chief Priest and a seventy all male Sanhedrin we have a female chief judge of the High Court accompanied by two sister judges. We had a female Governor General and a recent female Prime Minister. Surgeons, barristers, professors, brigadiers, engineers, jockeys, footballers and truck-drivers. The world which Jesus' followers inhabit has changed.

In an attempt to understand the ecclesiastical world of male officers, I decided to spend my time in retirement having a long hard look at the attitudes of church leaders towards women and their treatment of them, especially during the formative years of the organization. I started off with Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure and with the legal prescriptions finally canonized in the medieval Decretum Gratiani. I studied the vast canon of Adam and Eve literature and the many bizarre versions of the basic Genesis story as well as the substantial commentary on the details of the story which Augustine of Hippo had written – the scurrilous misogynist poetry written by monks for the amusement of their celibate brothers – the opinions of Aristotle and his friend Theophrastus as to the essential difference between men and women, and their relative status and value. I was surprised to learn that Aristotle had concluded that women were “misbegotten males” who had been conceived during a cold spell, or who had not been properly cooked in the womb. I explored the surprising misogyny of the great scripture scholar and translator of the Bible, Jerome, and traced his poisonous influence throughout the Middle Ages. In *The wife of Bath's Tale* Geoffrey Chaucer had quoted him often and referred to Jerome's affirming repetition of the misogynist writings of Theophrastus. I read the works of Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, the many Gnostic-Christian gospels and other recently discovered literature, and eventually I came to the letters of Paul of Tarsus where I ended my study.

I found a surprisingly virulent tradition of explicit misogyny which had begun with the author of the Pastoral Epistles, if not with Paul himself, and which ran right through the Middle Ages. I could identify not one voice which had taken up the cause of women and no female who had written favourably about them during the first millennium of the present era. An unrelenting stream of toxic misogyny

flowed through the writings of bishops, monks, poets and theologians.

Eventually I traced my way back to the beginning, back to Jesus and the Gospels. In my old age I decided to take another look at the gold standard for Christians, at Jesus as he was portrayed by the authors of the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John.

Surprise, surprise. I discovered a completely different world. Jesus had been a man who obviously loved women, who had responded to them warmly, who engaged with them out in public, women of all types, some of whom he shouldn't have been seen with. He involved these women in his life and mission. He was comfortable in their presence, eating and drinking with them, talking to them, journeying with them.

Jesus had been prepared to open his shoulders in his criticism of the religious leaders of the day – and he hadn't held back correcting his male companions telling them how dense they were, but when it came to women, not a word of hostility or criticism passed his lips. He invited them into his group of disciples, befriended them, discussed important aspects of his life and mission with them and ignored the many taboos the Jewish laws imposed on him and other men in their dealings with the opposite sex.

His behaviour as described in the Gospels was in complete contrast to what was expected of any Jewish man, especially of a preacher or teacher. Jesus had been a radical, counter-cultural figure preaching a message of inclusion, of equality, of forgiveness, love and non-discrimination. His life had been a moment of grace which, if grabbed with both hands, could have produced an entirely different cultural world – a moment of human history which was let slip, never to return. Jesus' behaviour and his attitudes had been in complete contrast with what I had been reading about women from the pen of Tertullian or in the letters of Jerome, from popes and prelates, poets and theologians. Before I wrote my book on the misogynist stream poisoning the traditions and practices flowing from the source, I had to prepare the ground with a book about the gold standard governing all Christian attitudes and behaviour.

*Jesus – The Forgotten Feminist* tells the story of this Jesus and his deeply personal relationship with his female friends and women in the marketplace. I have written it in an attempt to help reset the debate about the place and status of women in the communities of Jesus followers. ☺

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# Storms and Councils

ERIC HODGENS



**Eric Hodgins, Melbourne priest, considers the perfect storm that is upon us in the Australian church and if a Plenary Council can save us.**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a stormy period for the Catholic Church as the papacy battled to regain its European dominance undermined by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. How appropriate that the First Vatican Council final vote declaring Papal Infallibility was accompanied by thunder and lightning – a massive storm. Papal power won out in the long run as Paul Collins has shown in *Absolute Power*. But – at a price.

Four intertwining crises are currently creating a perfect storm for the Catholic Church.

The first crisis stems from the Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment and its progeny – human rights. This brought us cars in the garage and democracy in the forum. Authority now came from the people, not from the king (or pope). It took time to catch on. The Amish stuck doggedly to the horse and buggy – the Church to monarchy. But when the ordinary punter woke up that he was being taken for a ride the game was over.

The second crisis is clerical sexual abuse. Priests have held consecrated authority for centuries, yet 7% of them have been found to be child abusers. Nothing de-authorises a consecrated class more than being found out harbouring criminals. No wonder that transparency is taboo for power institutions. Nowhere to hide.

This leads on to the third crisis – corporate cover up of the crime, blaming the victim and persecuting the whistle-blower. Today's social sciences have a lot to say about crisis management, but monarchs don't readily take notice of new ideas that are not their own.

The fourth is the inevitable outcome – the very culture of the institution is exposed as defective.

There have been signs along the way that something was wrong.

For instance, a leakage of membership attributable to the crises. Sacrosanct doctrine no longer makes sense in a new intellectual context. If not properly re-articulated, grand truths and values

can be thrown out because the trappings take priority over the essence. This leakage has been relentless since the 1980s.

A second sign is the 50-year drought of priestly vocations. No one wants to join, though they lined up in abundance in the 50s and 60s. This is at root an institutional problem. Ministerial service is essential to Christianity. Sacral status is not. But the sacred fortress is hard to undo when the system dictates that the only ones who can change it are those who hold the power.

A third sign that something is wrong is priests being found to be sexual offenders. This awareness began as a suspicion and has snowballed to the stage that official investigations have determined that in some dioceses up to 7% of clergy have been guilty of paedophilia. Australia has led the way in investigating the problem with its Royal Commission into Institutional responses to Child Sex Abuse. But Australia's findings have been replicated in Ireland, the USA and England.

Now that the problem has exploded in Chile, it would be unreasonable to think that the rest of Latin America does not have the same problem. Charges in India and Sri Lanka would seem to be just the start of an Asia-wide exposure.

And it goes to the top of the tree with two cardinals suspended due to substantiated sexual allegations and another facing trial.

A flow-on of clerical sexual offending has been the corporate mishandling of the problem. The response of bishops has generally been bad. They have taken the understandable, but misplaced, step of covering up. In their defence, they have been labouring under the canonically legislated non-transparency of the Pontifical Secret. But there is a weariness with an institution that has so embedded its structures, doctrinal formulations and rules that they have become fossilised and doubled locked by being attributed to God.

This concealment has now reached criminal level. A cardinal in France is facing a charge and the archbishop of Adelaide has been convicted of non-disclosure. It would be rash to think these will be isolated cases.

The Church seems to be facing a perfect storm.

One way Pope Francis is trying to come to grips with today's challenges is by breathing life back into the Synod of Bishops. His focus is on synodality (everybody walking the path together) rather than collegiality (the bishops working together as a college). Synodality involves everybody, not just bishops.

The Australian bishops are attempting to address today's issues by convening a national Plenary Council in 2020. It is here that we come up against the fourth wave of the perfect storm – the very culture of the Church. A Plenary Council is a creature of Canon Law. Its powers and procedures are already set in legislation. Bishops alone have a deliberative vote and are jealously protective of their privilege. They will involve the laity – but as subjects, not equals. This type of council is not synodal. Hierarchy is inbuilt into the culture – a culture that itself needs review.

Many of Australia's bishops are half-hearted about the idea and are doing little to move it along. Knowing laity who have experienced diocesan consultations such as "Tomorrow's Church" and "Renew" have been burned off by making enthusiastic efforts producing no results. Why bother? The synod, being a creature of this church culture, is part of the problem.

It is a perfect storm. The situation is critical. But maybe there is a solution. We need to stop resisting change. The enlightenment was a mixed bag – but it did force us to use our brains.

Hierarchies jealously protect their status – but pastoral leadership of equally respected believers achieves Jesus's objective more effectively. Cultures can change – but not without reordering values and procedures and a clearing out of the old guard. A synod that is more like a colloquium of equals, set up and run by a group untainted by the old power has the potential of re-building after the storm. God knows Jesus's community of faith (not ideology) and his central message of love, forgiveness and loyalty is just what will be needed when the storm subsides leaving a chastened church. ☪

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# Fostering the growth of lay movements

PETER & PENNY CAHALAN

**Peter and Penny Cahalan from Teams (Equipes Notre Dame) South Australia discuss the lessons learnt from an outreach program in New Zealand. They ask whether lay movements are suffering decline because of 'professionalisation' of ministry.**

## Case study: Teams – a married couples movement

What are the ingredients needed for lay movements to grow? Their seeds so often fall on stony ground. So, when suddenly conditions seem favourable, sowers are not surprisingly prompted to ask this question.

Early in 2018 Bishop Steve Lowe of the Hamilton diocese on the North Island of New Zealand invited the Oceania leadership group of Teams (Equipes Notre Dame) to develop Teams in his patch. Two field trips from Australian Teams members followed and as we write it looks as if a small network of Teams will be starting in the Hamilton diocese. Exciting stuff!

## Teams spirituality

Teams is a movement for couples which aims to strengthen marriages via its practices. Teams of Our Lady is the exact translation of Equipes Notre Dame but it isn't in fact a movement of Marian devotion. Nor is the name 'Teams' a word that fits entirely comfortably in an English-speaking context. But let's not dwell on words. A Team is a group of four to six couples who meet monthly to reflect on their lives.

Where possible a spiritual advisor, a priest, nun and sometimes a layperson, accompanies the Team as a full member. This relationship with priests is cherished within this otherwise doughtily lay movement. Our own regional spiritual counsellor Monsignor John Swann (Team 7 South Australia) urged us to write something for *The Swag* and we asked him in turn for his own insight as the priestly member of a Team:

I have been a member of Teams for over 40 years. During the course of my priestly life I have been involved in many varied ministries, but one of the most rewarding has been my involvement in Teams. During my 20 years in marriage education and family welfare, Teams was a great support giving me great insights into the dynamics of marriage and family life.

My Team is essentially my extended family, a great support in my personal and priestly life – a truly rich resource.

Sadly, these days not that many Teams in

our neck of the woods can enjoy the companionship of a spiritual companion.

The one thing which members everywhere across the globe most cherish is the 'sit-down'. Each couple sits down together before the coming meeting and talks to each other about the past month. They then share whatever they agree can be shared from that encounter with their Team over the monthly meal. And everyone listens to them attentively and respectfully.

It's about as simple as that! Yet the sit-down, sharing and listening are exercises which, like all spiritual practices, demand persistence and discipline. It's easy to evade the dialogue with one's spouse. It's more comfortable just to 'download the diary' than share your inner thoughts with the others. And, since you're meeting over a meal, it's quite natural to drop into dinner party mode and start a conversation rather than a quiet listening.

The movement has flourished internationally with about 140,000 members. And it grew quickly in the first decades after the first Team was begun in Melbourne by Max and Stephanie Charlesworth. But in the last two decades it hasn't seemed to grow so vigorously, apart from a recent flowering in the Maronite and Melchite communities of Sydney. What's happened? And does the New Zealand comparison highlight any lessons for the Australian Catholic community?

## Three ingredients for potential success

Three factors have fertilised the soil on the North Island.

First, episcopal and clerical support has been crucial. Bishop Lowe himself had never encountered Teams directly. But he'd heard about them via a range of sources, including the Bishop of Westminster who had experienced Teams as a dynamic force in one of his parishes. Likewise a Hamilton couple, John and Raewyn Jackman, who had been active members of Teams in Wimbledon decades ago, spoke to him of their great desire to see Teams started in the region. Further, one of his senior clergy, Monsignor Trevor Murry of Taupo, had heard about them from an old friend,

Monsignor Frank Marriott of Bendigo.

Monsignor Marriott has just stepped down after seven years as the respected spiritual counsellor for the Oceania super-region. Joined by the former super-regional couple, Faye and Kevin Noonan of Canberra, he made a field trip to the Hamilton diocese early this year. The three of them gave talks in a number of places, one of them to the Council of Priests in Taupo, and generated a mood of enthusiasm for we've had a lot of experience in piloting new teams and developing the Australian piloting manual.

Second, Bishop Lowe committed real resources to assisting us. His marriage education manager, Joe Hogan, spent time preparing the ground for meetings in Hamilton, Taupo and Tauranga/Mt Maunganui as well as one in Auckland. He committed almost the entire nine days of our visit to travelling with us, explaining local situations to us and being a warm host. Bishop Steve, as he's often referred to, made sure that his clergy and large network of deacons knew about the trip and his keenness to see the movement take root. Both the bishop and Joe helped open doors for us. This was great, since we found it somewhat intimidating to be walking into a series of new situations where we knew no one and had no history in the area.

Third, and not least, we found ourselves meeting lay people everywhere who were skilled and experienced in marriage formation. They were active in Marriage Encounter, Engaged Encounter and other programs of formation of engaged and married couples. They got what we were talking about and were keen to see something like Teams take root. There was a wonderful cordiality between us all and no sense of territoriality. Though we were asked at one meeting not surprisingly: 'We're pretty skilled over here. So why do we need Australians to teach us what to do?' (Answering that's for another time!)

