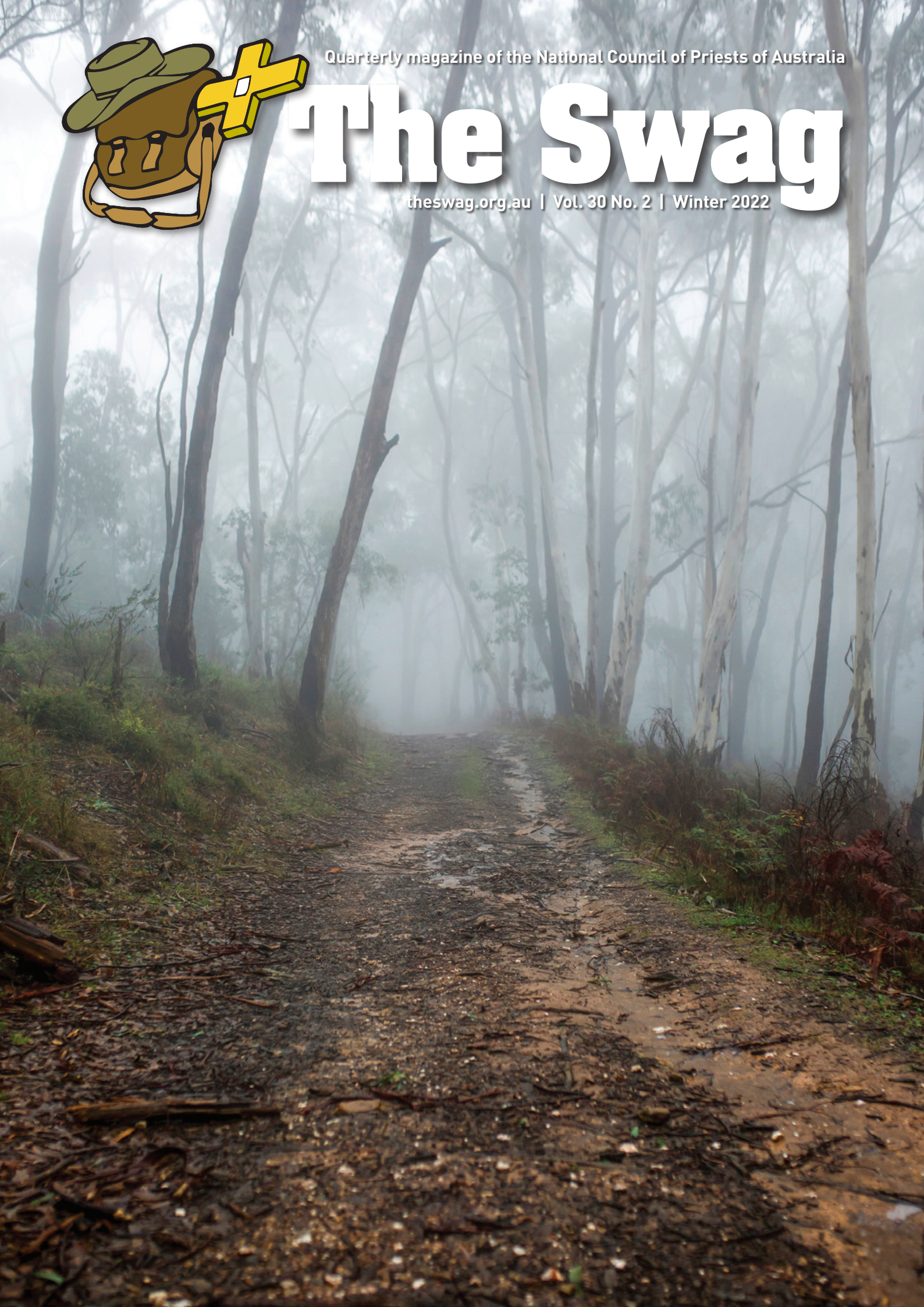




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The Swag

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

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James Clarke



Easter has come and we bask in the light of the resurrected Lord. A happy Easter to all NCP members, associates and supporters, and to the readership of *The Swag*.

NCP is at a crisis point in its history. We are an aging and declining membership and sadly most of the younger clergy are choosing not to align themselves with our organisation. This is their right, however it is somewhat disheartening, given that part of the ethos of NCP is to *encourage* all priests in their active

ministry and *support* all priests in their retirement.

At the time of writing this report, we currently have a membership of 831 (464 priests in active ministry and 367 retired priests) and I thank each one of you for your continued financial support.

We have the birthdates of 760 of the 831 member priests and the average age of the priests who make up the membership of the NCP is 74.54 years. It would appear that we are in the twilight years.

