



Quarterly magazine of the National Council of Priests of Australia

The Swag

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

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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



I write this article with both a sense of melancholia and optimism, focussing on the issue of clergy morale, or the lack thereof. The perennial issue of sexual abuse and the lack of interest in a priestly vocation in the current generation are issues which are at the forefront of current priestly ministry. Our parishes are growing larger. The demands placed upon priests are increasing and there are often polar theological divisions between parish priests and their assistant priests. Where do we turn to or look to for guidance or assistance? This is why we, the National Council of Priests exists. We understand

the plight of our brother priests and we have empathy with each other.

I hope and pray that the upcoming Plenary Council will address this issue of clergy morale and the declining numbers in priestly personnel. It is time to “grasp the nettle” and make the decision to ordain suitable married men to the priesthood. The venerable Pope Paul VI floated this idea and now his worthy successor Pope Francis is endeavouring to goad the various episcopal conferences throughout the world to take up this challenge, to face the reality of the situations in their countries and dioceses. The days of importing priests from other countries is over. It was a doomed experiment which admittedly had some modest success, but overall has failed dismally. What we used to refer to as the “Third World” is now experiencing the decline in clergy numbers commensurate with the “First World”. Africa has one priest per 5,000 people, Latin America has one priest per 8,000 people whereas Europe, North America and Australia have one priest per 2,000 people.

Issues surrounding enculturation, language, pastoral theology and pastoral practice have proved to be stumbling blocks for both priest and people. The Holy Father is throwing out a life line to his brother bishops. They must be courageous in

seizing this opportunity. We live in a prophetic time under the pastoral guidance of a prophetic Pope. The time is ripe to be bold, innovative and above all prayerful. We live in the “Great South Land of The Holy Spirit”, let us listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Our people are crying out for leadership. We as priests are in need of leadership. We want to put our trust in our bishops, both as leaders and as brother priests. The Plenary Council in 2020 is an opportunity to display prophetic leadership and to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and to the voice of the People of God.

This year’s biennial N.C.P. Convention is being held in our nation’s capital and if you haven’t already booked your place I encourage you to do so promptly as numbers need to be finalised. The convention is our opportunity to meet with, socialise and support our brother priests from across the country and is shaping to be informative and challenging while offering hope for our future. Details regarding the convention are contained in this edition of *The Swag*.

On a happier note, congratulations to those priests who are celebrating silver, gold and diamond anniversaries of ordination this year, me being one of the “Silvers”. Ad Multos Annos.

Yours in His Priesthood ☺

NCP ELECTIONS

NCP CHAIRMAN

Jim Clarke will complete six years as a committee member, the last three as Chairman, at the end of 2018. I hereby call for nominations for the position of NCP Chairman. **Mark Freeman, NCP Secretary.**

TWO COMMITTEE POSITIONS

1. Wayne Bendotti will complete six years on the committee at the end of this year.
2. Paddy Sykes will complete three years on the committee and is eligible to be re-nominated for a further three year term.

I hereby call for nominations for two NCP Committee positions. **Mark Freeman, NCP Secretary.**

- Contact the NCP Office for a nomination form or go to the Members’ Area – NCP Website nationalcouncilofpriests.com.au
- Both the person being nominated and the nominator must be financial members of the NCP.
- The term of office is three (3) years with the option of nominating for a further three (3) years. (Maximum term for all committee positions – six consecutive years.) The term of office will commence on 01/01/2019 and conclude on 31/12/2021.
- Nomination forms must be received at the National Office by **midnight 30th September 2018** (mail, fax or email).
- The successful candidate must be available to attend the annual NCP face to face meeting, commencing Monday 11 February 2019 at the National Office in Belmont (Geelong).



We need a new Ecclesiology or do we?

We are trying to enact a miracle in the church. We are trying to marry the hierarchical and the synodal. We are attempting

inclusivity through respect, listening and embracing change, while maintaining an exclusivity of being baptismal and Catholic. Is it any wonder we are in a conflicted church? Members are reading the signs of the times in opposing ways.

Pope Francis suggests: *Instead of being just a Church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, let us try also to be a church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside itself and go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit or are indifferent.* A welcoming church reaches out.

Ted Kennedy, parish priest of Redfern in Sydney at the time, wrote in *Who is Worthy?* nearly 20 years ago: *How else can we explain the topsy-turvy nature of a church which claims to cherish the Gospel, but allows sentiments spectacularly absent in the Gospel to delineate its public legal attitude to gay people in the Church?* This applies equally to all whose voice is silenced in our church.

Faggioli wrote recently in *La Croix International* quoting Pope Francis on the nature of a synodal church: *Our gaze also extends to humanity as a whole. A synodal*

church is like a standard lifted up among the nations (cf. Is 11:12) in a world which – while calling for participation, solidarity and transparency in public administration – often consigns the fate of entire peoples to the grasp of small but powerful groups.

As a church which ‘journeys together’ with men and women, sharing the travails of history, let us cherish the dream that a rediscovery of the inviolable dignity of peoples and of the function of authority as service will also be able to help civil society to be built up in justice and fraternity, and thus bring about a more beautiful and humane world for coming generations.

Faggioli goes on to comment: *The type of synodality that Francis is trying to inculcate in the church is not merely one that strives to make the church non-monarchical and more collegial. It is also a synodality that ensures that ‘small but powerful groups’ are prohibited from running the church. It is an antidote to those who think reforming the church requires a well-funded group with abundant travel funds, connections with the powerful and effective communication skills.*

A synodal church that resists ideology and power will side with the voiceless, the powerless; with women, refugees, indigenous peoples, LGBTI people and all marginalised, firstly by honouring their stories, and then by acknowledging their status as members of the journeying community, not clients, and then accompanying them, when asked, non-judgementally and non-hierarchically. This is a massive task and calls for prophetic wisdom.

One of the major challenges for those seeking to reform the church from within is that they play in a space between the wonder and burden of history and tradition, the ever new challenges to which we all must respond, and the challenge of the gospel that calls us anew in each age.

We do this at a time when our church is increasingly polarised both within the Western tradition of Catholicism and its eastern and western variants (eg Eastern Rites, Tridentine Rite, Personal Prelatures, Anglican Ordinariate), and the many other christian churches – not to mention the ever increasing chasm between Christianity and the other world religions and those whom we consider non-religious. Within the Catholic Church we are deeply divided at the very point of our communion – the Eucharist, as Mickens, Faggioli and others have pointed out recently. We are called to be as cunning as serpents and as gentle as doves.

What paradigm can we find for this? I think we are on the road to Emmaus – all seems lost as we talk about the things that have happened these past few decades – but we are still talking and journeying. But something is happening among us, something mysterious of which we know little and we will not know fully till we can break bread together. It felt like death to those on the road to Emmaus. However, resurrection requires death in a Christian iconography, so it is worth continuing on despite the risks of working and walking in liminal space. ☪

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The Swag Winter Edition

Closing date for letters and articles Monday 30 July 2018.

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

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

NCP is now even more environmentally friendly!

In 2018 communication to our members will be via email and the new NCP Website.

To ensure you don't miss out on important information, please email your current email address to: national.office@ncp.catholic.org.au



'It cannot be business as usual!'

These words were spoken by Archbishop Mark Coleridge, recently elected President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, at the conclusion of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Sexual Abuse in 2017. As the people on the front line of the Church's response to this question, what do these words mean for the clergy working with the People of God? The NCP Convention Committee felt it was necessary for the Australian clergy to explore these words.

To tease out the learnings from the Royal Commission we have asked Mr Robert Fitzgerald AM who was a Commissioner to speak at the convention along with Ms Kathleen McCormack who has just completed a three-year term in Rome supporting Pope Francis' response to Child Protection.

Dr Gerardine Taylor Robinson will give

a clinical overview from her many years of working with clergy in this area.

Together with Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFMConv, Robert, Kathleen and Gerardine will offer an open forum for discussion with the delegates.

Rev Julian Wellspring will offer a workshop on clergy rights and Ms Irene Sutherland from the ACBC will offer a workshop on using multimedia/social media in your personal and parish settings.

The Australian Catholic Church is looking forward to the 2020 Plenary Council. To help us all prepare for that, we will have Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Ms Lana Turvey-Collins (2020 Plenary Council Facilitator) and Rev Noel Connolly SSC to give us background on the Plenary, how the Church has responded so far to this opportunity and what we can do to facilitate a successful Plenary for our

Church into the future.

Rev Frank Brennan SJ AO will present on religious freedom and a Canberra based organisation Concerned Catholics of Canberra-Goulburn will offer insight into their organisation.

The Convention is being held at the QT Hotel which is conveniently placed for easy access to restaurants and shops. On Wednesday afternoon we will visit the War Memorial.

For those of you who have pencilled the Convention into your diaries and have not yet registered, please do so as soon as possible. Numbers need to be confirmed at the end of May and Sally and Chris at our National Office are waiting to take your bookings. It will be another great Convention and we look forward to seeing you there.

Paddy Sykes,
Convention Chairman

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

CONVENTION REGISTRATIONS

Delegate numbers need to be confirmed with the hotel by the second week in June.

If you plan to join us, but have not sent your registration form to the NCP National Office, please attend to it now.

Come and be part of another great NCP Convention!

Lay leadership in a parish community

CATHERINE SEWARD RSM

Sr Catherine Seward RSM, describes how parish communities might be maintained without parish priests by creative and innovative leadership as she experienced many years ago in Mansfield Park SA.



The Catholic Church in Australia is in crisis, in dire need of a fundamental change in the present hierarchical model of Church governance. Pope Francis is calling for a church from the bottom up, asking for dialogue and decision-making from all of God's people, especially those who have been hurt or exploited. Child sexual abuse by clergy and the on-going cover-up by the leadership of the church has shocked and disillusioned the lay faithful. Protection of the church's image was seen as more important than the pastoral care of victims, their families and indeed the perpetrators. Some bishops have distanced themselves from the crimes and been shown to be inadequate for the necessary reform, renewal and healing. The Australian Plenary Council 2020 offers an opportunity for creative responses and innovations that will address some of the areas in need of reform.

In the important discussions and discernment in preparation for this Council, lay faithful, priests and bishops are invited to enter into dialogue with those Pope Francis has asked us to listen to: namely the poor, the abuse victims, survivors, divorcees, gays, refugees, women and

disaffected Catholics. In an article, *Fighting Injustice and Inequality: a revolution of Love and Mercy*, (*Mission of Love and Mercy: The Francis Effect III*, Catholic Mission, 2017, p31) Dr. John Falzon writes: *This is our revolutionary calling, in the spirit of the Beatitudes: to turn everything upside down. We have only one enemy. It is called inequality.* To address the inequality in some ecclesial ministries in the Church, I offer my experience as a Parish Director for 12 years. My experience in this role allows me to address several of the suggested areas of concern: the missionary role of the laity, the role of woman in leadership in the church and the shortage of culturally appropriate priests.

Background to my appointment

Under the enlightened leadership of Archbishops James Gleeson and Leonard Faulkner, Adelaide diocese was very responsive to the challenges of Vatican II, especially in acting as a synodal church, and developing the involvement of women at all levels of leadership, including on Archbishop Faulkner's Diocesan Pastoral Team. A competent team of theologians and an Adult Education Service led by

David Shinnick were already offering the whole diocese understanding of the challenges of Vatican II.

At the time of my appointment, our diocese was swept up in the vision of Archbishop Leonard Faulkner's *Community for the World* (1988), a vision which invited parishioners to leadership formation. Archbishop Faulkner wrote: *The Synod of Bishops has focussed attention on the formation of Christian leaders. The Synod stressed the importance of forming and supporting leaders who can bring the gospel to bear on their neighbourhood and workplace, on economic and political decisions, and on all aspects of life in the world of the late twentieth century.*

Appointment as Pastoral director

It was in this climate of experiment and risk-taking that I began my joyful ministry as Pastoral Director of St. Patrick's, Mansfield Park, S.A, shared over the years 1988 to 2000 with three significant theologians as pastor-moderators, Fr. Denis Edwards, Fr. Michael Trainor and Fr. James McEvoy. Set in motion during the leadership of Archbishop James Gleeson, the possibility of lay leadership of a parish community was continued by Archbishop Leonard Faulkner. On Fr. Denis Edward's suggestion, St. Patrick's community in Mansfield Park was separated from a Polish parish and I was appointed, Parish Director, initially for three years, with Denis as pastor-moderator.

I had a secondary school teaching background, an Arts degree and Parish Pastoral Associate experience. Later I was involved with the Adelaide Diocesan Renewal Team of 1985/1986, on returning from post graduate pastoral theology studies at Heythrop College, London, 1982/3. My interest in pastoral theology arose from 4 years as adult educator in a parish without a Catholic school. In this parish parents were invited to join in the sacramental preparation of their children. My thesis while studying at Heythrop, explored how adults grow in their faith. It was a year of stimulating lectures and practical involvement with Westminster Adult Education Programmes, a parish RCIA and Wimbledon Teams of Our Lady.

The new parish of Mansfield Park

Mansfield Park was a rundown area of 75% Housing Trust homes, high unemployment and a generally disadvantaged people of many migrant backgrounds. Proud Europeans who had

bought cheap land and built their own homes after immigrating from the ravages of WW II, found themselves surrounded by a large variety of newer arrivals, especially Vietnamese, who could only afford to rent a Housing Trust home.

Locally, due to the vision of Premier Don Dunstan, there existed a vibrant community centre, *The Parks*, with health services, a theatre, a library, and a swimming centre. A group of energetic social workers set up many different groups to cater for local needs and there we were very welcome.

Fr. Denis Edwards, as the first pastor-moderator, gave me great support. He celebrated the weekend masses and encouraged the parishioners with his profound, yet simple homilies, reflecting an incarnational theology. His was a loving welcome of the “least,” helping to build each individual’s self image, and calling forth their gifts. He demonstrated above all God’s enduring merciful love for each and every parishioner and instilled in them their mission to share that love abroad. In his book, *Called to be Church in Australia – an approach to the renewal of local churches* (St. Paul Publication 1987 pp60-62), Denis wrote of three movements for the local church to become a more effective sign of gospel values: a church of equality and participation, of solidarity with the poor and having warm human community. This well describes our aim as we began in Mansfield Park.

Many gifts, one Spirit

From the beginning, we worked collaboratively, Catholic school principal, youth worker, Denis and myself, meeting regularly to pray, exchange concerns and celebrate good news stories. A Pastoral Council was established to reflect on our parishioners’ needs and we soon had a social group for monthly meetings, a finance committee, a youth group, a liturgy group with RCIA and weekly English lessons for the many migrants who enriched our multicultural parish. Each of these groups developed leadership and community life among all who participated. *The Pot of Hope*, a huge terracotta pot, stood at the door of the church, for food and money donations for the St. Vincent de Paul, lest we forgot there were great needs around us. My being able to drive a borrowed bus meant there were many trips and camps. An ecumenical coffee shop called ‘Buds’ became a meeting place for friendship and counselling.

A Pastoral Director’s Role

The role is briefly described in Canon Law and Vatican II devoted an entire document

to the Apostolate of the Laity. Each person must discern the Spirit’s gifts and how they are being called forth in the service of the church and the world. Much more detail as to formation and authorization is found in the 2005 document from the United States Catholic Bishops Conference *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord- a resource for guiding the development of lay ecclesial ministries*. The American experience of lay led parishes had grown from 268 persons in 1993 to 566 in 2005. Every baptised Catholic is called to develop and share the gifts given by God for the spread of the Good News of Jesus.

With my background in teaching and pastoral studies, I brought to all parish activities an authentic ecclesial ministry, conducting preparation for marriage, funerals, adult initiation and infant baptisms, organizing adult education groups during Lent and Advent, and affirming community members when they grew in confidence to offer their gifts. I was welcomed by the priests of the Western Region parishes as a parish leader when we met monthly to pray and plan.

Many parishioners remember to this day their participation as ministers in a Service of the Word with Holy Communion when the priest was not available. They confidently assumed their ecclesial ministries. Their reflections were from the heart, their lived experiences shared and strengthened by faithful reflections on the gospel.

Following Fr. Denis (1988/89) came Fr. Michael Trainor (1990/98) and Fr. James McEvoy (1999/2000) continuing the loving and creative celebrations of the Eucharist and the empowerment of the people to be on mission through their daily lives.

In discussing a parish banner, we came up with the motto ‘Come and See’ (John 1:46) and people did come over many wonderful Easter celebrations for Initiation into our unique community. Archbishop Falkner came on Episcopal Visitation every three years, re-appointing me on each visit, calling on staff and students of the Catholic school, visiting the sick in their homes, sitting down with the Parish Pastoral Council, enjoying the welcome of a cuppa after Mass, which continues to this day. His warm and encouraging presence gave the community a strong sense of belonging and affirmed the important difference they were making in our neighbourhood. He even met with significant leaders in ‘The Parks’ to see the potential for such centres lifting a local community out of disadvantage and low self image. They were indeed exciting times

for community and neighbourhood: an experience of evangelization through the sharing of life and faith.

Seasoned pastors asked regularly about the finances! My stipend was paid by a generous, richer parish from ‘the leafy side of town’. I was invited there regularly to tell of my experiences. I recently spoke with a parishioner from there who vividly remembers the stories I told. ‘It was good for us to hear how a poor parish can be such a lively community’, she said.

True it was a poor parish, small in area, not able to meet its parish expenses. At this time in diocesan planning, 1990s, small communities were closed and viable communities were amalgamated to cope with the shortage of priests. Woodville and Mansfield Park were joined to the Croydon parish. The shortage of priests continues throughout the dioceses but vibrant communities are retained wherever possible. Mansfield Park community still celebrates the Eucharist weekly as part of Croydon Parish and is still vibrant, welcoming and very multicultural. I am still a parishioner there and enjoy my continuing participation in the life of the community. I am very hopeful that my story will encourage the bishops to look again at the possibility of lay leadership of parishes where a vibrant community can be retained, affirming this role for women’s leadership in the church and the apostolate of the laity.

Pastoral Director-definition from Canon Law:

Canon 517 #2 permits a bishop to appoint a person to leadership of a pastoral community, entrusted with the formal, public, responsible leadership and pastoral care of a parish community. This person exercises a leadership role of responsibility for the day-to-day operations of a parish community, in collaboration with a pastor-moderator designated by the Archbishop.

The Pastoral Director will be responsible for the normal pastoral and administrative responsibilities as specified by the diocesan Bishop, with the exception of those duties and responsibilities reserved in general to an ordained priest or in particular to the pastor-moderator. ☪

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

First Plenary Council of Australasia 1885

PETER WILKINSON

This is the fourth in a series of articles looking at the particular (provincial and plenary) councils of the Catholic Church held in Australia between 1844 and 1937. It examines the 1885 First Australasian Plenary Council, held between November 14 and 29, which officially brought together the Churches in Australia and New Zealand for the first time. Part 2 of this article by Peter Wilkinson will appear in the Spring 2018 edition of *The Swag*.

In the period 1870-1885 fourteen particular councils were held in English-speaking mission territories across the world: 3 in Canada, 1 in England, 1 in Ireland, 8 in the USA and 1 in Australasia. The 1875 Maynooth Plenary in Ireland would significantly influence the Australasian council.

Developments and preparations

Between 1869 and 1885 three new dioceses were established in Australia – Ballarat (1874), Sandhurst (1874) and Rockhampton (1882) – as well as the Vicariate Apostolic of Queensland (1877). In 1874 Melbourne became an Archdiocese and Metropolitan See for the new Province of Melbourne which in 1885 had 5 suffragan sees: Hobart, Perth, Adelaide, Ballarat and Sandhurst. Councils representing all the churches of Australia would now have to be ‘plenary’, not ‘provincial’.

The 1869 Provincial Council had made no plans for a follow-up, but in 1882 Archbishop Vaughan sought permission to convoke a provincial council for Sydney. The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide (‘Propaganda’) was supportive, but urged him to plan carefully and make use of the 1st Vatican Council (1869-1870) and the councils of Westminster, Baltimore and Québec. He died before he could convene it.

In 1884, Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) informed the bishops of Australia and New Zealand that he wanted a ‘plenary’ council to be held within two years and delegated the new Irish Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran, to convoke and preside at it. Moran convoked the 1st Australasian Plenary Council on 15 April 1885, advising all the bishops and all other clerics who had to be present by law or custom, that they were to gather at Sydney on 14 November 1885, and that the council’s objectives were to emphasize the decrees of the 1st Vatican Council (1869-1870), to correct abuses in ecclesiastical discipline, to support and preserve Catholic education, and to do whatever else might promote the salvation of souls and the good of the Church.

As neither country had canonical ‘cathedral chapters’, Moran attached a Memorandum to the convocation decree, advising that the priests of every diocese should elect one of their number to represent them at the council’s public sessions on matters concerning their own dioceses. Other priests, including provincials of clerical congregations, rectors of major seminaries, and selected theologians and canonists, acting as episcopal advisors, could also attend, but only with a consultative vote. Any laymen admitted might only act as a notary or advisor on civil law.

Five public sessions were scheduled in St Mary’s Cathedral with solemn pontifical Masses, as well as the solemn promulgation of the Council’s decrees. All meetings of bishops, joint meetings of bishops and priests, and committee meetings, were to be in private.

Demographic situation in 1885

In 1885 the total European population of Australia was 2.7 million, with Catholics numbering around 540,000, some 20 percent of the total. One third was Irish-born. New Zealand’s Catholics numbered around 80,000 (87,272 in the 1891 Census), constituting just 13 per cent of the total population of 614,000. Australia had 2 archdioceses, 12 dioceses, 1 vicariate apostolic, and 1 abbacy nullius, situated within the provinces of Sydney and Melbourne. There were 512 priests ministering in 259 districts (‘parishes’ did not exist), and 622 Catholic schools educating over 65,000 students. New Zealand had 3 dioceses with no established hierarchy, 79 priests ministering in 55 districts, and at least 65 Catholic schools.

Council members and opening

18 prelates at the Council (Table 1 and photo below) – 12 Irish, 2 English, 2 Italian and 2 Spanish – met on 14 November to decide the order of business, the rules of procedure and council officials, and to elect a 5-member Bishops’ Committee, with Moran as Chair. This committee assigned all Council members to one of 4 other committees dealing with Faith, Discipline, the

Sacraments, and Education. Absent were Archbishop Goold (sick, but represented by Archdeacon Slattery) and Bishop Martin Crane (in Europe). No prelates from Oceania were invited or present.

The non-prelate members included 34 diocesan priests from both countries, and 18 religious priests, including 6 Jesuits, 4 Benedictines, 4 Marists, and a single Carmelite, Franciscan, Redemptorist, and Vincentian. All were listed as ‘theologians’. There were no lay members, men or women.

The Council’s *schemata* was largely prepared by Moran, who borrowed significantly from the 1875 1st Maynooth Plenary Council at which he was present. Many of the draft decrees were new; others repeated decrees of the 1844 and 1869 Provincial Councils.

The Council opened on Sunday 15 November 1885 with Pontifical Mass in St Mary’s Cathedral, attended by over 5000 people.

Cardinal Moran’s vision for the Church in Australia

Each of the first archbishops of Sydney had clear but differing visions for what they wanted the Church in Australia to be, and how it might be achieved. Polding envisaged a medieval Benedictine abbey-cathedral church, with missionary monks electing their abbot-bishop in perpetuity and spawning other monasteries throughout the land. It was never going to work, and well before his death in 1877 was in ruins. His singular achievement, secured at the 1844 Provincial Council, was securing uniformity of discipline within the single ecclesiastical province and episcopal unity of direction.

The second archbishop, Roger Vaughan OSB, dismantled Polding’s Benedictine vision and sought instead to build the Church in Australia on education. This would also protect it from anti-Catholic secularism. He wanted multiple diocesan seminaries acting as ‘feeders to one great central ecclesiastical university ... for the education and training of Australian ecclesiastics’, and causing the Church to ‘spring forward with invigorated life’. However, his public emphasis on Catholic doctrine made him a contentious figure, and his zeal for church construction detracted from the spiritual life. He died in 1883 before he could realize his vision.

The third archbishop, Patrick Francis Moran, had the grandest vision. The nephew and protégé of Cardinal Paul

Table 1: Provinces of Sydney and Melbourne, and Dioceses of New Zealand: demographic and ecclesiastical data for 1885.

Colony	Total Population	Catholic Population	Diocese/Abbacy/ Vicariate Apostolic	Year Est.	Bishop/Abbot/Vicar Apostolic (*not bishop) (Country of Origin)	Clergy	Districts (not parishes)	Catholic Schools/ Students
			Prov. of Sydney	1842				
NSW	943,867	120,000	Sydney (AD)	1842	Patrick Francis Moran (IR)	115	46	113/20,000
		30,000	Maitland (D)	1847	James Murray (IR)	36	18	38/3,118
		27,000	Goulburn (D)	1862	William Lanigan (IR)	33	18	39/3,346
		14,600	Armidale (D)	1862	Eleazar Torregiani OSFC (IT)	19	14	15/1,622
		25,000	Bathurst (D)	1865	Joseph Byrne (IR)	32	16	56/3,676
QLD	316,681	50,000	Brisbane (D)	1859	Robert Dunne (IR)	28	13	59/6,000
		2,000	Queensland (VA)	1877	John Hutchinson OSA (IR)*	6	5	1/80
		n/a	Rockhampton (D)	1882	John Cani (IT)	11	8	9/n/a
NT	n/a	n/a	Port Victoria (D)	1847	Rosendo Salvado OSB (SP)	6	2	n/a
			Prov. of Melbourne	1874				
VIC	959,777	140,000	Melbourne (AD)	1847	James Goold OSA (IR)	72	30	85/12,000
		15,000	Ballarat (D)	1874	James Moore (IR)	28	18	61/6,000
		35,000	Sandhurst (D)	1874	Martin Crane OSA (IR)	24	12	41/2,777
SA	309,313	44,000	Adelaide (D)	1842	Christopher Reynolds (IR)	57	28	56/4,384
WA	35,959	10,000	Perth (D)	1845	Martin Griver y Cuni (SP)	17	12	23/1,535
		n/a	New Norcia (AN)	1867	Rosendo Salvado OSB (SP)	5	3	4
TAS	128,860	26,000	Hobart (D)	1842	Daniel Murphy (IR)	23	16	22
Australia TOTAL	2,695,518¹	c. 540,000 (c. 20% of total)	2 Provinces 14 Dioceses 1 VA & 1 Abbacy			512	259	622/ 64,538+
New Zealand	613,900 ²	n/a	Auckland (D)	1848	John Luck OSB (EN)	19	11	n/a
		40,500	Wellington (D)	1848	Francis Redwood SM (EN)	44	31	59
		18,000	Dunedin (D)	1869	Patrick Moran (IR)	16	13	6+
NZ TOTAL	613,900	80,000 (estimate)	3 Dioceses			79	55	65+/n/a
G-Total	3,309,418	620,000	2AD; 15D; 1VA; 1AN			591	314	687/ 65,000+

Sources: Australasian Catholic Directory for 1886 (data is for 1885); ABS. Cat. No. 3105.0.65.001.

Notes: 1. The Directory incorrectly lists the Diocese of Port Victoria in the Province of Melbourne.

2. Bishop Salvado was both Bishop of Port Victoria (NT) and Abbot of the Territorial Abbey of New Norcia (WA).

FEATURES

Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin, Moran had watched his ultramontane uncle remake the Church in Ireland in the image of the Roman model. He also saw how Cullen used the 1850 Thurles and 1875 Maynooth synods to implement his plans.

Confident of his own knowledge, experience, skill, diplomacy and connections, Moran determined to emulate Cullen and use Australian councils to achieve his own vision, namely, of a united Australian church, modelled on the Church in Ireland. He planned to use the 1885 Plenary Council to lay the foundation of this vision, imposing uniformity of practice and discipline, and building a church with a 'national' character, free of state distinctions and the image of a collection of separate colonial churches. For Moran, unity and authority were paramount, and he would not hesitate to persuade, cajole or bully his brother bishops, overwhelming them with his prodigious work ethic and administrative skills.

Diocesan governance: cathedral chapters, canons, diocesan consultors, and irremovable rectors

Until 1885 Australian dioceses and vicariate apostolic had no canonical structure to assist the bishop in the governance of his diocese, or to act as a check on his authority. With the exception of Ireland, England, Scotland, and Holland, this was the normal situation for mission territories under the jurisdiction of Propaganda, which were exempted from the common law prevailing in the established churches in Europe, which mandated 'cathedral chapters'.

Cathedral chapters, which had evolved from the early *presbyterium* in the 4th century, were small officially constituted moral and collegiate bodies of selected priests, known as 'canons', whose principal purpose, besides their liturgical duties, was to assist the bishop in the governance of his diocese. Each chapter had a president and operated as a diocesan 'senate', with the bishop obliged to seek its counsel or consent for certain administrative acts, particularly those concerning property, finances and parishes. The chapter was the lawful defender of diocesan rights, and on the death of the bishop, would elect a vicar capitular to administer the diocese, and nominate the new bishop.

In mission territories such as Australia, where cathedral chapters did not exist,

diocesan bishops enjoyed almost unfettered authority and autonomy, especially the ability to appoint (non-stable) missionary priests to any place at any time and for any duration. They also had the exclusive privilege of recommending new and replacement bishops.

After emancipation in 1850, Pope Pius IX established cathedral chapters in all 13 new dioceses in England with the responsibility for nominating bishops, and in Scotland in 1878 Pope Leo XIII required cathedral chapters to be established wherever possible.