We came away feeling that this last factor, couples who were charged by their dioceses with leading marriage formation, was terrifically important. We ourselves attended a pre-Cana course at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Adelaide led by a married couple back in 1979. We can't remember all that much about it but the process was a helpful enough one for us.

## So what happened in Australia?

Yet something happened in our Archdiocese in a process which took place

*Continued page 28*

also in other parts of Australia. We don't know when but some decades ago 'amateur' marriage formation volunteers were shunted aside. Their job was taken over by professional social workers. We gather that all kinds of reasons might have been used such as risk management, health and safety and that kind of thing, but it amounted to the professionalisation of services at the expense of lay involvement.

We ourselves of course haven't experienced contemporary marriage formation conducted by a social worker. But we do know that the earlier organic links between the Archdiocese and its lay leaders committed to the ongoing nurture of marriage were sundered. Movements such as Teams, Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter have plugged on. But they've done so without much in the way

of warm support from the official structures. And their outreach has suffered as a result.

What we saw in NZ were people who ran courses for engaged couples and retreats for married couples. And who, precisely because of that, had a lively evangelical interest in anything in the way of lifelong nurture of the couples whom they encountered. Their horizons stretched beyond simply running one course and then moving on to the next.

This might be painting an unduly black and white contrast between New Zealand, where hierarchy, professional diocesan staff and lay leaders work together all the time, and the disjointed system in our own part of Australia. And we don't know yet whether the North Island mission will lead to a young and vital movement there, as we hope it will.

But we do wonder if the clock that stopped some decades ago in Adelaide and, we believe, elsewhere can be re-started. Could our clergy and hierarchy once again more actively embrace the lay marriage-oriented movements and deploy them creatively as missionaries of marriage? The challenge to get out there and share the benefits of your movement with the many who are hungry for nurture was issued by Pope Francis to the leaders of the movement when they came together in Rome from all parts of the globe in September 2015.

Lay missionaries such as us in Teams need the active partnership of the clergy. That seems to be the message of our New Zealand encounter. ☪



## Fully human, fully alive

**Monique (name and address supplied) explores the spirituality through the lens of our humanity and how we learn from prayer and reflection**

**W**e Catholics need to find and follow the real human Jesus or we will never become fully human ourselves, never surrender, never become one for others, never get near our full human potential of freely laying down our lives for others... (yes, I know that's the work of a lifetime!).

I believe we still have a long way to go before we capture the 'humanness' of Jesus of Nazareth and by so doing embrace what it means for us to be human. Some of us older Catholics spent so much energy trying not to be human, trying to be so perfect that we lost sight of what the mystery of the Incarnation – the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity 'became a man like us in all but sin' – should mean for us. We were almost encouraged to not own our weakness, let alone our sexuality, our humanity. 'The glory of God is man fully alive' got lost somewhere.

And don't we believe the human body of Jesus still lives somewhere out there in eternity, much like I will live in eternity with my human body: 'I believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting'. Does human blood still course through his arteries and veins, does he still have a human brain that thinks human thoughts? And they tell us that Mary didn't die, just went to sleep and woke up in heaven! That would make sense because wasn't her 'Yes'

total, as total as she could make it? What beautiful mystery is this!

For these 'scribblings' I am in debt to the Wollongong Diocese for their Lenten Program called *Surrender* and, especially, in debt to Fr Graham Schmitzer for his thoughts on the First Week of Lent and introducing me to the painting of 'Jesus in the Desert' by Ivan Kramoskoi. I have spent so much time and energy trying to reach God and only now have begun to understand what Fr Schmitzer is talking about when he tells me that all along God has been trying to reach me, but in my humanity. That same God tried to reach Jesus of Nazareth in his humanness; only with Jesus, God was a little more successful. Jesus, seeped in the wisdom of his people's prayerful scriptures and stories of Yahweh's intervention in his people's history, had a head start.

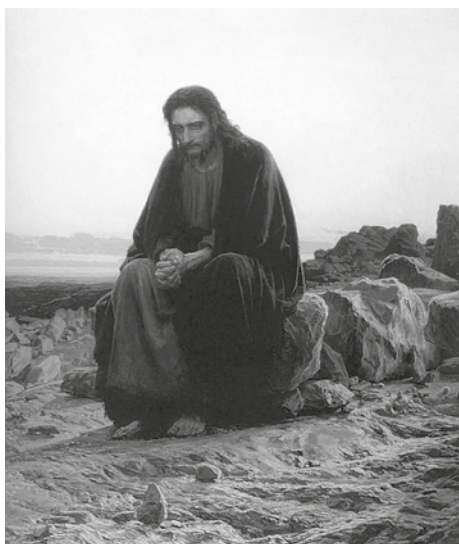
### Learning to obey

He obviously prayed a lot more than I do and in his imperfect, limited (or he's not like me in all things but sin) humanity allowed himself to be confronted by an infinite God until he surrendered into the truth that only obedience could bring (ob audire: listening over against what his life's experiences were teaching him). Little by little, as is the way with us humans, he came to 'hear' that, as God's chosen one, and every Jew believed he was 'chosen', was being invited by God to surrender

everything he held dear: his loves, his hopes, his possessions, ultimately, his humanity, into his Father's wishes. He learned to obey in the school of suffering. What a beautiful phrase: Jesus didn't always 'obey'; he had to learn to obey; by listening to his life's experiences. *He grew in wisdom, age and grace*. How comforting that phrase is for me in my humanity. He didn't know everything from day one, *he grew in human wisdom*. He came to realize he was being invited to live in God, to grow into his own unique and mysterious relationship with God: to call God 'Abba' and to be part of God's plan for us and all of creation. This was the wisdom he grew into. And it is a wisdom we are invited to grow into – into our unique special relationship with God as his creatures and intimates.

So, what was his suffering? I suspect it was letting himself learn in the school of hard knocks. Learning from reflecting on his experiences in daily life and the wisdom of others as much as from his time of prayer and his reading of the Scriptures. Maybe, even from his mistakes. Isn't that how you and I learn, how all humans learn? Imagining what might be possible and testing our ideas against our ongoing experiences and the wisdom of others? What deep human wisdom Jesus came to! Instead of accomplishing great things for God he meets a call to 'surrender, total unconditional surrender'.

This brings me to the painting of Kramoskoi, *Christ in the Desert*. Google it



and gaze at it. Meditate on it. It is a painting of *a man*. Look at the bowed shoulders, the clasped hands, the disheveled appearance, the troubled face staring thoughtfully at the earth without seeing it. What is this man thinking? What is on those shoulders? What has this man come to through the listening he has done in the wilderness? What has the Spirit that drove him to the desert, revealed to him in the deepest recesses of his human heart? Where has that Spirit taken him as he listened and reflected on all the thoughts and experiences that his life had brought him. What was he to do with the anger that he felt, when, on one of his visits to Jerusalem, he saw how the Temple was being desecrated by the money changers. How would he respond when he saw the inequality and injustice that was causing so much suffering to his people? Surely, he thought to himself, this can't be God's plan and what are my Father's wishes for the people he calls *His* people.

### Who am I?

You can almost hear Jesus crying out in frustration: Yahweh, who am I, what am I? Am I to be a prophet, and suffer a prophet's fate? What is it you want from me, that you want me to do? Slowly, prayerfully, he learns to listen in the school of suffering, going from ignorance to wisdom, from darkness to light. Has that man in the painting just recalled again the texts of what we call the suffering servant of Yahweh? Is that what bows the shoulders? Gaze at that man.

I much prefer Mark's simple rendition of the temptations to Mathew's Cecil B. de Mille's version: ...he was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him. Who and what did Jesus meet in the wilderness as he listened? Probably not too different from what you and I would hear if we listened.

He met his questions: he met *himself* in all his humanness. And he met a god, a god short on answers, but who asked him to surrender everything into his hands; his loves, his hopes, his dreams for a holy life serving God.

He met a god whose love was total self-giving, totally unconditional, and he heard the prompting of his own heart's desire to give his life for others as this God does. If it hadn't done so already his heart came to a total yes of self-gift, without knowing all that that 'Yes' would cost. Maybe Jesus had a total rethink as the Spirit prompted his searchings. He learned in that silence that his call, like every human being's calling, was to give his life for others, to fall in with God's life; only doing that would quell his pain, the pain caused by that hound of Heaven, calling him to live to the full what it meant to be human. He encountered his physical needs (stone to bread); his desire for power to change things for the better for his people (I will give you all the kingdoms of the world); he met his desire for recognition (throw yourself down from the pinnacle and everyone will acclaim you as being from God). Of course, he gets his recognition, the crowd that cry out *Hosanna to the Son of David* as he rides a donkey into Jerusalem, cry out *crucify him, crucify him* a week later. So much for worldly recognition. But his temptations are the basic temptations that we all suffer: I want food, clothing, a home to live in and be warm; I want to be loved (first temptation). I want to make a difference for the better my way, the way of power (second temptation). And I would like recognition by others of the good person I am (third temptation).

Not bad things in themselves but which all can be the opposites to *surrendering*; the opposite to letting God be God. We would be like God Himself without realizing the 'weakness' of God. And He says to us as he said to Jesus: My ways are not your ways, my thoughts are not your thoughts.

### Learning to listen

This listening is a bit like having a mobile phone in my heart and God has my number. He keeps ringing me on my mobile and gets my message: I'm busy right now but I've got your number and will get back to you as soon as I can. Or, I see that the number calling me is God's number and I do my best to ignore it, staying in the wilderness of my distractions – work, possessions, obsessions, addictions, on-line games, uncommitted sex, endless entertainment, even the distraction of my good works. I sense that 'toothache', that

anxiety deep inside me that I can't escape: my limitations, my insufficiency as a human and so I eat, and I eat rather than submit myself to the wilderness of surrender that will lead to my ultimate joy.

We are being told that obesity is becoming the number one disease in the western world along with depression. I instinctively seem to know that surrender will cost me everything and be painful to my large insidious ego even though, deep down, I know the truth: Seek first the Kingdom of heaven and all these things will be given you. The only difference will be that I will be free to pick them up and enjoy them and also be able to put them down. So I don't take God's phone call even though it could mean that I might even experience the freedom of the children of God and have a spring of living water welling up inside me.

In Mark's gospel, with typical economy of words, the first words of Jesus are: *The time has come and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe in the Good News.* If we learn to listen, the kingdom of God is always close at hand. God is always trying to reach us – in his creation, in others, in the events of my daily life, in my prayer, in the love of my husband and children, and my love for them. Sometimes I just gaze at the miracle of our grown children and my heart fills with gratitude and pride that my husband and I were capable of birthing and rearing such a reflection of God's love for us. And that even goes for the one that has lots of troubles.

Unlike Mark, I know I am going on, but indulge me for a bit longer because this word repent haunts me. *Metanoia* is Greek meaning to think beyond, to think outside the normal parameters of the way we humans think, especially Westerners. A good dose of Indigenous Spirituality would do us a *world* of good. They think like metaphysicians think, beyond and above the physical world. Jesus may well be saying be sorry for your sins but he may also be saying learn to think 'beyond', learn to see things differently, God's love is trying to reach you. Seek and you will find a pearl of great price in your back pocket, or in your midst.

Will there ever be a time, a moment even, when I will surrender myself into His love? Yes, there will. Glory be to Him, whose power working in us, can do infinitely more than we can possibly ask or imagine. Glory be to Him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen. ☪



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## The Spirit at work

BRIAN GLEESON CP

**Brian Gleeson CP offers a reflection on Pentecost.**

**F**or this Pentecost Sunday let me start with a true story about how strongly the Holy Spirit works for good outcomes in human situations. The story comes from Northern Ireland (with thanks to Paul O'Reilly SJ for its core).

Northern Ireland is a particularly beautiful scenic place. But until recently it was a nation at war between two groups of people, Catholics and Protestants, divided along ethnic, social, cultural and religious lines. But after more than 40 plus years of violence, murder, injury, pain and suffering, peace has at last come to places where people simply did not expect to see any outbreak of peace in their lifetimes.

How and why has peace been happening? Because the Holy Spirit of God has been at work. The long and drawn-out peace process has been the work of the Spirit. Slowly and tentatively – two steps forward and one step back – this peace process has gradually been replacing what people there have called 'the Troubles'.

It seems, looking back, that there was one decisive turning point when the cycle and spiral of violence came to a sudden full stop. It was when a bomb exploded on Remembrance Day, November 8th, 1987, in the small town of Enniskillen (population about 10,000 persons). 12 people were killed and 72 were injured. Among those killed was a young woman called Marie Wilson. It was her 21st birthday. Some birthday present! Her last dying words to her father, Gordon Wilson, the Methodist minister of the town, were these: 'Daddy, I love you very much.'

An hour after the blast the BBC interviewed him. The journalist asked how he felt about the people who had just blown his daughter to bits on her birthday. Without a moment's hesitation Gordon answered: 'Of course I forgive them. I only hope that her Spirit may be with us and bring us to Peace.'

The interview was played on the news that night. It was a moment that touched the nation. Since that moment of faith and forgiveness the momentum towards peace has changed for the better the long, violent and tormented history of Northern Ireland.

