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The Swag

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ABOUT THE NCP

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

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James Clarke



This is my final Chairman's article for *The Swag*. It is a "bitter-sweet" experience. As of the 1st January 2019 Paddy Sykes, a priest of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga and current member of the NCP executive, will become the new Chairman. Paddy and I are alumni of Corpus Christi College and I wish him every blessing and success in his new role. Wayne Bendotti is also concluding his term as a member of the NCP executive. Wayne has been the Treasurer for the past five years and I thank him for his service to our organisation.

The 2018 NCP convention held in Canberra was a great success and a credit to the organising committee of which Paddy Sykes was the Chairman. The attendance at this year's convention was laudable and

it is heartening to note that the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle encouraged their newly ordained and newly arrived clergy to attend. In fact we had 32 priests and deacons from around Australia for whom this was their first convention. In the tradition of past conventions, the speakers this year were outstanding. Dr Gerardine Taylor Robinson was provocative and challenging in her presentation, informing us of the duality of the lives of some of our brothers and the ongoing issue of celibacy. Frank Brennan SJ shared insights into the conclusions of the Royal Commission. He was forthright in his examination and assessment of the testimonies given by our leadership.

The question of how we as priests respond to the challenges to the sacramental seal of confession was also raised by Fr Brennan. As I have stated in my previous Chairman's article, the sacramental seal covers personal sin revealed to the confessor by the penitent. Any other information not pertaining to the personal sin of the penitent is not restricted under the sacramental seal. This fact was made evident to those of us who attended the Melbourne 2016 Convention workshop given by the Rev Ian Waters, Professor of Canon Law at the Australian University of Divinity, Catholic Theological College.

Frank Brennan took the issue a step further when he proposed the scenario that if the state parliaments pass legislation forcing priests to reveal knowledge of criminal behaviour gleaned during sacramental confession, then the bishops with dioceses

within those states should suspend the use of the 1st Rite of Reconciliation and promote the use of the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation. This is a logical and sensible solution. The parliament of South Australia has already passed such legislation. The NSW Parliament is debating the issue. We await the result of the Victorian state election on the 24th November to see whether the new Victorian legislature will pursue this matter. This issue should be discussed by the bishops at the forthcoming Plenary Council.

As I stated in my farewell address at the Canberra convention, it has been a privilege to serve as the Chairman of the NCP. I wish to acknowledge and thank Sally Heath our Executive Officer and Christine Moore our Administrative Officer, for their support and friendship during my tenure. I know that they will provide Paddy with the same support and assistance.

The NCP is a wonderful organisation which provides peer support to the presbyterate of Australia. We are not afraid to ask the tough questions, or push the boundaries on theological and pastoral issues. We are all labourers in the Lord's vineyard and through our support of one another, make the labours fruitful. There will be a new executive commencing in 2019. I wish them and our new Chairman every good wish and blessing.

For the final time.

Yours in His priesthood ☪

NCP Election Results

One nomination was received for NCP Chairman - Paddy Sykes.

Three nominations were received for two committee positions - Greg Barker, Brian Mathews and Martin Maunsell.

Congratulations to our new Chairman, Paddy Sykes, and the two new committee members, Greg Barker and Brian Mathews.

Our thanks to Martin Maunsell for accepting nomination.

The first meeting for the new committee will be the annual face-to-face meeting at the National Office in Belmont, 11-13 February 2018.



Youth Synod and the church

The final document from the Synod on Young People, *The Faith and Vocational Discernment*, covers a great diversity of issues facing young people including injustice, poverty and violence, and the emerging digital world. It also covers migration, sexuality, various kinds of abuse, the role of women in the church and what it means to be a synodal church.

The final document was approved by a vote of 191 in favour to 43 against. Of the 167 paragraphs in the document, only a few had sizable minority votes against including the paragraphs on abuse, women in the church, synodality because the topic had not been much discussed, sexuality and the highest negative vote in the synod attracting 65 votes against was homosexuality.

A key theme emerging from the Synod has been listening and accompaniment and the document recognises that this is an area for development. The role of women in decision making positions is underlined. It says 'in many places it is a struggle to give them a place in decision-making processes, even when these processes do not require specific ministerial responsibilities. The absence of women's voice and point of view impoverishes the discussion and journey of the church, and removes a precious contribution from discernment.' The synod asks for 'an anthropological and theological reflection on the reciprocity between men and women.'

It says 'an area of particular importance in this regard is the presence of women in ecclesial bodies at all levels, including in leadership functions, and the participation of women in ecclesial decision-making processes, while respecting the role of the ordained minister. This is a duty of justice, inspired as much by the way in which Jesus related to the men and women of his time, as well as by the important role some women have played in the bible, in the history of salvation and in life of the Church.'

The final document talks about living in the digital age with dignity, migration that exposes young people to extreme violence, and abuse in the church. It recognizes the suffering that the different types of abuse cause. Interestingly, it goes on to discuss abuse of power, economic abuse, abuse of conscience and sexual abuse. It says the 'desire to control, the lack of dialogue and transparency, the forms of double-life, the spiritual void, as well as psychological fragility are the terrain on which corruption prospers.'

The document denounces clericalism by quoting Pope Francis, saying it 'arises from an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation

that interprets the ministry received as a power to be exercised rather than as a free and generous service to be given. This leads us to believe that we belong to a group that has all the answers and no longer needs to listen or learn anything, or that pretends to listen.'

The document notes that the church's teaching on sexual morality frequently is incomprehensible to young people causing them to be distanced from the church. It recognises an urgent need to review the ways the church formulates and communicates sexuality teaching and proposes revisiting how this is translated into pastoral formation and guidance.

On sexual orientation the final document notes 'there are questions related to the body, affectivity and sexuality which require a deeper anthropological, theological and pastoral elaboration, which should be carried out in the most convenient ways at the local and universal levels of the church.' The document reasserts that God loves everyone and so the Church renews 'its commitment against all discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation.'

The document questions defining the identity of persons solely on the basis of their sexual orientation. It recognizes that the paths of accompaniment in the faith for homosexual persons 'can help in reading one's personal story, in adhering with liberty and responsibility to their own baptismal calling, in recognizing the desire to belong to and contribute to the life of the community and to discerning the best ways to achieve that.'

There is much more in the Synod final document. The synodal process envisages this document together with other synodal documents will continue to be discussed and applied to local situations. The pope may also offer a reflection later as he did after the Synod on the Family.

Pope Francis' homily at the final Mass of the Synod explored three fundamental steps on the journey of faith: to listen, to be a neighbour and to bear witness. He continued with his emphasis on listening, accompanying and speaking from the heart, while being careful not to settle for easy answers or fast fixes. Reflecting on the Bartimaeus story, Pope Francis noted that the faith that saved Bartimaeus did not have to do with his having clear ideas about God, but in his seeking him and longing to encounter him. Francis emphasized that 'faith has to do with encounter, not theory. In encounter, Jesus passes by; in encounter, the heart of the church beats. Then, not our preaching, but our witness of life will prove effective.' ✚



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A church in crisis needing attention

GERARDINE TAYLOR ROBINSON

Dr Gerardine Taylor Robinson, clinical psychologist, has worked for over 25 years in mental health and was Clinical Director of *Encompass Australasia* for 11 years. This article is the presentation she made at the NCP Convention in Canberra on 11 September 2018.



I am a reluctant presenter at this Conference for many reasons but primarily because I am aware that, as a result of the horrendous abuse perpetrated by Catholic clergy which was detailed at the Royal Commission, the morale of Catholic clergy, and especially the morale of the 'good guys', the many dedicated and selfless men who are the face of God to the people to whom they minister, has taken a battering throughout the five years of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse and following the release of the report in December 2017.

I do not want to add to that burden, but we do need to have some painful conversations about critical issues that challenge us as our Church is in crisis.

In written Chinese, the word for 'crisis' in their symbolic language comprises the symbol for 'Danger' and the symbol for 'Opportunity' under the same roof. We live in dangerous times as a Church, but we also face an unprecedented opportunity to radically reformulate our lives and our Church by reclaiming the values proclaimed by Jesus and embedded in the Gospel.

My sharing today is based on two old but wise sayings – Firstly, hurt people, hurt people and secondly, if nothing changes, nothing changes.

Some of what I will say and recommend today may be uncomfortable, challenging and even confronting. I don't mind if you disagree with my reflections and recommendations. I don't mind if you feel uncomfortable, even angry, because anger is an energy for change. Out there are many victims whose anger mobilised the Royal Commission to help us to reflect on our reality as a Church. So! Let's talk!

The Royal Commission

My contribution to the Royal Commission in interview on 13th February 2017 was mostly clinical opinion based on almost 30 years of working with Catholic clergy and religious in both the USA and Australia.

The Royal Commission's task was to listen and bear witness to what happened to children in Institutions, to provide compassionate and just responses to those who were abused, and to recommend changes to Church structure, culture and processes in order to prevent abuse. The bottom line of these deliberations was no more victims.

My task today and the perspective I offer for consideration are to describe 'A View from the Clinic'. If you like, my reflections on some factors I think need to change if we are to make a whole-hearted response to the tragedy of child sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic clergy and religious.

As I previously mentioned, I have been working with Catholic clergy consistently for almost 30 years – in the United States for eight years, and Australia for 21 years. The clergy I have had the privilege to work with in both the United States and in Australia have come from nearly every country on earth. Over many years now, I have noticed factors and patterns that are consistent from culture to culture, though they differ in intensity, and application in different cultures.

External factors such as social change movements and academic reflections and opinions have failed to impact and to radically alter the internal attributes of the Catholic Church that have led to the sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults. And if nothing changes, nothing changes!

Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse has always existed in the Catholic Church. This is not a new phenomenon. Throughout the centuries, Catholic Church authorities strove strenuously to keep such misconduct away from public view. However, with the advent of radio and television combined with the arrival of investigative journalism and social media, the maintenance of such secrecy was always doomed to failure and in fact led to an escalation and sensationalisation of the scandal.

For a comprehensive overview and summary of the extent of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church I recommend to you the RMIT report of Desmond Cahill and Peter Wilkinson titled, *Child Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church: An Interpretive Review of the Literature and Public Inquiry Reports*. (Centre for Global Research, School of Global, Urban and Social Studies. RMIT University, Melbourne. August 2017).

I acknowledge that the Church in Australia since the mid 1990's has been active in seeking to respond to child sexual abuse within its institutions. It established the Towards Healing 9 Point Plan, redress arrangements, counselling and support services for victims, and assessment and treatment for perpetrators.

But even the concerted effort by the Church in Australia in the mid 1990's to begin to address the issue at that time was driven by external factors, namely by the media and, in particular, by the attention given in the media to high profile serial perpetrators such as Fr Gerald Risdale.

If we are to enact and embrace change after the Royal Commission, then the impetus for change must come from within and it must come from both the grass roots level and from leadership.

Factors contributing to child sexual abuse in the Catholic church

The Royal Commission concluded that there were multiple factors that contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse in Church agencies. Furthermore, a combination of individual and systemic factors was involved, and they were interactive.

The Royal Commission quoted (Vol 16, Book 2, p587) evidence given by a social scientist and theologian as follows: *The features of the institutional church that are said to contribute to a climate in which*

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FEATURES

sexual abuse by Catholic clergy becomes possible includes the theology of sexuality, the ecclesiastical structure of power relations and hierarchical authority, the clerical culture and seminary formation. These aspects of the institution are influenced in turn by its traditions and teachings that are seen by some scholars to have rendered sexual abuse by clergy and the subsequent responses of the Catholic hierarchy almost inevitable.

The Royal Commission concluded that individual pathology on its own is insufficient to explain child sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic clergy and religious. Specific factors that heighten the risk of abuse relate to an individual's psychosexual immaturity or psychosexual dysfunction which combine with situational and institutional factors.

My view from the clinic

Others more qualified than I can comment on the Historical and Institutional factors that contributed to child sexual abuse such as Theological teachings, Canon Law, Leadership, Models of Church etc.

I wish to confine my comments to my area of expertise which is human development and clinical perspectives gleaned from working with clergy for three decades.

Keeping in mind then, the interplay of systemic and individual factors that heighten the risk and even likelihood of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults by clergy, I would like to comment on four specific contributing factors that I have encountered and observed within my area of expertise:

1. The corrosive culture of clericalism that pervades Catholic culture;
2. Celibacy and understandings of sexuality;
3. The selection, training, and formation of candidates for the priesthood;
4. The on-going personal development and support of clergy after ordination.

I will conclude by suggesting healthy ways of being in Church today.

Based on my view from the clinic, I wish to offer some practical and structural changes related to these four factors that may facilitate a more relational, accountable, healthy and nourishing culture in which men can continue to grow and to minister.

Clericalism

By and large our understanding of the priesthood has been influenced by particular theologies that have seen priesthood as a personal gift or calling that elevates the man above the laity. As Marie Keenan so

accurately observed: *Influenced by this theology of priesthood, it is little wonder that priesthood was construed by clergy and laity alike as a personal gift and a permanent sacred calling, rather than a gift of service to the community. It is also little wonder that a corrosive culture of clericalism was to be born from such a theology, which was to affect clergy and laity alike (Child sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power and Organisational Culture. Oxford Press. 2013).*

It is a reality that in our Church at the current time, we still have senior hierarchical figures who are proposing and promoting a theology of ontological change at ordination which elevates ordinary men and distinguishes them from lay men. I propose that this is unhealthy.

This theology appeals particularly to young men who have a rigid cognitive style, an unintegrated sexuality, and an unconscious sense of powerlessness that they seek to counter with the trappings and power that is afforded them by the church hierarchy and the laity at ordination.

Such individuals who have a defective sense of self, inadequate psychosexual development, and a sense of entitlement, and who inflexibly adhere to a theology of priesthood that separates them from others, are flocking to seminaries in this time of social uncertainty, rapid change and global insecurity. And – hurt people, hurt people!

If we are to begin to address the culture of clericalism, we must start with our seminaries where such ideas and theologies are being endorsed and promoted.

The Current model of Seminary

The current, most prevalent seminary model which has students segregated from the secular world, living and studying in a homosocial, institutionalised and highly structured environment, where, by and large, women are unwelcome and/or kept on the periphery, is dysfunctional, insular and a breeding ground for clericalism.

Furthermore, the model continues to perpetuate the conditioning of the laity which has been reinforced over decades, encouraging them to afford seminarians status, respect and power that they have not earned and do not deserve. It places seminarians in a perilous situation of being betwixt and between the real world and the false world of clericalism.

For some years now, I have been involved in assessing Maronite candidates for the priesthood and diaconate. Some of these men are married with children, they work a fulltime job and they study theology,

philosophy, scripture and canon law in their own time whilst being immersed in their local parish in various ministries.

By and large, they are older than the typical Catholic seminarian, mature, responsible, and fully engaged with the responsibilities of family life, financial management and social welfare commitments. Even non-married candidates for diaconate and/or priesthood are immersed in the same responsibilities and realities.

Why would such a model or an adaptation of the model not work for Roman Catholic seminarians?

I acknowledge that the majority if not all of you in this room have most likely come through the model that I deeply question. But if nothing changes, nothing changes.

I said at the beginning of this presentation that I would propose some practical changes to Church structures and systems.

To attempt to change the breeding ground for clericalism that begins in the most current, common seminary model, I propose the following.

Since personal and psychosexual development and integration is a process towards maturity, I suggest:

- That the entry age for seminarians be raised to mid-20's. I would suggest 25 years of age as a minimum.
- That a pre-requisite for consideration for seminary be a University degree and/or a Trade qualification, and at least three years of working in the chosen field or trade.
- That candidates demonstrate financial independence
- That candidates demonstrate independent living
- That seminarians remain living in the community in non-institutional settings in a model yet to be imagined.

Formation Staff

At this point, I would like also to make an observation about the selection of seminary formation staff.

Influencing the formation of another human being, whether it be a child or a young adult, is a profoundly serious ethical, moral and spiritual task. One is shaping the ideas, the dreams, the expectations, the identity and the awareness of another human being. To attempt to do so without adequate and accurate self-knowledge and without significant professional training and input is to me unthinkable.

Most staff at seminaries in the predominant model are clergy. They are good, pastoral priests who have proved their mettle in parish work, academic fields and other ministries. By and large, they have good interpersonal skills and sound pastoral experience. However, they are being plucked from the field and elevated to the position of Rector and/or formation personnel with little if any formal training in human formation. Note my emphasis on human formation. If we don't have healthily functioning human beings, we're not going to have healthily functioning professionals of any kind.

I suggest that it is unjust, unfair and unethical to put this burden onto any person or persons charged with formation in seminaries.

Furthermore, these clergy are also charged with deciding who goes through to ordination and who does not. As I said at the Royal Commission, why would a seminarian disclose personal challenges, especially of a sexual nature, to a person or persons who can preclude him from ordination?

If nothing changes, nothing changes.

Celibacy and understandings of sexuality

The Royal Commission endorsed the research findings of many academics and social scientists indicating that there is no direct causal link between celibacy and the sexual abuse of children.

However, the Royal Commission concluded that there is a heightened risk of sexual abuse where some compulsorily celibate male clergy have privileged access to children.

This conclusion was based on the understanding that for many male clergy, celibacy is linked to loneliness, depression, mental illness and isolation, and to subsequent alcohol and substance abuse, gambling, compulsive use of pornography and sometimes to sexual boundary violations with children and vulnerable adults.

The fundamental principles of Catholic sexual teaching are inspiring: that sexuality is sacred; that sexuality should be mutual; that sexuality is an expression of love and open to new life and new love within the couple.

However, Catholic sexual morality and teaching has been determined by male celibate clergy. It has not been open to 'the wisdom of the married' and more recently to a feminine, relational approach to sexuality.

Historically, Catholic church teaching on sexuality seemed to demand perfection from the outset rather than growth into a graced humanity from adolescence to adulthood.

One predominant theology of sexuality is particularly problematic. Personal identity is predicated on maleness and femaleness or a mixture of both. In relation to Catholic clergy for whom celibacy is mandatory, Marie Keenan at the Royal Commission noted: *Ordained male clergy at ordination are called to act out their maleness in which sexual activity is eliminated altogether and sexual desire is sublimated.*

Surely this imposed approach to sexuality dictates underlining the importance of discerning who is and who is NOT called to such a lifestyle. Some men, and I believe from my view from the clinic, few, can live a healthy life without sexual engagement. Many cannot! I know this from observations and from the confidential narratives I have listened to over three decades.

What I do know is that a choice for celibacy can only be made with a degree of psychosexual maturity which results from a wholistic maturation process.

Only those who can maturely embrace the loss of generativity implicit in a choice for celibacy and who can healthily grieve this loss, can live celibacy creatively, and lovingly go on to respect and to protect children.

Those who resign themselves to mandatory celibacy as a necessary 'sacrifice' required at ordination are hugely at risk of sexual boundary violations. Because hurt people, hurt people!

Clergy and sexual orientation

In relation to the Church's theology and teachings on sexuality, I have a particular problem with the teachings and documents related to sexual orientation.

I wish to state clearly at this time, that in no way is sexual orientation and, in particular homosexuality, associated with the sexual abuse of children. Homosexuality is one of many sexual orientations. The abuse of children is a paraphilia and as such, a psychiatric disorder.

I wish to make comment on the Church's teachings related to homosexuality because the fact is, a substantial number of our clergy are other than heterosexual.

Cahill and Wilkinson noted that there are various estimations of the proportion of homosexual priests and religious in the Catholic Church. They observed that the better estimates are in the 20–50 per cent range (reference above).

In my evidence to the Royal Commission, I suggested that the impact of the homophobic teachings and environment within the Catholic Church on homosexual men within the ranks of the clergy has been horrendous.

The hierarchical structure and the pervasive homophobic atmosphere in the Church together with inaccurate, denigrating and destructive Church teachings about sexuality by some moralists and Church leaders, and particularly about sexual orientation, have resulted in the spiritual, emotional and psychological abuse of many good men (and women).

I have seen, and continue to see, these people in the clinic, and each time I make my lament against the diminishment and/or the destruction of a human soul.

I propose that a theology of sexuality that leads to self-hatred, to ridicule and to secrecy driven by shame, requires radical reformulation.

What the Church needs now is not a return to traditionalism that has provided what appears to have been a safe haven for the fearful in the past, but a radically new, reformulated theology of sexuality that is transformational and liberating and which recognises that all of us are made in the image and likeness of a generative and loving God. This is a task that needs to be undertaken with urgency. Because hurt people, hurt people; and if nothing changes, nothing changes!

Selection, screening and training of candidates for the priesthood

The Royal Commission concluded that the inadequacies of selection, screening and initial formation of candidates for the priesthood contributed to the incidence of child sexual abuse.

There is a perception that, by screening candidates prior to acceptance into seminaries, we can weed out individuals with a predisposition to offend. This perception is based on the assumption that individual pathology is responsible for offending. That assumption is inaccurate. It is the interaction of the individual and systemic factors – the milieu – that is responsible.

Historically, the hermeneutic of suspicion has clouded the association of Church with the social sciences – especially with psychiatry and psychology.

Professional and comprehensive screening are important, but there is no identifiable profile of an offender and no completely reliable screening process.

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Therefore, in terms of the assessment of candidates for the priesthood, clinicians who have experience in clinical psychiatry and psychology and a comprehensive speciality in understanding the sub-cultures of religious life and diocesan priesthood, have the best chance of unearthing the complex web of interacting factors that could contribute to sexual offending in the future of a candidate.

These interacting factors include, but are not limited to, a rigid cognitive style, immature or pathological psychosexual development, mood disorders, acting out behaviours such as gambling and alcohol and substance abuse, compulsive use of pornography, and personality disorders.

As I mentioned at the Royal Commission: Until recently, (and perhaps to date) poor or non-existent screening procedures allowed for the selection of candidates who were relatively immature psychosexually and psychologically. Furthermore, formation systems were typically characterised by rigid, formal, hierarchal relationships that inhibited healthy psychological development and precluded opportunities for healthy psychosexual development. In such systems, candidates were deprived, to a large extent, of the opportunity for responsible decision making.

The system rewarded compliance and the inhibition of both aggression and libidinal energy, encouraged repression and dependence; promoted a preoccupation with short-term goals, namely Ordination or Final Profession.

Subsequently when some men transitioned from the rigid, formal structure to the more open system of parish life, and when there were no longer any external goals or structures, some clergy found that they lacked the internal resources for self-direction, self-monitoring and self-maintenance. (Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. Case Study 50. February 13, 2017)

Given that the assessment of candidates is, I believe, a deeply nuanced challenge requiring specialist professional training and experience, I propose the following:

- That, as suggested by the Royal Commission, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference establish and adopt a National Protocol for the assessment of candidates.
- That a highly skilled, multi-disciplinary team of initial and on-going assessors of candidates be external to the seminary staff and include professionals from various disciplines.
- That a program for training and mentoring of clinicians selected to

undertake this task in the future be instituted immediately.

- That the pre-requisites for candidates for priesthood noted earlier in this paper be adopted.

I have suggested practical changes to a model of seminary and to the selection and screening processes that could contribute to a healthier environment for the training of seminarians.

One final observation I would make is that, in the past, seminary curriculums have been dominated by studies in theology, philosophy, scripture and canon law, all of which are important to the formation for priesthood. However, in such over-crowded curriculums, human formation and an understanding of the dangerous dynamics which occur in helping relationships leaving both the helper and the helpee vulnerable to boundary violations, have been at best minimised and at worst neglected.

As a result, the system has failed its seminarians and clergy by being complicit in allowing well-motivated, generous yet virtually untrained men to minister as pastoral guides and helpers in an environment where vulnerable people often first seek support from clergy, who may be ill-equipped to maintain healthy boundaries in volatile, emotionally laden engagements.

It is easy to point the finger of blame at individual clergy who have breached boundaries either with children or vulnerable adults, labelling them as 'bad apples'. We need to look closely at the barrel in which these apples decayed.

The specific systemic factors which have contributed to the harm must be identified, taken seriously, and addressed comprehensively, even as soon as yesterday.

On-going personal development of clergy

Formation and personal development constitute a life-long journey for all of us, not just for clergy. I will say little here about on-going personal development of clergy other than it must be holistic, that is relational, psychological, emotional, and spiritual.

Like all professionals, clergy are called to be just that, professional. It involves being accountable to ethical and behavioural standards, to a Code of Conduct, and above all to each other and to the laity.

Healthy ways of being church

Finally, I appreciate that the challenges that face us in the present crisis are daunting.

I note that the contemporary presbyterate is very different from the group that most of you joined. You are fewer in number, older by average, and a more multicultural group. The demands of work are ever increasing and ever more technical, and few may feel as much energy as when you first signed up.

But your impact in this present crisis will be in the relational, in your humanness and in your willingness to promote change at the grass roots level.

If I could make positive suggestions for you, as a woman who has a deep love for the Church and a profound admiration and tenderness for you the clergy, I would suggest to you the following:

- Be men of prayer and then lead in this time of crisis. It is a dangerous time, but it is an opportunity to embody humility and faith, to hope in a different future, and to influence change.
- Don't do nothing because you can only do a little. Find your voice to be an agent of change.
- Model your church ministry on inclusion, adopting a team approach. Include women as equals and see their contribution not as oppositional but as complimentary.
- Allow some trusted people into your personal lives. Have at least one dear friend who you know is there for you at any time, no matter what. If possible, one brother priest who knows you inside and out.
- Prioritise your own family – parents, siblings, nephews and nieces.
- Allow parishioners and colleagues to support you outside of your role.
- Develop a more mature relationship with Church authorities that is mutually respectful and reciprocal.
- Take advantage of supervision, either individual or peer group supervision.
- Avail yourself of regular spiritual direction and of therapy to stay healthy at times when you feel depleted.
- With due respect, I suggest that bishops need to recognise that they have a responsibility to subsidise the costs for such therapy and supervision.

Above all, know that your responses to the challenges we all face in this current crisis must be based on Gospel values.