For years Propaganda had tried to have cathedral chapters established in America,



but the US bishops resisted strongly, arguing that chapters were not suited to the American character and had a history of controversy. At the 1866 Baltimore Plenary Council, a proposal to have cathedral chapters, and canons with the right to nominate episcopal candidates, was rejected on the grounds that they would restrict the role of the bishops. Though the 1852 and 1866 Baltimore Plenaries and the 1855 Provincial Council had recommended that dioceses should have 'diocesan consultors', rather than cathedral chapters, none made them obligatory or gave them a defined role. The 1884 Baltimore Plenary, resisting strong pressure from Propaganda, again rejected cathedral chapters and canons and determined that 'diocesan consultors' be obligatory. Following Scotland, it also

insisted that bishops choose half the consultors from names proposed by the priests.

When Moran was drafting the *schemata* for the 1885 Plenary Council, he was aware of the 1884 Baltimore legislation, yet proposed that each Australian diocese have 2-4 'titular canons' appointed by the bishop permanently. They were to have special status, be the bishop's consultors, and have a defined role, including proposing names for new bishops. The Council endorsed Moran's proposal, but when Propaganda reviewed the decrees it insisted that the term 'titular canons' be replaced with 'diocesan consultors', replicating the 1884 Baltimore model. However, the Australian bishops were free to appoint them without input from the priests, but only for a 3-year term.

At the 1844 Australian Provincial Council priestly ministry was viewed as essentially itinerant and missionary. It wanted no stable offices, such as cathedral canons or parish priests, and no inequality among priests. At their 1862 unofficial gathering, however, when local circumstances had changed significantly, the bishops agreed that where several missionaries were assigned to a single 'district' (similar to a parish) one was to have 'pastoral charge' of the others. When Bishop James Quinn of Brisbane broke ranks and started appointing 'parish priests', Archbishop Polding charged that 'it changes the aspect of a missionary country' and requires 'the concurrence of his episcopal brethren'. Though the issue was not raised at the 1869 Provincial Council, it was on the 1885 Plenary agenda, where it became the most hotly contested issue because, until then, all priest appointments had been 'diocesan' not 'parochial', and bishops could vary them at will.

Moran's *schemata* also proposed 'irremovable rectors' in each diocese, with a minimum of 3 districts and a maximum of 20 percent of all districts to have this stable priest. Some bishops wanted canonical 'parishes' and 'parish priests', as in Ireland, but Propaganda insisted that 'for now' this was not opportune and that, like the US and England, there should only be a small number of irremovable rectors. For bishops with few priests (Table 1), even having 3 priests they could not move was a major restriction, so when a secret vote was taken on the proposal, the tied result (9:9)

showed a major division, Moran used his casting vote to pass the motion, but Propaganda, in its review, insisted that canonical parishes not yet be established, and that Australia should follow the 1884 Baltimore decision and have only a limited number of 'irremovable parochial rectors'. While the bishops explained in their Pastoral Letter that 'the extent of the country now settled makes an opening to give a comparatively greater permanence to some of the priests', the legislated decrees still contained some escape clauses for those bishops who did not want diocesan consultors or irremovable rectors.

Selection of Bishops and the *Antistites*

To November 1885, three popes had appointed 33 men to the Australian hierarchy: 4 English, 21 Irish, 4 Italian, 3 Spanish and 1 Belgian. That 64 per cent were Irish is not surprising, given that Irish-born Australian Catholics peaked at 228,000 in 1891, some 40 per cent of all Catholics.

Until 1885, only bishops, inside and outside Australia, could make recommendations to the Holy See for episcopal appointments. But Propaganda always made it clear that the pope was not bound to heed them and could choose whomever he wished. Propaganda also tapped into the clerical resources of both the migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries.

The earliest episcopal appointments had involved delicate negotiations between Propaganda, the British Government, the English Benedictines, and certain bishops in Australia, England and Ireland. Ethnicity and politics were major factors, as were key advisors, such as Cardinal Paul Cullen of Dublin (1803-1878), who had 12 of his relatives and former students receive Australian bishoprics. In fact, during the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s, planning for the Australian mission was largely shaped by three cardinals: Alessandro Barnabò and Karl von Reisach of Propaganda, and Cullen. In Australia, Archbishop Polding was increasingly shut out of the planning, only being informed after decisions had been made, including those concerning the appointment of bishops. Moreover, much of the planning derived from innovations trialled by Propaganda in Ireland, England and the US.

In 1788, for example, Pope Pius VI (1775-1779) had permitted all 34 priests of the US mission to elect that nation's first bishop, John Carroll. When Carroll requested a second election, he was told to consult the 'older and more prudent

priests', and the pope would appoint the recommendation. In 1808, when Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) was appointing the next group of bishops, the US bishops and priests were completely left out of the selection process, causing huge discontent and confusion. When Bishop John Ireland pleaded in 1833 for a process allowing 'recommendations' to be made to the Holy See, Propaganda pushed hard for the establishment of cathedral chapters, with the canons having the right to elect bishops. But the US bishops were totally opposed, and at the 1855 Baltimore Provincial Council preferred that each diocese have a 10-12 'diocesan consultors' who, on the death of the bishop, would recommend to the metropolitan archbishop (or senior bishop of the province) a suitable successor.

In Ireland, after the 1829 emancipation, Propaganda told the bishops that, when a diocese became vacant, the '*Antistites*' (i.e. the cathedral canons and parish priests) were to forward to the Holy See a list of 3 names (*terna*), an innovation designed to ensure there was no suggestion of an 'election', or that the pope had no choice. In 1835 Propaganda told them they were to follow another new process, namely, on an episcopal vacancy, the vicar general of the diocese is to summon the *Antistites*, ask each to write in secret the name of the most suitable candidate of his choice, and after a ballot, send the names of the three candidates with the most votes to the provincial bishops, who are to forward the *terna* to Propaganda with their own comments, but no new names. In the case of a coadjutor with the right of succession, the same process was to be followed, but at the electoral meeting, the bishop seeking the coadjutor was to preside. This process gave the *Antistites* a significant voice, but excluded all other clergy and the laity.

In 1845 in the Instruction *Neminem profecto*, Propaganda told the heads of all mission territories they must notify it when more bishops were needed, and should recommend as the most suitable episcopal candidates missionaries with experience in the local territory.

After 1850, when a diocese in England fell vacant, the metropolitan was to convene the cathedral canons who, in 3 successive ballots, would determine the *terna* to be sent to Propaganda, with the provincial bishops only commenting, although from 1874, they could propose other names.

In the US, after persistent problems and requests for a uniform process for selecting and appointing bishops, in 1859 Propaganda asked the US archbishops to

suggest improvements and, in 1861, issued its *Instruction on the Election of Bishops for the United States of America*. Its 10 articles incorporated most of the recent Irish process, but also required regular, informed and updated lists of potential candidates, intended to provide 'extensive information on priests with a view to promoting them to the office and dignity of bishops'.

The *Instruction* stated: 'Every three years, each and all the *Antistites* shall first present to their provincial Metropolitan, then to the Sacred Congregation [of Propaganda], the names of suitable, worthy and distinguished priests to be considered for promotion to the office of bishop. They must carry this task out in the utmost secrecy, to ensure that ambition of any kind is strongly averted, and every care is taken in the process of gathering information to ensure a level of certainty about the qualities of those who are recommended'. Further: 'When a diocese becomes vacant, all the *Antistites* shall gather in synod within 3 months of the vacancy, under the presidency of the Metropolitan (or senior bishop), to discuss at least three potential candidates, whose names have been circulated prior to the synod, to assess each against a prescribed set of questions (listed in the *Instruction*), and to propose one candidate for the vacancy. At a gathering of the bishops, at which the Metropolitan or a senior *Antistes* presides, the qualities of all the candidates are to be discussed publicly, a secret vote taken, and the minutes of the gathering (with the name of the candidate elected) forwarded to Propaganda by the Metropolitan or another bishop of the province.'

This regular triennial updating of suitable candidates was to make Propaganda and the pope far better prepared for filling vacancies and establishing new dioceses. But the Latin word '*Antistites*' (singular *Antistes*) – a term used in classical literature to refer to 'high officials in the sacral ranks' or 'overseers of the sacred rituals', and in ecclesiastical literature to 'senior clergy' with sufficient rank to exercise considerable authority and influence in church governance – created some ambiguity and left the *Instruction* open to interpretation. Propaganda had not intended the term to refer to 'bishops' or 'prelates', and initially the US bishops took it to refer only to the 'diocesan consultors', legislated but not obligated by the 1855 Baltimore Council since, as bishops, they could review the merits of the candidates proposed by the *Antistites*, and, by secret ballot, could come up with their recommendation, so long as they gave

Continued page 12

reasons if their choice differed from that of the *Antistites*.

But the 1861 *Instruction* did not meet with universal approval, and at the 1866 Baltimore Plenary Council, another proposal to have cathedral chapters and canons, who would nominate episcopal candidates, resurfaced. It was again rejected, on the grounds that chapters would constrain the bishops. But relations between the US priests and bishops were now tense, with many priests resenting their exclusion from the process of selecting their own bishop. At the 1884 Baltimore Plenary Council the issue of priest participation in the selection of bishops again emerged, and only now did Propaganda propose the appointment of 'irremovable rectors' who would have a vote in the selection process, so long as the bishops could determine the final *terna* to be sent to Rome. Though most US bishops already had diocesan consultors, the 1884 Plenary, after resisting strong pressure from Propaganda to establish cathedral chapters, finally mandated them for all dioceses, with a defined role and duties. Bishop had to seek the consultors' advice and had to select one half of them from a list drawn up by the priests.

Propaganda trialled the 1861 *Instruction* for 5 years in the US, then on 19 May 1866, sent an almost identical *Instruction concerning the Election of Bishops in Australia* to the Australian hierarchy, explaining that Australia's situation was similar to the US, had also previously had a haphazard selection process, and was poised for a rapid population expansion necessitating several new dioceses. To ensure timely action, it wanted Australia also to provide triennially updated lists of episcopal candidates.

The 1866 *Instruction* assigned a pivotal role to the metropolitan archbishop, and insisted that all the 'Antistites' were to forward to him and, through him to Propaganda, the names of priests they thought suitable for episcopal appointment. But it made no mention of bishops making comments on the list of names prepared by the *Antistites*, or changing names with reasons provided. This was not necessary, as the only *Antistites* (strictly interpreted) in Australia were the bishops themselves. In 1866, although all dioceses had a vicar general, and some had deans, there were no canonical cathedral canons, diocesan consultors, parish priests, or irremovable rectors. Therefore, identifying future episcopal candidates had to be a closed-shop process for the bishops only, with

other clerics and the laity excluded.

So, in the case of a vacant Australian diocese, whether metropolitan or suffragan, 'all the *Antistites* (i.e. bishops) of the province were to meet in synod within three months of the vacancy to discuss at least three possible candidates, with a view to proposing one. Before meeting, the names of the candidates were to be circulated by the metropolitan (or senior bishop of the province), and the bishops were to consider them, using the set of written questions (attached to the *Instruction*) to arrive at their recommendation. At the synod, the qualities of each candidate were to be discussed publicly in the presence of the Metropolitan (or senior bishop of the province), and in a strictly secret ballot, each bishop was to place his vote in an urn. The result and minutes of the synod were then to be sent to Propaganda by the Metropolitan (or senior bishop of the province)'.

In the case of selecting a coadjutor with right of succession, or where the Holy See for some reason required it, 'the bishop wanting a coadjutor was to send his request to Propaganda with three names, which he had already shown to the Metropolitan and other provincial suffragans and received their agreement'.

The Australian *Instruction*, issued in 1866, was not discussed at the 1869 Provincial Council, and no decisions on it taken until 1885. Only after the 1885 Plenary Council were the *Antistites* taken to be the 'diocesan consultors' and 'irremovable parochial rectors', not the bishops. But the *terna* prepared by the *Antistites* had to be shown to the bishops before being sent to the Holy See, and the bishops could delete names, so long as they attached their reasons (Decree 23). Moreover, when new dioceses were being erected, the Metropolitan had to convoke all the diocesan consultors and irremovable rectors of the relevant territory (Decree 25).

New dioceses and ecclesiastical provinces

The 1866 *Instruction* also prescribed the process for establishing new ecclesiastical provinces and for electing new archbishops and coadjutor-archbishops: 'All bishops from all the existing provinces are to meet to recommend candidates for the new archdiocese(s), and if any proposed candidate is from outside the province concerned, that candidate's bishop and the metropolitan of the concerned diocese are to be advised in writing. When a new archbishop or coadjutor archbishop is

to be selected, all the metropolitans are also to be consulted'. While the *Instruction* advised that Propaganda only wanted a clearly stated recommendation, it also noted that 'the Holy See will not be limited in the advice that it might seek, and is under no obligation to follow the recommendation sent by the Australian bishops; for the Holy See's freedom to choose has to be safeguarded, and Propaganda must have no restrictions placed on its liberty'.

At the 1885 Plenary Council, significant effort went into planning new dioceses, vicariates apostolic, and ecclesiastical provinces. There was strong support for new dioceses at Grafton, Wilcannia, Sale, Port Augusta and Christchurch, as well as new vicariates apostolic in the Kimberley (WA), northern Queensland, and New Zealand, which were to have special focus on the indigenous peoples. There was majority support for Brisbane and Adelaide to become metropolitan sees, but hesitation on having a New Zealand metropolitan see. There was unanimous agreement that the Prefecture Apostolic of Fiji become a diocese, but deadlock on a similar proposal for the existing Vicariate Apostolic of Queensland. Moran's proposal for a new diocese to be carved out of the southern section of the Sydney archdiocese was rejected. Other specific recommendations on the new territories were drafted and the recommended names of episcopal candidates and coadjutors were drawn up by the bishops gathered according to province.

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

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Calls for change within the Church will be its salvation

PATTY FAWKNER SGS

Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri and *The Post* have something important to say about 'the what' and 'the how' of the Church's mission, says Sr Patty Fawkner Congregational Leader of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. This article is reprinted with permission from *The Good Oil*, the e-magazine of the Good Samaritan Sisters, February, 2018. Two recent award-winning films had something to say to me about the Australian Catholic Church in the wake of the *Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*.



The first was *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, a dramatic black comedy about Mildred Hayes, a woman who rents three billboards to draw attention to her daughter's unsolved rape and murder.

Mildred receives a pastoral visit from her parish priest who is sympathetic to Mildred's loss but critical of her justice-seeking methods. He reminds her that she'd have more community sympathy for her cause if she hadn't stopped attending church.

Mildred turns on the priest and in a tirade accuses him of complicity in sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. The scene is powerful and gripping. However, it was the response of the packed theatre that I found most sobering.

Some in the audience didn't hold back with their comments, murmurings and sneers. The disdain for the Catholic Church was palpable. A friend who saw the movie elsewhere said that he experienced a similar audience response.

The second movie was *The Post*, a political thriller depicting the true story of *The Washington Post's* attempt to publish secret

classified documents, the *Pentagon Papers*, regarding US involvement in the Vietnam War. These documents revealed unreported facts about the escalation of troops and serious setbacks to the US offensive.

The key motivation for concealing this information by four consecutive administrations was that the United States could not be seen to have failed. In the face of this hubris and misinformation, more troops were marshalled and more young American lives were lost.

The film follows the Government's litigation and heavy-handed attempts to suppress publication of the *Pentagon Papers*. In a concluding dramatic scene, the ruling from the Supreme Court is handed down: *The Washington Post* is vindicated because 'the press was to serve the governed, not the governors'.

Both films have something important to say about *the what* and *the how* of the Church's mission. The Church's mission is to serve the people of God, not any clerical 'commander-in-chief'. It is a church of the baptised not the ordained. It is a church whose focus of care should be those most in need in society. And a church whose priests should be, in Pope Francis'

memorable image, 'shepherds living with the smell of the sheep'.

Just as the US continued to send young soldiers to the Vietnam War in a vain attempt to bolster its international dominance, the Church's concern for the reputation of the institution trumped the care and safety of innocent children.

Irish theologian Dr Gerry O'Hanlon SJ, in his evidence to the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, stated that 'It was as if the Church, wishing to be seen as that beacon of holiness... could not quite face up to the grievous failure' (p. 632).

It was as though those in positions of power – all of whom were ordained clerics – could not see the abused children; nor could they, or would they, listen to them. They failed to understand the depth of the pain and the extent of the tragedy of child sexual abuse.

How different from Jesus' response: 'Let the little children come to me' (Matthew 19:14). Let the little children be seen; let them be heard and let them be believed. Above all, let them be healed and let them be safe.

The Royal Commission Report notes that there were multiple individual and systemic failures that contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, but, quoting from a leading expert, Rev Dr Thomas Doyle OP, 'If one had to isolate one single factor that has contributed to the toxic response of Catholic Church leaders to victims of sexual abuse it would be clericalism' (p.613). The Report defines clericalism as 'the idealisation of the Catholic priesthood and, by extension, the idealisation of the Institutional Catholic Church' (p.613).

Many commentators have said that it just can't be 'business as usual' within the Australian Catholic Church, which is now so distrusted and diminished. Popular culture, as evidenced in the films *Three Billboards* and *The Post*, is offering a necessary and timely critique.

It occurred to me that the audience's response to *Three Billboards* is positive. It rejects an arrogant, hypocritical, entitled institution. I hear a hidden call for a more humble and transparent institution; a less powerful Church without the status it once demanded and enjoyed.

A more wounded Church may have a more compelling message for the very people it is

Continued page 14

called to serve. The first and ongoing priority of the Church must be the care for the victims and survivors of its own abuse.

Mildred Hayes believes her pastor was complicit in child sexual abuse, merely by being a member of the 'clerical club'. But aren't we all personally complicit when we collude with any system – that of the Church and other organisations to which we belong – which puts some on pedestals? (I include myself as a religious sister and congregational leader.)

Where not only children, but also women, are invisible in structures, decision-making, language and ritual? And where a sense of entitlement occurs because of the position one holds?

A culture of clericalism not only damages children, it damages everyone within the system. While not exploring the contentious issue of celibacy here, I concur with the Royal Commission's finding that certain stressors in the lives of the perpetrators of abuse have had a role to play – stressors such as social isolation, lack of positive adult relationships and low self-esteem (p.592).

We get a volatile brew when this is mixed with a seminary formation, described as 'tridentine' by Rev Dr David Ranson, Vicar General for the Broken Bay Diocese, which promotes 'theological literacy but not sexual or emotional literacy' (p.610) and the curious belief that an ordained minister is somehow 'ontologically' different from those to whom he ministers. The ministered to, and the ministers, deserve better.

A wholistic initial and ongoing formation program needs to embrace an incarnational theology and spirituality where there is no false dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, the spiritual and the human.

The starting point for any theology is human experience – the actual flesh, blood, sweat and tears of human experience – that of those ministered to and those doing the ministering.

My experience is that many of the laity want to support their priests and want to work with them, not necessarily for them. Lay women and men want to contribute their skills and nurture a culture of mutuality for the sake of the Church's mission – which is Jesus' mission.

The calls for change within the Church are currently loud and strident. They will, I believe, be the salvation of the Church, only if we have but ears to hear and a humbled contrite heart committed to respond. ☪

Gilroy – a personal memoir

EDMUND CAMPION

Edmund Campion offered these reflections on Cardinal Gilroy at The Sydney Institute on April 4, 2018.

A few days ago, I told a friend that Gerard Henderson had just asked me to speak here tonight, to give, what he called, a 'personal reflection' on Cardinal Gilroy. 'You should say,' said my friend, 'that you once wrote a book, *A Place in the City*, the first sentence of which is, 'It wasn't much fun living in the same house as Cardinal Gilroy.' True. But I wasn't there for fun. I was there, half a century ago, to be a curate in the cathedral parish.

As such, I mainly saw the cardinal at meals in the rather formal dining room. There, the heavy questions of archdiocesan policy and its implementation were never discussed. If a visitor tried to raise them, the Cardinal would cut him short: 'I see the Bishop of Winnipeg has died,' he might say. Or, if the visitor persisted, 'Have a banana, Father.'

'Meals,' I wrote in *A Place in the City*, 'were meant to be recreation from the weighty matters of church and state considered elsewhere in the building. What ships were in the harbour, the vagaries of familiar clients of the cathedral's aid, oddities from the day's news – these were safe subjects. The adamant rule was never to mention another priest at table, lest you unwittingly said anything that could somehow discredit him.' Thus *A Place in the City*. It was, I wrote, as if you were under house arrest.

Sitting at the other end of the dining room table, I noticed something that seemed to me to be a residue, a surviving habit from his Roman education: he always gave people their proper, formal titles: His Grace, His Excellency, Monsignor, Father... never first names or nicknames. Nor did he encourage gossip or tittle-tattle about those in power. Power, he knew, is a network, a web, a seamless construct – damage any part of it and the whole thing suffers. I often remembered King James I's response to the Presbyterian divines who were arguing for the abolition of bishops. 'No bishop, no king.' It goes without saying that no unkind comment was ever voiced about the Bishop of Rome ('the Holy Father', as the Cardinal always called him, although we might say 'the Pope'). Yet such deference was not accorded to understrappers of the Vatican. When Pope Paul VI was coming to Sydney at the end of 1970, the cathedral dean spent some hours getting the sight-lines of the altar



exactly right for TV cameras in the clerestory. A few days later, two monsignori from the Vatican turned up and moved the altar out of line. 'How did the meeting with the Vatican people go?' asked Gilroy that night. 'They moved the altar we had spent hours getting aligned for the TV cameras,' complained the dean. 'Move it back,' said Gilroy. He wasn't going to have his man pushed around by blow-ins.

His life seemed lonely, however filled with constant interviews, ceremonies and public occasions. A man of prayer, yes, but a lonely man. John Luttrell's book tells us that he relaxed on Sunday nights in the family home; but there is no mention of personal friends, mates.

Let me tell you a story about that. When a priest was to be transferred from the cathedral to work elsewhere, a high tea was given in his honour, at which we each spoke. One such I remember vividly, the farewell to a Scripture scholar who was joining the seminary staff. In his speech, the cardinal acknowledged that seminary authorities had made several requests for this man's services; and each time (until now) the cardinal had refused them. Why? He said that he hated to lose any of the cathedral men because – here I quote him – 'in the necessary isolation of a bishop's life you are like a family to me.' 'The necessary isolation of a bishop's life' – what psychic cost is contained in that reading of a bishop's responsibility!

Now let me tell you two stories where Cardinal Gilroy came into my life. Back then, the church had re-introduced into the Mass an ancient call-and-response form of prayer to focus on issues of the day. It was called Prayers of the Faithful and the

bishops had produced a book of sample prayers with the instruction that if other prayers were added they should be written out, not done *ex tempore*. One Sunday, I was on the High Mass with Cardinal Gilroy presiding – it was a special occasion, Red Cross Sunday I think, and he was there to show his support. A week earlier, Father Dan Berrigan, an American Jesuit and protestor against the Vietnam War, had been arrested by the FBI. I wrote out a prayer for him and added it to the Prayers of the Faithful. Cardinal Gilroy was not happy. He instructed a secretary to excise my prayer from the tape before it was broadcast on the radio that night. The next day I wrote him a letter, to say that, as instructed by the bishops, I had written out the prayer for a brother priest in good standing with his religious order who was now in trouble. Leaving the dining room, he stopped and told me that I hadn't understood: he was presiding at the Mass, so people might think he had authorised the prayer. This was not the end of the story. A few weeks later, he inserted a sentence into the table talk, 'I see Father Berrigan's superiors have declared him in good standing with their order.' And he looked down the table to where I sat at the bottom. I admired him for his *amende honorable*.

Here is another story. After I had been at the cathedral for a year or so, I started an independent newsletter called Report. Its aim was to carry the news that the Catholic press, for whatever reason, did not print. Report began the week Pope Paul released his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* condemning contraception, so there was plenty of news to gather. As well, the daily press, the Sydney Morning Herald and The Australian, liked what we wrote and, often enough, ran stories sourced in Report. An assiduous reader of the Sydney Morning Herald, the Cardinal was aware of us. After some months, his principal secretary came to me and said he felt he had to tell Gilroy that I was the main writer of the stories he was reading about in his paper. I told him to go ahead. Which he did... to be told, 'You're not saying, are you? No, you're not – that Father Campion is printing material he is getting in here?' And the cardinal passed to the next item on the agenda. An admirable man.

Here is a story that shows him as a man of his times. When *Humanae Vitae* came out, in 1968, I went to the press conference in the crypt of the cathedral. I knew some of the journalists there, two of them women. Cardinal Gilroy sat at a table covered with

a worn green cloth, with Bishop Muldoon and two or three desiccated theologians. The Cardinal opened proceedings: 'Good afternoon, gentlemen,' he said.

Since I am speaking at the Sydney Institute, I expect you want me to say something about politics. To this day, however, I cannot tell which way Cardinal Gilroy voted. I direct you to John Luttrell's book again.

One thing I found there startled me so much that I copied it in my notebook to mull over on the bus and at coffee. Towards the end of 1963 or the beginning of 1964, the Archbishop of Bombay, Cardinal Gracias, had an invitation from B A Santamaria to speak at a conference he was organizing. What to do? Gracias wrote to Cardinal Gilroy for advice: Did he know this man Santamaria? Should he accept the invitation? Back came Gilroy's reply (p 265 in Luttrell): *The person who wrote to you not only has not the confidence of the greater part of the Australian Hierarchy but is regarded by them as one of the most harmful influences there has been in the Australian Church.*

As so often in the history of the church, quarrels are between good men on both sides of an argument. ☪



Treat women as equals now Pope Francis

MARY McALEESE

Mary McAleese, past President of Ireland, called on Pope Francis to advance the inclusion of women based on God-given justice in this talk given at the *Voices of Faith Conference* held in Rome on International Women's Day, March 8, 2018. The conference had to be moved from the Vatican venue because Mary McAleese was banned from speaking within the Vatican by Cardinal Farrell. Other speakers were also banned including Ugandan lesbian, Ssenfuka Joanita Warry and Tina Beattie. The conference was moved to a Jesuit venue outside the Vatican. McAleese full speech with references can be found at Catholic Church Reform Int: <https://tinyurl.com/y94fmle2>

The Israelites under Joshua's command circled Jericho's walls for seven days, blew trumpets and shouted to make the walls fall down. (cf. Joshua 6:1-20). We don't have trumpets but we have voices, voices of faith and we are here to shout, to bring down our Church's walls of misogyny. We have been circling these walls for 55 years since John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* first pointed to the advancement of women as one of the most important "signs of the times".

They are demanding both in domestic and in public life the rights and duties which belong to them as human persons. The longstanding inferiority complex of certain classes because of their economic and social

status, sex, or position in the State, and the corresponding superiority complex of other classes, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

At the Second Vatican Council Archbishop Paul Hallinan of Atlanta, warned the bishops to stop perpetuating 'the secondary place accorded to women in the Church of the 20th century' and to avoid the Church being a 'late-comer in [their] social, political and economic development'. The Council's decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* said it was important that women 'participate more widely [...] in the various sectors of the Church's apostolate'. The Council's pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* said the elimination of discrimination based on



gender was a priority. Paul VI even commissioned a study on women in Church and Society. Surely we thought then, the post-Conciliar Church was on the way to full equality for its 600 million

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female members. And yes, it is true that since the Council new roles and jobs have opened up to the laity including women but these have simply marginally increased the visibility of women in subordinate roles, including in the Curia, but they have added nothing to their decision-making power or their voice. Remarkably since the Council, roles which were specifically designated as suitable for the laity have been deliberately closed to women. The stable roles of acolyte and lector and the permanent diaconate have been opened only to lay men. Why? Both laymen and women can be temporary altar servers but bishops are allowed to ban females and where they permit them in their dioceses individual pastors can ban them in their parishes. Why?

Back in 1976 we were told that the Church does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination. This has locked women out of any significant role in the Church's leadership, doctrinal development and authority structure since these have historically been reserved to or filtered through ordained men. Yet in divine justice the very fact of the permanent exclusion of women from priesthood and all its consequential exclusions, should have provoked the Church hierarchy to find innovative and transparent ways of including women's voices as of right and

not in trickles of tokenism by tapping, in the divinely instituted College of Bishops and in the man-made entities such as the College of Cardinals, the Synod of Bishops and episcopal conferences, in all the places where the faith is shaped by decision and dogma and doctrine. Just imagine this normative scenario- Pope Francis calls a Synod on the role of Women in the Church and 350 male celibates advise the Pope on what women really want! That is how ludicrous our Church has become. How long can the hierarchy sustain the credibility of a God who wants things this way, who wants a Church where women are invisible and voiceless in Church leadership, legal and doctrinal discernment and decision-making?

It was here in this very hall in 1995 that Irish Jesuit theologian, Fr. Gerry O'Hanlon put his finger on the underpinning systemic problem when he steered Decree 14 through the Jesuits 34th General Congregation. It is a forgotten document but today we will dust it down and use it to challenge a Jesuit Pope, a reforming Pope, to real, practical action on behalf of women in the Catholic Church.

Decree 14 says: We have been part of a civil and ecclesial tradition that has offended against women. And, like many men, we have a tendency to convince ourselves that there is no problem. However unwittingly, we have often contributed to a form of clericalism which has reinforced male domination with an ostensibly divine sanction. By making this declaration we wish to react personally and collectively, and do what we can to change this regrettable situation.

'The regrettable situation' arises because the Catholic Church has long since been a primary global carrier of the virus of misogyny. It has never sought a cure though a cure is freely available. Its name is equality.

Down the 2000 year highway of Christian history came the ethereal divine beauty of the Nativity, the cruel sacrifice of the Crucifixion, the Hallelujah of the Resurrection and the rallying cry of the great commandment to love one another. But down that same highway came man-made toxins such as misogyny and homophobia to say nothing of anti-semitism with their legacy of damaged and wasted lives and deeply embedded institutional dysfunction.

