



Quarterly magazine of the National Council of Priests of Australia

The Swag

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REGULARS

From the NCP Chairman	3
Editorial	4
News	40-42
Letters to the Editor	42-43
Reviews	44-47
Returned to God	48-50

FEATURES

Melbourne parishes challenge Plenary Council's process	5
Chittister, censorship and an adult church	6
Inspiring week for retired priest	7
Our Church or our museum?	8-11
Ex Opere Operato... or not?	12
The Third Australian Plenary Council 3-10 September, 1905	13-16
Is religious freedom code for a licence to discriminate?	16-17
Uncovering gender inequality in my church	18-19
Missing the Catholic bus	19-20
Reforming Catholic sexual theology	20-22
Where are the Catholic LGBT role models for students in Catholic schools?	22-23
Integrating sexuality essential to healthy emotional life	23-24
My friendship with Les Murray and Valerie	25
A matter of style	26-27
Muslim intellectuals welcome 'unprecedented' joint text with Catholics	28
Parish Pastoral Councils – part of the solution?	29
Does the Plenary Council offer an opportunity?	30-31
How the Eucharist evolved	32-35
Rev Dr Rice proves you're never too old to learn	35-36
Rainbow Catholics meet in Chicago	36-37
And yet we dance on, basking in God's loving gaze	38
A possible Australian Church contribution	38-39

NCP CONTACTS



Chairman

Rev Patrick Sykes
103 Fernleigh Road
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
P: (02) 6925 2111
chairman@ncp.catholic.org.au



Secretary

Rev Mark Freeman
44 Margaret Street
Launceston TAS 7250
P: (03) 6331 4377
secretary@ncp.catholic.org.au



Treasurer

Rev Brian Mathews
Hutchison Street
Coober Pedy SA 5723
P: (08) 8672 5011
treasurer@ncp.catholic.org.au



Committee

Rev Boni Buahendri SVD
100 Albion Road
Box Hill VIC 3128
P: (03) 9890 0065
committee1@ncp.catholic.org.au



Committee

Rev Gregory Barker
33 Lake Street
Forster NSW 2428
P: (02) 6554 6304
committee2@ncp.catholic.org.au



Editor

Rev Peter Maher
Unit 30, 63-69 Bonar Street
Arncliffe NSW 2205
P: 0439 460 779
editor@theswag.org.au



Executive Officer

Ms Sally Heath
sally.heath@ncp.catholic.org.au



Administrative Officer

Mrs Christine Moore
christine.moore@ncp.catholic.org.au



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples are respectfully advised that this publication may contain the words, names, images and/or descriptions of people who have passed away.

NCP NATIONAL OFFICE

PO Box 295, Belmont VIC 3216
74 Fryers Rd, Belmont VIC 3216
P: (03) 5244 3680
national.office@ncp.catholic.org.au
www.nationalcouncilofpriests.com.au
www.theswag.org.au
www.catholicdirectory.com.au

ALL SUBMISSIONS TO:

E: editor@theswag.org.au

ALL ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES:

E: national.office@ncp.catholic.org.au

DESIGN

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ABOUT THE NCP

The National Council of Priests (NCP) is an Australia-wide organisation of Catholic Clergy (Bishops, Priests & Deacons) and Associate Members (Lay, Religious & Seminarians) who join together to support each other in their ministry in the Church. Founded in 1970 in the Spirit of Vatican II, the NCP is committed to the fraternity and further education of clergy and to representing clergy in the public forum. *The Swag* is published quarterly (March, June, September & December) by the National Council of Priests of Australia as a service to Catholic clergy of Australia, and through them to the Church and the wider community. Non-members and interested lay people are most welcome to subscribe.

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Paddy Sykes



Greetings from a very chilly and dry Riverina as we move towards the end of Winter. Many parts of Australia are still in drought and communities are facing tough times ahead. Let us keep them in our prayers. The middle six months of the year is when a power of work is done in parishes across Australia – First Eucharist and Confirmation ceremonies are celebrated in many parishes at this time of year. Parish schools, if you are lucky to have one (or more), are a vital part of the parish and a rich vein for evangelisation of our school parents. With all this busyness in mind, I trust that you have made plans for your annual retreat and vacation to recharge your batteries for the never-ending tasks and surprises of priestly life.

NCP Executive

As you will have seen and read elsewhere, two of our long serving NCP committee members are each completing a six year term on the Executive at the end of this year. We sincerely thank Mark Freeman and Boni Buahendri SVD for the contribution they have made to the life of NCP. Their departure necessitates that we elect two more members to fill their positions. Discernment is a key word and activity emerging from the Plenary Council 2020 process. I ask you to discern for yourself or another member (active or retired) the possibility of playing a more active role in our organisation as a member of the NCP Executive so that we are able to continue to carry out the work of and for our members. Nominations close at midnight 30 September and Nomination Forms are available from the National Office.

Support of Clergy

Bishops and leaders of religious congregations have long recognised the need for support

of clergy in their ministry. The National and Diocesan Clergy Life and Ministry representatives and other groups provide necessary support to sustain and develop the clergy so that they can operate at their optimum capacity. One area that has been previously discussed in *The Swag* and other forums, is the support provided to clergy who have had accusations brought against them that have required them to be stood down from ministry. Recently, a priest who has been stood down and who has felt unsupported after this event caused me to ask the question again. How can we, bishops and clergy together, support fellow members of the clergy with the ongoing pastoral, financial and spiritual support needed to confront and process these allegations? One would hope that they would have family, friends or clergy who can support them ... but what if they don't? I would be glad to hear what people think the NCP could do to support our fellow members who are in this potentially isolated situation. If you do know a member of the clergy in this situation, I encourage you to contact them to offer them your support.

Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy Convention (ACCC)

From 8-12 July, I attended the ACCC Convention as your NCP Chairman. The Convention was held in the Catholic Parish of Keilor Downs in the Melbourne Archdiocese where Charlie Portelli, the parish priest, provided the parish church and other facilities for this annual gathering. I was welcomed to the Convention and the associated liturgies. The presenters provided much to think about especially in relation to the legislative threat to the Seal of Confession and the recent Dying with Dignity Bill introduced into law in Victoria. When I became the NCP Chairman, one of my goals was to reach out to the ACCC and foster dialogue between the executive of the two organisations which represent the majority of priests in Australia. At the ACCC AGM a motion was carried that the Executive of the ACCC liaise with the Executive of the NCP to resume dialogue into the future.

Plenary Council 2020

The work of the Plenary Council 2020 has moved to the next stage of its maturation. An enormous number of individuals (222,000) and groups (17,457) submitted their response to the question 'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this present time?' The Plenary Council website is where you will find a lot of useful

information <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/reports/>. To paraphrase the words of Archbishop Costelloe, the task ahead of us is 'how to capture the voice of the Holy Spirit within the passionate, hopeful but sometimes contradictory voices of God's people'. It is up to we priests to encourage everyone – Catholics and non-Catholics alike – to accept the invitation of the Catholic Bishops to participate in this ground-breaking process in the Australian Catholic Church. The work of the Plenary Council is not over yet and there is a wide variety of opinions about the validity of the process and the possible outcomes. If we are nothing else, we are a church of hope and so as priests we must gather up all our people and invite them to be part of this dynamic process. The Plenary Discernment process gives our church a great opportunity to depth the spirituality of the sons and daughters of God in the church in Australia. I wish you every blessing and success in your Plenary Council endeavours.

Shalom,
Paddy. ☺

NCP Elections

Mark Freeman and Boni Buahendri SVD will each complete six years on the committee at the end of 2019.

Nominations are hereby called for two committee members.

The successful candidates must be available to attend the annual face to face meeting at the National Office in Belmont (Geelong) –

Tuesday 11 February and
Wednesday 12 February 2020.

*See page 24 for
more details.*



Finding the invisible God in the visible



I recently attended a workshop on Pastoral Supervision facilitated by Michael Paterson, Director Institute of Pastoral Supervision & Reflective Practice,

Edinburgh, Scotland. Michael invited us to consider the way we might do theological reflection in pastoral supervision. The role of theological reflection is to broaden the conversation so the supervisee might appreciate his or her own meaning making process and play in this field for a while to see what might emerge to support future reflection and action.

The question arises how is this theological and how is it reflection? Theological reflection is often understood as bringing to a situation or an event a theological lens such as scripture, doctrine or a spiritual image or saying. Paterson suggests that in pastoral supervision, theological reflection is more about finding, articulating and discovering the divine in the pastoral experience. The revelation of the sacred and the divine is found precisely in the experience – in the passion and the pain.

This incarnational method is based in the tradition of practical theology which begins from experience. In pastoral supervision it is finding in the ministry experience and in the minister, the sacred, the way meaning

is made and unmade, that brings insight and an invitation to be more fruitful in service of the people with whom the minister ministers.

Somehow the process of reflecting on the past, in the present, for the sake of the future means widening the way we see who we are in ministry and discerning the God-presence in the person or event taking place in our work and life.

It is rendering visible that which is invisible or seen darkly. It is noticing the spark or irritant in ministry where the incarnate God is present. It is finding life and love in the myriad of experiences that are our daily lives. It is recognising community, vulnerability, compassion, healing, forgiveness and joy in moments where these are not yet visible.

The theology we are more used to is systematic or doctrinal or church teaching. That kind of theology can be helpful but seems to mostly remain discussion about what is 'true' or 'right' or 'should be done'. It is often discussion *about* others not *with* others. If the invisible God is revealed and rendered visible in creation and if we expect experience to be shot through with the sacred and with beauty, then we had better be careful who and what we render invisible, because we deny ourselves the experience of the sacred and the God of history being revealed before our eyes.

The Plenary Council 2020, the Royal Commission findings and recommendations, the role of women, the silent majority in the pews, church governance, the LGBTIQ

voice, clericalism and more are topics that fill the pages of this edition of *The Swag*. They are there because readers and contributors are seeking to amplify the still small voice in their own humanity and in the cry of the voiceless and those rendered invisible, that the sacred might be revealed in the exploration.

An example of the alternative way of doing theology is seen in the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education recently published document entitled *Male and Female He Created Them: Toward a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*. This document critiqued 'gender ideology' without ever asking the question what it is and why it needs refuting. It's a made-up idea to suggest that someone or group is trying to impose an idea to corrupt people's minds causing them to become transgender or intersex. Under the guise of teaching theology, the author takes as read the teaching that only heteronormativity is 'ordered' – and therefore of God. LGBTIQ people and their experience is silenced because it is disordered. The corollary is that LGBTIQ people must become that way by someone's fault because all that God has made is good. The blaming and shaming of LGBTIQ people, their families and allies is necessary. They have to find someone to blame for distorting God's ordained heteronormativity. They completely ignore the science, but worse, they silence the voice of those who are LGBTIQ and their story which carries the sacred revelation of who God is. If all reality is shot through with the divine, and gender ideology is based on bad theology, wrong church teaching and ignoring science, anthropology and psychology, then we risk another Galileo episode. However, the stakes are high. It's not just that the church is denying itself the graced voice of LGBTIQ people and the gifts God wishes to endow on us through them, but we impose a self-loathing and torture upon our LGBTIQ siblings from faith backgrounds that counts them among the most likely to self-harm in our society.

Authors of church documents would do well to listen for the voice of God in the other before pontificating life sapping 'teaching' about them. Where is the evidence that the writers of *Male and female He made them* listened to one story of the people about who they spoke or of their families or friends?

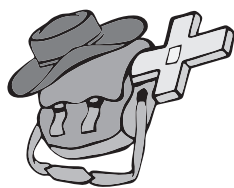
We must not damage people in the name of church teaching. Just as sad however, is that in silencing the other, we also silence God arriving in our midst. ☺

NCP Bursaries 2020

Bursaries are offered to members (financial for 5+ years as per NCP policy) to assist with further study in Australia or overseas.

Application forms are available at: nationalcouncilofpriests.com.au or by contacting the National Office.

Bursary applications will be addressed at the February 2020 Executive Meeting.



The Swag Summer Edition

Closing date for letters and articles Monday 28 October 2019.

Please email submissions for consideration to: editor@theswag.org.au

Articles: 700 words
Major Features: 1,400 words.

Melbourne parishes challenge Plenary Council's process

When 26 Melbourne parishes got together to explore the questions raised by the Plenary Council, they decided they wanted to be more proactive and produced a statement to try to advance the decisions of the *sensus fidei*. The authors of the Joint Statement believe that the more a united front is voiced the more effective it is. The more often it is put to the Plenary Council team and bishops, the more likely it is that the voice of the many voices now unheard will be heard. You can read more about this statement and add your comments at: senseofthefaithful.org.au

Joint Statement

1. Address the Sexual Abuse Crisis.

All Catholic institutions with possible historical sex abuse complaints should immediately join the national redress system. A trauma-informed treatment approach that is both competent and adequate is needed to assist the survivors. The Church must provide an ongoing ministry of support to victims/survivors of clerical child sexual abuse and their families, and also to the many fine priests who have faithfully served the People of God.

2. Change the Nature of the Plenary Council.

If the Council is not seen as genuinely representative of the Church it will fail. A majority of the delegates to the Council should be laypeople and priests working in parishes, with at least half of these women. Voting must be open and transparent, with the 'sense of the faithful' revealed by decision-making processes involving all those attending.

3. Encourage an Open and Inclusive Church.

Many are currently excluded from full participation in the life of the Church. These groups include women,

the LGBTIQ communities and those divorced and remarried. The Council must commit to full inclusion of these groups. It must also reach out and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who hold a unique position in Australian society.

4. Promote Servant Leadership for a Humble Church.

A new leadership model is needed. This requires dismantling the dominant male celibate club, banishing the trappings of power and reshaping the training of priests. All new priests need regular mentoring and support to help them develop servant leadership.

5. Change the Composition of the Priesthood.

Rather than relying on overseas priests and the clustering of parishes under one priest, immediate action is needed on widening access to the priesthood. We support optional celibacy for priests, re-admitting former priests now married, beginning the ordination of women as deacons and endorsing the principle of women priests.

6. Implement New Governance Changes.

The Council must instigate a move to a new governance structure, suitable for

the People of God. Lay men and women should be involved at all levels, with transparent and accountable structures throughout the Church. All leaders should be subject to regular review.

7. Make the Liturgy More Relevant.

The Council should move to make the liturgy more relevant for a truly synodal church, for example by reforming the language used, reinstating the Third Rite of Reconciliation and removing the restrictions on attending the sacraments. As Pope Francis has said, the Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect but nourishment for the weak.

8. Renew our Focus on the Poor and Marginalised.

The Council should set out to revitalise and extend the important work for the poor and marginalised that the Australian Church has done over the past 150 years. We need to build on past achievements to increase our outward-facing focus, reaching out to asylum seekers, the vulnerable and the disadvantaged.

9. Protect and Restore the Earth.

The Australian Church has failed to respond adequately to climate change and the destruction of the earth more generally. We urge the Council to express a new approach to caring for the Earth, the environment and our common home. We call on the Council to lead strongly and proudly on issues raised in *Laudato si'*, and to call for specific actions within the Church and Australian society to answer this powerful plea from Pope Francis. ☺



Chittister, censorship and an adult church

PATTY FAWKNER SGS

Patty Fawkner SGS, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, asks whether censorship in the Catholic Church underestimates the intelligence and maturity of the faithful. This article was first published in the July 2019 edition of *The Good Oil*, the e-magazine of the Good Samaritan Sisters www.goodsams.org.au.



It was decades ago, but I remember the day and the conversation well. It was a Monday morning and I was returning to work at a Catholic adult education organisation after a short break. I was confronted with the news that, during my absence, our newly appointed director had removed copies of Paul Collins' book, *Papal Power*, from the organisation's bookstore.

Nominally, I was the deputy director and when I asked "Why?" was told "Because it only tells one side of the story". To which I quickly retorted, "Well, wouldn't the adult thing be to supply other books that told a different side?"

Till then, "Towards an Adult Church" was the mantra of all that we did within that organisation. The phrase encapsulated our vision and guided both content and process of our programs. The words certainly had been the "hook" for my joining the organisation.

Fast forward 23 years and I immediately recalled this event when news broke that an invitation to Sister Joan Chittister OSB to be a keynote speaker at the 2020 National Catholic Education Conference in Melbourne had subsequently been withdrawn.

'While there's some contention over whether a formal invitation was made, Joan believes that she was invited and has received no reason for the snub. This is in spite of Recommendation 16.7 of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* which calls for Church

authorities to conduct a review of Church structures in relation to issues of transparency.

It is reminiscent of the 2018 ban imposed by the Hobart Archbishop on Father Frank Brennan SJ, precluding him from speaking at a conference on marriage equality.

It occurs to me that these three actions are anything but "adult" and, not only say something about the views some Church leaders' hold about some Catholic religious and clergy, they say something more about their views of us, "the faithful".

When we are denied information and when perspectives are censored, we are treated like children. Is it that we are neither intelligent enough nor mature enough to weigh different opinions and test these against our own conscience, experience and faith?

On a recent visit to Rome I was privileged to engage in an audience with Pope Francis as part of the Assembly of UISG, the international union of leaders of Catholic women's religious congregations. "Let's have a conversation," the Pope said as he discarded his prepared talk.

Among other things, Pope Francis encouraged the 850 leaders not to be afraid of dialogue either within or beyond the Church. He practised what he preached. He invited spontaneous questions from the audience and no topic was deemed to be 'out of bounds'. My heart warmed as I observed Francis listen intently and ask clarifying questions to ensure he understood the intent of the question. He responded with deep respect, openness, warmth and a refreshing blend of seriousness and humour.

Am I naïve in believing that Pope Francis would be open to dialogue with Joan Chittister? I wonder where the fear about us hearing Joan comes from? Here we have an 83-year-old Benedictine Sister who has effectively communicated the key message of the Gospel for 50 years and counting. Are we afraid that she would contaminate the faith of believers? In an engaging biography, the highly respected *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)* journalist, Tom Roberts recounts testimonies from numerous Catholics who say Joan has "has kept me in the Church".

Joan Chittister is on record saying that the ordination of women is not her main concern; but empowering and enabling women to be heard and to contribute their God-given gifts to the Church, is certainly up there with her passion for an open, transparent and accountable Church. I would say, an adult Church. With her media appearances, public lectures, 50 books, and her *Monasteries of the Heart* virtual community of nearly 20,000 members worldwide, it seems that Chittister is answering some hunger within the Catholic faithful.

She insists that social justice is not peripheral to the Gospel and that the Church's spiritual tradition, including her own Benedictine spiritual tradition, has insights and resources aplenty for those who wish to make meaning of, and respond to, the signs of the times.

People respond to Joan Chittister because she never speaks down to them, rather she invites them to join her in grappling with the truth. She is, I believe, one of the great prophets of our time.

It is interesting – and concerning – to note that, while the story of the Melbourne ban on Chittister was of keen interest to *The New York Times*, *NCR* and the prestigious UK publication, *The Tablet*, as far as I am aware, no Australian diocesan Catholic publication has reported the story. Is the story not seen to be newsworthy by Catholic editors or is it indicative of further censorship?

Perhaps my naivety is on display yet again, but I choose to see two signs of hope. The first is that we have been promised that the 2020 Plenary Council process will be characterised by mutual dialogue and communal discernment. May this be so.

Then, in a letter sent to the people and pastors of Sydney during the Australian Bishops' *Ad Limina* visit to Rome, Archbishop of Sydney Anthony Fisher OP weighed into the Israel Folau controversy. Archbishop Fisher disagreed with the treatment given to Folau "for daring to express unfashionable religious views". The Archbishop continued, "The Australia we all know and love has, for the most part, been good at giving people the space to believe different things, to express them in free speech, to try to persuade others of their beliefs, and to practice what they preach." One hopes that the freedoms advocated for Folau be also extended to Joan Chittister. This would certainly help us move towards an adult Church. ☪

Inspiring week for retired priest

LEN THOMAS

Melbourne priest Fr Len Thomas, who retired nine years ago, explores his most spirit-filled wonderful week of retirement.



On Sunday May 19, the Anglican Brotherhood of St Laurence invited 330 volunteers, including myself, and Charity Sister Margaret, to a Garden Party at Melbourne Town Hall. We two Catholics qualify as volunteers because Sr. Margaret visits Sambell Lodge Anglican nursing home weekly and I lead Catholic Mass there monthly.

The female master of ceremonies at the garden party named about 40 activities and places of the Brotherhood in and out of Melbourne and asked the different groups to stand as we all applauded in a spirit of Christian and ecumenical camaraderie. Town Hall staff and waiters enhanced the spirit with generous smiles and great service.

Two days later on Tuesday May 21, at a monthly lunch at a North Melbourne hotel I was with Corpus Christi Guys, men who trained for priesthood at Corpus Christi College, Werribee, Glen Waverley, Clayton, and who have been gathering for 40 years in friendship. Most did not continue as

ordained priests, but share lives and experiences now as teachers, lawyers, publicists, businessmen, and in many other professions. Most have married.

They have just launched a profound and meaningful 450-page book: *BYWAYS, Memories Of A Catholic Seminary*.

Thursday May 23 was the annual gathering of about 50 supporters of the Young Christian Workers Phillip Island camp committee, led by Chris Dixon, of West Ivanhoe. The beachside camp for 70 years has provided short holidays for young people of Melbourne parish youth groups, the YMCA, and others.

This year's guest speaker was Kevin McMahon, a St Vincent de Paul leader, who highlighted the challenges nowadays of welfare promotion. The sense of Christian service was palpable among the YCW veterans.

On Saturday May 25, with Fr Terry Yard of Hobart, a fellow student at Corpus Christie College for eight years, I attended the interstate L'Arche conference of 70 people, mostly intellectually disabled and their friends at St John's educational centre, East Melbourne. Worldwide founder John Vanier died in May, and his memory of gathering people in homes, in prayer, and in friendship, created the L'Arche movement. Again, I was experiencing first-hand an outreach of deep Christian peace and love.

Fr Terry helped begin three L'Arche homes in Hobart, and often stays at a L'Arche home when travelling on holidays. There are two such homes in Melbourne archdiocese. Archbishop Comensoli led Mass, after an inspiring joyful lay-led sharing session which showed how Christian love can break down fears and tensions and fulfil peoples' lives and struggles.

Later on, that Saturday May 25, I attended an 80th birthday afternoon of my cousin Denise at a home in leafy Mont Albert, and discovered grand-nephews, grand-nieces, their partners and other relatives whom I hardly knew. They swept me up with their friendship and care for each other and for the elderly.

On Saturday night, Fr Wayne Edwards asked me to lead his West Heidelberg parish Mass with the scriptural theme of

Peace and Peace-making. My week's experience made it easy to preach the weekend Gospel message about Peace-bearers. Even though I had lost my homily notes during the afternoon, the week with spirited communities informed me.

But there was more. Melbourne's Jewish-Catholic dialogue committee met at 7pm on Sunday May 26, at Caulfield synagogue hall. With Fr Wayne, several Sion Sisters and Sisters of Charity and many Catholic supporters, we dined and were entertained by Jewish people, and rabbis, and Catholic people who have come to know the other's faith.

Again, a generous spirit and a real willingness to bring about Peace in Melbourne and our world. Archbishop Peter Comensoli, backed by Bishop Mark Edwards, and by Jewish and Catholic inter-faith personnel, shared their lives and the Godly spirit.

It was a most spiritual and memorable week for this retired 83-year-old after 54 years priestly life in Melbourne archdiocese. ☪



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Our Church or our museum? Contributing to a confident, humble, listening and questioning church

FRANK BRENNAN SJ AO

Frank Brennan SJ AO discusses issues faced today at a meeting of *Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn* held at Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Canberra on June 26, 2019. This is an edited text. Full text at <https://jesuit.org.au/contributing-confident-humble-listening-questioning-church-pt-1/> and <https://jesuit.org.au/contributing-confident-humble-listening-questioning-church-pt-2/> Listen to full speech at <https://soundcloud.com/frank-brennan-6/address-to-concerned-catholics-canberra-goulburn>



Making the Eucharist more readily available to the hungry

I note that it is now 50 years ago that Karl Rahner when addressing the clergy of the Archdiocese of Venice said: *On the basis of the New Testament and the doctrinal nature of the priesthood we can however conceive of the priestly leader of a community in quite different terms. It is true that for the due exercise of his office he needs the approval of the leader of a wider regional church called a bishop, who for his part must once more live in union and harmony with the universal Church and so with the pope. This basic approval granted by the individual leader of the community is granted by the sacramental laying on of hands, which certainly in its turn requires specific prior conditions in the individual to be ordained. But the more integrated an individual community was from within itself, ie. from below, in terms of faith, communal Christian love, the energy of neighbourly love, and common responsibility for the world, the more it would in a true sense have the right to present from within itself an individual Christian known to it, living with it, integrated within it for the office of leadership, a Christian who had the necessary qualities for this position of priestly leadership and who would be recognised as such a leader by the sacramental laying on of hands on the part of the authorised bishop. Perhaps it will come about that the lack of priests which is becoming ever greater will compel us to admit the need for priests of this special kind and to allow them to be ordained, priests who come from the specific community concerned and 'from below.'*

According women their place at the Table

Pope Francis wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, *The reservation of the priesthood to males, as a sign of Christ the Spouse who gives himself in the Eucharist, is not a question open to discussion, but it can prove especially divisive if sacramental power is too closely identified with power in general.* Surely it must be even more divisive if those who reserve to themselves sacramental power determine that they alone can determine who has access to that power and legislate that the matter is not open for discussion. Given that the power to determine the teaching of the magisterium and the provisions of canon law is not a sacramental power, is there not a need to include women in the decision that the question is not open to discussion and in the contemporary quest for an answer to the question? Francis's position on this may be politic for the moment within the Vatican which has had a longtime preoccupation with shutting down the discussion, but the position is incoherent.

No one doubts the pastoral sensitivity of Pope Francis. But the Church will continue to suffer for as long as it does not engage in open, ongoing discussion and education about this issue. The official position is no longer comprehensible to most people of good will, and not even those at the very top of the hierarchy have a willingness or capacity to explain it.

The claim that the matter 'is not a question open to discussion' cannot be maintained unless sacramental power also includes the power to determine theology and the power to determine canon law. Ultimately the Pope's claim must be that only those possessed of sacramental power can determine the magisterium and canon law. Conceding for the moment the historic exclusion of women from the sacramental power of presidency at Eucharist, we need to determine if 'the possible role of women in decision-making in different areas of the Church's life' could include the power to

contribute to theological discussion and the shaping of the magisterium and to canonical discussion about sanctions for participating in theological discussion on set topics such as the ordination of women. As Francis says, 'Demands that the legitimate rights of women be respected, based on the firm conviction that men and women are equal in dignity, present the Church with profound and challenging questions which cannot be lightly evaded.'