I leave you with the exhortation each of you accepted in the Rite of Ordination to the Diaconate.

It is all as simple and as complex as this: Believe what you read; Teach what you believe; And practise what you teach. ☪

NCP Convention a wonderful success

BERNIE THOMAS

Bernie Thomas, former editor of *The Swag* and now retired priest of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, offers a general reflection on the NCP Convention.



Priests from around Australia gathered in Canberra in mid-September for the biennial Convention of the National Council of Priests. This year,

the theme was *Being Catholic in Australia today – After the Royal Commission and before the Plenary Council 2020*.

The first full day took up the findings of the Royal Commission through the input of Robert Fitzgerald AM, Gerardine Taylor Robinson and bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFMConv.

Robert Fitzgerald was a commissioner on the *Royal Commission into institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* and brought with him great experience into the Catholic Church's handling of child sexual abuse. A practising Catholic, he spoke of the many factors which give rise to institutional abuse and said that institutional response was part of the problem.

Dr Gerardine Taylor Robinson is a clinical psychologist and an expert consultant, especially to groups and organisations whose members are struggling with psychological and related issues and she themed her input with 'hurt people hurt people' and 'if nothing changes, nothing changes'. She said that a 'theology of sexuality that leads to self hate, to ridicule and to secrecy and shame needs to change'. She stressed the need for a 'national, professional protocol for the assessment of students for the priesthood'.

Bishop Vincent said the time has come to change the culture of the Church – to jettison the clerical church and to adopt a church of the people of God – of the baptised. He said it is not to be new wine in old wine skins, but new wine in new skins.

Irene Sutherland took the priests on an IT journey showing how technology can be a great advantage in parishes and dioceses

and Julian Wellspring spoke about the rights of an accused priest.

On the next day, Noel Connelly SSC and Lara Turvey-Collins spoke about the importance, the procedures and the direction of the Plenary Council before people had some free time or toured the War Memorial where James Clarke (NCP Chairman) and Paddy Sykes laid a wreath on behalf of the members of the NCP. (pictured, by John Jegorow)

The next day, Frank Brennan SJ AO shared his findings and responses to the Royal Commission with his usual depth and insightfulness before there was a plenary session to try and bring together everything that had been shared over the three days. The conference also gave Concerned Catholics Canberra a short time to address the conference.

The conference ended with the General Meeting of the National Council of Priests, the Conference Mass and the Conference Dinner.

Paddy Sykes, (Diocese of Wagga Wagga) and Pat Power, John Wood and Simon Falk (Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn) worked together to bring about another great NCP gathering. ☪



No action, is not an option now – a case for inclusion

MARILYN HATTON

Marilyn Hatton presented this talk at the National Council Priests Convention in Canberra on Thursday 13 September 2018.

In 2015, I had the privilege of working with the *International Church Reform Network* (ICRN) at their Limerick meeting and again in 2016, in Chicago.



You may be aware that ICRN comprises representatives of National Council of Priests groups from 18 countries across the world together with representatives from five reform groups. It was established in 2013 to support the reforms that Pope Francis is urging our Church to achieve. It most recently met in June this year at Bratislava.

Discerning prayerfully and respectfully with priests and members of renewal groups has been one of my most cherished experiences and many others would acclaim it similarly. We all grew in understanding of each other and of how the constraints of Canon law divide and create dissonance between the ordained and the faithful.

The experience of the Limerick and Chicago meetings also opened my eyes to the pressures on dedicated and committed priests who have given up so much. I imagine and appreciate that for all of you in Australia, the pressures to keep going must seem overwhelming at times, particularly with the pain and shame of the Royal Commission findings, our bishops responses to them, and the doubling up of parishes, a great load, we could share that load together.

As the convener of the Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Renewal (ACCCR) for the last five years, it was clear to me that all the renewal groups while often critical of our bishops leadership, wanted to work together with our priests particularly at this critical time in our Church.

Bishop Vincent Long urges us, not to cling to the old Church with its clerical culture and speaks about transitioning from a dying Church to imagining and developing radically new ways to bring the gospel message to the world. I was absolutely with Sr. Clare Condon when she spoke of any change being a change of heart as well as structure.

The renewal movement (11 groups) is ready to start to build and reshape the new and wants to look at how to work in partnership with our priests at the parish level as well as at all levels of governance, decision-making and development of sound doctrine.

We yearn for our Church to be an accountable, transparent and an inclusive Church.

Organisational research tells us that the culture and function of an organisation are formed and sustained by its structure. At the national meeting of ACCCR in Canberra, hosted by Concerned Catholics in March this year, Fr John Woods pointed to the close nexus between what the Church believes, how it is governed and the way Canon Law is used to give structure to that.

It follows then that if our Church is to address the clerical culture which Pope Francis calls a cancer in our midst, our structures and Canon Law have to be reviewed and changed to reshape our church.

Our present Church is not a discipleship of equals as the gospel message suggests we do not have full inclusion of women. There can be no justice in a church that does not treat all its members as equal.

Our present Canon law blocks the faithful, our bishops and priests, many of whom would agree with some changes to Canon Law, from fulfilling Pope Francis' desire for open dialogue between the faithful and the ordained and full inclusion of women at all levels.

Our Catholic theology is a theology of equality and our practice of faith must reflect this.

As you would all be aware our bishops are proposing the Plenary Council as the reform process that will alter our clerical culture. Many in our archdiocese are not confident that the Plenary Council will achieve this. As renewal groups we are supportive of our bishops process but we would be remiss not to monitor progress. We, the faithful are the Church, and have equal responsibility and there are more of us. So while supporting the Plenary Council our two pronged strategy is to be ready to act if necessary.

Our faith must be offered with grace and generosity, as a precious gift, not with hectoring and authoritarian overtones. We know this won't happen overnight but unless we articulate a vision and start to lead, it won't happen at all.

At the University of Divinity's 'Health and Integrity in Church and Ministry Conference' in Melbourne a few weeks ago, some courageous survivors spoke powerfully about their need for a healing and an inclusive church to sustain them in their future lives. It's the least we can do.

As a first step we must pull together and urge the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference to respond to the Royal Commission recommendations meaningfully. They have to do something to demonstrate that they have heard and are changing now not in two years time!

They could immediately appoint a suitably qualified woman to co-chair the Plenary Council to balance the existing situation; establish Diocesan Pastoral Councils in every diocese based on gender balance and governance principles of accountability, transparency and inclusivity and reinstate the third rite of reconciliation

No action, is not an option now!

So much could change, I dream of an inclusive Church where the faithful, leading with the ordained as equals, listening to and respecting each other, shape an inclusive and relevant new Church; where there is inclusion of women in all levels of decision-making including all Vatican dicasteries; where representative decision-making is deliberative not just consultative; there is optional celibacy and a priesthood inclusive of all the faithful, women, men and LGBTI people, married and single. I dream of liturgies of forgiveness with general absolution, the recognition of divorced and remarrieds' right to our nourishing sacraments, a review of *Humanae Vitae* and acknowledgement and understanding of the unity and intimacy of a healthy sexuality.

This would be the attractive Church Pope Francis points to. Sound doctrine would be such an influence for good in our world. The status of women in developing countries would rise, and violence and poverty experienced by women and children would begin to decrease.

We look forward to building a partnership with the NCP with the grace of the Holy Spirit to reshape the new. ☪

How parishes can welcome LGBT Catholics

JAMES MARTIN SJ

James Martin SJ delivered this talk at the *World Meeting of Families in Dublin* on 23 August 2018. Reprinted by permission. In this extract of the full talk, Martin talks about some fundamental insights for parishes and what can a parish do to be more welcoming and respectful.



Let's begin with six fundamental insights.

1) **They are Catholic.** That sounds obvious, but parishes need to remember that LGBT people and their families are baptized Catholics. They are as much as part of the church as Pope Francis, the local bishop or the pastor. It's not a question of making them Catholic. They already *are*. So the most important thing we can do for LGBT Catholics is to welcome them to what is already their church. And remember: Just to remain in the church LGBT people have often endured years of rejection. Our welcome should reflect that and so should be, to quote Luke's Gospel, "a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over."

2) **They do not choose their orientation.** Sadly, many people still believe that people choose their sexual orientation, despite the testimony of almost every psychiatrist and biologist – and, more important, the lived experience of LGBT people. You don't choose your orientation or gender identity any more than you choose to be left-handed. It's not a choice. And it's not an addiction. Thus, it is not a sin simply to be LGBT. Far less, it is not something to "blame" on someone, like parents.

3) **They have often been treated like lepers by the church.** Never underestimate the pain that LGBT people have experienced – not only at the hands of the church but from society at large. A few statistics may help: In the United States, lesbian, gay and

bisexual youth are *five times* as likely to have attempted suicide than their straight counterparts. *Forty percent* of transgender people in the United States attempt suicide. Among young LGBT people in the United States, *57 percent* feel unsafe because of their orientation. Also, one study shows that the more religious the family they come from, the more likely they are to attempt suicide. And one important reason that LGBT youth are homeless is that they come from families who reject them for religious reasons. So parishes need to be aware of the consequences of stigmatizing LGBT people.

Never underestimate the pain that LGBT people have experienced – not only at the hands of the church but from society at large.

Most LGBT Catholics have been deeply wounded by the church. They may have been mocked, insulted, excluded, condemned or singled out for critique, either privately or from the pulpit. They may never have heard the term "gay" or "lesbian" expressed in any positive way or even a neutral way. And even if hateful comments did not come in the parish setting, they may have heard other Catholic leaders make homophobic comments. From their earliest days as Catholics, they are often made to feel like they are a mistake. They fear rejection, judgment and condemnation from the church. In fact, these may be the only things that they expect from the church.

This often leads them to exclude themselves from the church.

Parents of LGBT children face similar pain. There is a saying, "When a child comes out of the closet, the parent goes into the closet." It can be confusing, frightening and embarrassing for parents to accept the reality of their children's orientation or gender identity. They may suffer shame in front of relatives and friends. Having a child come out or say that they are transgender can make the parent feel not only that they have somehow failed but that they will be isolated, judged and excluded from the church. Sometimes they feel that they must choose between their child and God. Parents also worry that their children will leave a church that is seen as rejecting them. As a result, parishes must let parents and families know that they are still welcome, that they have nothing to fear from the church and that the church is their home.

4) **They bring gifts to the church.** Like any group, LGBT people bring special gifts to the church. Now, it's usually wrong to generalize, but for a group that has been seen in the church almost exclusively in a negative light, it's important to consider the many gifts of the group. To begin with, because they have been so marginalized, many LGBT people often feel a natural compassion for those on the margins. Their compassion is a gift. They are often forgiving of pastors and priests who have treated them like dirt. Their forgiveness is a gift. They persevere as Catholics in the face of years of rejection. Their perseverance is a gift.

In fact, recently some American parishes have fired LGBT people after they were legally married. And something about these situations always mystified me. Every time I would hear these stories, it would always be about the "most beloved" teacher, parish associate or music minister. It made me wonder why they were the "most beloved." Then I realized why: LGBT people working for the church really have to *want* to be there, given the way they're treated. They stick with their ministry *despite* the rejection that they experience. It's the same with LGBT parishioners: They must make a conscious decision to stay with a church – to persevere. So when you think about their gifts, you may have the same reaction that Jesus had with the Roman centurion: amazement at their faith.

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Like any group, LGBT people bring special gifts to the church.

5) **They long to know God.** Like many Catholics, many LGBT people struggle with various aspects of the church's teaching – for example, terms like “intrinsically disordered.” At the same time, many aren't as focused on those parts of the tradition as people think. Many want something much simpler: They want to experience the Father's love through the community. They want to meet Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. They want to experience the Holy Spirit in the sacraments. They want to hear good homilies, sing good music and feel part of a faith community. Treat them like that – not as protestors but as parishioners. Help LGBT people and their families to fulfill their deepest desires: to know God.

6) **They are loved by God.** God loves them – so should we. And I don't mean a stingy, grudging, judgmental, conditional, half-hearted love. I mean real love. And what does real love mean? The same thing it means for everyone: knowing them in the complexity of their lives, celebrating with them when life is sweet, suffering with them when life is bitter, as a friend would. But I say even more: Love them as Jesus loved people on the margins: extravagantly.

With those insights in mind, how can a parish be more welcoming? How can we treat LGBT people with the virtues that the Catechism recommends: “respect, compassion and sensitivity”? Let me suggest 10 things. Now, the following suggestions need to be fitted to your own parish. No one size fits all. Each parish must develop its own model.

1) **Examine your own attitudes towards LGBT people and their families.** Do you believe someone is sinful because she's lesbian or more inclined to sin than a straight woman? Do you hold the parents “responsible” for a gay teen's orientation? Do you think a person is transgender only because it's “fashionable”? Here's another question: If none or only a few LGBT people have made themselves known to you, why might that be the case?

God loves LGBT people – so should we. And I don't mean a stingy, grudging, judgmental love.

Likewise, are you discriminating against them in your heart? For example, do you hold the LGBT community to the same standards as the straight community? With LGBT people we tend to focus on whether they are fully conforming to the church's teachings on sexual morality. So are you

doing the same with straight parishioners – with those who are living together before being married or practicing birth control? Be consistent about whose lives get scrutinized. Pastors are often more sympathetic to the complex situations of straight people because they know them. For example, even though Jesus condemns divorce outright, most parishes welcome divorced people. Do we treat LGBT people with the same understanding?

What can you do about these attitudes? Be honest about them. But also get facts, not myths, about sexual orientation and gender identity from scientific and social-scientific sources, not from rumors and misinformed and homophobic online sites. Then talk to God and your spiritual director about your feelings and be open to God's response. Invite your pastoral team to speak about their feelings and experiences. This leads to the next step.

2) **Listen to them.** Listen to the experiences of LGBT Catholics and their parents and families. If you don't know what to say, you might ask: “What was it like growing up as a gay boy in our church?” “What is it like being a lesbian Catholic?” And an important question, “What is it like being a transgender person?” We still know little about the transgender experience, so we must listen. Invite the parents of an LGBT child to speak with your pastoral team. Ask them: “What is it like to have a gay child?” “How has the church helped you or hurt you?” “How has your understanding of God changed?” And pay attention to what they say. To that end, be attentive to language that they say they find offensive and needlessly hurtful: “sodomy” for example. Names, words and terminology matter.

Do you hold the LGBT community to the same standards as the straight community?

Overall, whether you are participating in a ministry like an LGBT outreach program or are meeting with an LGBT person one-on-one, begin with their experiences. To that end, trust that the Holy Spirit will guide them in their formation as Christians. We don't treat other Catholics by simply repeating church teaching without considering their lived experience. So avoid doing that with LGBT people. Notice how Jesus treated people on the margins: for example, how he treated the Samaritan woman. Does he castigate her for being married several times and living with someone? No. Instead, Jesus listens to her and treats her with respect. So be like Jesus: listen, encounter, accompany. If the church listened to LGBT people,

90 per cent of the homophobia and prejudice would disappear.

3) **Acknowledge them** in homilies or parish presentations as full members of the parish, without judgment and not as fallen-away Catholics. LGBT people should never be degraded or humiliated from the pulpit – nor should anyone. Just mentioning them can be a step forward. Sometimes in homilies I'll say, “God loves us all – whether we're old or young, rich or poor, straight or L.G.B.T.” Even something small like that can send a signal. It also sends a signal to their parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles. You may not think you have any LGBT people in your parish. But you certainly have parents and grandparents of LGBT people. You have people who love LGBT people in your parish. Remember that when you're speaking about LGBT people you're speaking about their children.

4) **Apologize to them.** If LGBT Catholics or their families have been harmed in the name of the church by homophobic comments and attitudes and decisions, apologize. And I'm speaking here to the church's ministers. They were harmed by the church, you're a minister of the church. You can apologize. It doesn't solve everything, but it's a start.

5) **Don't reduce gays and lesbians to the call to chastity we all share as Christians.** LGBT people are more than their sexual lives. But sometimes that's all they hear about. Remember not to focus solely on sexuality but on the many other joys and sorrows in their lives. They lead rich lives. Many LGBT Catholics are parents themselves or are caring for aging parents; many help the poor in their community; many are involved in civic and charitable organizations. They're often deeply involved in the life of the parish. See them in their totality. And if you talk about chastity with LGBT people, do it as much with straight people.

LGBT people are more than their sexual lives. But sometimes that's all they hear about.

6) **Include them in ministries.** As I've mentioned, there is a tendency to focus on the sexual morality of LGBT parishioners, which is wrong, because, first, you often have no idea what their sexual lives are like; and, second, even if they are falling short, they are not the only ones. As a result, LGBT people may feel they have to be dishonest about who they are and that they have no place in ministries. Like everyone else in your parish who does not live up to the Gospels – which is everyone – LGBT

people should be invited into parish ministries: eucharistic ministers, music ministers, lectors, bereavement ministry and every ministry. By the way, by not welcoming them the church misses out on their gifts. They will simply go to where they are welcomed, to where they can bring their whole selves. Also, asking someone who has felt left out his or her or their whole life can be a life-changing.

7) Acknowledge their individual gifts.

Not only should we acknowledge the gifts that LGBT people offer in the church as a group but their individual gifts should be valued. For example, one of the cantors in my Jesuit parish is a gay man. He is kind and compassionate, and his beautiful voice has made him an essential part of our worship for 20 years. You probably have similar people in your parish. Remember how important it is to acknowledge them, to praise them, to raise them up. Don't hide their light under your bushel basket!

8) Invite everyone on the parish staff to welcome them.

You may have a welcoming pastor, but what about everyone else? Does the person answering the phone know what to say to a lesbian couple who wants to have their child baptized? At funerals, are the gay adult children of the deceased treated with the same respect as other children? What about the teacher in a parish school who has two fathers coming to a parent-teacher conference? How does a deacon treat the father of a gay man who just died and who wants a funeral for his son? Are gay and lesbian Catholics welcome in bereavement groups when a partner dies? Is your parish open to the children of all couples, not just straight couples? Are the children of lesbian and gay couples welcome in parish schools, educational programs and sacramental preparation programs? Is your parish staff educated in the full range of church teaching on nondiscrimination and pastoral outreach?

The voice of your parish is not just your pastor's voice but everyone's. Think about it this way: By not welcoming and by excluding LGBT Catholics, the church is falling short of its call to be God's family. By excluding LGBT people, you are breaking up God's family; you are tearing apart the Body of Christ.

By excluding LGBT people, you are breaking up God's family; you are tearing apart the Body of Christ.

9) Sponsor special events or develop an outreach program. Like everyone else, LGBT Catholics want to feel like they are part of the church. And, as for all its children, the onus is on the church to

invite them into the community. But for many LGBT people, the church has not been a place of welcome. So specific LGBT events and outreach programs are helpful to bridge the gap between your intentions and their suspicions.

As for events, there are many possibilities: You can offer a Mass of welcome, a weekend retreat, a day of recollection, a book club or a speaker. And speaking events don't have to be focused solely on LGBT issues. That is, sponsor a speaker to talk to LGBT parishioners about prayer. Or show a video about a topic that people need to be informed on, like the experience of transgender people. And again, that issue – transgender people – is one that the church needs to learn about because society at large is still learning about. Bishop Christopher Coyne of Burlington, Vt., said: "I see no reason why transgender people would not be welcome in church. There is more evidence...that a lot of this is biological; it's not just something a person just makes as a fashionable choice or cultural choice. This is who they are... everyone is God's creature, and I would invite anyone to come to the table."

As for LGBT outreach ministries, there are many models. They range from programs where LGBT people speak with one another privately to ones where LGBT parishioners meet together with other parishioners; to education programs on church teaching; to more holistic approaches where the group does not focus on sexuality but on the other questions that LGBT people face; to family groups for parents; to groups that do outreach to the LGBT community in the area, like working in shelters for LGBT youth; to what you might call "blending-in" programs, where the parish includes LGBT topics as one element among many in the parish: in adult education, social justice programs and youth ministry. All of this depends on your parish.

As for parents, one mother said, when I asked what I should say to you today: "The most important thing to give parents is a safe, welcoming space to share their stories with other Catholic parents. So many feel alone and don't think anyone else is going through this. It's relief to know that there are others on the journey. ... And they don't need to hear their children being compared to alcoholics. Hearing positive statements from the pulpit would also be nice, instead of acting as if their children don't exist."

Last year, the Jesuit parish where I celebrate Mass – called, not surprisingly, St. Ignatius Loyola – sponsored an evening of sharing

stories. Six members of our parish came together – three gay men, the mother of a gay child, the father of a gay child and his gay teen son – to talk about their lives. Their sharing of stories of joys and griefs were healing for them and for the whole parish. Why healing for them? Imagine thinking your whole life that you're not part of the church and then being asked to speak about your experiences. And healing for the rest of the parish, because it brought us all together in a way that we could scarcely have imagined.

10) Advocate for them. Be prophetic. There are many times when the church can provide a moral voice for this persecuted community. And I'm not talking about hot-button topics like same-sex marriage. I'm talking about incidents in countries where gay men are rounded up and thrown in jail or even executed for being gay and lesbians are raped to "cure them" of their sexual orientations. In those countries, LGBT issues are life issues. In other countries, it may be responding to incidents of teen suicides or hate crimes or bullying. There are many opportunities for parishes to stand with LGBT people who are being persecuted.

This is part of what it means to be a Christian: standing up for the marginalized, the persecuted, the beaten down.

The Catechism says, "Every sign of unjust discrimination must be avoided" when it comes to LGBT people. Do we believe this part of the Catechism? The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith wrote in 1986: "It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent speech and action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the church's pastors whenever it occurs." Do we believe that statement from the CDF?

This is part of what it means to be a Christian: standing up for the marginalized, the persecuted, the beaten down. It's shocking how little the Catholic Church has done this. Let your LGBT parishioners know you stand with them, mention their persecution in a homily when appropriate or in the prayers of the faithful. Be prophetic. Be courageous. Be like Jesus. ☪

NCP exists for you and because of you!

Homosexuality and the clergy: caught in a trap of dishonesty

JAMES ALISON

James Alison is a priest, theologian, lecturer, retreat giver and itinerant preacher who lives in Madrid, Spain. He analyses the dangers of the Catholic Church's approach to 'gay' priests. Reprinted with permission from *The Tablet* August 4, 2018. A follow-up article will appear in the next edition of *The Swag*.

Would it shock you to know that the leading force behind the term 'gender ideology', and the campaign against it, was a gay cardinal? Or that a gay priest wrote the official 2005 explanation as to why gay men could not be priests?

I learned of the (now dead) Latin American cardinal's reputation for violence towards the rent boys he frequented from a social worker in his home town, and later discovered that this and other outrages were open secrets in both his homeland and Rome. Paris-based Mgr Tony Anatrella was a Vatican expert on homosexuality, one of very few authors the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recommended on the subject, alongside Drs Joseph Nicolosi, Gerard van den Aardweg and Aquilino Polaino, gay-cure proponents all. Anatrella had long been reported to have engaged in inappropriate touching with seminarians and others who came to him for help in dealing with their so-called 'same-sex attraction'. As recently as this June, and after many years of shameful ecclesiastical obfuscation in France and Italy, those reports have been found to be credible, and Anatrella has been suspended from public ministry. If it does shock you that such paragons of homophobia-dressed-as-Christianity might have been 'protesting too much', prepare yourself for a rough ride over the next few years.

I start with the as yet unnamed Latin American prelate and Anatrella, both from outside the English-speaking world, because the accounts of (now former) Cardinal Theodore McCarrick's wrongdoings, added to those of the late Cardinal Keith O'Brien, might have fooled you into thinking that this is an anglophone thing. It isn't. Similar tales abound across the four language groups with which I am directly familiar. And now that the dominoes are starting to fall, both the name and the deeds of the Latin American will surely come into the record soon.

The McCarrick shock was not what he was a getting up to with seminarians and other adults. This was widely known about. It was that in addition to a standardly furtive, albeit egregiously creepy, clerical gay life, this generally kind and well-liked man had

also abused at least two minors. Such does not seem to have been the case with O'Brien, Anatrella or the Latin American. And in general, despite what those who try to conflate 'gay' with 'paedophile' would have you believe, a knowing clerical gay milieu is shocked and baffled when minors are involved.

Don't ask don't tell

In all these cases, in as far as the behaviour was adult-related, plenty of people in authority sort-of-knew what was going on, and had known throughout the clerics' respective careers. However, the informal rule in the Catholic Church – the last remaining outpost of enforced homosociality in the Western world – is strictly 'don't ask, don't tell'. Typically, blind eyes are turned to the active sex lives of those clerics who have them, only two things being beyond the pale: whistle-blowing on the sex lives of others, or public suggestions that the Church's teaching in this area is wrong. These lead to marginalisation.

Given all this, it seems to me entirely reasonable that people should now be asking: 'How deep does this go?' If such careers were the result of blind eyes being turned, legal settlements made, and these clerics themselves were in positions of influence and authority, how much more are we going to learn about those who promoted and protected them? Or about those whom they promoted?

So it is that voices such as Rod Dreher – keenly followed blogger at *The American Conservative* – are resuscitating talk of the 'Lavender Mafia', and the demand, which became popular in conservative circles from 2002 onwards, that the priesthood be purged of gay men. Investigative journalists are being encouraged to lay bare the informal gay networks of friendship, patronage, and potential for blackmail that structure clerical life (or are being excoriated for their politically correct cowardice in failing to do so).

The aim is to weed out the gays, especially the treasonous bishops who have perpetuated the system. Ross Douthat – the *New York Times* columnist – has called for a papally mandated investigation into the American Church (I guess along the lines of

Archbishop Charles Scicluna's in Chile) to restore the moral authority of the Church.

Others, such as Robert Mickens, *The Tablet*'s Rome correspondent for many years, are equally aware of the 'elephant in the sacristy', which is the massively disproportionate number of gay men in the clergy, but highlight the refusal of the Roman authorities to engage in any kind of publicly accountable, adult discussion about this fact. This reinforces collective dishonesty and perpetuates the psychosexual immaturity of all gay clergy, whether celibate, partnered or practitioners of so-called 'serial celibacy'.