That must surely be the work of the Spirit

of Pentecost, the Spirit that Jesus let loose among us on the first Pentecost Sunday, the Spirit that breathes where it chooses, the Spirit that will never be snuffed out. That Spirit of God keeps on overcoming resistance and breaking down barriers.

Here in Australia, the Catholic Church has begun today the countdown to a very vital and promising event, scheduled to take place in 2020. It's called the Plenary Council. It will be an assembly of the whole Catholic Church of Australia. It will engage the entire People of God, by means of its representatives. It will involve a comprehensive process of deeply listening to one another, of seeing, feeling, judging and acting together, and all this for the sake of a complete review, renewal and reform of the Church's mission, outreach, structures and workings. The Holy Spirit present to the gathered Council can shine a spotlight on everything to do with the Church – the good, the bad, the ugly and the beautiful.

Surely, this planned Plenary Council cannot succeed and will not succeed without the powerful presence and action of the Holy Spirit, who is the love of God at work within us and among us, the love that empowers us to listen to one another, understand one another and work together for the good of the whole Church. It will be concerned with every group and every individual within the Church, and especially, one hopes, with the poorest, the last and the least, those particularly dear to the heart of Jesus.

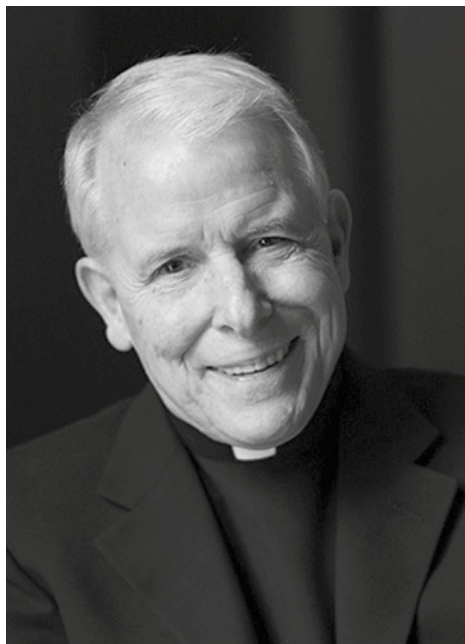
That wise international Jesuit scholar, Gerald O'Collins, has said so well: 'What we DO with the Church depends upon what we THINK about Jesus'. So, in short, the Plenary Council 2020 will focus most of all on discerning, discovering, and applying the dream of Jesus for his Church in Australia.

So let us pray today and every day, and over and over again, to the powerful Spirit of God that can overcome all resistance and break down every barrier: Come Holy Spirit! Be for us the love of God at work, the love that changes everything and everyone. Create among us all a new, ongoing, and lasting Pentecost! ☩

# A bishop for the times

MICHAEL RYAN

**Archbishop Raymond G Hunthausen, retired Archbishop of Seattle, died at the age of 96 on 22 July. At his funeral on 1 August, Fr Michael Ryan, Dean at St James Cathedral, Seattle delivered the homily. Fr Ryan had been Dean with Archbishop Hunthausen. This is an extract. The full homily can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/ydervwvn>**



This is not going to be your usual funeral homily, but Archbishop Hunthausen was not your usual bishop, was he? And I know: a homily is supposed to break open the scriptures and shed light on them. But Archbishop Hunthausen's very life was a homily on those scriptures. His life was a courageous prophecy. His life was a Gospel. He put a human face on each of those Beatitudes we just heard. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate*, tells us that we find a portrait of the Master in each of the Beatitudes. Yes, and I would say that we also find a portrait of our friend, 'Dutch', in each of them. So I hope you will bear with me if, instead of the usual funeral homily, I simply tell a few 'Dutch' stories that shed more light on the Beatitudes than any words of mine ever could.

## Installation in Seattle

FIRST STORY. My first story goes back to May 22, 1975, the day our friend was installed as Archbishop of Seattle. Those of us of a certain age probably have memories of that day – of the hope and joy we felt in welcoming our new archbishop. My memory is of the homily. Well, not so much the homily itself – who remembers homilies after all? My memory is of the

lead-up to the homily. When he stepped up to the podium on the stage of the Civic Auditorium, Seattle's new archbishop paused briefly and asked an overflowing crowd to join him in some moments of quiet prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to inspire him in what he was about to say. In the long silence that followed, you could have heard a pin drop, and I remember thinking to myself: this is new! And it was. We were used to bishops who knew exactly what they were going to say and said it, bishops who had a certain confidence that God told them what to say. Here was a bishop who thought the people might have some say in what he was about to say – the people and their prayer! That moment long ago reminds me of a memorable moment in March of 2013, when the newly-elected Pope Francis stood on the balcony of St. Peter's, humbly bowed his head, and asked the whole world to pray for him and to bless him.

All of this brings to mind the first Beatitude: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. It is only the poor in spirit, after all, who know how much they need the Holy Spirit.*

That's true of Pope Francis, and it was also true of our friend Archbishop Hunthausen. For him, it was always about being open to the Holy Spirit, which meant being open to God's holy people as channels of that Spirit. We know, of course, that Church leaders are channels of the Spirit – that God speaks through them. But God also speaks through the people in the pews – through their needs, their hopes, their challenges, their dreams. So the Archbishop's first homily set the tone for everything he did during his years in Seattle. From Day One, he made it clear that he would be listening to the Spirit speaking through God's people. All God's people.

Archbishop Hunthausen always maintained that he got his on-the-job training for being a bishop at the Second Vatican Council. He arrived at the Council with all the episcopal trappings: cassock and cape, miter and mozetta, biretta and buskins;

he left the Council wearing a simple black suit and driving a Volkswagen – a different man, a converted man, if you will, a man convinced that the people, all God's holy people, were the Church; a man convinced that the Church could learn as well as teach; and that the world was best seen as friend, not enemy – rich in potential, flawed yet flowing with grace, charged with the very 'grandeur of God', in the words of the poet.

And so, on that evening so long ago, when our new archbishop asked us to pray for him, it was his way of saying that he needed us, respected us, and would listen to us. And he did. For sixteen incredible years he led us by honoring our holiness – walking with us, consulting us, challenging us, collaborating with us, celebrating with us. I have often heard it said that there's something special and unique about the Church here in Seattle. There is. And we know why. We had a bishop whose own holiness was connected to the holiness of his people – which brings to mind another beatitude: *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for holiness, for they will be satisfied.*

## Listening in humility

SECOND STORY. The year was 1976 – one year after the Archbishop's arrival here. It was the year of our nation's bi-centennial. For the Church here in Seattle it was less a year of fireworks and flag-waving than a year of prayerful listening. All over the archdiocese, listening sessions took place that brought together parish leaders from communities large and small, rural and urban, multi-cultural and mono-cultural. I happened to be serving the parishes of the San Juan Islands at the time, so my parish's listening session was at Assumption parish in Bellingham. I can picture it well even after more than forty years. In the parish hall there were tables crowded with people from all the northern counties of the archdiocese. They were involved in earnest discussion and dialogue about their hopes and dreams for the Church. There were felt pens and facilitators, and butcher paper on the walls (this was the 1970s, after all), and there was a high degree of excitement and participation. And Seattle's new archbishop was there, but not in the way you might have expected. He was not seated in a place of honor, nor was he seated at any of the tables (lest he unduly influence or close off discussion). He was in the back of the hall, down on the floor,

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the swag



actually, having the time of his life playing quietly (well, maybe not all that quietly) with a bunch of little kids who had come with their parents.

He was the daycare, if you will, and he was right at home, right in his element. He had had years of practice doing the very same thing with his own nieces and nephews who were, to the day he died, the light of his life. You can picture the scene, can't you? It puts me in mind of another beatitude: *Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.*

It wasn't that the Archbishop had tuned out the meeting but, for a time, he had called a meeting of his own, making it clear that there is more than one way to lead and reminding us not to take ourselves too seriously. Of course, when all the discussions concluded and the various tables gave their reports, the archbishop was all ears. He didn't miss a word. Years later, when he was called to task for governing by taking polls and counting noses, he could have responded with words from Cardinal Newman: 'Truth is wrought by many minds working together freely,' but instead, he respectfully spoke about his belief that he could be a better leader and teacher if he knew what his people were thinking, if he knew 'their joys and hopes, their griefs and anxieties,' to quote from the great Council document on the Church in the Modern World. And that brings yet another beatitude to mind: *Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

### Hopeful, forgiving and kind

A THIRD STORY. This one comes from 1986. The Seattle Visitation was front-page news around the country and the bishops of the country were assembling for their November meeting in Washington, DC. The stakes were high. After several years of a wearying, dispiriting hanging-out-to-dry of this local Church and its archbishop, matters had come to a head. At the highest levels, the Archbishop's leadership had been called into question and he was no longer considered capable of leading this Church by himself. The people, however, (religious, priests, deacons, lay) – most of the people saw it differently. They loved their archbishop, supported and revered him, believed in him. It was a tense time and a terrible time. The eyes of the country were on Seattle. The bishops' meeting held some hope, no matter how fragile, for resolution.

A couple of us travelled to Washington with Archbishop Hunthausen for that meeting, and I remember sitting together on the plane. And I also remember that, joining us, purely by chance, was the chair of the theology department of Notre Dame University, Fr. Richard McBrien. He had been at St. Martin's University in Lacey to give a lecture the night before. As you can probably imagine, our conversation during the flight was rather animated!

Before we knew it, we had arrived in Chicago where we had to change planes. When we stood up to exit the plane we experienced the usual inertia, the bottleneck when everyone is eager to move to the exit but no one can. In the midst of that, a fellow who had been sitting in front of us turned around abruptly and thrust a piece of paper into the archbishop's hand. 'Here!' was all he said, but he said it with as angry and hostile an expression on his face as I'd ever seen.

'Do you I know you?' the archbishop asked him, smiling his disarming smile and extending his hand. There was no answer and no hand was returned. There was only a handwritten page filled with venom and vitriol and a devastatingly personal attack on the archbishop. Our friend quietly folded up the note, put it in his pocket, and remarked to us, as the fellow disappeared into the crowd, 'Oh, I wish we could sit down and get to know each other. Maybe we'd come to understand each other and be friends.' I hasten to assure you that my sentiments at that moment were far less generous!

I tell the story because it was vintage Raymond Hunthausen: hopeful, forgiving, kind. He was never one to judge, always one to think the best of another, no matter what. His passion for peace and his reputation as a courageous prophet of peace flowed out of who he was as a person – a grounded, holy, happy, perfectly-put-together, incredibly authentic person who never preached a word that he didn't first live – the very embodiment of another of the beatitudes: *Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.*

### Nuclear protest – a peaceful shot

STORY FOUR. Pardon me for jumping around chronologically. This story is from April of 1982. The archbishop was scheduled to speak before the regional

synod of the Lutheran Church at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma. The day before, he shared with me the talk he planned to give, asking for my comments. The talk was fairly predictable – until it came to the part about withholding one-half of his federal income taxes as a protest against the nuclear arms race. My heartbeat accelerated and my blood pressure – shall we say? – elevated. I told the archbishop that I thought it was a great speech but I questioned the passage about withholding his taxes. True to form, he thanked me and told me he'd pray about it. The next morning he told me he had prayed and was more convinced than ever that he should leave that part in. I knew at that point that there was nothing left for me to say, so I told him I would prepare a press release. 'Why would you do that?' he asked. 'No one is going to be interested in what I say'. On the contrary, I told him, it would be (pardon the militaristic reference) 'the shot heard round the world!' And it was. As it should have been. And I should have been a little less fearful; no, a lot less fearful. Thank God he listened to the Holy Spirit, to the Gospel, and not to me! *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

### Blessed are they who mourn

STORY FIVE. I only know this story because the archbishop told it to me. It goes back to August of 1945. To August 6, to be exact – the day we dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Dutch Hunthausen was at St. Edward's Seminary in Kenmore, a year away from ordination. Because of the war and the pressing need for priests, seminarians were on an accelerated path that involved their remaining at the seminary during what should have been summer vacation. When word reached St. Edward's about the Japanese bombing there was general jubilation. The enemy was finally vanquished. But that was not the way that Dutch saw it. He could only think of the 70,000 people who had been incinerated in a matter of seconds, and he shared with me how he went off to the woods for a walk, and then to the chapel, where he buried his head in his hands, and wept. *Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted...*

### Inheriting Seattle

STORY SIX. It was late fall of 1973. The Archbishop of Portland was about to retire. A call came to Bishop Hunthausen at his office in the Chancery in Helena. Not just

any call. It was Archbishop Jean Jadot, the Apostolic Delegate, calling from Washington, DC. ‘The Holy Father would like you to go to Portland as Archbishop’, he told him. Some moments of silence ensued. Then our friend expressed amazement and asked if he could have some time to think and to pray. The time was granted – I’m not sure how much – but I am sure that the praying was intense. At the appointed time, our friend called Archbishop Jadot and shared with him his deep and prayerful conviction that the appointment to Portland was a step too far – that he believed it would not be the best thing for the Church, and that, if the Holy Father would allow it, he would respectfully decline.