Handing on the Faith and Church Practice/Allegiance to our children

This evening, I want to suggest that even with changes to governance and participation, our Church remains at a cross roads between life and death, between relevance and irrelevance, between a Church and a museum in our post-modern world. After the recent Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, Pope Francis wrote in *In Christus Vivit*, 'A Church always on the defensive, which loses her humility and stops listening to others, which leaves no room for questions, loses her youth and turns into a museum.'

I know that many of you persevere, attending events such as this, wondering: how in God's name can we make our Christian faith and our Catholic practice and heritage translatable, communicable, and attractive to our children and grandchildren? We no longer live in a society surrounded by people, most of whom are believers. Some of the best people we know are not. Some of the most outstanding leaders wrestling with the moral, political and economic questions of the Age find little if any sustenance in religious faith. In fact, religious faith is seen to be antithetical to the moral sense of the age, whether it be equal rights for all regardless of their sexual orientation or care for the planet with its burgeoning human population.

In the wake of the sexual abuse crisis, why bother with the Church? In the wake of the Church's ongoing failure to give women their place at the table, why persevere with the Church? In the wake of the Church's wrong turn 50 years ago on the issue of birth control, why expect that the Church will in our lifetime play catch-up with the social mores of those who think the strident utterances of a group of celibate men ring hollow given the prevalence of child sexual abuse by those in the ranks of those supposedly

celibate men at the very time that *Humanae Vitae* was promulgated and enforced, requiring that all future bishops sign up to it, without any corresponding requirement that they sign up, for example, to John XXIII's insistence on adequate protection of human rights in all societies? Yes, Paul VI taught: 'each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life'. But five years earlier, John XXIII taught that there were three demands for the juridical structure of any state:

The first is this: that a clear and precisely worded charter of fundamental human rights be formulated and incorporated into the State's general constitutions.

Secondly, each State must have a public constitution, couched in juridical terms, laying down clear rules relating to the designation of public officials, their reciprocal relations, spheres of competence and prescribed methods of operation.

The final demand is that relations between citizens and public authorities be described in terms of rights and duties. It must be clearly laid down that the principal function of public authorities is to recognize, respect, co-ordinate, safeguard and promote citizens' rights and duties.

I'm not saying that John XXIII was necessarily right, nor that Paul VI was absolutely wrong. But I am saying that each published an encyclical which was an invitation to dialogue, an invitation to reflect on contemporary experience in the light of tradition.

There are many bishops who subscribe to Paul VI's dictum on birth control but who have no time for John XXIII's views on human rights and their best means of protection. I know that many Catholics would continue to distinguish the natural law definitions such as those contained in *Humanae Vitae* from the more contingent prescriptions contained in *Pacem in Terris*. But when the natural law is not self-evident or coherent to many of those naturally engaged in sexual relations, it is time to call a halt to pontifical pronouncements which purport to be ultimately definitive exceptionless norms.

One of the great things about being Catholic is that one is part of a Church community with an authority structure in place to formulate teachings which can assist all the faithful to discern what it is that God is asking of them, and this can be done by drawing upon the wealth of the tradition and the competence of the present community of scholars and leaders. But it must always be an invitation to

dialogue. It must always be a call to form and inform one's conscience, and to that conscience be true.

Committing to dialogue

Just last Friday when addressing a group of theologians, Pope Francis said, *Theologians have the task of encouraging ever anew the encounter of cultures with the sources of Revelation and Tradition. The ancient edifices of thought, the great theological syntheses of the past are mines of theological wisdom, but they cannot be applied mechanically to current questions. One should treasure them to look for new paths.* He repeated his observation from *Exsultate et Gaudete* that *spiritual discernment does not exclude existential, psychological, sociological or moral insights drawn from the human sciences. At the same time, it transcends them. Nor are the Church's sound norms sufficient. We should always remember that discernment is a grace, a gift.* Whether the issue be birth control, how best to protect human rights or how best to protect the planet, the Church with its tradition and authority provides us with very sound norms. But these are not sufficient.

We need to listen, question, and then discern in the light of people's lived experience and in the light of new insights gained through the sciences. Francis leaves us in no doubt when we hear him telling theologians: 'I studied in the period of decadent theology, decadent scholasticism, the age of the manuals. We used to joke that all the theses in theology could be proved by the following syllogism. First, things appear this way. Second, Catholicism is always right. Third, Ergo... In other words, a defensive, apologetic theology shut in a manual. We used to joke about it, but that was what we were presented with in that period of decadent scholasticism.' Those days are over, or at least, they should be.

As Catholics, we are also able to participate in the key events of life with sacramental expression, liturgy and words which are sufficiently shared and known to allow us to give expression to the fulness of the human reality and a faith-filled reflection on that reality.

As our churches have emptied and as young people have felt the pull of neither obligation nor attraction, we all know the absence of these sharings. We are all now well used to attending funerals and weddings where God does not get a look in. And no matter what the grandeur, mystery or eloquence, we feel that there is something missing...

Your children and your grandchildren look at you and our Church today and they ask: what difference does faith really make in your life? How does your religious practice really change your life? How does your religious belief really change your understanding of yourself and our world? Where's the value-add? Where's the added hope, joy, and glory? Where's the added capacity to confront sadness, evil, suffering, and death?

Even if up and coming generations are to believe in Jesus of Nazareth, why the need to be active members of a Church which espouses tradition and authority especially when as a social institution, the Church has been shown to be ill adapted to so many of the changes in the modern world?

Keeping the ship afloat

... Nowadays, many of us see that the ship [the church] is full of holes. Could it be that it is sinking? And many, especially the young, wonder about the need for any ship, boat or even a tub? Why not simply believe what one chooses and on one's own, letting a thousand flowers bloom, floating alone on the open seas, clinging to the occasional piece of driftwood should it be to hand in choppy waters, while happily floating unencumbered when the sea is calm and one is close to port?

Those of us who remain Catholic, and who espouse our faith, our doctrine and our practice as a commendable way of life do so because we just don't see how we can live a complete life on our own, following our own star unaccompanied by the community of saints who went before and unaccompanied by the community of believers with us now. Gifted with the tradition and with the authority of the Church, we believe that we can be more attentive to all possibilities and more attuned to truth and to the poor. We see the value in being on a ship, and especially a ship with its own museum. A museum can be a very educative place, but you don't look to the museum as the place from which to steer the ship or as the cabin in which to abide for the course of the voyage.

A year ago, if you'd said to me Cardinal Pell will be in prison, Notre Dame Cathedral will be in flames, and 50 people will lie dead, soaked in their own blood, having been gunned down while attending Friday prayers at their mosque – gunned down by one of our fellow Australians, I don't think I would have believed you. I'd be asking for proof. And when these things did come to pass, I, like you, was left wondering what room is left in our world, and even in our Church, for the joy, hope

Continued page 10

the swag



and glory of the Easter message which is the key to our Christian faith and the centrepiece of our Catholic mission to the world.

Cardinal's Pell imprisonment is part of a legal process as we seek truth, justice and compassion for all, especially the victims of sexual abuse, during a time of great uncertainty and change. We wait for the law to do its work. We are faced with two awful options. Perhaps Cardinal Pell is a paedophile who has effectively groomed the Church as an institution all the way to the top. But then again, perhaps he is not a paedophile and it has reached the stage in Australia that 12 of his fellow citizens were prepared to convict him of offences beyond reasonable doubt despite all manner of improbabilities because they don't trust him or our Church, no matter what we say or do.

... At the first Easter, the women stand outside the tomb terrified. The stone has been rolled away. The door between life and death, between heaven and earth, has been opened. The two men in brilliant clothes say to them, 'Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here; he is risen.' The women go and tell their story to others including the apostles, 'but this story of theirs seemed pure nonsense, and they did not believe them'.

To non-believers, our story of ultimate hope, with meaning beyond suffering, and life beyond death seems pure nonsense. We do believe that ultimately there can be truth, justice and compassion for all. We do believe that a cathedral can be the embodiment of faith and culture from century to century, and can be rebuilt to reflect the glory of humanity and the presence of God in our midst. But the cost and energy expended on bricks and mortar need to be matched by our commitment to those who are poor and on the edges, feeling as if they don't belong inside any grand structures.

We do believe that the tomb can be opened and the door of welcome made inviting for all if we carry with us the belief in the Risen Lord showing openness and care to all and offering forgiveness to those who espouse hate and fear. Paul tells the Romans that Jesus' life is now with God; 'and in that way you too must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus'.

We are people of the resurrection. Our hope is real in the midst of the mess and complexity of our world and of our lives. We are sent forth from the empty tomb remembering what Jesus told his followers in Galilee about being handed over to the

power of sinful men, being crucified and rising again on the third day. This is good news not just for us who remain committed to our Church, but for us always, and for everyone in our world. Not everyone needs to be on the ship, or on the same ship. But we do believe that it is good for everyone, including those clinging to the driftwood in turbulent seas and those floating happily in calm waters, that there be a flotilla of ships ferrying those with religious faith differently informed and led by tradition and authority underpinned by respectful dialogue with all.

We go forth from the darkness bringing the light which we continue to see, the light which emboldens us with hope to do as Prime Minister Ardern told her Parliament. Let me recall her words but render them without the understandable tinge of New Zealand nationalism: 'Our challenge now is to make the very best of us, a daily reality. Because we are not immune to the viruses of hate, of fear, of other. We never have been. But we can be the people who discover the cure. And so to each of us as we go from here, we have work to do, but do not leave the job of combatting hate to others. We each hold the power, in our words and in our actions, in our daily acts of kindness.' ...

Being ourselves in the public square and making our full contribution

... I constantly meet well educated, compassionate human rights advocates who view religion as a hangover from a long past era. While conceding that human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, they basically think that freedom of religion is more trouble than it is worth, a hangover from a past era. They find religious belief and practice marked by notions of tradition, authority, ritual and permanent commitment mystifying and counter-productive. They prize individualism, freedom, personal autonomy and non-discrimination.

They not only welcome increasing manifestations of the secular with a strict separation of church and state. They also relish increased secularisation of society with less reliance and respect being shown to the religious inclination which is quarantined to the sole preserve of the individual's private life – not to be shared in polite company and not to be aired on the public airwaves. Or if aired ever so briefly, to be silently tolerated or publicly declaimed.

Both sides of politics are agreed that it is time to repeal section 38(3) of the Sex

Discrimination Act which allows a religious educational institution to discriminate against a student on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status or pregnancy provided they discriminate 'in good faith in order to avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of adherents of that religion or creed'. I welcome this bipartisan commitment of the parliament.

Religious schools should not be able to discriminate against students on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. But religious schools should remain free to teach their doctrine respectfully and reasonably, in season and out of season. And the law should make that perfectly clear. We all need to concede that some religious teachings can be confronting and upsetting. But it is not for the state to rewrite the Bible or the Koran.

Let's consider an example that has nothing to do with sexuality. Jesus was fearless in his condemnation of wealth: 'Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' (Matthew 19:23-24) Church schools have to remain free to teach this doctrine even to the wealthiest children privileged to attend private schools with high fees.

This doctrine can be taught respectfully and reasonably even though it is in stark contrast to the lifestyle of many of these students and their families. So too, the teaching of Jesus about marriage and divorce. Yes, there is a large number of students from blended families who have experienced divorce, and there will be an increasing number of students from families with same sex married parents.

There's no doubt that Jesus' teaching on divorce has been counter-cultural for a long time; so now, his teaching on marriage. A Christian school must be guaranteed the freedom to teach what Jesus taught, respectfully, reasonably and counter-culturally – respectfully because the dignity of all persons must be affirmed, reasonably because a school has a fundamental educational purpose, and counter-culturally because many of the things Jesus taught will never appear in the political manifestos of the Liberal Party or the Labor Party.

Are human rights truly universal, being enjoyed by all those with innate human dignity or are they to be enjoyed only by those attributed human dignity because they are sufficiently like us? And are human rights truly universal, being

enjoyed by all at all stages of the life journey, with particular attention to their protection at moments and in situations of greatest vulnerability, or are they to be guaranteed only at those stages of life most likely to permit contribution to the more material aspects of the common good, most particularly, the economic strength of the state?...

Humbly taking on the big issues as Church

Our religious faith lived out and animated by Church participation helps provide us with food for the journey, a sense of true north amidst mess and complexity, and the intellectual and spiritual framework for shaping a human life fulfilled by optimal engagement with the world seeking to shape that world as a foretaste of the kingdom to come.

... We all know that climate change is an ongoing challenge for us all. It's heartening to be part of a Church community whose leaders can provide some moral pointers without presuming to be too prescriptive about solutions. In the lead up to the recent federal election, our own bishops issued a statement saying:

'Pope Francis appeals to all of us to start 'a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet' and calls for a "new universal solidarity". Climate change is a complex reality of international import. It is both social and environmental, with solutions that Pope Francis says demand "an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded and at the same time protecting nature". We in Australia must play our part. The Pope says: "Civilisation requires energy, but energy use must not destroy civilisation! Coming up with an adequate energy 'mix' is essential for combating pollution, eliminating poverty and promoting social equality."

The Californian bishops have just released a superb document marking the fourth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*. They don't just tell governments what they should be doing:

'For our part, we commit ourselves to fulfilling our calling to lead the Catholic Church and its institutions in life-giving responses to *Laudato Si'*. We pledge to work with pastoral leaders and Catholic institutions to:

1. Encourage the faithful to take the St. Francis Pledge—to pray, act, and advocate for solutions to climate disruption—and live out its tenets.
2. Support clergy, liturgists, musicians, and pastoral leaders to integrate the messages of

Laudato Si' into our life of worship. We commit to offering priest study days and days of recollection to share practical tools, such as homily helps, music, and resources that will regularly help proclaim themes of *Laudato Si'*.

3. Examine with (Arch)dioceses their institutional operations to determine the full extent that each can adopt renewable energy, energy efficiency, and water conservation practices.
4. Explore with (Arch)dioceses opportunities for divestment from fossil fuels, whether through Diocese bank investments, oil leases, etc.
5. Cooperate with Catholic charities and Catholic health care institutions to undertake environmental health and social initiatives, with special attention to the needs of the poor and excluded.

As each of us discerns how best to live and flourish in our own social context, we look to our Church and its leaders not to provide the definitive answers but to provide us with a moral compass, food for the journey, and truly good company as we chart our course to a more promised land. We thank God for Pope Francis who insists:

'Individual conscience needs to be better incorporated into the Church's praxis Naturally, every effort should be made to encourage the development of an enlightened conscience, formed and guided by the responsible and serious discernment of one's pastor, and to encourage an ever greater trust in God's grace. Yet conscience can do more than recognize that a given situation does not correspond objectively to the overall demands of the Gospel. It can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for now is the most generous response which can be given to God, and come to see with a certain moral security that it is what God himself is asking amid the concrete complexity of one's limits, while yet not fully the objective ideal. (*Amoris Laetitia*, #303)'

... Having learnt the lessons from our museum, let's step out, well fed and well directed, on our course as committed Catholics, members of a confident, humble, listening, and questioning Church. And let's not take ourselves too seriously. When watching the grandchildren play, let's always see the joy, the hope and glory in the midst of the despair and suffering of the time. ☪

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Ex Opere Operato...or not?

MARY FARRELLY SM

Mary Farrelly SM, Western Region Pastoral Ministry in the Diocese of Rockhampton, explores the limitations of distance sacramental preparation over the phone in regional Australia. How do we know it works? Are we limited by our understanding of how we might make disciples of all nations.

While 56 years down the track since leaving the novitiate and classes on philosophy and theology, at different times over the intervening decades snippets of those lessons have returned to me. While I don't remember the names of those who introduced such snippets into the language (Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas?) life has often confirmed the truth encapsulated in them. Moving *from the known to the unknown*: this was a guiding principle in my secondary teaching career and in fact to this day. 'Do' follows 'be': 'You will know them by their fruits... every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit' (Mt 7:16-17). *A thing cannot be and not be at the same time*. Actually, I'm not sure whether this is always true of God. *Ad hoc, ipso facto, ex opere operato*: the Latin phrases became familiar in theology classes. Over the last few years it is the latter phrase which has come back to me time and again: come to set my mind at ease *and* to trouble me.

In 2015 I assumed the role of preparing children for the sacraments of initiation. The children in question live on rural, in some cases remote properties in central western Queensland. With few exceptions they don't attend a school (Catholic or State) in town. Schooling for them is by distance education. On-air lessons (formerly via the radio and now delivered through the internet), one to several times a day, are supervised by a govy/governess. I don't know whether there are any males in this position. Depending on circumstances such as finances and availability, 'govy' may be an additional role which the mother has to assume. For some parents this isn't difficult; in fact, a number of those whom I've met have actually been teachers. However, I think it is true to say that this isn't the case for the majority and I don't think that it takes much imagination to understand that the two roles, that of school teacher and mother, not infrequently clash.

The children are used to distance learning so that working through lessons on Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist via the telephone, is not something foreign to them. I am the one with the problem! Although used to

engaging with teenagers or adults, it is not so difficult for me to talk to these children who spend most of their lives with adults rather than with boys and girls their own age. In almost all cases I begin the programme for a particular sacrament with a home visit, travelling the hundred to two or three hundred kilometres to the property. Occasionally for some reason such as needing to buy supplies, have repairs done or transact business, a parent will bring the child to meet me in a nearby town – not nearby here, but in the district where they live.

We begin with this face-to-face lesson. Then, on either end of the phone we use the relevant notes to complete the programme, perhaps using a DVD to consolidate in a final face-to-face session a month or two or more down the track. The length of time varies because of the availability of my young students, not on the number of lessons. Even if I can be 'online', reasons why they can't be are as varied as being away at a mini-school (for an intensive week at their school of distance education), a family emergency or even droving. Sometimes a parent can just forget as our lessons are out of time, being fitted in before or after school and in between chores or helping to muster a mob.

One of the aspects of this ministry which I find difficult is the rarity of the face-to-face lessons. On the phone there is no possibility of reading body language or picking up facial clues. Only so much is evident from the tone of a young voice. It is difficult to know how effectively I am communicating what is for the most part something quite new to the children whose families are probably not regular in attending the monthly or two monthly Mass in their area. While I have deep respect for the goodness of these families, for the values by which they live and the challenges which they face, as I have written elsewhere it is not uncommon for the parents themselves to have limited knowledge of the faith or the *language* of the faith given that they may not have attended a Catholic school at any time in their schooling. If they went away to boarding school it was not necessarily a Catholic school, selection depending on



factors such as finance and distance from home and/or other family members. Consequently, in talking with the children, I can presume very little background in terms of what I call language or specific knowledge of the faith in which I've been immersed from early childhood.

'Immersed' is not an exaggeration. While our parents were very 'down to earth' in matters of faith, the signs of catholicity were evident in our working-class home. I don't know that we said Grace at mealtimes as a rule, but the evening Rosary was part of life: *the family that prays together...* There were several statues and pictures were on the wall. I had a catholic schooling from start to finish. Later came novitiate formation, in the eighties a theology degree from YTU and later still, a Masters in Theology from ACU: immersed in faith language and knowledge! Herein has been my biggest challenge: in this ministry, in this context, time, knowledge and language were/are so limited. I've struggled to let go so much head knowledge, questioned whether it was right to do so and wondered whether it was worth it for the children? Would their relationship with our loving God be nurtured through our brief encounter?

That's where I come back to *ex opere operato*. Will good come out of the experience (for the children) regardless of the limitations and lack of understanding of the rich symbolism which I can only barely begin to convey in these circumstances? Can I take comfort in something of this nature? Or not? What else should 'we' be doing? How to differently approach this and other situations in our church so that we are responding to Jesus when he says *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...* (Mt 28:19)? ☪

The Third Australian Plenary Council 3-10 September, 1905

PETER WILKINSON

This is Part 1 of the sixth in the series of articles by Peter Wilkinson looking at the particular (provincial and plenary) councils of the Catholic Church held in Australia between 1844 and 1937. It examines the Third Australian Plenary Council held in Sydney from 3-10 September 1905. Part 2 of this article will appear in Summer edition of *The Swag*.

In the period 1896 -1905, just three particular councils were convened in the English-speaking mission territories under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide ('Propaganda'): the 1900 3rd Plenary Council of Ireland, the 1899 1st Provincial Council of Wellington, New Zealand, and the 1905 3rd Australian Plenary Council.

Cardinal Moran and preparations for the 1905 Plenary Council

At the turn of the century, Cardinal Patrick Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, was at the peak of his power. Made a cardinal by Leo XIII in 1885, he was a member of three Roman congregations (Propaganda, Consistory, and Religious), had presided as Apostolic Delegate over the 1885 and 1895 plenary councils, and had been tasked to convene assemblies of all the Australian bishops (in 1888, 1890 and 1897) and annual meetings of the metropolitan bishops (from 1890 to 1894).

During the 1890s he believed that the political and civil rights of Australian Catholics were under threat, and that a situation where "no office of first, or even second, rate importance is held by a Catholic" was deliberate discrimination. In the 1880s and 1890s he denounced anti-Chinese legislation as un-Christian, specifically defending Chinese migrants, and even wanting to establish a Chinese College in Sydney. For this, he was pilloried as 'The Chows' Patron'. Moran envisaged Australia as the base for the Christianization of Asia and the Pacific and planned his St Columba's Seminary at Springwood as a missionary college. He gave the French Sacred Heart missionaries a base and seminary in Sydney for their work in Melanesia, and urged Propaganda to provide missionaries for both Melanesia and Polynesia.

By 1897 his influence and authority had become so dominant that he discontinued all meetings of the bishops, even those of the metropolitan bishops. But he suffered a significant setback when Propaganda told him that the Church in New Zealand, which he considered an integral part of the common region over which he presided, was to be separated from the

Church in Australia, and that the bishops of New Zealand would hold their 1st Provincial Council at Wellington in 1899 without his presence.

Moran also played a role in Australian Federation. In 1896 he addressed the People's Federal Convention framing the new constitution, and in 1897 stood for election to that body. Though he failed to win a position, he continued to advocate for an independent Australian defence and foreign policy. He refused to attend the official inauguration of the Commonwealth in 1901 because precedence was given to the Church of England.

When Pope Leo XIII died in 1903, Moran failed to reach Rome in time for the conclave that elected Pius X, during whose pontificate the 1905 Plenary was convened.

In September 1904 Moran requested the Holy See to approve the convening of another plenary council and permission to invite the New Zealand bishops, who had expressed a desire to strengthen their unity with the Australian bishops. On 30 November 1904 Pius X approved a council to be held within two years, appointed Moran to preside, but made no mention of the New Zealand bishops. When Moran called all the bishops, abbots, superiors of the religious congregations, and others who were to be present by law or custom, to attend the Council commencing on 3 September 1905 at Sydney, they were not included. In the call, he advised the bishops that they could each appoint one personal theologian, and that the parish clergy of each diocese could elect one priest to represent them. He also asked each bishop to set up a 'diocesan commission' to consider amendments or additions to the 1895 Plenary decrees, and arranged for their reports to be circulated at the Council.

On 2 September 1905, the day before the official Opening, 21 'Fathers' met at St Patrick's College, Manly: Cardinal Moran, Archbishops Carr (Melbourne), Dunne (Brisbane), O'Reilly (Adelaide), and Kelly (Coadjutor, Sydney); Bishops Murray (Maitland), Reville OSA (Sandhurst), Corbett (Sale), Dunne (Wilcannia), Doyle (Lismore), Higgins (Ballarat), Gallagher (Goulburn), Kelly (Geraldton), Dunne

(Bathurst), O'Connor (Armidale), Delaney (Coadjutor, Hobart), Dwyer (Coadjutor, Maitland), and Murray (Cooktown); Abbot Torres OSB (New Norcia); and the priest administrators Walsh (Rockhampton) and Norton (Port Augusta).

Absent were Archbishop Murphy of Hobart (aged 91 years), and Bishops Gibney (Perth) and Maher (Port August), who were both ill. At the meeting, Torres, Walsh and Norton were granted a deliberative vote. Bishop Gibney appointed Fr Laurence Smyth his proxy (who participated from 7 September), while Archbishop Murphy appointed Mgr Daniel Beechinor as his proxy (later overturned).

In addition to the priests already mentioned, a further 12 priest superiors of male religious congregations with communities in Australia and 37 priest theologians were participants, with 19 having attended the 1895 Council. No lay persons, male or female, were invited to participate in the Council.

The Council's primary committee consisted of Moran (Chair), and Dwyer (Secretary), with four elected bishops – Higgins, Reville, Murray (Maitland) and Gallagher – and Fr James O'Brien (Assistant Secretary) and Mgr Denis O'Haran (Chancellor). This committee decided to have three working committees dealing with Faith and Sacraments, Discipline, and Education, three public sessions in St Mary's Cathedral – Opening, Closing and Thursday 7 September – three general meetings of the Fathers and all the priests, and private meetings of the Fathers only (8 were held). The Council was to be a re-working of the 1885 and 1895 Councils with the same basic format.

Developments and demographic data for 1905

Pope Leo XIII had officially approved the 272 decrees of the 1895 Plenary Council on 22 January 1898, and a week later had erected the Diocese of Geraldton (WA) and appointed the Australian-born William Bernard Kelly as its first bishop. Leo also attached the Vicariate Apostolic of Kimberley to Geraldton on a temporary basis, pending a decision of the French Trappist monks at Beagle Bay, and changed the name of the Grafton diocese to Lismore.

By 1900 various popes had appointed 31 Irish bishops to Australian dioceses, heavily influenced by the Irish bishops in both Ireland and Australia and the senior Irish

Continued page 14

priests in Australia, but without any direct lay input from Australia. Although Propaganda's standing policy favoured locally-born candidates for Episcopal appointment, prior to 1905 only two – both of Irish background – had been appointed: Patrick Dwyer to Maitland, and William Kelly to Geraldton.

In 1905 Australia had 824,363 Catholics. They constituted 20.4 per cent of the total population of 4,032,977. In the 4 ecclesiastical provinces, the sole new diocese was Geraldton. There were 421 'districts' (akin to 'parishes'), 921 priests (701 diocesan and 220 religious), 4,645 religious sisters, 429 religious brothers, and 1052 Catholic schools (733 primary and 319 secondary) educating a total of 105,824 students (Table 1).

St Patrick's College at Manly, the sole seminary in Australia and operating for 16 years, was educating 54 seminarians from all dioceses, with 71 – mostly Australian-born – already ordained as priests.

In the 36 years since the 2nd Australian Provincial Council in 1869, the Catholic population had increased by over half a million, districts had almost tripled (+279), priest numbers had more than quintupled (+761), and the number of religious sisters and brothers had increased exponentially, as had Catholic schools and their students (Table 2).

The Irish-born (184,035 in 1901) still constituted around a quarter of the total Catholic population, but their numbers had peaked in 1891 at 228,000 and were now diminishing.

1901 Federation and Australia's First Peoples

The Australian Constitution, which took effect on 1 January 1901 establishing the Commonwealth of Australia, included two references to Aboriginal peoples: Section 51 (xxvi) giving the Commonwealth power to make laws with respect to "people of any race, other than the Aboriginal race in any state, for whom it was deemed necessary to make special laws"; and Section 127 providing that "in reckoning the numbers of people of the Commonwealth, or of a State of other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted".