A healthy approach

How to approach this issue in a healthy way? As a gay priest myself I am obviously more in agreement with Mickens than with Dreher or Douthat. However, I would like to record my complete sympathy with the passion of the latter two as well as with their rage at a collective clerical dishonesty that renders farcical the claim to be teachers of anything at all, let alone divine truth. Jesus becomes credible through witnesses, not corrupt party-line pontificators. Having said that, I suspect that particular interventions, whether by civil authority or papal mandate, are always going to run aground on the fact that they can only deal with, and bring to light, specific bad acts, usually ones that are criminal.

I cannot imagine a one-off legal intervention in this sphere that would be able to make appropriate distinctions where there are so many fine lines: between innocent friendship, sexually charged admiration, abusive sexual suggestion, emotional blackmail, financial blackmail, recognition of genuine talent, genuine love lived platonically, genuine love lived with sexual intimacy, sexual favours granted with genuine freedom, sexual favours granted out of fear or in exchange for promotion, covering peccadillos for a friend, covering graver matters for a rival in exchange for some benefit, not wanting to know too much about other people's lives, or obsessively wanting to know too much about them. Let alone the usual rancours of break-ups, career disappointments, petty jealousies, bitterness, revenge and so on. All of these tend to shade into or out of each other over time, making effective outside assessment, even if it were desirable, impossible.

I don't think there is a healthy way to address this without opening up understanding of some of the dimensions of the systemic structural trap that is the

clerical closet. In a second article I will set out what I hope is a merciful picture of how this trap has arisen, and how it can be, and indeed is beginning to be, undone. This with a view to diminishing our scandal and helping all of us adjust to a new ecclesial reality. However, let me here describe some elements of the structure that will become more and more visible as time goes by. These will not offer a pretty picture. Our Lord told us that what was whispered in private would be shouted from the rooftops. So it is: what seemed randomly anecdotal is becoming sociologically evident.

For shorthand I use the word 'gay' here to refer to an adult male's stable same-sex orientation, irrespective of how that is accepted or lived out. Also please notice that, for the purpose of these two articles, the issue of a gay cleric's personal relationship status – single, partnered, widower, serially available – while important for each one personally, is functionally irrelevant for understanding the systemic nature of the clerical closet. A stably partnered and emotionally balanced priest can no more be publicly honest than a deeply tortured one with many partners. And it is very rare that a genuinely celibate gay cleric is allowed to bear witness to their gift in the first person. Not least because if they are genuine livers-out of celibacy as a gift, they are likely to have discovered that it is as a self-accepting gay man that they are so. This public self-acceptance puts them further into opposition with official teaching than any sexual indiscretion, which can of course be forgiven.

Honesty is needed

An anecdotal illustration: a few years ago, I found myself leading a retreat for Italian gay priests in Rome. Of the nearly 50 participants some were single, some partnered, for others it was the first time they could talk honestly with other priests outside the confessional. Among them there were seven or eight mid-level Vatican officials. I asked one from the Congregation for the Clergy what he made of those attending with their partners. He smiled and said, 'Of course, we know that the partnered ones are the healthy ones.' Let that sink in. In the clerical closet, dishonesty is functional, honesty is dysfunctional, and the absence or presence of circumspect sexual practice between adult males is irrelevant.

And so to some systemic dimensions of 'the elephant in the sacristy'. The first is its size. A far, far greater proportion of the clergy, particularly the senior clergy, is gay than anyone has been allowed to understand,

even the bishops and cardinals themselves. Harvard Professor Mark Jordan's phrase 'a honeycomb of closets', in which each enclosed participant has very little access to the overall picture, is exactly right. But the proportion is going to become more and more self-evident thanks to social media and the generalised expectations of gay honesty and visibility in the civil sphere. This despite many years of bishops resisting accurate sociological clergy surveys.

During the last papal election in 2013 we did have hints that the Vatican and the cardinal electors were shocked at discovering from reports commissioned by Benedict how many of them were gay. Part of their shock has to have been their fear at how the faithful would be scandalised if they had any idea. They were right to be afraid, and the faithful are going to have an idea as the implosion of the closet accelerates. How scandalised – or accepting – the faithful will be is going to depend on how well we learn to talk about all this.

A second dimension is grasped when you understand the general rule that the heterosexuality of a cleric is inversely proportional to the stridency of his homophobia. This is one of the reasons why I am sceptical of all attempts to 'weed out the gays'. The principal clerical crusaders in this area turn out to be gay themselves – in some cases, so deeply in denial that they don't know it. And in some cases knowingly so. My own experience, which has since been confirmed by hundreds of echoes worldwide, is that there are proportionately few straight men in the clergy (leaving aside rural dioceses in some countries, where heterosexual concubinage is the customary norm) and they do not, as a rule, persecute gay men. It is closeted men who are the worst persecutors. Some are very sadly disturbed souls who cannot but try to clean outwardly what they cannot admit to being inwardly. These can't be helped since Church teaching reinforces their hell. For others the lure of upward mobility leads them to strategic displays of enthusiasm for the enforcement of the house rules.

Banning gay men from the seminary won't work

A third dimension is that banning gay men from the seminary never works. In practice, the ban means that those 'tempted' by honesty will be weeded out, or will weed themselves out, uncomfortable with the inducements to a double life. Those unconcerned by honesty, and happy to swim in the wake of the double lives of those doing the weeding, will learn how to look the part.

The only seminaries that might avoid this are those that differentiate on the basis not of sexual orientation, but of honesty, which is a primary requisite for any form of psycho-sexual maturity. There are some that do, presumably with the permission of wise bishops, but in quiet contravention of the official line. These of course are instantly vulnerable to accusations of being 'liberal', of 'promoting homosexuality' or whatever, when in practical terms the reverse is true. For honesty is effectively forbidden by a Church teaching that tells you that you are an intrinsically heterosexual person who is inexplicably suffering from a grave objective disorder called 'same-sex attraction'. And so we get seminaries in which there are no gay seminarians, but whose rectors nevertheless push programmes like those of 'Courage' on their oh-so-non-gay-but-transitorily-same-sex-attracted charges.

A fourth dimension: no attempt to view this issue through culture war lenses will be helpful. The clerical closet is not the result of some 1960s liberal conspiracy. It is a systemic structure in which, absent scandal, all its members are functional. In the previous round of the blame-the-gays game, from 2002 on, much was made of the supposed culpability of liberal Vatican II bishops such as Rembert Weakland. The idea was that the new breed of John Paul II hardliners would sort it out. Men such as John Nienstedt and John Myers. Oh wait ... really? Then again, does anyone seriously think the four cardinals of the 'dubia' – two of whom have since died – to be proportionately more heterosexual than the rest of the hierarchy?

This is not a matter of left or right, traditional or progressive, good or bad, chaste or practising; nor even a matter of 25 years of Karol Wojtyła's notoriously poor judgement of character, though all these feed into it. It is a systemic structural trap, and if we are to get out of it, it must be described in such a way as to recognise that unknowing innocence as much as knowing guilt, well-meaning error as well as malice, has been, and is, involved in both its constitution and its maintenance. ☪

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

Revisiting the Theology of Clericalism

ERIC HODGENS



Eric Hodgens, retired Melbourne priest, asks how we might construct church leadership in a changed world.

Clericalism is on everyone's lips. The pope decries it. Australia's Royal Commission judged it a major factor contributing to child sex abuse by priests. Some bishops have joined the chorus denouncing it, even though other bishops resentfully bite their tongues.

But, as the saying goes, you tell me what you do, and I will tell you what you believe. Follow that line and we find clericalism alive a well.

The factional divide in the Catholic Church is becoming ever more political and militant. It parallels the identity politics which is currently enveloping many of the world's democracies. One faction places its focus on the church as *institution* – with its system, doctrine, law and clerical control. The other stresses the Christian *vision*, and sees system, doctrine, law and clergy as its servants. The 50 years since Vatican II have seen the pendulum first move from dominance of the clerical system as the Church embraced the new social order, followed by twenty-five years of restoration of clerical centralisation and control.

Seminary training followed the same pattern. Priests ordained between 1960 and 1975 were pastorally minded and well educated in theology, history and scripture. Since then ordination numbers have been minimal and the products more clerical, less interested in intellectual pursuits and jealous of their clerical rank. Sacristy priests rather than pastoral leaders.

There is infighting in clerical ranks over in-house issues which are irrelevant to the laity. Meanwhile, formerly devoted Catholics, liberated from clerical control, have gone their own way – many leaving altogether.

As ever, knowing the history helps to work out a solution. Theology follows practice and is an attempt to provide a rational explanation of that practice. The theology of the Constantinian church was formulated in an intellectual climate of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and in the Greek language. Much of it does not speak to today's world.

How did clericalism become entrenched in the Catholic Church? The answer lies largely with the theology of early Christianity after Emperor Constantine made it central to

the structure of his empire in the 4th century. Imperial patronage brought that great temptation – power. Bishops got status and power.

A key pastoral question of the newly endorsed Constantinian church was how you deal with people who had become Christians, been baptised and then abandoned the faith under persecution. What do you do with them if they want readmission?

The pastoral practice that emerged was to allow them back after doing penance, but not to baptise them again. How explain this policy? Here the tail wagged the dog. The answer the theologians came up with was that baptism causes an irreversible change in the essence of the person – like a seal on their soul. It caused an *ontological* change. This theory fitted the scene even better once clergy got power and ruled the community rather than led it. The sacrament had created a sacred person.

Theology tends to ramp up the status and certainty of its models and theories so that what starts off as a theory morphs into unquestionable truth.

As Christianity grew it became more organized. St Paul lists various ways members helped each other in his letter to the Corinthians. Different members had different talents which they used to serve the community.

Quite early, these were formalized as ministries. The Latin word for *to designate or direct* is “ordinare”. The problem with translating this into English as “ordain” is that it carries sacral overtones not in the Latin original.

The elders (presbyters) of the early Christian community emerged as leaders along similar lines to the synagogue. Presiding over the Eucharist became reserved to them. Over time that role became sacralised; and their routine designation (or ordination) became a *consecration*. The priest was not only the elder. He was a sacred person

The price paid by the clergy was pride and arrogance and a presumption of entitlement, which made them a cast which dominated rather than served – that enforced rather than led. It created two ranks of Christians. Clergy ranks have been breaking down for a long time. Priests have left in large

numbers. Others have been dismissed due to scandal. Clerical sex abuse has deauthorised priests and, more so, bishops. Yet other former priests are working formally and informally in church ministries. The “priest forever” tag just doesn't hold any more.

There are plenty of suggestions as to how to eliminate clericalism: A conversion of heart in the clergy from power to service. Changing the lifestyle and curriculum of seminaries so that they cease to be academies of clericalism. Selecting only proved pastors as bishops. But none of these will work without re-visiting the underpinning theology of the seal.

The theology of the seal has passed its use by date. A priest is no more sacred than any other baptised Christian. His or her designation to lead the Eucharist should arise from a calling by the Church; and any rite of designation a true *ordination* – not a *consecration* – by the community. His retaining of that ministry should be at the pleasure of the community.

Leadership of the community should be a quite separate ministry filled by someone competent and willing to do it. As the seal fractures a more varied and adaptable community can be born. ☞

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Can Parish Pastoral Councils save the ailing church?

AENGUS KAVANAGH FSP

Aengus Kavanagh FSP, Patrician Brother, Ryde, NSW suggests that with a little tweaking, parish councils could assist in offering a stabilising force in a church in uncertain times.



Over fifty years ago, five of the main documents of the Second Vatican Council made reference to a structure for more intentional and active participation of the laity in the mission of the Church. As a significant break from tradition, this was a main stimulus for the emergence of Diocesan and Parish Pastoral Councils in the life of the Catholic Church

In his document, *The Beginning of a New Millennium*, Pope St John Paul II, stated: *The Church of the Third Millennium will need to encourage all the baptised and confirmed to be aware of their active responsibility in the Church's life.* This responsibility is rooted in the Church's teaching that all the baptised share in the role of Christ the Priest, the Prophet, and the King, and all the baptised have an equal and active role to play in the life and mission of the Church. Pope Benedict XVI echoes a similar right to a Catholics For Action Forum in Romania (Aug. 2012): *Co-responsibility requires a change in mentality, particularly with regard to the role of the laity in the Church, who should be considered not as 'collaborators' with the clergy, but as persons truly 'co-responsible' for the being and activity of the Church.'*

These Papal pronouncements are a back-drop to the often-heard assertion of recent decades that the time of the laity has come. A factor adding urgency to this aspiration is the significant decrease in priestly vocations in the Western World generally and the consequent ageing and diminished numbers of priests in active ministry, so visible here in Australia. Such considerations invite the exploration of ways in which the lay faithful may share more fully in ministry and in leadership of

the complex organisations that most parishes have become. Besides, there is the realisation that many of the multiplicity of duties discharged by already heavily burdened priests, are not necessarily peculiar to the ordained state, and are but a legacy of a bygone golden era of priestly vocations.

However, despite the rhetoric, and despite the great changes in context and circumstances, evidence of adaptations in Church policies and practices in response to emerging scenarios remains scant.

In 2007, the Vicariate for Faith and Life, Brisbane Archdiocese, published the third edition of *Handbook For Parish Pastoral Councils*. This comprehensive and enlightened publication was authored by Sr. Cecilia Anning sj. Towards the end of the 74 page booklet there is the bold claim that *Pastoral Councils are flourishing in the Brisbane Archdiocese due to the commitment of the diocese to their establishment, ongoing support and development.... Pastoral Councils give recognition to the reality that the greatest resource of the Church is the People of God.*

Would that it were thus in most dioceses in Australia now. However, anecdotally, many Parish Pastoral Councils (PPCs) may be languishing at the other end of the flourishing continuum. Many factors contribute to this condition but a root cause may be the guarded institutional attitude of Church in ceding status and trust to PPCs. One gets a sense in the following extract from Canon 536 of the 1983 revised Code of Canon Law: *It is for the Parish Priest to preside at parochial councils. They are to be considered invalid, and hence null and void, any deliberations entered into, (or decisions taken), by a parochial council which has not been presided over by the Parish Priest.*

Reference to PPCs on Australian Diocesan websites, in the main, seem to be generic and aspirational with little mention of operational details. Not so for many Diocesan websites in the USA.

The hope is that the inference on the Washington Archdiocesan website in their guidelines for PPCs is not a prevailing presumption in Australian Chanceries: *When there is a change of pastor in the parish the parish council is dissolved.* Shades of

institutionalised clericalism here, just one manifestation of the clericalism which Pope Francis likens to a cancer in the Church.

Surely, a great benefit of a PPC is its potential to provide stability and continuity in times of fluidity in pastor appointments, and as a guard against the possible disruptive influence a pastor may bring if he has a very different personality and ecclesiology from his predecessor. This is not to question the right of the new pastor to make necessary changes but that such changes may be effected in a spirit of servant leadership.

In 2007 the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference launched a comprehensive statement on PPCs. As for many Church documents, the question remains on the extent to which the 2007 statement informs current policy and practice. Changed circumstances of the past decade invite an updating of the statement. Ideally, a modernised version would be given to all PPC members as an initial step in the desired process: *To participate responsibly in the life of the parish, Pastoral Council members will engage in purposeful formation.*

For PPCs to be truly effective there is an urgent need for dioceses to be proactive in the provision of formation experiences, training, and ongoing support which will equip Council members with the understandings, commitment, competence, and confidence to make the PPC a key player in the mission of the parish. To promote the profile and role of the PPC some parishes, maybe too few, display photos of PPC members in the Church foyer, and/or, on the parish website.

The coming together of a number of factors in the contemporary world invites a new model of Church. Some such factors include the globalisation of indifference, especially in matters of faith and spirituality, the huge alienation of baptised Catholics from parish affiliation, the major decrease in vocations to priesthood and the incidence of sexual abuse of minors throughout the Catholic Church. One by-product of these developments is the re-configuration, twinning and/or amalgamation of parishes. An underlying presumption in most of such rationalisations is that a faith community cannot exist in the absence of a resident pastor. Does it have to be thus? How does this scenario play out as the current crop of able, willing, and generous-spirited pastors diminishes?

A positive sign of the goodwill and eagerness of the People of God is the

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FEATURES

willingness with which groups across the nation, in the lead-up to Plenary Council 2020, are currently dialoguing on the fertile question: what do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Could it be that one of the things that God is asking is that a necessary paradigm shift takes place enabling a more active participation, male and female, in the ministry and in the leadership of dioceses and parishes? Would the planning, and concerted movement towards such a preferred and sustainable future, prevent an ad hoc drift into a probable future?

In his address to Manly Seminary Alumni (30 August 2017), Vincent Long Nguyen OFM. Conv., Bishop of Parramatta paints a picture with scope for the winding back of history in response to our present context: *There existed a variety of ministries in the early Church... Yet over the centuries, this richness has been gradually concentrated in the ordained at the expense of the baptised. In effect, the priesthood of the ordained has assumed and usurped the rich and varied ministries of the baptised.*

Surely a 'flourishing' PPC would be an essential platform in the emergence of any new model of Church, a model with potential for sustainability in an uncertain future? ☪



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Even God Smiled

KEVIN BURKE

Kevin Burke, Parish Priest of Eltham, Victoria, offered these reflections at the launch of his book *Even God Smiled* on 14 October in the Community Centre of the Eltham Parish Primary School. You can obtain a copy by sending \$40 (includes postage) to Kevin Burke, PO Box 310, Eltham VIC 3095.

I'd like to pay tribute to my publisher, David Lovell, who sadly passed away about 4 weeks ago. I found David very good to work with, he was just so helpful and he really helped me to feel as though I was part of the whole process. I was quite rocked and saddened by his death, and was privileged to attend his funeral.

Lead in: One line from Bee Gee's song,
Words: It's only words and words are all I have to take your heart away.

Words are fascinating, aren't they? They have a magic and a power all their own; uttering a single word can change the whole direction of a person's life. Yes, meaning I will marry you, or they can even alter the course of world history such as declaring war.

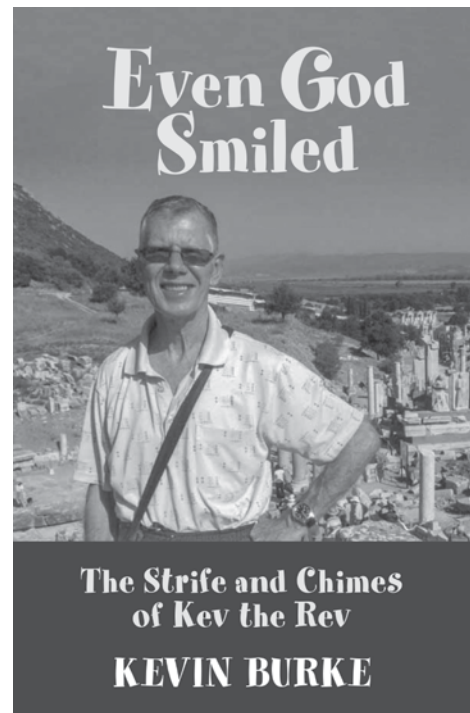
Words can facilitate the process of helping us understand the mysteries of life as they unfold before us.

When we come up with an idea, we express it in words. I'm excited by ideas in the many and varied forms that they come to us.

When we put a few ideas together in a comprehensive and systematic way we can come up with a vision which can energize and inspire us and maybe others.

I've had up to a dozen articles published in *The Swag*, the quarterly National Council of Priests' publication. One of our retired priests, Eric Hodgens, seems to have had at least one article published in every edition of *The Swag* for past six or seven years. He's a brilliant thinker and he's very gifted and articulate. The image I have of him is that creative ideas just ooze out of him. Now I'm not an oozier – I'm a sweater, a plodder. For me, the process of writing an article is a slow, tedious struggle.

*I'm not a writer, but I give it a go.
I'm not a poet, though I can be colourful.
I'm not a philosopher, but I have an inquiring and curious mind.
I'm not a theologian, but I'm fascinated by the mystery and wonder of life.
I'm not a scripture scholar, but I'm in love with the Word of God.
I'm not an orator, but I'm passionate about my convictions.*



I'm not creative, but I have a wild imagination.

I'm not an academic, but I have a few ideas.

I'm not blessed with the gift of wisdom, but I'm keen to learn from those who are. I'm not instinctively reflective, but I'm working on it.

In general, I'm more like the tortoise than the hare.

I admire those who see the big picture, the big thinkers, who express substantial insights in their expansive vision. In the spiritual/religious world, I love the writings of the two RRs, US Franciscan Richard Rohr and Canadian oblate Ronald Rolheiser.

Reflecting on their insights and slowly learning from the many and varied experiences I've had and continue to have, I've become clearer in my mind about life's priorities and more confident with what I'm passionate about and am happy to express my strong convictions.

Why did I write this book? It's taken six years and it's come at a considerable personal/emotional cost as anything worthwhile in life always does.

The catalyst was two events in my previous parish, Chadstone, about 15 years ago,

both humorous, quirky experiences. I describe them in the book; absolutely hilarious actually – I'll spare you the details. We know there's so much more to life than humour and having fun, although those two figure prominently in my life.

I've had many incredible experiences over my nearly 75 years. Just a few weeks ago I was on an incredible Wilderness Retreat in the Grampians that was organised by the Jesuit-based Campion College Kew.

I've publicly admitted that I'm a slow learner, but I'd like to think I'm gradually moving forward. It's only been in the past 8 years that I've finally got my act together in the sense of achieving some peace and stability in my life thanks primarily to the patient and understanding people of Eltham parish, backed up by the support of family, friends, including brother priests.

This new-found sense of peace and stability has given me the confidence to back myself and have a go.

I've written this book because I believe I have a story to tell. Who knows what form the church and Christian life might take in the next 50 to 100 years. I hope my story might encourage some people now or in the future to make sense of the gospel message and the Christian life so that they can live it out realistically in the world.

I've been encouraged by positive feedback from priests about my articles in *The Swag* and from many who appreciate my letters to newspapers.

The best example of what I'm saying is the article that was published in *The Swag*, Summer 2012, on the new translation of the missal. I called it *Left Right Out Rite*. In my opinion, it's the best article I've ever written. It was hard going. It started with a few ideas and a mountain of passion fuelled by anger, frustration and disillusionment. It took probably 3-4 months to write.

I met with local priest Steve Rigo who is an academic, very pastoral and a great guy. He gently pointed out that it was all over the place – which I often am – and that I needed to re-organise the scattered ideas and emotions and give them a clearer focus. My brother John, also a learned academic, helped me on one point, namely the historical basis of the Creed.

I'm always happy to learn from others who are wiser, more insightful and more articulate than I am. I'm sure there were others I consulted, including, at the last minute, a lawyer parishioner. He may have been concerned at the legal implications of some of my statements as I agreed to his suggestions to tone it down.

It was still hard-hitting and forthright and it received considerable positive feedback. As I've said, it's my best ever. The cost was certainly considerable expenditure of 'mud, pest and fears', not quite nightmares but many restless nights.

As someone who wears his heart on his sleeve, I know that everything good I have written was done with a slow, tedious process and substantial emotional cost.

As to the actual writing, again I had to seek advice; someone said just start writing and see where it takes you. I reckon I spent two years on what ended up as part 4, 8 chapters, with the heading *Keeping them honest*. That's the biggest of the 5 parts of the book, over 100 pages. It details my up-and-down relationship with church authorities, including correspondence with the Vatican.

One chapter is called *The Pell Papers*, another *The Little Letters*. Initially I called this section *Taking on the big boys*, but that may have been too blatantly self-indulgent or arrogant. I doubt if I caused big George too many heartaches though I did hear he said to Sydney priests: At least you guys didn't do me in to the Vatican as they did in Melbourne. I was probably the main culprit there.

I sent some of the earlier part of this section to a publisher. He read it and said we can't publish libel. I sent him some more pages and he said we haven't got deep pockets, so I moved on.

I sent it to former priest, a writer and he was hard-hitting, which I appreciated. He suggested several options including do a course at the University of the Third Age and learn how to write properly and take six months leave and go for it. He also offered constructive critique of what and how I'd written.

I sent it to my first PP, mentor and friend, Len Heriot, whom I respected greatly. He was disgusted and said you can't publish that. He psychoanalysed me in various ways, which was fair enough as he'd got to know me pretty well.

His advice stung me a bit. Again I moved on. Four years ago I spent a month doing a course at Tantur on edge of Bethlehem and a USA Catholic guy, a writer, suggested I tell my story to young people and get them to write it down.

In earlier times, I'd be totally confused and bewildered with all this advice. But as Paul Bongiorno writes in his foreword, once I set my mind to something, I can be relentless and single-minded.

So I started writing. The best time was Sunday afternoon, the only time in week

where I had the possibility of 3-4 hours uninterrupted. Sometimes I'd write at 9pm for 2 hours but found it hard to unwind and relax after that. Sometimes it took me half an hour to get started. I may have written the last piece 2 weeks earlier, so I had lost track of the direction I had meant to take. After a while, I'd sketch out a plan for the chapter and then make a summary when I'd finished it. The first opportunity I had to read all the chapters in a short time was while holidaying at Coolool Beach, Qld, October last year.

Two exceptions to this writing time were the year before last on Magnetic Island in August when unusually the sun didn't come out for 2 days, so I wrote for 5 hours each day and then a week on Phillip Island in November when I wrote for 6 hours every day. That helped to break the back of it.

Funnily enough I reckon I did my clearest thinking in the middle of the night instead of sleeping.

There were so many re-writes as my very patient typist Angela would know. I was continually updating, clarifying, adding more examples and re-arranging the material. It was all a bit like my life, trial and error, hit and miss, happily having a go.

The last communication I had with publisher David Lovell, was that I loved the front cover and back page with the photo of me in Ephesus with the title and the back page with the blurb and reviews from Paul Bongiorno, Bob Maguire and retired bishop Pat Power along with my epitaph: He had a go; We had a laugh; Even God Smiled. *Even God Smiled* is the main part of the book's title and the final line of the epitaph. I've spent the past few years pondering over the many possibilities for the book's title and epitaph.