The future of our organisation isn't looking "rosy". I don't want you to think that I am sitting at my desk writing this report dressed in a hooded cape holding a scythe. The reality of the situation is impossible to ignore.

We urgently need to inject new life into our organisation and so I am appealing to each one of our members to personally reach out and invite the younger priests in your diocese or order to join NCP. That said, we also need to invite all current non-members to come on board. If we all take it upon ourselves to recruit one new member, that will be a great start.

The absence of our biennial convention (because of COVID-19) has perhaps contributed to the despondency we are currently experiencing. We are planning to hold our next convention in 2023 and I am also asking for a group of priests from one diocese or together with priests from a neighbouring diocese to form a convention organising committee.

Please brothers, the time is now! I urge you to help increase and strengthen our membership and to also consider being part of a convention organising committee.

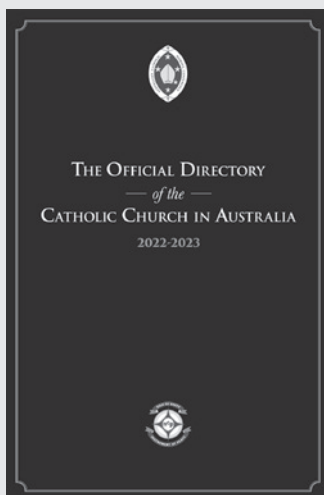
The Plenary Council will resume this year, and we await the outcome of its deliberations. Congratulations to Archbishop Patrick O'Regan and Bishop Shane Mackinlay on being chosen to represent the Australian bishops at the next meeting of the Synod of Bishops.

Finally brothers, on behalf of the NCP executive I wish all of you the blessings of the Easter season and of the Risen Lord.

Yours in His Priesthood,
James Clarke ☩

The Official Directory – of the – Catholic Church in Australia 2022/2023

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The Directory, a 1 July publication, gives the rich picture of the Australian Church, listing all ACBC Commissions, Secretariats, Advisory Bodies & Agencies; Diocesan information (Parishes and personnel, Chaplains, Schools, Health and Welfare) as well as all Religious Orders and Catholic organisations.

This edition will be Sally's 25th and Chris' 19th.

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Slowing down

One thing I am not known for is slowing down. I thought this would change once I retired. But I was wrong. Somehow, I was hard wired to say 'yes' to most things and there was a number of ministries/activities I was still involved in that seemed to fill in the time. This all changed after spending a month in hospital two years ago and being diagnosed with cancer.



Even this has not slowed me down too much although my energy levels are lower and endless medical appointments are now the priority.

To enhance the challenge, I contracted Covid recently which means isolating completely for a week or so. And cancelling all engagements.

During my Covid isolation, a friend sent me a poem, *I Want to Make Heroes of Those Who Slow Down*, by Leyla Aylin. It was a support for my enforced rest. It also made me think more about the pace of life in general. We need to respond when we see need, injustice and opportunity to support human flourishing. However, this poem reminded me we are more effective if we are also rested, thoughtful and measured. How do we get more in tune with what the body tells us about who we are; what we need and what it can reveal to us about our best selves and our potential for full flourishing in

ourselves and others? To read the full poem you will find the link below. Let me quote the first part of the poem.

*How brave you are for slowing down.
For not finishing that to-do list.
How courageous you are for not crossing that finish line, because your body said "enough."
How fearless you are for choosing the quiet of your soul over those voices driving you always towards more.
How bold, how rebellious – you, out there, honouring your own natural rhythm, going against the culture's breakneck speed.
We tend to make heroes of those hungry with ambition, relentlessly doing, producing always more.
We applaud those who refuse to stop or rest. Who push themselves so hard in the name of achievement, that they sacrifice their body and soul and heart in the process. We celebrate those who are ill or aging but never show it, never slow down, never reveal a moment of vulnerability. This drivenness can be heroic, at times. It can be necessary for our survival or the greater good.*

*But,
I want to make heroes of those who slow down.
I want to make heroes of those who listen to their bodies, who do not strive for more than what the soul truly needs.*

(I Want to Make Heroes of Those Who Slow Down, Leyla Aylin, Nov 17, 2021)

There are so many urgent matters to attend to. It may be work, ministry, family or everyday interests. There are plenty of global challenges to worry about such as climate change, war,

displacement of peoples, aged care and child poverty. It may be advocacy for the marginalised and voiceless so that their stories may be amplified and respected. It may be equality, justice and a fairer chance for all.