I don’t think that Archbishop Jadot was used to getting calls like that! And I don’t know what he thought or said, but if he hadn’t realized it before, he knew then that he was dealing with someone truly extraordinary! And it was probably at that moment that he became convinced that, despite his protestations, Raymond Hunthausen was precisely the kind of leader the Church should be promoting. No surprise, then, that our friend received a similar call from Archbishop Jadot a year or so later when an even larger archdiocese to the north became vacant. This time his prayers brought him to a different place. As he said to me: ‘It seemed that the Lord was trying to tell me something’. No one of us would ever doubt that. Thank God, he said ‘yes!’

*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.* (Or in this case, inherit Seattle!)

**Facing the difficult years**

STORY SEVEN. This story comes from 1987. In order to understand it, you need to know that one of the things the archbishop had been called to task for during the Apostolic Visitation had to do with his supposed permissiveness with regard to Church regulations about who can receive the Eucharist. He wasn’t permissive, but he was a pastor, not a policeman. Well, the Visitation had finally concluded. The Archbishop had been given back full authority to govern and Thomas Murphy had been given to him as his Coadjutor. In order to formally bring the whole sorry saga to a close, both archbishops travelled to Rome for an audience with Pope John Paul II. The plan was for the two of them to concelebrate Mass with the Pope in his private chapel and then to have breakfast with him. As it turned out, the two archbishops were not the only honored guests at Mass that day. Standing in line with them at the entrance to the Pope’s chapel was the noted American author, James Michener.

The Archbishop later told me how delighted he was to meet and visit with Michener, and how surprised he was that Michener knew who he was (a Hunthausen reaction if ever there was one!). The two archbishops were then escorted into the sacristy to vest

for Mass. After Mass, they joined the Holy Father for breakfast and some informal conversation. Then they took their leave, found their way out to St. Peter’s Square, and hailed a taxi to take them to the airport. Once they got into the taxi, Archbishop Murphy asked Archbishop Hunthausen if he had noticed that the Holy Father had given Holy Communion to James Michener, a Quaker. ‘No foolin’! our friend said. ‘Maybe we should get the taxi to turn around, and go back and report the Pope to Cardinal Ratzinger!’

I’m not going to leave the story there, because it doesn’t begin to tell the whole story of how the Archbishop related to Cardinal Ratzinger and Pope John Paul II. True to form, he was always completely respectful and he agonized greatly over the perception on the part of some that he was a maverick out to start a revolution. He always maintained, and rightly so, that it was his pastoral leadership that had been called into question, not his doctrinal fidelity – pastoral leadership – carried out in fidelity to the gospel and Church teaching, and in response to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. But thank God for his humor, the kind of humor evidenced that day in Rome. His humor, along with his humility, and a faith stronger than any I’ve ever witnessed – got him through some excruciatingly painful and difficult years. ☺

# THE TABLET

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### Spiritual Formation the key to the Plenary Council

What does God want for the church in Australia? What an audacious question! In one way we can answer that question fairly simply without need for much discussion – it is the sort of thing priests (hopefully) preach often at mass: that God's people walk humbly, act justly and love tenderly.

How we live these general principles concretely is where we can become political and divided. The organisers of the Plenary have invited all Catholics (including the 'lapsed') to participate and to give their opinion. It is all too easy to use such a discussion forum to pronounce what a person believes God wants for the church in Australia: married priests, women priests, the return of the third rite of Reconciliation, gays welcome in Mass, more reverence given to Father, return of Benediction, etc. Knowing the danger that this invitation will allow individuals to express their long-standing pains and complaints, and fail to listen to God, the plan is to have trained facilitators enable participants to listen, both to others and to their own hearts. What the organisers are hoping for is a response that brings to light the voice of God's Spirit. This presumes that both leaders and participants are men and women of prayer, that they already are tuned into God in their hearts. Alas, I fear that there are few of these among the people. This brings me to the heart of my proposition: that the Church in Australia needs members who know God and who can discern the movement of God's Spirit in their hearts. The people of the Catholic Church need spiritual formation.

The Society of Jesus has been invited, since last year, to enter into process of discernment in common to discover, embrace and live out the message of the 36th Gen Congregation (2016). The General, Father Arturo Sosa, sent out a letter reminding Jesuits of the prerequisites for genuine discernment. One of these is spiritual or interior freedom. Those who wish to discern will need to be detached from their own interests and be free to take on whatever is the greater good. They need to be divested of self-love and self-will.

At present there are 11 men at the Campion Centre of Ignatian Spirituality, seminarians of various dioceses, who are receiving the Full Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. The goal of these Exercises, proposed by St Ignatius, is to achieve a freedom of spirit so as to know more clearly God's will for one's life. These men (with many hundreds of men and women before them at Campion) are spending 30 days of silence, with daily

spiritual direction and four – five hours of prayer each day, to find God's will for their lives. It is not guaranteed that all will achieve this goal. Place this exercise next to that put before us by the organisers of the Plenary for all the people of the church and notice the difference.

The second prerequisite, Father Arturo reminds the Jesuits, is that those who are asked to discern know how to discern. This is a very specific spiritual exercise that is both an art and a science. Discernment in common requires each member of the group to understand how God moves in his or her heart and body and to notice such a movement as the members of the group talk and listen together. How many members of our congregations, parish councils or prayer groups know how to do this?

One might at this point see the whole consultation exercise as impossible and give up on it. But there is another possible response: that we use this invitation to participate in the Plenary to give the people of the church – and any other interested parties – spiritual formation. We invest time and resources into finding teachers of discernment to pass on their knowledge and skills to those who wish to learn. Many trained spiritual directors and supervisors have this capacity.

For the Church in Australia I believe God wants people of prayer, who know God and who can feel God's spirit in their hearts. These people will be able to help us know more clearly what God wants for our church in Australia.

**Iain Radvan SJ, Sydney, NSW**

### Can Mass appeal to the masses?

In recent past issues of *The Swag*, there has been some discussion on the liturgy and that some people say they find it boring. From memory, the articles expressed the views of some clergy. Some laity may see things from a different perspective.

As a cradle Catholic of 76 years, I have experienced the changes from the Latin days up till the present, and am very glad of those changes. But the basic, essential structure of the Mass has not changed much at all. Therein, perhaps, lies a problem.

I think that what some people in the pews find boring is that part of the Mass when the priest reads at length from the missal. They are beautiful prayers of praise and thanksgiving, but are sometimes very long and without active participation of the congregation. The language is also foreign to many. It is during this period that even some of the most devout can find it a time

of unintentional mind wandering and distraction, let alone those of lesser commitment. And this includes many of the young, the future of the church.

I sometimes go to one of the local Protestant churches, mainly to support former prison inmates I have come to know in my role on the Kairos team. The music at that church is "X Factor" material. There are a lot of young families there, and a good socio economic and cultural mix. The Pastor's main involvement is his sermon. Other congregation members, including women, lead prayer and singing. The prayer is not read. It is from the heart. They have several young families overseas on missionary assignments, products of the lively and enthusiastic faith of their community.

Is it time that we gave some serious consideration to our long held traditions and practices? What has been the norm for centuries may need a tweak. What response would we expect if we asked the young and the Christmas/Easter Mass goers what they would like our worship liturgy to be? What would make it sufficiently attractive to make them want to come and participate on a regular basis? What would draw the teenagers and children?

I don't know the answers, but I do think there is some merit in undertaking some critical thinking about the Mass format. Is it possible to simultaneously cater for the young and those who wish to preserve the status quo? And to make seriously significant changes to a practice of such long held tradition, would be momentous in itself. But, do we need to? Could it help to stem the flow away? I fear the horse has bolted, but, can we slow it down?

I realise that there are many reasons for the decline in church attendance, but it is my belief, as one in the pews, that this is one.

**Brian Walker, Wagga Wagga NSW**

### Signs of the times ignored

What a marvellous insight *The Swag* gives us of and for the real Church. It is very much appreciated in this very difficult time within the Church.

The Plenary Council is seemingly taking place in 2020. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? I read this question in the local Church newsletter. I have been reflecting on this question especially after I have attended the funeral of two outstanding men. These two men had the ability to read the signs of the time, to listen, to act with tremendous compassion and to be very Jesus like. Both

died within a few weeks of each other. Both had Y.C.W. backgrounds. I speak of Ernie Smith and Paul Willy.

Seeing Ernie was the first to go to our loving God I will speak of him. So many people appreciated the very human Ernie who, with his strengths and weaknesses, did his very best to try to make the world a better place for so many, one recipient of his help and compassion spoke of his endless care and understanding at his celebration Mass attended by over 500 people: If it wasn't for Ernie there wouldn't be a Sacred Heart Mission. From the small action of opening his heart, life and home, to needy people sprouted the Sacred Heart Mission which, beyond belief, feeds, clothes, houses and gives medical and spiritual assistance to so many. He knew and cared for his parishioners. He saw, judged and acted.

Paul Willy was an incredible man who, as a priest, influenced and guided many people through his humanity and care in guiding and encouraging especially through the See, Judge and Act method. He was involved in the St Kilda parish with an enthusiastic vision of setting up the care and spirituality for the very needy people in this area. Ears were deaf to his reading of the signs of the time which Jesus speaks about: cannot you read the signs of the time? He continued to do great work when he married Liz – this partnership continued to help, assist and encourage so many.

I use these two examples of two very fine men who were both called by God and followed His way in different directions but both achieving, in their life time, what they saw God wanted of them. Why do I reflect in this way? Because I see so many men within our Church throughout Australia in this same situation. Priests are trying and should be listened to as they are trying to service the area that they know. Walk side by side with them. If they can't listen then let them know and find a way to communicate the message. They say they are overworked. Well, the wastage of man power (and what is wrong with woman power?) is enormous. Married ex-priests, like Paul and so many other outstanding men I know, are not being utilised.

Instead of taking away Mass and other liturgy celebrations from outback country areas (yes, we are not all city where you can amalgamate) communicate with parishioners, it is not a power game, permit them to celebrate liturgies. Some of these most valued men (and their partners) are a resource in waiting. May we, like Paul and Ernie, see, judge and act when reading the signs of the time. Rest in peace Ernie and Paul.

**Mary Ward, Elwood, Vic**

## An Indian Adventure

For six days I was fortunate enough to visit the Indian province of Goa to assist at a wedding as well as preside and preach at a number of Parish weekend Masses.

Briefly the nation of India has a massive population of 1.5 billion people and of that number only 2% or 20 million people would be Catholic, there is a very small Protestant Christian following in India, most of the people are either Buddhist or Hindus. There are now 29 provinces or states within the nation of India and Goa is one of them. This province has a population of 1.4 million people and has a distance of nearly 150 kilometers from north to south and 70 kilometers from east to west. In Goa about 35% of the people are Catholic. This is largely due to the strong Portuguese influence as the Government of Portugal governed this province for 422 years between the years 1530 until 1952 then it was forcibly returned to the control of the Indian government. The Portuguese influence is still very strong with many people having names like *D'Costa, Silvieira, Mendez and Rodriguez*.

To experience the living conditions in Goa is so different from Australia in many ways, the first thing that struck me was the traffic it was simply chaotic! I noticed that there were so few traffic lights, Stop or Give Way signs, hardly any pedestrian footpaths and the many people who rode on motor bikes very few ever wore helmets. In fact I saw one family of 4 people on a motor bike also carrying their grocery shopping and everybody and everything seemed very secure. The only things on the road ways that everyone gives way to are the roaming bulls and cows which are very sacred to the Hindu people.

The local parish that I ministered in was for an Australian simply amazing. To begin with each weekday there are two early morning Masses and there are about 300 people who attend each Mass! On a weekend there are five Mass centers that provide 16 Masses presided over by the five resident priests of the parish and two visiting priests, on top of the numerous weddings, funerals and baptisms. The local parish scene reminded me very much to what the Australian Catholic scene was like in the 1960's where people usually got *dressed up* to go to Mass and Communion is often given on the tongue with someone holding a silver plate underneath. The attendance rate is about 85% as it is still widely held that to miss Mass is a Mortal Sin for the Catholics of India. On New Year's Eve there was a midnight outdoor

Mass in the parish courtyard and over 2,200 people attended amidst all of the outside noise and fireworks. The Archdiocese of Goa also average about eight men ordained to the priesthood each year in contrast to Sydney where the averages is about two.

Overall the short experience of life and Church in India was in many ways inspiring. The people in India have so little in a material sense compared to so many Australians but their sense of faith and community is so much more vibrant and stronger.

**Fr Martin R Maunsell, Eastwood, NSW**

## Cardinal Gilroy again

The article in winter *The Swag* on Cardinal Gilroy brought to mind a story about him.

There was this Irish priest, Father Twomey, who got up at Mass one morning and said, the Gospel today is the Gospel of the Good Samaritan, but I think it should be told in modern terms!

There was this poor fellow who had been knocked down by a hit run driver. He was lying in the gutter. The mayor went past and just left him there. A politician came along and just left him. Then a priest, a high ecclesiastical – Gilroy himself! And he passed him by.

Then came a man who was a Communist, a Communist, a man who is derided by you all. He picked up the poor man and took him to hospital and left some money to look after him.

Some people wrote to the Cathedral complaining about the disrespect to Cardinal Gilroy.