The Commonwealth *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, establishing the Bureau of Census and Statistics, made no reference to Aborigines, but as a definition of 'aboriginal natives' was required for census taking, the Federal Attorney-General ruled that "half-castes are not aboriginal within the meaning of s. 127 of the Constitution

and should not therefore be included." At the first Commonwealth Census in 1911 the Bureau excluded 'Full-blooded Aborigines' from its published count of the Australian population, but published a separate count of the "Number of Aboriginal Persons recorded in each State and Territory of the Commonwealth". In the 'Religion' classification of the 1911 Census (Table 57), 516 full-blooded Aborigines were counted as 'Roman Catholics' and 67 as 'Catholic (undefined)'.

Prior to 1901 the States were responsible for the welfare of Aboriginal peoples and from 1869 three had enacted special laws and protection policies: the *Aborigines Protection Act 1869 in Victoria*, the *Aborigines Protection Act 1886 in WA*, and the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 in QLD*. All were shaped by the prevailing attitudes of racial superiority and paternalism, with the Aboriginal peoples constrained to live under different state laws and regulations severely controlling every aspect of their lives: moving them from their homelands to live on reserves managed by protection boards protection officers or native welfare officers; having their children forcibly removed from their families; having their movements and associations controlled; and being classified according to descent. Across Australia, Aboriginal people suffered poor living conditions and poor health, and on many reserves and missions had sub-standard shelter or housing, meagre rations, and poor education. Their employment was controlled, and often with rations for payment or wages withheld. They were also prohibited from speaking their own languages and practising their own culture.

The Council Opening

The Council opened on Sunday 3 September 1905 with a public Solemn Mass and the singing of the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for the end of the Russo-Japanese War. The consecration of the newly completed St Mary's Cathedral was also celebrated.

Agenda

The main work of the Council focussed on Catholic education, mixed marriage, irremovable rectors, priestly discipline, Catholic publications, and missionary activity.

At the first general meeting of the Fathers and priests on the 4th September only preliminaries were dealt with. At the first private meeting of the bishops, letters to Pope Pius and the bishops of Ireland and France were approved, as well as the drafting of a pastoral letter on socialism. At their

second private meeting, the bishops accepted the 1895 Council decrees as the basic legislation and appointed a committee to draft additional decrees.

Education

The 1869 Council had made the first clear statement of policy and principles on Catholic education. The 1885 Plenary produced 14 decrees on primary education based on the 1869 principles. The 1895 Plenary enacted more decrees dealing primarily with parents refusing to send their children to Catholic schools and the right to government funding.

The 1905 Plenary legislated for a revised Catechism to be used in each and every diocese, and a bishops' committee to set new standards for religious education for all Catholic schools to adhere to, though they should follow the standards of state schools in secular subjects. The Council also called for each ecclesiastical province to establish a Catholic teachers' training college for religious sisters and brothers, and that all buildings be insured against fire.

Mixed marriage

Decrees on mixed marriage between Catholics and Protestants were first legislated at the 1869 Provincial Council, slightly augmented at the 1885 and 1895 Plenary Councils. The 1905 Plenary left the decrees virtually unchanged, only calling for outward penitential exercises to deter such marriages and to repair scandal. Mixed marriages remained strongly condemned, with all priests having to explain their evil and read the 1869 decrees annually.

Irremovable rectorates and priestly discipline

Though the matter of irremovable rectors had been dealt with thoroughly at the 1885 Plenary, and left untouched in 1895, the 1905 Plenary amended the legislation to allow a bishop, after consulting his senior priests, to reduce an irremovable rectorate (equivalent to 'parish') should the local population decrease or for other reasons. Propaganda agreed, but insisted that the irremovable rector in office had to consent to the change.

The 1895 Plenary Council had considered attendance at the theatre and opera as unbecoming for clerics, and contravention could make a cleric liable to suspension. When priests at the 1905 Plenary asked for uniform legislation on theatres and horseracing, the Fathers added an additional decree (n. 215) renewing the ban, but in stronger terms.

Table 1: The Catholic Church in Australia, 1905

Colony	Total Population	Catholic Population	Diocese/Abbacy/ Vicariate Apostolic	Year Est.	Districts (not parishes)	Priests (Dioc./ Relig.)	Relig. Sisters	Religious Brothers	Catholic Schools (Prim/Sec.)	Catholic Students
			Province of Sydney	1842						
NSW	1,487,884	175,000	Sydney (AD)	1842	72	120/74	1189	187	167/77	23,085
		30,000	Maitland (D)	1847	19	40/16	224	14	38/18	3,647
		45,500	Goulburn (D)	1862	23	47/8	245	8	54/11	4,691
		25,540	Armidale (D)	1862	15	22/2	144	0	19/4	2,510
		27,000	Bathurst (D)	1865	18	32/6	243	8	40/20	4,461
		19,500	Lismore (D)2	1887	17	17/2	104	0	11/12	1,907
		19,000	Wilcannia (D)	1887	11	16/0	139	0	17/14	2,980
		341,540				175	294/108	2,288	217	346/156
			Prov. of Melbourne	1874						
VIC	1,210,421	145,333	Melbourne (AD)	1847	53	102/37	693	50	110/31	24,553
		59,488	Ballarat (D)	1874	25	52/9	250	18	56/24	5,600
		45,368	Sandhurst (D)	1874	22	34/6	200	6	31/20	4,500
		13,521	Sale (D)	1887	7	16/0	47	0	7/2	743
		263,710				107	204/52	1190	74	204/77
TAS	186,385	30,000	Hobart (AD)	1842	19	28/0	135	0	25/5	3,280
			Prov. of Brisbane	1887						
QLD	531,482	60,000	Brisbane (AD)	1859	31	56/0	186	25	41/22	6,713
		30,000	Rockhampton (D)	1882	18	24/3	152	n/a2	22/9	4,892
		5,200	Cooktown (VA)	1887	6	0/10	18	n/a	3/0	450
		n/a	QLD for Aborigines (VA)	1887	0	0/0	-0	n/a	n/a	n/a
		95,200				55	80/13	356	25	66/31
			Prov. of Adelaide	1887						
SA	366,667	40,460	Adelaide (AD)	1842	27	34/24	302	45	35/26	4,306
		11,953	Port Augusta (D)	1887	8	12/0	39	0	11/2	795
		52,413				35	46/24	341	45	46/28
WA	250,138	40,000	Perth (D)	1845	30	34/11	280	30	32/17	5,940
		n/a	Geraldton (D)	1898	n/a	9/0	44	0	11/5	591
		1,500	New Norcia (AN)	1867	Abbacy	6/12	11	38	3/-	180
		n/a	Kimberley (VA)	1887	Mission	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
		41,500				30	49/23	335	68	46/22
NT	n/a	n/a	Victoria & Palmerston (D)3	1847	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Australia TOTAL	4,032,9774	824,363 (= 20.4% of total pop'n)	4 Provinces 19 Dioceses 3 Vicariates Apost. 1 Abbacy Nullius		421	701/220	4,645	429	733/319	105,824

Sources: *ABS. Cat. No. 3105.0.65.001; Australasian Catholic Directory for 1906 (data is for 1905). Note: 1. Secondary schools include colleges for boys, boarding schools for girls, and superior day schools. 2. The Diocese of Grafton became the Diocese of Lismore. 3. Name of the diocese changed. 4. This is European population only. Full-blooded Aboriginal people were not included in the official Australian Census until 1967.

Table 2: Change in Catholic population, religious personnel, Catholic schools and students: 1869-1905

	1869	1885	1895	1905	Change 1869-1905
Catholic Population	300,000 (est)	620,000	695,351	824,363	+524,363 (est.)
Districts (akin to parishes)	142	314	361	421	+279
Priests	160	591	747	921	+761
Religious Sisters	130 (est)	1,450	2,836	4,645	+4,515 (est.)
Religious Brothers	4	150	351	429	+425
Catholic schools (P & S)	246	687	897	1052	+806
Students in Catholic schools	11,000 (est)	65,000+	83,891	105,824	+94,824 (est.)

Source: Official Catholics directories, various years.

Other issues

At two sessions on 9 September, the Fathers voted in favour of Sydney becoming a primatial see, of establishing institutions for mentally-ill and deaf males (already established from females), of promoting the publications of the Australian Catholic Truth Society, of taking more care in the selection of books for libraries and school prizes, of seeking additional faculties from

the Holy See (e.g. sending holy oils by post, some relaxation of fast and abstinence, etc.) and clarification on hearing confessions on sea voyages, and of promoting the Society for the Propagation of the Faith

They voted against the publication of prayer and piety books without ecclesiastical permission, of archbishops becoming a tribunal of appeal for questions of discipline and for implementing the

decrees of plenary councils, a uniform tax for matrimonial dispensations, and having a summary and explanation of difficult words at the start of the catechism.

They also discussed the prohibition of sending Catholic children to state schools, the *conkursus* (test of fitness for parochial office), the funding and care of sick, alcoholic and mentally ill priests, and Holy Communion for nuns. ☞



Is religious freedom code for a licence to discriminate?

PETER JOHNSTONE

Peter Johnstone, member of Catholics for Renewal Inc., discusses whether legislation is needed to ensure religious freedom. There is vague reporting of the ‘right’ of religious schools to teach faith-based doctrine. This begs the question as to what these schools want to teach that they think is at risk. It seems that this is code for teachings that devalue people of LGBTIQ sexual orientation.

Our newly elected federal government has reportedly decided to prioritise religious freedom legislation to protect religious institutions from being accused of discrimination. And it seems that the Labor Party may well support this legislation, at least one front-bencher strangely perceiving some religious rejection in their electoral defeat.

The matter has been the subject of some recent public discussion in the context of a top Rugby player being sacked for publicly stating that homosexuals will go to hell. Such statements are clearly intended to vilify a vulnerable group in our community and cannot be tolerated from a moral perspective, quite apart from the contractual issues involved or the genuinely held view of the person concerned, albeit both naïve and dangerous. Would we accept as a community any public figure saying all females should go to hell, or that all of a certain race should be damned, or that redheads should be shunned?

Some religions may well teach such ignorant

views, but a good society should not tolerate the public and cavalier condemnation of classes of people (based on their God-given characteristics!) and certainly should not give legislative protection to the public expression of those views. There is no moral or other justification for protecting vilification of any gender, or any sexual orientation – and religious beliefs certainly do not justify such protection.

Religions have traditionally claimed a role in ensuring that the best values are practised by communities and teaching that all be treated with respect and indeed love. Is discrimination now part of religious beliefs or doctrine and are religions now to be legally protected in practising discrimination against others? Governments’ obligations to protect their citizens cannot be waived to allow harm to be done by religions.

I am puzzled by any suggestion that people of faith need religious freedom legislation. As a Christian adult with many years as an Australian Catholic citizen, parent and grandparent, I have never felt a lack of

religious freedom and on those few occasions that my faith has been questioned by others, I’ve been quite happy to share the reasons for my faith without feeling any oppression.

Where is this demand for religious discrimination coming from? I know of many Catholic schools that accept diverse sexual orientation among their students and teach tolerance of diversity, as they should in keeping with their Christian beliefs. The Catholic hierarchy, in claiming all sorts of exemptions on the grounds of religious freedom, are out of step with the leadership, staff and parent groups of those Catholic schools who have actually had in place for years appropriately respectful policies, protocols and practices.

It seems that some religious leaders live in fear of attacks from an increasingly secular society. If so, the traditional Christian response would be to ‘turn the other cheek’ and let our Christian behaviour be judged on its merits. One might wonder if recent claims by religious leaders of societal prejudice are in fact driven by an obsessive attempt to distract a scandalised community from the humiliation of clerical child sexual abuse. Of course, that scandal resulted from hypocrisy in religion, protecting paedophiles and putting children at risk. Perhaps religions should focus on getting their houses in order and thus earn the

respect of our secular society – that would be simply practising their faith.

Much of the religious freedom push seems to focus on a continuing, perhaps remnant, rejection of homosexuality in some religions including my own. This is despite the Australian people, including a majority of Catholics, making it very clear that they saw no room for discrimination against those of LGBTIQ sexual orientation when subjected to a survey on marriage equality in 2017. The Australian people have generally shown a true acceptance of others regardless of differences, an acceptance in keeping with the fundamental doctrine of love that permeates most religions and is the very basis of all teachings of Jesus.

Regrettably, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* relies on a limited interpretation of Scripture, presenting homosexual acts as “acts of grave depravity” and claims that ‘tradition’ declares that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.” The *Catechism* further states that homosexual acts “do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity” and describes homosexual tendencies and inclinations as “objectively disordered”. This teaching could cause considerable distress to people of LGBTIQ sexual orientation, particularly young people in Catholic schools.

The *Catechism* also notes however that those of homosexual orientation “must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity” and that “every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” That mutual respect is reflected in modern society, as illustrated by the marriage equality legislation passed by Australian and other parliaments throughout the world. The Catholic Church needs to fix this ambiguity in its teaching and dissociate itself from the move to protect unjust religious discrimination of LGBTIQ people.

Freedom of thought and religion is of course fundamental to a democratic society. Australians already enjoy that freedom of thought and religion. The proposed legislation seems to be about a licence to discriminate against LGBTIQ persons, sadly using religion as an excuse. There is a real danger that these laws could lead to young LGBTIQ people, already vulnerable to some ill-informed prejudice, being damaged by explicit rejection of their sexual being in religious schools. This would undo much of the social gains of marriage equality – perhaps that is what the proponents of this mooted legislation for ‘religious freedom’ really want. ☺



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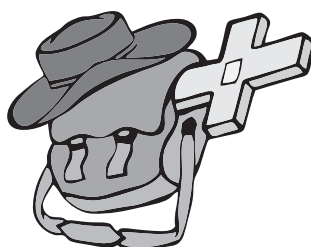
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Uncovering gender inequality in my church

STEPHANIE LORENZO

Stephanie Lorenzo is Communications Director of *Voices of Faith* whose mission is to build a prophetic Catholic Church where women's voices count, participate and lead on equal footing with men. She founded *Project Futures* to support victims and survivors of human trafficking in Cambodia, Australia and Nepal. She is a volunteer Board Director of Loreto Normanhurst and The Generations Foundation and lives in Sydney, Australia. Here she talks about this work.



If you asked me a year ago about the role religion and faith play in my life as a 32 year old, I would have laughed it off and likely told you about my parents daily prayers for me to find a husband. My parents, devout Catholics who you'll find in the front row of their parish weekly, migrated to Australia from the Philippines in the 1980s. They wanted to give their three daughters the best possible opportunities in what they heard was a safe, stable and beautiful country. My dad studied at TAFE, got a building licence and built houses for a living so that he could earn enough money to send his three daughters to a private Catholic school and then to university. I realise how lucky I am to have not paid for my education, and seeing my parents work so hard every day instilled in me a work ethic that led to a solid career throughout my 20s.

So forgive me if I find it a little ironic that as soon as 30 kicks in for their youngest girl, the prayers change from 'we pray she finds a good job, does well in her studies and finds the right house to buy' to 'please God let her find a husband and settle down'. I chuckle, and then ask myself, should I blame them? Isn't this what most societies, irrespective of their culture and outlook, seem to agree on – that a woman's role is to bear children, stay at home and

raise them? Now before you roll your eyes and turn the page, I'll admit that my 33 year old self without a doubt wants to have children and I'd like to be able to stay home with them in their early years. However I can't help but wonder and fear what major changes having children will mean for my career as a woman and my ability to continue on my professional trajectory.

I think about what roles will be available to me when I am ready to go back to the workforce. Will the workforce understand my needs as a parent, will it allow me flexibility, support in training and skill development, help to build my confidence so that one day I might lead the ranks? More than likely not, although I'll give credit to the Australian government and businesses who have acknowledged this real conundrum for many women. Yet there are still too few examples of it working in practice to equal the playing field and address the gender gap of women at the top.

And what about the Catholic Church? Why is the issue of women's participation in leadership and decision making roles within this institution such a blind spot? Is it because of the narrow view that has been painted for us over the centuries, a view that's been embedded into societal and cultural norms? Please don't misread my point here, I am not trying to diminish or undervalue the role motherhood is. I simply want to be able to know that there are leadership roles that are a possibility for me, after I have kids, that my career actually continues, not stalls, if I am willing to work for it. For a Church that values motherhood so highly, I would hope they realise the new perspectives, skills and understanding that this life-giving experience could bring to the top. So when can we start to question these norms? What are the possibilities to expand them and how can we better form them for the next generation?

I only realised the full force of gender inequality in the leadership of the Catholic Church, when I started working for *Voices of Faith*. *Voices of Faith* is a global initiative

that is focused on empowering and advocating for religious women and lay people, to have a seat at the table and be part of the decision making structures of their Church. These are roles that are theoretically open to them today, but are almost impossible to access for a variety of reasons including the clerical culture of the Church, a brotherhood that has protected their own to the point of evading justice when crimes have been committed. Many in this brotherhood fearing change and loss of power.

But before I lay blame to only one group, we must look ourselves in the mirror. The millions of lay Catholics unknowingly conforming to the status quo of that patriarchy and remaining silent on the issue. History points to how easily power structures that are cut from the same cloth, left unchallenged and without transparency, accountability or diversity in thought, perspective and skill set, become corrupted. It's not a matter of if, but when. The sad fact is, this last decade we have watched absolutely shocked at the unravelling of what far too many leaders of the Catholic Church enabled in the global abuse crisis; aiding sex offending priests and covering their crimes which led to thousands of innocent lives broken. The moral authority that the Church once stood for, defended and preached, was exposed as hypocrisy at its finest.

So where do we even start to effect change?

Well, did you know that nuns, who outnumber brothers almost 10 to 1 globally, whose female superiors have the same canonical status as brother superiors, do not have the right to vote at synods convened by Pope Francis?

Did you know that women make up less than 3% of leadership roles in the Roman Curia, even though there is nothing in canon law that stops Pope Francis from naming a female cardinal?

It is women who make up over 60% of the membership of the Catholic Church, who statistically speaking are more likely to bring their children up in the faith and whose volunteering hours keep parishes alive. However did you know that in 2019, women are still not welcome to sit at the table of its male leaders even in regards to decisions that directly affect them? It would seem, that their opinions, expertise and perspectives do not matter.

I believe most people of faith, and most Catholics specifically would agree that it

makes no sense that decisions affecting us all, cannot be voiced by only half of us. By excluding female voices from the decision making of one of the largest institutions in the world, half the Church remains silent.

Enter the Overcoming Silence campaign, Voices of Faith's first step in targeting millions of Catholics who may or may not realise how rampant gender inequality is in our Church. This online campaign urges you to commit 1 minute of action for change by uploading a photo of yourself and writing a short message to our current leaders demonstrating the urgency and importance of this issue for our Church. Our hope is that by International Women's Day 2020 this visual petition will have collected thousands, even millions of messages to present to Pope Francis and Curia leaders.

The Overcoming Silence website brings together Catholic women and men, as well as nuns, brothers, priests and we even have our first Bishop, who want to see women form part of the decision making and leadership of our Church. It contains free educational resources focusing on the campaign's three goals, that can be easily downloaded and used at your parish, school or community group. More resources will be added throughout the year, helping educate Catholics on the gender gaps in leadership that can and must begin to change.

If you asked me a year ago whether I was religious, I would have said "I grew up Catholic but not really practicing. Spiritual but not religious." So cliché I know, but it certainly echoes what we are hearing from so many young people today. When will the Church recognise this apathy, this disassociation that is becoming the new normal? More importantly, what are they doing going to do about it? There are many possibilities and certainly not just one solution. The gender equality my organisation is working towards will not completely solve or wipe away the deep scars that the Church is healing from, but it would be a major head start rebuilding a vibrant, inclusive and equal Church for the future.

So, if I ever have the chance to speak to the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, I would tell him that a solution exists right now and can be implemented by him, tomorrow if he is willing. This solution is simple and I guarantee it will help bring relevance, interest, dialogue and most of all hope back to the lives of women like me who have strayed so far.

Show us that he believes half the human race is welcome at his table. ☺

Missing the Catholic bus



ERIC HODGENS

Eric Hodgens, Melbourne retired priest, says the Catholic Church is now in freefall. Vatican II called for adaptation to the modern world. Most of the opportunities for adaptation have been missed. How do we catch the last bus?

Since WW II the western Catholic Church has been visibly in decline. This is part of a huge cultural change which is world-wide. Christendom was the prevailing social and political structure of Europe from the 4th century to the 17th. A high point was Louis XIV, hand in hand with the French hierarchy. But at the same time the Enlightenment was raging, undermining its very core structure. Meanwhile, across the Atlantic in America a new, democratic social order was being established, based on Enlightenment principles. Democracy won the day and the Church was left a disempowered widow.

The *full* effect of enlightenment ideas, like power from the people and individual human rights, came to the fore in the reconstruction of Europe after the devastation of WWII. The Church still looked the same, but was no longer the political force it had been.

Vatican II was called to work out how to handle this new world order. It changed the preferred image of the Catholic Church from that of a hierarchical organization set up by God, to the People of God on a common journey. The egalitarian and interactive qualities of the new world order replaced the hierarchical and static qualities of the pre-Enlightenment order. The Church was adapting to the modern world – on paper.

Many who formerly had submitted to the old order had sniffed the breeze and abandoned the church. That flow of departures – small enough to start – was to grow into a torrent. Vatican II had alerted us to equality of membership and the need to adapt to fast social changes, but it was up to the membership to be nimble footed in adapting if it was to stem the collapse.

Vatican II finished in 1965. But the adaptation to the new world order got bogged down. The opportunity bus has driven by time after time and the church has missed it. Why? A restorationist, right-wing movement mobilized to halt any further adaptation and re-instate the old order. This small, but well-connected group had major influence under Montini (Paul VI), but found its champion in

Wotyjla (John Paul II) continuing under Ratzinger (Benedict XVI).

Their methodology in extending their power was to appoint like-minded ideological bishops. The Australian leader of the pack was George Pell who has succeeded in getting his own men appointed as archbishops of Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart. See <http://johnmenadue.com/eric-hodgens-catholic-culture-wars/> for details on the development of these culture wars.

The Australian scene is fast changing. Same sex marriage and assisted dying are now legislated. Culture war champion Cardinal Pell has been convicted of child sexual abuse and is in jail. Financial compensation claims are growing rapidly depleting the reserves of dioceses and religious orders.

The same sex marriage campaign was a hot button issue for the Vatican and Australian restorationists. Australian bishops decried it as "against nature and against God". Polls showed that Catholics disagreed with them. The archbishop of Sydney waved the ideological flag but was ignored. Another bishop was reported as donating \$250,000 to the "No" cause – but in vain.

The Restorationists are now crying foul on religious freedom to enable them to continue religious discrimination in their institutions. A similar scenario happened on assisted dying. Their call is to continue criminalisation of assisted dying while most Catholics say leave people free to decide.

Melbourne's Archbishop Comensoli has banned the renowned American Benedictine Sister Joan Chittester from speaking at a national Catholic Education conference in Melbourne. True to Pell, his mentor, he signals a return to the bad old days of episcopal censorship and misogyny which we had thought had gone.

Finally, Frederick Martel's book *The Closet of the Vatican* has shocked the world with its exposé. The Vatican has pursued a relentless, homophobic policy under Wotyjla and Ratzinger – yet the papal bureaucracy are overwhelmingly gay, heavily compromised and hypocritical. Some of the loudest to condemn homosexuality are themselves active gays.

Continued page 20

As this book sinks in Catholics will become more disgusted and ashamed.

We (first person because I personally identify with this hapless Church) missed three main opportunities for adaptation: Mission, Message and Ministry.

Mission: The South American bishops were the early adopters of a new mission – the preferential option for the poor. They set up Basic Christian Communities to serve the needs of the poor and protect them from oppression. This was deliberately reversed by Wotyjla using episcopal appointments to replace pastoral bishops with hard liners.

Message: life-centred catechesis started re-articulating Christianity as a way of life to be lived, rather than a set of doctrines to be memorised. The restorationists, under Ratzinger, gave us the Catholic Catechism – more doctrine and rules including positions at odds with what mainstream Catholics believe.

Ministry: Counter-intuitively priestly vocations have been dropping since WWII – even during the baby boomer period. Proportions were dropping. Nobody wants that life-style, especially as a male preserve with celibacy attached. Vatican II's call for nimble footed adaptation could not break through the rock barrier of clericalism. Today's cleric may be like the wounded knight in Monty Python's Holy Grail – but he still blocks the ministry door.

Liturgy – the central ministry – was to be adapted to local culture. Instead, it became a culture war battleground resulting in unspeakable liturgies and language. A pyric victory for the Wotyjla/Pell camp because the people are abandoning not only the liturgy but the church itself. And once they go they do not return.

The Catholic Church is now in freefall. Most of the opportunities for adaptation have been missed. Some parishes are still working well – but they will be the last. Their worried pastors can take heart that their ministry is still needed and valued by the remnant of believers. By providing faithful service they are still on the bus – even though it may be the last. ☺

“We are priests best when we are priests together.”

Reforming Catholic sexual theology

MARY E HUNT

At the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics (GNRC) International Forum on July 4, 2019 in Chicago, Mary E Hunt, feminist theologian and co-founder and co-director of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER) spoke about the problems facing the LGBTIQ+ Catholics today. She argues that a new theology of sexuality is the only way to honour the experience of Catholics today. This text is an extract.



I offer in great humility some theological foundations for our common work, knowing that each context around the world has its own particularities and contributions to make to the emerging and ever more inclusive Catholic community. My remarks come from a white, cisgender, lesbian, US-based, middle class experience open to learning and sharing with global colleagues.

I want to make one simple point: *The damaging Roman Catholic theology about sexuality creates a clear and present danger to the well-being of millions of people. It cannot be wished away or simply ignored. It must be dismantled and replaced by love-centered, sex-positive, community-grounded, and justice-driven pastoral and theological resources that we the people are developing together.* I will address how.

I begin with a font of wisdom, the late Audre Lorde, an African American lesbian, who wrote, *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* (1984. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Ed. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press. 110- 114). Catholic theology is in this no-way-out situation. The traditional sources of institutional theology are inadequate to provide the foundations for a 21st century moral theology. Lorde stated, 'What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow parameters of change are possible and allowable.' In our time, if we want

small, incremental changes that work for a few privileged people, then we can tinker with the institution's theology. But if we want, as I do, a wholesale rewrite that welcomes all to the table without distinction of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or any other particularity, then we need new tools and new people who are not masters but colleagues.

Power and authority are the crux of the matter. Simply put, who gets to say what is of God and on what basis do we take them seriously? Our church, at the macro level, operates with impunity when it comes to theology. Proclamations that do not bear the faintest resemblance to the contemporary experience of good people living loving lives are common. Church authorities with power exert pressure on theologians, clerics, and the rest of us to comply. Negative economic, social, and spiritual consequences result for those who refuse.