The laws and cultures of many nations and faith systems were also historically deeply patriarchal and excluding of women; some still are, but today the Catholic Church lags noticeably behind the world's

advanced nations in the elimination of discrimination against women. Worse still, because it is the 'pulpit of the world' to quote Ban Ki Moon, its overt clerical patriarchalism acts as a powerful brake on dismantling the architecture of misogyny wherever it is found. There is an irony here, for education has been crucial to the advancement of women and for many of us, the education which liberated us was provided by the Church's frontline workers clerical and lay, who have done so much to lift men and women out of poverty and powerlessness and give them access to opportunity. Yet paradoxically it is the questioning voices of educated Catholic women and the courageous men who support them, which the Church hierarchy simply cannot cope with and scorns rather than engaging in dialogue. The Church which regularly criticizes the secular world for its failure to deliver on human rights has almost no culture of critiquing itself. It has a hostility to internal criticism which fosters blinkered servility and which borders on institutional idolatry.

Today we challenge Pope Francis to develop a credible strategy for the inclusion of women as equals throughout the Church's root and branch infrastructure, including its decision-making. A strategy with targets, pathways and outcomes regularly and independently audited. Failure to include women as equals has deprived the Church of fresh and innovative discernment; it has consigned it to recycled thinking among a hermetically sealed cosy male clerical elite flattered and rarely challenged by those tapped for jobs in secret and closed processes. It has kept Christ out and bigotry in. It has left the Church flapping about awkwardly on one wing when God gave it two. We are entitled to hold our Church leaders to account for this and other egregious abuses of institutional power and we will insist on our right to do so no matter how many official doors are closed to us.

At the start of his papacy Pope Francis said 'We need to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church' – words a Church scholar described as evidence of Francis' 'magnanimity'. Let us be clear, women's right to equality in the Church arises organically from divine justice. It should not depend on ad hoc papal benevolence.

Pope Francis described female theologians as the 'strawberries on the cake'. He was wrong. Women are the leaven in the cake. They are the primary handers-on of the faith to their children. In the Western world the Church's cake is not rising, the



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baton of faith is dropping. Women are walking away from the Catholic Church in droves, for those who are expected to be key influencers in their children's faith formation have no opportunity to be key influencers in the formation of the Catholic faith. That is no longer acceptable. Just four months ago the Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin felt compelled to remark that 'the low standing of women in the Catholic Church is the most significant reason for the feeling of alienation towards it in Ireland today'.

Yet Pope Francis has said that 'women are more important than men because the Church is a woman'. Holy Father, why not ask women if they feel more important than men? I suspect many will answer that they experience the Church as a male bastion of patronizing platitudes to which Pope Francis has added his quota.

John Paul II has written of the 'mystery of women'. Talk to us as equals and we will not be a mystery! Francis has said a 'deeper theology of women' is needed. God knows it would be hard to find a more shallow theology of women than the misogyny dressed up as theology which the magisterium currently hides behind.

And all the time a deeper theology is staring us in the face. It does not require much digging to find it. Just look to Christ. John Paul II pointed out that: we are heirs to a history which has conditioned us to a remarkable extent. In every time and place, this conditioning has been an obstacle to the progress of women. [...] Transcending the established norms of his own culture, Jesus treated women with openness, respect, acceptance and tenderness....As we look to Christ.... it is natural to ask ourselves: how much of his message has been heard and acted upon?

Women are best qualified to answer that question but we are left to talk among ourselves. No Church leader bothers to turn up not just because we do not matter to them but because their priestly formation prepares them to resist treating us as true equals.

Back in this hall in 1995 the Jesuit Congregation asked God for the grace of conversion from a patriarchal Church to a Church of equals; a Church where women truly matter not on terms designed by men for a patriarchal Church but on terms which make Christ matter. Only such a Church of equals is worthy of Christ. Only such a Church can credibly make Christ matter. The time for that Church is now, Pope Francis. The time for change is now. ☺

The dark night: A post Royal Commission Church

BRIAN GALLAGHER MSC

A news item by John Allen (*The Swag* Autumn 2018) expressed fear that the 'let's move on' camp, post Royal Commission into Institutional Sexual Abuse, is gaining ground, even 'calling the shots'. Brian Gallagher MSC, Shoreham, Vic, looks at 'moving on' using John of the Cross' teaching on purification of our memories.



We keep hearing that we will be a very different Church post Royal Commission into institutional sexual abuse. Please God, this will be so. But how will this difference come about? What has to change in us and in our Church?

I see our present situation as an experience of *impasse*. The term *impasse* comes from Carmelite Sister Constance Fitzgerald's study of St. John of the Cross. Writing from his own experience of what he called a 'dark night', John teaches how God brings new life in us when we seem to be at a dead-end, when life seems empty and unsure. Fitzgerald extends John's teaching to experiences on a communal level in Church and society. These are Fitzgerald's words: ... *what if, by chance, our time in evolution is a 'dark night' time – a time of crisis and transition that must be understood if it is to be part of learning a new vision and harmony for the human species and the planet?*

John of the Cross and Constance Fitzgerald speak to our present Church experience.

Fitzgerald's original writing was in 1984. She wrote what she calls an 'update' in 2009, reinforcing her earlier understanding of John of the Cross and updating her examples of communal *impasse*. Whereas

in 1984, Fitzgerald wrote of the 'purification of our desires' as a gift of grace freeing us for new life and new mission, later she adds, also from John of the Cross, the 'purification of our memories'. I hope I can do justice to her thinking.

In my words, it's about the tension between remembering and forgetting! There are experiences in life that we remember vividly – indeed, we do not want to forget because they have been significant for us, even formative for us. And yet, in another sense, we are invited to 'forget' them, to be open to new experience. Fitzgerald says we want 'to be receptive to transformative hope'. This does not mean ignoring or putting our memories aside, but rather an 'unravelling or de-linking' of our memories. John of the Cross calls this 'purification of memory'. Purification frees us from the hold our memories have on us. He says that we too easily become attached to our memories, which then block the development of our relationship with God and our relationships with other people. The problem is that 'memories can lead us either to healing and empathy or to hostility and destruction.' Only when 'purified' will our memories ensure the former.

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I think of personal examples. When I remember times when I have been deeply hurt, I don't imagine I will even forget them. But the risk is that I could become bitter and revengeful, unless I do 'forget' in some way, unless I am open to transformative hope. Only then will I grow in empathy.

In 2009, Fitzgerald's examples were the horrendous evil inflicted upon the Jewish people in the holocaust, the genocide in Bosnia and other parts of the world, and the systemic injustice of women's experience of social and ecclesial marginalisation. She says *I struggle with remembering anew so that we can tell the narrative differently, and (yet) I struggle with forgetting when forgetfulness and silence are dangerous. Again, I strive to be faithful in solidarity with those who continue to remember indescribable violation and at the same time I am receptive to the transforming power of hope that deconstructs memory and to the fathomless Mystery coming to us from the future.*

I believe our present *impasse* around our Church's history of sexual abuse is the current example, indeed much closer to home.

We must remember, indeed, we cannot afford to forget, our sin and the pain inflicted on thousands of young people, still often unhealed. There is no turning back from this reality, and yet there are no clear answers to the question of how we move into a different future. It's true that we have committed ourselves to 'integrity in our ministry', to more careful accountability and to strict ethical norms of behaviour.

These are necessary behavioural changes. More may yet be needed around Church governance. But the real conversion has to be within our personal and communal hearts. I'm interested in how this transformation can happen for us.

This is where Fitzgerald calls on John of the Cross who makes sense of the process of purification of memories by linking it to hope. 'The dynamic of being able to yield unconditionally to God's future is what John of the Cross calls hope.'

This is a hope that is completely free from even our positive memories, our past achievements, our past gifts and consolations, and certainly our past hurts. Our 'limited self' (that is, limited by attachment to the past) needs to surrender to the transforming power of God's call into the future.

Obsession with the past gives way to a new undefinable sense of relatedness or

intimacy, an experience of ultimate assurance, and this conversion releases creativity and most importantly freedom for the limitless possibilities of God, for hope. This freedom... enables a person to reveal the vision of a different kind of future.

Fitzgerald says this is a 'radical call', asking us to leave much behind. And it is no great consolation in the sense of feeling delight or close to God. It is more likely to be painful because it is a time of dark emptiness, calling on deep faith, as we face the reality of the impasse we are in. Fitzgerald calls the experience a time of waiting on God.

John captured this in his poem, *The Living Flame*:

*Ah! gentle and so loving
You wake within me, proving
that you are there, in secret and alone.
Your fragrant breathing stills me
Your grace, your glory fills me
So tenderly, your love becomes my own.*

The hope and newness will emerge only from our accepting the painful memories of the Church's past, not imagining some 'back to normal' dream, forgetting the past. We are invited, rather, to 'deconstruct' our memories, see them differently, though in truth, never forgetting them. Such 'moving on' will come only with God's grace.

Fitzgerald believes that the dynamic of purification of memories will come about in a person's prayer, which she expects to be equally empty and without felt consolation. She calls it the 'prayer of no experience', the prayer of silent waiting on God which, she says, 'radically changes a person and opens into new possibilities, new vision, a vast bottomless and incomprehensible Future toward which hope reaches and love gives.' It is the only prayer possible for us at this time, for we cannot bring transformation to birth by ourselves.

In my words again – though it hardly needs saying – as a Church, we have sinned. Not every individual, of course, but as a Church, we have sinned. As we acknowledge our Church's past abuse and frequent denial, as we admit our past mistakes, we know that we have lost all innocence and all claim to respect. And there is no going back!

We are left grieving what was (and what might have been), exposed, ashamed and humbled, always remembering the harm we have done. We cling to our only hope, born of our wanting God, wanting truth and goodness. John says we must stay in this place, this veritable 'dark night', as we wait for the dawn that only God can bring.

In God's time. Only then will our memories be transformed or 'purified'. Only then can we move on to God's future.

The good news is that we are in this together. We may experience the shame personally and individually, and we may know the helplessness in prayer personally, but each one's experience will impact on the experience of all of us. With John of the Cross, Fitzgerald teaches that our prayer in hope 'will lead all humanity across the frontier into the new epoch that is trying to be born.' Our personal prayer, waiting on God, will bear fruit for the whole Church, for all God's people.

Resources for this article: Fitzgerald, Constance. 'Impasse and Dark Night.' In *Living with Apocalypse*, edited by Tilden H Edwards. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1984. Fitzgerald, Constance. *From Impasse to Prophetic Hope: Crisis of Memory*. Vol. 64. Catholic Theological Society of America, 2009. John of the Cross. 'Dark Night.' In *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, edited by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez. Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1973. John of the Cross. 'The Living Flame of Love.' *Centered on Love: The Poems of Saint John of the Cross*. Translated by Marjorie Flower. Varroville NSW: The Carmelite Nuns, 1983, reprinted 2002. ☪



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Reading the Christian story properly

ERIC HODGENS



Eric Hodgens writes about the meaning of stories as the key to understanding them. How we read texts and reread them in each new age is equally important for our reading of scripture stories.

Christianity is now 2,000 years old with a pre-history of a further 1,000 years. Its stories are amongst its most prized possessions. Christians love their stories. Stories take pride of place in its liturgies. But for some they are a credibility stumbling block. How can the story be told *and heard* so that it engenders faith as it was originally intended to do?

The main character in the grand Christian narrative is Jesus of Nazareth. He is a Jewish prophet with a message for the poor and oppressed of Israel. The message is that when the God of Israel fully establishes his kingdom, suffering, oppression and poverty will be relieved; life will become good. So, keep your hopes up and stick together to be ready when the new order arrives.

Jesus preached the coming Kingdom; but his followers preached *Jesus* as their message. His message was one of solidarity, forgiveness, mercy and mutual care. His whole life modelled his message. His first followers formed a community, intent on following his *way*. Jesus's death disrupted the movement but did not stop it.

They came to believe that the crucified Jesus now lived in a transcendent way and was still with them in spirit. In fact, this was the culmination of God's reign – overcoming the power of death. Life, not death, was the ultimate reality.

The disciples saw it as their duty to spread this good news.

As the community of followers grew, so did the story. Jesus and all his first followers were Jews who grew up imbued with their Jewish culture. For them, Jesus was a climactic moment in their ongoing Jewish story. They came to believe that Jesus was the promised messiah of Judaism – the promised Christ.

We get a good insight into the beliefs and practices of this early Christian group from the letters of St. Paul, and later from Luke in his Acts of the Apostles. What kept them regularly together was the weekly gathering of members to remember and celebrate Jesus as the Christ. As the decades went by they believed that God had made

a unique incursion into history in Jesus. Jesus was so in tune with God that they came to believe that he was the unique Son of God.

By about 70 CE. they wrote their story down in a new form of literature which came to be called a gospel. Mark wrote the first of the four gospels using the word "gospel" in his opening sentence: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus, Christ, the Son of God."

The first Christian written stories focussed on Jesus. They were all written by authors familiar with the scriptures of Israel. So, the Jesus story is told as an ongoing part of the story of Israel. The interaction went both ways.

They saw the Jewish scriptures as predicting Jesus. But they massaged their stories of Jesus to fit those scriptures. Matthew's infancy narrative is a classic example of this. Was the flight into Egypt a fulfilment of the scriptures or did the scriptures give Matthew the idea for the story? Whichever way, Jesus's status of chosen by God is enhanced.

We all need to become amateur literary critics. Our post-enlightenment education biases us to prioritise ideas over feelings – intellect over imagination. We tend to confuse story with reportage and first ask: 'Did it happen?' Such a first question misses the point because a story calls for an affective response.

The first question should be 'What is this story getting at? What does it mean?' This would put us on the right track with stories such as Jesus walking on the water, changing water into wine, feeding the multitude etc.

When citing a past story, is the old a prediction? Or is the present being moulded to look like the past and amplify the theme? The past can be re-shaped to fit the present, or the present can be tweaked to look like a fulfilment of the past. You see this process at work in Matthew's infancy narrative.

What came first – the Last Supper or the early Christian practice of the Lord's Supper? To what extent was the Last Supper story told in the light of the later Christian practice?

Story telling is no place for the fundamentalist or the literalist. The facts can ruin a good story if the listener is not tuned in to understanding the meaning.

The same question holds for loads of gospel events such as Jesus's baptism, the Transfiguration, the Temptations in the desert, the Passover and the language and events in John's gospel.

The primary purpose, therefore, of the original Christian story was to recruit and support believers, not to write a history. That purpose is the same today.

The biggest phase of the Christian story is the story of the Church – 2000 years of it beginning with the New Testament scriptures. Despite originating in the Middle East, the cultural setting of Christian history has mainly been Europe – West and East. In that setting the Church has been a dominant power player for most of its existence. Its centuries of power have produced a Church which has canonised its statements of belief, promoted its procedures to laws and claimed its structures as divinely ordained. This produces a well-oiled machine but can undercut the primary purpose that the machine was designed to serve.

The Church's power base is largely eroded in today's secular and pluralist culture. The urgent challenge is to adjust to this new culture. We must sharpen our ability to spot the meaning of a story. But also, the story must be revised to make sense in its new context. This has happened often enough in the past, so it is possible.

Resistance to change and re-assertion of old and tired dogmas will no longer cut the mustard. The astute observer knows that the challenge is on. The choice is clear. Either move on to oblivion, or recontextualize the story so that it is credible and cogent when and if a changing culture becomes ready to listen again. ☺

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

Where to from here?

PATRICK FLANAGAN

Fr Patrick J Flanagan, Red Cliffs, Victoria, charts the history of the missal texts and the need for reform.

When Vatican II first convened on October 11, 1962, the bishops were presented with a series of documents, prepared under the control of the Roman Curia, which were going to do nothing for anybody. Pope John XXIII in his opening address included important remarks that would help the Council to broaden its perspective. In the second breviary reading for John XXIII's Office, the remarks which challenged the Roman Curia have been excised.

The Council began to flounder. The bishops, gathered from around the world, were annoyed at being asked to be rubber stamps. Cardinal Frings of Cologne delivered an address prepared for him by his *peritus* Joseph Ratzinger, which blew up the prepared agenda. New commissions were formed to draw up new documents that would address better the reality of the Church post-WWII. And the world's bishops were determined to smash the power of the Roman Curia, or perhaps I might say it better, to break its stranglehold.

The Liturgy document became the one bishops could most easily come to grips with. The Liturgical Movement was nearly 100 years old; and pope Pius XII had already made significant changes, mainly by restoring Holy week. One of the disputed questions at the Council was the use of the vernacular in the Roman Rite. Cardinal Spellman of New York occasioned a jibe from Time magazine. He wanted the Breviary to be put into the vernacular, but the Mass to stay in Latin. Time remarked, 'he wants the priests to pray in English, and the people to pray in Latin.' There were a lot of serious questions involved in reforming the Liturgy; the vernacular question was comparatively minor.

The first session of Vatican II ended without completing any document. Joseph Slipyi, a late arrival at the Council, just set free from a Soviet prison, asked that St Joseph be included in the Roman Canon. He was laughed at by bishops who had suffered nothing for the Faith. Pope John XXIII went ahead and inserted 'Joseph, the spouse of Mary', into the Roman Canon.

The second session of Vatican II concluded two documents. One was about the media. It did not receive the attention it deserved.

It was more 'got out of the way' than thought through. Fortunately, the post-conciliar commission formed to implement this document made up for the deficiencies in the document itself.

The other document was of course the one on Liturgy. It was one of the four documents from Vatican II that were named not Decrees, but Constitutions. Use of the vernacular was approved, though the fathers did not anticipate at the time that the whole of the Roman Rite would become vernacular. It did in fact become vernacular quite swiftly, before Vatican II ended finally on December 8, 1965. But there was a very important proviso in the Constitution and that is that responsibility for producing vernacular translations was entrusted NOT TO THE ROMAN CURIA but to the bishops of the particular language groups. But the Holy See was not excluded from the picture, and the Curia would in time, use the need for texts to be forwarded to the Holy See to exercise a lot of control.

At all events, the various English-speaking countries began at once to put together their own translations of the Common of the Mass in the Tridentine Rite as amended in 1962. (Time magazine later compared them and reckoned that Australia did it best.) Various approaches were followed for translating the *proper*. Fairly soon we were using here the Canadian Missal, with the Australian texts for the Common.

Translating the Mass texts to English

But for the English translations of the Rites for the Mass and Sacraments that would be produced in fulfilment of the Decrees of Vatican II, the bishops of the anglophone countries established in 1963 the International Commission for English in the Liturgy (ICEL), with its headquarters in Washington. To help with translating, the Commission set up to implement the Constitution on the Liturgy, produced a comprehensive guide. It was published in seven languages, of which the original was French. The document is known as *Comme le prévoit*. Interestingly, it was never translated into Latin.

As ICEL and other translating bodies were embarking on translations of the new rites of Mass and the Sacraments, they began to formalise procedures. In the case of ICEL,

it had an Episcopal Board of Directors consisting of bishops representing each of anglophone countries. ICEL had also an advisory board consisting of people with expertise in Liturgy. Denis Hart, when he became secretary of Australia's National Liturgical Commission (NLC) was a member of this advisory board, replaced later by Tom Elich when he became secretary of the NLC.

And ICEL sought out experts in Latin and in English to engage in the actual work of translation. They also obtained the help of experts in Greek and the other biblical languages, because biblical texts often underlay the various formulations. They did not have to mark time, waiting for the Missal of Paul VI to appear, whole and complete. The post-conciliar Commission sent the various elements of the new rite to them as they were completed. The over-all principle of translation was that of *dynamic equivalence*. The aim was not word for word translation from the Latin, but the conveyance of the meaning of the original. As texts were prepared they were sent, in the case of ICEL, to each of diocese of the anglophone world, so that the bishops could comment, make suggestions for improvement etc. My bishop, Ronald Mulkearns, often sent material from ICEL to me to vet on his behalf. On one occasion I made an important intervention. It was the proposed translation of the new Rite for Anointing the Sick. In the form for the second part, the anointing of the sick person's hands, the translation proposed read, 'may the Lord who *has forgiven* you your sins'; but the Latin, reflecting the passage about Anointing the Sick in chapter 5 of the letter of James had the present tense. 'May the Lord who *forgives* you your sins ..' I don't imagine that I was the only one who pointed out the error. I am presenting it to illustrate that ICEL was not a closed shop.

Everything went very harmoniously. If any criticism is to be made of ICEL's translation of the Missal of Pope Paul VI, it is that the translation was a bit too simple. But there were no hassles from the post-conciliar Commission about ICEL's *modus operandi*.

There were other currents at work though. They had to do mainly with the way celebrants were operating, and most especially, with the kind of music that was being sung at Mass. The *sense of mystery* necessarily involved in the use of Latin, because it was foreign, was not there in the vernacular. We might call it the Guitar

crisis (a term I just invented). Various theologians began to express concern to Pope Paul VI. Foremost among them was Joseph Ratzinger. Pope Paul VI disbanded the Post-conciliar Commission, which entailed the dismissal of its president, Cardinal Knox, and of its secretary, Annibale Bugnini. When everything has settled down, someone will write a worthy biography of Annibale Bugnini and all that he accomplished.

In the place of the post-Conciliar Commission, though it was given a new name, the old controlling Congregation of Rites was restored; and life would become in time less happy for ICEL.

We are now far enough down the road from Vatican II for it to be worthwhile recalling why the language of the Roman Rite changed from Latin to the vernacular. The original language of the Roman Rite was, not Latin, but Greek. The reason for this was simple. The common language of the Roman world was Greek. Eventually, though, Latin replaced Greek as the *lingua franca*.

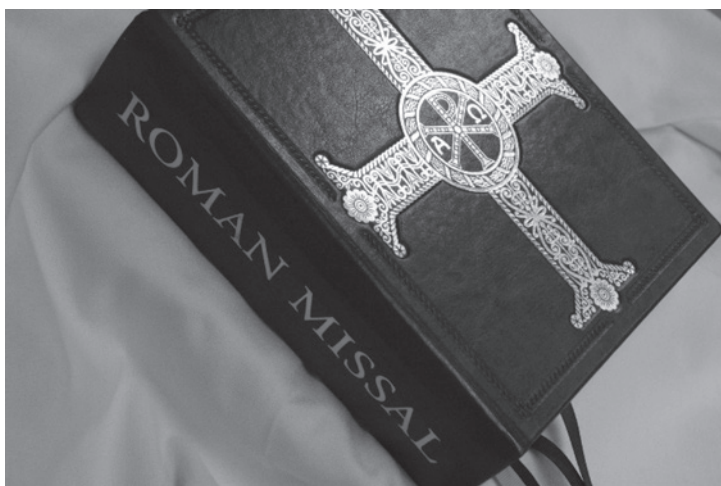
The vernacular liturgy around the world

Consequently, about the year 375, Pope Damasus decreed that Latin should be the language of the Roman Rite. Logic then would suggest that, as the Gospel spread into countries where Latin was an alien language, the Liturgy would be celebrated in the native languages of those countries.

In one case this did happen. The apostles of the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius, found that the Slavic-speaking peoples had no written language at all, and they devised an alphabet for them, and the written language of Russia now is the Kirillic (after Cyril.) The Slavs received from Cyril and Methodius an enculturated Liturgy, though not without a lot of opposition from the bishops of Germany. But, for the most part, wherever in the new countries that grew out of the barbarian invasions the Liturgy was celebrated, its language remained Latin. This was to have a most unfortunate consequence. The *laos*, the people of God had, from the beginning, been the subjects of the Liturgy, its actors. Joseph Jungmann SJ, in his magisterial work, the Mass of the Roman Rite, points out again and again that the further the Roman Rite journeyed, the more it became foreign to the people. The actors had

become spectators. There was eventually only one actor, the priest. I will give some examples. The task of chanting the Epistle at a High Mass belonged to the sub-deacon. But, while the sub-deacon chanted, the priest, standing to one side of the altar, recited the epistle in a subdued voice. Similarly with the Gospel. The deacon chanted the Gospel; but, while he chanted, the priest recited the Gospel in a subdued voice. *A fortiori*, while the choir may have chanted the Entrance Antiphon (Introit), the priest had to recite it. So that the priest did *everything*, and anything done by others was mere window dressing.

As the Church entered the new Asian world in the 16th century, the newly-formed Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith prevailed upon the popes to allow the missionaries to both celebrate the



Liturgy in native languages, and to enculturate the Liturgy for those countries. Later popes however reversed this, insisting the Liturgy be in Latin and unenculturated. This caused great pain, and did great damage to the Church's missionary endeavour in China, India and the Philippines. I mention this here, because, since Vatican II, dancing has become a cultural Liturgical expression in sub-Saharan Africa. Right now there are dark forces at work trying to suppress this enculturation. When will they ever learn?

The intention of Vatican II's Constitution on the Liturgy was, before all else, to bring about the full, conscious and active participation of the people in the celebration of Mass. For this to happen, the language of the Liturgy had to be the vernacular.

The translation of reformed Roman Rite, the missal of Paul VI, came into use in 1974. But ICEL had not intended the 1974 translation to be the last word. Soon

enough it began looking at what it had produced with the aim of producing a much better translation. In regard to this, I had been screaming softly, 'Don't change any of the people's parts. Australians had been very unhappy when, with the new Rite, they had to ditch the Australian translation of the Common, that they had learnt enthusiastically, and learn the ICEL text. Don't do it to them again.'

The ICEL 1998 translation

As a consultant for the National Liturgical Commission here in Australia, I followed the work of re-translation and offered suggestions as best I could. In addition to the translation of all the prayers in the Missal, ICEL also produced original Opening Prayers for each Sunday and major feast of the three-year cycle. The

production of these original prayers accorded with the final recommendation, (paragraph 34) of *comme le prevoit* 'Clearly, translating from the Latin is not enough. Original prayers, suited to the genius of each language are needed. But the Latin texts of the Roman Missal will serve as a guide for all this.'

Well, that was the 1998 translation. All of the anglophone bishops' conferences gave the 1998 translation their approval. It went to the Congregation for Divine Worship (CDW), and the CDW sat on it till it squashed it.

At that time, the boss at the CDW was the biggest bully in living memory in the Roman Curia, Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez. He was determined, in fact, to reject the English translation approved by all of the anglophone conferences of bishops. *Liturgiam authenticam* was his weapon for achieving that. He just changed mightily the rules governing translations from the Latin, shifted the goalposts, and said that the 1998 translation failed the new test. It was a bit like the dictation tests, that successive Australian governments used, to keep out of the country those they didn't want to admit.

This procedure was manifestly unjust, and done in bad faith. In no way was CDW behaving like a servant. All of the language groups would have to re-translate according to the new rules, no matter how much trouble that meant. But the real purpose was to bully ICEL. And in fact, ICEL was to be disbanded, which caused a lot of hurt to a lot of people; but sociopaths don't even begin to feel the pain they cause

Continued page 22

to others. And new ICEL was formed, controlled by the CDW, which was clear contrary to the intention of Vatican II. I asked a contact I had in Rome why they disbanded ICEL. His reply was 'They had to. It was becoming the Congregation of Rites for the English-speaking world!' My response to that should have been, 'So bloody what?'

But I have never been quick on my feet.

How was old ICEL becoming the Congregation of Rites for the English-speaking world? Well, again, I'm guessing. ICEL was exercising lots of pastoral initiatives, each and every one of which it was entitled to do. It was violating no liturgical laws. A simple example: In the 1998 Roman Missal there was to be, beside the excellent general introductions prepared by the post-conciliar commission giving the *ratio* for everything (these general introductions were found for each of the revised rites following Vatican II and were goldmines). ICEL had prepared Pastoral introductions. I was able to make what I think was an important, if small, contribution to one of these Pastoral introductions. It was the one for Advent-Christmastime. The final line said that 'we leave the season of Christmas with the words the Father speaks to us 'Listen to him'. I wrote to point out to John Page, executive secretary of ICEL, that in fact those words were spoken by the Father, not at Jesus' Baptism, but at the Transfiguration. I suggested a much better ending, 'And so Christmastime is completed by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus, as later in the year, Eastertime will be completed by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Church.' John Page thanked me for my observation.

An initiative ICEL exercised early on was in the translation of the Nicene Creed. In the Latin text, this creed begins in the singular, *Credo in unum Deum* – I believe in one God – although this was not always the case in Latin rites. There were Latin versions of the Nicene Creed that had the plural *Credimus*. The Latin text is not the original text. That is the Greek of Nicea-Constantinople which speaks in the plural – 'We believe in one God.' The Post-conciliar Commission had no trouble about accepting ICEL's proposal that the English text use the plural of the Greek text. But not the CDW further down the track.

There was one pastoral initiative of ICEL which I opposed quite strongly. If you set out the Entrance Rite of Mass, it appears to be quite complex. The Anglicans had one way of simplifying it. They moved the *Gloria* to after Communion. ICEL

proposed to simplify the Entrance Rite by giving a series of options. One of these options would be the Penitential Rite. But a consequence of that was that the Penitential Rite would become optional. That is what I opposed quite strongly. But I want to emphasise that ICEL didn't sneak in this simplification. The Episcopal Board of Directors was aware of it and accepted it. As far as I know it was accepted by the various anglophone conferences of bishops, and became part of the proposed 1998 Missal. But if the CDW had wanted to reject this simplification, it could have done so without producing the heavy artillery of *Liturgiam Authenticam*, *Vox Clara*, and the sacking of ICEL.

Pope Francis and a new translation

Anyway, Pope Francis, by his *motu proprio* *Magnum Principium*, has returned the responsibility for translation of Liturgical texts to where Vatican II had initially decreed – the relevant bishops' conferences. So, where to from here?