I'm grateful for the help from my lawyer friend Tim who helped me refine my thoughts, especially referring to the two previous archbishops of Melbourne. I bear no ill will towards them. All three of us along with my friend Bob, and other priests that are here today, have to exercise leadership and live our priesthood as we see best. My differences with them were more professional than personal, though there's a fine line.

Could you allow me to conclude by being so precocious as to quote Oscar Wilde: If one tells the truth, one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out. ☺

Faith and community in the bush

MARY FARRELLY SM

Sr Mary Farrelly SM, who works in a country setting, reflects on the Catholic culture in the Australian bush from John O'Brien's *Around the Boree Log* to today's family based faith.



A month or two ago I read through John O'Brien's book of poems, *Around the Boree Log*. We had a copy of this at home when I was growing up, long before I knew that a boree log wasn't just another quaint Irish term but actually the name of a tree, common here in central western Queensland. As I read through the book many references to characters such as *Hanrahan* (we'll all be rooned) and *Laughing Mary*, to places such as *The Old Bush School* and to family life described in *The Trimmings on the Rosary* were familiar to me. However, it had been recalling the story about the bishop's visit to *Tangmalangaloo* which caused me to go in search of the book. I found a copy when I visited our Sydney community in January.

Many people will be too young to have come into contact at school or in some other context with the writing of John O'Brien. He was one among a number of bush poets at that time. John O'Brien was the pen-name chosen by Father Patrick Hartigan. It is said that he administered the last rites to Jack Riley who was believed to be the inspiration for Banjo Patterson's *The Man from Snowy River*. Born at Yass in 1878, the son of Irish parents from County Clare, he was ordained a priest in 1903 and spent time in Albury (Thurgoona), Berrigan and most especially in Narrandera. The twenty third *John O'Brien Festival* was recently held in Narrandera. I've long felt a connection with him because he was the celebrant at the

wedding of my grandparents, Mum's mother and father whom unfortunately, I never had the joy of meeting.

Speaking about his rural diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes in a Youtube clip, *Lessons from the Long Paddock*, Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green quotes from this John O'Brien poem. So why did the boy who proudly identified Christmas Day as 'the day before the races out at Tangmalangaloo' strike a chord with me? Sometime previously the poem had come to my mind after a phone lesson with a young boy preparing for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Perhaps I phrased the question poorly when I asked him what was special about Christmas Day. After a moment's thought he happily told me that was when we get presents. Although it didn't take us long to move on to Jesus and His birthday as the reason for the presents, for me his answer was a reminder of how deprived – I don't think that is too strong a word – people, young and old, in rural and most especially *remote* country are in terms of faith input.

Life as John O'Brien describes it in *Around the Boree Log* published around 1911, is country life although not remote country. Catholic faith pervades the everyday life of his characters. People's attendance at Sunday Mass is evidence of this. They travel to the little country church (just as the priest goes on horseback and later early motor car, to visit them), but in truth those distances from the properties around

Narrandera were considerably shorter than they are in western parts of Queensland dioceses for example. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that there was still a strong connection **in time** to life in Ireland, its beliefs and practices, even its superstitions.

Half way through the 20th century I grew up in what was then a little town in outer western Sydney. In our unpaved 'dead-end' street, children had right of way. We walked to school, the little Catholic Church-school where desks were actually pews with hinged planks which dropped down for Sunday Mass, even as the heavy curtain separating the sanctuary from the nearest classroom was drawn back for a few hours each week. At school we learnt about our faith not just in daily religion classes (through catechism, singing hymns and saying and learning prayers off by heart) but we absorbed it so to speak, in the environment where the Sisters were our teachers, so consolidating what our parents passed on to us and lived out in our homes.

Early Catholics in Australia (many of whom were at least first generation Irish) had a somewhat ghetto mentality tending to mix with fellow Catholics. Mixed marriages were to be avoided or at least discouraged and if they happened there was no nuptial Mass: they took place in the sacristy rather than in front of the altar. My parents remembered job advertisements which stated that 'Catholics need not apply.' What a contrast it is today when we live in a secular society and the bigotry that those of us who are older remember, has in general, been replaced by an appreciation of others regardless of their faith and where ecumenism is a reality. This must surely be something close to the heart of Jesus who desired that 'they may be one' (Jn 17:21).

And yet, how much harder it is for parents today who live in rural and remote places, over a century further on from John O'Brien's community! I think it is true to say that many have less knowledge to pass on because they received less themselves, studying by distance education, even if they went away to a Catholic boarding school as teenagers – which is not always the case. It is my thirteenth year in the western pastoral ministry and I am in admiration of the parents who may rarely be present in a town at the celebration of Mass and yet strive to live and teach their children how to live lovingly and in relationship with the Father as Jesus demonstrated for us. ☪

Changing the Pope's mind on women

PATRICK FLANAGAN

Fr Pat Flanagan, Red Cliffs, Victoria, reflects on the development of Pope Francis' thinking on women through his willingness to learn.

Very soon after Jorge Bergoglio was elected bishop of Rome, Pope Francis, Robert Mickens pointed out two blind spots in the new pope's thinking. One was the matter of sexual abuse of minors committed by clergy. He did not see it as a big issue. The other concerned the place of women in the Church.

Events in Chile this year have removed one of those blind spots from Francis, but not from the whole Church. There are still plenty who think that the victims are mainly after money. And, of course, Francis, and we with him, still have an enormous task ahead of us in rooting out the causes of such abuse. Nevertheless, the fact that Francis, at the age of 82, has been able to say both 'I am sorry' and 'I was very wrong' itself says that he is a blessing God has given to his Church.

But about the other blind spot – the place of women in the Church: It became evident quite early in his papacy that Francis believes that it is settled Catholic Faith that the Church has no power to ordain women to the priesthood or the episcopate. The fact that he believes this is very understandable. He is always, first and foremost, a pastor. So, when Pope John Paul II, issued his very short instruction, couched in the language of defining doctrine, that the Church has absolutely no power to ordain women priests, and furthermore, absolutely forbade any further discussion of the matter, Jorge Bergoglio regarded the matter as settled. And, of course, the Holy Office immediately said that the teaching was definitive, infallible, confirming what has been the constant teaching of the Church over 2000 years. And, when the Holy Office, motivated according to some by the fear that John Paul II himself was drifting into heresy, released during the Jubilee Year 2000 AD that document taking our Faith back several hundred years it stated among many other things that if we do not accept John Paul II's teaching that women can't be priests, or Leo XIII's teaching that Anglican Orders are absolutely null and utterly void, then we are no longer in full communion with the Catholic Church.

I mentioned that John Paul II's letter was couched in the language used to define matters of Faith. Since it used that

language, is it not an exercise of Papal Infallibility? Well, we all know that, as Vatican I progressed, Pius IX gradually brought huge pressure to bear on the assembled bishops to define that the pope is infallible, so much so that some have argued that Vatican I was not a free Council. What was actually defined was less than Pius had hoped, and very much less than some of the Ultramontanists had wanted. An English convert, William Ward expressed the desire to sit down to breakfast each morning with, as well as his copy of *The Times*, an infallible papal encyclical. Cardinal Manning, also a convert, and the only convert bishop at the Council, wanted infallibility to extend to encyclicals and other documents emanating from the Holy See. Even after the Council's very restrictive definition of Papal Infallibility, Manning continued to maintain that the pope's infallibility extended to truths of science, truths of history, dogmatic facts such as canonisations, and minor censures.

But the definition is quite restrictive. A number of bishops – and the bishops generally had a warm regard for Pius IX – rather than vote against papal infallibility, abandoned the Council and went home. There were other bishops prepared to vote for papal infallibility if the wording could be altered. One such requested alteration (and I have this from Butler's two-volume history of Vatican I) was that the phrase 'after consulting with the bishops of the church' be inserted into the definition. This request was rejected because – and I think this phrasing is quite important – 'the pope has ways of ascertaining the Faith of the Church other than by consulting the bishops.'

So, for John Paul II's statement to achieve the status of *infallible*, he first had to ascertain the Faith of the Church. Did he? Not unless he believed that, 'L'Eglise, c'est moi.'

The CDF at once said that JPII was confirming the constant teaching of the Church. The teaching is therefore definitive and infallible. The immediate reaction to that pronouncement is to ask a question: How many who input to that statement are mysogynists? If the CDF hasn't woken up by now to the fact that its game is up, then the sooner it is folded up

the better. Towards the end of Acts, a Roman procurator says, about the charges against St Paul, 'We Romans are not accustomed to condemning any man without allowing him to face his accusers and answer them' (Acts 25:13-21). Pagan Rome behaved more decently than has the Roman Inquisition.

It would not be difficult to go through Church Fathers, great theologians, writings of saints, theological textbooks and find plenty of attempts to explain why women can't be priests. I think that Pope Francis' talk to the Union of Superiors General in which he spoke about the Feminine Genius (the talk that went over like a lead balloon) was just such an attempt to explain why women can't be priests or bishops. But all of all of the explanations and rationalisations and justifications put together do not substantiate a claim that Jesus taught that only men can be priests or bishops in Christ's Church. A big distinction must be made between what the Church has always *thought* and what the Church has always *taught*. Some will say, and I'm not disagreeing with them, that there is evidence that in the early Church, in some places women did lead the Eucharist. But I leave that aside. If we ask why the Church has always thought that only men can be priests and bishops, the most likely answer is that society everywhere was patriarchal. But that does not mean that Jesus revealed to us that human society is meant by God to be patriarchal. Is the reason why women aren't ordained priests really *theological*, or is it really *sociological*? I think it is fortunate for us that the Anglicans have opted for ordaining women as priests and as bishops. Some left the Anglican Church over it; but the story so far is that it was mainly a case of getting used to it. One of the arguments against ordaining women to priesthood in the Catholic Church is that it would drive a deeper wedge between the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches. I am not aware (but I'm no authority on this matter) that the Anglicans and Orthodox have stopped talking to one another since women priests made their appearance in the Anglican Communion.

I think Gerald O'Collins SJ is very right in saying that an Ecumenical Council is needed to thoroughly discuss and resolve the issue. The late Cardinal Martini SJ believed, I think, that the Church's present praxis can change, but he also saw that to do it at present would split the Church. The matter needs to be discussed so

Continued page 22

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thoroughly that the Catholic people can see plainly that what is eventually decided does arise from Catholic Faith.

There are other issues of a similar kind. We hear it parroted often enough, 'The Church is not a democracy.' But does that mean that Jesus Christ taught that the Church cannot have any elements of democracy. If so, when Pope Leo the Great said he who is to rule over all must

be chosen by all, was he heretical?

My guess is that Pope Francis is at present a long way from thinking that women can be ordained to Catholic priesthood. When Archbishop (now Cardinal) Ladaria SJ published his statement that the Catholic Church cannot ordain women to the priesthood, and Gerald O'Collins SJ replied with his call for an Ecumenical Council, Pope Francis SJ immediately

expressed support for Ladaria. But one of the great things about Pope Francis is that he is prepared to learn, to change his mind quite thoroughly. My hope is that God will keep him alive and remaining as bishop of Rome for as long as is needed to place the Church Jesus founded ahead of the times, not two hundred years behind the times.



The Body of Christ and the People of God

BRIAN GLEESON CP

Brian Gleeson CP, a doctor of theology and Passionist priest, has been teaching theology in various theological schools in Australia and PNG since 1978. He discusses bridging the divide between laity and clergy and the implications for the Plenary Council.

Vatican II was mainly about who we are together as the church of Jesus Christ – both who we are and what we are for. It highlighted two images from the New Testament, our identity as the Body of Christ and the People of God. From this emphasis three important and vital conclusions follow, as foundations for our Plenary Council 2020.

The church is always the whole People of God

It must be emphasized as a first conclusion that the expression 'People of God' distinguishes between those who are, and those who are not, God's People of the Covenant, lovingly bonded to the God who has chosen us to love and serve him. It does not distinguish between groups within the variety of people who make up the church, which is to say that it does not distinguish between laity, religious and clergy. It is about the People of God as a whole, the whole people in communion as a sharing people.

It is striking that in the New Testament the word *laos* (people) means 'People of God' which means the Christian community. On the other hand, the word *laikos* (lay person) in either the Gentile meaning of 'uneducated' or in the Jewish sense of someone who is neither a priest nor a levite, does not occur. In the New Testament no emphasis is given to any select group, but only to the whole company of what the New Testament calls 'the elect', 'the saints', 'the disciples', 'the brothers and sisters'.

If we recognise that all baptised believers make up the People of God, his *laos* (people), we won't make the mistake of identifying the church with the clergy, or turning ecclesiology (the study of the

church) into what that great theologian of the Council, Yves Congar, has called 'hierarchology' (the study of the clergy). The church is always the whole people of God, the whole *ekklesia*, the whole Body of Christ, the whole communion (fellowship, *koinonia*) of the disciples of Jesus. It includes lay persons, religious and clergy. All baptised believers without exception make up and belong together to the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation.

As Christians, all members of the church are fundamentally equal, and in principle, all are equally responsible for the church's work in the world, its mission.

Saying this implies a second conclusion, that all members of the church are fundamentally equal as Christians. (See Denis Edwards, 'A second theological basis for renewal: Australian local church as sacrament of God's saving action in this land', *Called to Be Church in Australia*, St Paul Publications, 1987. Ch.4)

All equally have been called by God to belong, all equally have been justified by Christ, all equally have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit. All equally have been called to respond to the message, the person and the work of Christ, by their faith, their commitment, their cooperation, their trust and their love. In principle also, all are equally responsible for the church's work in the world, its mission. So much so that John Fuellenbach makes what may seem a startling claim: *With this image, the Council wanted to counter-balance the too hierarchically perceived image of the church. It was to restore to the People of God their legitimate right to participate in the governing power of the church since all are equal before God. The image was thought to break with the unegalitarian and anti-*

democratic ideology of the earlier ecclesiology. (John Fuellenbach, *The Kingdom of God: The Message of Jesus for Today*, Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books, 1995:254)

In practice, however, for about 1500 years there has been a marked division between clergy and laity. Although many of the laity today are well-educated and exercise great social responsibilities, too many of them in the church have been made as passive as sheep. Church structures do not yet reflect their equality, dignity and status to any large extent. (Paul Bernier, *Ministry in the Church: A Historical and Pastoral Approach*, Mystic CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1992:7) Fuellenbach (*The Kingdom*:261) notes that *in fact only male celibates are allowed to participate actively in the governing power of the church. If some participation in this power is granted to the laity, it is done only through delegation from the hierarchy and not because the laity has a natural right to participate. The basis for authority and government in the Catholic church is the sacrament of orders.*

Bridging the Divide

The differences that do exist among the members are not based on baptism but on the charisms of the Holy Spirit for ministry. These gifts of the Spirit result in different services, tasks, functions and offices, but they are secondary to the fundamental membership in the church which is based on baptism, and on the life of discipleship which stems from baptism. What counts more than any ministry or office, however exalted, is whether we live authentically as members of the chosen People of God.

Do we live in faith, hope and love our covenant relationship with God and with our fellow disciples of Jesus? For, more than anything, the church is 'the community of the disciples of Jesus'. Everything else is secondary and subordinate to that. The shared call to baptism and discipleship has meant that

from the beginning all kinds of people, sometimes persons naturally opposed, have joined the church and belonged to the church. Jews and Gentiles, free citizens and slaves, rich and poor, men and women, have shared with one another in the life of the church as fellow-disciples of Jesus Christ, their Lord.

It is through Jesus the Jew that the church has become the People of God of the New Covenant

A third important conclusion from the data investigated is that it is through Jesus the Jew that the church has become the People of God of the New Covenant. *Lumen gentium* calls it explicitly 'the new People of God' (a.9) and 'the new Israel' (a.9). This has happened 'in Christ', to use Paul's recurring and central expression.

This development raises two questions, vital questions in Christian-Jewish dialogue and reconciliation today: Has God rejected his people Israel and been unfaithful to his promises and have the Jews ceased to be the People of God?

These questions are so important that should Christians fail to face and answer them appropriately and justly, they run the risk of continuing the anti-Semitism that has too often soured and destroyed relationships between Christians and Jews, and has even led to the persecution and murder of many Jewish people.

These are difficult questions, which have been debated by scripture scholars and theologians for many years. To both of these questions the Apostle Paul has given a decisive 'No!'. Daniel Harrington sums up Paul's thinking on the matter: *The inclusion of non-Jews in God's people is a miracle of God's grace. The root of God's people, however, remains Israel as the historic people of God. The acceptance of the gospel by Jews like Paul means that Israel's obduracy is not total. And Paul fully accepts that in the end "all Israel will be saved"* [Harrington, *The Church According to the New Testament* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield), 79. Cf. Harrington's extensive discussion of the matter in his 'Why is the Church the People of God?', *Vatican II: The Unfinished Agenda*, ed. L. Richard et al. (New York/ Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1987),49-51. He suggests that the different answers that Christians have given to those questions, starting with the New Testament, 'can be divided into three categories: the organic model, the replacement model, and the conflict model' (49), and gives illustrations of all three. He claims that even though Vatican II, in its Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian

Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, 'rejects the idea that all Jews indiscriminately in Jesus' time or Jews today can be charged with the crimes committed during Jesus' passion' (53), it nevertheless asserts overall that the church has replaced Israel as the People of God (52) and taken over Israel's prerogatives (54)].


Michael Fahey offers this answer to the same questions: *The church regards itself as the "new People of God" but in a way that does not annul the first covenant given to Israel (Luke 1:72; Acts 3:25; Gal 3:17). Israel remains God's people (Rom 9:6). God has not cast off Israel (Rom 11:1). The vocation of the Jewish people of God is continuous, irrevocable, indestructible: the Jews are and remain God's chosen and beloved people. The new situation of the church does not destroy the old (Rom 9:3). The Jews remain the people God addressed first.*¹ (Michael Fahey, 'Church', *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, ed. F. Schusler Fiorenza & J.P Galvin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), II,37.)

The theological positions of both Harrington and Fahey on the questions are conclusions which reflect their interpretation of Paul in his Letter to the Romans. They both appear to have taken the stance of Vatican II in a more generous and affirmative direction. In this matter they are in harmony with the personal stance of Pope John Paul II. The prayer which he placed in the Western Wall in Jerusalem on March 26th 2000 reads in part, '... we wish to commit ourselves in genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant' (Cited in Edward Kessler, 'On the path of friendship', *The Tablet* (23 April 2005), 10-11, 10). Edward Kessler says of him: '[John Paul II] made it clear that replacement theology – the view that Christianity has simply replaced Judaism and that Jews lost their covenantal relationship with God – no longer has a place in Catholic teaching.' ('On the path of friendship', *ibid.*)² Kessler notes also that John Paul's positive approach was demonstrated by his dramatic visit in 1986 to the Great Synagogue in Rome. After warmly embracing Rome's chief rabbi, the pope spoke of the 'irrevocable covenant' between God and the Jews. ('On the path of friendship', *ibid.*)

I personally resonate with such a positive stance, and so I offer my personal response to the questions. Whatever about the details of how Jews and Christians are related to one another, it is of supreme importance that when Christians think of themselves as the People of God, they regard themselves as both connected with, and in continuity with, God's original chosen people, the Jewish people. ☺

**It's Not Too Late...
An Ecumenical Response..**

*On Caring
for our*



*Common
Home*

A LENTEN JOURNEY
The First Weekend of Lent
8 -10th March 2019
St Clement's Retreat Centre, Galong, NSW

Coordinators:
Anthony Kelly CSsR Doctor of Theology, Member of the International Theological Commission, (2004-14). Author of *Integral Ecology and the Fullness of Life* (2018)
Dr Bruce Duncan, C.Ss.R Director of the Ecumenical Advocacy Network, Social Policy Connections.
Jacqui Remond: Co Founder Global Catholic Climate Movement. Former Director, Catholic Earthcare Australia

Participants / Speakers
Dianne Torrens: Chairperson: Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
Anglican Bishop Philip Huggins: Chair National Council of Churches Australia.
Dr Ross Gregory Garnaut AC Prominent Australian economist Prof John Williams, Adjunct Professor in Public Policy and Environmental Management ANU

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Reaching out to the divorced

JOHN HANNON

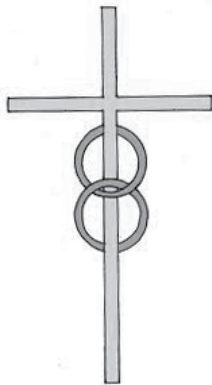
John Hannon, parish priest Essendon, Victoria, offers a homily on divorce and the Church given on the 27th Sunday of Ordinary Time Year B (Mk 10/2-16).

As Brendan Byrne SJ, scripture scholar, comments on today's Gospel: "Any pastor would be aware that no Sunday Gospel read throughout the year... will require more careful handling than this one... To simply read out the rulings of Jesus in the Gospel without comment or nuance would be to turn Gospel into Law, and simply add to a burden of guilt that may already be oppressive." So, here goes, for my take!

A priest was quoted to me as saying from the pulpit at Mass one Sunday in the not so distant past, words to this effect: "Any person who is divorced in this church should not be here, because you are a cause of scandal"! Does this reflect the attitude of Jesus in today's Gospel? Absolutely not. The scandal came straight from the silly man in the pulpit, with his wrong, ignorant and judgemental attitude. The person who told me this, in approaching the Tribunal about the possibility of nullity said she had not been to Mass for a long time after this traumatic and unjust experience. And so, to those who here present, who have been through the difficult process of divorce or annulment, and, to those who have been divorced and remarried, annulled or not, you are most welcome to participate in our diverse community, and I commend you for being here, sticking with your faith and faith community, seeking spiritual strength and nourishment, as well as friendship and a sense of belonging. As Pope Francis has said, our model for Church is a *field hospital* for sinners, all of us *walking wounded* in some way or other, whatever our situation. We are diverse People of God on the journey of life, at whatever stage we are at. This is no perfect society, as we well know, at all levels.

I say that divorce is a necessary good thing in terms of enabling freedom from a relationship, usually entered with the best of intentions, and with genuine love, in the first place. It is rare that anyone marries with a clear intention of it not lasting, although it is possible. I recall a hostile respondent opposing nullity, who blamed Germaine Greer and Lionel Murphy (*long*

dead even then), for his wife divorcing him, the former giving her ideas about her own rights, and the latter introducing no-fault divorce into Australian law way back there in 1975. As this chap ranted and raved, pounding my desk, I could quite understand her reasons for ending it, and wondered why she had put up with such a person for as long as she had. Another chap opposed to annulment, memorably spoke of how his wife always had his primary affections and any other incidental dalliances on his travels with work were just, as he put it, *hors d'oeuvres*! This hardly indicated a commitment to fidelity, among other considerations. Needless to say, both cases went through in the affirmative.



A few years ago, I felt compelled to reply, in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, to a letter written critical of Catholic priests, who, it was said, advised women in an abusive marriage to remain in it, no matter what. They printed my response, that this had never been my pastoral practice, rather the opposite, and that as a priest for 40 years now, and an ecclesiastical judge for over 30 years, I had been happily engaged with, helping set free, individuals, for whom the dream

of a happy and permanent marriage had died. Over that time, I have judged, literally, thousands of nullity cases, enabling them to get on with life in the Church, and to have the opportunity for a loving marriage to a new partner, or at least be declared free of a commitment, which fell far short of what marriage should be, in terms of mutual and equal partnership.

As an old and wise priest friend of mine, Monsignor John F Kelly, once said what would celibate men in black dresses know about marriage and raising children anyway? He also spoke of a hazard of celibacy being that, as priests, our eccentricities and idiosyncrasies can flower and flourish, without a partner to straighten us out, and knock off some of the rough edges, along the way, noting that as one of the benefits of marriage in partnership and growth in life and love together! He did have a point.

There is nothing sacred about an abusive or dysfunctional relationship, within or

without marriage. Everyone has a right to find peace of mind and a sense of personal equilibrium in life. Where there is deep unhappiness, fear or oppression, some resolution and relief need to be found, and there is a fundamental right to do so.

Marriage is far more than just a personal or social contract in society. Certainly, it provides a secure and stable base for family life and formation and education of children, towards whom Jesus speaks and acts affirmingly and lovingly, following his words on the serious nature of marriage. At the same time, if it is a sacred commitment, defined as a covenant of life and love, in theological terms, then surely this must be reflected in the way a couple relate to and respect each other, with the intention and the capacity to grow together, strengthened to face life's challenges as equal partners, with all of the ups and downs, the joys and sorrows that are part of every life.

Of course, there is no perfect marriage, but there needs to be the basic maturity to understand that love is not on automatic pilot, and that love as passionate attraction, in itself, is not sufficient for a lifetime commitment. Where it works, it is wonderful, but where it does not, it can be disastrous for both, and for the good of children as well. More harm can be done to them in an unhealthy home environment, where dysfunction prevails, than in an alternative peaceful and loving scene.

It is hard enough to get one's own act together in life, let alone hope one's partner has also, and then there is the challenge of moving along in the same direction, facing the unforeseeable future together.

New grounds for annulment

Annulment has been mistakenly described as 'ecclesiastical divorce'. This is not to deny the reality of a marriage in the first place, presuming good intentions and love, but the conclusion is that this commitment fell short, for whatever reason, of what constitutes a sacred bond. A person cannot be bound to an impossible situation, where there are elements of misery, unhappiness or a vacuum, in terms of the absence of mature love, affection and interpersonal growth. And it is not length of marriage or number of children which determines these aspects.

Once more, I return to Vatican II's final document, *Gaudium et spes*, where it is clearly stated that marriage is a partnership of love and life, for the mutual good of the

parties, as one of the key elements of marriage, equally important to the other three dimensions of children, fidelity and permanence, the latter coming from Augustine, in the 4th century. In 1969, my final year of school, the year of the moon landing, and the Concorde and Jumbo jet taking off, a landmark decision for annulment was given by the Roman Rota, on psychological grounds, which opened the way for local Church Tribunals to move forward in granting annulments.