Take the recent trial balloon from the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education entitled *Male and Female He Created Them: Toward a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*. It is an intellectually embarrassing document that makes clear that the writers have no concept of contemporary social and biological data on sex and gender, and even less inclination to use them as foundations for useful moral theology. The proof is in the footnotes—citations of John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Francis; references to earlier Vatican statements and encyclicals. There is no mention of the sources for other views of sex/gender even to refute them. This is far from the gold standard in theology simply on methodological terms.

Implications of new document for LGBTIQ Catholics

One could be forgiven for ignoring this document except that trans and intersex people are written off as if they did not exist as we know them, robust and respected members of our communities whose struggles we share. Moreover, the negative consequences of this teaching are playing out in U.S. Catholic schools. In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, at least three Catholic high schools have been pressured to fire teachers who are legally

married to same-sex spouses. A Jesuit school (Brebeuf) because of its autonomy refused and is now not considered 'Catholic' by the Archdiocese; a diocesan-owned but Holy Cross brothers/fathers-run school (Cathedral) fired a teacher rather than lose not only its Catholic name, but also its 501(C)3 status as a tax exempt educational institution, meaning it was threatened with closure; and a diocesan owned and run high school (Roncalli) fired its staff person despite widespread community outcry. All of these cases of institutional theology written and imposed without concern for real people's lives have negative educational and economic consequences for those fired and their families. Members of the school communities are scandalized and ashamed of such treatment in their names, but they are powerless and without authority to do much to change the situation except take their money and leave. We have to change this power dynamic that dictates that integrity is only for those who can afford it.

The good news is that there are many and varied theological resources by Catholic writers to construct new theological paradigms. There is also much insight to glean from Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and other scholars and activists whose traditions are grappling as ours is with what it means to live rich and full lives in postmodernity given what we now know about the fluid, dynamic, changing, and diverse dimensions of human sexuality and gender.

A great new resource is a recently published *New York Times* study of 5000 people who responded to the question: 'Tell us who you are: We want to know how you identify yourself.' The answers are wonderfully diverse with lists of words most common to various generations – from gay/lesbian/straight/queer in the baby boomer generation to bisexual, gay, queer, and especially nonbinary for Generation-Z people. The *New York Times* writer Dan Levin concludes: 'The words they use tell us that 'the human experience is infinite.' (June 28, 2019). Our task is to develop theologies together that take account of this reality.

A new theology of sexuality

We Catholics say that God, the divine experience, is infinite. Now we know that our experiences are infinite too when we see ourselves as one human family and not as finite individuals. Far from eroding our human uniqueness, this understanding makes it more and more clear that humankind is 'made in the image of the divine,' which is to say that taken together, we, too, are infinite. Catholics call God 'love,' and we

say that the Gospel mandates of love and justice are humankind's common threads. Imagine if we were to promote moral theologies that focused on love and justice, including the right to sexual pleasure, rather than focusing on the gender constellation of those involved and whether their love making is procreative. That new theology is our work. It will not emerge from tinkering with statements about how a male God created Adam and Eve.

Fortunately, we have myriad resources from feminist and now queer studies in religion that, like other liberation theologies, include the data of the social and biological sciences as resources. These writings, especially from women and people of color, project an interstructured analysis that takes racism, xenophobia, climate change denial, war, and economic injustice as seriously as sex/gender issues. Biblical resources are key to such new theologies, but only when the texts have been subjected to a thorough-going hermeneutics of suspicion so that they are understood in the various contexts of contemporary faith communities.

Those in power and who claim theological authority will not give it up easily. Showing the limits of their arguments and the absurdity of their making them is a good first step. The institutional Roman Catholic Church is imploding with literally hundreds of priests discredited, many bishops under a cloud for covering up illegal behavior, cardinals resigning, and one holed up in prison in Australia awaiting appeal. On what authority do these people and their colleagues speak in the name of God? Not that we have any more claim, but I am proposing an overhaul of the way we do theology, not simply a replacement of the people who do it in the traditional way. Clergy are welcome to join us but they have no privileged place in the work. I think of theology as a team sport. I suggest we play like the US women's soccer team, but as a global team.

I conclude my current favorite example of this approach in which many people are involved given their experience, commitment, and common sense. Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School in Washington, DC, is run by the Salesian Sisters of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary. These educators came into conflict with Roman Catholic institutional theology – some of their alumnae have married women. It is the custom of this school to publish the happy news of unions in their alumnae magazine. Faced with this new reality – the public nature of legal same-sex marriages – the school had to decide whether to discriminate against

their own lesbians or reject the Church's discriminatory policies.

The school's decision to publish information on same-sex marriages was made and announced by Monastery Superior & President Emerita, Sister Mary Berchmans Hannon, VHM. In a May 2019 letter to alumnae she wrote: *As a professed Sister of the Visitation for 67 years, I have devoted my life in service to the Catholic Church. The Church is clear in its teaching on same-sex marriages. But, it is equally clear in its teaching that we are all children of God, that we each have dignity and are worthy of respect and love. I have been blessed to live my vocation here at Visitation, where I have welcomed and come to know, respect, and love thousands of unique, intelligent, passionate, and faithful women, each made in the image and likeness of God.*

As I have prayed over this contradiction, I keep returning to this choice: we can focus on Church teaching on gay marriage or we can focus on Church teaching on the Gospel commandment of love. We know from history – including very recent history – that the Church, in its humanity, makes mistakes. Yet, through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, it learns and grows. And so, we choose the Gospel commandment of love.

Beginning with the fall issue of our alumnae magazine, we will publish news of our alumnae's same-sex unions, along with all updates our alums choose to share with their classmates.

We reached this decision as a school and Monastery leadership after much prayerful consideration and thoughtful dialogue. We welcomed – as we always do – the respectful, earnest, faith-filled comments of several community members who contacted us directly. We encourage each of you to reach out to us when you have a question or concern. We all can grow through these courageous conversations. (The Washington Post, May 13, 2019) I say, Amen, Sister.

In this case, you have an example of a theological method for our work in our respective communities around the world. After all, Sister Berchmans is in her late 80s, so she has rich life experience, and she lives in community so she hears many views. She sees the contradictions between what the institution teaches on the basis of its perceived power and authority, and how good people live in her midst. She educated these girls after all. She can read church history and see how wrong the church has been on slavery, usury, science, among other themes. So after 'prayerful consideration and thoughtful dialogue' she and her colleagues opted for 'the Gospel commandment of love.' They model a way forward.

Continued page 22



In the absence of clerical credibility

The Archdiocese of Washington, DC expressed its disappointment that they had not been consulted but could do little else. Their Cardinal Theodore McCarrick is laicized and in exile; their Cardinal Donald Wuerl tendered his resignation with over 600 not-so-flattering mentions of his name in the Pennsylvania Grand Jury findings on sexual abuse and coverup as well as later revelations that he personally received money from a corrupt bishop of West Virginia who squandered millions in diocesan funds, and that he lied about what he knew when. The Archdiocese was not, shall we say, in much of a position to contradict an octogenarian nun who decided to publish news of lesbian marriages. Let us have some sense of proportionality in all of this.

Let us also note that wealthy, well established schools like Georgetown Visitation and the Jesuit school in Indianapolis continue their work unimpeded in large part because of their privilege, because they can afford to do the right things in institutions that they own. But the goal of our work is to make that kind of integrity possible, affordable for all. So let us take up our theological tasks with plenty of resources, a serious commitment to listen and learn to contextualized experiences, and an equally firm resolve to let love and justice flourish. I am in. I am on the team. Are you? ☺

Where are the Catholic LGBT role models for students in Catholic schools?

PAUL HARRIS

Paul Harris, educator and involved in LGBT Catholic ministry, discussed with Archbishop Comensoli the dangers of forced invisibility of LGBT teachers in Catholic schools. His letter to Archbishop Comensoli was published in the last edition of *The Swag*.



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Are gay and lesbian people welcome in the Catholic teaching profession? This was the question I posed to Archbishop Comensoli in a letter I wrote to him in response to comments made at the Senate enquiry as reported in *The Age* November 19, 2018 *Archbishop of Melbourne suggests gay teachers more acceptable if they live far away from school* (see *The Swag* Vol 27 Autumn Edition 2019 p23). He responded to my letter acknowledging the pain his words caused and offered an invitation to meet to talk things through. An invitation I accepted.

This is not the first time I have raised this type of question. When World Youth Day was coming to Sydney in 2008, the Archdiocese called for applications to create events complementing the experiences of the young people, celebrating their communion in Christ. As a member of the Catholic LGBT group Acceptance, we responded by proposing a forum to explore the experience of LGBT youth, their faith and the Church. "Finding a Place for Gay and Lesbian Youth in the Catholic Church" was the title of our event. We were unsuccessful in our application.

Provisionally, two groups, the Jesuits and the Marists, heard about our plans and offered to host the forum as part of their pre-WYD programs. Months of planning and preparation followed only to receive the devastating news in the final weeks leading up to WYD, that the Archdiocese had specifically instructed the groups to withdraw the event from their respective programs.

The unexpected media attention this stirred highlighted that the forum had to be held. Ironically and significantly, this rejection also gave us the confidence and the freedom to construct the forum in a way that now didn't have to be so mindful and sensitive of our host group. Our event was held to a packed auditorium of 200 people at the University of Technology Sydney. The only thing we changed was the title of the forum. It became, "Is There a Place for Gay and Lesbian Catholic Youth in the Church?" Whilst the content and discussion of the forum was all very positive about the lives of LGBT Catholic people, the question that the forum posed was answered loudly and clearly by the actions of the Sydney Archdiocese.

So the pain I felt at the Archbishop of Melbourne's words as reported that November morning was salt thrown into the deep wounds experienced in the actions and language of "the Church" of my lifetime.

The Archbishop and I met on a March afternoon in the grounds of Mary McKillop Place. I was a little nervous, but I sensed he was too. I spoke, he listened. In his written reply to my original letter, the Archbishop said that his words were "clumsy" and "poorly expressed" and something that he would "work on". My written reply to that was it is impossible to articulate a sound argument justifying the exclusion of a homosexual person from living the life that God intended for them. We are assured through scripture that all people are made in the image and likeness of God, never have I seen a footnote to scripture saying, "only applies if you are heterosexual".

In our Catholic schools we affirm the dignity of our young people including those who are questioning or acknowledging their sexual orientation, and we encourage them in their lives. But we don't allow them to have the role models that heterosexual people take for granted. And it is this "don't ask, don't tell" mentality that speaks volumes to our young people especially the ones who are so attuned to the nuances of language and witness.

I am far from suggesting that LGBT staff in our Catholic schools and ministries, priests and religious "come out", for that is a deeply personal and intimate choice. I am suggesting however, that our dioceses, school systems and organisations state quite clearly and emphatically that LGBT people are welcome, and they will not be dismissed from their jobs because of their life situation. I posed this idea to the Archbishop, he smiled and shuffled uncomfortably.

So, what was the outcome of our meeting? Did the Archbishop answer my original question? Did I actually expect an answer? The fact that he invited my conversation and listened to my story was significant to me. The Melbourne Archdiocese was the only diocese in Australia (as far as I am aware) to specifically invite LGBT people into a conversation for the 2020 Plenary Council. This call into dialogue is at the heart of Pope Francis' vision for the Church. Whilst I may not have received a specific answer from Archbishop Comensoli to my question, his actions of listening and dialogue was a positive step forward. Jesus tells us there are "many rooms in my Father's house", I know one of those rooms is reserved for me; and I am looking forward to decorating it. ☺

Integrating sexuality essential to healthy emotional life

KHOI NGUYEN MSC

Khoi Nguyen MSC discusses the importance of integrity in sexuality for priests and those in formation. In June 2018, he studied at the Institute for Sexuality Studies at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. After this in-depth course, the students, mostly formators, were asked to write an integration paper to synthesise personal and professional learning. This is the paper Khoi Nguyen wrote.

Let me begin this article by one of the most fundamental affirmations and truths about human sexuality. To be human is to be sexual. To be sexual is to be relational – with self, others and God. Kevin McClone, my professor at the Institute of Sexuality Studies, Chicago, used to say: 'There is no spirituality without sexuality.'

Our sexuality is essential, vital, and fundamental to our being as human and spiritual. We cannot talk about humanity without touching on our sexuality. We cannot live fully a human life without living wholeheartedly our sexuality. This is because our humanity is all about relating, loving and being loved, caring for others with our affection, emotion, physical presence, thoughtful gesture and ultimately unconditional love, and longing for the same (or similar) care from others, especially those we love. All of this is fundamentally founded upon our sexuality – our awareness, acceptance, integration and channelling of our sexual energy, desires and feelings.

Sexual feelings, desires and longings are indications of God's Spirit working in us. It is a grace of God urging us to connect, to commune, to unite. Firstly, we are called to touch into who we are, to connect with ourselves. Regardless our sexual orientation, gender and sexual attraction, we are created in God's image and likeness. This means that we are an image of love, and we are free to love and to accept love that is offered us. This is true for those who are women or men as well as those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex. If one should not be discriminated against by the variation of their skin colour, race or culture, one also should not be looked down or condemned because of their sexual variation. The identifications of homosexual acts and homosexuality as 'intrinsically disorder' or 'intrinsic moral evil' are more and more understood in psychology and sciences to be misunderstandings or myths. I think the Church needs to listen to the LGBTI people with a more open mind and heart, with a compassion that of Jesus than with a



claimed institutional authority that filters our ears and closes our hearts. As Brian McNaught, an American corporate coach and author on LGBT issues, said: 'No one would choose to be gay so to be rejected, discriminated and ostracised by his family, friends and community.' The LGBTIQ issues in religious life today are wake up calls for me and those who are heterosexual or straight from our lack of vigilance and awareness of the sufferings of our brothers and sisters; some who are very close to us – our community members, our families, our close friends, our parishioners, or our young people.

Our sexuality is not merely something we are experiencing just now but it is a life or a self that has been building up, growing, developing and maturing over time. In other words, our sexuality has a history we need to look back, reflect and accept. Only in doing this do we become more aware of how we are with our sexuality now, how much we accept or feel at home with it, how we deal with our current sexual desires, feelings and longings, how we react or respond to our today's relating with others, and how we pray and see where God is in our sexual and relational realm.

Looking back on my psychosexual history, emotional life was poor and at times impoverished deeply. This led me to a fragmentation in my sexual desire and gratification, a disconnection between emotional intimacy and physical pleasure, a separation between human body and

Continued page 24

FEATURES

emotional effect. Emotional need and intimacy I lacked when growing up became driving forces for me to involve in many romantic relationships so to indulge what I missed. Of course, I never felt satisfied and always restless in heart. I considered emotional disconnection as a lack of love, and the emotional realm was a sole, decisive factor in my intimate relationship with others, and ultimately with God. When I don't feel 'good' in prayer, when prayer doesn't feel wonderful or fruitful, I tend to perceive it as a lack of being loved by God. When bad things happen to me, when sickness strikes, it means that God is unhappy with me. I fail to see a God of Jesus, a God who endures with me through pain and suffering, through the ups and downs of life, through my successes and failures, through my weaknesses and glories. Love is much more than how I feel emotionally.

Having said that, it doesn't mean that emotion means nothing. Over the years, I have grown and learned more deeply and consciously about my emotional life. Without this, my sexuality will go unchecked – repressed, acting out or both. Tending to my emotional life is as important as tending to my physical body and health, my intellectual development, as well as my spiritual journey. In fact the more I tend to my emotional life, the better I am aware of and growing in other aspects of myself. One thing I realise is that

one aspect of human being cannot be replaced or substituted by others. If my emotional life is going wild, I need to attend to it. I cannot use intellectual life, e.g. my studies, to suppress it for long. We cannot excuse ourselves from dealing with our emotions and pains by sublimating them to pastoral responsibility. Sooner or later, we will need to attend to it – being aware, accepting, expressing appropriately and integrating them, at times (or many times) with the help of others. If sexuality is the energy for connection, we cannot deal with it alone. We need the graces of God and others whom we trust to help us integrate and thrive with our sexuality.

Our sexuality is manifested in ways we are interacting with others. Interacting with others is how to seek intimacy at the circumstances given us. We ourselves need our own personal intimacy – affectional intimacy, physical intimacy, and spiritual intimacy. We also have ministerial intimacy, crisis intimacy, communication intimacy, intellectual intimacy, or community intimacy. All these intimacies are fundamental to our identity and integration as human being. Intimacy is a human constant and permanent need. Without this need, there is no sexual desire and energy flowing through human bodies.

Having said all this, I now turn to pay attention to their applications in formation for men in community. A community and environment of acceptance and sensitivity

needs to be built in terms of human sexuality. The men entering initial formation need to feel safe and accepted talking, discussing and revealing their sexuality – feelings, fantasies, longings, experiences. This needs to happen in formation discussion, formation education and relationships between formators and students, students and other members of community. The men in formation need to have spiritual directors, supervisors and/or counsellors who accompany them individually according to their needs and who can accept and deal with issues of human sexuality in positive and meaningful ways. It is important to avoid giving the students mixed messages or conflicting messages about sexual issues and sexuality. Friendship and interaction with others beyond formation and religious community are encouraged with a humility when community/religious life is not always providing enough intimacy for one's needs.

Lastly, being informed, educated, self-aware, self-attentive and self-responsible in our sexuality are not merely applied for students in formation, but also to formators who are called to be models in this area. One of my respected formators used to say: 'Don't teach anyone to do what you yourself cannot do. And even if you can do what you are supposed to do, don't judge but be compassionate.' ☺



NCP Elections

Mark Freeman and Boni Buahendri SVD will each complete six years on the committee at the end of 2019.

NOMINATIONS ARE HEREBY CALLED FOR TWO COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

- The term of office for both committee positions is three (3) years: 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2022.
- The person being nominated and the proposer must be financial clergy members of the NCP.
- The person being nominated must counter sign the nomination form.
- Nominations close at **midnight 30th September 2019.**
- Contact the NCP Office for a Nomination Form.

The successful candidates must be available to attend the annual face to face meeting at the National Office in Belmont (Geelong) – Tuesday 11 February and Wednesday 12 February 2020.



My friendship with Les Murray and Valerie

JOACHIM DIRKS SSS

Jo Dirks SSS, Melbourne, wrote this reflection as a tribute to Les Murray after his death.



This article traces my relationship with the Australian poet, Les Murray and ends with the poem I wrote six weeks before Les died on 29 April 2019. The poem is dedicated to Les and his wife Valerie. Whilst I saw my priestly ministry as 'preach, proclaim and sing the Word', composing the poetic word came to me much later in my life. Nonetheless I was well prepared by a double major in English (having Dinny O'Hearn as tutor and the poets Vincent Buckley, A D Hope and Peter Steele SJ as lecturers) and German at the University of Melbourne. What endeared Les to me over many years was the freshness and boldness of his vision and what poetry is about. *Australia was ruled by poetry for tens of thousands of years, prose only became its ruling principle after settlement in 1788.*

My first meeting with Les occurred when I was a chaplain at the Catholic Teachers College, North Sydney. I had discovered the 1979 verse novel *The Boys who Stole the Funeral* and was keen to have a reading of the novel with a group of the students at the College. The Head of the English Department was aware of my intention and suggested that I should contact Les himself. Hence I found myself knocking on the door of a house in the North Sydney area. Les and Valerie were both at home. I explained what I was intending to do and Les graciously said he would come himself and read the indigenous voices that punctuate the text. The night of the actual reading was a great success and we were delighted to have the author himself with us.

On another occasion I stayed with some friends for my annual holidays in Mildura. I was also able to experience the Mildura Writers' Festival, well attended, but not overcrowded. It was summertime and the

weather was hot. I remember a barn like venue near the river. There I enjoyed Les reading his own poetry and having a chat with him.

Back in Melbourne I resumed my ministry at St Francis Church. There we had recently built the new Pastoral Centre to provide a greater outreach to the people and offer hospitality to all and sundry. The venue also provided opportunities for sessions on education and formation for the people who came to St Francis Church. When Les published his 1999 novel-poem *Freddy Neptune* I read it eagerly and was inspired to give a talk on it in the Pastoral Centre and the poems to date that Les had published.

On one occasion I received a friendly postcard from Les. It was quite unsolicited and unexpected. I treasure this postcard right up to this present time and especially after Les' death, even more so.

A few years later I heard that Les had published yet another new collection of poems in 2006 called *The Biplane Houses*. I decided to go to the former artists' colony at Montsalvat in Eltham where Les was going to talk and read some of his newest poems. Again I was able to meet Les and enjoy a chat.

After this meeting I had the opportunity to take a sabbatical rest and time out after two terms in provincial administration and governance. I relished the opportunity to visit family overseas in 2007 enabling me to make the Camino pilgrimage in Spain to St James Cathedral in Santiago. I kept a daily journal of my pilgrim walk of the Camino Frances and thought that it might provide the raw material for what might one day be published as a book. But when on holidays in Perth at my sister's house, with space, time and leisure, my poetic muse awakened again after many years and I began to turn my Camino reflections into poems. I wrote one poem for each of the thirty one days that I walked the Camino. Once I had finished these poems, I found that I enjoyed writing poetry when moved by persons and events which had impacted on me.

Having had my own collection of poems published as *The Surprise of Walking* in 2016, and currently preparing a new volume, I decided to contact Les and ask him if he might be interested and able to

speak at the launch. It was then I found out from Valerie that Les had experienced a severe down turn in his health and was in a nursing home near his home at Bunyah. It was at this moment I decided to compose the tribute to Les and Valerie that now follows below.

Les and Valerie

English head of the Teachers' College, hearing of my wish for a group reading of The Boys who Stole the Funeral, suggested I contact you. So I knocked on your door and met you both. Les you kindly offered to speak the indigenous voices, which you did one night at Balmain Point. Then in mid-summer by our grandest river met once more at Mildura writers' festival. Enthused I gave a talk on Freddy Neptune in our new Pastoral Centre. My flickering poetic muse fell dormant in my thirties, the flow was to proclaim, preach, sing the Word. You came to Montsalvat, where Matcham Skipper mentored me in my student years crafting with wax, for the launch of The Biplane Houses. But after my Spanish walk, the gift awoke. At Q/A Rabbi Boteach passionately spoke of marital intimacy as the lot of human life. May this love sustain you both and always. [14/3/2019]

The poem had its debut after I had said Mass for the students at Yarra Theological Union. It was the chaplain, Sue Richardson PBVM, who suggested that I send the poem to *The Swag* for publication. I hope the poem brings some comfort and solace to Valerie Murray. She herself has written *Flight from the Brothers Grimm: A European Australian Memoir* in 2016 detailing her story and the transition from the Old World of Europe to the New World of Australia.

At school we were obliged to write at the top of every page of our workbooks 'A.M.D.G.', Latin words for 'To the Greater Glory of God'. Les dedicated his poetry *To the Glory of God*. Let Les have the last word, as the following quotation from his poem *Poetry and Religion* puts it so well: *Full religion is the large poem in loving repetition; like any poem, it must be inexhaustible and complete.* ☺

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

A matter of style

PETER CULLINANE

Peter Cullinane, Bishop Emeritus of Palmerston North, New Zealand discusses the way of church reform in an article originally published in *NZ Catholic Newspaper* (Issue 564, May 5-18 2019).

Why is it that many Catholics applaud the way Pope Francis is leading the Church, while others fear he is leading the Church astray? That question merits the attention of all Catholics.

It is not enough to like or not like ‘the changes’. Ultimately, being Catholics is not about our own likes and dislikes anyway. It is about faithfulness to Christ in the Catholic tradition. The desire to be faithful is common ground between both supporters and critics of Pope Francis’ leadership. But the Catholic tradition is about being faithful in an ever changing world. Historically, the Church has always adapted to changing social and cultural conditions, in order to carry out its unchanging mission. Not to adapt is to not be faithful to that tradition or to that mission.

Clearly, Pope Francis believes the social and cultural conditions of our time require a different style of leadership – and he expects the same of other leaders within the Church. Pope John XXIII’s pastoral instincts were already in the same direction when, at the opening of the Second Vatican Council, he famously said the Church needed to act by ‘making use of the medicine of mercy rather than severity . . . and by showing herself to be the loving mother of all, benign, patient, full of mercy and goodness’. Those who still clamour for harder preaching, stricter rules and harsher punishments were already on a different path years before Pope Francis came along.

Personhood and conscience: But the needed change of style has deeper roots. It is based on what it means to be a person, and what it means to fully respect the primacy of conscience. A deeper appreciation of what these mean has been growing in the Western world over many years, and has been gradually recognised in the Church. It is less evident in the Churches of the East. And it is non-existent wherever ‘religion’ is still promoted by force or fear. It is a development that was both acknowledged and affirmed by the Second Vatican Council: The dignity of the human person is a concern of which people of our time are becoming increasingly more aware. In growing

numbers people demand that they should enjoy the use of their own responsible judgement and freedom and decide on their actions on grounds of duty and conscience, without external pressure or coercion. (*On Religious Liberty – Dignitatis Humanae*, n.1.)

Proper appreciation of these developments requires a correspondingly different way of exercising authority: a different way of leading, and a different way of expecting to be led. An earlier way of leading and of teaching tended to be ‘controlling’. Often, people’s experience was that their decisions had already been made for them. They didn’t need to understand the issues; it was enough just to obey.

A true appreciation of personhood and of conscience fosters personal responsibility in others. It relies more on catechesis and moral formation than on regulation and penalties. It is more akin to ‘author-ising’ or ‘en-abling’ others to grow as persons. It requires a formation aimed at helping them to understand the issues and to choose well. It moves away from social patterns and leadership styles that were more typical of feudal societies, and that prolonged over-dependence and personal immaturity.

Shift to personal responsibility

The Church has not always been the first to appreciate the need to shift from feudal dependency to taking personal responsibility. Various human and civil rights that we now take for granted (even the idea of democracy) were originally condemned by Popes Pius IX and Pius X. In our own time, Church leaders have sometimes found it easier, by resorting to blanket bans, to exclude individuals’ scope for exercising their own conscientious judgements. The following are three topical examples:

(i) Canons 960 and 961 forbid general absolution for the forgiveness of serious sins (outside situations of emergency). These canons do not forbid the use of general absolution for those desiring the sacrament of reconciliation ‘out of devotion’. But a lazy and controlling style of leadership finds it easier to simply forbid general absolution for all. (I leave it to psychologists to explain what kink in



human nature sometimes ‘needs’ to feel more is forbidden than actually is.)

(ii) The Church teaches that it is wrong to contracept the love of husband and wife. That teaching does not extend to contraception in other situations. (Married love is not being contracepted where there is no marriage.) But a lazy way of leading finds it easier to make a blanket ban by attaching the wrongness to contraceptives themselves.