Readers of *The Swag* will be aware that CDW told the bishops of England that, since it has been already rejected, the 1998 translation cannot be revived. This is sheer nonsense, believable only by those who want to believe. It seems obvious that the 1998 translation will be the foundation of whatever translation the English speaking world chooses for its new translation. But it can't be that wholly and solely, because the edition of the *Missale Romanum* that appeared in 2002 contains, for example, Mass formularies for each day of Advent and of Easter-time, welcome additions to the missal. These, of course, need to be translated. There were some other prayers added, as well as propers for a number of saints since added to the general calendar. These all need to be translated. Translated how? To me the answer is obvious. Translated according to the principles of *Comme le prévoit*. Ideally I think, the new ICEL should be graciously retired, and the old ICEL restored. The work of translating all of the new texts should be executed as far as is feasible, by those who brought about the 1998 translation.

That, however, leaves some residual problems to be addressed. It is quite important, it seems to me, that the English speaking world not have several versions of the texts recited by the congregation floating around. A couple of enterprising parishioners here in Red Cliffs, Vic. managed to get the best of both worlds with one of the common responses by answering 'And also with your spirit.' But the anglophone bishops' conferences do need, providing no one conference

(England) tries to hold the rest to ransom, to settle on an agreed translation of the common responses and prayers. The 2010 translation of the Nicene Creed, beloved it seems of Cardinal Sarah, has fallen into disuse, and should not even receive Christian burial. But there is a small but significant problem with the Apostles' creed, too. We oldies know that 'he descended into hell' does not mean 'he descended into *hell*'; but those who received their Christian education more recently don't know that. I suggest that, 'he went down among the dead' expresses accurately what the creed means at this point. Whatever, hopefully, unanimity among the anglophone conferences of bishops may be arrived at, without disturbing the *laos*.

Further, I think it is time to consider whether it is still necessary for there to be one only approved translation of Opening Prayers, Prayers over the Gifts, Prefaces, Prayers after Communion etc.

The 1974 ICEL translation of the Missal was not without merit, although the alternative Opening Prayers were so complex that it was very difficult for the Celebrant to so pray them that the congregation prayed them with him.

The 1973 translation of the Missal approved for use in England and Wales (until Cardinal Knox sat on it) likewise had merit, as do certainly the Opening Prayers in the Breviary most of us pray in Australia. The set of Opening Prayers for the 3-year cycle in the 1998 translation are generally excellent. Those who clamoured for the 2010 translation were hoping that it would restore to our celebration of Mass that lost sense of mystery. What has been learnt from its use is that it is not the way to go.

It has been proposed that one of the reasons the bishops of England decided to continue with the 2010 translation is the expense of printing yet another altar Missal. But the idea that everything that is used in Mass should be contained in one heavily bound book may be anachronistic. There are priests for whom, with the appropriate apps, the Ipad or some other tablet, has become both breviary and missal.

There are now quite a number of books with plastic leaves for items such as the Prayer of the Faithful, notices etc. They generally are, unfortunately, not long lasting. Their covers, being also plastic, don't take long to develop cracks. Hopefully, some entrepreneurial Liturgical publishers will begin to produce such books with long-lasting leather covers. ☞

Remembrance of things past, Adelaide's Pastoral team

PAUL HAWKES

Paul Hawkes, BTh. is an active layperson participating in a range of local ministries within the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide. He has a particular interest in ecclesiastical history and in the contribution of the laity in the light of the challenges facing the Catholic Church today. In this article he looks at Archbishop Faulkner's Diocesan Pastoral Team as a model of governance for our times.

Looking ahead to the 2020 Plenary Council we, as Church, are being asked once again to imagine restructuring the institution so that it might better relate to the realities of contemporary society. In our own time, this is something the Catholic Church has been working at since Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council in 1965 with a call to *ressourcement* (healing) and *aggiornamento* (updating). The Church has of course continuously sought to reposition itself to better minister to and reflect the needs of contemporary society; the First Vatican Council and numerous other councils attest to that.

In the darkness of the deeply painful scandal of sexual abuse in the Church and the general disconnect with secular society we are now more than ever looking at ways to mend a broken Church.

Perhaps we should imagine a change to the institutional structure of Church where the individual diocese is administered by a pyramidal structure with bishop at the top, parish priest at the bottom and laity maybe being consulted from somewhere in or outside the structure. Could we imagine a more flattened structure where the bishop governs in a team along with a priest, a religious and a lay person? A team where each member took on a portfolio of responsibilities within the diocese and, as a team led by the bishop, took deliberative decisions as to the overall governance of the diocese.

This movement from unilateral to participatory leadership in the Catholic Church has actually manifested before; only once and it was unique in the world to Adelaide, South Australia.

In 1986 the then recently appointed Archbishop of Adelaide, Leonard Faulkner, along with the College of Consultors and the purely consultative Council of Priests, governed the Archdiocese of Adelaide in collaboration with a Diocesan Pastoral Team instead of the common (post-conciliar) model of governing with the assistance of an auxiliary bishop. This form of governance arose from an already present practice of collaborative ministry in

the archdiocese and sought to engender Archbishop Faulkner's vision of a *Community for the World* which in its turn was soundly based on the theology arising from Vatican II. The Diocesan Pastoral Team was the centre of the continuing and evolving process of renewal which characterised the post-Conciliar Church in Adelaide and especially pointed to a more considered understanding of the place of the laity in the modern Church. The Diocesan Pastoral Team depended upon this theological vision and operated on the basis of continually testing the authenticity of its actions against the principles of *Community for the World*.

The recent findings of the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Sexual Abuse noted that reports of abusers in the Archdiocese of Adelaide, at 2.2% over six decades, was the lowest number in any diocese in Australia and the third lowest within Australian Catholic Church institutions generally. It was the testimony of expert Catholic theologian witnesses that the fact that Adelaide was relatively untouched by the abuse scandal may well be explained by the different type of governance in Adelaide under Archbishop Faulkner and, particularly, the important and public role which women were seen to have at the most senior level of the diocese.

In Adelaide, the passing of this unique form of open and inclusive governance was regretted by many and recently I was given to understand the depth of that regret. When I left paid work a few years ago I studied for a bachelor degree in theology and for my honours thesis in ecclesial history I made a study of the Adelaide Diocesan Pastoral Team, emphasising the role of the three lay women who, at different times, served on the team. A number of people later suggested that I publish the story, and after expanding and updating my account I published it as *Prophetic Pastoral Leadership: The Adelaide Archdiocesan Pastoral Team 1986-2001*. (Copies are available from the author: pkhawkes@gmail.com)

Last month I launched the book and many of those attending suggested that the book



should be sent to all the bishops in Australia as an aid in their discernment process for the 2020 Plenary Council. Leonard Faulkner's Diocesan Pastoral Team model addressed a call for change which still resonates with the current sentiment being expressed as to the needs of a modern Church and points to the imperative need to give the laity deliberative as well as consultative roles in ecclesial governance. Thanks to the fact that a number of people in Adelaide put their money where their passion was, this book has now been sent to more than 40 Catholic bishops and leaders in Australia. It is not meant to be a blueprint of how governance should be done but rather it is an invitation to consider the possibilities of what might be done by examining the history of the Catholic Church in Australia. ☪

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Tweet others as you would like to be tweeted, Mr Folau

PETER DAY

Peter Day, Canberra priest, reflects on the theology of Isreal Folau's tweet that homosexuals will go to hell.



It is problematic when someone is described as a 'devout Christian' because the term implies a person's bona fides; it implies that a person is a 'true' follower of Christ and the Bible. Think Wallaby fullback, Israel Folau, who has attracted notoriety thanks to this recent twitter exchange with one of his followers: 'What was God's plan for gay people?' tweeted Mike Sephton.

'HELL... unless they repent of their sins and turn to God,' responded the 'devout Christian'. Frankly, there is nothing remotely devout or Christian about Mr Folau's tweet. Indeed, it betrays an extraordinary level of ignorance.

Where to start? Let's go to HELL first. The word 'hell' comes from the biblical Greek 'Gehenna' which, in turn, is a transliteration of the Hebrew 'ge-hinnom' – literally, the valley of Ben-hinnom located on the southern boundary of Jerusalem (Joshua 18:16).

Now, Ben-hinnom was notorious in the ancient world as a place where child sacrifices, and assorted other acts of idolatry, were performed to placate the god Molech (circa. 600 BC). Disgusted by the horror that abounded there, God told the prophet Jeremiah to 'go to hell' and curse it (Jeremiah 7:32-33; 19:1-15; 32:35). Dutifully, he did and overtime Gehenna came to symbolize punishment for those who died unreconciled to God.

Interestingly, today 'hell' is a peaceful recreational park shaded by Olive trees where locals and tourists seek respite!

One wonders what Mr Folau's hell looks like.

As for homosexuality and the Bible, well, this is not nearly as black and white as some would have us believe – bearing in mind, among the 30,000+ verses that appear in the Great Book, barely a handful deal with this subject matter.

Further, there was minimal, if any, awareness or knowledge of the psychological and physiological realities inherent in human sexuality – no Freudian or Jungian wisdom, for instance; not to mention absolute ignorance concerning human anatomy: genes, hormones, neuro-plasticity etc.

What did, however, confront the authors of the Bible was the proliferation of male prostitution, along with a culture of accepted pederasty in parts of the Greco-Roman world.

As scripture scholar, Fr Michael Fallon msc, says: *The culture in [those] worlds was, speaking generally, indulgent towards male sexual behaviour. The male was considered to be superior, not only intellectually, but also from the point of view of physical beauty. It was not expected that wives would be chosen for either intellectual or romantic motives. It was widely considered that the appropriate partner for a male was another male. An adult male was encouraged to have a young*

male to give him pleasure, including the pleasure of sexual gratification. It was expected that the intimacy be intellectually stimulating, and that the older male would look to the education of the younger male, and behave towards him in a sensitive way.

One can readily see the dangers inherent in the pederasty that was generally accepted in the Greco-Roman world: dangers in the unequal nature of the relationship, in its impermanency, and in the occasion it provides for abuse and humiliation. However, the point being made here is that the culture saw its advantages as outweighing its disadvantages. Laws were enacted to protect young males against sexual harassment and rape, and moralists condemned those who ran brothels, and those males who made a living out of offering their sexual services to older males, but pederasty of the kind we have described was widely encouraged. See mbfallon.com for more on this topic.

Given this backdrop and context, one must be careful not to assume that the biblical condemnation of obviously destructive sexual acts – male prostitution and pederasty, for instance – is inclusive of all same sex attracted actions, let alone the nature of sexual orientation.

Alas, too many of the Christians we hear from in the public square treat (and quote) the Bible as though it were proof text; a text set in stone that cannot, and must not, be contextualized. Thus, and especially in the case of homosexuality, they trot out a couple of favoured verses in order to condemn a particular group.

These imposters, these false prophets do untold damage to the beauty and truth of Christianity.

They are purveyors of a cruel, 'lower case' god: a god created in the image of man.

They seem to have little sense of the God that pervades and transcends the 13.78 billion year old cosmos: The God of utter Selflessness and Hope and Truth as manifest through Jesus of Nazareth.

This Mystery, this 'Cloud of Unknowing', this Ultimate Reality, this Sheer Act of Existence cannot be contained by the Bible, or by quantum mechanics, or by anything that exists.

That all said, while I have little regard for Mr Folau's theology – his God reductionism; I would still fight tooth and nail for his right to express his opinions.

In the end, it behoves us all to 'tweet others as we would like to be tweeted'! ☺

Liberation

JOHN HILL

John Hill reflects on 70's priestly life in the Philippines and the hope for a new look at today's church.

Reading the Swag does give me a sense of belonging to a tradition I was brought up in. After reading the article of Eric Hodgens in the autumn edition of *The Swag* and the meaningful eulogy of Bernie Moylan on his mate Kevin Flanagan I started to reflect about my own faith and the way I envisaged priesthood going back to close on 50 years when I was stationed in the southern Philippines as a pastor in a township there.

I wanted to view the impact that institutional Catholicism had then and to revisit it and see it afresh from another perspective. That is why the article of Eric Hodgens made such an impression on the way Catholicism has been seen through the prism of time and how it seemingly has strayed from its original purpose to become almost insignificant in terms of the Gospel story. I sense the restorationism of the German and Polish popes has sadly led to that demise.

So I decided to reflect on my days as a pastor of a parish in Northern Mindanao in the early and mid 1970's and how much of this seemed to fit into the way Hodgens sees the institution now and the hope he sees for the church of the future. At the same time I was able to look at the life, the values and the ideals of an authentic priesthood through the life of Kevin Flanagan.

Let me start with the way my community in that township in Mindanao perceived the Jesus of History, that same Jesus who was at the heart of their Catholic faith. Remembering that this was in the early 1970's and liberation theology had not been decimated until later by the arrival of the Polish pope.

With the support of the local bishop we set up a programme of Basic Christian Communities. Its purpose was about changing basic power relations by conscientizing peasants, labourers and in turn mobilizing them to social action with the communities they were part of. We were using Catholic symbols, practices and narratives interpreted in the light of Vatican II. The purpose was for large scale social and political change resulting in a redistribution of resources and political power. This was introduced at the village

level primarily through seminars and Eucharistic gatherings. It was all to do with grass roots initiatives. It was the relative role of the institution versus the knowledge and the aims of the local people.

The ultimate aim was to change religious and social consciousness and to stimulate social justice. All of this was during the tyrannical reign of the Marcos regime where fear and harassment were dominant factors in the community at large.

We were on about Jesus and Human Liberation. We were learning that the Messiah wanted to free his people from the yoke of imperialism. He was about loaves and fishes not the corridors of power. When we see what opportunistic politicians and some ambitious church authorities, so often devoid of truth, are doing in present day Australia the similarities sadly enough become too apparent.

For our parishioners the life of Jesus ended up in many ways a failure. So the focus was very much on the human face of Jesus. The Jesus hanging painfully from the cross unsure what is happening after death. He was fearful of dying to his own personal world as well as of his own body. Being human he had no insight into the God who he knew as his Father. He was tried as a seditious rebel and subsequently condemned as one.

We would sit on the dirt floor during a Eucharistic meal listening to their stories relating to their interpretation of the gospel reading for the day. This Eucharistic meal shared became a witness for the participants to identify with the early followers of Jesus who understood the social message and they in turn gave primacy to building a community of love seen through the breaking of bread, the sharing of goods and seeing that no one among them was in need. This was a witness to love and a confrontation to the false values that were so readily perpetuated by forces outside their little community, those being the forces of Marcos and his cronies.

When we observe here in our own country just how low we have sunk with the happenings on Manus, Nauru and the

exclusion of aborigines to their constitutional rights we have a sense of frustration feeling we can do very little. Just imagine what our community in northern Mindanao felt with the juggernaut powers of Martial law going against them. Yet as history showed it was People Power that in time won through. This can be a lesson for us who are presently saddled with opportunistic and expedient politicians shredding the good name of our country for no other reason than to retain power.

That was why sharing the Eucharist in a community that had a real Catholic heart and true vision made it so enriching. From my own experience of those decades past I can start to understand that the obstacles to genuine love are to do with selfishness, fear and insecurity. Until an institution like the Catholic Church can face up to this then it has no future in the light of the teachings of Jesus.

We are talking about deeds and not merely words. We can ask why Rome for over 30 years centralised its authority. May it not have been the fear of losing its privileged position and the many benefits it acquired in becoming the servant of Caesar instead of the servant of the Gospel teachings.

The role of genuine Catholicity and Christianity in general is to be a part of a community identifying with the sufferings of the men, women and children of our time. This is all about us and we can deal with it in one of two ways. We can analyse the situation first in our own country and then in our world. As a church we can no longer take on the mantle of being status quo orientated.

We are part of an upside down world, like Sisyphus perpetually lugging the boulder up the hill only to seeing it come down again. So unless structures change the myth of Sisyphus will be part of our church. Until there is liberation from the religious structures which embodied sin then there is no hope for the Jesus story to resurface.

We need to rediscover our own dynamism as followers of the Jesus message. The YCW mantra 'see, judge, act' can be the start. The other option is to ignore it completely and it is there that hope disappears and the secular world will look for answers elsewhere and the church becomes totally meaningless to the message of the crucified one. ☪

Australia, land of the Holy Spirit

JOHN SCANLON

John Scanlon sees the feast of Pentecost as a time to live the vision of many voices in Australia

On a number of occasions since the start of this year, public discourse in Australia has questioned how many of the people living in Australia are truly Australian. This question always gets an airing in the weeks leading up to Australia Day, because of the inherent conflict between those who want to celebrate the beginning of European settlement and those of our indigenous peoples who regard this anniversary as Invasion Day. This year the question has also been raised in proposals by Peter Dutton, the arch-defender of Australia's borders against (non-white) foreign presences and ideas. Much of the current debate about population policy and immigration levels is also being driven by views that real Australians must spring from European Christian cultures.

The Historical Background

Moved by those who ignore or deny the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Australian population, I have been thinking about the Portuguese navigator de Quiros and his name for the huge land mass that he sought in 1606 but never reached: *Terra Australis del Espiritu Santo*, the South Land of the Holy Spirit. In naming it thus, he made an unwitting prophecy of what Australia would eventually become; one of the most diverse mixes of ethnicities and cultures ever to form a nation. It was not so in the beginning, as the first sixty thousand-odd years of human settlement was by peoples whose cultural and ethnic similarities were more marked than their differences. Then within a remarkably short time from the beginning of European settlement, the exploding white population overpowered and dispossessed the indigenous peoples and left them submerged and almost invisible. The indigenous were not even counted as part of the population. Within one hundred and sixty years a white monoculture had virtually replaced the indigenous monoculture. Non-European migrants were a tiny minority.

Another seventy years further on, and starting with post-World War II refugee admissions and assisted migration schemes, the Australian population has changed almost beyond recognition. About half of us were born outside Australia or had at least one parent born elsewhere. Migrants come here from all over the world, as refugees, through family reunions, because

of their skills or because they are rich. Those of us who are old enough to remember the White Australia Policy will fully understand how different a country we have become.

The Multicultural Australian Church

The universality of the Catholic Church is reflected in the mix of nationalities that immigration has brought about in Australian parishes, at least in the larger cities. My parish in Sydney's Inner West is far from extreme in its ethnic mix, though the parish primary school enrolls children from over forty countries. I would guess that for at least half of the regular churchgoers, their first language is not English. On our patronal feast day we have prayers of the faithful in a number of languages. Over the years these would have included Arabic, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Bahasa, Malayalam, Samoan, Fijian and Nigerian Igbo, as well as Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Maltese, Romanian and Polish.

Our current parish clergy come from New Zealand, Uganda and Malta. Men born in Vietnam and Malaysia preceded them. Australia already has two bishops of Asian ethnicity and surely there will be more. Priests of European ancestry are becoming less visible as Australian dioceses import priests from Africa, India and East Asia. The importation of priests born and trained in other countries and cultures is not without serious problems, but unless or until the requirement for a celibate priesthood is changed, there seems to be no prospect of doing without them.

Diversity of languages and the Holy Spirit

Before the immigration explosion seventy years ago, our prayers at the patronal feast would have been dismissed as a Babel of tongues. Now we take a much more constructive view of diversity, and the biblical reference we think of is not the Tower of Babel but rather the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Of all the ways in which we describe the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, for me the most powerful has always been the passage in the Acts of the Apostles that narrates the events of that first Pentecost following Christ's ascension. The shared understanding of the Gospel message by

speakers of many different languages is a figure of the universal church to come, but it also has a particular meaning for the highly diverse church in Australia. If we Australians honour and treasure our ethnic and cultural diversity, we may become worthy to call ourselves what de Quiros first called us long ago; the Land of the Holy Spirit.

Parish Celebration of the Holy Spirit

The celebration of the feast of Pentecost in the Australian church tends to be quite low key, and jarringly so when one considers the significance of the feast. At Easter time some members of our parish, still feeling euphoric at the end of Holy Week, decided to try something as an element of our Pentecost observance that would increase the impact of the feast in the parish. The Lectionary and Missal do contain a Vigil, but the texts are not particularly inspiring and the ceremony has nowhere near the impact of the Easter Vigil.

Instead we have drawn up a paraliturgy which we term a 'Celebration of the Holy Spirit in Music and Readings', which will take place in the evening of Pentecost Sunday. The feast is still three weeks away as I write and some details are still to be settled, but basically the event includes three congregational hymns, four motets performed by an *acappella* choir on texts related to Pentecost or the Holy Spirit, and four readings. Three of the motets will be sung in Latin, as we see this kind of paraliturgy as the most suitable vehicle for maintaining a connection with our church heritage of Latin vocal music.

The readings we have chosen begin with the descent of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2: 1-11. It will already have been heard as the first reading in the Mass of the day, but it easily bears repetition. The second reading is Romans 8: 22-27, which comes from the Pentecost Vigil Mass. Next is John 15: 9-12, 26-27, which is a section of Christ's last supper discourse that precedes the Gospel from the Mass of Pentecost day. There are several possible candidates for the final reading, but my personal favourite is taken from the Office of Readings for the Saturday before Pentecost. It is a reading from an Exposition of Ecclesiastes by the sixth century Bishop St. Gregory of Agrigentum, and has as its theme 'the Church in its unity speaks in the language of every nation'.

I commend the idea of such a celebration to any parishes who would like to celebrate Pentecost more deeply. ☪

Catastrophe! Possibilities from the Scriptures in a difficult time

KEVIN HORSELL

Kevin Horsell, Adelaide, offers the stories of the prophets as a way through the challenging times after the Royal Commission.

Many of us have probably come to see the Royal Commission into Institution Responses to Child Abuse and its aftermath as an unmitigated catastrophe for our Church in Australia – as have Catholics in other parts of our world to issues in their own jurisdictions. Many years ago in my seminary studies I came across the book by Peter Ackroyd *Exile And Restoration*, a study of the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem and the subsequent exile of many of the leading citizens of Judah in and around Babylon, and the resettlement of some of their descendants back in Jerusalem. We must remember, of course, that the destruction of Jerusalem was accompanied by much death and destruction, and most likely plenty of sexual violence as well (see Isaiah's curse on Babylon 13:16); our humbling is nothing compared to that violence. Nor should our shame be compared to what happened to our Church's victims; we will survive it, many of the victims have not.

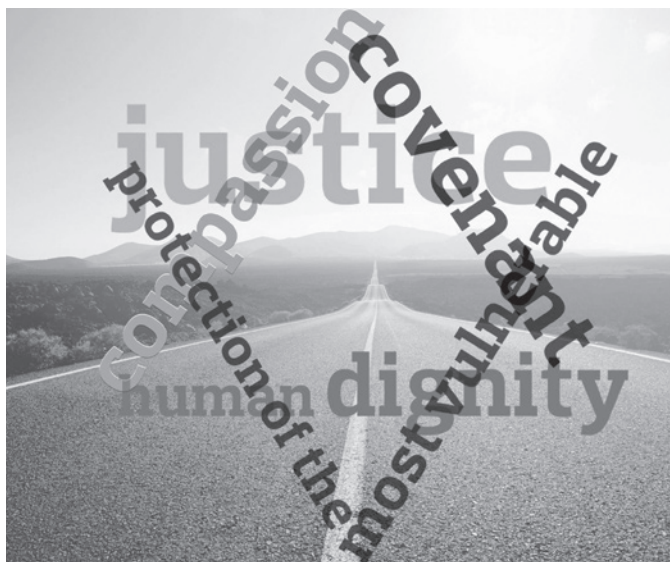
What brought Jerusalem to destruction?

Judah and Jerusalem just got sandwiched in the hurly burly of big power politics is one possible answer. But it was also a victim of self serving delusion and yes men for leaders. It was Isaiah around a hundred years earlier during the great siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian Sennacherib who laid the foundations for some of the self delusion (Is 37: 33-35 or 2 K19:32-34); 100 years later Jeremiah had to struggle hard against this notion of the invincibility of Jerusalem thanks to the presence of the Lord's Temple in the city, reminding them that there had once been a Temple in Shiloh, which despite the presence of the Ark of God was burnt down (Jer 7: 13-15).

The last effective king in Jerusalem was Josiah, but the city and royal family over which he ruled were rent with deep divisions; there were pro Egyptian, pro Babylonian, pro Assyrian and pro exerting national independence factions – and lots of ambassadors and emissaries at work amongst the political elite to sway their plans in what they considered appropriate

directions [ancient politics was no different from the ways it is played out today].

When Josiah died leading his army against an Egyptian attempt to bolster the flagging Assyrians against a Babylonian uprising, Judah went through a quick succession of kings, just like its northern neighbour Israel had a little over a century earlier. The first of these was Jehoahaz [Shallum] who was installed by the country people [big landowners, not peasants!]; his reign was short, being imprisoned by the Egyptians, and replaced by a half brother renamed Jehoiakim. This Egyptian puppet was a thoroughly self serving nasty character, but had only a few years of peace



before this lackey was forced to capitulate to Babylonian power on his borders.

Eventually this pro Egyptian was tempted by a new ruler in Egypt to buck Babylonian authority, and Jerusalem was besieged in 599 BCE; during the siege Jehoiakim died, leaving his eldest son to run up the white flag. The Babylonians stripped Jerusalem of most of its human and financial resources, deporting a sizeable proportion of the royal family and upper classes, priests, military and craftspeople off to Babylon – Ezekiel was among those in this first wave of exiles, while Jeremiah was released from prison and remained in Jerusalem. The Babylonians then put their own yes-man in place, a full brother of Jehoahaz, and renamed him Zedekiah. But the factions in Jerusalem remained, and Zedekiah was the

epitome of that saying -: *I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure*. He was captive to the last person who gave him advice, bad or good, and eventually led Judah into another attempt to throw off the shackles of Babylon.

In late 589 the Babylonians lay siege to Jerusalem which held out for 18 months until Zedekiah and the royal guard made a run for it; he was captured and his family executed, The Babylonians then proceeded to round up and deport more of the survivors to Babylon, appointing an administrator to look after their interests in the area. More civil chaos ensued, with some of the survivors heading to Egypt, including Jeremiah (against his will) while there are suggestions of yet another or more rounds of deportation to Babylon in the 580's BCE. See 2 Kings 23: 28 to the end of the book for the history of this era.

Reaction to catastrophe – see, I told you so!

This reaction can be seen most typically in the Deuteronomic History editing of what we call the history books – Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, It was in the reign of Josiah that a mysterious book, probably the core of the Book of Deuteronomy, was discovered in a renovation of the Temple (2 K 22); interestingly it is a female prophet who is called upon to authenticate it as God's Word (2 K 22: 14-20). The editorials dotted throughout the books give the judgments on the reigns of individual rulers as well as the key events of the story. The

judgment on the fall of the Northern Kingdom, Israel 2 K 17:7-23 is typical of these 'I told you so' editorials. But a feature of all of the reactions is a note of hope for the future, in this case the release of Jehoiachin which marks the end of the Second Book of Kings (2 K 25: 27-30).

Reaction to catastrophe – woe is me!

This approach to disaster is best seen in the Book of Lamentations with its cycles of acrostic poems detailing the disasters of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. One of the key images used over and over again is that of the daughter of Sion/ daughter of Judah to represent the city. This image was used much earlier in Isaiah 37:33-35. Ezekiel pours scorn on this image of self pity in an unflattering description of his people not as offspring of the virgin daughter of Sion but of an unwanted

Continued page 28

daughter of a street prostitute who despite the love and care lavished upon her by God goes back to her mother's old job (Ezek 16). Perhaps a good example of the woe is me approach is seen in Lam 1: 17; Lam 2 even pictures God making war on God's own people. But again there is a note of hope even in the desolation of these verses: Lam 3: 21-31 – the favours of the Lord are not all past ... Perhaps we might do well to paraphrase that old refrain from the use of Lamentations in the Matins Office of Holy Week -: Ecclesia, ecclesia, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

Reaction to catastrophe – It's someone else's fault.

Again we take a lead from Lamentations, or what was called the Prayer of Jeremiah with its attribution of blame for the disaster on 'our fathers' Lam 5: 7. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel tackle this via a popular self-serving proverb which runs: *the fathers have eaten unripe sour grapes, the children's teeth are set on edge*; Jer 31:29 and Ezek 18:2. Jeremiah simply affirms individual responsibility when dealing with this proverb, while Ezekiel devotes an entire chapter to examining the issue from every possible angle (Jer 31:29f; Ezek 18); it is also tackled again in Ezek 33:10-20. In Jeremiah the proverb is followed by the possibility of a new covenant, and the promise of a rebuilt nation and Jerusalem. Ezekiel ends with the chapters in the 40's looking to a magnificently rebuilt Jerusalem.

Making sense of the catastrophe – Why me?

In Jeremiah we find a few passages which seem to be the prophet's personal reflections on the hardships he faces doing God's work. These include Jer 11:18-23, a warning of danger in his own country district; in Jer 15:10-21 the prophet has another whinge to God. Jeremiah has more whines in 18:18-23, and in 20:7-18 we begin with a shocking image of rape by God, a reminder that often translations (right from the ancient Greek Septuagint) have toned down the very colourful language of the original Hebrew. Now while no doubt we might think we have been raped by the media and wish those last verses of Psalm 137 (V136) are visited upon them, the messages we probably need to hear are from Jer 20:11, God is at our side, and, less comforting, the 'get back to work' message from Jer 15:19. Ezekiel, on the other hand, does not seem to have shared in Jeremiah's doubts, possibly because he was 'safe' in exile near Babylon, while all hell broke loose in and around Jerusalem with mob violence, sieges and an all out assault on Jerusalem and its citizens.

Making sense of the catastrophe – Where are we now?

There seem to be two quite different approaches to where we are now; the more comforting comes out of Jeremiah, and as the line of least resistance might be where we shall go. Jeremiah seems to imply that the destruction of Jerusalem, while it was definitely avoidable by following God's Law, was like lancing a boil – eventually healing would take place in God's good time; the suggestion of seventy years is often referred to especially by fundamentalists (Jer 25:11-12), though Jeremiah is probably just alluding to a good span of human life!