A year later, Father Twomey was up again: the Gospel today is the Gospel of the Good Samaritan. I think it should be told in modern terms.

And so he went on as before – and then came a priest – a high ecclesiastic... And for those of you who wrote to the Cathedral last year. You can take out your pens and paper. Because it's GILROY AGAIN.

**Dick Magree, Redesdale, VIC**

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### Searching for meaning

Viktor Frankl, the renowned psychiatrist and survivor of the infamous concentration camp, Auschwitz, visited Melbourne in 1985. The occasion was the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau (Cathcare).

Viktor spent time working with the staff of the Bureau and gave a series of public addresses.

At the conclusion of one of the public presentations, one in which he had spoken in detail about his life both before, and after, his internment, he was asked, by a member of the audience, whether, if he was able to recreate his life, he would omit, in this new version, his time spent in Auschwitz.

Without hesitation, he replied emphatically No, No, No and I'll tell you why. Viktor then, against the background of an audience spell bound, gave his reasons.

Firstly, he said, in these concentration camps one saw both sides of humanity: on the one side, it is capable of inflicting intolerable suffering on its members and, yet, on the other side, unselfish love can be given. In the camps evil and goodness were bedfellows; just as they are in life.

Secondly, Viktor confessed that, in the camp, he was faced with the reality of who he really was when stripped of all pretence and privilege. One went, he reflected, from being a person of distinction and standing in the community, to being a number and a person of little or no worth.

Finally, Viktor, with humility and awe, spoke about what he would never want to change in another life. It was, he said, discovering God's presence in the seemingly inhumane degradation which was inflicted upon inmates of the camp.

How often I called out, 'where are you God?', he said. And God would answer by an unexpected kind word from another prisoner or in the offering of another to share a piece of bread. In these signs, I knew God was there – I could almost touch him. The content of Viktor's answer to the question was, in itself, a practical lesson in Logotherapy.

Viktor's reference to God, in this recounting of his visit to Melbourne, might surprise some since he was always reluctant to confess outright his own beliefs. Perhaps the nature of his audience on this occasion encouraged him to speak of what he felt most deeply.

He was, after all, very familiar with all things Catholic. His wife was a Catholic: a large crucifix hung in the Hall of his home.

In public, Frankl didn't know, or created the impression that he didn't know, who God was. In private, however, thanks to his wife, we know that he did know the God of, and in, history. Viktor admired and frequently spoke of Father Maximilian Kolbe, referring to him as 'a saint'.

His Jewish upbringing certainly influenced him throughout his life. He read the Psalms every night and put on his Tefillin (phylacteries) whenever he prayed.

In the spirit of a Lament Psalm, late in life, he wrote about the deep psychological effects of his suffering endured in the camps. This experience was such that he wrote there is nothing a man need fear anymore, except God.

At the age of ninety, in an interview with Mark Scully, he gave his definition of a religious person (including himself): *a religious person may identify Super as meaning something paralleling a Super Being; and this Super Being we would call God.*

Logotherapy, Frankl's outstanding contribution to psychological thought, has made a great impression on the way in which psychologists – and other practitioners including priests – seek to bring peace and healing to their clients and parishioners.

Logotherapy is a positive approach to the mentally or spiritually disturbed personality stressing the freedom to transcend suffering and find a meaning to life regardless of circumstances.

As our Church, and all its members, struggle in today's circumstances, we might reflect not only on the anguish we suffer, but rather on the hope our 'meaning' as Catholics should give us.

**John Bushell, East Brighton, VIC**

### Finding the church today

I have come to *The Swag* somewhat late in my life and am delighted to find such a rich and organized publication devoted to a liberal view of Christianity. In view of my age and education I am not surprised to find myself to be a mixture of liberal and conservative. For instance, I love the rich liturgy of the past. The Mass, hidden in its Latin context, symbolizes so well, the hidden nature of the One, the Creator God to whom we aspire

The conservative church, discarded as it is, still holds the beautiful Benediction, with its lovely Latin hymns. Still upholds the thrice beautiful Monstrance. We have cast it aside. I last saw a Monstrance displayed in a TV documentary of a Masonic Initiation in Edinburgh. We have lost it,

as we have lost the glorious church music. Oh to sit through a lovely Gounod Mass!

At the same time there was much in the conservative church which repelled me and caused me great pain. The rigid authoritarian grip which silenced the Laity, the obligation to obedience, the infallibility, which stretched from the Pope to the latest Curate, fresh out of Ireland, the obligation to accept the simplistic nature of the Catechism. It goes on and on. Where do I stop? Any attempt to discover Spirituality was cut off at its source. It had all been discovered by *The Fathers* and could not be questioned. Our way to God was through the priest. He was the representative – the agent – of the Church and had the answers and we, the Laity, were not in the pipeline.

Suddenly, here I am, in the 21st century and still, perhaps I should say once again, a Catholic. Perhaps just in time to enjoy the ritual of the Requiem Mass. Here I am a conservative/liberal/long time rebel. There is much in the modern practice of Catholicism to which I do not relate, but it is my home, the home in which I was reared, and, considering my age, the home in which I may find my destiny.

**Mark Stokes, Somers, Vic.**

### Now is the time for accountability

I am a great grandfather. I have been faithful to weekly Mass my whole life and intend to remain faithful. When I was a child I attended a boys' boarding school where I was sexually abused by one of the teaching brothers. Curiously enough I don't hold resentment in my heart towards him. Even as a child I could see that the poor bloke was in desperate need of professional help. He is probably dead by now but if I found out he was alive I would go visit him.

I was also sexually abused by a senior boy and I do deeply resent that abuse because that boy passed himself off as someone who never did anything wrong. It was my first encounter with hypocrisy. That sexual abuse affected me for the rest of my life. It affected my marriage of fifty-four years. Fortunately, I had an understanding wife. It affected my faith. I am amazed that I am still a practicing Catholic because I now have a very sensitive nose for hypocrisy and the Catholic Church has been well represented in the hypocrisy department for many years.

Worse than the sexual abuse was the physical abuse. Some kids seemed to be singled out for vicious and undeserved caning. Goodness knows what that abuse has done to the rest of their lives.

Worse even than the sexual and physical abuse was the abuse of the message of love that Jesus gave us. Our Church leaders reduced that message of love to an obsession about sex. This perversion of the true faith has done me and others untold spiritual harm.

In some cases, there were kids who the teachers seemed to dislike for no obvious reason. One day a house captain was chided and humiliated in the presence of the three other house captains for not receiving daily communion and not setting the right example for the other students. I was that boy. The sexual abuse coupled with the fear and guilt treatment had left me with a severe case of scruples.

Who is to blame? Not the brothers, they were doing there their best. Not the fire and brimstone preachers, they didn't know any better. But now we do know better and unless the church and its institutions start to operate in a more open and accountable manner and return to the message of love that Jesus brought us our church will continue to be desecrated.

**Anonymous.**  
(name and address supplied)

## Can Francis fix the clergy sex abuse crisis?



One need not be clairvoyant to see that dioceses across Latin America (as well as Europe, Asia and Africa) are likely to eventually discover that clergy sex abuse exists in their communities on a scale comparable to what we've witnessed in the United States, Great Britain, Ireland and Australia and are seeing in Germany, France, Belgium and a growing list of other countries, said Robert Mickens in *La Croix International* on May 25, 2018.

The big question now is what Pope Francis will do next. He did not do much (at least publicly) to deal with clergy sex abuse in the first five years of his pontificate. But he sure has done a major turnabout in the last several months in the way he's facing the crisis in Chile.

The stakes are high and we should hope and pray that Francis gets this right. His challenge is to devise a truly effective and radical response to a crisis that, even Vatican officials (both dead and alive) must surely see by now, is no longer limited to one geographical or linguistic part of the world, said Mickens.

## Give priests the opportunity of talking about their emotional lives

Previously it was considered to be inherently bad, but now sexuality is increasingly seen as an element of spiritual life. Priests should take this into account with regard to their own reflections and experience of humanity, Brother Michael Davide Semeraro said in an interview with Céline Hoyeau in *La Croix International* on June 4, 2018.

He is the author of a book about priests' sexuality, *The Truth Will Set You Free: Spirituality and Sexuality Among Priests*.

The danger is that priests, who, with great generosity and love, give others the possibility to open up intimately, might themselves be incapable of expressing themselves or confiding completely, and that is risky. ... We have to give them the possibility of talking about their emotional lives, about the joy to be had in living a life of chastity but also about its hardship and their challenges and their mistakes, he said.

Brother Michael Davide Semeraro, an Italian Benedictine monk, went on to say: we have to change the way we think about the ordained ministry. When people get the idea that their consecration comes only from on high, that they are holy, privileged men with direct contact to God, this can lead to an illusion that they have infinite power over others and that they are exempt from the moral codes that others must follow.

They place themselves on pedestals and get drawn into a kind of caste mentality. This is the temptation that Pope Francis talked about in the apostolic exhortation on holiness *Gaudete et Exsultate*, the temptation of Gnosticism and elitism.

To get out of this caste mentality, we have to begin with a very important step. This is to put ourselves on the same level as everyone else, even when there is a different ministry for others.

Pope Francis emphasizes this point when he talks to priests: Presbyteral and monastic consecration alike are ways of living out baptism in service of the community.

## International Church reform conference in Slovakia

The International Church Reform Conference took place over five days recently in Pezinok, Slovakia. About fifty people attended, from various corners of the world, all of them involved in one way or another with Church Reform issues. There were about two thirds men, and one third women.

Various speakers told of the experience of the underground Church in Slovakia during the communist regime. A number of people who were priests or bishops in that time spoke. The work they did in preserving the faith, and the time many of them spent in prison, contributed to making them into really impressive people.

During the conference we worked on issues such as equality for women in the Church; LGBT ministry and the upcoming World

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Meeting of Families. Other issues included the lack of priests depriving communities of the Eucharist and the need for a Charter of Fundamental Rights in the Church.

*For me the most satisfying aspect of the whole week was the celebration of the Eucharist. This was my fourth such conference over the past seven years. At previous conferences we have had great difficulty over how we could celebrate Eucharist in a way that everyone could feel they fully belonged. The problem centred around the conflict between those who needed women to feel completely equal in the celebration, and those, priests mostly, who needed an ordained priest as the presider. But on this occasion, maybe because of all that we had heard about the underground Church, we all sat around together and had a wonderful celebration. I found it hard to keep back my tears!* said Fr Tony Flannery of the Association of Catholic Priests, Ireland.

## Health and Integrity in Church and Ministry

A symposium to be held on August 27 – 29, 2018 at the University of Divinity, Melbourne will be an ecumenical conversation on the task of rebuilding and renewal after the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

At a time when Australia's churches are still in an early phase of absorbing and responding to the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, this two-and-a-half-day symposium aims to begin an inclusive, ecumenical and interdisciplinary conversation about the task of cultural change and renewal that lies ahead.

The symposium will address questions about implications and learnings from the Royal Commission, methods of support and restoring trust and building a healthy ministry culture.

This conference aims to bring together a broad cross section of voices: church leaders, academics, people in religious and pastoral ministry, representatives of Church agencies, together with those who rarely get a voice, including survivors of abuse and their supporters, members of the laity, women, and church reform groups. Speakers include Robert Fitzgerald, Anglican Bishop Alison Taylor, Br. John Wong, Dr Peter Wilkinson and co-author of a study on Catholic child sexual abuse, Professor Des Cahill.

It is a free conference. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/yc7pusfu>

## Francis calls for a 'new ecumenical spring' while on visit to Geneva

Pope Francis focused entirely on the issue of Christian unity during his June 21 visit to the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, to mark the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the ecumenical body, reported Nicolas Seneze in *La Croix International* on June 22, 2018.

Francis appealed to his listeners not to forget the primary goal of ecumenism, namely evangelization.

*The credibility of the Gospel is put to the test by the way Christians respond to the cry of all those, in every part of the world, who suffer unjustly from the baleful spread of an exclusion that, by generating poverty, foments conflicts ..... It is problematic when Christians appear indifferent towards those in need,* the Pope said.

He also took the opportunity to criticize the so-called theology of prosperity of some 'evangelical' Protestants, 'who consider their own blessings clear signs of God's predilection rather than a summons to responsible service of the human family and the protection of creation.'

## Teams – 12<sup>th</sup> International Gathering

Teams (Equipes Notre Dame END) has just concluded its 12th International Gathering at Fatima in Portugal. Some 9,200 delegates from 80 countries in the world including 43 from Australia. Among the new faces were delegates from the UAE, Singapore and the Philippines.

The Teams from Syria were offered huge acknowledgement and support. The gathering worked for five days with an emphasis on discovering what the parable of the Prodigal Father /Son had to teach the couples in living out their married love in our changing times. Different countries produced and led the prayer and Masses, whilst the newly appointed Priest to the Roman Culture Commission and Lenten preacher to the Papal household, Tolentino de Mendonca, offered the Daily Meditation. There were papers by the laity and clergy and by far the most outstanding presentation was from Cardinal Peter Turkson who won the applause of all. Small groups enabled the top presentations to be re-examined at a personal level, but like many such gatherings, we ran out of time.