(iii) Holy Communion is not for those who are conscious of unrepented serious sin. This can be the case for people living in irregular marital situations. But it is not always and necessarily the case that people in irregular situations are actually guilty of serious sin. Proper pastoral responsibility allows for what Pope John Paul II called the ‘law of gradualness’ and for circumstances that mitigate culpability. These are well spelled out in the traditional books on moral theology. But a less pastoral leadership (and some critics of Pope Francis’ *Amoris Laetitia*) simply ignore those principles and assume that all people in irregular relationships are “living in sin”. (When the question is asked: “Who are we to judge?”, it is not objective moral law that is being questioned, but people’s subjective degree of guilt.)

In all these examples, the individual’s right to exercise personal responsibility is being obstructed by a way of exercising authority

that belonged to an era when the significance of personhood and the paramountcy of conscience were less appreciated. It is not coincidental that the same Pope who opposes clericalism is promoting respect for individuals' consciences. But nor is Pope Francis being novel: Pope John Paul II had reminded us that the Church's official teaching is 'at the service of conscience'. Church teaching informs conscience, but faithfulness to conscience is what we shall be judged by.

Clericalism, however, is the mindset not only of those whose leadership diminishes people's scope for exercising personal responsibility. It is also the mindset of those who prefer to be led in that way. Mere conformity to authority and to the law can be a cop-out for those who don't want to take personal responsibility. They prefer others to do the thinking and deciding. Those who still hanker for those times will certainly have difficulty with Pope Francis' style of leadership.

The law and false security: There is a further problem with mere compliance with the law: the law on its own cannot fully reveal what is God's will for the individual in every set of circumstances. Sometimes God's will for them will be the same as what the written law prescribes. Sometimes it will be only partly the same — and sometimes quite different. This reality is also acknowledged in traditional Catholic moral theology, which is why it developed various ways of explaining occasional necessary departures from the letter of the law — e.g. 'exemptions', 'dispensations', 'epikeia'...

What matters is the value or values which the law is intended to protect and promote. A law-based morality looks only to the written law. A value-based morality looks to the values which are the purpose or 'spirit' of the law. To look no further than the letter of the law is stunting. Fulfilling the law's purpose is 'life-giving'. Pope Francis emphasises the need for discernment in the sense that St Ignatius taught. This means including but looking beyond the use of 'intelligence and common sense', beyond 'reason and prudence', and beyond 'the Church's sound norms' — and being guided by the Spirit who 'alone can penetrate what is obscure and hidden in every situation...' (*Gaudete et Exultate* 172,173)

Is it any wonder they take fright who can only feel secure behind the letter of the law clearly spelled out for them. They fear Pope Francis' style leads to 'relativism' and 'subjectivism'. Yes, that is a risk. But that is what good moral and spiritual formation is

intended to prevent — and providing that is hard work. Those who have failed to provide sound catechesis must take some responsibility for the insecurity of those who depend excessively on the written law.

Sooner or later, failure to provide sound catechetical/moral formation, and failure to allow scope for people to make their own decisions, backfires. It is been claimed, for example, that the pro-abortion vote in Ireland was really a vote 'against the Church'. People voted the wrong way, but they were fed up with being told what to do. Making right decisions still matters — greatly; but so does the way people come to their decisions — freely. Affirming the Church's teaching and respecting conscience go hand in hand; it is not one or the other.

The trappings of authority

A significant shift from one model of exercising authority to another raises questions about the symbols of authority inherited from the previous model. Tonsure and skullcap were given at the time of entry into the clerical state, which signified apartness and privilege.

Today, priests no longer wear the black skullcap, but use of the purple and scarlet skullcaps to signify 'higher rank' lingers on. The mitre had been part of the uniform of officials at the imperial court in fifth century Byzantium. The shepherd's crook could aptly replace both those insignia. At least it has a biblical allusion. The title 'Excellency', which is still used by Roman Congregations to address bishops, was given in 1930 when Pope Pius XI wanted to match Mussolini's gesture of giving that title to his mayors. Some cling to these insignia and titles precisely to signify the kind of authority they originally signified. Some find them incompatible with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 23:1-10. Some regard them as harmless embellishments. Some shrug them off as 'toys for the boys'. Others see them as left-overs from models of authority that the Church is being called to move away from. Perhaps others are waiting for someone else to make the decision for them.

The Church's mandate to teach has not changed; the way it teaches has needed to change, based on greater respect for the person and for conscience. Pope Francis' style of leadership invites people to become more fully human and more fully alive through the exercise of personal responsibility. This is our dignity and our calling. It is based on our being 'made in the image of God'. ☪

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Muslim intellectuals welcome ‘unprecedented’ joint text with Catholics

ANNE-BÉNÉDICTE HOFFNER

Sunnis, Shia, Sufi express ‘great satisfaction’ and hope that the *Document on Human Fraternity* constitutes a new phase in relations between Christianity and Islam reported Anne-Bénédicte Hoffner in *La Croix International* on July 10, 2019. Reprinted with permission.



The Document on Human Fraternity signed on Feb. 4 by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayyeb, Grand Imam of the Al-Azhar, during the pope’s trip to the United Arab Emirates, has been hailed as ‘an unprecedented institutional event in the history of Christian-Muslim relations.’

In a text that runs to 15 pages and is entitled *The Brotherhood for Knowledge and Cooperation*, 22 Muslim intellectuals and leaders have welcomed it as a sign that ‘a new phase is opening up, in different aspects, in the relations between our two religions.’

‘This phase seems to be moving toward the recognition of the providential legitimacy and diversity of Revelations, theologies, religions, languages and religious communities,’ they write. ‘Diversity is no longer seen as a call to conquest or proselytism, or a pretext for a simple facade of tolerance, but rather as an opportunity to exercise and put into practice the fraternity which is a vocation contained in God’s plan for creation.’ Recognition of ‘the other’ is necessary. Consequently, and by ‘respect for religious plurality ... recognition of the other is necessary,’ the signatories also affirm. It is an acknowledgement that is ‘neither a forced uniformity nor a conciliatory syncretism, but instead a warning against the risk of placing one group against the other or in the other’s place.’

Among the signatories are several Sufi officials, including the Senegalese Sheikh Ahmed Tidiane Sy and the Italian Yahya Pallavicini, ‘one of the promoters of this initiative’, as claimed by one of his Italian relatives. There are also personalities who have long been involved in Islamic-Christian dialogue, such as the Algerian Mustafa Cherif and the Lebanese Mohammed Sammak. They were joined by muftis from Bosnia and Slovenia, the Grand Imam of the Lahore Mosque in Pakistan, a member of Kaiciid, a Saudi organization engaged in interfaith dialogue and based in Vienna, Austria, as well as several representatives of Emirates organizations.

Shias also signed the text, including the Iraqi Jawad al-Khoei, as well as two North American academics: Yousef Casewit, Assistant Professor of Koranic Studies at the University of Washington, and Ilyas Islam John Andrew Morrow, a teacher in Canada. Quran recommends interreligious dialogue. Published on a website created for the occasion, their text recalls from the Catholic point of view some of the stages of Islamic-Christian dialogue, such as the Second Vatican Council declaration *Nostra aetate*, the visit of John Paul II to Morocco and the meeting in Assisi in 1986. ‘Since then, the idea began to emerge that the Christian concept of God, in its very essence, is not fundamentally contrary to the Islamic vision, although it is formally

presented in a different way,’ they write.

On the Muslim side, other initiatives were also mentioned, such as the document *A Common Word* written by 138 Muslim scholars in response to Benedict XVI’s remarks in Regensburg, and the launch by Saudi Arabia of the Kaiciid in Vienna in 2012. ‘Interreligious dialogue is recommended by the Quran, which calls for its implementation ‘in the best way’ and nowadays it is vital,’ say the authors, who warn against the temptation to ‘understand or practice’ the values of ‘fraternity, mercy and spirituality ... in an excessively sentimental or emotional way.’ But, for the most part, these Muslim leaders from various countries wish to express their great satisfaction and their hope that this text constitutes what they describe as ‘a starting point (as much as a point of no return).’

‘We hope that, through this meeting and this document, the Muslim community around the world will find a new impetus and inspiration for internal dialogue, to make its natural ‘unity in diversity’ a shared common value once again,’ they said. ☪



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Parish Pastoral Councils – part of the solution?

FR PETER KOOLOOS

Peter Kooloos, priest of the Diocese of Sale, discusses the scope and limitations of Parish Pastoral Councils.



Reading Aengus Kavanagh's article, *Can Parish Pastoral Councils save the ailing Church?* in the Summer edition of *The Swag* led me to reflect on my experiences of Parish Pastoral Councils over the almost forty years I have been a parish priest. For most of those years I have been blessed with either Parish Pastoral Councils or Parish Committees which have functioned well and have been a great support to me in my ministry.

Since the turn of the century I have had to establish Parish Pastoral Councils in five parishes and rejuvenate the Parish Pastoral Council in another one. When I was the Parish Priest of Leongatha I was for a few years also the pastor of three other neighbouring parishes, none of which had a Parish Pastoral Council. The Parish Pastoral Council at Leongatha functioned very well but looked like gradually fading out of existence because it did not have an appropriate succession structure to bring in new blood in a positive ongoing way. When I came to my current appointment as Parish Priest of the Iona-Maryknoll and Koo Wee Rup parishes I discovered that these two parishes had non-functioning Parish Pastoral Councils.

I found *Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils* written by Sr. Cecilia Anning rsj. a very helpful and practical resource in establishing new Parish Pastoral Councils and in rejuvenating the Leongatha Parish Pastoral Council. The outcome in all these cases has been the establishment of a very well-functioning Parish Pastoral Council and in the Leongatha case giving it the structure it needed to remain a great Parish Pastoral Council. In my current ministry as Parish Priest of two very small neighbouring parishes, the Iona-Maryknoll parish and the Koo Wee Rup Parish, I have established one Parish Pastoral Council to serve the two parishes. In this situation it is

extremely important that everyone works for the good of the two parishes. Huge problems will occur if members from one parish will try to dictate to the other parish what they should do there. I am very vigilant about this issue and so far it has not arisen. The separate identity of each parish is highly respected. While this handbook is currently out of print electronic versions are available from *Evangelisation Brisbane* of the Brisbane archdiocese.

I believe that these are some of the requirements for having a well-functioning and effective Parish Pastoral Council:

1. The parish priest must have a leadership style which is one of service and modelled on Jesus himself who said, *'the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve'* (Mark 10:45).
2. The Parish Pastoral Council members need to work together with their parish priest to try to determine what God is asking of their parish at this particular time. They also need to be aware of Jesus' promise: *'Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them'* (Mt. 18:20) as they have gathered in his name. Pope Francis calls this a synodal way of being Church. People with a personal agenda can be disastrous on a Parish Pastoral Council.
3. The consensus model of operation is the model which best reflects gospel values and helps build up the parish community. I like to use the example of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15)
4. All financial issues and managerial tasks such as repairs and maintenance matters must be referred to the Parish Finance Council.
5. Accountability to the whole parish is extremely important. This can be done in various ways such as general meeting of the parish, reports in the parish bulletins or other parish publications.
6. Good statutes (I do not like the word, constitution, as it implies great rigidity) which have a built-in succession structure are extremely important. They can also be used to form Parish Pastoral Councillors and educate the parish.
7. I have always found it very helpful to have one of the Parish Pastoral Councillors chair the meetings.

This frees me from the responsibility of running the meeting in order to listen more carefully to the discussion.

Now I shall give my answer to Aengus Kavanagh's question, *'Can Parish Pastoral Councils save the ailing Church?'*

I believe that the issue raised in the Code of Canon Law about a Parish Pastoral Council having a consultative vote (can. 536 §2) is largely an irrelevant issue when the Parish Priest and the Pastoral Council are working together harmoniously for the good of the parish. It becomes a very large issue when there is a power struggle between the Parish Priest and the Parish Pastoral Council. Unfortunately this situation also has very sad pastoral consequences for the parish. There are never any real winners!

When the apostles were having a dispute about which of them was the greatest Jesus put forward the model of 'servant leadership' – the only model in parish leadership which works (Mark 10:45). My view also is that giving the Parish Pastoral Council the upper hand by it being able to overrule the parish priest might solve some problems but also create other ones.

It is only when the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Priest work together harmoniously and in partnership that a Parish Pastoral Council can save an ailing Church. ✚



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Does the Plenary Council offer an opportunity?

AENGUS KAVANAGH FSP

Aengus Kavanagh FSP, Patrician Brother, Ryde, NSW offers a reflection on the context in which the Plenary Council 2020 is being held and possibilities for hopeful outcomes.

In October 1962, after four years' preparation, and at the instigation of the Pope, St John XXIII, the first session of the second Vatican Council commenced with the assembly of over 2,000 cardinals and bishops from all over the Catholic world. Though almost 80 years old at the time, Pope St John XXIII, was impelled by his vision of *aggiornamento*, pastoral renewal of the church, towards a Church In The Modern World – *Gaudium et Spes*. Pope St John XXIII died in June 1963 and the Council process was continued by his successor, Pope St Paul VI. The Council ended officially on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1965 with the launch of *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy & Hope). In between October 1962 and December there were a number of assemblies in Rome of cardinals, bishops, and periti – theologians of special expertise to refine and ratify the Council documents. Each assembly averaged over 2,000 in attendance.

These facts are recalled here to underscore the gravity of Vatican II and its potential for a church renewed. A question to ponder is why the spirit of Vatican II was allowed to atrophy under the two papacies preceding that of Pope Francis? The title given to the main document emanating from the Council is *The Pastoral Constitution on The Church In The Modern*

World. Clearly the Council aspiration was that the church would grow in attunement to, and in conversation with, the lived realities of Catholics in the contemporary society. It seemed as though the Spirit was ushering in the kind of evolutionary consciousness needed to generate a re-culturing within the church and enabling a fresh expression of the Gospel through times of great change in society. It could be argued that an absence of this evolutionary consciousness in past decades may be a reason why our church as a messenger of the Good News appears to find little resonance in the hearts of so many. Too often signs of the times that invite a discerning response are met with defensive reactions in favour of the status quo.

In the 1960s, Peter, Paul, and Mary had a popular song of lament – *Where Have All The Flowers Gone?* Well might we lament: *Where Have All The Young Ones Gone?* as we observe the greying in the pews among the around 10% of baptised Catholics who turn up weekly, along with the ageing and diminishment of the clergy. Does it have to be so? Let us not succumb to the trend of inevitability.

Pope Francis is earnestly trying to revive a prevailing antiquated vision of church calling for a proclamation of a joyful Gospel, a Gospel which is widely perceived

as a vehicle of Good News in a church freed from the shackles of elitism and dis-connectedness. In his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, he lists as a threat shades of: a tomb psychology that develops and slowly transforms Christians into mummies in a museum (n.83). A gloomy prospect in a world that is crying out for an infusion of Christianity in action, action inspired and guided by life and teachings of Jesus, witnessing to his compassion, his courage and consideration, his healing, his honesty, his forgiveness and reconciliation, his sense of justice, and above all, his life as a beacon of hope and unconditional love. Surely our church can do better as a visible transforming presence of Jesus in our world rather than seemingly legitimising the fears of Pope Francis that the church may remain 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 (E.G. n.47).

Plenary Council 2020 – A platform for a new dawn?

Many factors have combined in recent decades leaving our church battered, broken, and confused. Paradoxically, this condition of humiliation and vulnerability could be a catalyst for overdue renewal, taking heart from St Paul: *whenever I am weak, then I am strong* (2 Cor. 12:10).

Kevin Treston articulates a perspective in resonance with our present context: *The crisis situation now for Christianity presents an extraordinary graced opportunity to courageously engage in the re-interpretation and revitalisation of church life. (The Wind That Blows Where It Chooses – The quest for a Christian story in our time, p.96).*

However, such 're-interpretation and revitalisation' does not happen by the mere wishing it were so. Likewise, it does not happen just by the articulation of aspirations and the development of plans. Dioceses and parishes are awash with pastoral plans, often resulting from widespread consultation, often naming expectations without much capacity for attainment, and rarely leading to significant transformation. In the macro context does this not mirror a fate that befell Vatican II?

USA Catholic columnist, George Weigel, identifies a major obstacle in his contention that the Catholic church 'doesn't do paradigm shifts'. This fortress mentality is more frequently encountered in the simplistic blocker 'you can't change church teaching'



without any recognition of the multiple layers of church teachings, some of essence but many 'man-made' in particular contexts, and crying out for updating or for scrapping altogether.

The challenge is one of hearts and minds at every level in our church, resulting in a move from prevailing mindsets, from consumer to donor, from spectator to participant, from compliance to commitment. In the contemporary meaning, a range of paradigm shifts are a necessary undergirding for such a move.

Renowned spiritual writer, Richard Rohr OFM in *The Universal Christ* (2018:40-41), makes the following pertinent observation the term 'paradigm shift' describes a major switch in one's assumptions or viewpoint. We hear the term much less in the world of religion, where groups assume they are dealing with eternal and unchangeable absolutes. But, ironically, a religious paradigm shift was exactly what Jesus and Paul were initiating in their day – so much so that their way of seeing became a whole new religion.

A recurring theme in the aspirations of Pope Francis, along with a host of other church leaders, commentators, and the thinking faithful, is the urgent need to find new ways of 'being church' in our world to-day. Fortuitously, the Catholic church in Australia is actively engaged in this quest through Plenary Council 2020. The engagement of great numbers of Catholics in Phase 1 of the Council process is a heartening indicator of a widespread yearning for a church renewed. This view is substantiated in the scenario reflected in the Council website: *More than 222,000 people participated in listening and dialogue encounters and contributed 17,457 submissions during the first stage of preparation for the Australian Plenary Council.*

The Council Team assembled to analyse and crystallise the mammoth amount of data thus generated, categorised emerging themes which name and invite new ways of 'being church' in the world. And so, the Council is now inviting a next round of 'listening and discernment encounters' as follows: How is God calling us to be Christ-centred church that is:

1. Open to conversion, renewal and reform
2. Humble, healing and merciful
3. Prayerful and Eucharistic
4. Joyful, hope-filled and servant community
5. Missionary and evangelising
6. Inclusive, participatory and synodal

This is a refreshing and inspiring vision for a reformed church, all the more pleasing and hope-filled in that it is a synthesis of thousands of group gatherings of 'ordinary Catholics' throughout the land. However, we recall the reams of visionary and inspiring documents emanating from Vatican II over fifty years ago hoping to position the Catholic church as a key player in the Modern World but with scant evidence of deep transformation in the institutional church. And so, the big challenge for the Council and for the Catholic church in general is to put in place policies and strategies to broaden the base of co-responsibility to ensure deliverable expectations that translate rhetoric to reality.

A case in point to illustrate a gap between aspiration and practice arises from an exhortation of Vatican II that seems to have slipped off the radar: *It is highly desirable that in every diocese a special pastoral council be established, presided over by the bishop himself, in which clergy, religious, and laity specially chosen for the purpose will participate (Decree on the Pastoral Office of the bishops in the church, No 27).*

There in the 1960s' golden era of priestly vocations in the church, and after a number of Rome assemblies of over 2,000 bishops and theologians from around the world, was a 'highly desirable' urging for the setting up of a structure which would give the lay baptised a formal role of co-responsibility for the mission of the church in their own diocese. Surely, it is a serious negligence in church leadership that over 50 years later, and in a time of growing crisis in our church, Diocesan Pastoral Councils are very much the exception rather than the norm and efforts to implement them are frequently viewed with scepticism by those who should know better.

This is not to suggest that Diocesan Pastoral Councils are a panacea for current problems, but it is to question a seeming deep reluctance to give the lay baptised a voice in policies relating to pastoral ministry and church governance. Is the absence of Diocesan Pastoral Councils but the tip of an iceberg of rejection, of inertia, of ambivalence, of misunderstanding, of fear – all hindering a much higher profile for the lay baptised and confirmed, in the life of parish and diocese? On present clergy statistics and with just trickles in local priestly vocations as currently conceived, what is a likely scenario for parish leadership and governance in 2040?

Obviously, it is not possible to answer this

question with any level of certainty. It is reasonable however to assume that there will still be 'parishioners', though parishes may be configured differently. It is further reasonable to assume that the parishes will be strong Gospel communities in the Catholic tradition where flourishing parish and diocesan Pastoral Councils are the norm. So, now is the time to sow the seeds for such flourishing. Perhaps a time to engage earnestly with the implications of an assertion by the Bishop of Parramatta-Vincent Long Van-Nguyen, OFM. Conv. – *In effect, the priesthood of the ordained has assumed and usurped the rich and varied ministries of the baptised. It is time, therefore, that the notion of priesthood needs to break open anew so as to fully honour what Paul says, "everyone is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Address to the National Assembly of Diocesan Priests, Christchurch, New Zealand, 13 September 2018).*

Phase 1 of Plenary Council 2020 'listening and encounters' has brought us the invitation: How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred church that is, among other things, *Open to conversion, renewal, and reform; Inclusive, participatory and synodal.* There are many paradigm shifts implicit in the voice of the Spirit in these invitations, shifts that assign a priority to the faith education, formation, and training of clergy and the lay baptised for an expanded and shared 'way of being church'. Also, a call for equity and a raised profile for women in positions of leadership and governance in the church?

In recent years there have been many diocesan assemblies and forums across the Catholic church of the Western world especially. Such events are indicators of a desire to implement the vision of Pope Francis for a more synodal church. In opting for a national Plenary Council, the Australian church has taken the vision implementation to a higher and more formal level. Because of this, Australia is favourably placed to model revitalisation strategies and initiatives more widely in the Catholic world. The collated themes emerging from Phase 1 of the Council's 'listening and encounters' provide a framework and a catalyst to build a church that is more pastoral than dogmatic, more compassionate than judgemental, more invitational than demanding, more empowering than controlling, more reconciling than hurting, more committed than compliant., In short, to build a church that more authentically reflects the face of Jesus the Good Shepherd, the Jesus whose mission the church is called to proclaim. ☪

How the Eucharist evolved

FRANK O'DEA SSS

Frank O'Dea SSS looks at how the Eucharist developed and what it might mean for our Eucharist today.

The Beginning

The disciples were devastated at the death of Jesus but were greatly comforted and encouraged by his appearances after his resurrection when he ate and drank with them. I like to think Jesus was teaching them that when they had a meal together to remember him, then he was with them as the risen Christ.

The Last Supper was probably a rather bewildering event for the disciples and there was little time to reflect on it as it was followed immediately by his betrayal, suffering and death. When he revealed himself in the 'breaking of bread' to the two disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35) and when he provided a barbecued breakfast of bread and fish for the disciples on the shores of Lake Galilee (John 21:1–14), perhaps he was teaching them in a very visual way that when they had a meal in memory of him, then he would be with them as the Risen One.

What provoked the disciples to begin celebrating a meal in memory of Jesus is a 'missing link' in the history of the Eucharist in the early Church

Perhaps after the coming of the Holy Spirit, one of the disciples was inspired with the memory of Jesus' instruction at the Last Supper, and said to the others, *Do you remember that when we had that last meal on the night he was betrayed, after he broke the bread and blessed the cup, he said, 'Do this in memory of me? Come on, let's do it.*

The disciples began to celebrate the Eucharist very soon after Pentecost. Immediately after he tells us about the coming of the Holy Spirit and Peter's preaching to the people, Luke writes, 'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.' (Acts 2:42)

Does *the breaking of bread* mean the Eucharist? This undoubtedly refers to more than ordinary meals. The presence of the resurrected Jesus is noted at the 'breaking of the bread' in Luke 24:35. Luke emphasizes the connection between meals and Jesus' presence (Luke 24:41–42; Acts 1:4, 10:41). The ritual is noted again in 2:46; 20:7, 11. (Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p.58, Sacra Pagina Series, 1992)

Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 and Matthew, Mark and Luke in their gospels tell us about the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. These accounts were written 25 to 60 years after the event, during which time what actually happened would have been partly lost and each community remembered the event in the way it had been passed on to them. It would be natural for the authors to write into their story of the Last Supper the way the Eucharist was celebrated by the communities at the time of writing. We would like to know the details of the early Eucharists but, alas, the writers have not provided them.

One of the major difficulties faced by scholars with regard to the origin of the Eucharist is the question of how far the accounts of the Last Supper may be treated as reliable descriptions of an actual historical event and how far they have been affected by the later liturgical practices of the first generation of Christians. (Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, Oxford University Press, 2002, p.61)

The earliest Eucharists were home Masses (Acts 2:46 says 'they broke bread at home') with small numbers and one could safely presume they would have been very simple. Elaborate ceremonies would develop only later.

Yet these early Eucharists were establishing the traditions or should we say 'Traditions' with upper case 'T'. When we want to be truly 'traditional', we are looking not at the Church of the 1950s or the Middle Ages but at the very early Church of the first few centuries.

As the good news spread beyond the borders of Israel, there were Gentile converts and these too learned to remember Jesus' death and resurrection in the Breaking of Bread. Luke tells us of Paul at Troas: 'On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread..' (Acts 20:7–12)

This is the only account we have in the New Testament of a specific celebration of the Eucharist, and again it gives no details.

Note that they met 'on the first day of the week', that is, Sunday, the day of the resurrection, so these early Christians changed the day of meeting from Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, to Sunday.

Eucharist with a Meal

Each community would have developed its own way of celebrating the Eucharist and for this reason we cannot generalise about how the ritual was performed. At least in some places such as Corinth, the Eucharist, here referred to as 'the Lord's Supper', was celebrated together with a community meal. We know this because Paul rebukes this community for not sharing their food as they should.

When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. (1 Corinthians 11:20–21)

Paul is quite severe towards the Corinthians and he asks them to recall how Jesus gave himself so unselfishly when he instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. He repeats for them the words that Jesus used: *This is my body that is for you...* Paul then tells them that when they do not share generously, they are eating and drinking 'in an unworthy manner' (v. 27) and not 'discerning the body' (v. 29), that is, the assembly of followers.

Sharing a meal at the same time as celebrating the Eucharist fell out of use, though it seems a natural thing to do, and many parishes today have morning tea after Sunday morning Mass..

Evolution of Different Rites

The particular way of celebrating the Eucharist, that is, the sequence of events, the texts, the symbols are called 'rites'. In the East, many different rites evolved and these are still in use such as the Coptic, East Syrian, West Syrian, Byzantine and Malabar rites. Several different rites evolved in the West but the Roman Rite is the one used almost universally now.

Language

We could safely assume that when the 'Breaking of Bread' was begun in Jerusalem, the participants would have used their own language, Aramaic, and the Greek speaking people among them (the Hellenists) would have used Greek. As the gospel spread beyond Israel, the local language of the area was used, and people of the Eastern rites still use these languages. In the West the language of the common people, Koine Greek, was used but Latin became the favoured language.

'In the second half of the second century, however, Latin also appeared as the language of Christians (in North Africa),

and from that time on it was used more and more widely in the west.’ (Herman Wegman, translated by Gordon W. Lathrop, *Christian Worship in East and West*, Pueblo Publishing Company 1985, p.65)

Latin prevailed in the West until the Council of Vatican II in the 1960s. This transition from Latin into the vernacular languages for the Mass was a momentous step in the 1960s. I wonder whether there was as much trauma in the change from Greek to Latin in the late second century as there was in the recent change from Latin to English!