The less comforting is in Ezekiel in the chapters in the mid to late 30's where we get glimpses of ways forward, as well as the state of God's people in exile. The most difficult to understand perhaps is that image from Ezek 36: 16-38, a reading from our Easter Vigil liturgy, picked up no doubt for its renewal by water imagery, but the key is to focus on the image of defilement-: God's people defiled their own land, given to them by God, and by their continued lack of repentance are blackening God's good name amongst the pagans. The idea of a new heart and new spirit is also picked up by Jeremiah 31: 31-34. But Ezekiel's ideas flow naturally into that famous image with which chapter 37 begins: the valley of dry bones. I have struggled to hear anything like repentance in my own reactions to the Royal Commission, and have heard nothing like repentance from the lips or actions of our Church leaders during or after the Commission; all we hear are corporate weasel words and legal gobbledegook. It is worth remembering that for all the mentions of God's Law in the pages of the Scriptures it is a struggle to think of any scripture passages presenting lawyers in a good light! I suspect Ezekiel might say we are indeed continuing to defile God's land and blacken God's good name, and may not be ready for God's renewing Spirit to breathe life into us again.

Ways forward?

This area is far too overwhelming to deal with easily, given the number of books in our scriptural tradition reflecting the resettlement and rebuilding of Jerusalem. But there is a word of warning from Ezekiel: his condemnation of the shepherds of Israel. It is no accident that John's gospel alludes to this in its pictures of the Good Shepherd; pictures we often forget are loaded with censure of Jerusalem's shepherds, the High Priestly clan as the fleeing shepherds of Ezek 34. Jeremiah

also uses similar imagery in his repeated hopes for a new leader bearing the name of Zedekiah, but with the elements reversed – the opposite of what we've actually got (Jer 23: 1-8; repeated 33:14-18). Ezek 34:17-23 also contains a reminder to care for the weak and under-resourced – we are all in Ezekiel's sights, all called to the sort of justice and inclusiveness of the third strand of tradition in Isaiah: chapters 56 onwards. Particularly relevant is Isaiah 58 with its rebuke of the returning descendants of Jerusalem's elite trying to recreate the very social institutions that Jeremiah and Ezekiel preached had landed their ancestors in Babylon in the first place.

Might the Plenary Council help point us in good directions, or will it be so controlled and scripted that we end up replicating what has already led to catastrophe?

A good suggestion as our Church prepares to look at ways forward to deal with our issues might be to once again reflectively read those great prophets straddling the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. I know it's difficult, as Jeremiah has not come down to us particularly well edited thematically or chronologically; it jumps all over the place, and is repetitive; but a good guide is to remember the first 25 chapters have a mostly negative spin, while from 26 onwards even the detailing of disasters is accompanied by a hopeful outlook. Ezekiel is frankly tedious at times, especially when we get to his hopes and visions for Jerusalem rebuilt (40 onwards); a good way to overcome the tedium is to let our imagination wander into all those rude words we're not supposed to use – they are there in abundance in the original Hebrew, why the book barely made it into the Hebrew Canon of Scripture.

If we do not have time for the long reflection, a shorter one from the words attributed to Jesus might barely suffice: Matthew 23 – words for ancient opponents of Jesus and/or early Christians or a mirror for our own time?

Maybe our local Church will once again reflect that beautiful image with which Ezekiel ends, the life-giving stream bringing health and goodness from the Holy of Holies in God's rebuilt Temple. And we should remember the Hebrew Bible, whose very different ordering of many of the Books from our Christian traditional ordering ends with a note of hope after the catastrophe of the second destruction of Jerusalem in 70CE in its very last words: 2 Chr. 36:22-23 – Cyrus giving permission for the exiles in Babylon to return and rebuild. ☪

The Plenary Council – can it be a people’s voice?

PATRICK POWER

Pat Power, retired bishop of Canberra & Goulburn Archdiocese, explores the challenges facing the organisers of the 2020 Plenary Council if it is to include the voices regularly silenced in church discourse.

The Plenary Council planned for 2020-21 gives rise to great hopes and some anxiety as the Catholic Church in Australia and indeed worldwide faces the greatest challenge of the modern era. As a church “always in need of reform” we are continually confronted by the need to read the signs of the time and to respond in the light of the Gospel.

Listening must be a key part of the whole Plenary Council preparation. It was heartening to hear of Archbishop Timothy Costelloe’s encouragement to all Catholics, whether devout or disillusioned, fervent or frustrated, to give voice to what is on their minds and hearts.

I must say that I was somewhat taken aback by the emphasis placed on Pope Francis’ approval of the Plenary Council. It was even stated in the Australian Bishops’ commentary that the delay in the Vatican’s approval was that they needed to see the agenda to assess what topics would be addressed.

What I have learned from Pope Francis’ five years as a truly Holy Father has been his willingness to listen and to reach out to all kinds of people in every situation he encounters. He doesn’t seem to decide in advance whom he will listen to or whom he will meet. His informal media conferences, usually on a plane, are particularly revealing of his truly pastoral heart and mind. He does not come across to me as someone who is strongly committed to set agendas. He is a true disciple of Jesus in that he meets people ‘where they are at’. He welcomes being blessed by others, before presuming to reach out in blessing to them.

I have sympathy for those planning the Plenary Council if they feel so bound by constraints of traditional theology and canon law that they are inhibited in fully listening to the voices of the faithful in the way that Archbishop Costelloe is inviting them to respond. But if the Council is to begin to succeed, there must be a genuine willingness to listen to and confront the hard questions which are facing the Church in Australia today.

Archbishop Costelloe is putting it mildly when he suggests that some Catholics may be frustrated or disillusioned. There is a

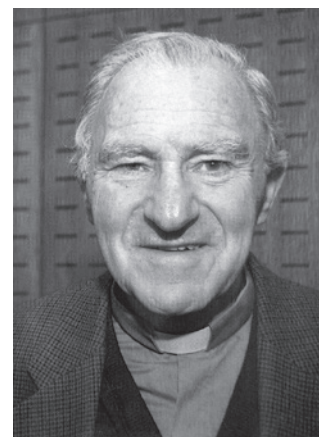
whole body of loyal and dedicated Catholics who have left the Church in the past fifty years. Many of them tell me *I have not abandoned the Church, the Church has abandoned me.*

Much of the disenchantment has come from a failure to carry forward the hopes and vision provided by the Second Vatican Council. The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World began with the prophetic words: *The joys and the hopes, griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, particularly those who are in any way poor or afflicted, these too must be the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of all the followers of Christ.*

Those hopes for Vatican II began to fade in 1968, a few years after the close of the Council with Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on birth control. Pope Paul went against the majority report of his own commission in responding as he did. It is said that he feared that to have followed the advice of his expert advisers, he would have undermined the authority of papal teaching by going against the 1930 papal decree *Casti Connubii*. In fact, Pope Paul’s decision, which I understand caused him great pain, effectively undermined much of papal authority because it was never truly received by the body of the faithful. Loyal Catholics rightly began to recognise the primacy of conscience in seeking to live out their marital love in a joyful and fruitful manner. Sadly many married people in varying degrees felt they could no longer be part of the Church. Many good priests felt unable to uphold the papal edict and resigned from active ministry.

It is interesting that the two things explicitly excluded from discussion at the Second Vatican Council by Pope Paul were the matters of birth control and compulsory celibacy of the clergy. Refusal to re-examine these crucial issues by successive Popes has caused great harm to the mission and credibility of the Catholic Church. It is said that Pope Paul was so unsettled by the aftermath of *Humanae Vitae* that he never wrote another encyclical.

Pope John Paul II’s long pontificate was a mixed blessing. His charismatic leadership and engaging personality touched many



people well beyond the Catholic Church. His role in the down-fall of totalitarian communism guarantees him an important part in modern world history. His appeal to young people especially at World Youth Day events made a real impact on those participating. He was a ‘father’ of Vatican II, but I would argue that much of its implementation was steered off course under his time as Pope. Certainly, here in Australia, bishops and male clergy felt intimidated in giving effective leadership for fear of being branded ‘disloyal to Rome’. I have to say that for most of my time as an ‘active’ bishop from 1986 to 2012, I was in trouble with the Vatican for giving voice to what I believed were the concerns of loyal Catholics. My fate was mild in comparison with what was suffered by Bishops Bill Morris and Geoff Robinson who gave such prophetic leadership to the Australian Church.

It is only one perspective, but I am convinced that much of the above is relevant to our approach to the Plenary Council. Unless there is a genuine willingness to listen to the hard questions facing the Church in Australia today, there will be an opportunity lost.

The many questions arising out of the Royal Commission are basic to the reform needed in the Catholic Church today. So much of the culture which has been male and clerically dominated must be fundamentally challenged. So many good Catholics are saying that the Australian Church would not be in its present parlous position if women had been in effective decision-making roles at all levels of the Church in its recent history. Pope John Paul’s 1993 ban on the discussion of the question of the ordination of women should not prevent the issue being further examined. The unique gifts of women need to be brought to the fore in every aspect of the life and mission of the Church.

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FEATURES

The Australian bishops have done much to encourage the participation of young people in the life of the Church. Regional and national gatherings of young people give rise to great hope. The young people's joy, enthusiasm and active role in so many areas are a source of great heart at a time when such a boost is sorely needed. It would be a pity if their outreach did not extend to the many other young people who are caught up in drug abuse, suffering mental illness, homelessness, family and sexual violence, and those who do not find much joy in living. Where does Jesus fit into all those scenarios?

Sadly, much of the Church's teaching on sexuality over the years has been overly

negative. I made that admission in 1998 to a group of Rainbow Sash people who presented themselves at St Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra, a week after a similar group had done so in St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. I asked them not to present themselves for Holy Communion, but I stated then what I have just written and said that the Church's teaching not only on homosexuality, but on sexuality generally needed to be re-formulated. I invited the parishioners to join me in greeting the 'protestors' on the Cathedral steps after Mass. The actions and voices of the faithful that day helped many homosexual people to find acceptance from the Church in a way they had not previously experienced. I believe that in the light of the same-sex

marriage debate and referendum, the Plenary Council must be open to serious listening in this whole area, a listening that involves gay people themselves, their families and those who are expert in this very complex area. Again, the input of women will be vital.

These are a few scattered reflections written on the fifth anniversary of the inauguration of Pope Francis. I am sure that confident leadership from every part of the Australian Church in the lead-up to the Plenary Council will give support and validation to all that Pope Francis is seeking to achieve (despite considerable opposition) as our universal pastor. ☪



Four days in Pakistan

BRIAN LUCAS

Brian Lucas, Director of Catholic Mission, reflects on arranged marriages and seminaries in Pakistan after a recent visit there.



The concerns of the young people who are wrestling with the custom of arranged marriage are far removed from the same-sex marriage debate we have had in Australia. It was a good reminder that the meaning of marriage varies significantly among different cultures.

Catholics make up barely 1% of the Pakistan population. Survival largely depends on leadership holding the community together and a Catholic school is a vital tool. The second question at my

gathering was from a man who, almost in tears, pleaded for a school for his village of 200 Catholic families.

Waseem and his assistant have a parish comprising about 2,000 families. I visited four of his eight churches, each lead by a lay catechist. Four schools use the church buildings during the week. We visited Gojra, about two hours drive from Faisalabad for a gathering of 350 children from local parishes supporting the Society of Holy Childhood.

Anti-Christian sentiment in government schools means that often children leave school early and without an education are left to fend for a living in the brickworks

or on the streets. Christians find it hard to thrive in business due to discrimination and boycotts. The professions provide their best prospects which reinforces the importance of education.

I had the opportunity to meet with Fr Asif John the rector of the philosophy seminary in Lahore. He has currently 83 students in the three years of philosophy before they move to Karachi for their theology course. He told me how committed the students were and how they saw their role as providing leadership and encouragement to the Catholic community.

He said it was important for the seminarians to have a good education and formation so they were secure in their vocation and could serve their communities through the sacraments and teaching the faith. They spend 2 – 3 years in a pre-seminary formation programme after they have graduated from high school before beginning philosophy.

A couple of weeks later when in Rome for meetings of the Pontifical Mission Societies I caught up with two Pakistan seminarians and a deacon at the Collegio Urbano.

Amoon was 15 years old when he stood on the roof of the parish house watching the church burning. He was with his father who was the parish catechist and the parish priest. They lived in the diocese of Hyderabad.

Some Muslim youth had heard rumours that a Christian had mocked their religion and they set fire to two churches. The feeling of helplessness and sense of danger left Amoon in tears. The next day the parishioners rallied around to begin to

What happens in Australia if a girl does not want to marry the boy? This was the first question asked at a gathering of young people in the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption in Faisalabad, Pakistan last October.

I was visiting at the invitation of the Pontifical Mission Societies Pakistan National Director, Fr Waseem Walter (pictured) who had asked me to give some workshops and talks to his diocesan directors and parish co-ordinators.

I was treated like a rock star (which was somewhat unsettling) but fitting in with local custom is critical in maintain good relations.

repair their church and Amoon got involved as well. 'They were all crying and upset', he said, 'but they were determined not to be defeated by their fear.' It was this that Amoon began to think about becoming a priest.

He wanted to do something important to help the community maintain their faith and show the power of Christian love in their community.

Amoon is now 27, has completed his philosophy course, and is now in the first year of his theology studies. Joining Amoon that evening in Rome were Adil Albert, a fellow seminarian from the Hyderabad diocese, and Deacon Adnan Rasheed from the Lahore Diocese. Adnan is finishing his postgraduate study in missiology.

Adil is from the Parkari Koli tribal community in the south of Pakistan. He is the first from his tribe to be in Rome and the first from Hyderabad to come to Rome. The Pakistan tribal people are very poor, often nomadic and without any land security.

Adil told me how fortunate he was. He came into contact with the Columban missionaries in his area, including Australian Columban, Fr Robert McCulloch. As he got to know the priests and got involved in the parish life his vocation developed.

He faced one major challenge and that was finding the means to complete his college education after high school which was necessary before he could be admitted to the major seminary.

He went to work as a labourer in the brickfields to make enough money to start his college education. From there he had the support of the parish and now has a scholarship from the Society of St Peter Apostle, one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies.

He appreciates this opportunity in Rome for a good theological formation so he can return to his diocese and take up his pastoral mission.

It was a real pleasure and privilege to sit down with these three young men and listen to their stories. They are positive about the challenges of their society and understand the realities of discrimination and prejudice. They are young men full of hope and encouragement. They want to make a difference and help the local community and make a better society.

In 2018 Pakistan will be the focus for Catholic Mission's fundraising for the Society of St Peter Apostle. ☪

Becoming human, becoming holy – Pope Francis

CHRISTOPHER OBI

Christopher Obi, Parish Priest, St. Thomas' Parish, Camp Hill, Queensland, analyses the new apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* in a post-structural, post colonial secular world.

As soon as I heard of the new apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 'Rejoice and Be Glad', I immediately began the process of engagement with the text with the same enthusiasm as I had with the exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, The Joy of Love. I have only witnessed three popes: Saint John Paul II, Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis. I prefer to reflect on their papacies as a kind of holistic papacy which synthesizes their thought as a process of 'dynamization' from orthodoxy to ortho-praxis.

The big question I asked myself at the end of my reading was what use would it be to be able to propound the meaning of Christianity [holiness]; to explain many separate facts, if it had no deeper meaning for myself and my life? This question is not entirely original to me but was asked by a Danish thinker, Kierkegaard. It is the understanding that one essential character of becoming holy is in the praxis [action] of a human being that makes the new document, *Rejoice and Be Glad* an interesting read. For the fundamental substratum for becoming holy is grounded on our experience as human beings caught up in the 'active commerce of worldly realities'. Any acts of withdrawal or *fuga mundi*, fleeing from the world of 'the other' tantamount to an escapist illusion. I say this without prejudice to the contemplative lifestyle of those whose prayers have been our strength of support for the various missions going on around the world. For they too have not escaped into the 'little world' within the monastery as Thomas Merton would say.

The 44 page document took me two days to finish. And for a slow reader like myself reading late into the night was also a big deal. The truth is, I was trying to be 'in-the-world' with this document, to engage it, and translate it into whom am called to become – holy as my heavenly Father is. Initially, this would sound unachievable, but this new document beautifully suggests otherwise by God's grace. I discovered in my reading that the very fact of existence lies in becoming. There is a kind of trans-substantiation of



Heraclitus *omnia flux*, where experiences and events are constantly changing. This turns towards regaining and renewal of self within the continuum of time. Holiness as a way of life, therefore, meant for me I must share, I must advance, I must relate, I must pass-over, and I must be capable of response, of creative response. These claims are usually the starting point of every good human enterprise as Martin Buber succinctly puts it, 'all real living is meeting.' Hence, becoming human and becoming holy, it is about the real meeting of both actuality and potency. An encounter between my weaknesses, frailty, and God's power of grace [no.34]. In fact, it is about my being, my action, and my becoming relational.

Interestingly, the document was proposing for the world the call to holiness in a practical way [no.2]. At the end of one's reading, the idea of holiness ceases to be a herculean project. It was no longer a sign of contradiction for an existing individual who might think of the canonized and beatified as solely meriting it. In fact, the way of holiness suggested in this new document is not rocket science. It is the *complexus* of everyday activities as a human being each in her or his way [no.11]. Its only requirement is that we exfoliate any trenchant of solipsism. For no one is saved alone but we are saved as a family [no. 6]. However, I am warned to be aware of the

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TARRAWARRA EUCHARISTIC BREADS



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

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subtle detractions in the form of 'disembodied spirituality' which glories in human reason and will.

Many words echo my existential thought pattern. They were for me, a rare treat such as 'middle class of holiness'[no.7], and the 'genius of woman' as feminine styles of holiness [12]; do not be afraid of holiness [32], and become poor in heart where the Lord can enter with his perennial newness [68]; avoid the action which tends to pigeonhole others on the virtue of their ideas, customs, the manner of speaking and dressing [71], and think of ourselves as an army of the forgiven [81]. A true peacemaker is a bridge builder [88], and holiness is not swooning in mystic rapture [96]. Holiness is boldness [129-132] as far as it imitates the 'unafraid God' who is seen on those at the fringes of society [135]. Finally, holiness contemplates the face of Jesus and does not require domestication of the power of the face of Jesus [151]. For me, these words and many more describe one category of existence we share: the relatedness. For 'Being-with' and 'for-other' stands at the center of our ongoing discourse in a pluralist society.

Furthermore, because of the correlation between becoming holy and promoting human flourishing and because holiness does not require a conscious flight from the question, into what sort of person should I grow? I understood the ethical import associated with being holy. I must reclaim Kant's call to duty proposed in his categorical imperative.

Purify it from its excessive humanism by making Jesus Christ not only my 'categorical imperative' but also 'my concrete universal.' Therefore, being human and being holy means, accepting people the way they are and protecting the unborn as much as it is about the rights of women. It involves the constant dialogue between the Christian revisionist and fundamentalist which eschews the hermeneutics of suspicion. I still see in my aspiration of holiness of life, the idea in Paul Ricoeur's 'sympathetic imagination,' because it is about allowing the believing soul to speak from his/her situation, as it is about inhabiting the space of that soul to understand how he/she feels. In other words, the Church should not revert to those self-referential and triumphal days before the Second Vatican Council. Our mission is to seek a way of being Church for a 'post-modern' world and share in her anxieties and joys.

The idea of becoming holy in a secular world should not sound utopic. For me, globalization is weighed by how much it

serves the promotion of human person integrally considered. Free trade and economic policies between the West and continents like Africa must help to enhance and develop the dignity of all human persons. For holiness is justice per se. Otherwise, at its best, it is one of spirituality jargon and, at its worst, a missing link in the pursuit of happiness in a globally diversified world.

On the other hand, while reflecting on holiness as boldness [129], the idea of witnessing and being open to the paradoxical truth, if we want to retain our sameness we must accept change, should define growth. I think of the continent of Africa. Holiness is the audacity to opt for a government system that works for our continent given the prosperity and abundant resources we have and not to follow the idea of pseudo-democracy sheepishly.

Both politicians and their citizens require the boldness to discern wisely and navigate the fault-lines of religion and ethnicity, political party and nepotism bedeviling respective national states. The danger in all these is the birth of polyhedron faces of multifarious political lacerations on the psyche of ordinary citizens whether Christian, non-religious, Moslem or traditionalist. And as a way out, the growing attitude of *McDonaldization* of God by Pentecostal pastors and miracle Christianity have grown exponentially. Is it surprising that recently in Rwanda the government had to order the shutdown of up to 700 happy-clapper churches due to unsound theology and charlatan trotting out of miracles as if it is on a giveaway prize show.

Other nations are caught up in the tidal wave of contemporary deification of human power. Hence the examples of belligerence in the conflict between Israel and Palestine; the on-going civil war in Syria; Saudi Arabia and her constant actions in Yemen; Russia and her annexation of Crimea and parts of Ukraine; Myanmar and Rohingya crisis, to mention but a few. Adequate steps to overcome these tensions are possible. If we can resist the continuous familiar rhymes of 'it's about territorial protection' or 'self-defense', and acknowledge that while the challenges abound [134], enormous possibilities and probabilities are offered in the perennial 'today' of the risen Lord [173] by the sheer grace of God. We create the space and allow the God of surprises to act still. Truly, *Rejoice and Be Glad*, has declassified the notion of holiness for us.



An authentic audience, Listening Circles confronting sexual abuse

VIC O'CALLAGHAN

Vic O'Callaghan is co-designer of a process that offers safety, secured agreements, and most significantly, a voice for all. He works in schools and communities in Restorative Practices. He talks about his experience of using Listening Circles in Parramatta Diocese as a catalyst for authenticity as we search for effective antidotes to the paralysing and silencing impact of the abuse that still hinders genuine healing.

What happened – the cover up

Late in 2017, John Furner was with a group of ex-students who gathered around at a school reunion. He told them the following story.

One morning, a cousin of mine, Steve Simmonds was in a fight with another boy in our class, Jerry Murdoch. After the altercation, Jerry had to go to the hospital to have his split lip attended to. That afternoon, Steve was expelled from the school by the school principal, Brother X.

My father, Tom Furner, was talking with Steve's father, Uncle Eric when Steve arrived home early from school. Both men were shocked when they heard Steve had been expelled. 'All my six kids go to the Catholic schools,' said Eric. 'What are we going to do now? Anyway, it was a fight between two kids. It doesn't seem anyone at the school tried to sort it out.'

My father Tom spoke reassuringly to Eric, 'Don't worry mate. Steve will be back at school tomorrow morning.'

'What do you mean?' Asked Eric

'I will fix it,' said Tom. 'Steve will soon be back at school.'

Tom walked to his car and drove to the school. He walked into the principal's office and said to Br X: 'If young Steve Symonds is not reinstated in the school tomorrow morning, I will go straight to the police and tell them what you have been doing to my son Geoff.'

Steve was sitting at his desk the next morning.

Eric Symonds told his son Steve about the background to this incident not long before he died. John added that the story explained many unanswered questions about the life of his brother Geoff. Being an A-grade student and top sportsman, Geoff won a scholarship to study engineering at university. Eighteen months into his studies, a sullen Geoff dropped out of university and returned home where he was quickly offered an apprenticeship as an electrician. After two failed marriages and eventual unemployment, Geoff died from liver failure. He was fifty eight years of age.

Two essential questions arise from this event. Firstly, how was Tom able to deliver justice for Steve while he was unable to generate a glimmer of protection for his son, Geoff?

Secondly, what would have happened if Tom had spoken to the police? This story joins the thousands of narratives with similar endings. It was the season of denial. Who would believe an almost incoherent father and his surly son as they made unbelievable accusations against a religious man who had dedicated his life to teaching boys about how to behave in society? Therefore, the father and son had no voice. These were indeed the days where power and coercion enabled a sexual perpetrator to operate with impunity?

Back to the school reunion. Rod Andrews, another ex-student began to speak. He told a story about men who were in a similar position to John's father, Tom Furner.

I was with my Dad at a school working bee where the parents brought their trade equipment to help prepare sporting amenities. A group of fathers were standing around the old school tractor having a beer and talking about stuff. Some of them were upset. They were saying things like, 'This has to stop.' 'We can't let this happen to our boys.' 'Who does he think he is?' I vividly remember one of the men thumping his fists on the bonnet of the tractor saying, 'If someone doesn't do something, I will.'

What was it like for the parents of these boys? Did they feel like bystanders? Did those who carried such secrets die like bystanders? Were their deep memories laced with a gut wrenching sense of being drenched by tears of impotence?

The Royal Commission – authentic listening

The findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Sexual Abuse has been described as a tsunami of suffering and shame. It is now public knowledge that church leaders deliberately hid criminal activities for decades while aiding perpetrators to move to fresh pastures.

What were church leaders thinking? Was the exultation of high office subtly

beguiling, much like the person who has learned to surf a wave? Could they be heard saying, 'The first time you stand on water and begin to move faster than running, something magical is happening. It is like walking on water.'

Was it fear of scandal? Or could denial of natural justice have been driven by hubris and arrogance, two factors that slowly decay the essential trait of leadership we know as humility? Was it a simple fact they did not know what to do? Part of the answer is – all the above.

It takes many decades for behaviour such as this to eat away at the pillars of any organisation. In the case of the church, the betrayal was magnified by the fact that this institution was a paragon of virtue, a symbol of righteousness. In fact, what has been revealed is that the home of forgiveness and truth was powerless against itself? It has taken brave individuals and families to begin to speak. It has been the work of editors and public officers and eventually courageous politicians to advocate for the traumatised.

It has taken parents who have suffered previously unimaginable betrayal, to be awakened by a thirst for justice. They have had to dig deep to mine the courage necessary to speak. Then more was asked of them. Many whistleblowers were castigated and derided within their communities by people who could not believe what they were told. Many have left to find peace and listening ears in other places.

In truth, within the church, the voice of the vulnerable was rendered mute. The Beatitudes had become platitudes. The abused were denied, rejected and further pummelled to be cast as gold diggers and recalcitrants.

These revelations have crushed most within the Church. To be known as Catholic in a bus or on a train is to risk subtle shaming. To be a priest walking across the high school yard is to hear the unfiltered remark, 'There goes another paedophile.' To sense the need to muster caution when speaking with an elderly relative who cannot understand what has happened. The struggle to explain what sexual abuse means to the young and having to say, 'Father' in the same sentence. These are but a few of the crushing moments that will continue for years, even decades.

Listening Circles – finding ourselves

Amid the pain and confusion of the fallout from the Royal Commission, there are

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signs that Catholic communities are beginning to search for understanding. This is a perplexing and devastating issue where questions swirl through the minds of many: Why were the abuses, betrayal, denials, lies and terrible sorrow allowed to happen in the first place and then continue for so long?

At times like this, it is understandable that we ask questions, but often we seek answers that do not survive never ending disclosures.

In the Diocese of Parramatta, a team of three people have been encouraging, training and confirming willing parishioners to conduct a process called 'Listening Circles'. These circles involve people who are or have been occupiers of church pews. The key question is: How have I been impacted by the sexual abuse crisis?

One of the essential elements of this experience is the gathering of an authentic audience where listening and talking can occur.

As Mark Twain wrote, 'Most conversation is a monologue in the presence of witnesses.' We could add, 'Most talk is an exercise in persuasion.' When we are speaking with friends, colleagues or strangers, we wait for the break in transmission to capture 'air time' to tell our story and so validate our version of the truth.

The listening circle turns this process on its head. On average, within a sixty minute period, one person's share of speaking time is ten minutes. This means fifty minutes of listening. A 'talking piece' is passed from one person to the next. No one can speak unless she/he holds the ball. No one comments on what another has said. Total respect is given to each member of the circle, and all comments are in response to a question posed by the facilitator of the circle. All stories remain in the circle.

The audience is authentic because everyone shares a common desire to listen in order to begin to understand what the impact of this crisis looks, sounds like and smells like. The circle contains long-held and unexpressed pain, feelings, impressions, hurts and opinions. Most know someone whose life has been shattered, ceased or altered because of the actions of trusted ones.

While it is the task of the church to identify the grace of forgiveness in our world, there is a growing sense that an essential part of the ritual has been ignored. Before we can forgive, can we first recognise that most people in the church and society have been bystanders?

So how can we gauge and deepen our understanding of the stories of betrayal and silencing of victims? How do we recognise our contributions to the cacophony of excusing and accusing voices? How do we allow the Spirit to lead us in this long and painful journey?



In working with parishes to conduct Listening Circles, there has been one phrase close to the surface, 'What if we open a can of worms?' The phrase should read, 'What will happen to us if we open this can of worms?'

In one parish, during the essential review after a Listening Circle session, a provocative character asked the question, 'What did we find when we opened the can?' Without a moment's hesitation, someone said, 'We found ourselves.'

True, most feel uncertain in unfamiliar circumstances, but vulnerability is necessary for the seeds of courage, faith,

trust and confidence to bubble to the surface.

Always in Scripture, we find stories that mirror today's world. The Hebrew Scriptures are littered with Psalms and stories of characters who stand like dried leaves before a storm. Among them is Job. How like the accent of Job are voices in these listening circles? We hear these voices as we listen to the pain of the shocked and betrayed. Here is the sorrow of the psalmist cracking through the parchment.

Another such story, buried deep in the Gospels, is about the time Jesus asked his disciples to sail their fishing boat to the other side of Lake Galilee. On their way, a storm sweeps across the lake, and all were scared. Jesus calmed the water (Mark 4:35-41). When they reached the other side, Jesus stepped into the shallow water and made his way ashore, alone. As he met dry land, the crowd swallowed him. On the outskirts of the town of Gerasene, he met a man chained in a cave. He was said to be possessed. Jesus spoke with him and listened to him. He heard the demons and expelled them (Mark 5:1-20).

The correlation is clear. We have all weathered many storms, and like the leaders of our church, we opted to stay on the *Bark of St Peter*. But can we rest on our rollicks as we confront the obvious?