All these and more are valid and essential concerns and deserve our time and energy. However, Leyla Aylin reminds us, much like the mystics such as Catherine of Siena, John of the Cross or Hildegard of Bingen, that leaving space and time for reflection, prayer and rest is an essential element in the life of the reflective practitioner. It's in the reflection on experience that we make headway in learning how to be in the world in an emancipatory transformative way.

Aylin writes elsewhere in her poem:

*I want to celebrate those brave enough to cease all doing, even for a second, and sit with the ache in their hearts.
A task many find harder than summiting the highest peak.
I want to make heroes of those who honour their limitations. Who are unable to keep up with the busy-ness of our times, yet show up to each profound, necessary moment.
It is truly an act of courage and rebellion to do any such thing, in a world demanding you resist your own self, your own rhythm, your own soul.
And the paradox is, that often when we cease our incessant doing, even for a minute, and listen to that quiet voice within, we discover what it is we absolutely must do, and what instead can fall away.*

Go gently, colleagues. ☺



The Swag Spring Edition

Closing date for letters and articles is Monday 18 July 2022.
Please email submissions for consideration
to: editor@theswag.org.au
Normal Articles: 700 words
Major Features: 1,400 words.



My ideal church

JOHN ALONSO DICK

John Alonso Dick, an historical theologian and former academic dean at the American College, KU Leuven (Belgium) and professor at the KU Leuven and the University of Ghent, describes his ideal church and what he would like to find in a church that is a healthy Christian community. Reprinted with permission from *La Croix International* March 17, 2022. <https://international.la-croix.com>



I would begin my response by saying I want a Church that is truly a supportive community of friends: men and women striving to live in the spirit of Christ. Not a doctrinaire, authoritarian institution.

Some institutional structures of course are necessary but they should be understood as provisional. They, along with institutional leaders, should be regularly critiqued and changed.

Institutional structures are tools – a means – constructed to help and support Christian communities. The innate danger in all institutions is that, if left unchecked, they cease being service-oriented structures and become hard-nosed self-serving institutions demanding unquestioned loyalty. A kind of institutional idolatry.

A healthy Church affirms the dignity and equality of all men and women, regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. It does this not just in official rhetoric and documents but in personal and institutional behaviour. We need male and female ordained ministers. LGBTQ people should be welcomed in Church ministries and employment. For too long Church leaders have patronized, insulted, or simply removed people who do not fit their mold. It still happens.

An honest and humble Church must realize that it does not possess all the truth and has to collaborate with a

variety of people in pursuit of the truth. It has to acknowledge as well that all Church doctrines are time and culture bound. They are provisional and changeable. Some doctrines may have been meaningful in the past but just don't work today. Others evolved more from religious fantasy and folklore. Gabriel Moran mentioned the great assumption about the Assumption.

A questioning church

A healthy Church asks questions and welcomes the questioner. Asking questions brings greater self-knowledge, a more realistic life understanding. It is an essential element in personal conscience formation.

All the great advances in human knowledge have come from people who dared to ask questions. Isaac Newton asked: "Why does an apple fall from a tree?" and "Why does the moon not fall into the Earth?" Charles Darwin asked: "Why do the Galápagos Islands have so many species not found elsewhere?" Albert Einstein asked: "What would the universe look like if I rode through it on a beam of light?" By asking these kinds of basic questions they were able to start the processes that lead to historic breakthroughs in human and scientific understanding. And of course, Jesus of Nazareth asks in the synoptic gospels "Who do people say that I am?" In John 7, 19 he asks "Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"

I want a Church that stresses and practices tolerance and freedom of inquiry: a Church that realizes that all doctrines, even infallible papal pronouncements, evolve. All "official teachers" must also be humble learners. A healthy Christian community rejects intimidation and realizes that conflicts must be resolved through patient and humble dialogue. It may not be easy but it has to happen.

Contemporary leadership

I want a Church in which the higher-up ordained leaders dress and act like healthy contemporary leadership people not museum-piece Renaissance princes. It costs between four and five thousand dollars to dress a cardinal. I often think about the comment of Jesus in Mark 12, 38: "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes."

I want a Church in which leadership people are elected by the community for set terms of office, like five or 10 years. They, like professors where I taught for many years, should be regularly evaluated. They should be replaced by new leadership people when their terms of office expire. If a bishop knew that he or she would only be bishop for about five years, his or her behaviour would be greatly modified. Can you imagine, for instance, what would happen in places like the Archdiocese of New York? And of course the Diocese of Rome?

I want a Church in which openness to the signs of the times is a key virtue rather than a closed-minded condemnation of all that is contemporary. We live in the present. God, whatever one wants to call God, is alive and closely with us right now. Not as a controlling authority but as a loving companion.