Fasting

Jews had rules for fasting and the early Christians continued this practice by fasting from midnight until the celebration of the Eucharist. Fasting meant nothing to eat and nothing to drink, not even water – a very difficult practice, especially for priests in hot countries like Australia when they frequently had to travel long distances between Masses on horseback. This obligation was only relaxed after Vatican II. Today the fasting is one hour prior to the time of receiving communion.

Roots in Judaism

Because Christianity has its roots in Judaism, it was natural for the early prayers to be adaptations of Jewish blessings and prayers. The prayers we use now at the presentation of the bread and wine clearly show their Jewish origin with the opening line, ‘Blessed are you Lord, God of all creation’. Likewise, it would have been natural for the early Christians to continue the practice of reading the scriptures, including the gospels, at their gatherings. To this practice was added the reading of the letters of the founders of their communities: Paul, Peter, John and others. We now call this the Liturgy of the Word.

Sign of Unity

One of the major concerns of the early Church was for the Eucharist to be a sign of unity, especially when persecution threatened to divide the assembly. Eating from the same loaf, drinking from the same cup, gathered around the same table – these were symbols of a united people. This sense of belonging is still very important today.

In the early Church, unity with previous assemblies and with congregations in

different parts of the city was considered important. In Rome the pope placed a piece of the bread from a previous Mass into the cup at the Breaking of the Bread to symbolise unity with earlier gatherings, and pieces of bread from the pope’s Mass were taken to other churches in the city where the ‘Breaking of Bread’ was being celebrated..

Justin Martyr

A very important document comes from around 155 when Justin Martyr (100–165) describes the form the Mass took at that time:

- Readings from Old and New Testament ‘for as long as time permits’.



- The president of the assembly gives a homily.
- Prayers and intercessions.
- Kiss of peace.
- The president ‘offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability’.
- Communion taken to the sick and the absent.
- Collection for those in need. (Refer John F. Baldovin S.J. *Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation*, Sheed and Ward, 2003, p.41)

When Justin says the president ‘offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability’, he is referring to the Eucharistic prayer which the presider composed spontaneously as there was nothing fixed in writing at that time—a very significant difference between Mass then and Mass today.

Apart from this concession to spontaneity, note how closely the Eucharist at the time of Justin Martyr corresponds to the present-day Eucharist. See also the importance given to taking communion to those unable to be present to let them know they are not forgotten by the assembly – again the concern for unity.

Notice also the differences. What is missing is the introduction, penitential rite, opening prayer, the creed, prayer over the gifts, prayer after communion and the dismissal. These were added in later centuries.

The Institution Narrative in the Eucharistic Prayer

We take for granted that in every Eucharist we hear the story of the Last Supper which contains the words of Jesus, ‘Take and eat, this is my body given up for you... Take and drink, this is my blood poured out for you.’ We refer to these as the ‘words of consecration’. In the missal they are printed in bold type and bells and incense were used. These words were considered absolutely essential.

However, research shows that the earliest Eucharistic prayers did not contain the story of the Last Supper, hence they did not contain what we call ‘the words of consecration’.

So there is not a single pre-Nicene eucharistic prayer that one can prove contained the Words of Institution, and today many scholars maintain that the most primitive, original eucharistic prayers were short, self-contained benedictions without Institution Narrative or Epiclesis, comparable to the Didache and the papyrus Strasbourg. (Robert F Taft, Mass Without the Consecration? Worship 77, 6 Nov 2003, p.483; italics, upper case and lower case in original). [The Council of Nicaea took place in 325 AD, the Didache was written between 50 and 100 AD, Strasbourg is the title of an ancient document]

In the early Church the Last Supper story with the ‘words of consecration’ was not part of the liturgy. The focus of Taft’s article is the Eucharistic prayer of Addai and Mari used in the Assyrian Church of the East and which does not contain the story of the Last Supper, hence it does not have the ‘words of consecration’. He refers to an ‘audacious agreement’ between the Assyrian Church and the Vatican in which the Holy See states that Catholics of the Chaldean Church may receive communion

Continued page 34

in the Assyrian Church when the Eucharistic prayer of Addai and Mari is used even though the 'words of consecration' are not there. This document (*Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*) was approved by Pope John Paul II and promulgated on 26 October 2001. Its aim is to enable the faithful of the two 'Sister Churches' to receive the benefits of the Eucharist when their own ministers are not available.

Catholics have grown up with the idea that it is at the moment when 'the words of consecration' are pronounced that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ.

In the early Church, however, the whole of the Eucharistic prayer was considered to be the words of consecration, there was no one instant that was singled out as *the* moment. Thus the early Church did not think of the consecration as 'consecration by formula' or of 'the moment of consecration'. This has important implications for our understanding of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine.

Who Presides at Mass?

A big difference between the early Church and today's Church shows up in the question of 'who presides?'. Today, in the Western Roman Church, only an ordained male celibate can preside at Mass, except for the situation when a priest from another denomination who is already married and becomes a Catholic is then ordained as a Catholic priest. This is likely to occur more often since Pope Benedict XVI in 2009 invited Anglicans to join the Catholic Church in groups or parishes. On the other hand,

'Who was ordained, how, and why does not seem to have been a major preoccupation in the very beginning.' (John F Baldovin S.J., *Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation*, Sheed and Ward, 2003, p.42)

It may not have been a major preoccupation then, but it certainly is now as controversy rages fiercely over the ordination of married men and of women. Ordination was available to married men in the Western Church up until the eleventh century.

Over time an extraordinary mystique developed about priesthood with its accompanying status and privilege which does not seem justified from what we know about the early Church. Raymond Brown, a highly respected Catholic scripture scholar, says,

Nowhere in the New Testament are church presbyters or bishops called priests; that

development came for bishops in the second century, and later for presbyters. It is interesting that 1 Peter speaks of a general 'royal priesthood' (2:9) and of 'presbyters' (5:1) but makes no connection between them. (The Church the Apostles Left Behind, Paulist Press, New York, 1984, p.80 footnote)

There is much food for thought here!

Bread: Leavened or Unleavened?"

In the early centuries ordinary bread which has yeast to make it rise was used for the Eucharist. The gifts that were brought to the altar to be given to the poor included bread, and some of this ordinary bread was used in the Mass.

In Jewish practice, unleavened bread was known as "bread of affliction" but the early Christians wanted to celebrate the memorial of Jesus' death and resurrection as a joyful event so unleavened bread was not appropriate. They drew on the sacrifice of *todah* for their inspiration. This was a sacrifice offered when death seemed to be inevitable due to sickness or danger. Meat, leavened bread and unleavened bread were offered in thanksgiving when the person's life was spared.

The unleavened bread was burned and the leavened bread and the meat were eaten in joyous thanksgiving. The person who was saved proclaimed (the verb form of *todah* means *to make known*) God's goodness. This gave rise to some well known psalms such as Psalm 118 with its exultant cry, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad!"

Gradually this sacrifice moved away from the temple into homes and was celebrated with leavened bread and wine. Rabbis predicted that this sacrifice would continue into the life to come whereas other sacrifices would not.

The practice of using leavened bread continued for 800 years. Then because of an upsurge of interest in the sacrifices and priesthood of the Old Testament (forgetting about the sacrifice of *todah*), unleavened bread began to be used. It was also found that left over leavened bread didn't keep well.

Another influence was that the Germanic tribes which had been converted to Christianity picked up the Arian heresy which said that Jesus was not divine. The church reacted to this aberration by stressing that Jesus was not only God but that he was the judge of all humankind, and a severe judge at that. People then felt they should not touch this divine presence in the host, so receiving on the tongue became the norm, a practice that has lasted

till the present day.

"Requiring the use of unleavened bread, as does the Western Church, certainly has no secure foundation in either institution or tradition. It is not even a rule of early Christian practice but one that was imposed only during the Carolingian age [8th century] when Christian sacraments and order were paralleled to the Israelite priesthood and sacrificial ritual." (David Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery, Revitalizing the Tradition*, The Crossroad Publishing, New York, 1992, p.868)

Song

It's a universal human urge to sing, so we can be sure there was singing during the Eucharist in the early Church. Singing gives colour to a ceremony, touches the heart and allows the right side of the brain to come into play.

Over the centuries, customs and regulations about singing have varied. Gregorian chant, the free-flowing music without a time signature or regular beat, ruled for hundreds of years, especially in monasteries. Gregorian chant is surely one of the most beautiful creations of the human genius and was designed for the Latin language. The simple chants of the early centuries were very beautiful and quite suitable for the people to sing. However, as chant developed in length and complexity, only trained choirs could sing them. Polyphony (part singing) also developed to an extraordinarily high art form.

The model being used for Church music, consciously or unconsciously, was that only the very best was good enough for the worship of the all-holy God. However, this meant the people in the pews became listeners, not participants.

When Vatican II asked for more participation by the people, a new form of music was introduced: more singable, based on scripture and accompanied by guitars and other instruments in common use. Along with other lovers of fine music, I was not impressed. But I had a conversion. At a family gathering an aunt and an uncle spoke enthusiastically about how they could now join in the singing at Mass. I thought, 'If this music gets ordinary people like Auntie Pat and Uncle Bob to sing at Mass, it has a lot going for it.' However, Gregorian chant and polyphony still have a valuable niche to fill in Church music, and I have a great love for the dark but deeply spiritual music of the Eastern Churches.

Venues for the Eucharist

An important development was the movement from the 'home Mass' of the

very early Church to the Eucharist of the larger public buildings called ‘basilicas’ once the emperor Constantine issued an Edict of Toleration for all faiths in 313 and Theodosius declared Christianity as the state religion in 381. The large basilicas allowed for processions for the entrance of the ministers and for bringing up the gifts. Sunday became a holiday, giving more time for Christians to celebrate. Liturgies became longer and more elaborate.

By the fifth century they almost everywhere contained the following elements (not always in the same order):

- Introductory dialogue (“The Lord be with you” etc.)
- Expression of praise and thanksgiving (at times in terms of creation)
- The hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy”
- Continuation of praise and thanksgiving (at times recounting salvation history)
- The narrative of institution: “On the night he was betrayed...”
- A formula of memorial (anamnesis) and offering (that tied the institution narrative to the thanks and praise being given now)

- A petition (epiclesis) for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Eucharistic gifts and upon the assembly for its true communion
- Intercessions for the living and the dead
- A concluding expression of praise (doxology) (Baldovin S.J. p.45)

Feast days to commemorate the martyrs and other significant Christians were introduced. This led eventually to daily Mass. ☩



Rev Dr Rice proves you're never too old to learn

LINDY MCNAMARA

Lindy McNamara tells the story of the conferring of a doctorate on Monsignor Robert Rice, Adelaide priest. Reprinted with permission from *The Southern Cross*, 7 May 2019.

At an age when most are happy to sit back, relax and enjoy their retirement, Monsignor Robert Rice decided to venture down a much different path and embark on all-consuming studies to gain his PhD.

Twelve years later, at the ripe old age of 87, the Archdiocesan priest can now proudly call himself ‘Rev Dr Rice’ after graduating with a doctorate in philosophy from Flinders University on April 23.

His research thesis is of great importance to the history of the Catholic Church in Australia as it covers the life of Archbishop James Gleeson and the contribution he made to the implementation of changes which took place in the wake of Vatican II.

One of the examiners described the thesis as ‘an impressive piece of scholarship, and a valuable contribution to the literature on Catholic Australia’.

‘It is written with fluency, and based on prodigious research,’ he said.

Unquestionably the oldest priest in the Archdiocese to complete his doctoral studies, Mgr Rice was overwhelmed when he was presented with printed copies of the thesis by one of his supervisors, Dr Josephine Laffin, a week before his graduation.

‘God bless my soul,’ he exclaimed, clearly moved by the imposing book in front of him.

With more than 400 pages and 110,000 words, Mgr Rice has devoted ‘every spare minute’ of his time to researching and writing the thesis which he started when he retired in 2007.

‘On Saturday afternoons I would be going to the State Library (to do research) and would be thinking, ‘why are you doing this to yourself, this is crazy’...because research is lonely,’ he said.

‘At times when I got disheartened and thought I was never going to make it, Jo said no, you’re almost there.’

It was a real thrill to go over the finish line,’ he admitted.

Besides the weekend visits to the State Library, Mgr Rice also spent months in the Archdiocesan Archives office and the library at the Adelaide College of Divinity trawling through old newspapers and archival sources. He also conducted several interviews over many hours with members of Archbishop Gleeson’s family.

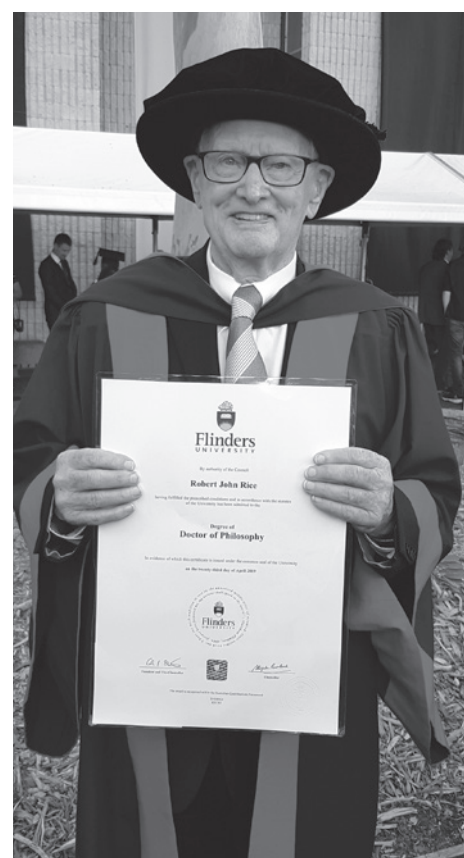
The spritely priest strove to ensure he maintained a neutral and balanced tone in his writings, without including too many personal anecdotes.

‘It was interesting because I was a priest in the Archdiocese for the whole time Jimmy was a Bishop and we got on well together – except on one occasion when he asked me to consider going to Mt Gambier and I said no. He still made me go, but we got over it and got it sorted out.’

‘I think he will be remembered as a pastoral Archbishop... that was his strong point. He was a very spiritual man and had a passion for social justice,’ Mgr Rice said.

Some of those social justice issues included the rights of Aborigines and overseas aid.

‘Historian Patrick O’Farrell said Gleeson



pursued social justice in such a forthright manner as to embarrass some of his more conservative confreres.’

Mgr Rice said Archbishop Gleeson’s biggest flaw was that he ‘did not take care of himself’.

‘He had a massive heart attack at 64 and no doubt it was partly due to his relentless go, go, go attitude and that he never relaxed.’

Archbishop Gleeson died in 2000 at the age of 80, serving as archbishop from 1971 to 1985.

While working hard on his thesis Mgr Rice was mindful not to emulate his subject and

Continued page 36

FEATURES

maintained a more balanced approach. Throughout his retirement he has continued to celebrate parish and school Masses, baptisms, marriages and funerals, while also making time for a round of golf each week.

Ordained in 1956, Mgr Rice said he realised after about 25 years into his ministry that he needed to exercise his brain and learn more.

He completed a diploma with the Catholic Correspondence Centre in Sydney and was then awarded a scholarship to study at the Catholic University of America in Washington DC.

Returning to Adelaide, Mgr Rice forged a friendship with Dr David Hilliard, an historian from Flinders University and one of Australia's leading scholars in the field of religious history. At Dr Hilliard's prompting, Mgr Rice began writing journal articles, including one on each of the 11 Archbishops of Adelaide which were published in the Australasian Catholic Record.

With retirement looming and a new challenge needed, Mgr Rice took up the suggestion of Dr Laffin to start doctoral studies. Dr Laffin had just completed her thesis on Archbishop Matthew Beovich so it seemed appropriate that he continue the thread by researching Archbishop Gleeson.

'It's a massive task and he was extremely conscientious and diligent in regards to research,' Dr Laffin said.

Even two half-knee replacements and heart surgery in 2018 didn't deter Mgr Rice and he remained resolute in finishing the enormous project.

However, while allowing himself a little time to bask in the glory of his achievement, there is still plenty of work ahead. For the thesis to be a 'readable document' to the average member of the public it now needs to be edited, reworked and trimmed by at least 30,000 words. ☺

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Rainbow Catholics meet in Chicago

PETER MAHER

The Global Network of Rainbow Catholics met recently to address the issues faced by LGBTIQ Catholics and allies. This meeting included delegates from all corners of the world. This report is by Peter Maher who attended the meeting representing Rainbow Catholics Interagency for Ministry, Australia.



The Global Network of Rainbow Catholics (GNRC) held its 3rd Biennial Assembly in Chicago from June 30 to July 3. GNRC is an international network of groups and individuals who work with LGBTIQ Catholics to support one another in this mission. It is made up of 5 regional groups from Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Nth America and Latin America and the Caribbean. About 50 delegates came together to discuss the gifts and challenges for lesbian, gay, transgender and intersex Catholics, their families and friends.

Meeting just after the Congregation for Catholic Education produced Male and Female He created them, reports from the regions reflected the limitations of church hierarchy and teaching to meet the reality of the LGBTIQ experience and story. The failure of the document to engage at any stage with the LGBTIQ Catholic community became a deeply painful backdrop to the discussions by the GNRC delegates.

Regional groups reported continued or increased experience of state sanctioned discrimination of LGBT people. Delegates were especially concerned with the internal discrimination within the church itself.

Delegates reported that not only are Catholic employees in Catholic educational institutions finding their jobs and roles threatened but in some countries the students are also experiencing discrimination as they are asked to waive their right to stay with the institution if they come out or support LGBTI anti-discrimination.

Other key issues included the inadequacy of the Catholic church's theology of sexuality; inadequate training of priests and pastoral carers to support LGBTIQ Catholics and how to get more women involved.

GNRC Co-chair, Ruby Almeida, called for the value of diversity in the GNRC to be more than just words. GNRC and its member groups are strongly male and there needs to be some thought and strategies to include women, transgender and intersex people and their experiences in the future of the GNRC.

Another major issue is support for LGBTIQ refugees and asylum seekers. GNRC is committed to advocate with world leaders and UNHCR. In spite of the continued vulnerability of LGBTIQ people in some countries, there is no quota for them.

UNHCR was unresponsive to the situation of LGBT people as they seem to think they are faking their sexuality and are really economic refugees. There is no evidence for this. GNRC is committed to supporting refugees from violence to LGBTI people with a project called 'You are Safe Here'.

A key refrain emerged that we are here not to save the church, but to save lives from internal homophobia and transphobia that leads to self-harm and larger expressions of discrimination that leave whole populations of LGBTIQ peoples vulnerable and subject to personal and structural violence in the church and society.

In South America, the sexual abuse crisis in the church has negatively affected the lives of LGBTIQ Catholics and contributed to continuing invisibility because of the lie that somehow sexual abuse is caused by homosexuality which is commonly pushed by church leaders.

The Asia Pacific delegates (see picture) reported ongoing challenges with of how 'religious freedom' laws leave LGBTIQ Catholics discriminated against. They also noted that LGBTIQ Catholics are consistently edited out or erased from the narrative of church life. Some cannot be visible because it would threaten their jobs, livelihood and ministry. GNRC will take an affirmative LGBTI stance against workplace sackings and institutional homophobia.

In Europe there is a diversity of issues and cultural contexts. Common issues include gay conversion practice, extreme fundamentalism and promoting diverse representation. Strengths included strong ecumenical action and some positive collaboration with some German bishops.

North American issues included pastoral care issues including identifying LGBT friendly parishes; independent intentional lay led LGBTIQ+ communities and historical and current communication problems with the hierarchy.

Theological reflections from Mary E Hunt, a feminist theologian and Miguel Diaz, John Courtney Murray, Chair in Public Service at Loyola University, offered insights into the way forward for LGBTIQ+ Catholics. They noted that only when LGBTIQ Catholics are recognised and invited into the conversation can the theology, moral theology and spirituality be developed that will be relevant to LGBTIQ people.

Diaz critiqued church heteronormativity which judges everything as if there were no other perspectives. This produces unjust power relationships and imposes an unjust

bias in personal, economic and ecclesial ways. The insiders club constructs the normal, that counts as natural, against the outsiders who are then constructed as 'disordered' and thus have no voice or visibility in the construction of a theology of sexuality.

Diaz noted that Mark's gospel looks at Jesus in terms of insider and outsider. However, Jesus crosses over to the other side to create new knowledge. He learns from the other side as in the story of the Syrophenician woman. Jesus' shocking response does not silence the woman. She, an outsider, engages the outsider. It is those on the periphery who properly identify Jesus as the suffering Messiah such as the Centurion at the foot of the cross, while Peter, the insider, consistently misses the mark.

The church today needs to find this truth in its theological method when exploring sexuality and gender.

Mary Hunt unpacked the reasons why patriarchal theology cannot admit to the changes required to address the current situation of LGBTIQ Catholics. She claimed the only way forward was a total rewrite 'that welcomes all to the table without distinction of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or any other particularity'.

Hunt noted the embarrassing latest offering from the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, *Male and Female He created them* which critiques gender ideology. It shows no evidence of adequate theological method or any understanding of LGBTIQ lives or stories that might inform any contribution to the valuing of LGBTIQ lives.

The GNRC Assembly established ideas for working groups to work on over the next two years till the next Assembly. These groups will research and advocate internationally to address discrimination and criminalisation of LGBTIQ people. Internal issues for the GNRC to address included responding quickly to political, social and theological events; the development of female participation in the movements and developing collaboration and communication of member groups of GNRC. Developing a spirituality and theology, working with parents and allies of LGBTIQ Catholics and working towards the formation of priests and pastoral workers were identified as important. Developing partnerships and alliances with Catholic church groups and addressing disadvantage in the lives of LGBTIQ people were also noted for action. ☺



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Eric Hodgens (retired) Catholic Priest

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And yet we dance on, basking in God's loving gaze

NIMMI CANDAPPA

Nimmi Candappa has a deep interest in faith matters and working in research. She enjoys the challenge of living out her faith in a strongly evidence-based environment.



'Woman is a temple built over a sewer... You are the devil's gateway' (Tertullian, early Christian theologian); 'As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten' (Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church); 'Woman is a misbegotten man and has a faulty and defective nature in comparison to his.' (Saint Albert the Great, Dominican theologian); '[For women] the very consciousness of their own nature must evoke feelings of shame.' (Saint Clement of Alexandria, Christian theologian); 'She is not the image of God but as far as man is concerned, he is by himself the image of God.' (Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo Regius, Father and Doctor of the Church).

As women, we have had to do it tough in our journey of faith. Historically, we have been immersed and undefended from such

verbal clouts of intense criticism by prominent and lauded fathers of the faith; we have been viewed only through the male lens, misunderstood and distrusted, kept under strict control through clever interpretations of Scripture, crushed into submission and branded witches if dissonant, persecuted and excommunicated. Currently, we are physically and visually absent from the altar (some priests even opting for male-only altar servers), we are verbally excluded from liturgical wording, and we are, for the main, excluded from leadership and influence on the faith. It is little wonder a Mother Superior of a Carmelite convent, an order renowned for its orthodoxy and loyalty to the Church, said to me once, 'sometimes as women we need to look outside of the Church for our sense of worth'.

As women of faith then, in order to keep our eyes on God, to trust in His promises, to live within His love, to expand the heart to its full and glorious potential, we need to be the Ginger Rogers of the spiritual world: 'do everything Fred Astaire does but backwards and in high heels'. We need to work harder to hear for ourselves the relevance of the Gospel, amidst the overwhelmingly-male voice and interpretations. We are called to forgive more often – when unintentional yet hurtful interpretations of the woman, and

remnants of the Roman and Jewish patriarchal voice, insist on minimising women into preconceived, limited roles, or when the lives of strong, passionate, God-adoring women saints are summarised simply as 'virgins'. We are challenged to not be drawn into bitterness – when women in the Church outnumber men from congregational numbers to volunteers, yet we are explicitly excluded from key decision-making involving our faith.

We are called to continue to trust wholeheartedly in the Spirit's movement in the Church, even when a disproportionately high number of male saints (80%) coming from a disproportionately high female congregation, might otherwise have raised an eyebrow. We are called to surrender completely – when well-intentioned desires to influence the faith of those around us are met with little encouragement and few opportunities. For when we are met with bias, rigidity, control, fear, we are called to redouble our focus on love, and compassion, and humble surrender.

For at the centre of it all is God, and His immense and intense love for each one of us. And what a love it is! As with the idiomatic two lovers locking eyes across a crowded room, a truly-felt glance from God, and all perceived and real injustices, conscious and unconscious bias, misunderstandings, recede into the periphery. We are then simply, heart interacting with God's delightful heart – with very little else more important than that. ☺



A possible Australian Church contribution

ERIC HODGENS



Eric Hodgens, a Melbourne priest, considers how the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse might have an effect beyond our shores.

The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RC) is one of the most thorough investigations of its kind worldwide. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) have made a combined response accepting virtually all the commission's recommendations. This puts them further down the track of adaptation than most countries in the world. If it works out, Australia has the

chance to be showing the way for other nations, the Roman Curia and even the Canon Law itself.

The Australian bishops have set up an Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) to advise on how to implement the recommendations of the RC.

A key recommendation is: *The ACBC should conduct a national review of the governance and management structures of dioceses and parishes, including in relation to issues of transparency, accountability, consultation and the participation of lay men and women.*

Agreeing to this recommendation, the bishops and religious have set up a Governance Review Project Team (GRPT) to develop the review project plan. This team has wide experience and expertise. Its task is helped by the experience Catholic Church agencies which have already set up effective governance structures in education, health care and social services.

Its task will be difficult because the existing governance structure of dioceses and parishes is monarchical and has been so for most of the Church's existence. Transparency and accountability have never been the order of the day. On the contrary, *secrecy* is strictly legislated on virtually all activities and communications.

The post-Enlightenment concept of the separation of powers has never been

incorporated into diocese and parish governance. The bishop is, at once, legislator, administrator and judge. Such power will not be relinquished easily. According to Canon Law the Holy See cannot be judged by anybody. Furthermore, the papacy and its curia have managed to *extend* its control over diocesan bishops during the last century or two. But making bishops subject to agencies of review will be a much harder task.

Consequently, the first question is how to go about reviewing this governance structure. Hence the setting up an experienced project team to work out a way.

There are a couple of things the review team needs to address before coming up with a recommended way to proceed.

The first issue is the theology of the Church. Before Vatican II the Church was predominantly viewed as a hierarchical community with two levels of membership – clerical and lay. The focus was on jurisdiction. The pope has universal jurisdiction over his diocese. Canon Law sees the Parish Priest as having sole authority in his parish. The source of authority is clerical ordination. The model is pyramidal.

Vatican II decreed that the Church was the People of God – a community of equals in service to one another. There are different services, but the more important the service the humbler should be the servant. The model is concentric; the source of authority is faith attested by baptism.