Do we merely follow routines and row when our rostered time arrives, or, is it our task in Christ to face this terror, this diabolical and grotesque situation? If we believe God has no favourites (for each of us is Christ in our midst), then we are all called to take part in the renewal of this wounded/human and radiantly/spiritual body we call the church.

Listening and talking will lead us to discover both the damage and the dramatic changes needed to ensure this horror is never repeated. ☪

What to do about vocations?

FRANK O'LOUGHLIN

Frank O'Loughlin, Parish Priest of Sandringham, Victoria, suggests we be aware when praying for or seeking vocations to the priesthood that it is only just and right to do so with a clear understanding of the church in the world approach of the Second Vatican Council.



Sometimes promotional material for vocations or forms of prayer for their increase make me wonder if we ought not be more careful of what we pray for and sometimes indeed that we ought be more aware of what prayer really is.

Christian prayer as we know is about the 'raising of our hearts and minds' to God, to the God who is in no sense begrudging and does not have to be cajoled. Rather he leads us on in our prayer as he has been doing since the time of Abraham, our father in faith. This is the God who brings about change in the hearts and minds lifted up to him, just as he did with that same Abraham and all those biblical characters who followed in his wake.

Prayer for vocations like all prayer is about the opening up of ourselves to God, to the God who assures us that those who seek will find and that those who knock will have the door opened to them. But that God does not say what will be found on seeking or what will be walked into when the door is opened. The response to prayer, whatever our personal feelings may be, is left up to God. Even when it is something urgent that drives us to prayer and we really want what we are seeking, prayer remains always an exercise of the prayer of Jesus: 'Into your hands I commend my spirit'. In prayer we seek to let that prayer of Jesus penetrate us.

When our prayer is not answered as we want it to be, we have to start reviewing what we are praying for in terms of what God's ways may be and how different they may be to our ways. Prayer, by leading us into communion with God, gradually leads us into an ease with the reality that his ways are different from our own. In prayer, our prayer is changed, we are changed.

In praying for vocations we may need to look again at what we are praying for. Are we seeking to impose our solutions onto God? Are we indeed open to changing the way we see things in this case to the way we see priesthood?

The Priesthood and the Church

Aware of the need for ministry in the Church, and especially at this time the need for priestly ministry, one of the things we need to be clear about is what such ministry involves. In this article I will be concerned specifically with the priestly ministry.

If people feel drawn to be a carpenter, a doctor, a nurse, a teacher or whatever else, they have to have some idea of what that particular role involves, of what it will require of them. To be attracted to the particular way of life involved in these professions, people need to have at least some initial understanding of them.

In the case of the priesthood, we are speaking of a role that is essentially tied into the Church and its purpose and identity. The priesthood involves a particular kind of relationship with Christ of course, but that relationship is tied into the life of the Church. It is a ministry in and to the Church, the community of faith. This means that the identity of the Church is a crucial element in understanding the priesthood and so in the attraction of suitable people to fulfill that ministry. This point can raise all sorts of questions about

the faults and failures of the Church and they are indeed relevant. But in this article I want to discuss another issue which is also crucial and unavoidable. And that issue is: what is the Church? what is it for? what is its identity?

For centuries before the movements that led up to the Second Vatican Council, there was a mentality in the Church which could be summed up in the old saying: Outside the Church, no salvation. It is quite some time since this saying has been taken literally but its influence was very strong and all-pervading in the Catholic mentality of those earlier times. In the course of the twentieth century it came down perhaps to something like: inside the Church we are assured of salvation, for those outside the Church that is not so clear.

I want to emphasize that this was not just a matter of theology but of a mentality within the Church. It was part of the mindset of the whole Church and was a major element in the make-up of the Church's identity at that time.

In our days this mentality is no longer credible. Neither believers nor non-believers any longer accept that mentality as a viable way of looking at the world or the Church. One of the consequences of this new situation is that it can make the Church seem unimportant. The Church becomes just an added extra, rather than something integral to the mission of Christ in God's world. Consequently ministry in the Church becomes a part of this added-extra.

Such a situation leaves the Church's sense of identity in a rather confused state. A sense of the Church's identity is crucial to its very being. Unless we can give meaning to the Church's identity today, the number of those belonging to the Church will diminish and the number of people offering themselves for ministry – and for religious life – in that Church will diminish further both in quality and in quantity.

Stimulus to go Forward

Our point of departure for understanding the Church's identity today has to be the Second Vatican Council and what flows from it. Not taking the stance of the Council into account or sidelining it is to set one's sails in such away as not to catch the wind.

The Second Vatican Council sets out the Church's identity in the very first paragraph of its document on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) where it states: *Christ is*

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the light of humanity; and it is accordingly, the heartfelt desire of this sacred Council, being gathered together in the Holy Spirit, that, by proclaiming his gospel to every creature, it may bring to all men (sic) that light of Christ which shines out visibly from the Church. Since the Church, in Christ, is in the nature of a sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men (sic) – she here proposes for the benefit of the faithful and for the whole world, to set forth as clearly as possible, and in the tradition laid down by earlier Councils, her own nature and universal mission.

From this statement the rest of the document unfolds. It is this vision of the Church which takes the place of the earlier vision of the Church summed up in the saying: outside the Church, no salvation. The above fundamental statement about the identity of the Church sees it as related to the rest of humankind not in contraposition to it, and as its servant, not its master. The Church is a sacrament of what God is at work seeking to do in the whole of humankind; it is the sign and instrument of that working of God seeking to bring all human beings into communion with him and with each other.

In the light of this vision of the Church, we are as all other human beings are – save that the light of Christ has shone upon us. What this light of Christ has enabled us to see and receive is not just ours but is God's gift intended for all humankind. It is

indeed given to the Church but given to the Church specifically as the first fruits of the whole harvest of humankind which is yet to be gathered in. In other words, given to the Church as the sign and instrument of God's plan which is for the whole of humankind.

This vision turns the Church toward all that is human. It makes all that is human precious to us because it is humankind which is the object of God's working to bring all to himself. This vision enables us to discern in the joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of humankind the Spirit of God seeking to bring creation to its fulfillment, even in the midst of the groaning of its birth pangs.

What is specific to the Church is Christ. It is the light which he shines upon the human journey which it is the Church's task to reflect. The Church's identity is its relationship to Christ. This is no mean purpose to have as its source of identity. Both the good that is abundant in the whole of creation and the obvious presence of evil in our world require the light of Christ to be shone on them. In that light – the light of his gospel – the signs of God's presence in the world can be discerned as can the signs of the destructiveness of evil.

We cannot afford to have a confused sense of the church's identity; it disables our capacity to act and bear fruit in the societies of which we are an integral part. And this will have its effect on attracting people to ministry.

In calling for vocations to the priesthood – and the religious life – we are asking prospective candidates to put their lives on the line for a specific purpose, a purpose which is essentially tied into the meaning of the Church. To inspire people this needs to be clear. One cannot ask people to put their lives on the line for something which looks like an added extra. One cannot ask people who are genuinely part of the world of their time to step out of that world to take up a vocation which seems separated from it or even alien to it.

Thus the radical importance of our reception of the approaches of the Second Vatican Council. That Council sets the Church on a path which puts it firmly in the society and culture of the contemporary world, a contemporary world which has already undergone significant changes since the closure of that Council. In seeking leaders for the Church, we need people who are able to lead a Catholic people who by and large already belong to the contemporary world and who look for leadership which has a genuine albeit critical appreciation of that world.

The completion of this shift in the awareness of the Church's identity begun by the Second Vatican Council is something which needs to happen throughout the Church and within the Church's present leadership. The issue of vocations sharpens the need for its continuing implementation. ☪

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The Christ-child sign of hope for a modern parish

JOHN HILL

John Hill, parishioner of Kensington Parish in Sydney, imagines the heights to which a local community might rise if, by living gospel faith, we took the simplicity and authenticity of the Christ child of Christmas as a beacon to light our way.



What can we make of our church and our parish? What can our church become?

We are the church in action and we alone can show this to the world by the way we live our lives. Can you imagine standing against a culture that promotes urban sprawl and people running away from the city and instead boldly standing with the poor, the children and those who nobody seems to care about like the detainees suffering on Manus Island and Nauru. Seeing their plight we can rightly be ashamed to identify as Australian. They survive in conditions that can only be described as inhuman. We stand with them in our actions that go beyond mere words. And when we observe the plight of our LGBTI brothers and sisters and the outright rejection by so many of our churches towards them we can rightly question where are the love and acceptance values that Jesus spoke about and lived so fully in his life. It is so easy to lose that flickering light of humanity that makes us care about those who have become strangers in our midst. And as a result we can become casualties of our own religious rigidity.

What kind of church we can truly become. It becomes apparent in investing what little we have, trusting that God will transform our very meagre loaves and fishes into transforming neighbourhoods, feeding people, doing peace education and living out the message of Pope Francis.

We can come to realise that fear doesn't have to be our lot and that true security is not found in the size of our military or the number of weapons we possess but when every human need for food, housing,

healthcare, employment and dignity is met. It is precisely then that we start to fashion peace. Real peace is not found in fear although that is what is continually preached to us by world powers and to which our government in its sycophantic way adheres. Real and genuine peace is found in the ability to search for ways and put into practice the true meaning of Gospel sharing.

Some, if not the majority of Christians, can be tempted to see this as totally impractical and fail to act upon it. But isn't this the Christmas message? The meaning of being born in a manger should hold the key to where true Christian values lie, and yet unfortunately these values seem to lie hidden in so many instances.

Our church, our parish here in Kensington is the sacrament of the salvation of the world. This runs through all the documents from Vatican Council II. In a sense we have become members of a little flock in an immeasurably vast world of non-Christians, many of whom unfortunately are still Christians by name alone.

We have seen and read about the Royal Commission into child abuse with the church being subjected to utter humiliation from the numerous allegations of child abuse perpetrated by some, albeit a small number, of the clergy. As we well know most of these allegations are justified especially when many of our church leaders are called to account. They have admitted that they failed to act in the best interests of the victims and even the church itself. Our hierarchy on the whole has not served us well. Covering up has not served them well and is definitely no Christian excuse.

Our church has lost the certainty it had in the past. It has lost much of its credibility. Now there are no longer those same certainties, no longer the privileges that had been bestowed on it, the honours so readily available based on status and privilege. The Royal Commission shows this ever too clearly.

Yet we the parishioners of Kensington are a Catholic community made up of many cultures that are so enriching. By our profession of faith, our worship and the way we live our lives all of these become the expression of the hidden grace of the Gospels. It is precisely this that we offer to that part of our world yearning for genuine solutions from the heartache of being fed answers that are only superficial, false and offer nothing but a sense of hopelessness.

I believe we must always go back to the Gospels and reflect on what Jesus was trying to get across to us. All it was, was a simple and uncomplicated message of love. This is what a genuine Catholicism is all about. It becomes what we live and breathe. Still it can unfortunately be lost if it is taken for granted. This can happen when we allow arrogance, power and indifference to take precedence over the Gospel story. Those who recognise no humanity in others, lose it in themselves. When this happens the Jesus message becomes lost. Empathy and compassion were the obvious ways that Jesus lived his life.

What we really want on the deepest level of our being is to express that hidden grace inside all of us and to offer it to a world outside which is crying out for it to replace the emptiness that so easily takes over. The gods of mammon, overdevelopment, certainty, power over others and deafness to the needs of our brothers and sisters should disappear in the world of which we are part. It may seem a long shot even a pipe dream but what is held up to us today by the juggernaut forces of the outside world is not working and never will.

In the Christ child we have the tangible, the historical manifestation of the gift of grace we possess and which our God communicates to us as absolutely present, close, inclusive and forgiving. There could be no greater gift than for us to become empowered to be the persons we always wanted to be. We in fact become the gift to a wounded world in need of our personhood because the Christ child has become us. ☺

Eucharist – Sacrament of Transformation

FRANK O'DEA SSS

Frank O'Dea SSS looks at how the transformative nature of the Eucharist needs to be reflected in our lives.

During the Eucharist the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit – an extraordinary phenomenon!

It's very comforting to receive the risen Christ into our spirits when we receive the bread and wine, and we can spend some time in heart to heart contact with the Lord. But we don't go to Mass just to get nice, warm feelings. There's no virtue in just feeling good.

If I walk out of the Church with the same arrogance or selfishness that I had when I entered, then what's the point of going? My attendance has been nothing more than a comforting but useless act of piety.

Personal transformation

The transformation of the bread and wine must lead to a transformation in me. An important ingredient of our spirituality is the need to change frequently. Cardinal Newman once said: *to grow is to change and to have become perfect is to have changed often.*

Ask yourself what do I need to change in my life? Selfishness, pride, overly concerned about material things...? Are you going through a difficult emotional time with anger, jealousy or resentment? Are you trying to break an addiction to alcohol, tobacco or drugs? Is there a physical ailment: a weak heart, diabetes, high blood pressure, the frailty of old age?

Whatever it is, there is a need for transformation and the Eucharist is a powerful instrument of transformation.

How to be Transformed

A very practical way of achieving transformation through the Eucharist comes from *Say But the Word: How the Lord's Supper Can Transform Your Life*, by Theodore Dobson. (Paulist Press, 1984)

The key moment is the Preparation of Gifts which tends to be a neglected part of the ritual. The bread and wine are brought to the altar and handed to the presider who then presents them to the Father by elevating them a little.

The way of transformation is to present ourselves along with the bread and wine to be changed. If it is a physical thing such as

a bodily ailment, then it is appropriate to present this with the bread.

In your imagination you knead (k-n-e-a-d) into the bread your high blood pressure, diabetes etc, and ask the Father for the change you need. Also offer to the Lord in thanksgiving those parts of your body that are in good health.

It is appropriate to present your emotional and spiritual needs with the wine. It's interesting that alcohol, especially the stronger type, is called 'spirits'. So, the matters connected with our spirits and our feelings have an affinity with the wine.

In your imagination you pour your spiritual failings and emotional concerns into the chalice and present these to the Father to be transformed during the Eucharist.

We can easily miss this time. The moment can slip past unless we are alert because frequently the priest says the prayers quietly and often the singing continues through this part of the Mass.

If your eyes are fixed on the hymn book or on the screen you may miss the action at the altar. When I preside I always wait for the musicians to finish so that the people hear these important prayers.

Dobson's Story

Dobson begins his book by telling a beautiful story of how he was healed in this way. He recounts how he was living in a community with an elderly priest who had a heart condition. The two always had opposing sides on issues, and soon found it hard to talk to each other.

One day they had a particularly angry discussion and soon after, Dobson was sitting in a pew while the other man celebrated the Eucharist. Dobson felt the old feelings of animosity arising in him.

Through prayer and intentionality I identified with the bread the angry words that had marked our relationship, and with the wine the feelings of hurt and anger in my heart, asking forgiveness for all... By communion I was begging God for a reconciliation and asking him what I could do to accomplish it. (Dobson, pp. 3-4)

The next time Dobson saw this priest, he was having difficulty walking up the stairs

because of his bad heart. Dobson offered to help and the other man allowed him. From that time they were able to talk to each other again. Their relationship was healed.

Need to Recover Transformation

The failure to present ourselves for transformation has been a serious omission in our Eucharistic spirituality. It must be recovered so that the Eucharist has a practical effect in our lives.

However, there must first of all be the desire to change. It's so easy to go through life quite content with myself as I am. St Augustine used to pray for his own conversion: Lord, make me holy ... but not yet.

This inertia of spirit itself can be put into the chalice – if we are brave enough. This may be where the transformation has to begin.

The action of presenting ourselves for transformation must be done consciously and deliberately; inner transformation doesn't happen automatically.

Transformed into What?

What are we to be transformed into? St Augustine says we are to be transformed into that which we receive, namely, into the risen Christ.

Paul says, Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5). Can any of us dare to say we already have the mind of Christ, that we think like Christ, that we have the same attitude as Christ? The best we can say is that we're on the way. Transformation is a life time project.

The Eucharist recognizes this in the Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs and Occasions III: *By our partaking of this mystery, almighty Father, give us life through your Spirit, grant that we may be conformed to the image of your Son.*

Let's hear St Augustine again. He imagined the Lord saying to him: *I am the food of grown men; grow and you shall feed upon me; nor shall you change me, like the food of your flesh, into yourself, but you shall be changed into me.* (VII, 10, 16: PL 32, 742).

A billboard advertising bread once said: What we eat and drink today walks and talks tomorrow. When we eat the Eucharistic bread, we are transformed into Christ.

The Rule of Life of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament alerts its members to the need for change. *The Spirit of the*

Risen Lord exerts an ever increasing influence over all who welcome him. By sowing in our mortal flesh the seeds of resurrection he transforms us day by day in love. (Rule of Life, 26)

The 'seeds of resurrection' are sown at the Eucharist. The grains of bread act like a slow release fertilizer and the wine provides the moisture. Thus the seeds of resurrection that are sown in our hearts grow through the Eucharist.

Growth is a slow process as gardeners know. The oak tree grows slowly but its branches are very strong.

Little by Little

Another practical point: we must be content to offer a small part of ourselves at a time for transformation. Psychologists say we can only be aware of about 10% of our consciousness at any one time, so we offer that 10% that is uppermost in our minds when we come to the Eucharist, be it a personal relationship, a family difficulty, a work related matter or an element of our spiritual journey.

At each Mass, surrender to the Lord for transformation whatever is of prime concern at that time. I used to do this with the speech impediment that I had. I surrendered to the Lord those blockages that sometimes occurred in my speech and I believe this was an important factor in healing the impediment.

Dobson sums up this method of transformation in this very powerful sentence: *Therefore the heart of the mystery of the Eucharist is this: As the bread and wine are transformed and made sacred, so are we transformed and made sacred, if we unite ourselves consciously and prayerfully with these symbols of the sacrifice.* (Dobson, p.31)

☪

The Swag Spring Edition

Closing date for letters
and articles Monday
30 July 2018.

Please email submissions
for consideration to:
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Articles – 700 words
Major Features – 1,400 words.

Communion and the transcendent

MONIQUE

This article offers numerous creative and simple ways that might contribute to a more meaningful and prayerful celebration of Mass. It is offered by Monique (name withheld but supplied).

In spite of the sins of some of the Church hierarchy and clergy for which they want us, the laity, to do prayer and penance, a wonderful opportunity exists for our Church if only we can step outside the boundaries that limit us for long enough and use our imagination to show a lost and searching world what we really have to offer. Communion and transcendence – there are lots of places we can experience the transcendent and togetherness: – a concert with friends, a film shared, a beautiful scene, a provocative painting or work of art – these two things we all long for more than anything else for they feed the soul. These two experiences need to be part of our Eucharist or we go looking elsewhere.

Thank God that, at last, we have come to a place where our faith is no longer something to be expressed in terms of dogmatic statements, even if there is a hierarchy among those statements.

We know now our faith must be expressed in a relationship with the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and our main entrée to this relationship is the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus, Our Lord.

Let's deal with the Communion aspect of the Eucharist. Think of the young people who flock to see a concert by one of their idols. What communion and ecstasy they enjoy. They are united in a communion of transcendence – carried out of themselves in a celebration of their common appreciation and love for their idol. I'm not suggesting that at Mass we should behave like teenagers at a concert – heaven forbid, how unseemly; I wonder if God would frown at us if we did, or dance for joy. 'And the Father will dance. He will exalt over you'!

When we think of communion in the Eucharist we normally think of receiving the consecrated host. What would happen if we stepped outside this limiting boundary and began to see and, more importantly, experience and name all the other ways we have communion at our Eucharist.

I would suggest that 'our communion' begins as we gather before mass with the greetings we give one another as we make our way to the door of the Church. And this continues as we get to our, almost 'reserved', seats and say 'hello' to the familiar faces around us. This too is communion and could be experienced more if you, as the celebrant, invited us to say 'hello' to a wider number of people around us. Even asking us to share one fact about ourselves, one event of our week, with someone we don't know so well. Slowly we are beginning to experience 'communion' – union with those with whom we are celebrating the central event of our faith. And think of how we 'hang around' after Mass, couldn't this be named as 'communion with the Body of Christ'; it certainly is in country parishes! It could be celebrated with the occasional BBQ in summer and bowl of soup in winter!

This feeling of relaxed union would be further enhanced if you, the celebrant, spent a few minutes at the front of the community ('congregation' is such an old fashioned word and carries a heap of connotations about how we should behave!) easing us into a state of readiness to appreciate the readings and prayers of the celebration of the Word. Notice how often we use the word 'celebration' in connection with the Eucharist! And we wonder why the young aren't at our dull celebrations! You may suggest to us some things that we could have in mind as we pray and celebrate our Mass – some world event that's happened or is threatening to happen, the people caught up in some local tragedy. Our Mass begins to get stretched beyond our little worlds into a cosmic dimension. Every parent, metaphorically, brings their children to Mass with them. It would do no harm to show that you recognize that. Then you make sure the readers and special ministers are in attendance. You have set the scene for 'communion' of God's people around His table of Word and Sacrament. You have taken the place of the supporting act at the kids' concert and we are 'warmed' up ready to celebrate. You finish this

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the swag





‘introduction’ encouraging us to sing with the choir. All this shouldn’t be too difficult unless you are mired in the ‘red’ words on the page in front of you. And we carry this experience of communion with us into the Eucharist we offer together.

Maybe you quote a few words from the Psalm of the Mass to help us enter into a prayerful silence before Mass begins. And I suggest it will be a silence you, yourself, will need to gather your own heart into a prayerfulness. Then you begin with words like: ‘Let us bless ourselves as we own God’s mercy to us’. Not too hard, is it? Just a little stretching of your imagination and some preparation.

Now when we receive the host we will be communing, not only with the Risen Christ, but with that extraordinary reality called the Mystical Body. I can hear you saying to all this, ‘I’m too shy’, or ‘the people will get sick of it’, or ‘Mass may go beyond the hour, and I’ll get all these complaints’, or it’s not in the rubrics, or

‘people will start coming later because they know Mass will start late’... Be strong, you may bring about a cultural change whereby the most important thing isn’t that Mass is finished within the hour!

That custom goes back to the time you had Mass on the hour and you had to get ‘em out for the next Mass. How many times have I experienced priests taking a few extra minutes to have something ‘extra’ during Mass, a baptism or a special speaker, then rush the rest of the Mass in a most unprayerful way. You steal from us, Father, when you do this; you have robbed us of an opportunity to touch the transcendent. Besides, do what I suggest above and you would only need a three minute homily, five at the most.

Transcendence

This brings me to transcendence. If you make our ‘celebration’ prayerful and unhurried we will be like kids’ at the concert we won’t notice the time! We may even want the experience of ‘touching the

hem of God’s cloak’ to be prolonged.

Let me digress for a moment and put the pain of our society under the microscope for a moment, for it is our pain also. ‘The hopes, joys, the aspirations...’ The kids’ concerts aren’t the only place where people are looking for communion and transcendence. Call to mind just a few of the ills of our time, many of which are the result of our failure to find the things we most deeply need to satisfy our hunger: communion and transcendence. Look at the popularity of facebook, twitter and scrapbook. ‘I have five hundred ‘friends’ on facebook’ – how sad, but it’s my longing for communion and I can’t exist as a human person without communion with my fellow human beings’. And we search for ecstasy and transcendence. We get our instant ‘lifts’ from drugs, alcohol, meaningless sex without commitment. We are saturated with entertainment on iphone, ipad, and TV but they don’t begin to deaden that ever so human pain of longing for the transcendent, so we spiral down into despair, self-hate, and depression.

Back to my theme. You and I have the antidote, of course, for ourselves and our society, intimacy with the Transcendent One. We celebrate this antidote at every Eucharist. No instant ‘fix’ and no fleeting moment of drug induced ecstasy, but the wonderful truth of God’s love for us, as the Body of Christ, in Christ. We are on our way to transforming intimacy when we begin our Eucharist by acknowledging our vulnerability and our Father’s mercy in the Penitential Rite – not something to be skipped through or treated lightly.

I could go through the rest of our Mass but I will spare you that with a plea to be prayerful and unhurried – especially unhurried. And know my heart bleeds for you when you stumble over the awkward language of the New Translation – it doesn’t help you to be prayerful, I know.

Communion and transcendence are two things that our Church should be good at. We have been celebrating our communion with The Transcendent and with one another for centuries in all kinds of ways.

Our Sunday Eucharist is such a great opportunity to lift us out of our consumerist, competitive, stressed, tribal lives; grounding us in the truth of who we are and bringing us into an experience of communion and transcendence with one another and our God. ☪

To Karol Josef Wojtyla, Freedom of Speech was an alien concept

CLIFFORD LONGLEY

Clifford Longley's article in *The Tablet* (Nov 1, 2017) argues that Wojtyla's lack of experience of democracy made for an authoritarian papacy that could not allow science and reason to correct faith. *The Tablet: The International Catholic News Weekly*. Reproduced with permission of the Publisher.

Nobody likes to admit it, but the central mission of Pope Francis is emerging as the dismantling of the legacy of Pope John Paul II. The day after the death of that first non-Italian Pope since 1523, I wrote a piece in the London Evening Standard describing him as “the best of popes, and the worst of popes”. I've seen no reason to revise that judgement. But as Shakespeare told us, the best “is oft interred with their bones” while the worst lives after them. While he lived, the compassionate, animating spirit of John Paul II mitigated the dead hand of his doctrinal authoritarianism. But not afterwards. And that is the problem Francis has inherited.

Pope Benedict may have glimpsed the truth in this, and it may be what lay behind his address to Westminster Hall during his state visit to the UK in 2010. Word went round that he regarded this address as the most important of his papacy. Remarkably, given that he had been John Paul II's chief enforcer, it was far from authoritarian.

It inevitably drew attention to the feature most missing from the papacy of his predecessor – safe space in which to argue about the received doctrines of the Catholic faith, to test whether they are soundly based or not. Under the Polish Pope, any questioning of the party line was virtually spiritual treason.

In contrast, “secular rationality and the world of religious belief need one another and should not be afraid to enter into a profound and ongoing dialogue”, Pope Benedict told the assembly of politicians and other notables. Sectarianism and fundamentalism arise, he said, “when insufficient attention is given to the purifying and structuring role of reason within religion.” By secular rationality – which he shortened to “reason” – he appeared to mean the whole modern mix we are familiar with: science, medicine, economics, politics and so on.

Benedict was equally clear that “reason” had to allow itself to be interrogated and, if necessary, corrected, by faith. John Paul II would not have quarrelled with that. But

the former – allowing reason to interrogate and, if necessary, correct religion in order to avoid the trap of fundamentalism – was quite radical, at least in the post-JP II environment of 2010. It could be taken to imply that religion which refused to allow reason to correct it was in itself a form of fundamentalism.

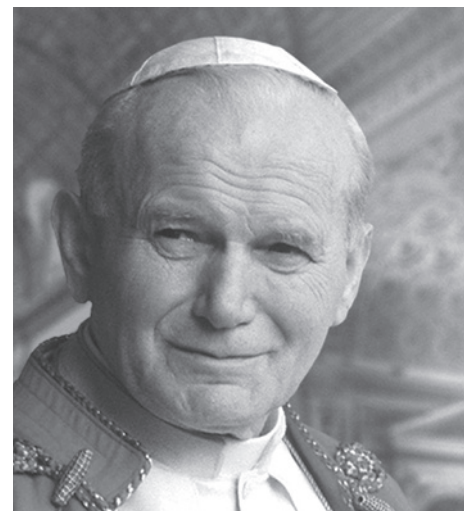
And this is not an unfair description of the way the Catholic faith was heading under that Pope. There was only one mind in the Church that mattered, and it was the mind of Karol Josef Wojtyla. That it was undoubtedly a brilliant mind made this dominance all the more impressive – and repressive. It is not irrelevant that he had never in his life lived in a democracy. To him, freedom of speech was an alien concept.

Many nails have been driven into the coffin of Wojtylan fundamentalism by Pope Francis, not least his refusal to battle on the ground offered by his opponents. So the defenders of that old ideological regime can only gnash their teeth and hint of heresy. More significant still is Francis' refusal to play the role of infallible oracle who can answer every question. “I would make it clear,” he wrote in *Amoris Laetitia*, “that not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues need to be settled by interventions of the magisterium.”

It is in the area of personal and sexual morality that the absence of any engagement of reason with faith has been most harmful. Academics who dared to question, say, whether the depiction of homosexuality as “intrinsically disordered” was biologically or philosophically sound could not expect an answer or discussion but a summons to see their superior.

If they'd been invited to give a public lecture, the invitation would be cancelled. They might well lose their jobs. The same applied to the issues of contraception and abortion. The paradox, of course, was that many of these doctrinal positions were said to derive from natural law, and natural law itself entails the use of reason.

What Benedict did not refer to in his Westminster Hall address was the issue



of authority, a key aspect of the Catholic doctrinal framework. Many times the authority of the Church has been used – indeed, used by him as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – to prevent the interaction of reason and religion that he was advocating in Westminster.

To preserve, in other words, the Catholic fundamentalist fortress. And this is what Francis is at last pulling down, brick by brick. ☞



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Alan Gill religious journalist

BRIAN LUCAS

Brian Lucas, Sydney priest, offers a few memories of the long-time religious affairs journalist with *The Sydney Morning Herald*. He was very popular and offered an honest perspective on religious affairs. Alan Gill (1937-2018) died in February this year.



allocations and as an all ticket event the spaces could not be taken up at the last minute. For Alan, however, he was angry that others wanted to see the negative while all he was keen to report was the jubilation among the young people on sharing this time with the Pope.

When Cardinal Clancy appointed me as an official media spokesman in 1985 one of my first interviews was with Alan. We spoke often. When he finished in 1989 he shared his disappointment that the *Herald* seemed no longer to value a specialist religion reporter. Not only did Alan report the religion news but his weekly column and commentary was compulsory reading for anyone interested in religious affairs. He told me that by far he had the biggest mail response to his writing of any *Herald* contributor. I would believe it.