Worldwide, Brazil is by far the largest region with teams represented in 25 of the 27 provinces. The English speaking

component is the smallest but is the biggest in acreage.

It seems that in the growth areas Teams has the active support of the local Bishop and it was no surprise for Cardinal Sergio Rocha from Brasilia to be at the gathering. After all Cardinal Ricardo Blazquez Perez turned up on day one and Cardinal Manuel do Nascimento Clemente of Lisbon also made a cameo appearance. What was surprising was the amount of time spent by all four quoting Pope Francis.

Teams is going through a dying and rebirthing process not just in Australia but also around the world. The original founding cadre in Australia is reaching the end times and worldwide that reality has sparked a new offshoot for old and senior members who have begun a modified version of the model for that age bracket. Could this be worth a look in Australia. Emeritus Archbishop of Mosul and newly appointed Apostolic Visitor to Australia reflected upon the situation in the Middle East. He was captured/ kidnapped by ISIS years ago. On another level an adaption of the Teams model for those singles between



Equipes Notre-Dame

20 and 30 now has over 5000 members. Perhaps this is also worth thinking about in our land.

All in all a positive experience and the energy is renewed, for more consult the National Teams web site or else call Frank Marriott on 0427 315 633.

## LGBTI Catholic Groups Ignored by Vatican World Meeting of Families



The GNRC (Global Network of Rainbow Catholics) reports that they have had no response from officials overseeing the World

Meeting of Families 2018 in Dublin, Ireland. The GNRC, representing 32 LGBTI Catholic groups from around the world, applied for an exhibit booth on 17th April 2018. GNRC has received no response.

A media release noted that despite early comments by Dublin Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and other Irish church officials saying they expected same-gender couples and LGBTI families to be welcomed at the meeting, a promotional booklet for the Vatican-sponsored event deleted images deemed to depict same-gender couples and their families.

Ruby Almeida, Co Chair of GNRC who submitted the application for a booth said: *Attempts to get a response about our exhibit booth from World Meeting of Families officials have been very frustrating. We feel completely ignored. It was our hope that we could provide support to our fellow Catholics who have LGBTI family members. Many families have questions about how to best support gay and transgender family members, what the Church really teaches about us, and how and why we choose to remain Catholics. Our hope was to provide a place where these families can have honest conversations with people who have dealt with the same questions, to provide them resources, and to help them connect with people in their own countries who might be able to provide ongoing support. We have much to offer to them, as well as to Church leaders responsible for ministering to all kinds of families.*

Christopher Vella, Co Chair of GNRC, added, *"This seems to follow a historical pattern of editing-out LGBTI voices and Catholic LGBTI stories, the faith-filled voices of our loving Catholic families and affirming church communities.*

Meanwhile, Francis DeBernardo, Executive Director, New Ways Ministry, USA noted recently that the Vatican has reached three new milestones in its evolution toward a greater dialogue with the LGBT community. In preparatory documents for the October 2018 Synod on Youth in Rome, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym 'LGBT' to describe individuals with diverse sexualities and gender identities. Another significant development is the acknowledgement that LGBT people have a desire to be part of the church.

New Ways Ministry welcomed these developments and prays that the Vatican will make real its intriguing acknowledgements of youth and LGBT reality by having an open and free discussion of these issues at the synod.

DeBernardo also noted that there is nothing in the new document which indicates that the Vatican is, as yet, willing to entertain changes in church policy on LGBT issues. The furthest they have gone is to indicate a willingness to work towards being a 'community open and welcoming towards all.' This pastoral approach is important, but the Church's outreach cannot end there. He also asked who will get to speak at the Synod.

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## The Swag Summer Edition

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Monday 29 October 2018.  
Please email submissions  
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**Articles:  
700 words  
Major Features:  
1,400 words.**

## Befriending the spiritual place

This is a short overview of three new books in the field of spirituality: *Grace on a Journey to God*, 2018, Michael Casey OCSO, St Pauls Publications, *A Quiet Place Within*, 2018, Khoi Doan Nguyen MSC, Coventry Press and *I Call You Friends*, Patrick O'Sullivan SJ, 2018, David Lovell publishing, Reviewed by Peter Maher.

These three very different approaches to spiritual writing by three Australian priests from three different spiritual traditions, each have something to offer the searcher for spiritual nourishment.

In *I Call You Friends*, O'Sullivan offers a series of prayerful reflections on topics both old and new. From themes such as the love of God to women in the church and Anzac Day, O'Sullivan guides us through ways of seeing these themes in the light of Pope Francis' thinking and teaching. Being written by a Jesuit, the reader will not be surprised to see chapters on Discernment, Listening and the Examen, although a reader might be surprised to find a chapter headed: Banjo Patterson, Henry Lawson and St Ignatius. It's a book that you can thumb through and find little gems at your finger tips. It offers insight, wisdom and food for prayer and self reflection.

*A Quiet Place Within* has the sub-title, *Contemplation from the Heart*. Here we are privileged to catch glimpses of Nguyen's spiritual diary that are steeped in the spirituality of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. In his introduction, Nguyen writes he has two groups in mind writing this book: ordinary people living ordinary lives but ever searching for meaning and deeper substance for their living and young people. Might I add it has great wisdom for everyone on the spiritual path well beyond those two groups. Experienced practitioners in spirituality will find the short seemingly simple reflections replete with ever deepening pools of wisdom and insight into the heart of God in the reality we inhabit.

A beautiful surprise in this book is the second half, where Nguyen offers a series of poems that once again are seemingly simple and straight forward but offer beautiful images and poetic imagination that can transport us to the divine indwelling imperceptibly – just as God

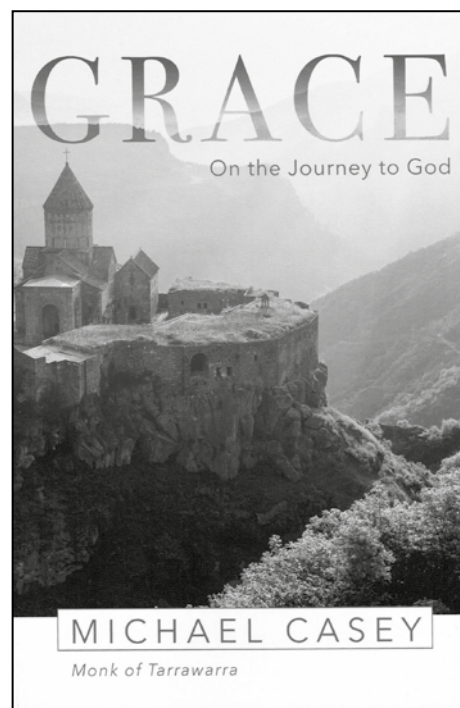
intended us to experience the universe.

The reader will easily recognize the depth of the christian, mystical and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart spiritual traditions that Nguyen claims as his context, but I rather enjoyed the hint of the eastern and Asian religious traditions that also sneak through from his Vietnamese background.

In *Grace on a Journey to God*, Casey offers us more of a contemporary theology of spirituality looking at expected themes such as prayer, self knowledge, faith and silence. However he also addresses more unexpected themes such as discontinuity, alternation and leisure. These are all grace-filled for Casey.

Drawing on scripture and the traditions of ancient christian writers, Casey allows the pages of this book to reveal a very contemporary feel and approach to issues we might wish to address in our spiritual and human journeys in 2018. For example, I was taken by the chapter on the grace of temptation. Temptation is addressed by many spiritual writers and thinkers. As Casey says it is often spoken of in a way that requires extra strong will power to do battle with temptation. This can lead to low self esteem if we fail to win the battle can make us more unsure or we can feel discouraged and fatigued, thus lessening our ability to resist. If we give in we feel hypocritical and lose our sense of life and joy.

Casey quotes St Aelred who begins his thoughts on temptation with a quote from James 1:12: Blessed are those who endure temptation. Temptation is an indication that everything is going well according to Aelred, so don't despair says Casey. It's a path to self-knowledge in the hands of this writer depending on a string of writers in our tradition. Temptation ushers in a growth point in the spiritual journey where we have highlighted for us places we can



grow and become more compassionate or be able to see things that were previously hidden or of which we were unaware.

The process Casey offers is as profound as it is liberating. He suggests a five point plan based on St Aelred of Rievaulx. Temptation means we have become aware of some obstacle to growth and thus invites us to name accurately the obstacle to growth. We can take full responsibility for that obstacle and act on it in a practical manner. Temptation offers a chance to devise a thoughtful and honest assessment and then a plan of action to deal with the 'vice'. We can be more open to receiving feedback more honestly and without resentment because we have recognized and engaged with our failures and shortcomings. Finally we can honestly and simply bring our fault or failing to God in prayer, not groveling nor excusing nor as a hopelessly failed believer, but in an adult prayer relationship thanking God for the temptation that is teaching me so much and taking time to reflect and share with God your strategies for growth and human flourishing.

You won't be disappointed reading this book of blessings in the spiritual journey. ☪

*We pray for life giving rain.*

*For the men and women who grow crops and care for animals that produce food.*

*For all children who live in drought areas who may not have basic needs being met at this time.*

*For all in drought affected areas who suffer depression and anxiety because they have lost hope.*

*For ourselves that we will generously support our neighbours battling drought.*

## Could sharing resources survive today?

**Race Mathews' *Of Labour and Liberty: Distributism in Victoria 1891-1966*, (Monash University Publishing, 2017), is a record and commentary on the role of Australian Catholicism in politics of cooperative distribution of ownership especially in the YCW. Review is by John Warhurst, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the Australian National University.**

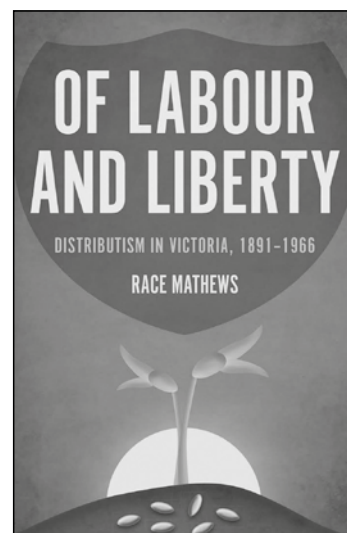
The biggest achievement of this impressive book is that it shows that the contribution of Australian Catholics to Australian society and politics in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not just their role in the anti-communist struggles around the trade unions led by Bob Santamaria's Movement. That important episode continues to generate a voluminous literature, most recently *The Show: another Side of Santamaria's Movement* by Mark Aarons with John Grenville. Both the general Australian public and younger Catholics must continue to be amazed at the staying power of these stories. But, as informative and revealing as this Movement literature continues to be, it can tend to obscure the wider impact of Catholic Social Teaching on Australian Catholics.

This latest instalment of Race Mathews' massive project to bring to light the Distributist element in Catholic political philosophy discusses, as the blurb on the back cover tells us: Australian attempts to give effect to Distributism, with special reference to Victoria. As such it tells the sometimes well-worn account of Cardinal Moran, Archbishop Mannix, the Campion Society, the Movement and, finally but perhaps most importantly, the Young Christian Workers in advocating social reform through the widespread ownership of property. This cooperative idea is an important part of the history of socialism but has been largely eclipsed in social democratic and socialist political parties by a concentration on state action and state ownership.

This thread in the book stands on its own and could almost have been a stand-alone, shorter book. The section I found most informative and fresh were the chapters on the role of the YCW in spreading the cooperative movement idea within Australia. It is now a largely forgotten story and greatly to the credit of the YCW leaders who carried the burden of keeping the cooperative idea alive for many years of dedicated service. It stands alongside Kevin Peoples' recent work on the National Catholic Rural Movement in *Santamaria's Salesman* (2012).

Other parts of this 'book within a book', detailing the role of Mannix and Santamaria in this story, were not as new to me, but may have been necessary to the integrity of the whole account. At times I thought these sections, such as chapter 5 on *Mannix: the Man*, were diverting from the main story no matter how good they were. Greater efforts also could have been made to widen this Australian account beyond Victoria to take into accounts parallel efforts, such as those by Paul McGuire in South Australia, which are only mentioned in passing.

But *Of Labour and Liberty* does much more than tell an Australian story, which makes the book's title somewhat misleading or at least insufficient. An early chapter is devoted to England's Cardinal Manning, described by the author as the precursor. Included in this section is a discussion of the contested role of Manning in the inspiration and production of the



foundation papal encyclical of Catholic social teaching, *Rerum Novarum* (1891).

Then the final chapter before the Conclusion, oddly situated in my view, is a discussion of the Catholic inspiration in the worker-owned cooperatives at Mondragon in Spain. It is a magnificent story of worker achievement, one told earlier by Mathews in a previous work, *Jobs of Our Own* (1999). *Of Labour and Liberty* is dedicated to its founder, Fr Jose Maria Arizmendiarieta (1915-1976).