The second issue is the theology of priesthood. The early Church organisation and ministries evolved as sociology shows us all human groupings do. The early Church had no priests. The earliest leadership was either charismatic, as with St. Paul, or presbyteral, like that of the synagogue. Head presbyters morphed into bishops (literally overseers), ordained to lead, with ordinary presbyters ordained to assist in leadership and other ministries. Ordination (think ‘being appointed’) morphed into *consecration* turning the candidate into a sacred person – the foundation of clericalism.

This will be a curly problem for the project team. Power once gained is reluctantly yielded. Clericalism is a hard beast to kill as Pope Francis is finding out. Seminarians are still being taught that they are *ontologically changed* by ordination (think consecration) as priests.

The terms of reference of the project team are clear and specific, culminating in the charge “to recommend changes to governance and management structures to achieve the


goals of best practice outlined in these terms of reference”.

What matters is what the bishops do with all the recommendations of this project team. The only ones who can finally do anything about it are the bishops. The timeline assumes that they get this report before the Plenary Council of the Australian Bishops in 2020. Consultation is taking place, but when the chips are down it is a council of the *bishops*.

The four issues identified in the RC’s recommendation are transparency, accountability, consultation and participation of lay men and women. Will the team’s recommendations have any impact on the way the Plenary Council is run? Under current Canon Law only the bishops have deliberative rights. The Canon Law itself needs review. Gestures of inclusion will be made – but will they be taken seriously?

Then what about enforcement of decisions right across the 33 dioceses of the country by an authority-conscious variety of bishops?

Finally, how forcefully will they present their case to a Roman Curia which has for a long time has treated them as inferiors and in which they have acquiesced?

The timing is auspicious. The pope is about to re-organise his curia insisting that it be at the service of bishops, not their controller. His recent instructions on handling the sexual abuse issue in-builds episcopal accountability. Following on the Royal Commission, Australia is in pole position to contribute positively to major improvements in governance and management to the advantage of the world-wide church. Let’s see what happens. 

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NCP Elections

Nominations are hereby called for two committee members.

The successful candidates must be available to attend the annual face to face meeting at the National Office in Belmont (Geelong) – Tuesday 11 February and Wednesday 12 February 2020.

See page 24 for more details.



Aboriginal Reconciliation



Reconciliation Week in June began in 1993 as a Week of Prayer for Reconciliation. *Acknowledgement of the truth of our personal and social sin and the harm that we have done, comes before, and paves the way to repentance, efforts to make things right, conversion and commitment to change. The fact that our First Peoples continue to come last on so many socio-economic and health indicators has roots in historical injustices which need to be acknowledged and addressed in order to make lasting change*, writes Sandie Cornish from The Office for Social Justice of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in her June briefing.

Acknowledging the Church's part in injustices done to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and supporting the call for a makarrata or treaty to give recognition to Indigenous Australians' right to contribute to their own future are some ways the document suggests the church can respond and support Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Meanwhile on 10 July, the new minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt, said he would 'develop and bring forward a consensus option for constitutional recognition to be put to a referendum during the current parliamentary term.' He said he had begun seeking the counsel of Indigenous leaders on the best way forward. But Wyatt made it clear that the

final decision on whether the referendum goes ahead this term will depend on achieving a high degree of consensus and the prospect of it having a very strong chance of success.

'Constitutional recognition is too important to get wrong, and too important to rush', he said

Catholic Religious Australia responds to Morrison win.

'As you set the agenda for the future of Australia and this term of office, we ask that your Government gives priority attention to several areas that might restore Australia's reputation and practices as a compassionate and creative nation', said Sr Monica Cavanagh RSJ, President of CRA on 19 May in a letter to the newly elected Prime Minister, Scott Morrison.

The letter noted that having stopped the boats could we now move to a more compassionate policy in relation to the treatment of asylum seekers and would the new government take seriously the 'Uluru



Statement from the Heart' and work toward the Treaty 'to empower Indigenous people to take their rightful place in their own country' and make Indigenous leaders active partners in their future welfare. The letter then addressed the need for action on climate change and homelessness.

Pope names women to congregation for consecrated life

'Pope Francis named six superiors of women's religious orders and a consecrated laywoman among the 23 new members of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life' reported *La Croix International* on 9 July, 2019.

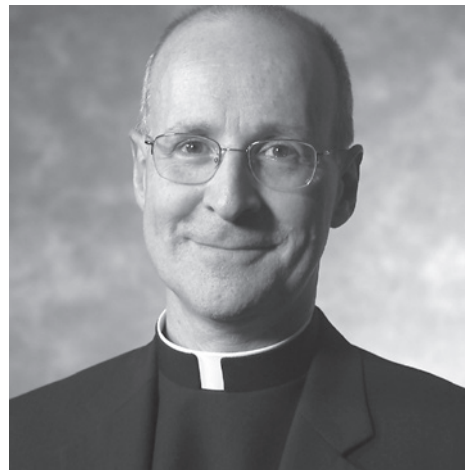
This breaks the tradition of only male bishops and superior generals being appointed. The new appointees are Sister Kathleen Appler, the US-born superior of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul; Sister Yvonne Reungoat, superior of the Salesian Sisters; Sister Françoise Massy, superior of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary; Sister Luigia Coccia, superior of the Comboni Sisters; Simona Brambilla, superior of the Consolata Missionary Sisters; Sister Rita Calvo Sanz, superior of the Company of Mary Our Lady and Olga Krizova, general president of the Volunteers of Don Bosco, a group of consecrated laypeople.

In 2014 Pope Francis nominated Sister Irma Luzia Premoli, superior general of the Comboni Missionaries, as a member of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the report noted.

Vatican issues gender theory document

The Congregation for Catholic Education issued a document on 9 June titled *Male and Female He Created Them. Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*. It is the Congregation's 31 page critique of 'gender theory' and 'gender ideology' it claims these are undermining the Church's teaching on the family and sexuality. It primarily critiques sexual orientation and transgender theory with the three pronged approach of listening, reasoning and proposing. Unfortunately, it falls very short on listening to the people most affected, LGBTI people and their experience. The document's call for dialogue and respect seems hollow to LGBTI Catholics who feel disrespected, unacknowledged and abused.

James Martin SJ responded in *America Magazine* on 11 June in an article, *Listen to the LGBT person: a response to the Vatican's gender theory* noting that it is an explicit call



for dialogue, which all should welcome. It speaks of a 'path,' which indicates that the church has not yet reached the destination. It focuses on the 'question' of gender theory in education, which leaves some degree of openness.

While calling for respect and non-discrimination, Martin points out that the document proposes the position that *men and women are created (as heterosexuals) with fixed sexual and gender roles. This traditional view, however, is contradicted by what most biologists and psychologists now understand about both sexuality and gender. These contemporary advances in understanding human sexuality and gender have been set aside by the congregation in favour of a binary understanding of sexuality. Even the term 'sexual orientation' is put into quotes in the document, as if to call that very notion into question.*

The congregation's argument is based in physiological terms so as to discredit any possibility of diverse sexualities and thus argues the claim to these is an 'autonomous' choice. Martin notes that *one objection to that proposition is that it ignores the real-life experience of LGBT people. In fact, the document's primary partners for conversation seem to be philosophers, theologians and older church documents and papal statements – not biologists or scientists, not psychiatrists or psychologists, and not LGBT people and their families. If more people had been included in the dialogue, the congregation would probably find room for the now commonly held understanding that sexuality is not chosen by a person but is rather part of the way that they are created.*

The document relies on natural law and yet ignores the lived 'natural' experience of LGBTI people. Ignoring the experience of intersex people, it seems to lump all LGBTI people as misguided by those peddling 'gender ideology' and a 'dialogue' might solve this problem if the ideologues were removed.

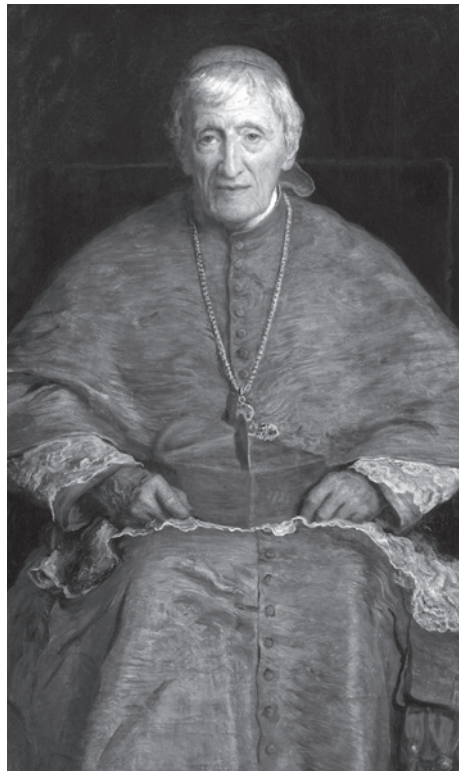
Again, the document largely neglects to engage in discussions about new scientific understandings and discoveries about gender. It relies mainly on the belief that gender is determined solely by one's visible genitalia, which contemporary science has shown is an incorrect (and sometimes even harmful) way to categorize people. Gender is also biologically determined by genetics, hormones and brain chemistry – things that are not visible at birth. The congregation's document relies heavily on categories of 'male' and 'female' that were shaped centuries ago, and not always with the most accurate scientific methods, notes Martin.

Compounding the problem is the doctrine

of 'complementarity' espoused by the document assigning to women 'a unique understanding of reality. They possess a capacity to endure adversity...' This belittles men's capacity for resilience, surely a virtue to which all aspire, but harshly belittles women for having such a trait and doubly so for LGBTI people who might exhibit resilience, compassion and perseverance. As Martin notes, 'such ideas reinforce stereotyping and prevent both men and women from rising above precisely those cultural constructs that the Vatican often rightly decries'.

The document talks of transgender people as being 'provocative' and are either consciously or unconsciously trying to 'annihilate the concept of 'nature.' This silences the real life experience of transgender people and their families and allies. This serves to plunge them into greater despair. Martin quotes a Catholic deacon, Ray Dever, who has a transgender child and wrote about his family's experience in U.S. Catholic. As he writes, 'Anyone with any significant first-hand experience with transgender individuals would be baffled by the suggestion that trans people are somehow the result of an ideology. It is a historical fact that long before there were gender studies programs in any university or the phrase *gender ideology* was ever spoken, transgender people were present, recognized, and even valued in some cultures around the world.'

John Henry Newman to be canonised



Pope approves Blessed John Henry Newman's canonization along with a Swiss laywoman, an Indian nun, an Italian nun and a nun known as the 'Mother Teresa of Brazil' reported *La Croix International* on 2 July, 2019.

Cardinal Newman is to become Britain's first new saint since St. John Ogilvie was canonized in 1976 by Pope Saint Paul VI. Born in London 1801, Newman was ordained as a Church of England priest and went on to found the Oxford Movement. He joined the Roman Church in 1845 and died in 1890. A theologian and poet, his sainthood cause was opened in 1958. He is often described as one of the most significant figures of the 19th century. Pope Leo XIII made the Englishman a cardinal in 1879 while respecting his wishes not to be ordained a bishop. Pope Benedict XVI beatified him in September 2010 during his trip to the United Kingdom, the report noted.

US Catholic priests' group call to end clericalism



The Catholic Church in the United States needs to focus on three priorities: drawing the curtain on its culture of secrecy, ending clericalism, and giving women more roles in Church affairs, the chair of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests (AUSCP) wrote in a letter to bishops dated June 4 it was reported in *La Croix International* on 6 June.

'We are in crisis. We need change,' wrote Father Kevin Clinton, a priest of the Archdiocese of St Paul, Minneapolis. 'Please engage all of God's People in bringing about the needed change. Clericalism most especially must be eradicated, and women must be integrated.'

'We ask you as a bishop to do what Pope Francis urged you to do: dialogue with us,

Continued page 42

clergy and laity, attentively and with respect. Listen to us, engage us in setting direction for our Church, and accompany us as we do our work in our Church's field hospitals' he said.

Fr Clinton called for 'a deeply synodal and not only a hierarchical Church.'

'People are increasingly aware that our Church remains diseased by the three deadly viruses flagged early in Vatican II: legalism, triumphalism, and clericalism. Those viruses generated among leadership pride, secrecy, and lack of accountability. We have got to address this crisis together.'

Pope Francis tells Vatican diplomats to behave ethically

In an article by Gerard O'Connell on 13 June in America Magazine, *Pope Francis tells Vatican diplomats: don't 'criticize the pope behind his back'*, he notes Pope Francis told the 100 nuncios: 'It is inconceivable to be a pontifical representative and to criticize the pope behind his back, to have a blog or even to unite himself to groups hostile to him, to the [Roman] curia and to the church of Rome'.

Francis offered the nuncios 10 commandments for themselves and 'through you also to your collaborators and, indeed, to all the bishops, priests and consecrated persons that you encounter in every part of the world.'

He began by saying that, first and foremost, 'the nuncio is to be a man of God, one who 'does not go around or cheat his neighbour' nor 'allow himself to gossip or speak badly' about others but 'keeps his mind and heart pure, preserving his eyes and ears from the filth of the world', said O'Connell.

Second was a call to treat collaborators, the staff, the sisters and the community of the nunciature well and not live luxuriously especially where the people struggled to survive. Then pope the encouraged apostolic zeal, reconciliation, advocacy for justice and peace, availability, flexibility, humility, impeccable professionalism, ability to communicate and to negotiate and keep himself up to date, so he knows the thinking of the one he represents and knows the country in which he lives and is able to report on this to the pope.

Among the requisites for the nuncio is to 'be a man of active charity.' As he has often said before, the pope underlined that if we really wish to meet Christ, it is necessary that we touch the wounded body in that of the poor, which links us to the sacrament of the Eucharist, O'Connell noted.

Reconciliation?

Some years ago, for about three years, I was a sort-of pen pal to a priest in prison. Every month I would write to him and send him money for incidentals. His diocese ended any relationship with him when he was convicted of sexual abuse. I could have – but chose not to – avail myself of the news reports about his abuse. I just wanted to be a friend in Christ. A few years ago he was released from prison at age 84. He had to rely on a couple of friends to find him a place to live and to get him some State support.

On more than one occasion this priest told me of the pain involved for him and a couple of other priests, also doing time, when they learned that their Archbishop came to the prison to visit the men on death-row, but never once visited them or offered to celebrate Mass for them. Technically he was their shepherd and they his sheep.

We have all been shaken, seriously affected by the news about our clergy sexually abusing children and the deliberate neglect or cover-up by our Bishops. Some have 'left' the Church and others are still riling in anguish and rage. All of this is understandable as we face probably the gravest crisis the Church has ever known. But for us, we know these feelings and disappointments must, in time, return us to peace. Reconciliation, on both a personal and collegial level, remains the cornerstone of the Catholic Community – or why are we here in the first place? Jesus loved His slayers.

I have wrestled with this question for some time: What happens to the priests who have abused? Are we content with unceremoniously removing them and then forgetting them? Why is it the case that they appear to be thrown out of the Church? This will be considered by many to be a perfectly natural reaction, but it certainly is not a Gospel reaction. Each of us is so much more than the worst thing we have ever done.

I believe it is a responsibility of all of us to seek out ways to reconcile the Church – us – with these priests. Certainly it is or will we say that Christ wants us to reconcile with all except a certain group? I don't think so!

How any reconciliation happens will obviously vary. Perhaps some – or many – of these priests do not want reconciliation. Is it not primarily up to the bishops, those who moved these men around, to reach out and offer some support? Whether accepted or not, we need to do this for ourselves.

This can be our way forward: just recognizing the need for such reconciliation. The Holy Spirit will lead us as the Holy Spirit brought our shame to the surface. For myself, owning my own past history gives me the humility to realize how merciful the Lord has been to me. Be merciful as your Father is merciful.

At this point I confess that I am very much aware that any suggestion about reconciliation with these brother priests is an explosive proposition. Some will say that I am minimizing the repulsive nature of sexual abuse. Many may feel that such priests deserve to be 'shunned' for the rest of their lives. Yet, how can we be content with such thought? Ultimately, this is a matter of what we hold to be true in the teachings of Christ: If you do not forgive, you will not be forgiven. Will we work and struggle to be the Church of Christ? Can we accept them in our hearts?

About fifteen years ago, while still Pastor of the parish in which I grew up, a friend of my sister called and asked me if I would have a funeral for her brother – an inactive priest. He was a priest of a Diocese other than my own, but he also grew up in our parish. It was very clear to me that he had been removed from ministry, so it fell to his family to have him buried. I asked no questions, but said, 'Yes, of course.'

Since he had no clerical garb, I gave him my own clerical clothes and vestments so that he could be laid out in a coffin as the priest he was. We had a very beautiful, prayerful liturgy celebrating his life, with three priests of his Diocese concelebrating and the newly-installed Bishop of that Diocese present. Afterwards, the Bishop thanked me as did his grieving family. I believe all priests should be buried as priests: You are indeed a priest forever.

Someone questioned me later about doing that funeral. I reminded him that it is a work of mercy to bury the dead – no questions asked. I always thought that 'That Funeral' is what all of this is about.

Rev Fr Bryan O'Rourke, St Paul, Minneapolis, USA

Parish Renewal in South Korea

A despondent air hangs over most church reporting worldwide. It even clouds hopes for the Australian Plenary 2020.

This contrasts with my experience of buoyant church communities in South Korea, evangelising and self-renewing. While this story is from a different culture and time, it tells of church practice in growing a future. Some marks:

Organising RCIA outreach was the hub – Come and See. Every parishioner named a friend, relative or work colleague to target. They prayed for them, even burning a slip of paper with the name on it as an offering before the altar. The person named was warmly invited to an information evening at the church.

Multiple parishioners witnessed to what Catholic faith means to them. Personal journey stories and the attraction of church social action were the two main elements at the *Come and See* evenings. This style continued in the catechesis.

Every church-goer had a part in the RCIA, often a Sunday focus. Even the tepid were asked to fill a role, be it printing invitations or inviting a member of their profession.

The feeling of joining a community was key. People were known personally. Block visitation kept community news up to date and personal issues cared for. Importantly, members got to have fun together – everyone getting dressed up for Easter made for belonging to a lively mob.

Members learnt to pray out loud and for each other. This was a positive fruit of the charismatic movement. Visiting the sick was prayer filled. Prayers of the Faithful ranged from the sick to local social issues. This was a time of military dictatorship, industrialisation and nation building. The future was unknown.

Learning Scripture applied the Tradition. A common language translation of the Scripture was published and studied in groups. Even grannies bought their large print New Testament. The catechism, augmented by Vatican II, took on life in Scriptural stories.

Worship was professionally done – reading, preaching, hymns – often paying a good organist and choir leader.

Parish renewal was automatic as members committed to the RCIA. As believers repeatedly witnessed to what Jesus meant for them: their own conviction grew; they reached out to evangelise individuals and society; and parish life grew. Only then did parishioners identify special renewal people to invite in when needed.

Priestly and Religious Vocations grew. Lively parishes inspired young people to explore a worthwhile adventure in church ministry. An old bank motto said Get with the Strength. A vocation to serve church communities needs to be attractive.

Korean Catholic communities in Australia continue Vatican II renewal. Numbers matter if a parish community is to serve the emerging issues of individuals and

society. It is no accident that a large percentage of the adult baptisms in Sydney Archdiocese are from the Korean community.

Charles Rue SSC

Celibacy and abuse

Vale, Fr Daniel O'Leary. I concur with his view on compulsory celibacy for Roman Rite priests. However, I would go further than saying it is a kind of sin against God's will and nature and call it a crime!

This ruling was introduced in the 12th century because bishops were leaving their estates to their sons.

As a member of a women's religious order for over 20 years, I was the recipient of unsolicited advances from three priests, one of whom wished to marry me. Despite my liking him, I declined, because he had become dependent on alcohol, as had many of his priestly colleagues. It took me some years to realise that my entering religious life was to escape from my violent alcoholic father. The afore mentioned priest left the priesthood some months later and married. Enough said.

Name withheld but has been supplied.

Church Collections in a Cashless World

Some may recall the days when men (and a few women) stood in booths on bridges and freeways collecting the toll, conductors sold tickets on trams and busses and you queued to buy your train ticket. Men's trousers had a coin pocket. Teams of counters spent Sunday morning in the presbytery rolling coins in brown paper. Much has changed but coin and banknotes are still the staple of the Sunday offertory collection in many places.

On 27 September 2018 News Limited outlets posted the headline St Mary's Cathedral angers worshippers over new 'tap and go' collection plates. Two days later the *Huffington Post*, under the banner, 'weird news' had this to say about Facebook posts connected to the Cathedral's announcement of the new collection process:

Multiple payments! The response was certainly not all negative and seemed more focused on the minimum donation being set at \$10.

'If you had made it [a] \$2 minimum we probably wouldn't be having this conversation,' said one Facebook user.

'I hate it when I turn up to mass and realise I don't have any cash,' another user

said in support. 'I would love this option at my parish.'

Leaving aside the pre-set minimum the Cathedral's move has much to commend it. The reality is that today fewer people carry cash. They tap and go for their morning coffee and this simply repeats the pattern of digital toll booths and tapping your card for public transport.

Cash is a problem. It has to be counted and banked. It presents a security risk. Income is volatile and upper-middle class parishes know when school holidays are happening.

Tap and go has advantages but also limitations. It does not allow for easy receipting for tax purposes (a problem for organisations like Catholic Mission where donor details are necessary for a tax receipt) and you are locked into the pre-determined amount unless the system can cope with the time it takes for people to enter their own amount.

The ideal is to migrate parishioners to an EFT (electronic funds transfer) arrangement. They can nominate a set amount to be deducted monthly from their bank account or credit card and this can then be appropriated proportionally in an agreed way to the various purposes – parish, priests' support, charitable works fund, other special collections etc. The day may come when this is so well established that we no longer need two separate Sunday collections (a puzzlement to overseas visitors I found when on the Cathedral staff).

This process is secure, easily audited and allows for a more predictable budgeting.

But, some object, does this mean you are embarrassed when the plate comes around?

The simple solution to this concern is to issue all the regular with a year's supply of cards (like a business card) which can have a simple prayer of offering and is symbolically put on the plate. Many parishes are moving in this direction as cash transactions are gradually fading away.

Brian Lucas, Director of Catholic Mission, Sydney

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Catholic clerical culture and the people in the pews

Call No One Father, Countering Clericalism in the Catholic Tradition (2019), Berise Heasley, Coventry Press. Review by Peter Maher.

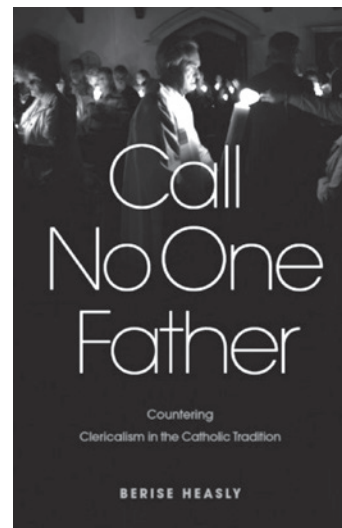
Berise Heasley is an educator. In her book she applies educational theory to the problem of clericalism as we now experience it in the Catholic church. The theory, put maybe too simply, is that interconnectedness of all things is at the heart of understanding, and forms the basis for discernment and formation for life giving engagement in the world. Our world is one of the pieces shot through with God's grandeur as in Gerard Manly Hopkins enduring image. Heasley makes a case that if all the opportunities offered us were engaged in the process of discernment in the church we would not have moved so far from the gospel towards the clericalist church. This move has led to the catastrophic effects that have divided the clergy from the laity, thus removing the laity as a source of divine wisdom, but worse, oppressing the 'People in the Pews'.

Heasley uses the term People in the Pews as an image for reimagining the church as more inclusive, faithful and helpful. She believes that the gradual exclusion of the People in the Pews led to the idea of clerical 'ontological change'. This raises the clergy to be set apart and above, and

gradually leads to the secrecy and coverup that escalated clergy sexual abuse to a much more disastrous problem, the need to protect the clergy from facing the truth and the successive coverup of the problem. Protecting clerical status and the inherent belief that the sexual abuse was a sin without consequences because it was considered not to be harmful – again a failure to recognise the secular sciences as able to teach anything.

This book, while a little academic in parts, is a handbook for understanding the historical context in which clericalism arose and the way forward under a new a paradigm. We must firstly jettison the outmoded and destructive practice of leaving definitive church teaching solely in the hands of the set aside clerical caste. This has led to disastrous polarisation where some, mostly the People in the Pews, have had to work things out for themselves through conscience decisions, while others have fought back with restorationist strategies in the 'culture wars'.

Heasley has some wonderful analysis of what went wrong, how we might address



the mistakes of the past and how we might work together as equal disciples of the gospel in service of a more equitable, sensible and relevant church. She posits the idea of regenerationism as a way forward as opposed to revisionism and restorationism.

This is a book that adds to the call from the pews to find a listening church that recognises the gift of God in all its people. With the Plenary Council coming, it offers a way for that meeting to be a sign of hope.

✪



O'Leary dancing with love

Dancing to my Death, With the Love called Cancer (2019), Daniel O'Leary, Garratt Publishing, Melbourne. Daniel O'Leary leaves us a legacy in this, his final book. Reviewed by Tony Doherty.

Daniel O'Leary – priest, teacher, prolific author, proud Kerry man – died on 21st January, 2019. His life-time passion was to awaken in his readers the often-unrecognised sacredness embedded in every aspect of life. Catholic belief would describe this conviction as the mystery of the Incarnation.

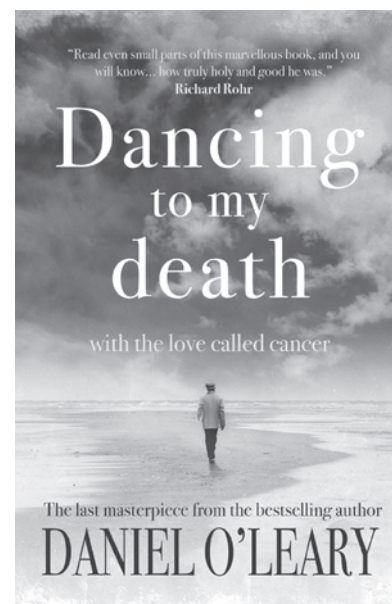
Facing his death, his insight became even sharper, and his deeply-held opinions less constrained. The last song of his final farewell in the place of his childhood Rathmore, County Kerry, posed this question: 'And when you get the chance to sit it out or dance, I hope you dance. I hope you dance.'

As its title suggests, O'Leary's book is a dance, slow and at times painful, to the music of the total sacredness of life – even to the outrageous extent of celebrating his own terminal illness as part of the gracious evolving nature of his body. Cancer was a

gift from the 'Love' that is at the centre of it all, he claims. Even in his last days he was determined not to sit it out but to join the dancers, and to write a book.