That year, only one marriage was annulled in Victoria & Tasmania, probably on the traditional grounds of negative intentions. By 1992, there were over 300 here for the year. In general simple terms, grave immaturity of judgement is the commonest ground. And, don't we know, nothing beats youthful immaturity and infatuation, in terms of heading towards inevitable disaster.

We have to live with the facts, that 33% or so of marriages entered in Australia, do end

in divorce, not a good thing in itself, but for Catholics, there is the means of having an opportunity to remarry in the Church, following annulment. Marriage rarely ends lightly; there are always serious underlying problems, often not externally observed.

Moreover, in some situations, where annulment is not possible, there is the good conscience solution, also referred to as Internal Forum, also a means of moving forward in a new committed relationship, and fully participating in Catholic life.

It is all very well to be self-righteous and judgemental, but no-one knows what goes on behind closed doors, and it is up to each of us to do our best in trying to live up to the call of Christian discipleship in our own lives and relationships.

Today's Gospel has further strong words from Jesus, following his call to discipleship, presenting an ideal as to what marriage should be, but there can be no question that it be binding for all situations, given

human nature, weakness, psychological, personality and behavioural complications, and occasional negative intentions or deceit.

Let's not forget the encounters Jesus had with so-called sinful women, from the woman caught in adultery (and, by the way, where's the man, who seems to most unfairly have got off the hook) about to be stoned to death by the self-righteous and judgemental Pharisees, to the woman at the well, who had a run of husbands or partners along the way.

With Jesus, there is always outreach, another chance, words of compassion, understanding, forgiveness and hope.

And so, again, it is an inclusive welcome to all for our celebration of Eucharist, as we prepare to receive *Bread for the Broken* (and not for the pure and the perfect, who don't exist anyway), as Frank Molony SDB, another well-known scripture scholar succinctly describes the situation. ☪



Reflections on clericalism and sexual abuse in the Catholic Church

BERNARD MOYLAN

Bernard Moylan, retired priest living in Sydney, asks the big questions facing priesthood in the light of the Royal Commission: the clerical culture, mandatory celibacy and married priests.



In an interview recently published in *The Tablet*, world-famous classical pianist, Stephen Hough, revealed that upon realising his homosexuality at an early age he decided to enter the Catholic priesthood. It was only the subsequent advice from a priest that he possessed an exceptional God-given talent, which he should use to its fullest extent, that finally dissuaded him from entering a seminary.

There was a time when men such as Hough, especially those religiously inclined, saw the priesthood in those terms, an imagined haven for those who knew they could never marry because of their same sex attraction. They would never again have to answer questions about why they were unmarried. This was especially the case when homosexuality was a condition about which one could barely speak since it carried with it such harsh ecclesiastical and civil opprobrium. 'Coming out' was something they could not envisage since the anti-gay sentiment was so pervasive and so entrenched throughout society. It was something furtively disguised and not spoken of, the elephant in the room to which no one adverted. There was the shame of being classified among the deviants and the perverts, the poofers and the faggots, those who heinously sin against nature, for something over which they had no choice. To enter a profession in which mandatory celibacy was a requirement seemed, for some, the perfect answer to their prayers. In addition, the life of a priest with Holy Mass, administering the sacraments and other holy pursuits, might somehow

moderate, even eradicate those 'deviant' desires which presently haunted them. This was, of course, totally erroneous thinking but at least it was worth a try and far better than alternatives such as suicide or a fake marriage which could end disastrously for everyone.

This is not to say that gay men cannot make excellent priests; they most frequently do. Their own personal travails and their long experience of being among a persecuted and misunderstood minority make them especially sensitive to injustice and the need to care and show compassion for the least in our society. A person is not defined by his/her sexuality and the Church would be all the poorer for their absence. Henri Nouwen who has provided such spiritual nourishment and wise counsel to so many, by popular acclaim, is recognised as a saint. However, the danger lies in the fact that if the main reason for taking holy orders, is to escape the embarrassment of being asked awkward questions, then it is far from being a sufficient reason. The taking of holy orders should always be motivated by an earnest resolution to give themselves wholeheartedly and unreservedly to Christ upon whom they hope to shape their priestly lives in all respects.

We are now realising that there are more gay men in the priesthood than their proportionate numbers in society at large.

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In fact, it is said that if all gay priests, bishops and cardinals resigned tomorrow, the institutional Church would hardly be able to function. This is a far from healthy situation.

Facing challenges in the priesthood

The priesthood, however, is no refuge from real life and its temptations. It can be one of occasional frustration; it is subject to unrealistic expectations and even bitter loneliness. In the past, it also gave easy access to other younger men and boys with no questions asked and in many varied circumstances – youth groups, scouts, altar servers, etc. Unless priests are determined and well-disciplined, as indeed it must be stressed most are, any unbridled sexual desires could lead to the committal of acts rightly considered seriously immoral by the Church and criminally illegal by the State. In the past, little thought was given to the life-long deleterious effects those actions had on younger people and the power imbalance between the priest abuser and his immature partner was rarely considered. Some victims never fully recover from the trauma. Consensual gay sex between adults is another matter but, both for the heterosexual and homosexual priest, it cannot be countenanced since it is the breaking of their commitment to lead a celibate (chaste) life. I speak of a long-term relationship and not some rare or occasional transgression for which the priest is repentant.

Where to from here?

I believe that celibacy should be optional, not mandatory. It is often argued that priests have six or seven years to consider their life-choice so it is already optional. However, most will admit that during their seminary days in an artificial and semi-monastic atmosphere, concentration was fixed on eventual ordination and what was promised did not become a living reality until the newly ordained began their ministry in earnest. The promise of life-long celibacy and priesthood are two different charisms. Voluntary celibacy is a special gift of God but what of one who has an intense vocation to serve as a priest but no call to celibacy? St Paul acknowledged that the grace of celibacy was not given to all. The diocesan priest who is supposed to be in the world but not of the world, especially in today's very sexualised one, has a life-long battle with which to contend. It is difficult enough for the married man to remain faithful let alone one who has relinquished all sexual activity. There seems to be in the human person, an innate need for companionship and intimacy. In the Genesis myth of

Creation, after Yahweh had created man, He said: 'It is not good that man should be alone.' He then proceeded to create woman, a helpmate. 'This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife and they become one body.' (Gen 2:24)

During the recent papal visit to Ireland, Ireland's youngest priest was interviewed on television. He remarked that when he got home there was no one to greet him and when he got up in the morning there was no one to talk to. This 26-year-old was merely on the threshold of a long journey. I wish him all the best but I think that we tend to vow people to a way of living when they are not always psycho-sexually prepared to make such a momentous decision.

The clerical culture

Once ordained, these men become ineluctably embedded in a clerical culture with special garb, title and expectations. It gets even worse if they climb the ecclesiastical ladder. The bishop enjoys 'the fullness of the sacrament of orders' and we then enter an unreal world of funny hats, honorific titles, coats-of-arms, episcopal rings, pectoral crosses, predictably good meals and exaggerated deference.

There is a strong argument for changing the way young men are trained for the priesthood since the present system encourages the toxic clericalism which bedevils, mostly unawares, so many men of the cloth.

Few parishes these days have housekeepers. Many will remember when this was not so and some housekeepers became almost surrogate wives to their parish priests who relied on them for everything. They were certainly more valued than their 'curates' and when these pastors retired, they often took their housekeepers with them.

Some suggest that a married priest would lose the 'priest-mystique' of the celibate but this is surely another form of clericalism against which Pope Francis constantly rails as he sees it as the root cause of both the abuse of power and sexual abuse.

At a time of declining vocations and sensational damaging revelations, I see no reason why a completely new approach should not be taken, starting with the ordination of *virī probati*, married men of excellent character and proven dedication to the Church. Sometimes their spouses as well would add another positive dimension to their ministry and the experience and responsibilities of family life could give valuable insights into the problems facing

all families. Alongside these married men, there could also be those who, for their own reasons, have freely chosen to live celibate lives and serve the Church as celibates. To make celibacy optional is not to make marriage compulsory. In this way, the priesthood would not be seen as an escape route for gay men. They would know with absolute certainty what was required of them as celibate priests if that was the path they had decided to follow. Of course, heterosexual men would also be welcomed as celibates, not to a higher but to a different role and, if necessary, provided with whatever support structures they need. There will always be those, specially chosen, who are willing to make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom.

Pope Francis, fully realising that this is not a doctrinal issue but a disciplinary one, has already indicated that he is not totally averse to the idea of ordaining married men. However, he seems to want the National Episcopal Conference to make the first move and make any representations to Rome. It is expected that the matter will be raised at next year's conference of Amazonian bishops in Brazil. In the case of South America and parts of Africa, the ordination of married men would only legitimise an already common and unsatisfactory situation, that of a large number of already *de facto* liaisons involving priests.

Bishops who wished to allow *virī probati* to be ordained in order to supplement the priests in their dioceses would need only to discuss the matter at the Episcopal Conference level and, if necessary, bring any recommendations to the Holy Father. Australian bishops would be even underpinned in their request by a major recommendation from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

At this point, it should be said that the importing of priests from overseas, without whose generosity parishes in most dioceses would have long ago been emptied, is not the answer. It is a band-aid solution, at best. This is not only because of cultural problems, but because it is a kind of modern-day colonialism. These foreign priests belong to and are needed in their own native dioceses.

Celibacy is not the answer

Now that the world is changing, particularly the Western world, in regard to how homosexuality is viewed, gay Catholic men need no longer see the priesthood as a way to hide their orientation. For this

reason, fewer will seek the 'priest solution'. Homosexuality is seen increasingly as a non-pathological variant of the human condition, as I once heard it described by Greens leader Dr Bob Brown, and it is being seen as such by a majority of people – certainly to an extent unimaginable a few years ago. Even gay marriage is being endorsed especially by those who have gay relatives and friends and are personally aware of the uprightness and goodness of these individual men and women, for so long savagely excoriated. If gay men have often been accused of promiscuity, a committed relationship recognised by the State, could well mitigate the need for this random and ultimately unsatisfying lifestyle. 'Coming out' to parents and friends is proving less problematic today because gay people are no longer seen as a despised and maligned minority and it is generally agreed that, for the majority of these men and women, their sexuality is a choice made not *by* them but *for* them. How else could 62% of the Australian population (in my own electorate 80%) vote for the legalisation of gay marriage?

But isn't the principal reason for a celibate priesthood to allow priests to pursue spiritual matters without hindrance and to give themselves totally to their flock? I think, if we are honest, we have to admit that this is, for the vast majority of diocesan priests, more a pious hope, an aspiration, rather than a reality achieved in

practice. Too often, sadly, it means irresponsible bachelorhood or men seeking solace in drink or spending too much time on the golf course. We already have married priests in the Catholic Church, Eastern rite and married Anglican priests moving over to Rome, and they seem to function with at least equal fervour. Certainly moving priests from place to place would not be as easy but these and other pragmatic considerations are not sufficient in themselves to justify an enforced celibacy which we know had its origins around the 12th century principally because of inheritance issues. Judging from the scandals that assail us almost daily, mandatory celibacy no longer seems to be working. It is time that we start to treat the causes, not the symptoms.

Financial considerations are frequently raised as a serious obstacle to a married priesthood. How could we afford to pay the wages of a married priest with a family to support? If we need to, we will find a solution. We could well ask how could the Catholic Church in the USA afford to pay many billions in compensation to victims of abuse? What has already been paid in Australia, we will never know.

Since the 13th century, a marriage in the Catholic Church between believers has been recognised as a sacrament. The Second Vatican Council spoke very highly of marriage: *The apostolate of married*

persons and of families is of unique importance for the Church and for civil society ... Christian families give priceless testimony to Christ before the world by remaining faithful to the gospel and by providing a model of Christian marriage throughout their lives. (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity) Similarly, it extols celibacy: *Through virginity or celibacy observed for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, priests are consecrated to Christ in a new and distinguished way. They more easily hold fast to him with undivided heart.* Yet, the Decree also admits that *it is not, indeed, demanded by the very nature of the priesthood ... there also exist married priests of outstanding merit.* (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests.)

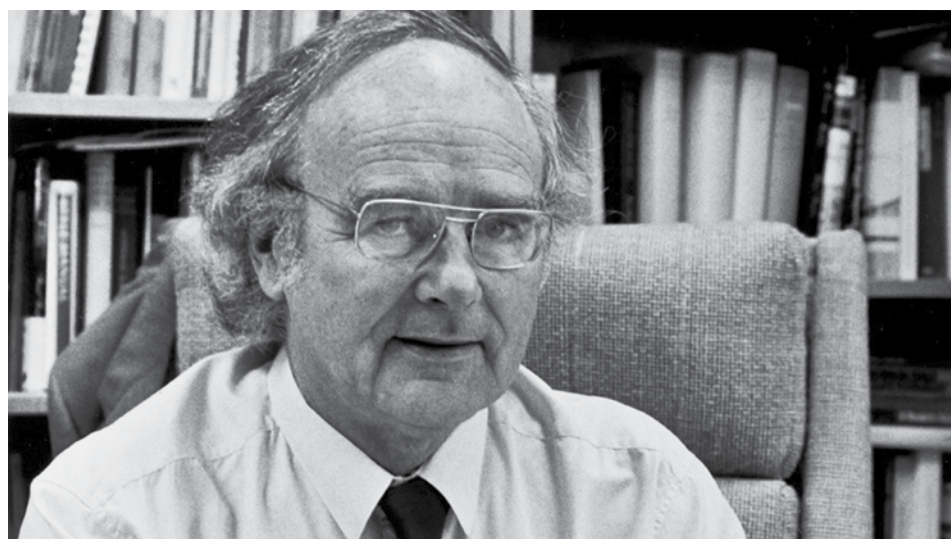
The mission of the Church, a sign and an instrument of the Kingdom of God, is to proclaim the Gospel by the quality of its own life and by applying the Gospel through its struggle for social justice, peace and human rights. In other words, to follow the mission of Jesus to help bring to completion God's kingdom on earth. In this shamefully unfair world in which we live, never was the mission more important. The key question is whether it is happening today as fully and as exhaustively as it should and, if not, why not? All the other issues are subsumed in an honest response to this one crucial question. ☪



John Molony a hero of Vatican II

PATRICK POWER

Bishop Pat Power offered these words at the funeral of Professor John Molony (pictured) on 21 Sept 2018 at St Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, Aranda, ACT.



The 1989 Synod of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn was the first diocesan synod in Australia since the Second Vatican Council. It was convoked out of the genius and vision of Archbishop Francis Carroll. Its theme was 'Coming Home in Christ'. I chaired a number of the sessions over the three days and for me one of the most moving of the contributions was made by John Molony. He had made a couple of incisive interventions in earlier discussions, but towards the end of proceedings, he said simply: *I would like to thank Fr Geoff Lloyd for nominating me as a delegate to this Synod and Archbishop Carroll for accepting that nomination. After many years, I feel that I have finally come home.*

Many of his hearers that day would not have understood the full import of those powerful words but some of what you have already heard from Damien and much more that I had been privileged to know

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meant that the depths of John's words and emotion were not lost on me. Bear with me if I elaborate.

In the aftermath of World War II, the brightest Australian students for the priesthood were sent to Rome to complete their seminary studies at the missionary Propaganda Fide College. John Molony of the Diocese of Ballarat belonged to an outstanding cohort of Australians ordained in the Holy Year 1950. These included Bishop Bede Heather present today, Father Geoff Lloyd already mentioned, Archbishops Frank Little and Len Faulkner, Bishops Peter Quinn and John Gerry and two legendary priests still living, Noel Tobin in WA and Leo Donnelly in Port Macquarie.

God works in mysterious ways. Many commentators are adamant that the brilliant young Father Molony was destined to become a bishop. With intimate knowledge and experience of the Vatican, a doctorate in Canon Law and deep insights into Belgian priest (later Cardinal) Joseph Cardijn's YCW, John had a breadth of church and worldly experience and wisdom. I remember when as a young YCW chaplain in the late 1960s, I often sought guidance from his book *Towards an Apostolic Laity*. All these years later, when the Catholic Church is rightly being called out for excessive clericalism, John Molony was seeking to empower lay people at many levels. But for reasons, political and otherwise, John was not destined to become a bishop. However, I believe that in God's plan John's vocation was to have an impact on the Australian Church and nation far beyond that of any bishop.

Despite all the difficulties alluded to in the eulogy, John Molony always remained totally loyal to the Church in his family life and in his civic and professional life. Where lesser mortals may have become bitter, John humbly followed in the footsteps of his master, Jesus, who had applied to himself the words of the prophet, Isaiah: *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me. He sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken, to set the down-trodden free.*

John's marriage to Denise, a full-time extension worker with the YCW meant that these two deeply committed Catholics brought to their married life a great appreciation of Catholic social teaching. However, the practicalities were not as simple as might appear today. I stand here ashamed that many good priests like John Molony had the experience that we heard following a conscientious decision to resign

from active ministry. In those days, part of the condition for a dispensation was that the person concerned was to move well away from where he had served as a priest with all the consequences of such dislocation. Apparently, it was even spelt out how far away you had to go. John being proficient in Latin calculated that Canberra was just far enough away from Ballarat for him and Denise to begin a new life here. With hindsight, I would say that was a *felix culpa*, a happy fault which enabled the Australian capital and the Australian nation to benefit from the enormous gifts of both John and Denise Molony.

It would be patronising of me to comment on the mark that Professor John Molony made on the academic life of the ANU but we can all recognise that he was well ahead of his time in highlighting the rights of Australia's first peoples and the wrongs they have suffered. Moreover, tireless advocacy and practical assistance for refugees and asylum seekers was a hallmark of the more recent part of Denise and John's lives. For this Denise was given an Order of Australia a few years before her death, but for me the most fitting tribute still adorns the family home in the form of a simple but striking picture, painted and given by a grateful refugee family to the Molonys.

When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and told them to do likewise, isn't that what he was talking about? When Pope Francis reminded priests that they were pastors, shepherds, and that they were not to shy away from the smell of the sheep, he was speaking a language which John Molony well understood.

I often cringe nowadays when I hear politicians and others speaking self-righteously about so called 'Australian values' which is often code for a narrow vision which excludes anyone or anything different from the proponent. It is even worse when such a view is proposed in the name of Christianity. The breadth of John Molony's vision gave expression to his belief in God's love is for every person. I hope it is not moralising to say that John's passion for the ALP in days gone by and for Aussie Rules football arose out of his innate desire for the triumph of the human spirit in every possible way. May we all aspire to John's vision of every person being our sister or brother in the human family. It is in that spirit that I welcome every person here today.

In the Jubilee Year 2000 with its theme of reconciliation, I met with John and some other priests no longer in active ministry. At the time, I estimated that there were

about forty such men and their families in or around Canberra. Many of them had begun a new life in this city for reasons similar to what had brought John here. With agreement from them and encouragement from Archbishop Carroll, we began meeting regularly with their wives for a twice yearly dinner. I have grown in the admiration I always had for these men and their wives and families. John was consistently at the heart of it all, contributing to the positive spirit which was always in evidence.

With the hope which followed Pope Francis' election, members of our group determined to write to the new Pope, with John Molony putting pen to paper. In my supporting letter to the Pope, I pointed out that I never refer to such men as ex-priests because of my belief that they never lose the priestly character of ordination. John was acutely aware of that. I am proud to be using his ordination chalice for his requiem Mass today.

Last year, two of our group went to God and less than a month ago, Gerard Manion's funeral Mass was celebrated in Goulburn. As was the case with John Molony, Gerard Manion continued to live out his priestly life as a married man. At that Mass, I noted that Gerard was one of the few Catholics to receive all seven sacraments. The same, of course, is true for John Molony. At a time when radical reform is patently needed within our Church, I would hope that both these men and their wives can be an inspiration to many.

Our hearts go out today to John's four living children, Damien, Michael, Leah and Justine along with their spouses, Deborah, Louise, Glenn and Bruce, and John's grandchildren. We remember in a special way, John's sister, Margaret Brennan. It is just over five years since God called Denise to her eternal reward. In our Gospel reading today, we read that Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to the Father. Where Jesus has gone, we all hope to follow, for that is God's plan for us. May the Molony family rejoice that John and Denise are now re-united in a special way in the communion of saints.

Go gently, dear John. Our world is a better place for you having been part of it.

Eternal rest grant unto John Molony, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. ☩

Len Faulkner – one who served

MAURICE SHINNICK

Archbishop Emeritus Leonard Faulkner was buried on 14 May 2018 at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Adelaide. Fr Maurice Shinnick offered this reflection on the occasion.



When he returned to Adelaide as a young priest following his ordination in Rome in 1950, Father Leonard Faulkner was appointed as assistant priest to Monsignor William Russell, in the newly establish and expanding Woodville Parish in the Western suburbs. There he found so many migrants from post-World War Two Europe, striving to establish themselves in a new environment of culture and language. To that ministry he brought his life experiences.

His childhood was spent on a farm where life was tough. He did not start school until he was seven, because before that, he was considered not strong enough to walk the more than four miles to and from school. I asked him if it was true that he had to carry his shoes to school to save the leather, and with one of his half smiles, he replied, probably.

Going to Rome to study soon after World War II, he saw the devastation caused by war and the hardship under which the people laboured. Living and studying with students from across the world, his understanding of people and their diversity expanded dramatically. Learning to speak Italian was a skill which he bought to his ministry as priest and bishop. Life itself, more than text books in Latin, connected Fr Leonard Faulkner to the people with warmth and respect.

His appointment as chaplain to the Young Christian Workers Movement in 1955, while still in parish ministry, gave Fr Leonard an in-depth understanding of

youth and workers. He absorbed and lived the spirit of Joseph Cardijn, and the movement which he founded. It was a gospel-centred apostolate with the simple process of See, Judge, Act that influenced his whole life and ministry.

When he asked me to deliver the Tribute as his Funeral Mass, Archbishop Faulkner, wanted me to emphasise that he was always the priest. And while the mitre was placed on his head during his consecration as bishop on Townsville in 1967, he remained always the priest. Taking as his motto the words of Jesus, *As One Who Serves*, he remained totally faithful to his priesthood.

It must have come as a shock to him, when at the age of 40, he was appointed as bishop of Townsville, moving from the Mediterranean climate of Adelaide to the tropics of North Queensland. This brought new challenges, such as driving vast distances to the parishes across his new Diocese. It also meant leaving family and friends behind and the making of new friendships and appointing new people with whom he would work collaboratively.

As a new bishop, just two years after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, and having learnt much from Archbishop Matthew Beovich and his friend and mentor, Archbishop James Gleeson, he absorbed the spirit of the Council. Bishop Faulkner was among the first of the post-conciliar bishops called to serve Australia.

Townsville provided the opportunity for him to discover the faith, cultures, and spirituality of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples. The deep respect he developed for them in Townsville and in Adelaide, and a sensitivity to the complex issues which they faced, was an important hallmark of his ministry.

Returning to Adelaide as Coadjutor to Archbishop Gleeson was a joy for him. Their long friendship and partnership in ministry continued after Archbishop Gleeson's early retirement and remains a model of priestly partnership and cooperation.

In the spirit of the Vatican Council, and with the experience of 16 years as bishop of Townsville, Archbishop Faulkner arrived with new ideas for the Archdiocese. He was

profoundly convinced of the essential role of all the baptised, Christ's Faithful, called to mission.

Building upon the Diocesan Pastoral Renewal that had been inaugurated by Archbishop Gleeson, and in consultation with the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Council of Priests and other key people, Archbishop Faulkner proposed a new model of governance – the Diocesan Pastoral Team – bishop, priest, religious and lay person sharing leadership together. This was met with some suspicion by many priests, therefore Archbishop Faulkner went to every regional priests' meeting to explain what he had in mind. I remember thinking at the time just how humble he was to do such a thing. He did not seek to impose his ideas from above; rather he demonstrated his genuine desire to work collaboratively with priests and people, within and beyond the Church.

We, in this Archdiocese, are grateful for the vision and wisdom Archbishop Faulkner brought to his ministry. That unique partnership of the Diocesan Pastoral Team enriched the pastoral care of people beyond expectation, especially with its strong emphasis on parish visitation. This was another hallmark of Archbishop Faulkner's ministry – always out among the people – in parishes and among the ethnic communities – relishing in the multi-cultural nature of the Church of Adelaide.

His humility would be shown much later, when twice, he was offered an Order of Australia honour. The second time he wrote in reply: How can I accept an honour for something I have always loved doing.

Archbishop Faulkner was absolutely delighted, when preparing for the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1986, Adelaide was chosen as the venue for the meeting with rural communities – given his farming origins – and the Mass with its focus 'Australia: Land of Many Cultures', which was an experience which truly gladdened his heart.

Like Archbishop Gleeson, Archbishop Faulkner had a great memory for names, which delighted people being remembered so personally. He followed the test cricket with great attention, and enthusiastically supported the Crows. His regular games of golf brought him relaxation and friendships with brother priests. Archbishop Faulkner chose to live in a suburban house, like many of his priests, and there he offered hospitality to us priests, especially through his informal Thursday evening meals.

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FEATURES

With a warm smile he relished being with people. Sometimes administration became a problem, which he readily admitted. When a country parish was soon to become vacant he told three priests 'you would make a great parish priest there' – each thinking that it was theirs – in the end leaving two of them very disappointed.

The completion of the Cathedral, with the erection of the tower, was a project which Archbishop Falkner approached with some ambivalence, but its dedication in 1996, 138 years to the day since first part was blessed, was a joyful and wonderful occasion.

Through the years how many people worked with Archbishop Faulkner, too many to name! But what each person did with, and for Archbishop Faulkner, helped him live his motto *As One Who Serves*. Special acknowledgement is given to Mrs Sheila Hill, his secretary in Townsville and his personal assistant and housekeeper in Adelaide. In his later years her care for him enabled him to live at home until he turned 90. For this we are very grateful.