Mathews is very much a passionate advocate of the benefits of the cooperative idea in Distributism. It is a labour of love for him in telling this story and he does it very well. The final few pages are a plea for Distributism and a lament for what might have been had the momentum been sustained. He holds hope for Australia and elsewhere and points to some green shoots, but his head may be telling him that unfortunately the prospects of a recovery are slight. ☺



## Addressing sexuality and spirituality in priestly formation

***A Priesthood Imprisoned*, John E Ryan, Coventry Press, 2017. Reprinted with permission from *The Furrow*, vol.69, no.6, June 2018 p 376-7. Review by Tim Hazelwood.**

The introductory dedication of this intriguingly titled book sets its tone and gives the reason for writing it. This arose from the author's dissatisfaction with the response and explanations accorded to the 'abuse crisis'. John Ryan, himself a priest, suggests that by exploring and identifying inherently deeper reasons, it may be possible to rectify explicit defects. The ultimate goal of his book is to probe what he sees as a systemic dysfunction.

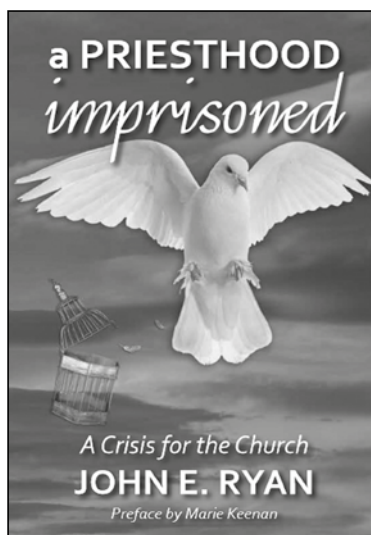
Written within an Australian church context, this book's content is nevertheless universal and especially relevant to our most recent history. The connection goes even deeper, if viewed as a continuation of the work of Dr Marie Keenan, who in Ireland, has explored the possible causes of child sexual abuse committed by priests in her book, *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender Power and Organisational Culture*.

John E Ryan shows a deep knowledge and wide experience of Catholic priesthood. Ordained in 1963 for the Diocese of Sandhurst in Victoria, Australia, he subsequently pursued post graduate studies in Pastoral Theology in Rome and in Spirituality in St Louis' USA. He has also worked in the area of counselling. His interest in the area led to him establishing a centre for the care and education of clergy in Australia. This book comes as a result of a life time's involvement in the lives of priests. It also obviously comes from a place of love – with deep concern

*Continued page 42*

the swag





for these human beings in their journey and struggles.

The early part of the book speaks of the reality of priesthood as it is found today, and Ryan does not view priesthood from a distance but instead, inserts his own

journey into the process. Thus we experience an insider's look and honest appraisal of priesthood which greatly adds to the book's authenticity and attraction.

I found the book especially enlightening as I identified my own personal journey within the spiritual model of development, and the psychological stages he puts forward. Rather than 'the usual' more academic examination of priesthood, I found it non-judgemental and helpfully reflective.

From my own work within the ACP [Association of Catholic Priests], I see that we are in desperate need of help. There are so many labour demands, accompanied by often unrealistic expectations on the parts of all concerned Bishops, priest, laity. There are also unresolved issues arising from formation or the lack of it. From his own observations and experience, Ryan concludes that the vital areas of sexuality and spirituality are not adequately addressed in priestly formation, which leads to the Lifelong Dilemma faced by

priests... How do I answer the Gospel Call to love alongside the fear of my own human vulnerability? I found his template for moving forward inspirational but demanding the moral courage from those in leadership, in allowing the Gospel message and values to be at the very heart of leadership. This applies as well to ongoing formation, and education. Ryan speaks the language of Pope Francis and as with him he is faced with the same dilemma... How do you hope to cure a 'cancer' within the confines of the existing system and structures? In our context how do we change, and change we must, if Priesthood has any hope of survival?

I am left with great hope having read this book. The conversation has begun and needs to continue. I recommend this book to all priests and to all those wishing to gain an insight into a living rather than a moribund priesthood. It is a provocative, challenging and inspiring book.

Buy it! Talk about it! ☺



## Finding Truth

**Anthony M Maher is a Research Fellow of the Centre for Public and Contextual Theology (PACT) at Charles Sturt University. He has recently published two books. *Faith and the Political In the Post-Secular Age* and *The Forgotten Jesuit of Catholic Modernism* (2018), Fortress Press. Here are some notes on these books and an invitation to the launch of *Faith and the Political In the Post-Secular Age*.**

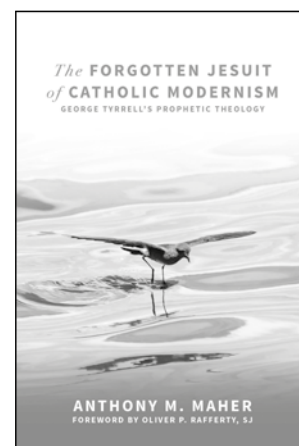
*The Forgotten Jesuit of Catholic Modernism* illustrates how George Tyrrell's theological challenge to those who would take the church out of history was never effectively refuted, either at the time or since, and that the issues Tyrrell raised are still relevant and alive in the church today. In highlighting Tyrrell's liberation of theology from dogmatism, the current work describes why he was vilified by the Roman hierarchy, expelled from the Jesuits, and eventually excommunicated. Tyrrell's Ignatian-inspired, hope-filled theology should not be forgotten, not least because it sheds further light on another courageous and prophetic Jesuit, Pope Francis. In revisiting Tyrrell's Ignatian theology, this book celebrates the promise that Vatican II presents to the future church, namely, a universal call to holiness as embraced by Pope Francis.

*With this monograph on the life, theology, and legacy of George Tyrrell, Anthony Maher fills a serious gap in the theological literature leading up to Vatican II. Tyrrell courageously sought to do theology in the complicated ecclesiastical environment between Vatican I and the "modernist" crisis of the early 20th century. It is hard not to see in Vatican II and in Pope Francis much of what Tyrrell*

*prophetically wrote and said one century before,* notes Massimo Faggioli of Villanova University.

*This is an excellent book; the first part tells the dreadfully sad story of Tyrrell's life, and his appalling treatment by the Church and (alas) the Society of Jesus; the second is a carefully crafted account of his theology (which makes you wonder what the fuss was about); part three explores his legacy and reveals how far ahead of his time he was. For he was working for a theology that made sense to ordinary people, and was playing Pope Francis' tune a century ago. His project of the 'liberation of theology' was, viewed from another angle, already a 'theology of liberation'. Anthony Maher has done an excellent job; the book is a warning of the terrible price we shall pay if we do not follow Pope Francis' leadership,* said Nicholas King SJ of Campion Hall, Oxford University.

The second book, *Faith and the Political In the Post-Secular Age*, is an ecumenical work in which the authors challenge the current polarising rise of aggressive atheism and closed-truth fundamentalisms, both religious and economic. The work is mindful that a Gospel inspired prophetic voice seeks to persuade rather than coerce,



to strike a balance between individual autonomy and the protection of the common good. Appealing to those of faith and none, written by leading scholars, yet in a conversational style that is accessible to the modern reader, the book opposes the growing cultural dominance of 'fake news' and advocates for rigorous 'truth-seeking.' Contributors include Anthony Maher, Elaine Graham, Bob Dixon, Andrew Cameron, John Warhurst, Terry Veiling, Brendan Long and Frank Brennan.

You are invited to the book launch in Canberra on Tuesday September 11th at 6: 00 pm at Canberra Chapel at the Australian Centre for Christianity & Culture, Cnr Kings Avenue & Blackall St, Barton ACT. It will be launched by Frank Brennan SJ and Bishop Stephen Pickard. ☺

## Writing new sacred texts – the Mormons are not the only ones

**The Book of Mormon is a very popular musical. How and why does it connect with a non-religious audience? Review by Peter Maher.**

The popular musical, *The Book of Mormon*, playing to packed houses across the globe, is an irreverent satire on religion in our time by the creators of *South Park* – Trey Parker, Matt Stone and Robert Lopez. They say they wrote it as a light hearted play on religious themes never suspecting it would become one of the most popular musical theatre shows of recent times. Is anyone really interested in religion anymore?

In spite of the show being clever and funny, it is filled with all-dancing, all-singing and entertaining musical theatre. The themes it addresses are all too relevant to today's monotheistic religions. Although Islam is not mentioned, the writers are really asking questions about the trajectory of the religions born of Judaism.

The Mormons are easy pickings as a form of 19<sup>th</sup> century American exceptionalism. If you believe in the exceptional value of a new community and you want to carve out a new way of living it then you need a new prophet to validate its existence as truly from God and to reconceptualise it in the new national imaginary. It needs to be enculturated and, if the dream and hope is radical enough, it needs to be documented and raised to the level of the sacred by holy texts.

To our *South Park* writers, this comes easily. They have effectively done this now for a whole generation of TV viewers creating their own critique and interpretation of the American culture, even to predicting Donald Trump becoming president – to Lisa's despair. They are used to making jokes become reality. In *The Book of Mormon* they try the reverse process – can we see the joke in reality. But it turns out to be not just a laughing matter.

If you think the show is a satire only about Mormonism, you have missed the point of the show. For the *South Park* satirists, reinterpreting theodicy and theology has as much to do with birth of Christianity and Islam as Mormonism.

Why is this show so important for the general theatre going public beyond its clever humour? I went to see it with some friends with no religious affiliation who are indeed very sceptical about all religions. In a comment after the show I heard a kind of cathartic expression of relief about its religious context. The satire had released them from the vestiges of christian

religious oppression somehow still inhabiting western culture. They knew little of Mormonism they told me but they got the jokes because they knew the feeling from their own experience of the largely academic or newsworthy brush with western religious culture.

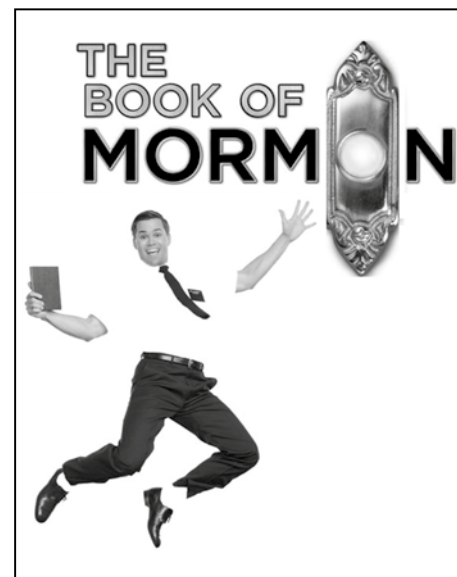
The show is a story of missionary activity in Africa. The questions of cross-cultural religious evangelisation are brought into stark relief with the misfit of a religious sacred text of 19<sup>th</sup> century rural American exceptionalism and current post colonial Uganda. The writers do not disguise the similarities with christianity and other world religions which struggle to convert people with culturally bound theologies.

While this may be considered by many as an historical problem largely addressed by modern exegesis and eisegesis and sophisticated theologies, both conservative and progressive, the *South Park* team are not so easily seceding this ground. A very telling song in the show raises the question of adapting 'beliefs' to current times playing with words like 'myth' and 'lies' and to what extent religious texts go to explain religious truths in today's world by *Making Things Up Again*, the title of a song in the musical.

For conservatives, the writers ask how can you possibly expect people to believe you in 2018 when you depend on a literal interpretation of 'religious texts', and for the progressives they ask to what extent are your religious texts normative if you change either the texts or their meaning, or conveniently leave a few verses out or, as happens in the show, just write a whole new story more amenable to the congregation in the hope of new converts. When salvation is paramount in the colonisers' mind can the story be adapted for a 'higher cause' even if the application of the 'religious truths' is skewed a little?

I wonder if the success of the show means it is touching something deep in the widening gap in western culture as we turn on the twin drivers of capitalist democracy and science, while we find all institutions failing in trust and leadership. The Mormon missionaries are so keen and confident but the shocking realities of their cross-cultural encounters cause them to question everything they believe about themselves and their culture.

This is the world we live in. The church, its leaders and followers, are caught in the



same moment. How do we respond adequately to the current reality? Denial and obfuscation are clearly not productive. While we continue the culture wars and ideological battles between conservatives and progressives, we sap the energy from the real battle. How do we reshape our beliefs and practices, not for our own sakes, but to help us encounter the deeper issues we face us humans on a vulnerable planet?

Perhaps *The Book of Mormon* provides a reminder that beyond the humour and satire, there is a perennial challenge for religionists to reform and adapt with authenticity and intelligence or perish. The real question is how we support the human project. We are neither victims nor saviours. We are disciples on a road with questioning humanity hoping to provide a place of recognition without knowing from where or when it might emerge. ☺

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# Returned to God

## BRIAN CONAGHAN SM

12/11/1931 – 02/07/2018



Brian Conaghan was born at Rozelle near Hunters Hill on 12th November 1931. His father Patrick was the ninth of thirteen children of Irish immigrant parents. His mother Delma nee Donnelly was the third child of nine children again of immigrant parents from France and England. Patrick and Delma had five children, the eldest dying of whooping cough at the age of five.

Brian was educated first by the Good Samaritan Sisters at Rozelle and then by the Christian Brothers at Lewisham. It was there that he obtained his Leaving Certificate in 1948. He joined the Society of Mary as a postulant at Toongabbie in 1949. After his Novitiate at Armidale in 1951 he returned to Toongabbie and was ordained from St Patrick's, Church Hill, in 1956.