Astonishingly, it was written in the last three months of O'Leary's life, with a body reduced by invasive surgery and awash with chemotherapy, a mind confused by the uncertainties of how much time might remain, and no guarantee there would be energy to reach the goal. How could anyone in such a state entertain the notion of writing a book? A book, it must be added, of over two hundred pages.

The reflections are raw and uncompromising; at times repetitive, but always candid. There were good days and bad days. In a metaphor too good not to repeat, his publisher describes the writing as being 'like a torn kite in a storm – it sweeps and swoops between hope and despair, throws cartwheels and steadies out,



crashes with fear and continues with raw and real courage.' The eighty reflections should carry a note of caution: to be taken in small doses.

And yet, O'Leary's approaching death allows him to write free of his usual restraint. He releases the frustration about

his Church's slowness to contemplate genuine reform.

'At low times in my life I am often somewhat disillusioned, even angry with the institutional Church, that I have tried to serve, not brilliantly, but the best way I could, over many decades.'

Pulling no punches, he speaks about compulsory celibacy and clericalism: 'Compulsory celibacy is a kind of sin, an assault against God's will and nature. At last it is now being recognised as such, especially since Pope Francis began pointing to clericalism, its sister, as the major underlying threat and destroyer of the true church.'

He takes aim at the absence of women in decision-making, and a ministry 'cut off' from the normal run of relationships and society.

Unsurprisingly, he speculates on life after death. In one of his most refreshing reflections he invites the reader to imagine a baby reluctant to leave the safety of the womb – a place where everything is designed to sustain, to inspire, to complete. Why leave a place where everything has meaning? Out there is nothing but mystery and the unknown. Perhaps, he argues, there is some sort of parallel with the feelings of those of us seeing that nothing could possibly exist after death.

In another way of looking at the after-life, he continues, consider the billions of stages in the evolution that has brought us to this point of existence. Does this relentless momentum simply cease with the death of the person? Or is it the tragic failure of our imagination to appreciate the mystery of being human. O'Leary takes those arguments into new depths.

There are many other existential questions tackled. Whatever the death of a human person means, it doesn't mean something that can be written on a fridge magnet. O'Leary will not be satisfied with sound-bite answers.

'May I be alive when I die', was the wish of the child Psychologist Donald Winnicott. These reflections of Daniel O'Leary are the raw, unvarnished reflections at the end of one man's days spent in the relentless search for what an integrated and authentic life might look like – a search which sustained this large-hearted poet of the human spirit right up to his final moments.

Yes, if music was playing, Daniel O'Leary was never among the wallflowers. Even to the end, he led the dance. ☺



Hope in the darkness

Salt, Not Honey: For Faith that Stings, Luigi Maria Epicoco, Coventry Press, 2018.
Reviewed by Peter Maher.



they become playthings of political intrigue and pawns in the games of powerful moneyed interests.

Epicoco, ordained in 2005 for the Aquila Diocese, Italy, wants to help us escape the paralysing effect of disaffection with our reality. His book is one of many publications by this priest, retreat master, theologian and philosopher, although this is the first translated into English. He suggests we can engage in the current malaise armed with a biblical spirituality.

The title gives the hint to his general thesis. He believes that a biblical spirituality approach to the darkness of life is more like salt that stings but brings healing which is real, rather than honey which soothes but is short lived and illusory. He embellishes this argument through the lens of the three virtues, faith, hope and love, and the freedom these bring to live a life that matters and has significance rather than one that is hollow.

A spirituality that offers answers amidst the challenges we face he calls idolatry. A biblical spiritual life does not offer answers but 'direction to take, with everything journey can bring with it: precariousness, falls, getting hurt, getting lost.' (p25) While this may not be comforting, it is more robust for life and deeply embedded in the biblical stories of hope in times of despair, loneliness, sickness and fear.

Faith is about letting go certainties, hope

means embracing the bigger, more fearful or mysterious events of life without knowing and love is the God relationship that makes this possible. There is a good dose leaving emotion behind as it is too fickle against the strength of the virtues themselves lived somehow out of commitment. Epicoco argues that 'feeling good' is not what it is about. It is about 'doing good' and while emotions can lead us in this direction, they can confuse the Christian in their efforts at living faithfully.

Something about this book feels a little underdone. While the key points are what you would expect from someone who is well read and reflective, there is something a little unsettling about doubting 'feeling' when it doesn't lead to a classic experience of the three virtues. But with that little caveat in hand, there is much to recommend this book especially the careful analysis of the classic virtues through biblical stories. ☺

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If there was ever a time in living memory when we needed to hear some way of finding a message of hope it's now. The church in dire need of reform, along with our spirits, as we hear story after story from people whose hope and faith is dashed by revelation after revelation not just of abuse and failure of leadership but also parishioner's experience of poor pastoral care and unbearable liturgical overreach. It is also very noticeable in the world of politics. People are exasperated as

A blueprint for reform of the Australian Catholic Church

Getting Back on Mission, Catholics for Renewal (2019). Garratt Publishing, Mulgrave VIC. Reviewed by Peter Maher.

The introduction to this volume notes that *the core of this book is the formal submission of Catholics for Renewal to the Australian Plenary Council to be held over two sessions in 2020 and 2021. It is presented as a resource for the people of God in discussing their expectations of the Council.*

Catholics for Renewal was formed in 2011 as a way ordinary Australian Catholics could have a voice in the complex space of church renewal. In the light of the emerging credibility crisis in church leadership, large numbers abandoning the church, and a crisis in priestly training and pastoral care, *Catholics for Renewal* along with many other Australian Catholic reform movements in the church had a series of meetings and events that sought to better understand the hopes of Catholics seeking reform. These meetings began to feed into the hopes for the Plenary Council 2020. *Catholics for Renewal* began to put together a comprehensive submission to the Plenary Council preparatory stage. This book is that submission with some very important additions.

With optimism and supported by the coalition of Catholic reform movements, this book has been produced. It stands as a landmark work produced from the dreams

of Australian Catholics for the church as we seek a way through the current crisis. The question is will it be heard by those who will hold the power in the wash up of the Council.

The book outlines a very well researched sketch of the considered concerns of a large number of Catholics. It offers a consideration of the issues and practical recommendations for reform.

It offers a carefully articulated voice by the people for the people. It serves a dual role of identifying and discussing the key issues facing the Australian church at the moment while also offering the challenge to the Plenary Council process to include the clear but disempowered voice of the lay reform movements.

Bishops and religious leaders are challenged *to listen to the laity and to implement standards of governance where accountability, inclusiveness and transparency become the norm and not optional extras*, the book's introduction claims.

The submission itself has been available on the website, but it is the other inclusions that make this book a must for the shelves of activists advocating change for the Australian Catholic church. It is a handbook for activists.



It includes *The Renewal Propositions* produced in 2019 by *The Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform* (ACCCR) which is a network of 13 Catholic renewal groups across Australia established in 2012. There is a foreword by Robert Fitzgerald AM and discussion questions for the issues identified by the Plenary Council working party. For those interested in engaging their bishops and religious leaders there is a handy list of contact details for the Apostolic Nuncio, diocesan bishops, eparchs, other ordinaries, auxiliary bishops, and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.



Jean Vanier changed the world

Summer In the Forest, a film about the life of Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche communities. Reviewed by Peter Malone MSC

When Jean Vanier died earlier this year, a significant 90 year life had made quite an impact on the world, the Catholic Church, Christians and compassionate people all around the world and 147 L'Arche communities in 35 countries.

Summer In the Forest is a documentary filmed in 2016, released in 2018 in Europe but available in Australia for special screenings with a wider release later in the year. It is not the only Jean Vanier film. There is a French documentary, *Jean Vanier, Le sacrement de la tendresse* (Frederique Bedos, 2019).

One of the great advantages of *Summer in the Forest* is that Jean Vanier not only appears but also does a great deal of the voice-over, memories of his early life and

the influence of his father, Governor General of Canada, and the Navy, his first encounter with the mentally disabled, the first community, and his reflections on simplicity, respect for everyone, his spirituality. Patients moved out of institutions which were prison-like, humiliating, dropping barriers, encouraging celebration and laughter, becoming family.

Most of this film takes place in France, where L'Arche began, Trosly-Breuil, but there is an excursion to the occupied territories of Palestine in the second part of the film, Jean Vanier visiting the L'Arche community in Bethlehem.

Vanier was a big man, physically, complete life dedication, spiritually. He was also very genial, down-to-earth, patient. We see him

accompanying a range of men and women in France, visiting and supporting in Bethlehem. As we accompany the communities in France, it is something of a jolt to be transferred to Palestine, many images of the wall separating Palestine from Israel, some of the L'Arche community living at home and getting ready to go to the community house, getting to know more people with different styles of life, music, dance, exuberance.

Accompaniment is a keyword. There is no goal to be reached. Rather, those who live in the communities are listened to, meals shared, work shared, happy and patient conversations, realities of work and play day-by-day. Vanier notes we are all fragile but many of us hide this. Those who live in the communities have not cultivated the mind or the superiority of knowledge but seek friendship and family.

We also see the presence and work of so many of the volunteers – and the challenge of making small talk, listening, alert to cues for responding and communicating.

Vanier says that L'Arche is not a Utopia, but a hope, of presence, taking time, wasting time apparently, but a place where we can be what we are called to be.

Which means that this film is offering possibilities for its audience to share Jean Vanier's perspective and to accompany several characters throughout the film, sometimes waking up with them, shaving and dressing, going to meals, travelling with them, listening to their confidences, the memories, their hopes. One elderly man, Michel, is prominent, victim of a medical accident when young, with strong memories of the war and its impact, visiting the war cemetery. Andre is also an old man, as is Patrick, Andre not the greatest communicator but with a great friend, Wadid, whose house he visits to share a meal.

On the other hand, there are quite a number of young people, the exuberant David, a 33-year-old Downs Syndrome

man who works with a group assembling cardboard boxes. He also enjoys dancing as well as playing with another young Downs friend, he imitating a dog, she purring like a cat. And we accompany the group at a picnic in the countryside. Finally, there is an outdoor community celebration as to young people become engaged.

The Jean Vanier we see is a man in his later 80s, still healthy, but with two hearing aids, a man who had Navy experience, but whose heart was touched, continually touched for over 70 years of compassionate service.

The surroundings of the L'Arche communities is a forest, beautiful shots of summer, the trees, the green, and atmosphere of both growth and fulfilment, beautiful aerial drone photography.

With the availability of *Summer in the Forest* in Australia towards the end of 2019, there could be many opportunities for parishes, socially-compassionate groups, those who want to appreciate Jean Vanier better and have an opportunity to accompany him with Michel, Andre, David and the others. ☺

Grace filled reflections

***Glimmers of Grace*, Kevin Bates SM. Holy Name of Mary, Hunter Hill, (2018). Reflections from the bulletin of Hunters Hill parish where Kevin has ministered for 10 years. Order at: www.glimmersofgracebook.com Review by Peter Maher.**

I remember seeing the young Kevin Bates singing on the Opera House stage in one of Tony Doherty's spectaculars and later meeting him in his work with children's retreats. These were experiences of a creative, imaginative and musical theologian and pastoral carer with a sense of the human and a way that sounded relevant to me.

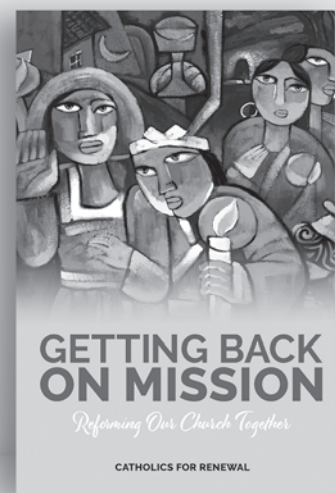
This volume shows he has continued to develop these skills in offering imaginative insights for the people of Hunters Hill parish over a long time. This collection of his weekly reflections from the bulletin offers the same relevance and space for reflection on the many day to day experiences of the people in the pews.

He has arranged them in three sections: moments, motifs and in search of the sacred. Moments recalls some of the key festivals of the church's year. The section titled Motifs reflects on themes of values, beliefs and communion. In search of the sacred offers a space to reflect the way God is embodied in the human, the metaphor and the symbol of experience of everyday life and that liminal ritual space.

The genius of Kevin's reflections is the ability to relate the grand themes of meaning and existence to everyday life experience. He does this primarily through story, image and connection to the experience of the person in the street, or should I say pew.

It's the lyrical prose of the song-maker in Kevin that makes these reflections easy to read, enjoyable to digest and almost addictive as they cut like a two edged sword into the heart of reflective space, often giving them a prayer-like quality. They are delightful, insightful and challenging – a dangerous combination.

The reader is meant to dip in and out of this book, savouring a little morsel at a time. Whether Kevin is talking hope, life, the seasons, Pentecost, Trinity, parenting, conscience, IVF, climate change or the abuse crisis, he always works with nuance, sensitivity, humour and inclusion. He welcomes the story of life and challenge and weaves them into a tapestry of curiosity for the reader to stop and wonder at the immanence of the divine. Enjoy! ☺



GETTING BACK ON MISSION

Reforming Our Church Together

CATHOLICS FOR RENEWAL

Catholics for Renewal has provided a realistic, hopeful and authentically Catholic roadmap for the forthcoming Australian Plenary Council.

Frank Brennan SJ AO, CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia

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Emeritus Professor John Warhurst AO, Chair of Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, and Member of Australian Bishops' Church Governance Review Panel

Want to know what the 2020 Plenary Council should be dealing with? Then read Catholics for Renewal's Getting Back on Mission.

Eric Hodgens
(retired) Catholic Priest

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Returned to God

JAMES OWEN CAULFIELD

23/07/1949 – 16/05/2019



Jim, the youngest of three children of Richard and Joyce Caulfield, was educated by the De La Salle Brothers in Lakemba and Marist Brothers in Peshurst.

Jim was a loving husband to Gail, for 46 years and loving father to his four children and grandfather to his 15 grandchildren.

Jim, one of the first four Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of Broken Bay, was ordained as a Permanent Deacon on the 16 April 2004 by Bishop David Walker in Corpus Christi Cathedral St Ives.

Following his Ordination Jim was appointed to the Parish of Mary Mackillop at Warnervale, where he remained for the whole of his diaconal ministry.

Deacon Paul Simmons, who was a classmate of Jim's and ordained with him, said, "In reflecting on Jim's 15 years of diaconal ministry, Jim was a man of great faith, who thanked God for the vocation he had received and lived out his vocation of ministry of service in an exemplary manner".

Jim had a tremendous love and care for the sick which he showed by his dedication and loyalty to their care. He also ministered for many years, coordinating the priests of the Diocese of Broken Bay in attending to urgent sick calls to the various hospitals across the Diocese."

Jim took on the role of Manager for the 1300 PRIEST service, and was later appointed as the Chaplaincy Support Officer for the NSW Central Coast Hospitals. Unfortunately, in the last couple of years, Jim's health deteriorated and he retired in March 2018 from the ministry he loved so much.

We thank God for the gift of Jim's ministry of service and for his tremendous love and generosity to those to whom he ministered. May he be welcomed, by our loving and compassionate Lord, into the place prepared for him in Heaven.

CORNELIUS "CON" CROESE

07/01/1929 – 09/05/2019



Cornelius "Con" Croese was a dedicated and devoted priest for over 50 Years. Born in Newcastle, NSW, Con spent his childhood years at Moss Vale, NSW and was educated at the Robertson Public School, the Dominican Convent Moss Vale, and the Marist Brothers in Campbelltown, NSW.

Before joining the Priesthood, Con completed an apprenticeship as a 'Fitter & Turner' at Southern Portland Cement Works at Berrima where many of his immediate family members worked. Con maintained the friendships he made during his childhood and his years at the cement works and often met up with those friends on his visits back to Moss Vale. Con also worked for an engineering firm in Wagga Wagga before entering St Columba's Springwood and St Patrick's Manly to train for the priesthood in 1954.

Con was ordained a priest on 17 July 1961 at the Dominican Convent in Moss Vale by Most Rev T McCabe of Wollongong. The Chalice used by Con during all his years as a priest was a treasured possession, presented to him by his family on the occasion of his Ordination.

Con achieved things in a quiet manner and was regarded highly within the Diocese where he worked. He served in the Parishes of South Wagga, Leeton, Albury, Tocumwal, Tarcutta, Urana, Howlong, and Lockhart. He also spent time in the Diocese of Port Pirie in 1997. Con was appointed Rector of Vianney College Seminary from 2001 until 2004 and also served as a Diocesan Consultor. He retired to Lockhart in December 2006.

A Requiem Mass was held at St Paul's Catholic Church Moss Vale on 20th May 2019 and Con is buried at St Patrick's Catholic Cemetery, Sutton Forest.

May he rest in peace.

MICHAEL KEOGH SDB

12/09/1926 – 22/03/2019



Michael Keogh was born in Quetta, then in the Indian British Empire, (prior to Independence and Partition into India and Pakistan in 1948) on 12 September 1926 and attended Salesian schools in Calcutta and Sonada. He joined the Salesian Congregation in India, making his first profession on 24 May 1950 where he also undertook all his studies and formation, at the end of which, he was ordained on 26 June 1960 by Bishop Ferrando in Shillong.

After his ordination until 1974 he undertook various roles and responsibilities in Salesian schools in the Calcutta Province in India. As many in his family had migrated from India to Australia in 1974, he transferred to the Australia-Pacific Province and continued teaching in Salesian schools for ten years – Chadstone, Engadine, Sunbury and Brooklyn Park. From 1985 he was involved in Parish Ministry in a number of Salesian Parish in the Province – Kelmscott and Victoria Park (Perth) and Brooklyn Park (Adelaide).

In 2015 he retired and entered into care at Flora MacDonald Lodge. Michael had a wonderful sense of humour and regularly entertained students, family, parishioners and confreres with his skits, jokes and impersonations. He was also a great lover of sports, particularly hockey and table tennis. May he rest in peace.

JOSEPH PATRICK HALL

20/03/1931 – 10/06/2019



“Joe” to some, “Pat” to many, was born in Toowoomba, the youngest of nine children to William and Mary (nee Gabbett) and grew up just a stone’s throw from St Saviour’s where he commenced his schooling and St Patrick’s Cathedral where he was baptised and prayed daily as a young man.

Together with life-long friend John (Jack) Clancy, Pat continued his primary and most of his secondary schooling at St Mary’s College. Both Pat and Jack finished their secondary education at Banyo Seminary, following in the footsteps of many other young men who were neighbours growing up – Pat’s older brothers Bill and Frank, John Bennett, Tom Isaac, Pat Kelly, Neville Grundy, Bernie Kane, John Bergin...; not only neighbours but also participants every morning in daily Mass at the Cathedral.

The young Pat Hall, both at St Mary’s and at the Seminary, was a bundle of energy. On the football field Pat was “The General”, playing and directing each game accordingly. At the Seminary he was a live-wire and a very fast sprinter. Being an athlete was, incidentally, a valuable asset given that the Rector, Monsignor Vincent Cleary, had a major interest in athletics.

Pat was ordained in the Toowoomba Cathedral on 29 June 1955 and served in the parishes of Warwick, St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dalby, Charleville, Wallangarra and Millmerran from where he retired to Vianney Village at Lourdes Home in 2007.

It was during his time at Warwick that he became overwhelmed by a sense of unworthiness, lots of scruples, a feeling of insecurity as a person and as a priest and suffered a major breakdown. With the help of the St John of God Brothers and the fatherly accompaniment of Bill McCormack – together with the encouragement and support of family and fellow priests of the Diocese and his own courage in facing the truth of his life’s journey – Pat recovered.

What had been and what in many ways continued to be a dark cloud hanging over Pat, became somehow a wonderful gift which he shared generously. For the rest of his life among us he offered the hope and the way to recovery to hundreds and hundreds of other people; he gently challenged and inspired hundreds more to be more authentic in our lives; and regularly showed, through a witty, sharp, insightful remark, the leadership and spark of his younger days.

He enjoys now, with our loving God, the fullness of the life for which he was created.

LEONHARD KIESCH SJ

29/09/1943 – 29/06/2019



“A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”. Leonhard Kiesch, having trained as a turner, entered the Society’s novitiate in Stara Wies, Poland in 1960. His philosophy studies in Cracow were interrupted by forced military service in Gdansk for two years from 1966-8.

After a year at the Bobolanum in Warsaw, he came to Australia where he studied theology at the United Faculty of Theology in Parkville and was ordained priest by then Cardinal Karol Wojtyła on 25 February 1973 at St Ignatius, Richmond.

That year marked a sadder landmark for Fr Kiesch as well. A few weeks after the ordination his father died unexpectedly and Leonhard went to Poland for his funeral and a few months of rest, so his last year of Theology was postponed a year. He was the first rector of the Polish shrine in Essendon and a dedicated servant of the Polish community there until 1982.

More grief was to follow. In October 1974, while finalising his theology studies in Parkville post-Ordination, he suffered a traumatic motor vehicle accident which hospitalised him for almost four months.

After a brief period of study in Rome, he was missioned to Germany to work in a variety of chaplaincy roles. At the request of the German Bishops’ Conference he was assigned back to Melbourne in 2004 to serve as chaplain to the German-speaking community there. He served in this role in Camberwell and St. Albans. During these years of German chaplaincy he belonged to the Campion Community in Kew.

From 2008-2018 he returned to chaplaincy roles in Germany (although spending a brief time as a parish priest in Austria). He was drawn particularly to the sick and the elderly, whose sufferings he knew only too well. He himself, while serving as chaplain to the residents of the Maria Frieden Nursing Home in Baden-Baden, was a patient there and experienced a great deal of physical pain in his last years. He refused all operations, however, and died there, at peace, on 29 June 2019.

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord
and let perpetual light shine upon them forever.
May the souls of the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

RETURNED TO GOD

GREGORY JAMES MCCANN MSC

18/04/1917 – 18/06/2019



Greg, professed in 1945, devoted his first five years as a brother at Chevalier and Kensington. He constantly asked to go to the missions and finally got there. After completing teacher training, he taught at Sidea in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. In 1958, he went to the Trobriand Islands to establish a primary school which he headed until 1974. He then moved to teach at Hagita High School in Milne Bay, PNG for a couple of years before heading to teach at the English Academy in Nagoya Japan until 1979.

In 1980, he entered St. Paul's National Seminary and in 1983 was ordained a priest, after which he went back to Hagita, Sideia Island, Fiji and Kiribati for pastoral work. He returned to Australia and was priest-in-charge of Douglas Park Parish. In 1997, he was appointed to the Provincial house at Coogee before retiring to Kensington Monastery and then to St Joseph's Nursing home.

Greg's love for all people had touched and impacted so many lives, including his nephew's Greg McCann Jnr who, inspired by him, became a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

Well done good and faithful servant of God! May he rest in peace.

PETER TOOHEY SSC

21/11/1940 – 09/07/2019



Peter was born in Sydney, the fourth of six children. After high school, he entered the Columban seminary and was ordained in July 1963 in St Mary's Cathedral by Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy.

The following year, he travelled to Korea where he began language studies, then worked as an assistant in a number of parishes in Kwangju Archdiocese and took on the role of pastor in Yeongkwang parish in 1969.

In the seminary, Peter quietly went about whatever interested him. He spent many hours in the garden, enjoyed classical music and always signed on for a bushwalk on free days. He was a gentleman who, with a lot of searching, found ways to follow his missionary calling.

He returned to Australia in 1970. The Columban mission in Korea was not his way.

He then worked at the Matthew Talbot Hostel for homeless men that was run by the St Vincent de Paul Society in Sydney. He was also chaplain to the Gladesville psychiatric hospital in Sydney. Later, he travelled to Canada to get in touch with Jean Vanier's L'Arche communities and subsequently helped establish a community in Burwood, a suburb of Sydney. He also worked in the Columban mission in Chile from 1986 to 1989.

On returning to Australia for home leave, he spent some time at the Aboriginal Spiritual Centre, located at Turkey Creek in the Kimberley Region, a remote north-west part of Australia. In 1990, Peter took up an appointment in the Archdiocese of Perth as Chaplain in Aboriginal Ministry, first in Kalgoorlie and then in Perth itself. From the late 90s to 2014, he became the chaplain to three separate prisons in Perth.

Peter is always remembered as a person who really loved and cared for everybody but certainly from the viewpoint of the poor and marginalised.

Peter was small in stature but huge in the eyes of those who knew him – huge in a searching faith, in courage, in humility and compassion for all.

Returned to the God, we hold them in prayer.

† Ian Abbott (Diocese of Broken Bay)	04/06/2019
† Reginald Ahearn (CSsR Redemptorists)	22/05/2019
† Kevin Crock CSsR (Redemptorists)	08/03/2019
† John McEneaney (Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle)	31/05/2019
† John Pearce CP (Passionists)	05/05/2019
† Jordan Perry OP (Dominicans)	25/05/2019
† John Thornhill SM (Marists)	28/07/2019
† Peter Schultz (Diocese of Toowoomba)	05/08/2019
† Ignacy Smaga SChr (Society of Christ)	18/06/2019

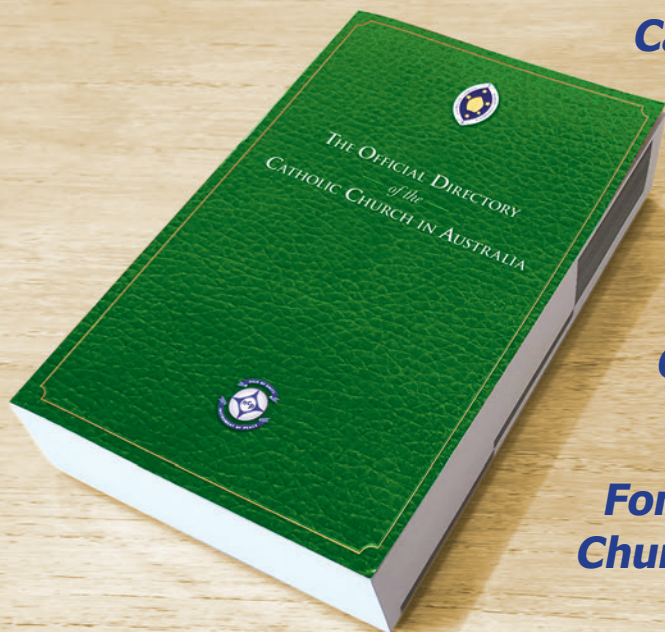
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Founded in 1970 in the Spirit of Vatican II, the NCP is committed to the fraternity and further education of clergy and to representing clergy in the public forum.

The Objects and Purposes of the Council

- To promote a spirit of fraternity among members and other clerics of the Catholic Church in Australia.
- To devise ways and means for members and others to better serve the people to whom they are called to minister.
- To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and to promote the spirit of ecumenism and to establish ecumenical links.
- To effect a liaison with other national bodies of religious women and men and with national bodies of laity.
- To maintain contact with similar associations.
- To be a consultative body to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.