Archbishop Faulkner built on the firm foundations laid by Archbishop Beovich and Archbishop Gleeson, but also brought to his ministry fresh Vatican Council inspired ideas, which enriched the Archdiocese and all its people.

His vision of the Church as a community for the world was underpinned by a deep, personal relationship with Jesus Christ, shown in his love for the Gospels, in his quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, in praying both the Divine Office and the Rosary of Mary every day. By living out this vision he led this local Church of Adelaide in the development of basic ecclesial communities within parishes. He was committed to ecumenical and interfaith partnerships – including welcoming the Dalai Lama to the Cathedral, by shared leadership in the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Dialogue and friendships made within the Heads of Christian Churches regular meetings. He showed a compassionate and respectful ministry among people living with HIV/AIDS. We witnessed his belief that

Catholic Education enriched families and made an important contribution to our Australian society. We saw his sincere appreciation of the unique place which the religious sisters, priests and brothers had among the People of God, and valued the dynamic presence of so many multicultural communities in the Archdiocese.

Archbishop Faulkner celebrated his last Mass on Good Shepherd Sunday. While reading the Gospel, coming to the central words, he spoke them with additional strength and conviction: *I am the Good Shepherd. I lay down my life for my sheep*. As son and brother, as priest and bishop, Leonard Anthony Faulkner was a good shepherd who gave his life as one who serves without counting the cost and always with a great spirit of optimistic joy. At the conclusion of that Mass in his room, he said to the few of us gathered with him: *It is good to spend time with the Lord like this*.

Thank you, Len, for helping us all to spend time with the Lord all through the years of your ministry among us. ☪



First Schoenstatt Diocesan Priest in Australia dies

TERRY BELL

Fr Denis Patrick Foley, born 18 July 1939 and ordained 21 July 1962, died on 10 October 2018. This homily was given by Fr Terry Bell at the funeral on 17 October 2018.

Yesterday, it was necessary and fitting that the Vigil Mass for Fr Denis was celebrated at the site of the Shrine of Our Lady Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt at Mulgoa, for Denis was a consecrated member of the Secular Institute of Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests. And now it is fitting that we are gathered for his Funeral Mass in the Parish chosen by him as the place for his ministry as a Priest on Lesser Duties. It was chosen because it is the Sydney Parish closest to Mulgoa cared for by Diocesan Clergy. It also enjoyed having as its Patron Mary Immaculate.

In the Prayer of the Office for the Bishop and Martyr St Denis, celebrated just three days after Fr Denis' death, we asked that we might be able, like St Denis, to 'meet with like indifference the triumphs and afflictions this world has to offer'. Fr Denis did that faithfully and fully all the days of his life.

Fr Denis was a physically strong man. Many can testify that when he set the pace, either bushwalking or kayaking, it was high impossible to keep up with him. So it

was hard to see him laid low with physical afflictions that were numerous, frequent, and spread over many years. Each time he suffered another setback people would say 'Not another illness – what next?' But when he left Holy Family Parish Menai of which he was the first Parish Priest, and moved into lesser duties, it was not to lick his wounds and put up his feet but to throw himself fully into the life of the parish here in Bossley Park and especially into the ministry to the sick in Fairfield Hospital. The nursing staff was very conscious of his constant presence among the sick and were distressed when he would fall ill but also privileged to look after him. In his sufferings, whether from accidents or illnesses, he got to know many staffs in many hospitals.

But it is because of his triumphs that he will be best remembered. Like Fr Joseph Kantenich, the founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, he loved God, Mary, and the Church. He was a disciplined thinker and loved challenging people to think, especially when he would ask: What is God saying to you, saying to us?

Denis and I came into contact with the Schoenstatt Movement with his appointment to the parish at St Marys and my appointment next door in Penrith. Together we made our consecration in the Covenant of Love with Mary on 17th July 1975. We had been gathered together as young priests in the western part of the Archdiocese by Fr Carl Boes. We met weekly in Carl's A Frame House in Mt Druitt and took part in Monthly Reflection Days at the Shrine in Mulgoa. Bishop Eddy Kelly would often join us so that we could concelebrate Mass since, initially, one could only concelebrate if a Bishop was present. He wanted to encourage us to meet and pray together and so facilitated that gathering together and celebration.

Long before *Ministry to Priests* was promoted, Denis met with me and many other priests each month, supporting us, challenging us, sharing with us the trials and triumphs of priestly ministry and our striving to grow in holiness. Eventually we chose the prayer of Oscar Romero as our motto for our group, our striving, and our approach to ministry. It now rests on the coffin.

Denis was always loyal to the Covenant, to his Bishop and brother priests, and to the Schoenstatt Groups – Priests, Sisters,

Families, Mens, Mothers, Youth, Girls, Boys. He was first and foremost always a Diocesan Priest.

Our First Reading today is chosen because Fr Denis moved on from being a Schoenstatt Diocesan Priest in the League to undertaking preparation for and eventual consecration in the Secular Institute of Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests. On your Mass booklet is the Motto of Denis and his brother Priests in the same course: One in Adoration through Moriah for the Father. House Moriah in Mount Schoenstatt in Germany is the International Centre for Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests. On Moriah, Abraham put his faith and trust in God. Israelites, Christians, and Moslems all celebrate Abraham as our Father in Faith. Fr Denis' dream and conviction was that he would not be just the first and only Schoenstatt Diocesan Priest in Australia but that there would be many others, numerous as the stars seen by Abraham, who would make the Covenant of Love, either as League or Institute Members. For this he was prepared to offer his life and his sufferings.

The Second Reading invites us to live through love in his presence knowing that we dwell always and are surrounded constantly by the providence of God. Like St Mary MacKillop, Denis had a strong faith in the providence of God. All things, all events, all gifts, all experiences have meaning and purpose. Denis asked of himself and of others – what is God saying to me? The 18th of each month, the day for renewal in the Covenant of Love, was always special following on from the founding day of the Schoenstatt Movement on 18th October 1914. So it was especially significant and providential when he awoke, on the 18th of the month, after having been in an unexplained coma for three days at least in Liverpool Hospital.

Our Gospel is often the one of choice for funerals. It continues our trust in Divine Providence. On Saturday evening, 6th October, in Mary Potter Nursing Home, Ryde, as I was proclaiming this passage of John's Gospel, Denis peacefully passed from this life into eternal life. He had completed his journey home to the Father. The one whom he had loved and served faithfully as Christian, Priest, and Schoenstatter called him from the joys and sufferings of this life into the glory prepared for him so that he may rest with Fr Kantenich in the peace and love of his Blessed Mother's arms in the presence of the eternal Father. ☪

Bishop Wenceslao Padilla

BRIAN LUCAS

Fr Brian Lucas, Director of Catholic Mission, reflects on the life of missionary bishop Wenceslao Padilla of Mongolia.

The Most Reverend Wenceslao Padilla C.I.C.M., the Apostolic Prefect of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, died on 25th September 2018 at age 68 of a heart attack.

Bishop Wens, as he wanted to be known, a missionary of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, was proof that a Church so steeped in centuries-old tradition still needs its pioneers. Appointed Mongolia's first prelate by Pope St John Paul II in 2002, Bishop Wens led the world's youngest Catholic Church. He will be deeply missed by those whose lives he touched, both in Mongolia and in his home the Philippines.

Born in 1949 in Tubao, Wenceslao Padilla was ordained in 1976. He was a missionary in Taiwan and, for six years, a provincial superior of the Chinese provinces of his Order. Catholicism was first introduced in the 13th century during the Mongol empire, then died out with the demise of the Yuan Dynasty in 1368. New missionary activity began again after the Second Opium War in the mid-19th century. On 14 March 1922 a mission *sui juris* was formally founded for Outer Mongolia, but all work ceased within a year when a communist regime came to power.

In 1991 Mongolia and the Holy See established diplomatic relations. Fr Padilla went as a missionary to Urga (the old name of the capital Ulanbataar). On 19 April 1992 he was appointed ecclesiastical superior of the mission *sui iuris* of Urga. On 8 July 2002, Pope John Paul II established the Apostolic Prefecture of Ulaanbaatar, Father Padilla became its first prefect. He was ordained bishop on 29 August 2003 by Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, in St Peter and Paul Cathedral in Ulaanbaatar. Like so many buildings in Mongolia's capital, the cathedral is modelled after the yurt – a round tent made of animal skin.

Bishop Wens, visited Australia in 2013 as part of Catholic Mission's promotion of Mongolia for the annual mission appeal. This coincided with that year's World Mission Month celebrating 20 years of the Mongolian Church.

The impact that he had on the people he met during his visit to Australia on behalf of Catholic Mission is still spoken about. Many people, when they heard the news of



his death, commented on having met him and how inspiring he was. His story of his work in such a remote mission brought home for many the Church's work of evangelisation *ad gentes*.

The Catholic Mission appeal shone light on his work to develop a young and previously oppressed church, shepherding the Catholic faithful in a nation facing issues of acute poverty and homelessness, often compounded by Mongolia's severe weather.

In an article in the *National Catholic Reporter* (14 September 2017) Gemma Cruz and Edmund Chia (a married couple from Australian Catholic University) recounted their visit on behalf of the Pontifical Missionary Union and wrote of Bishop Wens' mission:

When he arrived with two of his Missionhurst confreres, members of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, there was no church and no local Catholics to welcome them. He did, however, discover some expatriate Catholics, especially those working in foreign embassies. They began house-churches, taking turns to have Mass celebrated in one another's homes. Friends and colleagues came along, and as the numbers grew, community halls were rented for the Sunday services. It was only much later that brick-and-mortar churches were built to accommodate the growing membership.

What triggered the growth and expansion of the Catholic mission, however, was its involvement with society. The Soviet Union dominated Mongolia during most of the 20th century, so the Soviet collapse in the late 1980s left

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Mongolia's economy in turmoil, resulting in much poverty nationwide. The three missionaries soon found themselves involved with homeless people, in particular those who sought warmth and shelter in the underground drainage systems where heating pipes pass, and rats and cockroaches proliferate. The missionaries would make their way into every manhole of the city in search of its "residents," offering them food, medicine and love. As their ministry expanded, they recruited their neighbors to assist in the distribution of food. The new volunteers then began asking questions about these noble missionaries – and what motivated them to care for the least, the last and the lost – and some eventually made their way to the church.

Bishop Wens ordained Mongolia's first native-born priest, Joseph Enkhee-Baatar on 26 August 2016.

Bishop Wens' work for young people with disabilities, a stigmatised minority in the country, was a source of inspiration to those in positions of leadership, not only in the Church but in broader society too. That may be his greatest legacy to those he served. A Catholic Mission video featuring the church in Mongolia is available on you tube <https://youtu.be/EeERhGy6qyw>

We pray that the fledgling church which he began will continue to flourish. ☪

Golden Jubilee celebrations

MICHAEL MCENTEE

Fr Michael McEntee, Parish Priest, Mentone and Parkdale East, Victoria, reflects on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee.



I have reflected a lot in recent weeks about the Golden Jubilee of priestly ordination that I am celebrating with you this weekend.

As I approach the evening of my life as a priest, I was encouraged by a remark of Bishop Peter Comensoli who, in the prime of his life, begins to serve us as our archbishop. He wrote to the permanent deacons and priests of Melbourne on the morning following the announcement of his appointment: It remains our ongoing task to cultivate the virtue of fortitude in believing those who have been abused, striving for their healing, and working for a culture of safety in our communities.

This commitment reassures me. The great effort put in over the past seventeen years by Archbishop Hart to create a culture of child safety in our local church will be maintained.

Bishop Peter went on to say: Our priesthood and diaconate have nothing to do with entitlement, exemption or exception, so neither should we. This acknowledgement starts with me, your Shepherd.

I went back to a text from the Year of Mercy (2016). At the Jubilee Mass for Priests on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, Pope Francis called on every priest to know the heart of Jesus and to know his own heart.

Whether or not my life reflects this twin priority after fifty year is for others to judge. However, the Pope's formulation of it inspired me. I share a little of it below: *This celebration of the Jubilee for Priests on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus invites us all to turn to the heart, the deepest root and foundation of every person, the focus of our affective life and, in a word, his or her very core. Today we contemplate two hearts: the Heart of the Good Shepherd and our own heart as priests.*

The Heart of the Good Shepherd is not only the Heart that shows us mercy, but is itself mercy.

The Heart of the Good Shepherd tells us that his love is limitless; Jesus loves us "even to the end" (Jn 13:1), to the very end, without ever imposing.

The Heart of the Good Shepherd reaches out to us, above all to those who are most distant. His love desires to embrace all and lose none.

Contemplating the Heart of Christ, we are faced with the fundamental question of our priestly life: Where is my heart directed?

Christ loves and knows his sheep. He gives his life for them, and no one is a stranger to him (cf. Jn 10:11-14). His flock is his family and his life. He is not a boss to be feared by his flock, but a shepherd who walks alongside them and calls them by name (cf. Jn 10:3-4). He wants to gather the sheep that are not yet of his fold (cf. Jn 10:16).

So it is also with the priest of Christ. He is anointed for his people, to be close to the real men and women whom God has entrusted to him. As a minister of the communion that he celebrates and lives, he does not await greetings and compliments from others, but is the first to reach out, rejecting gossip, judgements and malice. He listens patiently to the problems of his people and accompanies them, sowing God's forgiveness with generous compassion. He does not scold those who wander off or lose their way, but is always ready to bring them back and to resolve difficulties and disagreements. He knows how to include.

Dear priests, in the Eucharistic celebration we rediscover each day our identity as shepherds. In every Mass, may we truly make our own Christ's words: "This is my body, which is given up for you". This is the meaning of our life; with these words, in a real way we can



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daily renew the promises we made at our priestly ordination.

Did you notice how Francis draws his thoughts together? 'A priest is a minister of the communion that he celebrates and lives; in the Mass, Christ's words, This is my body, which is given up for you state the meaning of a priest's life.'

The Mass is central in the priest's life and ministry because in the Mass the shepherd of the local community celebrates with the believers and, in the power of Christ's name, makes present for the community the great price of perfect love. Only the love of the God-man, Jesus of Nazareth, can heal our wounded human heart, forever capable of compromising itself. We yearn to be whole, to share communion with Christ and, therefore, with Christ in one another. In the Mass, the priest offers this precious divine gift to all present.

Pope Francis is, piece by piece, forming a coherent theology of the priesthood centred on the image of the Heart of the Good Shepherd. He is freeing us from the risks inherent in the theological notion of the ordained priest being consecrated in the person of Christ the High Priest. The image of the Good Shepherd does not have dangerous baggage associated with it.

Too easily, the notion of a mere human as representative of a divine High Priest has accrued to itself expectations of entitlement, privilege and exemption. Bishop Comensoli asks us Melbourne priests to shun these aberrations like the plague. So does Pope Francis.

For Francis, the wounded Heart of Jesus, the Heart of the Good Shepherd is the key to a healthy understanding and exercise of an ordained priesthood that will be capable of serving in fraternity and justice the universal priestly nature of the Christian people.

Sooner, rather than later, I will lay down the baton of priestly service. I pray for the young priests of Melbourne who will take up this baton and join with our new archbishop in serving God's people. May they be preserved from the plague of entitlement, exemption and exception that has contributed to the decimation of our local Church in the past four decades. May they tenderly carry the lambs along the path to the day when 'they will no longer put on their own belt and walk where they like' (cf. Jn 21:18). They inherit a Church that shows obvious wounds, may they bring the Church home securely to the Good Shepherd's fold (Jn 10:1-11). ☪

The Legacy of Kevin O'Shea CSsR (1930-2018)

RICHARD WHITE

Richard White writes on the life and contribution of Kevin O'Shea CSsR to the Australian church.

One of Kevin O'Shea's confreres, in the course of a much appreciated theology update, commented that 'Kevin is in danger of becoming a prophet in his own country'. My hope is that the late Kevin O'Shea might become a prophet in this country.

My first contact with Kevin O'Shea was through his little book, *The Way of Tenderness*. My reading of the book coincided with a fairly prolonged period of depression. Kevin's book inspired, comforted and enlightened me. The depression did not abate, but my appreciation of suffering and trust in a loving, sustaining Presence, grew.

After thirty years in religious life, I began seriously to contemplate leaving. What inhibited my decision was not loyalty to the order or fidelity to my vows; it was fear. My life had been, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually, governed by fear. No amount of retreats or counselling or spiritual direction gave me the peace I needed. Enter Kevin O'Shea, again.

On the advice of a former Redemptorist, I approached Kevin for spiritual direction. To this day, I am not sure how Kevin's direction 'worked'. For a start, our conversations had a different feel from other experiences in this area.

Kevin was warm, hospitable and disconcertingly detached. No clock on the wall for Kevin. He would periodically glance at his watch, as if to say, 'OK, I've heard you, let's get on with it, you with your life and me with my books and my thinking!'

There was something of the style of the psychoanalyst in Kevin; a disembodiment that allowed for free association, but much more than that. Kevin's approach was not studied, it was very much part of his personality. He seemed to create a space for me, to think more clearly, to appraise more fairly and to come to a decision.

Kevin was not the 'teacher who appears when the student is ready', so much as the companion revealed as one of a succession of companions, all part of the *Courtesy of God*; the patient, respectful and enabling Presence whose ways are so well described in Kevin's book by this title.

*...whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery...*

Kevin used to quote Gerard Manley Hopkins and these lines from 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' well describe the style and content of *The Courtesy of God, An Appreciation and Interpretation of Saint Alphonsus Liguori As A Moral Theologian*. It was a book I picked up tentatively, given my memories of Redemptorist missions.

If *The Way of Tenderness* is Kevin in the spirit of Sebastian Moore's *God is a New Language*, poetic and evocative, in *The Courtesy of God* Kevin is the philosopher and theologian; meticulous and forensic in uncovering the pastoral sensitivity and grace-filled awe of Alphonsus.

For St Ignatius the overwhelming awareness was the glory of God; for the first Redemptorist there was wonder at the courtesy, the patience, 'the lingering-out sweet skill', in dealing with our poverty, our fears, our so, so gradual awareness of love and our capacity for loving.

The respect for our humanity is foundational in Kevin's writing and teaching. He is faithful to the Church's emphasis on Thomistic philosophy and he creates a dialogue between philosophy and psychoanalysis, a 'philosophical anthropology', in his book, *PERSON IN ANALYSIS – Interpersonhood in Metaphysics and Analytic Theory*.

'Nothing human is alien to me', a quote from the Roman poet, Terence, found an echo in the preface to the Vatican II Document on The Church in the Modern World. The inner workings of the human psyche, for Kevin O'Shea, are as eminently human as our much vaunted intellect.

The 'true humanist' is a 'true Incarnationist'; not an expression of Kevin O'Shea's but a good description of him. In a cultural and religious climate sadly lacking in engaging and credible language about the human and divine, Kevin O'Shea has much to offer. ☪

A Change of Era

Commonwealth for Common Good was an excellent statement put out by our church back in the early nineties in conjunction with other Christian bodies. It made the point that the widening gap between the rich and the poor is a looming threat to world economic stability. Wayne Swan, the Federal Treasurer during the Global Financial Crisis, made the same point recently on television.

Perpetrators of child sexual abuse and its cover-up have not only trashed the lives of their victims but have also trashed the credibility of our church and in particular our servants the hierarchy. It has got to the stage when any statement about anything, regardless of its intrinsic value, is automatically dismissed as suspect if it has the word Catholic or the mitre logo connected to it. However, as a believing community I think we still have a lot to offer the moral compass of our great country.

Pope Francis has said that we are not in an era of change but a change of an era. Could one of the signs of that change of era be that moral credibility is very much in the hands of our magnificent lay leaders. I am thinking of people like the CEO's of Vinnies, Catholic Health Australia, Catholic Social Services Australia along with some of our ex pollies and many other highly principled lay leaders.

Would it be possible for these heavy weights to form themselves into a group and issue well researched vital statements on the facts and their consequences on matters such as homelessness, gender inequality, immigration, affordable housing, global warming, domestic violence, refugees, aged care, human genetic manipulation, child sex abuse in families, funding for schools, among others. I am thinking of something similar to the "Commonwealth for Common Good" statement.

But for credibility's sake keep the word Catholic or any mitre logo's well out of it.

Harry Moore, Wyneden NSW

Clerical Training

This year brings me to thirty years of being in the 'field hospital' to quote Pope Francis. I seem to be using many of his images of late in my weekend reflections here at Benalla. As I try and see back over these years, by and large I endeavour to reflect a positive approach to the priesthood, despite the horrendous experiences which include the sexual abuse

crisis which confronts our much loved Catholic Church and our people.

I remember fully the process of interviews I went through as I explored the notion, 'do I have a calling?' Many around my time in the 1980's will recall our interviews were quite extensive. I remember one interview with a psychologist, Ronald Conway. I remember the drive down from my home city of Bendigo wondering to myself what's this going to be about, what effect will it have. As I realized years later, this test would determine 'particular traits' or 'tendencies'. In other words, the seminary and the Bishop would get some idea of who Peter Taylor is.

Then during my seminary years there was a pastoral formation program centred upon hospital ministry called Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Each week during the fourth year pastoral program, I and another class mate would venture into what was then the Mercy Hospital in Grey St. East Melbourne. We went up to the fifth floor overlooking the Fitzroy gardens. The seasons would pass as I looked out, occasionally seeing the window cleaners coming down through the fog onto the landscape of the city.

The program holds much importance in the development of my pastoral ministry for diocesan priesthood, at the time and in the years that have followed. This program gave great insight into you as a minister, on top of what you bring into the life of another. Anyway I remember I was the only male participant in the group with the rest being women of a variety of backgrounds in their ministry. They never left any stone unturned with me as I went through my reflections. This happened in 1985.

Why am I mentioning this? Firstly, I am grateful for the formation towards priesthood I experienced. Secondly, the formation I experienced addressed strongly the human development and offered a level of maturity giving me confidence to cope with pastoral ministry.

This is one area which hasn't been addressed strongly enough in light of the tragedy that has been the abuse of the vulnerable. While I deplore the awful abuse, sexually and in other forms, at least I can take some comfort that I was formed to have a healthy understanding of myself as a person. Glean from this what you may, I just wanted to express a view from one who is looking through a window where a flicker of light is needed amid the gloom.

Peter Taylor, Benalla VIC.

A Divine Balance: Trust & Obedience

This trust which my Father has committed to me is more precious than all else (John 10:29, Knox translation).

An ever dwindling group of priests, now in our 80's and 90's can remember how we loved and cherished the only New Testament in English available to us in school days, namely, the Rheims – Douay-Challoner Version, commonly known as the Douay, first published in 1582. (The King James Version first appeared in 1611) For some unknown reason, as students, we were never given the American Standard Version published in 1901.

The first English New Testament since 1582 for us was the approved Ronald Knox translation of 1945. As the whole world was recovering from the devastation of World War II, the Knox translation was not mass produced for worldwide distribution until 1950. (I still have both my Douay and Knox translations from schooldays.) The Knox translation was a scriptural tornado that opened the floodgates to a spate of new translations, notably the Jerusalem Bible in 1966.

One classic example of the difference the Knox translation made to the Douay can be seen in John, chapter 10, verse 29, which in the Douay reads, 'That which my Father hath given me is greater than all.' In the Knox version it becomes, 'This trust which my Father has committed to me is more precious than all else.' The Father trusted Jesus; Jesus became obedient to the Father, a divine balance – trust and obedience.

The Father trusting Jesus is a powerful role model for us mortals. Jesus in turn trusted Judas, a nice way of saying, 'Go ahead and trust; somebody will let you down, but that will not lessen your virtue of trust.' Thank God, we are blest in Pope Francis with a Pope who can trust, not only his cardinals, some of whom let him down, but also the bishops to provide the faithful with a suitable language for the liturgy in their respective countries.

That the bishops in turn trust all their priests sounds Utopian, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility, as witness the diocese of Melbourne in the first half of the 20th century. Try this for an astounding scenario: a 99 year old archbishop, confined to a wheelchair but with mental faculties firing, governing a diocese of 360 priests in 176 parishes with total peace, calm, serenity, equanimity and a devilish sense of humour – I never studied in Rome, but I try to be a good

catholic!' – Dr Daniel Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne from 1917 to 1963. Mannix trusted all his priests and they responded to his trust with a willing and joyful obedience. Mannix spent the first thirty years of his clerical life in an environment not known for trust. He was fifty before he learned of mutual trust from his predecessor, Archbishop Thomas Carr.

Ironically, Australia also provides an example of the ultimate in mistrust, where a bishop excommunicated a saint, Mary MacKillop! Priests who are trusted and know they are trusted, will not betray that trust. They will not seek refuge in drink, sex, gambling, paedophilia or whatever as they will have no need of any such, and can quietly get on with their prayer life.

Hopefully, this Divine Balance of Trust and Obedience will be one small step the Catholic Church will take on its long journey of recovery from the global plague of the abuse crisis.

Fr Max Palmer, New Zealand.

Leadership has trashed the church's credibility

In one recent article in *The Tablet* two bishops, one of whom was Archbishop Coleridge, were dining together. They had trained together for the priesthood. They were discussing or skiting about when they were young priests that little did they think then that one day both would have to clean up this mess the church finds itself in. Maybe, what they should have been discussing was how much *they* had contributed and are contributing to this mess!

Archbishop Coleridge is not doing the Church any favours by being a spokesperson for the Australian Episcopal Conference. Maybe the Bishops should reconsider this appointment after seeing how he acts on TV. As shepherds of the flock most bishops could do well by imitating their Saviour and go into the desert, wearing simple clothes – leaving their regalia behind – and spending forty days and nights in silent prayer.

This mess would never have gotten to this stage if the Bishops had acted as they should have when this abuse first began.

On Friday night's news it was reported that some bishops including Archbishop Coleridge met with the Prime Minister to discuss Phillip Wilson's case. Unfortunately it showed the bishops sitting around a table laughing which looked most inappropriate given the seriousness of the situation.