As a full-time religious affairs writer his coverage was wide and deep. He sometimes irritated Cardinal Clancy by dealing with sensitive topics but such is the nature of good journalism. Even so, in my experience, he was always fair. He moved from worshipping with the high Anglicans at St James King Street to embracing Catholicism and was a member of St Mark's Parish Drummoyne.

In retirement among his works was a lengthy and detailed account of the British child migrant scheme *Orphans of Empire* (1997). He is survived by his wife Daisy. May he rest in peace. ☪

In December 1986 I was standing in the back row of the top deck of the M.A. Noble Stand at the Sydney Cricket Ground. It was the evening of the papal visit youth rally and Pope John Paul II was in full flight. *Sydney Morning Herald* religion writer, Alan Gill came out of the media box near me with a facial expression that spoke of irritation and frustration. 'Brian', he said, 'I sometimes despair of my journalist colleagues. Some of them in there are beginning their story with: it was a disappointing crowd to greet the Pope at the SCG'.

True! There were blocks of empty seats. Something went wrong with the



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DON'T MISS OUT!

Remastering Catholic Marriage Preparation

BRYON & FRANCINE PIROLA

Byron & Francine Pirola are the directors of the Marriage Resource Centre and are authors of the SmartLoving Series. They have been working in marriage formation for over twenty-five years including roles in the Australian Council of Natural Family Planning, the Catholic Society for Marriage Education, the Australian Catholic Marriage and Family Council. www.smartloving.org



Like all areas of society and Church, everything we do has a history, a current context and future goal. Marriage preparation is no different and it is helpful to take stock of where we need to go by looking at each.

Where did we come from? A brief history

Up until the 1950's marriage preparation was almost exclusively the domain of the celebrant and focussed on Sacramental theology and spiritual preparation. There was little understanding of the science of relationships and the culture was by and large supportive of marriage and family.

Seismic cultural shifts emerged in the 1960s and the culture swung from supporting to questioning and ultimately undermining marriage. In parallel, a new emphasis on the role of the laity in the life of the Church post Vatican II and the concurrent emergence of movements like World Wide Marriage Encounter and Teams birthed a cohort of couple educators who introduced peer witnessing to marriage preparation.

These factors led not only to an increased need for more comprehensive marriage preparation but also the capability to provide it. Marriage preparation courses became more sophisticated in content with partnerships between lay couples and clergy.

Over time, as the relationship sciences added new insights and the theology of marriage became more developed, a heightened need for professionally

delivered courses emerged. The increasingly busy and under resourced parish priest was no longer equipped to deal with the expanding complexities of modern relationship formation.

More demanding training requirements gradually displaced both priests and volunteer couple educators with employed facilitators who conducted courses predominantly in diocesan social welfare organisations. Driven by the logic of economies of scale and skill, the role of the clergy in marriage preparation unwittingly became an 'add on' and the sacramental witness of couples rarer.

The current landscape

Participation in church life is falling at all levels, and marriage is no different. Non-Church weddings represent over 70% of all weddings in Australia. Catholic weddings have more than halved from over 20,000 per year two decades ago to under 10,000 in 2016. Many parishes across the country can go several years between weddings and for many of the weddings that do occur in a parish, often the couple neither resides there nor has any connection to a parish community.

In terms of marriage preparation, the adoption of secular relationship curriculums means that teaching content is dominated by a 'divorce prevention' agenda rather than sacramental formation. Most of the courses are disconnected from the local parish community and they are facilitated by neither a married couple nor a priest.

The question we must ask ourselves is whether this is ideal, desirable or acceptable? We would argue it is none of these and we need to 'reimagine and remaster' our approach to marriage preparation.

The Why and the How marriage preparation

It is stating the obvious, but it is worth reminding ourselves that the Church exists to evangelise; it's why we exist. It's not a side project; it's our mission, our core purpose. The primary goal of Catholic marriage preparation therefore, must also be to evangelise; to enable our engaged to

develop a deeper, more intimate relationship with God. Helping couples to live happy vibrant, joy-filled marriages, and preventing divorce is a noble and necessary endeavour, but should never take priority over our mission to evangelise.

When a couple presents to the Catholic church for marriage, we are presented with a natural 'teachable moment'. While they are all at different starting points, it is always a prime evangelisation opportunity. In this teachable moment, our goal is to:

- Deepen the couple's faith and prepare them spiritually for the Sacrament of Matrimony. The fact that a couple might not be religiously inclined should give us all the more reason to engage with them in this, not less!
- Warmly invite any non-Catholic fiancés to become part of our faith family.
- Motivate the couple to embrace Matrimony as a vocational calling lived out among a community.

With a clear goal in mind, a clear 'why', we then need to look at how we achieve this.

Presently, the primary 'how' of marriage preparation is to teach and thus the perennial debate around the curriculum of our courses: do we have too much of a focus on the human relational psychology, and not enough on the spirituality and sacramental theology or vice-versa? It's a common debate but a false choice. Both have an important role and both are necessary to achieve our goal of evangelisation.

More importantly however is that these two essential categories of catechesis need to be intimately integrated and not taught as two different ideas. In our experience, that integration is not only possible, it makes each element more effective.

However, there is a missing critical ingredient in the 'how' of most courses today. We all know faith is as much 'caught' as it is 'taught' and that catechesis alone is not enough. There has been gradual movement to recognise this, but Pope Francis' call to focus on 'accompaniment' has brought this missing element into sharp relief.

Accompaniment is more than reaching out to those in distress. We would argue it applies as much as walking with people in the process of positive growth as it does to those struggling in dysfunction trying to find their way to truth. It is a critical component of effective evangelisation.

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FEATURES

Present marriage preparation processes by and large completely miss this. Educators can talk chapter and verse about course content, teaching pedagogies, format choices, curriculum, etc... but it is hard to find any elements of an accompaniment approach; of walking with the couple, witnessing to and praying with them, and being involved in their life beyond the 8 hours or less they spend attending a course.

The necessary remastering of marriage preparation needs to include a parallel 'accompaniment' dimension. Consistent with this thinking, we note that following the two recent synods on the family, there have been strong calls to approach marriage preparation in a 'catechumenate model' – to think of it not as an event (as in a course that takes place on a day or weekend) but a period of formation. Similar to the RCIA, a marriage catechumenate is a process of formation that includes catechesis, evangelisation and accompaniment, where long-term community relationships and fellowship are formed.

Remastering marriage preparation – the future

Our proposition is that the future must be rebuilt around four key elements:

- Involves married couples to accompanying the engaged but not necessarily having to teach the courses
- Parish-based but centrally-enabled to make this practically possible
- An integration of the best of relationship

science and contemporary theology

- Conducted over a period of time and not as a one or two-day 'intensive'

With regard to achieving accompaniment in marriage preparation, we propose as a very practical step that every engaged couple be paired with a Sponsor Couple from their local parish. This couple would take on the responsibility to interact with the engaged as a marital witness and support throughout the engagement period and into their newlywed years.

In terms of parish delivery, with the curriculum demands of marriage education higher than ever, and the capacity of our parishes arguably weaker than in any time in recent history, it is perhaps difficult to see how we can practically provide marriage preparation from within the parish. However, technology has changed the education landscape dramatically. The enabling power of new technologies now allows us to put world class teaching materials into parish halls and the living rooms of parishioners. It allows us to capture the teaching of some of the best marriage educators and theologians in the world and integrate their insights into one package.



When we started in this work twenty-five years ago the power of desktop publishing put high-quality printing within the physical and financial reach of anyone with basic design skills. It was transformative. Now it's the same with video and interactive digital learning platforms.

If fact, we believe these delivery models are superior to live presenters and we are moving all the *SmartLoving* courses into this approach.

So, the need to centralise because of economies of scale and skill no longer hold; we can provide superior learning experiences into the home of any parishioner using a model of centrally-enabled, locally-provided marriage formation in a way that was not practical even five years ago. In our own organisation we now support parishes delivering marriage preparation around the world on demand 24 hours a day with superior outcomes compared to our traditional live delivery formats.

Importantly, local delivery naturally aligns with the accompaniment model; if we 'get' the importance of the accompaniment dimension, centrally-enabled, locally-provided marriage preparation is the only practical approach. It also removes the need for compact, intensive courses so that formation can take place over several months where integration into daily life is possible.

If all this looks a bit hard, take a look at the *SmartLoving Engaged Online* course. It is a remastering along the principals outlined above with impressive results. It's not just a concept; it's a true 'renaissance' of marriage formation happening right now across the world.

See: www.smartloving.org  

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Church in a time of peril and opportunity

A funny thing happened on the way to my retirement. In my eighty-seventh year and with a body showing a variety of signs of wear and tear, I guess I'm pretty close to the great launching pad to wherever.

For all but 25 years of this time I've been a priest working as a curate, parish priest and a half-baked 'GP' sociologist (largely due to my studies at the Roman Jesuit university, 'the Greg', in the late 50's). I am now retired and physically not very active but with a few remnant 'marbles'.

I recall an incident that occurred sometime after the election Karol Wojtyla as Pope John Paul II when I was visiting two priest friends. In the company of some local clerics we called upon a recently retired Monsignor. The conversation naturally

turned to discussion of the new Pope and I was genuinely surprised and a little shocked when I heard them say 'This man will be a disaster for the church.'

Of course I didn't feel confident or inclined to evaluate the effectiveness of Pope John Paul II's behaviour upon the life of the church, but I have gradually come to agree with the opinion that reckons that despite the many great gifts of nature and grace of John Paul II, his style of leadership did impede the church from continuing the reformation that Vatican II began.

So back at the parochial 'farm', after thirty five years experimenting with a model of lay governance of the parish with the help of some really generous parishioners, I felt content to retire in their midst and in the spirit of serene withdrawal from the distant establishment's reconstruction and/or demolition of Vatican II's dream.

Then came Francis. How can I adequately describe how I felt when I first heard Pope Francis speak? In a world where the word 'unbelievable' is greatly and illogically overworked, it is nevertheless the word to describe my reaction to what I was hearing him say and do. How unexpected, how un-authoritarian, how shockingly and delightfully new, fresh and Gospel.

He was saying in fact that we have to learn how to know and respect the consciences, the living reality of all people's lives and to stop substituting the rule of laws for the reign of love.

Since the fathers of Vatican II have agreed in principle, even if some reluctantly, that the church should in future propose to, and not impose upon, a community of responsible adult believers, doctrine and opinion based on that simple gospel truth of the freedom of the sons and daughters of God.

This letter was prompted by reading an article recently published in *The Tablet* (January 6, 2018) by Marko Politi. The article summarises the history of Pope Francis' words and actions as Pope and the sad, sinister and slanderous opposition that the Pope and his actions have evoked in many people within the church. This is an attempt to stifle permanent real reform of the church.

I want to encourage us all to support the Pope in this time of great peril and of unique opportunity. Can we find specific ways to express support practically and explicitly? Maybe we could encourage our bishops to offer a special imaginative gesture of support.

More importantly, in view of the anticipated diocesan and national synods, I wish to encourage bishops and all lay and clerical leaders to foster the art, skill and habits of dialogue and effective consultation in the evaluation, planning, governance and accountability phases. May this create a genuinely synodal community of the church at every level as is Francis' express and passionate desire and goal.

I want to alert our church to the hazard of settling for an expensive and elaborate appearance of consultation rather than engaging in real consultation relevant to people's lives. Otherwise such efforts may lead to the unfair perception of the church as a discredited museum piece.

I want to resist the inertia of fear that trusts only in the ossified paths of familiarity, clericalism, privilege and obstructionism. We must dare to trust in the Spirit and in the unique leadership of Francis and work with him to comprehend and embrace his desire and attempt to incarnate such a vision.

**Reg Callinan, PP Emeritus,
Morisset, NSW**

Falsely accused of sexual abuse

The Royal Commission into institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, in its final report, made many recommendations as to how children and vulnerable adults can be protected as we go into the future. All victims of sexual abuse till this point of time need to be able to seek redress, be that through criminal prosecution, or by getting appropriate compensation, or both of these things.

There is one group of people that the Royal Commission did not pick up on, and that is those who are falsely accused of this very grave crime and they are victims as well. To be fair, the Royal Commission was not

asked to take this matter into account. That is fair enough, but it is a matter of justice that this matter is put into the public forum.

I believe this issue needs to be taken up by the Catholic Bishops and other church officials. This should also be taken up by the legal and justice services as well, to see how those falsely accused can find help, and where appropriate, redress. Finally I believe that therapeutic and professional information is needed to help society understand how false accusations can damage a person and to assist such persons to face their future with a degree of confidence. A conversation needs to be had about this. However such conversation needs to lead to effective action for those who are falsely accused of sexual abuse. This is needed so they can live healthy and productive lives as they move forward into the future.

Name supplied but withheld.

Justice is vital for every priest. Because if we do not experience justice as individuals we do not experience peace; the two go hand in hand.

There is rightly an anger against males who use their authority and power to belittle women. Sadly, priests are numbered among those who have betrayed their positions and inflicted grave harm on women, children and their families.

Church leaders stand guilty of denying what really happened over many years in many countries. The way to regain peoples' trust for past mistakes is not to swing too far in the opposite direction. It's like from going to believing no one to believing everyone who makes an accusation against you as a priest.

There is still such a thing as a false accusation. As a priest who is trusted you need to have a good reputation. How you, as a pastor, relate to people depends on how much they trust you. That relationship is considerably weakened once doubt enters the scene.

It may take decades for a priest to build up a good reputation. It only takes minutes to destroy it. There is a fine line between grace and disgrace. Even when one is proven not guilty in a civil court the good name of the priest is never fully restored.

False accusations may come out of nowhere. We live in a world of substance abuse when people say or do practically anything to obtain drugs. Mental instability is also very widespread. Sometimes the priest is seen by the accuser

as the hated male authority figure.

Whatever the motives of those who make false accusations I pray that it never happens to a priest or anyone. I hope this bell never rings for anyone, for once it does it can never be un-rung.

It is good to see Bishop's fighting for justice in the courts. At least they are in a position to gather resources to defend themselves with good lawyers. The average priest has few resources. May the day come when everyone will have the support, both financially and morally, to stand up for justice.

Richard (name and contact details supplied)

Servant or master?

Frank O'Dea SSS and Peter Day have written in the Autumn 2018 edition of the 'Swag' about clericalism. Frank O'Dea wrote: *Clericalism is the notion that clerics are superior to the laity and are entitled to privileges. Examples abound.* Peter Day wrote: *A tremendous struggle lies ahead because those in the thrall of power don't easily give up the privileges it bestows. In our clamour for 'honour at banquets and most important seats at churches' we have forgotten our place. And what is our place? No one has said it better than John the Baptist: 'In order for Christ to increase, I must decrease.'*

Reading these articles from *The Swag* brought up memories of situations I have noticed over the years.

When attending a Requiem Mass for a priest many years ago, I noticed that the church was very crowded. There were many people standing, inside and outside the church, including old people and infirm, with walking sticks and walking frames.

Sixty priests processed through the people standing outside and inside the church. Their seats were already reserved and allocated for them in the main body of the church. I was quite concerned about this, granted there were a few elderly priests who needed a seat, but not one of the younger priests stood up to give their seat to an elderly or infirm person. What witness they would have given to the community if they had thought through their actions. What would Jesus have done? Later, I was speaking to a priest and he commented he had not given a thought to the people standing around.

This is not the only time I have noticed this, I have attended many functions where the same situation has occurred.

Continued page 46

Paul said: Be imitators of me as I am of Christ (1 Cor. 11-1).

Maybe we all need to examine our hearts and question the servant aspect of the issue, within our own lives. What would we do as a worshipper in the same situation, or any other circumstance? Would we just unthinkingly take a seat, or would we be aware of the needs of others around us?

J. Robinson

Celibacy and marriage

Thanks to Monique for sharing about the dark beauty of married love in her letter headed 'Eucharist, married love and celibacy'. Wise words from her lived experience. Celibate priests learn about marriage from our home experience and married couples we are in contact with. Because we also study about the Sacrament of Marriage in theology, we can be tempted to think we know it all.

Early in my priesthood I was blessed to be able to take part in a Marriage Encounter Weekend. The teaching about marriage was so rich and so well backed up with the real flesh and blood issues shared by the presenting couples about their everyday living of their love. Ever since that weekend I have relied heavily on married couples to work with me in whatever I did to prepare couples for marriage and for

marriage enrichment and for many other efforts for children and families. It has been so good to have been able to do this for over forty years

I remember reading some years ago words of Chuck Gallagher labelling as 'Prophetic' the ways Sacramental couples and Ordained priests can encourage and support each other -- help each other to live the vision of *Loving one another as Christ loves us*; and the ways our two sacraments can combine in working together to promote the kingdom of God.

Fr. Chuck suggested that this would be a good way forward for our church, a way to go with confidence into the future. I suggest that this prophetic way is even more relevant for us today with our shortcomings being so painfully displayed in the outcome of the Royal Commission

Marriage I think is a forgotten sacrament. It is undervalued by our hierarchy and priests and even by married couples themselves. I have suggested to unaware Bishops that Marriage Encounter is adult faith education of high order.

I have just managed to convince Catholic Education WA to have the M.E. weekend accredited for 6 hours of ongoing formation for staff in Catholic Schools. The weekend program has been put together and continually refined by well formed and informed married couples, theologians, psychologists and priests.

A lot of its value comes from celibate priests and sacramental couples working together.

Working with leadership in Australian Marriage Encounter, I have endeavoured to help our bishops realise that we have a rich resource in couples who really live their sacrament of marriage in our parishes and dioceses. I have also been trying to help bishops and Ministry to Priests realise the benefits for priests, personally and professionally, when working with married couples in things like Marriage Encounter and Marriage Preparation.

There is great value in the two sacraments of love/relationship, encouraging and supporting each other and working together as companions on the journey. As a priest in a scattered country diocese, over 40 years involvement with married couples who are comfortable in sharing intimately has provided me with love and support and filled much of my need for intimacy.

**Pat Rooney, Pastor Emeritus,
Manjimup/Pemberton**

Bishop Mulkearns

Perhaps it is a bit late though for Margaret Callinan to be so critical of ordained clergy writing about Bishop Ron Mulkearns in *The Swag* when the journal is published, in the first instance, for ordained clergy. That doesn't take away, though, from the points she made. On the other hand the impression given by her remarks is that the Bishop single handedly made all the decisions about Gerard Ridsdale. In his testimony before the Royal Commission he said, 'Frankly I didn't know what to do.' For that he has been punished both in life and in death, so severely. He was refused a funeral Mass at the Cathedral, his name has been stripped from Catholic schools as well as any number of hateful commentaries and letters. But in that same testimony to the Royal Commission he also said, 'I never sent him to a parish without the approval of a psychologist.' This would indicate that the decision, ultimately the Bishop's, was not just a clerical one, professional advice was involved, yet this is never mentioned.

Recently I listened to an interview with a man who had written a book about the writer Ernest Hemingway. About half way through the interview the radio announcer said, 'We've spoken a lot about the bad things he did but we must remember he did a lot of good things too and we must talk about them.' And so they did. I remember thinking at the time I wonder if that applies to Catholic Bishops now. It seems it doesn't!

So, unfortunately, it looks like Shakespeare is right again: 'The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones.'

Rev Brian Cosgriff, Melbourne

Corporate Australia not a good model for change

Last edition we had a suggestion that we might find constructive ways forward from the changes happening in Corporate Australia, especially with regard to inclusiveness in leadership positions. I hate to throw a bucket of ice water over this idea, but has anyone paid attention to the Royal Commission into Financial Institutions. The bank which even had a female CEO was described by the Royal Commission as 'the most unco-operative'. Going that way may lead us up yet another dead end -- just like the early explorers trying to push west from Sydney Cove!

Kevin Horsell, Adelaide. ☺

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Fostering faith life program for clergy

In the formation of clergy more time and resources have usually been devoted to Theology, Liturgy and Moral Theology, than to the serious study of prayer, which is the relationship that gives meaning to the other three. This course is a joint programme of the Australian Catholic Council for Clergy Life and Ministry and the Centre for Christian Spirituality, Randwick. It seeks to provide a non-academic, but serious study of the Church's traditional teaching on the life of prayer, how to live it personally and foster it in the lives of those in their care.

This program fosters personal faith and prayer as well as supporting clergy's confidence in their guidance of those in their care. It covers faith development and leadership, the interior life, prayer as relationship and ways of prayer. The Programme will be conducted by Most Rev David Walker. It is delivered through ten live conferences offered online which may be accessed at other times and readings. There is no assessment. However, it is a serious programme and exercises will be provided to assist participants work with the material of the programme and they will be encouraged to share their insights with other participants.

It runs between July 30 and October 10 and Costs \$100. Further information: www.centreforchristianspirituality.com.au or email: dl-walker@bigpond.com or greg.bourke@cam.org.au Registration: Sally@thecentre.com.au

Australian Catholics call for Church reform

The Catholic Church in Australia faces continuing decay unless bishops listen to grassroots Catholics. About 50 members of The Australian Coalition for Catholic Church Reform (ACCCR) representing ten Catholic groups throughout Australia advocating for systemic reform of the Church, gathered in Canberra on March 23 and produced the following communiqué which was then sent to all members of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. The ACCCR comprises Catholics Speak Out, Women and the Australian Church, Catholics for Renewal, Inclusive Catholics, The Friendship Group (Bunbury WA), Aggiornamento, Perth, Australian Reforming Catholics, Cyber Christian Community (WA), Concerned Catholics of Canberra Goulburn and Rainbow Catholics InterAgency for Ministry.

The Catholic Church in Australia faces continuing decay unless bishops understand the necessity of the grassroots Catholics to have a central role in the direction and decision-making of the Church.

There needs to be a restoration of trust in and by the bishops in the value of advice and wisdom from ordinary Catholics which for too long has been rejected or at best ignored.

The Coalition will seek a meeting between the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and ACCCR representatives to open the lines of communication to press for the bishops to give effect to the significant recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and to respond to our call for greater involvement of the people of God through the coming Plenary Council 2020.

We also call on the bishops to accept the nomination of a woman as co-chair of the 2020 Plenary Council.

The catastrophe that the Church has experienced with the institutional sexual abuse underlines the need for effective and urgent reform. Yet the response of the bishops so far in its preparation for the 2020 plenary indicates a failure to learn a fundamental lesson of that catastrophe.

That is the need for decisive reforms to the governance structure that remains largely unchanged despite that experience.

The people are as much a part of the church as the bishops and we need to work towards their greater participation.

We propose a summit for all Catholics before the Plenary to cultivate open discussion to assert a mature and frank engagement with the issues confronting the church today.

The program content so far for the Plenary Council indicates they have not understood the recommendations regarding transparency, inclusiveness and accountability.

The place of women in the Church must be given urgent priority so that at this time of crisis in the church, the wisdom and talents of women can fully contribute to the Church.

There will be no successful governance structure without the grassroots people, particularly women, in leadership and decision-making roles.

The 2020 Plenary is a positive step. It is imperative that the faithful be fully involved in preparation of this Plenary Council. But the plenary council must

not be used as a delaying tactic in avoiding immediate issues.

The Royal Commission has identified grave deficiencies in the Church's governance. Those deficiencies resulted in the protection of pedophiles and the abuse of further children.

The horror of child sexual abuse terrible as it is, is but one example of the lack of accountability in the leadership of the church.

Church leaders have to learn to be accountable, transparent and inclusive of all, particularly women. That means listening to the faithful and engaging through structures such as pastoral councils.

There must be greater and continuing attention to the survivors of sexual abuse as well as marginalised people, Australia's first nations people, refugees, and LGBTI people.

Without strong influence and input of the people of God laity, the plenary will be like a departing cruise ship, leaving 95 per cent behind at the dockside.

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



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

Australian Sion Sister in the Philippines arrested

Sr Pat Fox NDS was detained by the Bureau of Immigration of the Philippines without due process and respect for her fundamental rights, the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion said on August 17. Sister Pat has since 1990 been a tireless worker amongst the poor and marginalised people of the Philippines.

She was arrested for joining rallies and attending fact-finding and mercy missions among the indigenous people and for ecological causes.

The Papal Nuncio, Bishop Broderick Pabillo intervened to support Sr Pat. 'The Sisters of Our Lady of Sion called on the Philippine Government through its Bureau

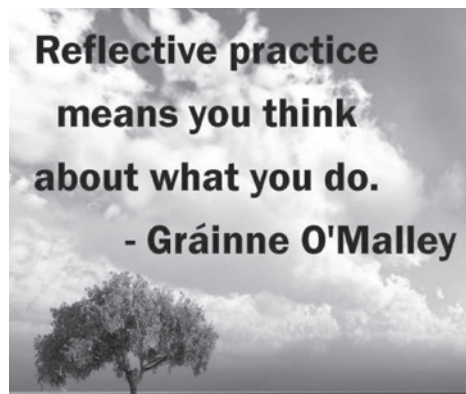
Continued page 48

the swag



of Immigration to set Sister Pat free so she can continue her vital ministry', said Sister Mary Barbuto, Region Co-leader of the Congregation.

Pastoral supervision growing in Australia



Since the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, there has been a growing interest in pastoral supervision. Pastoral supervision is a process of reflective practice for people working in ministry in order that they might learn from experience. A pastoral supervisor is a facilitator of learning rather than what some think is a monitoring or checking on practice or coaching or mentoring. It is more like a learning partnership with a qualified supervisor.

Transforming Practices is a registered association of autonomous practitioners who foster personal and social transformation as professional and pastoral supervisors. It is also a Training Association with the Australasian Association of Supervisors (AAOS) offering a supervisory training program leading to recognition with AAOS, a professional association of practitioners. This year there has been a spike in trainees with Transforming Practices. Another program for training pastoral supervisors will begin in October. Details of the program can be found on the website: <http://transformingpractices.blogspot.com.au/p/supervisor-training.html>

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Alphonsus, musician poet and mystic

O God of Loveliness, The poetry of St Alphonsus, (2017) Patrick Corbett CSsR, St Paul Publications Homebush. Reviewed by Peter Maher.

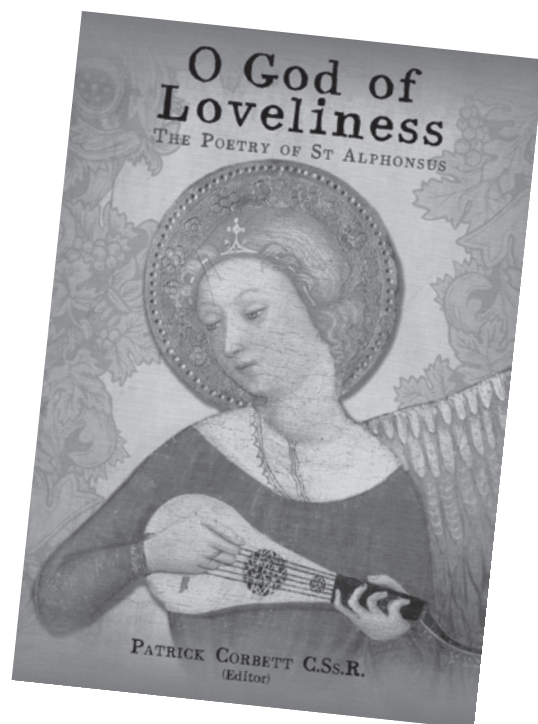
This book sent me back to sitting in the pews on a hot summer evening in the church of St Therese of the Little Flower, West Wollongong as a nine year old boy waiting in a long line of people for confession and absolution from the priests of the Mission. This book records the poetry and music of a mystic which one might think would be in stark contrast to the dire consequences of passing up the unique opportunity of a confession, or maybe two, if day three or four uncovered sins you hadn't thought about by day two when you first joined the confessional queue.

The poems and hymns of this book newly translated from the original Italian or Neapolitan texts are filled with beauty in word, art work and design. This is a beautiful book to hold and dip into from time to time.

It is filled with the love of a mystic's relationship with his God, his Lord and Saviour, Jesus and His mother, Mary. Alphonsus' poems are sometimes in the words of the heart or soul, or God or Mary. One poem says: 'so answer me my heart, why are you sighing so? It replies, I long for God, I languish for Jesus' love' (p53) or when commenting in prose on the Song of Songs love poems, Alphonsus writes as the Divine Spouse to us: 'And you my spouse, a garden most pleasant does appear, so fruitful and so lovely, and to my heart so dear.' (p38).

However reading some poems and hymns in this book reminds me from where came that Redemptorist mission theology of the 1950's. The heart of the Redemptorist retreat masters was formed by such lines as 'God sends me here with a message of mercy, but could this be your last chance of forgiveness? The God of all compassion is calling you today, but if you delay your return, God may not call again' (p82), or the plea to Mary to 'run, run Mamma mia, run quickly do not delay! see the serpent, (may it not be so), comes my trembling soul to slay' (p151).

The devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, or The Icon of the Passion as it is called in this book, so embedded in my memory from the parish retreat, is



explained as an icon entrusted to the Redemptorists by Pope Pius IX

for wide dissemination. In a poem accompanying the icon Alphonsus writes as Mary and she says: 'Lord when the Father saw you clothed with all our sinfulness, he must have felt anger dying on the cross for love of us' (p118). No wonder we needed confession having caused not just Jesus' death, but so much pain to Mary.

Feminists will not be happy with some poems about Mary as she is sometimes cast as the watcher, waiter and the purest of mothers who was not touched by sin. 'As a lily among thorns, you are, blessed Virgin, from sin preserved, to be the Mother of the Lord.' (p148).