Brian's first appointment was as Curate in Redcliffe (1957-60) in West Australia and then to West Sunshine (Melbourne). A year teaching at Burnie College (1963) and two years as Chaplain at Royal North Shore Hospital (1982-84) would be his only time out of parish ministry in 44 years. He served as either Parish Priest or Assistant at St Patrick's, Hunters Hill, St John's Wood (Brisbane), and Burnie (Tas) from 1964-79. Brian then worked "On loan to the Archdiocese of Sydney", being stationed in Liverpool, Panania (three separate occasions) and Bondi until 1996. From April 1996 until the end of 2000 he was priest-in-residence in Macquarie Fields, a part of the Diocese of Wollongong. In January 2001 he was appointed Superior of the Maryvale Community caring for the elderly members of the Society in the Australian Province.

In 2015 Brian took up residence in the Maryvale/Montbel retirement community, Hunters Hill, where he lived until moving to Aged Care facilities at Marsfield, NSW, in 2018. He died at Ryde hospital, NSW, in the early hours of Jul 02, 2018. May he rest in peace.

## PAUL COONEY SM

16/03/1953 – 05/08/2018



Paul Cooney, born 16th March, 1953, was raised the second of eight children of Ben and Joan Cooney in the New South Wales south coast town of Thirroul. After secondary school at St Paul's College, Bellambi, he entered the Marist Fathers novitiate at Armidale in 1971. Completing seminary studies at Toongabbie (NSW) and Hunters Hill (NSW), including an Arts degree at Sydney University, Paul was ordained in Wollongong in 1978.

Paul's first appointments were in secondary education, with a year at St John's College, Lismore, NSW, (1980) and Bellambi, NSW, (1981). He then began a long stint in Marist parishes: Burnie, Tasmania, (1982-84), St John's Wood / The Gap, Brisbane, (1985-86), West Sunshine, Victoria, (1987-93), and St Patrick's, Church Hill, Sydney, (1994-97 and 2000), including being parish priest at West Sunshine and St Patrick's.

After studying for a year in Dublin doing the Religious Formation Ministry Programme, Paul worked in formation for 18 months at the Marist Seminary in Auckland. In 2001 he was elected vicar-provincial and remained in that role until elected provincial at the beginning of 2007.

Paul had always been keen on sport, with his rugby league career ending abruptly in 1981 by a wayward elbow to the cheekbone while playing for his beloved Thirroul against Dapto. He then became a keen walker, especially after a triple by-pass operation in 2002. Not long after finishing a double term as provincial, Paul was appointed as Bursar-General of the Society of Mary, taking office in Rome in late 2013, and holding this position until health concerns led to his return to Australia in early 2016. His final weeks were spent in Lawrence Hargrave Hospital, Thirroul, where he died peacefully on 5th August, 2018. May he rest in well-deserved peace.

## JOSÉ-MARIA ENEDÁGUILA SJ

08/12/1934 – 20/04/2018



A very active, zealous priest, José-Maria Enedáguila died peacefully at Residential Gardens for Spanish Speaking Frail Aged in Western Sydney, aged 83, having been a Jesuit for 64 years and a priest for 51. Born in the Basque country of Spain, he entered the Preparatory Military Academy in Burgos after his schooling with a view to joining the army. There he met a Jesuit chaplain who was a pilot and who impressed him greatly. That led to a retreat, after which he joined the Castilla Province of the Society of Jesus (1953). All his formation was done in Spain. After ordination in 1966, he worked in a school, gave preached retreats and assisted the Master of Novices. He made his Solemn Profession in 1971.

In 1974, at the age of 39, José-Maria moved to Australia to become Catholic chaplain to Spanish-speaking migrants in Sydney. This was the major apostolate of his life, one that he exercised with great efficiency for 43 years until his retirement at the end of 2017. The people he ministered to were diverse – from Spain, Central and South America, the Philippines – and scattered over a wide geographical area. Beginning with very few resources, he organised the first Spanish school in Villawood (1980) and eventually established a *Misión Católica Hispana* Centre at Fairfield, which became his base. He drew on the support of a dedicated, enthusiastic group of lay people, whom he trained through the *Cursillos de Cristianad* (Christianity courses) that he introduced. He gave thirty such courses in Western Sydney, ten in Melbourne and one in Canberra. These courses have since spread to all Hispanic communities in Australia. In 1983 he began publishing a weekly bulletin for the information and formation of the Spanish-speaking community. It has continued to the present day. His pastoral ministry continued unabated until he required surgery for a brain tumour in 2017. Fortunately, he was able to attend a rousing farewell on 16 December at St Gertrude's, Smithfield, where his funeral also took place on 27 April.

Thousands benefited from José-Maria's deep spirituality and devotion to his people. They had a great affection for him. Thoroughly committed to lay formation and collaboration, he gave his all and triumphed over many difficulties. He accepted his terminal illness with moving serenity.

### REV STANLEY NORMAN HILL PE

01/02/1927 – 07/06/2018

Ordained a member of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers on 15 December 1954 by Archbishop Justin Simonds, he later commenced ministry in the Archdiocese in 1976 and was incardinated in 1980. During his time in the Archdiocese he served as Assistant Priest in the Parishes of Holy Cross, Caulfield South (1976) and Clifton Hill (1981-2000), where he served with the famous Father Frank Harmon. In August 2000 he retired to live independently in Reservoir.

One of Father Hill's primary concerns as a priest was care of the aged and infirm. When he commenced with the Archdiocese he had a desire to dedicate himself to an apostolate to senior citizens. He was mindful of those senior Catholics in transition whose loss of independence sometimes disconnected them from their former participation in parish life. He was concerned for their wellbeing and spiritual care; this marked his pastoral ministry and care of many in the parishes he served. In retirement he provided wonderful supply support to many priests and parishes.

In recent times Father Hill has been wonderfully supported by family, the Clergy Care Team, Father Thang Vu, priests and friends who have assisted this fiercely independent man. In mid-May he transferred from his home to St Bernadette's, Sunshine West where every effort was made to care for him. May he now rest in peace and rise in glory.

### JOHN JAGO SM

01/09/1932 – 17/07/2018



John Jago was born in Grafton, NSW, on 1 September 1932, the first of five children. After completing his schooling at St John's College, Lismore, he studied law at the University of Adelaide, practising in Sydney for five years.

In 1961 he entered St Peter Chanel Scholasticate, Toongabbie, where his studies in philosophy and theology took place. His novitiate was at the Marist Novitiate, Armidale, where he was professed on 2 February 1964. His ordination to the priesthood took place at St Patrick's, Church Hill, on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1967.

For three years from 1968 he studied Moral Theology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, where in 1975 he was awarded an S.T.D. for his dissertation on J.H. Newman, *Freedom of Conscience and Vatican II*.

He joined the staff of Marist College, Burnie, in 1971 and was the principal there from 1973-78. In 1979 he lectured in moral theology at the Catholic Theological College, Sydney. He was appointed provincial superior of Australia and Japan for six years from 1979. From 1985-93 he served as superior general of the Society of Mary, based in Rome.

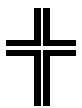
In 1994 he joined the community at St Patrick's, Church Hill, where he remained until 1999. The following year he joined the Herston community in Brisbane where he undertook retreat, reconciliation and moral advice work.

John was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2005. Because of the side effects from the cancer treatment and increasing hearing and balance problems, he retired from active ministry in 2006. In 2011 he joined the "Montbel" retirement community at Hunters Hill and in April 2018 transferred to Southern Cross Aged Care at Marsfield.

*John brought dignity and graciousness to his ministry and leadership, including throughout the years of his retirement and final illness.*

### JOHN MICHAEL WILLIAMS AM FACE

18/01/1938 – 09/05/2018



John Williams was born in Launceston, Tasmania and grew up in the working-class parish of St Finn Barr's, Invermay. He was educated by the Presentation Sisters at Invermay and later by the Christian Brothers at St Patrick's College, Launceston. He was Head Prefect and Dux of the College in 1954. One of his responsibilities during this year was to give the speech of welcome to the newly arrived Coadjutor Archbishop of Hobart, Guilford Young.

On 1 March 1955, John joined fellow Tasmanians Graeme Howard, Adrian Doyle and Terry Southerwood as well as many others from around Victorian in making the journey to Corpus Christi College, Werribee to commence his seminary studies. These students were among the first group to continue their studies at Glen Waverley. John was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Hobart at the Church of the Apostles in Launceston on 20 July 1962.

John was appointed temporarily to the Cathedral in Hobart, then spent a few years as an assistant at Stanley (Circular Head). This was followed by a stint at Devonport until in 1967 when he was called to Hobart to be involved more closely in the Church's administration, firstly at the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau (now CatholicCare) and then in Catholic Education, where he served as Director from 1972 – 1994. Towards the end of his time in Catholic Education, John took on the administration of the parish of Lenah Valley. He resigned a Director in 1994 and continued his ministry in the parishes of Lindisfarne and New Town.

John Williams made an inestimable contribution to Catholic Education in Australia. As an inaugural member and then as Chair of the National Catholic Education Commission (1979 -1985) he was heavily involved in the debate over State Aid. Friend and foe alike respected him because of his sharpness of mind, his integrity and his profound sense of justice.

## RETURNED TO GOD

When preaching in characteristic style at the Hobart Jubilarians' Mass in 1987, Archbishop Guilford Young described John Williams in these words: *He has been gifted with a mind like a razor, who feels deeply but hates to show it. He detests injustice and has been and is so often a corrective irritant to minds like mine. That this man of these qualities could have given me, a man so different, a loyalty and obedience so true across 25 years, is a measure of the strength of his faith. It has been his lot to play a part in one of the most complex, demanding, exhausting and highest of the Church's services to humanity. Fr Williams possesses an intellectual grasp and comprehension allied to more than ordinary capacity to negotiate and manoeuvre, albeit with an appreciation of the good and the true in the position of an opponent, arising from his keen sense of justice and honesty.*

John's only desire was to give his all as a priest. He has done this for nearly 56 years. He was a deeply loved and admired brother, uncle, cousin and friend whose life as a priest made a difference to countless people around Tasmania and across the nation.

### JOE WILSON OP

03/01/1929 – 16/03/2018



Dominican Father James Joseph Wilson (Joe) died peacefully aged 89 years at Nazareth Nursing House, Wynnum. Joe was the only and beloved child of James and Anne Wilson and was born in Wycheproof, Victoria.

Joe was ordained at St. Dominic's Church, Camberwell, Victoria on 19 December 1953. Sixty years later on the occasion of Joe's Diamond Jubilee, he expressed his gratefulness to God for all God's graces and to quote Joe's words "what can I give back to the Lord for all that I was given" – was the message Joe conveyed to all who joined him on that special day.

Joe lived his priestly life with faithfulness, never wavering from the Truth of God's word. The Bible was his constant companion. Joe lived the 'Joy of the Gospels' and being led by the Holy Spirit was exceptionally cheerful and good natured. As a man of deep prayer and great faith, many were drawn to Joe. Even when Joe was at the nursing home, many came to Joe seeking his spiritual guidance and because of his charitable nature were deeply loved and respected as a confessor and as a friend. Many simply enjoyed his quotes from Shakespeare and his many amusing stories.

Joe gave 65 years of his priestly life to the Church. At Joe's requiem Mass held at Our Lady of Graces, Brisbane where fellow Dominican Fr Maurice Keating spoke lovingly of Joe "Joe followed St. Dominic in the characteristic apostolic life of the order by passing onto others his contemplative insights ("contemplate aliis tradere"). With his many abilities, Joe was truly a renaissance man, a Latin scholar, an itinerant preacher Australia wide and overseas, a much loved teacher, a scripture guide, a novice master, chaplain to the Dominican Laity, organiser of theology discussion groups, Legion of Mary and a religious superior. Foremost among Joe's qualities was his priestly care. One could differ with Joe and argue but he never got angry, he was person-centered and always had time for everyone..."

After 65 years of faithful and loving service, Joe now reaps his rewards with God and enjoys eternal bliss!

### JOHN FRANCIS VAN SUYLEN

10/12/1939 – 05/08/2018

John Francis Van Suylen was ordained at St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne on 24 July 1965. Serving at St Patrick's Cathedral after his ordination, John was then appointed Assistant Priest at the parishes of Deepdene (1966), Bentleigh (1969), St Albans (1972), Mt Waverley (1974), Fawkner (1976) and Boronia (1978). He was appointed the first Parish Priest at Wantirna (1980) and then appointed Assistant Priest at Ashburton parish (1995).

When challenges came his way, he remained steadfastly committed to his priesthood and his service to the people of God, especially in the parish of Mitcham – Vermont South. He was very grateful for the support he received.

The Pontifical Requiem Mass was celebrated on Monday, 13 August 2018 at St Simon's Church, Rowville.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

#### Returned to the Father but no obit received. We hold them in prayer.

† Lawrence Ayoub (BSO Melkite Eparchy).....	30/05/2018
† George Connolly (Archdiocese of Sydney).....	06/08/2018
† John Egan (Archdiocese of Brisbane).....	13/06/2018
† Neville Faulkner (Diocese of Bunbury).....	17/07/2018
† Douglas Smith (MSC Missionaries of the Sacred Heart).....	07/06/2018
† Paul Ryan (Archdiocese of Sydney).....	23/07/2018

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