After spending 82 years of my life having

great love and respect for our church I now find that I am heartbroken over the damage the bishops have caused and I must state that I have no respect for them whatsoever.

Listening daily to the media, I find that hatred for the Church is growing more and more each day and this is caused by the bishops sitting back doing or saying nothing significant or appropriate. It took Father Brennan SJ to rise to the occasion and speak on radio about what the bishops should have done and letting the public know that his thoughts were the same as theirs about this unholy mess. Thank God for Father Brennan!

Our dear priests must be battling in this current situation and they certainly would not be getting the support they need from their bishops. The bishops should be spending time in each parish getting to know their priests and their parishioners.

It is pathetic that the secular leaders should have to call upon Catholic senior clerics to ensure that justice is being done.

On watching the hearings of the Royal Commission some of the bishops by their actions looked as if they were covering up. They looked weak and ineffectual and showed no compassion towards the victims, casting their eyes down when they were answering questions.

Most bishops have been ostracising the lay people by their righteous pronouncements from the pulpit and telling the people how to live their lives including discriminating against divorced Catholics, gay Catholics and others, while at the same time their priests haven't been supported.

The bishops do not display the Christ-like vision of humility and service to others. Rather, they seem to be there to be served.

It is disappointing that all the good work that has been done in the name of the Catholic Church in Australia has been negated by the poor leadership of the hierarchy.

The image of a Catholic in the public eye has been tainted – completely trashed!

The Plenary Council seems to be just an opportunity for some bishops to feel better about themselves. If the bishops were true to their calling they wouldn't need a Plenary Council to find a different direction for the Catholic Church in Australia.

The Bishops revel in the power of being a bishop instead of living a humble and dedicated life of service

Mrs June Bell, Gilgandra NSW

Rescuing Plenary Council 2020

So, we are to have Plenary Council ...beauty! At Mass we watched a video clip telling us how it would happen. She listed all who are to take part in the Plenary Council, from the Bishops right down the list to the last mentioned, the laity. How many times have we been told that 'We' are the Church? But the 'We' at the Plenary Council have no authority at all and whatever we contribute can be just ignored by our Church authorities. That may seem pessimistic. Is there a chance to turn the corner and make a good outcome possible.

There is a common saying out in the real world 'that nothing happens until a sale is made'. Broadly speaking that sale can be as simple as a person doing a menial job such as a bus driver – who sells labour in return for a wage, or it can be the sale of a shirt or food or a car.

In our Church we have the perfect 'sale' to make – access to God, and it has always been a hard sale to sell, even to our own people.

In Australia there has been a big decline in attendance at weekend Masses and over decades we have missed out on a massive chance to make or re-enforce our sale to our people who have drifted away. This may be a crude commercial image, but we have had the customers and let them drift away.

One of the reasons is too much rigidity and clericalism in our Mass. It is an unknown, but would any of the drifters still be around if we had done things differently?

If God were to walk into one of our Churches today God might ask why we do what we do and not make Mass more amenable to hearing the word and sharing a meal. Our priests can only do so much and in many cases are run off their feet, so we cannot ask them to do a lot more.

Can we change our customers/parishioners to be a sales team. Some who have drifted away may attend other churches or no church at all. But we still have sufficient numbers of customers who can make a difference.

There are many thousands of good people doing good works every day and many of those are Catholics who do so because of their faith. To facilitate changes in our church we need to firstly change the format of Mass a little.

We need to convince them that *they* are the church and that it is a living growing church doing thousands of good works in

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

God's name each day and even their small acts of kindness are appreciated by God.

We could change the words at end of Mass. Instead of saying 'Go and announce the Gospel' or even worse, 'The Mass is ended', we need to invite the people to be the people of God and so be uplifted.

Can we make Mass a more joyful experience? In his book, *Evangelii Gaudium*, in the first chapter, Pope Francis encourages us to be joyful. In our announcing of the gospel can we react to that word in a more positive way?

Maybe we need a few deacons in each Parish to assist the priest – not to usurp the priest's authority or to 'dress up' at Mass, but to move around the parish to train and encourage the people.

Des Goonan, Wagga Wagga NSW

Empowering married couples

Several articles in the Spring edition of *The Swag* support a submission I put to our Bunbury Diocesan Synod to be held 2019. We need to pay more attention to identifying people and priests with skills or potential in different areas, to recognise and call all to use their skills and gifts and help them develop them and empower them and trust them to use these gifts responsibly and well in their parishes and the diocese. We need to appreciate and thank them, while the bishop and priest act as cheer leader.

Aengus Kavanagh's article, *Plenary Council 2020: A call to radical reform or abundance in scarcity?* pleads for Diocesan Centres for Adult Faith Formation and Ministry Training to recognise, and use, the abundance of gifts and skills of the people.

Supporting another submission for our Bunbury Synod, Peter and Penny Cahalan write in *Fostering the growth of lay movements* that we as a diocese help parishes provide the support for marriage and family that is strongly recommended in *Amoris Laetitia*. Our smaller country parishes would need to be supported in doing this by working together in groups or with a larger parish. *Amoris Laetitia* on the Pastoral Care of Families, Ch 6:202 states that the main contribution to the pastoral care of families is offered by the Parish.

Parishes should be providing ongoing support for marriage and the family especially for newly married couples, marriage preparation, pastoral care for those in troubled marriages and those in

complex situations and support for single parent families.

Penny and Peter are disappointed that in the Archdiocese of Adelaide some decades ago 'amateur' marriage formation volunteers were shunted aside and the job was taken over by professional social workers.

Movements such as Teams, Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter have plugged on. But they've done so without much in the way of warm support from the official structures. Peter and Penny hope that clergy and hierarchy could once again embrace the lay marriage oriented movements and deploy them creatively as missionaries of marriage.

Working with leadership in Australian Marriage Encounter, I have endeavoured to encourage our bishops to realise that we have a rich resource in couples who really live their sacrament of marriage in our parishes and dioceses.

In West Australia we have just managed to have the M.E. Weekend accredited as ongoing formation for staff in Catholic Schools. A dream I have is that through enabling more couples to be enriched by Marriage Encounter, or other enrichment programs, there will be a resource of sacramental married couples with confidence and skills needed to start improving support for Catholic marriage.

We have recently provided training for 5 married couples and 7 priests as Foccus facilitators. We are looking into starting to use the "Smart Loving" online marriage preparation described by Francine and Byron Pirola in the Winter edition of *The Swag*.

I have also been trying to encourage priests in this ministry. Their excuse for not doing so is often that they are too busy. However working with married couples in these areas makes our work easier and to my mind much more effective. It also recognises the value of marriage as a Sacrament for the couple and for their church community. There is great value in working together as companions on the journey. As a priest in a country diocese for over forty years working with married couples who are comfortable in sharing their life story has provided me with love and support and filled much of my need for intimacy. The importance of being able to do this was pointed out in a news item in the Spring edition of *The Swag*, on giving priests the opportunity of talking about their emotional lives.

Pat Rooney, Manjimup WA

The seal of Confession

Thank you Peter for the article, *The Seal of Confession: civil law, church law and conscience* (Peter Johnstone) published in *The Swag*, Spring, 2018.

Peter clarifies some important points: the Royal Commission heard evidence of perpetrators disclosing their activities in confession; arguments for exempting confessors from the obligation of reporting ... ignore or deny the harm to children; the failure of any persons to report knowledge of paedophiles at large ... could implicate them in any further abuse of children; mandatory criminal reporting is based on substantial evidence of past failures by institutional personnel to report abuse and abusers, and; religious freedom cannot be absolute. He notes that governments have a responsibility to act in the best interests of their society. Do churches not have the same responsibility?

The loss of public respect for and credibility of the Catholic Church has been a major issue for us Catholics for many years now, exacerbated by the revelations of the Royal Commission and other agencies. The inability or unwillingness of Church leadership to categorically assure the public, Catholic and others, that there will be no further concealing of paedophile activity is astonishing. Until they address the issue of the seal of confession, their assurances are conditional, with reservations.

Consider this scenario. A paedophile confesses to abusing a child who is known to the priest. The perpetrator professes his remorse and determination to stop and promises to report himself to the police. However the moment of repentance and good conscience does not last. The priest is able to see from his contact with the child and the family that the abuse is continuing. What does he do? It is impossible to reconcile allowing the abuse to go on with a clear conscience. Every responsible parent or carer would expect the priest to help them. Promises made at baptism, assuming the family is Catholic, require the community, including the priest, to do whatever can be done for the good of the child. Primacy of conscience is an issue for priests as well as for everyone else.

Kevin Liston, Sheidow Park SA

**NCP exists for you
and because of you!**

Corpus Christi College Memories



Past students of Corpus Christi College (CCCguys) have published a book called *Memories of a Catholic Seminary*.

There are 30 contributors in this well-illustrated volume which has photo essays of the four Corpus Christi College campuses: Werribee, Glen Waverley, Clayton and Carlton in its 340 pages.

CCCguys is a group that has met monthly for lunch for the past 30 years for fellowship and mutual help and has an online forum with 178 members.

Less than three years ago the elder Guru John Moloney proposed this collection. He was editor of the first year book in 1955 on the initiative of George Maher, the then President of the Corpus Christi Old Boys Association, formed to give financial help to seminarians in need.

Since then nine year books have appeared which are available on CD from Rachel Naughton at the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission.

Alella Books: alellabooks@gmail.com
One copy: \$40.00 (plus \$15.00 express) or
Three copies: \$100.00 (plus \$15.00 express)

Monk says it's time to renounce clericalism

The Church needs to ask questions about the deep-rooted causes of sexual abuse, says Benedictine monk, Michael Davide Semeraro from Koinonia of the Visitation Monastery, Italy.

In *La Croix International* on October 25, 2018, he said: *The most important issue facing the Church is not who is responsible for these scandals but what these scandals – particularly the abuse of children – reveal about its manner of being.*

He goes on to say we need to seek more than solutions to the inappropriate behaviours and zero tolerance. A return to gospel-centred led communities of faith must be made. *What we are experiencing today is an indication of the bitter consequences arising from making sacred certain functions that in reality are and should remain services,* he said.

Semeraro claims that the clerical caste encompasses not only the clergy but has also clericalized lay people. Like the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' time, this caste is tempted to make use of the Gospel for its own purposes rather than to serve it.

He said there are two things that need urgent review: *the role of the woman in the life of the Church and the move from a theology of mortification to a theology of pleasure. In each instance, our manner of understanding sexuality, as a sign of our way of appreciating our humanity and entering into relationship, is the key to the vault of a willingness – or not – to accept current anthropological changes, not as a threat, but as an opportunity.*

This will enable us to continue to live as we did in the past – including in celibacy – but with a new freedom and responsibility that still needs to be developed – at least in part – not only so that it can be lived out interiorly, but so that it is also comprehensible from the outside.



Youth Synod and Francis' new synodality



Pope Francis is using synodality to reform the Church as he reshapes the way of governance while looking at important issues for the future according to Robert Mickens in *La Croix International*, 19 October.

Mickens said 'Just like the two previous Synod assemblies on the family, Pope Francis has made this current assembly on youth yet another necessary juncture on the road towards radically reforming structures of ecclesial governance and effecting a 'conversion' of the papacy itself.'

'What is perhaps most remarkable about this project is the expanded role it has begun to carve out for ordinary Catholics – that is, all the baptized faithful and not just those who have received Holy Orders', he said.

Mickens points to Pope Francis' apostolic constitution *Episcopalis communio* made public on Sept. 18 which sets out the principles for substantially reforming the nature, purpose and function of the Synod of Bishops.

Francis sets in place a principle of extensive consultation of all the baptized, a very new idea. *The history of the Church bears ample witness to the importance of consultation for ascertaining the views of the bishops and the faithful in matters pertaining to the good of the Church. Hence, even in the preparation of Synodal assemblies, it is very important that consultation of all the particular Churches be given special attention,* Francis says in *Episcopalis communio*.

The Synod of Bishops must increasingly become a privileged instrument for *listening* to the People of God, the pope says.

However listening to the people of God is a great challenge as many voices are out there. At the youth synod there are voices ranging across the vast divide of a polarised church. The Francis' model of starting with the pastoral encounter is challenged by those who want to privilege the doctrine

Continued page 38

and devotion of the church as a way ahead.

One example is contributions to the Synod on LGBT people. James Martin SJ proposed using the term LGBT in church documents to respect the people with whom we are in dialogue and to honour the theology of the dignity of the members of the Body of Christ.

LGBT Catholics are in the church and we need to recognise the reality of their lives not to categorise them but to recognise them and their families. While Archbishop Charles Chaput argued at the Synod that the term LGBT should not be used in church documents as there is no such thing.

PALMS Australia



Palms Australia

Palms Australia began life in 1956 as the Paulian Association, a lay Catholic movement operating in Catholic parishes in Sydney. In 1961 the PALMS program started preparing Catholics for a global mission. In 2001 the organisational name became Palms Australia to reflect the mission that had spread far beyond Sydney.

The logo heralds Palms vision and values. The two colours in Palms' logo suggest difference, however forming a global shape with open palms, proposes working together, giving and receiving. The hands also evoke tenderness; a reminder that justice is achieved through love and in humility. Such mutual support advances strength in solidarity.

The Palms Australia vision inspires us to bridge difference and nurture togetherness in the world; to realise the passage of Galatians 3:28 that unde

r Christ Jesus there is no longer Jew and Greek, Slave and Free, Male and Female. The Palms mission challenges us to be open to mutual formation and inspiration through connection to the chosen ones of Jesus.

The teachers, health professionals, accountants, managers, and others who volunteer are thoroughly prepared by Palms Australia for authentic relationships

based in mutual development. This enables the skill sharing that assists vital grass roots organisations in overseas communities to foster the strengths of their people for sustainable solutions to poverty. It also enables prophetic voices to be heard in Australian communities.

Since 1961 Palms preparation for a cross-cultural mission has been refined to assist participants to achieve their full-potential in all aspects of intercultural engagement. It is important preparation for those travelling abroad as well as those working in mixed cultural contexts within Australia.

Palms welcomes any who wish to realise the potential of such preparation to register for one of their Orientation Courses. Palms 101st course will run from 5-13 January 2019 and the 102nd course runs from 6-13 July 2019. For a registration form for either course call the Palms office on (02) 9560 5333 or send an enquiry from our website: www.palms.org.au

Darwin's new bishop



Fr Charles Gauci was installed as the seventh Bishop of Darwin on 26 September 2018. He became the first Adelaide Archdiocesan priest in 45 years to be ordained a bishop.

The former administrator of St Francis Xavier Cathedral in Adelaide succeeded Bishop Eugene Hurley, who had served in Darwin for the past 11 years. Bishop Hurley served as principal consecrator at an overflowing St Mary's Star of the Sea Cathedral.

In his homily, Bishop Hurley welcomed Bishop Gauci to the Diocese, but also reminded him of the task that lies ahead. Bishop Hurley said trust between the people and the Church in Darwin has been built over more than a century.

'This is a sacred trust, well-earned, but it brings with it a grave responsibility to walk with the people as a good shepherd must', he said.

'Our diocesan family consists of people from almost every part of the world. Many

of these people, dislocated from their own culture and homeland, look to the Church for comfort and reassurance. They will look to you as their bishop for understanding and support.'

'You will need to listen carefully, observe closely and walk humbly with them as you assess the situation which confronts them,' he told Bishop Gauci.

At the conclusion of his ordination Mass, Bishop Gauci declared: 'I am now a Territorian – and very, very glad to be here as one of you.'

He expressed his desire to follow the example of Bishop Hurley, who has been 'such a good bishop, so loved,' and in 'continuing to build the Body of Christ' in the Darwin Diocese.

Bishop Gauci was born in Malta and came to Australia as a 13 year old in 1947 together with his parents, grandfather and four siblings.

He studied for the priesthood at St Francis Xavier Seminary and was ordained on 10 December 1977. As a priest in the Adelaide Archdiocese for the past 40 years, Fr Charles has served in a number of parishes and has always said 'yes' to what Church leadership has asked of him, including his most recent role as Administrator of the Cathedral.

As the seventh bishop of a diocese covering 1.3 million square kilometres (twice the size of France) and with one in three Catholics of Indigenous background, Bishop Gauci is determined to follow Pope Francis' call to 'wear the smell of the sheep and be a fellow traveller in the midst of life'.

But he is fully aware of the challenges that lie ahead and is thankful that retiring Bishop Eugene Hurley will be close at hand to steer him through his early days. 'He will be one of my chief advisers... I am very happy he is staying in the diocese,' he said.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge welcomed the appointment which was made by Pope Francis on June 27.

He said Bishop Elect Gauci was known for his deep spirituality and real commitment to evangelisation.

'He has ministered to people from many walks of life – as a pastor in parishes, a chaplain to schools, a spiritual director and retreat leader,' Archbishop Coleridge said.

'He will be a great gift to the Church in Darwin with all its challenges and also a good addition to the Bishops Conference because of his long and varied experience as priest and teacher of the faith.' ✠

Pastoral Care is a miracle of love

Pastoral care is a professional skill used in ministry and chaplaincy roles. In this book there is an exploration of the skills but unless carried out with the heart it may not be true pastoral care. Margaret Ghosn, *The Miracle of Love*, 2018, Coventry Press. Reviewed by Peter Maher.

I am privileged to be a pastoral supervisor for a number of pastoral carers in various forms of ministry. The process of pastoral supervision is a form of pastoral care for the ministers. It is a reflective space where those involved in the complex task of embodying gospel values and attitudes, often in multiple systems and organisations, can ask the questions of meaning and learn from experience how to find deeper satisfaction in their vocational life.

For pastoral carers who see their work as more than a job, it involves the discovery of themselves and those they care for and with. It involves people wrestling with life changing and affirming issues with the support of theological and spiritual resources so they can make life better for both the carer and the cared for. I have learned over hundreds of hours of pastoral supervision as a supervisor and a supervisee that this is not merely the application of learned skills and teachings. It is the careful and gentle self sacrifice as we carers dare to walk with them on their sacred ground of joys and sorrows, grief and challenge in their chosen ministry.

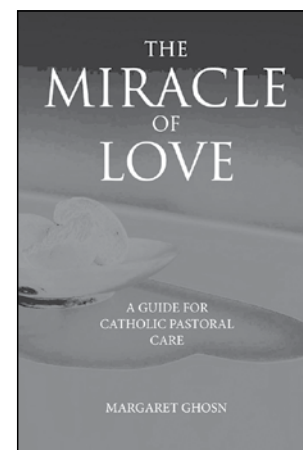
What a joy is it to see this experience confirmed in this marvelous book that values both the skills of the pastoral carer, their commitment, their challenges and their love. This book affirms in the title and throughout that the essential element that makes a helpful pastoral intervention in people's lives is love for them. How do we care for people, what do we do or say,

how do we deal with our own demons and what happens when we are overwhelmed or paralysed by the pain or beauty of the lives of those we care for? This book carefully and lovingly dares to comment on all these things. It is both practical and deeply vocational, that is it takes into account the humanity and vulnerability of the carer and those cared for.

Ghosn's definition of pastoral care begins with the humanisation of the pastoral relationship that we might move toward wholeness, justice and equity. She notes the importance of respect for difference, collaboration and the interdisciplinary nature of caring for the vulnerable. Pastoral carers cannot be independent, they come as part of a team of players including family, personal experience, faith, culture and the other helping professionals.

Carers need to be aware of self, asking who am I in this pastoral relationship? They need to be careful about what they say. A list of commonly used comfort phrases alerts the reader to some mistakes in glib responses that either oversimplify, spiritualise or blame someone for the predicament of the person. Pastoral caring is often a slow process requiring patience, honesty, authenticity and being at home with silence.

This book does not stop at tips for good pastoral practice. It is full of gospel reflections, exploring models of pastoral care and a delightful prayerful reflection at the end of each chapter. There is attention



to ethical practice and a chapter on each of the key areas of pastoral care.

One example of how theory can assist with practice, Ghosn suggests that pastoral care is moving people from the Drama Triangle of victim, rescuer and persecutor to the Winner's Triangle where these are replaced by vulnerable, caring and assertive respectively. This is so helpful as it engages with a common transactional analysis tool to understand dysfunctional relationships sometimes employed in the power relationship of pastoral care with a model of relationship that respects the other as a competent actor in the story (vulnerable) and an openness to dialogue through listening not advice giving (caring) and strategising to meet the person's need without punishing (assertive). These are healthy pastoral care positions requiring careful and on-going self awareness through reflective practice by the pastoral carer.

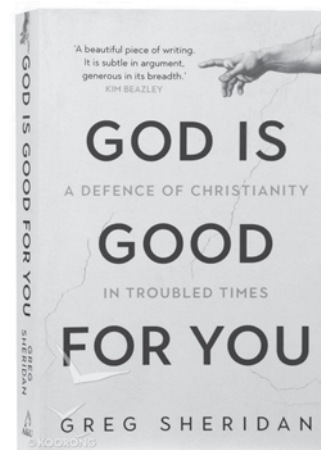
While its subtitle is A Guide for Catholic Pastoral Care and there are specific references to things that apply to Catholic support, this book would be useful for all people involved in providing pastoral care in a Christian setting. ☺

On Christianity and Christians

The last of the seven books produced so far by the well-known journalist and broadcaster Greg Sheridan is *God is Good for You* (Allen and Unwin, 2018). Reviewed by Michael Costigan.

One of my oldest friends, an 87-year-old much loved, now retired, former country parish priest who was my seminary contemporary, phoned me recently to recommend Greg Sheridan's latest book. He thought it was terrific and suggested I read it. He saw it as an antidote to much of the bad press religion and Catholicism has been receiving. As it happened, I had already bought, had begun reading and was enjoying the catchily

titled *God is Good for Us*. While, as I told my friend, I had retained one or two mild reservations about Sheridan and his previous book, his memoir *We were Young and Foolish* (Allen and Unwin, 2015), I found on coming to the end of the 'God' book that I was in full agreement with my friend's judgement on its merits. I too would exhort other active, doubting, former, anti and non Christians to read it.



Continued page 40

Applying to his task the writing and anecdotal skills of a leading journalist, the author summarises the nature of Christianity, together with its good and bad fruits. All of this, in the book's Part One, is presented in the context of what he deems the false prophetising of those prominent writers and talkers whom he labels the 'new atheists'. Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens are not spared.

In Part Two, the writer reports the results of the interviews he carried out with a series of famous Australian personalities, most of them politicians, about what their associations with Christianity have meant for them and the millions affected by their lives and decisions.

Lacking high academic degrees in disciplines like theology, biblical studies and religious history, Sheridan could be regarded by some critics as less well equipped than he should be to pronounce on some of the matters he covers. He does confess humbly (page 95) that 'there is a whole eternity of things I do not know, or, knowing, do not fully understand'. But both his handling of themes and the bibliography at the end show that, drawing on his journalistic research ability, he is one who has studied his subjects well and is able to write on them with a fitting mixture of assuredness and questioning.

It is not surprising that public interest has

focused on what Sheridan records from his interviews with such celebrities as Bob Hawke, Kevin Rudd, Kim Beazley, Kristina Keneally, Michael Tate, Penny Wong, Bob Carr, Mary Easson and Bill Shorten on the Labor side of politics, together with John Howard, Mike Baird, Tony Abbott, Andrew Hastie, Peter Costello and Malcolm Turnbull on the Liberal side. If research for the book had been delayed a year or so, one could have expected it also to feature an interview with Bill Hayden, following the former Governor-General's late 2018 conversion in his nineties from atheism to Catholicism.

A particularly interesting chapter (pages 305-316) is about answers given to the author's questions by Anthony Fisher, after the Sydney Archbishop had mostly recovered from the sudden serious illness that threatened his life three years ago. Among other things, Fisher reveals how he was moved one day to prayer by looking at the symbolic buildings he passed as he walked slowly (and presumably painfully) along Macquarie Street towards his cathedral after visiting his doctor.

Greg Sheridan has achieved much in covering Foreign Affairs for *The Australian* and as an articulate radio and TV commentator on his area. Some of his views are controversial but, partly I'm sure through the influence of his Indonesian

wife and his own and his family's interest in the Sikh religion, he writes authoritatively on many Asian issues and above all on Australia's increasingly crucial relationships with China, Indonesia and India.

His memoir *When We were Young and Foolish* told a great deal (even with his account of a trial year as a teenager in the Redemptorist seminary at Galong, NSW) about how he came to be the person he is now as a key member of the Australian branch of Rupert Murdoch's media empire. That book's sub-title, *A memoir of my misguided youth with Tony Abbott, Bob Carr, Malcolm Turnbull, Kevin Rudd and other reprobates*, is close to a summary of its contents. It contains much about his friendship with Abbott and the extent to which the attitudes of both of them were formed by their mentor, B.A. Santamaria, whose extraordinary effect on life in this country continues today, even, it could be claimed, helping governments to die or live.

Something of the Santamaria influence was surely present, for better or worse, in the writing of the very readable and important *God is Good for You*. Whatever about that, the book, like Bill Hayden's conversion, should be something of a tonic for believers battered by all that has emerged about clerical sexual abuse in Christian churches and institutions. ☺



The Elephant in the Christian Room

John Shelby Spong, *Unbelievable – Neither Ancient Creeds nor the Reformation Can Produce a Living Faith Today* (2018), HarperOne and John Bodycomb, *Two Elephants in the Room – Evolving Christianity and Leadership* (2018) Spectrum Publications. Reviewed by Eric Hodgens.

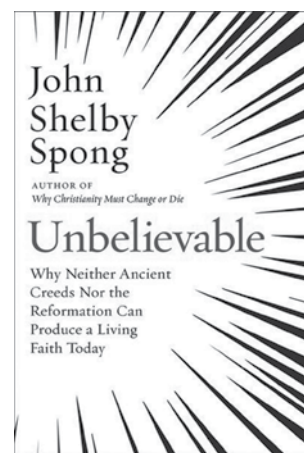
On Easter Sunday morning as Catholics renew their baptismal promises we are questioned about the propositions of the creed. 'Do you believe in ...?' The answer is 'We believe'. But one of my friends answers each item with 'More or less'. She is not alone. She is still a Catholic, but the propositions as they stand sound odd.