These sentiments are to be expected in a book that faithfully records the words of an 18th century mystic. They serve as a reminder that we are not 18th century mystics but 21st century ones. They remind us that while there is much to rejoice in the mystical tradition, we are here to forge our own. While standing on the shoulders of our ancestors, we are, as Pope Francis says, not so much in an era of change as in a changed era. ☺

Mary Magdalene and Paul: Old stories revisited in film

Peter Malone MSC reviews two new films. The feminist interpretation of Mary Magdalene and a traditional historical story of Paul are both of value.

Mary Magdalene received a commercial release in Lent. From the point of view of a cinematic treatment of the Gospels, of Mary Magdalene, of Jesus himself and the apostles, the film is very well done. It can be recommended for those interested in an interpretation of the gospel story. It could also be used quite profitably for catechesis and as a background for biblical studies.

The film was directed by Australian, Garth Davis (Lion). It is significant that the screenplay for *Mary Magdalene* has two British writers, Helen Edmundson and Philippa Goslett, which means that the writing has a female sensibility.

The performances are quite strong. Rooney Mara is a quiet, different Mary Magdalene. Joaquin Phoenix is Jesus, looking somewhat older than usual, heavier than usual, more a Jesus from St Matthew's Gospel rather than from St Luke's, not a charismatic leader or affable, but rather stronger, stronger-minded, intense in his religious experience and expression. Chiwetel Ejiofor is Peter, older, black, expecting the kingdom on earth, as is Judas, Tamar Rahim, a pleasant man, an idealist, ultimately a disillusioned idealist about the nature of the kingdom and what Jesus should do and have done.

However, the title and focus of the film is Mary herself. One of the expectations of audiences would be the correlation of this dramatisation with the gospel texts. As the film makes clear at the end, Mary has often been identified as a prostitute, something which emerged with the influence of Pope Gregory the Great in 591. The film then adds that the Vatican, in 2016, named her 'Apostle of the Apostles'. Here, the focus is on Mary according to the brief gospel references, her Gospel experience, and creating imaginative aspects of the story

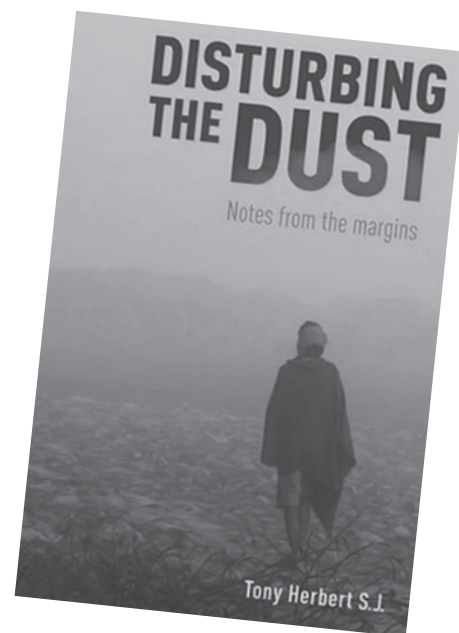
consistent with these texts. As is said at the end, stories are told according to 'the essence' of the Gospels.

This is a film which should satisfy most Christian audiences. Catholics would respond well to it. It is a film which communicates the Gospel message of Gospel characters, not completely, but credibly to any open-minded audience interested in knowing Jesus in the Gospel stories better with Mary Magdalene as a persuasive woman-guide.

Paul, Apostle of the Christ, also received a commercial release in Lent. It has been produced by a company for faith-based films, Affirm. The screenplay, which has strong elements of realism in its presentation of Rome, is also quite devout in its presentation of its central characters in the early Christian community, their way of speaking, their faith, their outreach to the persecuted, their mutual support. Many audiences may find this too devout for their taste.

This story of Paul has been made for specifically Christian audiences, the whole range of denominations. Its appeal to non-Christian audiences will be in its depiction of ancient Rome in the mid-60s, the aftermath of the fire, the rule of Nero, his persecution of Christians, their being burned as human torches in the Roman streets, their being sent into the arena to be killed by wild beasts. In this, the film is successful, providing a rather vivid picture of the times, Roman rule and oppression, the small Christian community, persecutions.

The Christian audience will also be interested in this depiction of Paul in his later years, a prisoner in the Mamertine prison, oppressed in his cell and flogged, given some reprieve at the end, though



finally, with great dignity and decorum, beheaded. The other central character of the film is a Luke, having written his gospel, visiting Rome to see his friend, Paul, and to continue writing of Paul's mission, ultimately, The Acts of the Apostles.

As a biblical film for a faith audience, there is much to commend in its depiction of the times. It does incorporate into the screenplay a number of gospel texts and, especially, quotations from Paul and his epistles with the interlude in the prison writing and listening to Paul's memoirs and dictation.

In earlier decades, a lot of religious instruction was done through catechisms and, especially for some Catholic schools, Bible History stories as well as those of the early church, text and drawings for the students to imagine and memorise these stories. In some ways, this version of Paul, Luke, the early Christians and Rome is a cinema equivalent of this kind of Bible History instruction. ☪



Surviving and thriving in Siberian prisons

***With God in Russia*, Cizek, W. with Flaherty, D (2017) originally published 1964. Harper One. This incredible story of a priest's imprisonment in Stalin's Russia exudes hope in the face of despair. God is present at every turn even the most unlikely. The book has been republished with a new foreword and afterword that remind us how the story and its spirituality is every bit as real today as it was then. Reviewed by Peter Maher.**

In Australia today there are thousands of men, women and children detained as political prisoners. Albeit a little

different context to Stalinist Russia, those imprisoned for being refugees and asylum seekers must feel exactly the same as Fr.

Cizek did in Siberian labour camps through the 1940's and 50's. The sense of hopelessness that there is any way out must surely be the same. Fr Cizek introduces us to the highs and the lows of life as a political prisoner. The terrible realisation that no matter what you say and no matter how true, you will not be believed because there is a value higher than truth and for

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FEATURES

that ideology, the most vulnerable are dispensable. Another factor that this book explores is the role fear plays in the various players. It not only sends the prisoners mad to the point of agreeing to anything but it is felt throughout the system from the KGB agents, to the officers, to the guards, to the other prisoners and to the people in general. A spirit of mistrust and fear is the glue that holds the lie together. That's how the asylum seekers imprisoned in Australia must feel. It's all about fostering a spirit of fear to serve political ends and it doesn't matter that the vulnerable are fodder for the game – they simply don't count.

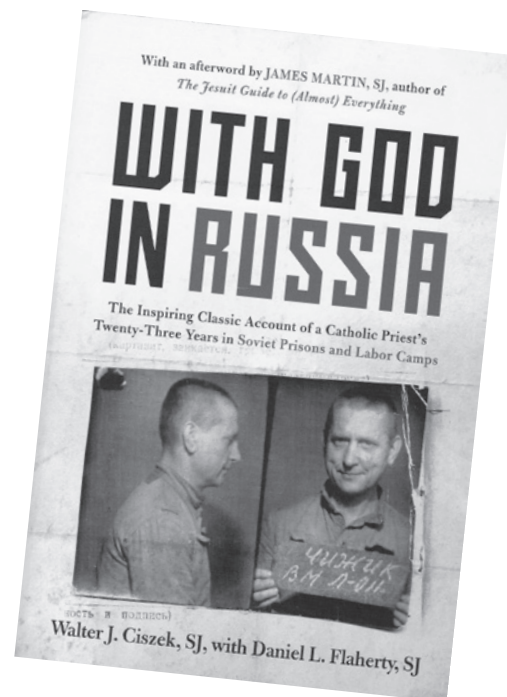
Fr Cizek is a Jesuit priest who volunteers to work in Russia in 1940. It is not long before the KGB interrogates him convinced he is a Vatican spy. Soon he is sentenced to 15 years hard labour in the Siberian mines. This story is remarkable as a story of resilience and faith in the most difficult of situations. Cizek manages to continue his ministry through almost the entire 15 years imprisonment. But it is much more. It is a story of how the people's spirit cannot be broken by ideology. It is a story about creativity and imagination in pastoral care and liturgical celebration. It is a story about friendship and loyalty. It is a story about kindness in the face of brutality. And it is a story about forgiveness, understanding and compassion for the 'enemy'. For Cizek there is no

enemy, only circumstances and frightened men who need his understanding and care.

Yes – he does get angry and depressed when he is treated badly, sees others treated badly, not believed and told lies, but he never stops believing in the presence of God somehow accompanying him on this spiritual quest. He stays true to his Ignatian spirituality of regular spiritual practice, reflecting on the scriptures and discernment of the right path according to the present reality.

This book has a couple of secrets that sets it apart from other historical and spiritual journals of adversity. It is beautifully written. It is filled with poetry and suspense. It is like a spiritual James Bond story. It is impossible to put down. It is as exciting as it is inspiring. And as a story of its time in terms of spiritual and liturgical practice, being pre Vatican II, it offers a little insight into one of the influences that may have led the bishops of Vatican II to opt for respect for diversity, creativity and imagination. This insight is needed every bit as much today.

Another lovely touch in this republishing is the foreword by Daniel Flaherty SJ who assisted in the writing of the original 1964 text and an afterword by James Martin SJ. These highlight how powerful the themes of the 1964 text are in today's church and world. Given that recently James Martin



has had some lectures cancelled because of writing *Building A Bridge, How the Catholic church and the LGBT Community Can enter into a relationship of Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity*, the questions Martin says Cizek's story raises for our spiritual journey are biting and poignant.

Those who read this book will be rewarded. I am not surprised it has been revived to guide us and embolden us in these troubled times. ☪



Reviewing the Christian Story

During a discussion on Christianity someone commented: you can't believe half of it so why believe any of it? Eric Hodgens looks at two books that address this urgent question in different ways.

Kevin Treston has been an Australian Christian educator for his whole professional life. His book, *The Wind Blows Where It Choses*, has the sub-title: *The Quest for a Christian Story in Our Time*. First, he describes in detail the crisis in Christianity today. It is a declining religion in a pluralist, secular world. The Catholic constituency has changed too. Simple acceptance from on high is no longer an option.

He devotes a chapter to the rediscovery of the authentic Jesus. He names the problems both in the telling of the story and the acceptance of it. He has a good eye to that all-important factor – history.

This leads him to what has happened to the Jesus story during the two millennia of the Church's existence with its high and low points. There have been big problems, but he ultimately concludes that there is reason to hope.

Roger Haight is one of the USA's best theologians. Christology is his dominant subject. Have a look at his books *Jesus Symbol of God* and *The Future of Christology*.

Another of his books, *Spiritual and Religious*, is a pastoral book written in response to the common claim today 'I am spiritual, but not religious'. He outlines

clearly his understanding of spirituality and religion. A person's spirituality refers to the logic, or character, or consistent quality of a person's or a group's pattern of living insofar as it is a measured before some ultimate reality.

Religion, on the other hand, is a set of beliefs, values and practices that together identify what ultimate reality is and help establish the relationship that obtains between this ultimate reality and the practitioners.


It is a most enlightening read. His case that a group spirituality necessitates a religion is compelling.

These books by Treston and Haight could be a help to pastors who are struggling to understand how they can present a more credible message. ☪

Returned to God

ROBERT “BOB” FRANCIS COGHLAN

02/04/1938 – 24/03/2018

 Bob was ordained at St Patrick’s Cathedral on 24 July 1965 by Archbishop Simonds and has given priestly witness for over fifty two years serving as Assistant Priest at the parishes of Geelong, South Yarra, Cheltenham, Gardenvale and Mitcham, as Administrator of Balwyn North, Lilydale and Hampton Park. He served as Parish Priest of Heidelberg (1979), Spotswood (1984), West Melbourne (1989), Healesville (1995) and Ringwood (2004). Due to his declining health he retired in 2006 as Pastor Emeritus initially living independently, then at George Maher House and more recently at Mercy Place Rice Village.

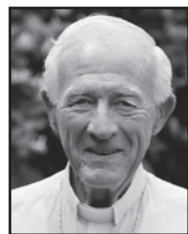
Throughout his ministry, Bob endeavoured to serve his people faithfully. He found his involvement in Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 1970’s provided a new encounter with the Risen Lord which brought focus to his personal life and the lives to those he ministered. He enjoyed liturgical music and receiving great pleasure through his involvement with Church choirs. His personal health brought him challenges along the way, but this never impeded his desire to respond to the care of his people. While a quiet man by personality, he had a wonderful sense of humour and quick wit. He was a kind and charitable man whose generosity to many will be fondly remembered.

Bob was blessed by the attentive care of his family, friends, Clergy Care Team and fellow priests who accompanied through the days of illness into the Promise of God.

He now rests in peace.

LEONARD A FAULKNER

05/12/1926 – 06/05/2018



Emeritus Archbishop Leonard Faulkner died peacefully on Sunday 6 May 2018, in the presence of family, friends and clergy.

The eldest of ten children, he was born in Booleroo Centre in the southern Flinders Ranges on December 5 1926 and after entering the seminary at Rostrevor was ordained a priest in January 1 1950 in Rome.

He was appointed Bishop of Townsville on November 28 1967 and on June 19 1985 he was installed as the seventh Archbishop of Adelaide where he continued his commitment to, and support of, the lay people as a critical part of the life of the Church.

Archbishop Faulkner established the Diocesan Pastoral Team which gave lay women a role in governance, and pioneered a unique model of neighbourhood communities based on the Second Vatican Council’s challenge that the Church be one that looks outward to the community.

He was passionately involved in ecumenical and interfaith initiatives, support for migrants and refugees, Aboriginal communities and the Young Christian Workers movement.

During the AIDS epidemic he demonstrated his bold and compassionate leadership by establishing the Diocesan AIDS Council and an extensive volunteer program to support those affected.

After Archbishop Faulkner’s retirement in 2001 he continued to serve the people – sitting on various committees, saying Mass regularly and visiting the sick. He also used his retirement to catch up with his large family which includes more than 60 first cousins.

Last November he became only the third bishop in the history of the Australian Catholic Church to reach his 50-year milestone as a bishop.

Adelaide Archbishop Philip Wilson extended his deepest sympathy to Archbishop Faulkner’s family and friends and asked the clergy, religious and people of the Archdiocese to pray for the repose of his soul.

“We grieve his death deeply, but we also give thanks for his life and his outstanding service to the gospel and to all whom he led,” he said.

May he rest in peace.

JOSEPH MICALLEF

07/09/1937 – 06/03/2018

 Joseph Micallef PE died at St Bernadette’s Aged Care Facility, North Sunshine.

Ordained at Sts Peter and Paul Basilica, Rome on 13 March 1965, Joseph served the Church in a very positive and pastorally enriching manner, giving fine example to both his brother priests and the community for over 52 years. The Archdiocese is most grateful for his service to the Church of Melbourne.

A member of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, Fr Micallef became incardinated into the Archdiocese of Melbourne in May 1977.

Joseph served as Assistant Priest at the parishes of Albion (1974-1977), Clifton Hill (1977 – 1979), Williamstown (1979 – 1981), Noble Park (1981 – 1984), Glenroy (1984) and Hadfield (1984 – 1988). He was then appointed Parish Priest of Kealba in 1988 until 2006 and then appointed Administrator of the parish of Yarraville in 2006. Joseph retired in 2007 was appointed *Pastor Emeritus*.

WILLIAM ERNEST HOLMES

16/01/1932 – 13/11/2017



William Holmes, husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather, friend and priest died bravely after almost five years residency at Bethanie Aged High Care, Bunbury, WA.

The only child of Melbourne working class parents, William and his mother grieved through the untimely death of William's father in 1943. Williams's mother laboured long hours to continue funding William's private school education, after which he became a teacher – working in Melbourne, Vic; London, UK and Perth, WA.

Aged 32 years, William arrived in Perth. He met and married Marjorie and their romance flourished during 53 challenging years.

Influenced by his devout grandmother, William a practising Anglican, had long felt God's call to the Anglican priesthood. Accepted for possible ordination by Adelaide's Anglican Bishop, William studied three years at theological college and was ordained deacon and then priest by the Bishop, serving in the parishes of Mt Gambier, SA; Albany and Kojonup, WA and Latrobe, Tasmania.

William came to believe that Catholicism, despite weaknesses, brought people nearer to God and so he resigned from the Anglican Priesthood and with Marjorie and their son, joined the Catholic Church and moved back to Melbourne. Acknowledgement must be given to Bishop Myles McKeon who initiated William's catholic Ordination.

Now unemployed, William volunteered at a Catholic Hospital and gained a theological degree from The University of Melbourne. Thankfully, Marjorie's work could support the family during this time.

William's situation became known to Bishop Peter Quinn of Bunbury and with the agreement of his priests and the Australian Catholic Bishops, Bishop Quinn applied to the Vatican for approval to ordain William. Imagine William's and Marjorie's joy when after five years William was informed by Bishop Quinn that Papal approval had been received. William was ordained Catholic priest for Bunbury and loved serving in the parishes of Bunbury, Pemberton, Northcliffe, Manjimup, Margaret River and Augusta. Working at the Marriage Tribunal became another responsibility.

Retiring to Bunbury in 2006, William offered supply ministry until increasing disability forced him to stop.

William's many interests included English Literature, Classical Music, Australian Politics, history, painting and going to the cinema. While congenital feet problems precluded active sport, William engaged in walking and watching cricket and football.

May he now rest in peace, watching over his beloved wife, Marjorie and the family he so dearly loved.

GERARD MAHONY CP

22/04/1922 – 14/08/1947



Gerard was born in Werris Creek, NSW in 1922. The family moved to Erskineville in Sydney, and then to Livingstone Road, Marrickville.

After completing his Passionist formation he was engaged as a teacher at the junior seminary at St. Ives and from there he was elected as Provincial at the age of 35 years, in 1957. He served as leader of communities, attended two General Chapters in 1968 and 1970, to be part of the re-writing of our Passionist Rule as called for by Second Vatican Council. Gerard attended every Provincial Chapter, during his life as a Passionist until 2015. Faithfulness, perseverance, doggedness and unpretentious are words that characterise Gerard.

Gerard gave over 200 parish missions and 300 retreats in his lifetime. He gave many missions with Gerard Glynn, and also with Sr. Carmel Gardiner RSM. A priest and a religious sister working together to give missions was something entirely new at that time. This style of ministry reveals Gerard's openness to change and his willingness to step into and create that future. He lived in the "old church", pre-Vatican II, and then fifty years and more in the Church after the Council. He was very much part of the changing church, and was a great influence for others being able to understand the changes and welcome them. He showed, until his death, a great capacity for reading, thinking and trusting in God. He was faithful to prayer and the daily discipline as the bedrock of his Passionist life. One of his random thoughts on Prayer was, "Meditation is not simply saying prayers, thinking thoughts; it is taking a stance. It is a way of living in the present, living in an awareness of this Presence." Gerard lived out that saying.

Gerard produced many writings on history and spirituality. He was up with the latest thinking and writing and that was reflected in his thinking. The past was to be honoured, the present was to be participated in fully and the future was to be looked for with hope.

Gerard's last words just a short time before he died were, "Another day to be lived and to be lived fully. God is so good. I have really enjoyed today. I enjoyed living today. Thanks, God! Today it was my intention to move to Concord, but what are my intentions worth? My oxygen levels were low so they thought it better to stay here at Balmain for a few more days. People here are all wonderful – the cleaning people, sweeping the floor for me, the ones who bring the meals and cups of tea – they are all so kind and friendly. I am going to get better – I haven't reached the end of the road yet. I am only 95 and I can't even see the end of the road. I think there's another book in me yet."

A little while later, whilst on their rounds, the nursing staff found that he had died. Perhaps he hadn't opened his eyes again. His was a seamless move on the next part of the journey – on the same road he shared with us and will continue to share with us. Gerard is buried at Rookwood cemetery.

PETER MCGRATH CP

17/08/1939 – 03/03/2018

✠ Peter was born in Blacktown, Sydney and undertook high school Christian Brothers Lewisham. He joined the Passionists as a postulant in 1957 and was recognized as very intelligent student with a canny extrovert personality.

Six months after ordination he was appointed to St Ives to teach Ancient History (which he was studying a class ahead of his students) and Biology. St Ives or the nearby district was to become his home for the rest of his life. Peter began studying for a BA and became involved with several other 'young' Passionists in the new Youth work ministry of the post Vatican II Church. The skills acquired were easily transferred to adult faith formation and before long, there were regular programmes being offered at St Ives by Peter (or Richard as he was known after profession and throughout his early years of priesthood) and others.

It was from this adult faith formation that Peter began offering retreats for married couples, and in 1972 he became the acting administrator of Terrey Hills, a very small church with a very small Sunday Mass attendance. Many people from St Ives and the surrounding district who were attending the faith formation sessions began to participate at St Anthony-in-the-Fields. Following the first married couples retreat, many of these families wanted to continue meeting, and what became the Passionist Family Group Movement developed from these simple beginnings. Peter was recognized as the founder, and became the pastor of a thriving parish at Terrey Hills and top rating presenter of a Sunday night religious programme on Sydney radio.

Peter was a gifted motivational speaker. He battled more demons than many people do and prided himself on being a 'boundary rider' sometimes causing him to run up against authorities. Despite of this he was deeply loved by the core group from Terrey Hills. They were grateful for his deep compassion. In his Requiem Mass, Kevin Dance CP included this tribute: "You have known triumph and rejection. But through all the high points and the low ones, you have grown in an understanding of the sea of suffering and the sea of love that is the Passion of Jesus. And over-riding everything else it was your compassion. I salute you for your years of loving service – preacher, parish priest, Provincial, Founder of a Movement and man of quite extraordinary generosity. After some quite rough seas that you have weathered, I pray that you can look at this journey with deep thankfulness and gratitude for connections made, for friends gathered, for desperate souls, for the vision shared."

KEVIN O'SHEA CSSR

1930 – 18/04/2018

✠ With the death of Redemptorist Father Kevin O'Shea a great light has gone out, for our Congregation, for the Australian Church, and many more. Our provincial, Edmond Nixon CSsR, in a moving homily during the Requiem Mass, noted the singularly luminous effect of Kevin's life in his ability to shed light on the mysteries of faith and the deepest reaches of the universe itself: not only was Kevin a classically trained theologian but also he possessed and continued to cultivate an expert knowledge of philosophy, of science and mathematics, not to mention his lifelong interest in the deep things of the human mind itself.

As a young man Kevin contributed to any number of international theological journals and published his thesis on a profound aspect of the Incarnation. Subsequently, he did not write a great number of books, possibly because his mind was so endlessly restless and creative and he had little patience with footnotes and lists of authorities, and the demands of writing. He was, however, endlessly productive in his research and his willingness to share it, and enjoy the new resources of the computer and the Internet.

The clarity, comprehensiveness and creativity of his exposition brought him many invitations to lecture, both in Australia and overseas. He was a regular visitor for a number of years to the Jesuit University of Fordham, New York, where his lectures and courses were deeply appreciated by faculty and students alike.

Redemptorists and the wider Australian church were singularly blessed with the presence of a remarkable intelligence at work amongst us. Kevin has gone into the vision of God, after a long and fruitful witness to faith and to the things of God. His legacy will be cherished by those of us who, however far behind, follow after this man of luminous mind and generous heart in its service of the Word of God and the promise of plentiful redemption.

TIMOTHY O'TOOLE CP

29/09/1956 – 22/12/2017

✠ Tim was born and raised in Geelong. During his formation he spent a period of time in PNG and returned there five years after ordination for four years. Tim was always a popular community member because of his personal warmth, his ability to mimic and to laugh at himself. He struggled with self-belief which endeared him to ordinary people. In his younger days Tim shared his love of music with fellow students. He was a fan of Irish and Australian bush music, enhanced by his ability to play the piano accordion, tin whistle and cornet.

Tim served at St Ives, Hobart and Bourke, but it was at Endeavour Hills where he truly left his mark, having lived there for sixteen years. The last seven of these years he served as parish priest. He was greatly loved for his pastoral care, sensitivity, compassion and ever-ready availability. Tim was transferred to Marrickville as parish priest in 2016, but having survived heart surgery and the insertion of a pace-maker, he could not survive cancer. In his final weeks the cancer moved rapidly, but he died with great resignation and peace. Huge funeral Masses were held in Marrickville, Endeavour Hills and Geelong where he was finally laid to rest.

RETURNED TO GOD

JOHN SHALLVEY MSC

31/1/1942 – 29/10/2017



John grew up as the youngest of four children in country Victoria where Mass was held in a hall in town once a month. John always said, "It was the nightly family rosary recited around the fireplace, that passed on the faith."

He loved the land and it was assumed that he would grow up to look after the family property, however, following his secondary education at Monivae College, Hamilton, Victoria, he felt called to join the MSCs. John was professed as an MSC Brother in 1962 and managed the Douglas Park seminary dairy while working hard at overcoming a very severe stammer. Then in 1971 he entered the Late Vocations Seminary in Kensington and was ordained in 1974.

In his first appointment at Wadeye he immersed himself in Aboriginal culture. Later he was assistant priest at Randwick when the Antioch Youth Movement was starting. As National Chaplain, he was a legendary figure with youth. They gravitated to this humble man who exuded his *own* love of Christ with a smile that lifted everyone's hearts and he was much sought after as a confessor.

Other appointments took him to Hindmarsh in South Australia, Moonah in Tasmania, Park Orchards in Victoria, North Randwick and finally Hillston and Bourke in Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese. John sensed God's presence in nature, in the beauty of the bush and the roaring challenge of the waves. He relished the surf but his favourite place was a cave at Douglas Park where he loved to camp, pray and meditate and where he felt most in touch with the Lord. He also had a profound appreciation of the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and Reconciliation. His focus was always on trust in the mercy and personal love of Jesus for each one of us.

He died of cancer in the loving care of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Kensington. His requiem Mass was at OLSH Parish, Randwick where he was farewelled by a large community of priests, religious, family and laity. A wonderful priest, a great human being and loved by so many.

ANTHONY (TONY) VICTOR SMITH SJ

03/06/1947 – 18/02/2018



A colourful character who made a very particular contribution to the English language with his distinctive, oft quoted sayings, 'AV' died suddenly at St Paul's Residential Care, Northbridge (Sydney) at the age of 70, having been a Jesuit for almost 53 years and a priest for 40. Born in Perth, where he was educated by the Jesuits at St Louis School, he entered the Society of Jesus in Melbourne in 1965. He returned to Perth to do a BA at the University of WA and again for his ordination on 03 December 1977. Apart from 1984, when he completed a Diploma in Educational Administration at Fordham University, NYC, he ministered in Sydney from 1979 until his death.

In 1985 Tony was assigned to St Aloysius' College, where he went on to become the longest-serving headmaster in the history of the College. For 18 years he provided dynamic, forthright, imaginative leadership. On the eve of the bicentenary of white settlement in Australia, he raised the Aboriginal flag on the rooftop of the College (overlooking Sydney Harbour) in a symbolic move that attracted the attention of the police. He acquired a new site for the previously constricted Junior School and commissioned the magnificent stained-glass window and Létourneau organ in the College Chapel.

In 2004 Tony became Parish Priest at North Sydney, helping forge North Sydney, Lavender Bay and Kirribilli into the parishes of Our Lady of the Way. He started "Father Tony's lunch", a free Christmas meal for 200 people who had nowhere else to go. During his nine years there, he was afflicted with multiple health conditions, but he bore them with great courage and good cheer. When he transferred to the infirmary at St Ignatius' College, Riverview, and to life in a wheelchair, he continued to provide whatever chaplaincy services he could for the school. Even when he moved to St Paul's for greater care, he exercised his love for priestly ministry.

A man of great pastoral concern, Tony had a gift for encouraging people, was humorous about honest mistakes, strong in calling things as he saw them and willing to take the consequences. The MP for North Sydney paid fitting tribute to him in Federal Parliament the day before his funeral at North Sydney. ☺

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

† George Branch MIC (Archdiocese of Melbourne).....	05/04/2018	† Donald Kennedy CSsR (Redemptorist Fathers).....	10/03/2018
† Mitrat Chorkawj (Ukrainian Eparchy).....	19/03/2018	† George O'Mara (Diocese of Parramatta).....	28/02/2018
† Brian Cooper (Archdiocese of Brisbane).....	28/04/2018	† Ernest Smith (Archdiocese of Melbourne).....	28/03/2018
† Brian Cunneen MSC (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart).....	11/04/2018	† Joseph Wilson OP (Dominican Father).....	16/03/2018
† Hugh Dowdell (Diocese of Wollongong).....	19/02/2018	† Rev John Williams (Archdiocese of Hobart).....	09/05/2018
† José-Maria Enedáguila SJ (Jesuit Fathers).....	20/04/2018	† Rev James Dekker SSS (Blessed Sacrament Fathers).....	03/05/2018

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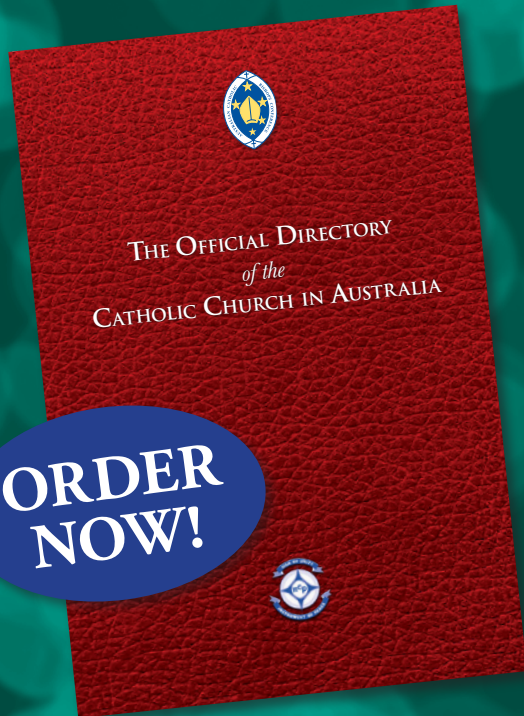
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