The creed was shaped in a culture and language we do not recognise today. As today's understanding of the world changes, we adapt our language and thinking. But religions can find adaptation hard as they canonise the old format of doctrines and rule. If they do not adapt they become more and more irrelevant.

Two octogenarian Christians have written books on the issue. John Shelby Spong is a retired American Episcopalian Bishop. His

book is titled *Unbelievable – Neither Ancient Creeds nor the Reformation Can Produce a Living Faith Today*. His daughter told him that he was writing answers to questions that nobody is asking any more. So, he asks the fundamental question. What is believable about Christianity today? He answers with twelve theses. During the last 500 years we have had the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. We have also had Galileo, Newton, the Enlightenment, the scientific/industrial revolution, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud and the new sciences of sociology and psychology. Much Christian doctrine is incredible in its traditional articulation. Christianity's proclamation must adapt or die. You may dispute with Spong, but you can't ignore the issues he raises.

John Bodycomb is a retired Australian Uniting Church minister. He was well



known in university chaplaincy and theology schools in Melbourne and Adelaide. He takes a further step. He sees an elephant in the Christian room. Fewer and fewer people have any interest in Christianity at all. Nearly a quarter of Australians answer 'No religion' in the census. In Holland it is now over half. Religions that were main features of society a century ago are now largely irrelevant. And the decline of religion goes on apace.

We must ask the question: is mainstream

religion on its way out for good? This is the first elephant in the room. If it is true, internal doctrinal and ethical jousts are re-arranging the deckchairs on the Titanic.

He sees a second elephant. It is getting almost impossible for mainstream Christian

religions to recruit professional ministers for ordination. This is not just a Catholic problem. Attrition of full-time religious leaders is high and on the increase.

He muses that just as Karl Jasper's *Axial Age* ushered in the great religions maybe a

second axial age of Reformation, Galileo, Enlightenment, scientific revolution will usher them out. A sociologist's view can be sobering. His book is *Two Elephants in the Room – Evolving Christianity and Leadership*.

Vatican II theology with heart and humour

Graham English, *Climbing out of Yesterday* (2018), Morning Star Publishing. Reviewed by Edmund Campion.

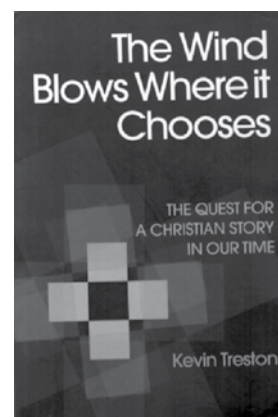
These days our lives are swamped with online information. For a church historian one of the most interesting bloggers is @Catholica's 'Enda' (Graham English) whose life has been spent in Catholic education, starting in Christian Brothers' schools during the Vatican II years and peaking as a lecturer at Australian Catholic University. His writing at *Catholica* has now been published in a book, which makes it a ready reference for understanding how someone from the meat-and-three-veg Vatican I Church matured into a *Cordon bleu* Catholic of the Vatican II experience. Graham English is a witty, well-read, questioning believer who makes you think.

When he was starting out, Graham English was fortunate to encounter mentors who had been influenced by the great Br Michael Benignus Hanrahan, a pioneer of modern catechetics in Australian Catholic schools. As far back as 1929 in the *Australasian*

Catholic Record (imagine!) he wrote that instead of children being expected to learn by heart the Q & A in a catechism they should be encouraged to ask their own questions.

One of the best things about *Climbing out of Yesterday* is that it is a kindly record of what the Christian Brothers achieved. It's a crowded field, the list of Australians who learned to write in Christian Brothers' schools, including Tom Kenneally, Morris West, Laurie Clancy, Desmond O'Grady, Jim McClelland and B A Santamaria. Now one could add Graham English to the list; and he is happy to acknowledge his indebtedness. Noticeably, the author writes the title 'brother' with a capital B, while sisters and priests get lower case initial letters.

Another notable feature of this book is its wit. It seems to be written by a man who is smiling. Certainly as I read it I often found myself smiling. English, however, is serious



about the mess we have got the Church into. Mass attendances are down and much of church life seems pointless. What to do? The people who read his *Catholica* blogs are responsible Catholics whom he wants to recruit as rescuers. 'We need to get together and reform the sacraments,' he writes. 'Otherwise they will all die out.'

So *Climbing out of Yesterday* is a book I'd give to a seminarian because soon enough he will be preaching every Sunday and, although he may not know them, in his congregation there will be plenty of people who feel the same as Graham English.

A New Story in each age

The Wind Blows Where it Chooses The Quest for a Christian Story in our Time, Kevin Treston, 2018, Coventry Press. Reviewed by Peter Maher.

Where do we go to find a new vision for the church in our age? The church is caught in death trap of its own making. The church has lost credibility and finds itself emptying of thinking creative Catholics, women, LBGIQ Catholics and young people. However the church's role in fostering, interpreting and passing on the sacred texts remains as important as ever. The church holds the Book of the Bible and seeks to work to understand and implement the text in collaboration with the other source of the divine, the Book of Nature.

Treston claims we have done a poor job of this recently. He asks in this book how can we recover this skill in terms that are meaningful today for the people they are

meant inspire. These people are deserting the church in droves because it has failed to make sense to them and act with ethical integrity that might inspire their allegiance.

Treston's most inspiring chapter is entitled: What happened to the Jesus story in the history of the church? He does not embark on a long historical analysis of the 2000 years but engages with the difficult issue of reinterpreting the story for our time. This major task he tackles with some very insightful explorations of 'what if's'. He looks at what if we had not adopted Augustine's version of original sin; the philosophical framework of dualism; a separation of clergy and laity; a passive laity; centralization of authority; a sense of exclusivity; disconnection with the world; a

distrust of science or an anthropology that subordinated women to men. This chapter points to some changes we might discuss to simply allow the Jesus story to be embodied in this century by divesting ourselves of accoutrements that have shadowed or even drowned the Jesus story. Treston challenges us as church, the whole people of God, to be daring and willing to embrace the new era with all its challenges. His analysis is interesting and his challenge to engage a new theology refreshing, but his suggestion we face the future with multiple spiritualities drawn from all quarters and a deep pastoral wisdom is extraordinary and breathtakingly inclusive.

All who endeavour to understand our current dilemma and seek practical and thoughtful pathways ahead will find this short and easy read something to savour and in which to find encouragement. ☺

Continued page 42

Jirga, a parable of Reconciliation

Peter Malone MSC reflects on an Australian film about one man's attempt to revisit the horror and pain of war in Afghanistan.



The question: why a recommendation for a film about the war in Afghanistan, a brief film about military activity, a soldier returning to the country?

A quick answer: this is a film which can serve as a paradigm for an understanding of the process of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The film is *Jirga*. It comes from a religious perspective. The father of the film's director and cinematographer, Benjamin Gilmour, was an Anglican minister. This humane and religious perspective was also a feature of the first film by this director, *Son of a Lion*, a story of post-9/11 Pakistan.

It is also an Australian film, the main character a soldier returning to Afghanistan on a personal journey.

We are told immediately that Jirga means a meeting of council elders. The opening

invites its audience into military action, a raid on a village, dangers and shooting, all filmed in green night-light. At the end of the episode, one of the men is filmed staring at what has happened, the death.

The director knows the landscapes of Afghanistan as well as the city of Kabul and audiences may well feel as they look at the cityscapes from above, move through the streets and markets into the small hotel, into the shops, that they have been there.

However, this is the story of a personal journey of the soldier from the night raid, Mike Wheeler, played by Sam Smith. It is not clear at first why he has returned from Australia to Afghanistan. He has a large amount of money. He asks a taxi driver to take him to the combat area, the driver refusing many times, resisting the money, but eventually taking Mike part of the way, sharing the journey, some music, a meal, his Muslim prayer and rituals.

As Mike Wheeler continues his journey on foot through the desert, we realise that he is on a pilgrimage, to go back to the village, to confess, appear before the Jirga, the Council of Elders, for them to decide his fate.

For a Catholic watching the film, the

parallel with the Sacrament of Penance becomes ever more clear. In this sense, the film does serve as a paradigm for the Sacrament. There is the offence, the perpetrator of the killing deciding that he has 'sinned'. He has examined his conscience quite profoundly which leads him back to the Jirga meeting which is his confessional. He is sorry for what he has done. He has repented. But this is not enough. He needs to confess aloud, to acknowledge his sin. He certainly has a firm purpose of amendment. He wants to atone – although some of the locals note that the money he has brought is something of a curse and we see some of it blowing in the wind. He wants to make reparation and to perform a penance.

He experiences both condemnation and forgiveness – and, in the ritual styles of the Middle East, an animal is sacrificed, shedding its blood, symbol of the suffering and reconciliation.

The film is worth seeing as a film, brief, some beauty, some dread. A non-religious audience watching it would appreciate the humane themes while the Christian audience, especially those with a sacramental tradition, would appreciate how the pattern of penance and reconciliation is played out before their eyes.

The film can be recommended for discussion, for religious education. ☪

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Returned to God

THOMAS EDWARD BROPHY PE

07/09/1926 – 21/08/2018

Tom was ordained at St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne on 24 July, 1949. He was appointed to St Patrick's Cathedral, then as Assistant Priest at Ivanhoe (1950), East Brunswick (1952), North Richmond (1956), Ormond (1956), Kew (1957) and Manifold (1960). In 1962 he was appointed Administrator of Prahran, and was appointed the first Parish Priest of Forest Hill (1968), Parish Priest of North Balwyn (1982) and Camberwell South (1988) until his retirement in 2002, when he was appointed Pastor Emeritus.

In his retirement, he elected to go on-loan to the Diocese of Port Pirie. Upon his return to Melbourne he retired privately. His gifts included his pastoral kindness, prayerfulness and his commitments to the various duties asked of him throughout his priestly life. The Archdiocese of Melbourne is grateful to God for Father Tom Brophy's joyful, priestly witness and dedicated service to his people.

May he rest in peace.

GEORGE CONNOLLY

05/03/1934 – 09/08/2018

George, the son of George and Madeleine Connolly, was educated at St Joseph's Guildford, St Laurence's Galong, CBC Lewisham and then at St Columba's College Springwood and St Patrick's College Manly. He was ordained by Cardinal Gilroy in 1957.

George served in the parishes of Campsie, Waitara, Lewisham, Revesby and Elizabeth Bay, before his fateful appointment, in 1984, as Parish Priest at St Anthony of Padua, Clovelly, where he served for the next 25 years. Here he led the establishment of the first Pastoral Council, appointed the first pastoral associate and sacramental co-ordinator, took charge of the building of the Parish Meeting Room, school administration block and amenities and some renewal of this church building, including the acquisition of the organ and promotion of the St Anthony's Singers.

As a long-time amateur historian, he was chaplain to the Australian Catholic Historical Society and also a regular supply priest on Norfolk Island. In latter times he continued to serve at Greenwich in Lane Cove parish and at Norfolk Island for as long as he could.

In 2017 George contracted a debilitating illness which he faced with courage, hope and his customary good humour as he prepared himself to meet his Maker.

George died at Mount St Joseph's Home Randwick where he had spent the last few months of his life. His funeral Mass was celebrated at his former parish of Clovelly on 17 August, attended by six bishops, many brother priests, family members and former parishioners.

Rest in peace, George.

JOSEPH BENEDICT DARGAN PE

09/02/1928 – 19/08/2018

Joseph trained both in Ireland and Manly, NSW and was ordained on 21 July 1962 at St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne. He served as Assistant Priest at the parishes of Broadmeadows (1963), South Melbourne (1965), Maidstone (1969), Seymour (1970) and Caulfield South (1974). Joe was appointed Parish Priest at Parkville (1977) and Assistant Priest at Clayton (1978), Daylesford (1979), Belmont (1981) and Castlemaine (1982). After his appointment as Parish Priest at Meredith (1982), Joe retired in 1988 and was appointed Pastor Emeritus.

Joe battled with personal suffering beyond his control which prevented him from engaging in priestly ministry as he would have liked. His priestly ministry was witnessed through his fidelity to prayer and his gentle kindness to those he met each day. Joe was grateful for the kindness of close personal friends who accompanied him until his final breath.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

JOHN EGAN

22/09/1934 – 13/06/2018

Whenever John celebrated the life of one of the residents at Holy Spirit Care Carseldine, he always made reference to their baptism and spoke of their parents' dream that their child, the now deceased, would grow up knowing that he or she was loved by God and in that knowledge, give love to others. I hope someone said that at John's funeral. For if anyone knew they were loved by God, it was John.

John was such a wonderful example of love in action, words and attitude. Over the dozen or so years that I have worked with him, not once did I hear John criticise or speak negatively about anyone. He treated everyone with respect and dignity, acceptance and understanding. Being sensitive to others was always his number one priority in the way he dealt with people. He was a man rich in humility and simplicity and made those qualities part of every facet of his life.

As a member of the pastoral care team, John was a team player – co-operative, obliging, never putting himself first, but consistently flexible in fitting in with everyone. He made it his business to know what people cared about. He never forgot a birthday or an anniversary. So many qualities to admire in John, but a lasting and inspiring one was his total faithfulness to his vocation in life. We've all heard of the "people's princess", well now we have the "people's priest". And while John was ever mindful of his sacramental role as priest always carried out with reverence, he was equally reverent and pastoral to people – us – staff and residents alike.

On behalf of the pastoral care team, Holy Spirit Sisters, management, staff, residents and volunteers of Holy Spirit Home, I convey condolences to Colleen, Fr. John's cousin, and her family, and hope they will be comforted by our acknowledgement that we have lost a very great and holy man whose example of how to care and love people will live on long in our ministry.

Carmel Costin, Pastoral Care, Holy Spirit Care Services (Carseldine).

Continued page 44

LEO PATRICK GRIFFIN PE

20/03/1934 – 30/10/2018

Father Leo died peacefully at St Joseph's, Little Sisters of the Poor, Northcote. He was aged 84.

Leo was ordained on 27 July 1963 at St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne. He served as Assistant Priest at the parishes of Preston (1963), Mordialloc (1967), Heidelberg (1968), Castlemaine (1970) and Camberwell South (1974). In 1976, Leo was appointed Administrator of Alexandra parish and in 1977 became Parish Priest. He was then appointed Assistant Priest at the parishes of St Kilda East (1991) and Blackburn (1994). Upon his retirement in 1997, Leo was appointed *Pastor Emeritus*. He resided at George Maher House, Justin Villa and, more recently, at St Joseph's.

Leo was small in stature but was large of heart. He was a kind, generous, caring and prayerful priest. Sadly, he did not enjoy robust health but he managed to negotiate his illness with a spirit of fortitude and trust. He was always grateful for the care and patience of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master, Clergy Care Team, Ministry to Priests and, more recently, the Little Sisters and their staff. For many years he assisted the Archdiocesan Office for Youth Six30 gatherings at St Patrick's Cathedral and supply in nearby parishes.

His gentle ways, reassuring words and attention to others will long be remembered as his witness as a priest of Melbourne.

Rest now in peace dear Leo.

RAYMOND KEARNEY

01/03/1938 – 29/10/2018

Greatly respected Archdiocesan priest Fr Ray Kearney passed away on 29 October at St Vincent's Hospital, aged 80.

Ray was ordained as part of the second largest class ever to leave Banyo Seminary in 1962.

His initial posting was to Mt Gravatt parish from 1962-1964, where he learned the power of pastoral visits alongside the revered Fr John Rosenskjar. Ray recalled much shoe leather being worn out knocking on all the doors in the surrounding community.

He was then sent to Rome and studied philosophy at the Gregorian University. Upon returning to Brisbane in the late 1960s he went onto staff at the Pius XII Seminary.

Ray resumed parish postings with an appointment to Ipswich in 1977 followed by Darra Jindalee (1982) Booval (1983) and Sunnybank (2001).

He retired in 2007, and came to enjoy living alongside a number of fellow retired priests at an independent living unit block in South Brisbane.

Fr Denis Long, one of his neighbours, recalled Ray as a wonderful friend. "He was always very kind to his fellow priests and invited them round for a meal and fellowship," Fr Long said. "A whole group of us also played golf with him for many years. In terms of his pastoral touch, I was lucky to witness it because I lived in a convent within Sunnybank parish whilst doing supply ministry. He put great effort into the sacramental program, and he would interview all parents and try to encourage them in their faith in a gentle but a practical way. It was very productive because of all the parishes I've been to it certainly was up there for the very high number of families with children attending mass."

Vicar General Peter Meneely extended condolences to Fr Kearney's family and friends on behalf of the Archdiocese.

May he rest in peace.

EUGENE MCGRATH

18/12/1929 – 02/08/2018



Eugene McGrath enjoyed a colourful pastoral ministry across the span of 64 years in the Archdiocese of Perth.

Raised in County Kerry, south-west Ireland, he was the youngest of 10 children to Eugene and Margaret, farming parents who provided the family with a remarkable and lifelong gift of faith.

Four of his sisters have been religious sisters dispersed throughout the world.

Before entering the Pontifical Irish College seminary in Rome, Eugene attended St Brendan's College in Killarney. 11 months after his ordination on 13 March 1954, Eugene arrived in Perth at the invitation of Archbishop Redmond Prendiville and was appointed Assistant Priest at Queen's Park Parish.

From 1959 to 1967, he served as Priest-in-charge of Boulder, Assistant Priest at Northam, and Assistant Priest at Subiaco. From 1967 to 1976 he was Parish Priest of Kellerberrin Rockingham and from 1976 to 1990 he was Parish Priest of Guildford, Manning, Bruce Rock and 1991 Merredin.

In April 1994 Eugene was appointed Parish Priest of Belmont-Redcliffe until his retirement from parish ministry. He then became Chaplain to the Little Sisters of the Poor for four years, and then became a resident for eight years until his death.

Away from the religious scene, Eugene was a great follower of Gaelic football – enjoying attending games with his brother and nephews when visiting Ireland – and was a West Coast Eagles supporter for many years.

Rest now in peace Eugene.

JOHN O'DOHERTY OMI

27/4/1934 – 31/7/2018



John was born in Brisbane in 1934, and celebrated his 51 years of priesthood this year. He loved being a priest, a missionary, every day of those 51 years.

Big John (as he was affectionately called) was also called 'the gentle giant'. He was also called Johnno and Jack. John had passion for certain things: he loved the ocean, the waves, swimming, sailing. He loved sports of all kind especially football, and even in his years in Indonesia he would try to see the live broadcast or a replay. John devoured bananas for breakfast, lunch and dinner!

His greatest passion was his Oblate priesthood. He approached all his ministries with enthusiasm and creativity. He was pastor in Dernancourt, then Novice Master. His love for the mission in Indonesia lead him to learn the language and culture and then volunteer to help the mission. He was there for 27 years, as pastor in Cilacap, in Cengkareng and involved in formation ministry. His guidance to the novices and students was simple, clear, some might say rigid, and precise. His guidance in spirituality was faithfulness in prayer and action.

John was a reader, he was a people's person. Even though he was very tall and big he was approachable, willing to listen. He was joyful, out-going, kind and sociable and so in return he was liked and loved.

May he now rest in peace.

FRANCIS PERRY MSC

07/12/1940 – 01/09/2018

Frank made his first profession on 26 February 1963 as a Brother in the congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. For more than 20 years he served as a Brother in MSC communities and in colleges. During the 1970s a number of brothers did teacher training and made the transition to teaching and supervision in MSC Colleges in Australia and in PNG. Frank was one of that group.

During the 1970s and 1980s a number of Brothers also began studies at St Paul's National Seminary and Frank was ordained on the 9th February 1991.

Following his ordination he was appointed to the Randwick Parish in Sydney and served in Darwin as parish priest of Nightcliff and later as the Administrator of the Darwin Cathedral. In 1998 he returned to Sydney as parish priest of Coogee.

Frank moved to Adelaide 2003 as assistant priest in the parish of Hindmarsh. Significantly, he committed himself to learn to say mass in Italian, which he did for the next 14 years until his illness made it too difficult for him.

Frank moved to live at Henley Beach in 2006 to give companionship to Fr Mark McGuinness MSC, and although he continued his ministry in the Hindmarsh parish he re-established his links with the young people of Antioch at Henley Beach.

For some years Frank had been ill with cancer, with the disease finally taking its toll on his life.

May he rest in peace.

PAUL GEOFFREY (GEOFF) SCHNEIDER SJ

23/12/1912 – 08/10/2018

The oldest Jesuit in the world at the time of his death at the age of 105, Geoff (as he was known) was born in the Jesuit parish of Hawthorn in the year the Titanic sank and was educated by the Jesuits at Xavier College, Kew (Melbourne). After teaching briefly for the Victorian Education Department at the height of the Great Depression, he entered the Jesuits at Loyola, Greenwich in Sydney, then returned to Melbourne for his Juniorate and Philosophy at the recently opened house of formation at Loyola, Watsonia. His studies were interrupted by a three-year teaching stint at St Louis School, Perth, established just two years earlier. Then came Theology at Canisius College, Pymble (Sydney) and priestly ordination in January 1946 at St Mary's, North Sydney, where Archbishop Norman Gilroy ordained him just after being appointed Australia's first native-born Cardinal.

The remainder of Geoff's active life was spent in schools, notably at his alma mater in Melbourne and St Aloysius' College in Sydney. In Melbourne he was the headmaster of Burke Hall (then a boarding school, where he lived in what is now a cupboard) and Kostka Hall – preparatory schools for Xavier. At St Aloysius' he was assistant prefect of studies, discipline and sport in the senior school from 1965-69, then headmaster of the junior school until 1976. After three years at the Catholic Education Office in Sydney and a year back at Kostka Hall as headmaster, he returned to St Aloysius' as religion teacher and junior school chaplain until his retirement in early 2014 at the age of 101. At 100 he had made it into the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest full-time teacher in the world.

He was also the longest-serving staff member of St Aloysius' College, to which he devoted 44 years of his life and where he lived for 47 years. Outside the school he was chaplain to the Lane Cove Christian Life Community for over 25 years and celebrated a monthly Mass for ten years at David's Place drop-in centre for the poor in central Sydney. Although he was remarkably independent until a very advanced age, in his final years he needed care, which he received at MacKillop Residence back in his native Hawthorn, close to his beloved Hawks.

Geoff attributed his longevity to routine and walking long distances. No doubt his equanimity, patience and simplicity also helped. At the time of his death, he had been a Jesuit for 85 years and a priest for 72.

FEATURES

DOUGLAS SMITH MSC

16/11/1939 – 07/06/2018

Doug spent his secondary school years at Chevalier College in Bowral. He made his novitiate in 1958 with his older brother, Don and they were professed on February 26th 1959. Doug was ordained on 22 July 1967 and celebrated his Golden Jubilee last year.

During his seminary studies, Doug completed a BA at the Australian National University.

He had a varied ministry, in Education at Downlands College Toowoomba and in a number of parishes including Coogee in the past and Randwick in recent years, where he served as Community Leader of the Sydney MSC parishes.

In the 1980s he went to Rome to study Moral Theology and returned to lecture and be Rector of St Paul's National Seminary. While there was justice in whatever he did, it became significant in his perspectives of moral theology and action.

Doug had a special ministry in the parishes and beyond the parishes with the experience of Marriage Encounter, both in Australia and worldwide. As regards Hosea and loving tenderly (as read at his funeral), he expressed this not only with his MSC community, his family, but especially with all those he engaged with through Marriage Encounter. He certainly had the experience of loving tenderly!

Doug spent a number of years in Fiji in formation as well as time at St Mary's Towers, Douglas Park. He moved to St Mary's Towers earlier this year for the local parish.

Doug Smith was a good man, a straight up-and-down guileless man, but a man of justice and tenderness, who did walk humbly with his God.

May he rest in peace.

PETER WOOD MSC

02/05/1941 – 28/08/2018

A Melbourne boy, Peter did a degree in architecture and practised professionally in London. Later he would design the MSC community house at the Pacific Regional Seminary in Suva.

Peter worked as a lay missionary in Papua New Guinea, entered St Paul's National Seminary in 1972. He made his first vows on 7 January 1978 and was ordained in his home parish church of St Bede's Balwyn where his funeral Mass was celebrated.

In his 45 years and more as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. He was blessed by a new choice in life in the early 1970s, a call to be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, testing it in Papua New Guinea. He joined as, what in those days was called 'a late vocation', studying at St Paul's National seminary, a wise support to his fellow students. During these years he also had some time again in London but, most importantly, in Zambia, serving as a secretary to the Archbishop of Lusaka – who then came to ordain Peter to the priesthood at the church of St Bede's, in January 1981.

In his 37 years of priesthood, Peter served in a wide range of ministries including in Darwin and Suva, heading the newly-established AIDS ministry in Melbourne and then in the NT. He was parish priest of Moonah, chaplain at Monivae and, in recent years, available for parish supply in the Ballarat diocese, based at Monivae.

May he rest in peace.

Returned to the God, we hold them in prayer.

† Harry Bliss (Archdiocese of Brisbane).....	22/08/2018
† Eric Burton (Diocese of Parramatta).....	05/09/2018
† Denis Foley (Archdiocese of Sydney).....	06/10/2018
† John Martin CSsR (Redemptorist Fathers).....	09/06/2018
† Lawrence McCarthy CSsR (Redemptorist Fathers).....	07/09/2018
† Peter Nicholls (Archdiocese of Hobart).....	30/10/2018
† Daniel Neylon OFM (Franciscan Friars).....	12/05/2018
† Francis Perry MSC (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart).....	01/09/2018
† Paul Pitzen (Archdiocese of Perth).....	20/10/2018
† Noel Tobin (Diocese of Geraldton).....	03/11/2018

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