And yes indeed... I want a Church open to the bigger questions that touch on a contemporary understanding of Jesus Christ and a contemporary understanding and experience of God. For many people today the old anthropomorphisms just don't work anymore. God is just as much Mother as Father, but much more than that. Why don't Christian religious leaders sit down with, pray, and meditate with leaders of non-Christian religions? God is much more than a Christian. It is not too late to make a few good New Year's resolutions: To ask more questions about contemporary Christian belief and practice. To support those who question. To explore together, in respectful and earnest dialogue, the complete range of answers. More questions will arise of course. We are on a journey. We have not yet arrived. And a healthy Christian community is our GPS. 🗺️

A celebratory service

LIZZIE SNEDDEN

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle made history when it celebrated its first-ever LGBTIQ Mass, on 4 March 2022. This article originally appeared in the Autumn 2022 edition of *Aurora*, which is produced by the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Words are by Lizzie Snedden and photo is by *Standing Free Photography*.



The Mass is part of the Diocese's response to the call of the Diocesan Synod and of the National Plenary Council. During the discernment process, it became clear that many Hunter Catholics wanted the Church to be more openly inclusive of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community.

Organised by the Diocese's LGBTIQ Catholic Forum established in 2020 with the encouragement of the late Bishop Bill Wright, the LGBTIQ Mass was the same as a regular Mass but with prayers and scriptures addressing the needs of LGBTIQ people and their families.

The Forum's secretary, Lawrie Hallinan, said the LGBTIQ Mass is an opportunity to celebrate that LGBTIQ people are created in God's image and are welcome in the Catholic Church.

Diocesan Administrator, Fr Greg Barker, led the Mass held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Tighes Hill. In his Homily, Fr Greg referenced Pope Francis' recent message to Catholic families, which encouraged parents who "see different sexual orientations in their children" to accompany, not condemn their children.

Greg Byrne forms part of the Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Forster-Tuncurry and drove two hours to attend the service, which was of significance to his family.

"I am pleased to see the Catholic Church welcoming homosexual people into the worshiping community," said Greg, who is also a member of PFLAG, the first and largest organisation for LGBTIQ+ and their parents, families and allies. "These people have felt very unwelcome in past years."

A personal story

In the lead up to the Mass, James Turner, a parishioner in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle now in his seventies, said he wished there had been a LGBTIQ Mass when he was a young man.

"It would have saved me years of fear and self loathing if my Church had clearly said, "God made you as you are, God loves you and we see you as a valued member of God's Church."

James grew up in the western suburbs of Sydney with his mother, Joy, and Jack Turner, not his biological father but the only Dad he ever knew. James and his five younger siblings were enrolled at the local public school and on the weekend they attended Sunday School hosted by the Anglican Church.

When James was around 11-years-old, he noticed he was not like many other boys his age. He preferred to sit inside and discuss history, faith, and politics rather than play rugby. An interest in the Catholic Church followed and he contacted the Catholic Enquiry Centre.

"I readily embraced Catholicism, and like many converts of that era, I threw myself into it," James said. At 18 James was baptised a Catholic and two years later, in the late 1960s, he left his family home in Sydney to join the Oblate Seminary in Melbourne.

While his decision to become a priest was prompted by a desire to "do something good for society", James was also hiding a secret. "I was aware I was attracted to men," James said of that confusing period in his life. "I felt totally ashamed and had never verbalised it to anyone, let alone acted upon it."

"Everything I had ever read on the topic made me think it was just a passing phase. In part, I felt that becoming a priest and following my faith would help me to 'right the wrongs' I was experiencing in my mind. Taking up the vocation was never intended as a cover-up for my sexuality or self-imposed penance; I had a genuine desire to do something worthwhile," he said.

While James was in his second year of study his mother and sister came to visit him at the seminary and their presence made him feel terribly homesick. "By this stage I had been to see a psychiatrist about the thoughts that had plagued me for over a decade," James said. "While my family was none the wiser, I had arrived at the understanding my attraction towards men was not a passing phase."

He decided his best chance of "properly dealing with his sexuality" would be at home in Sydney. A short while later he left the seminary and enrolled at Teacher's College in Wollongong. There he befriended another college student, Peter, with whom he formed a close platonic relationship. James' Catholic faith remained as strong as ever.

"Peter was openly and unapologetically gay, with a strong personality to boot," James recalled. "He was much loved by his Catholic family who knew of and accepted his homosexuality."

Treatment a failure

"This realisation made me begin to question the deep-seated myth I had held onto for so long; that my

conservative family would shun me for being gay,” James said. Despite this new insight, at the end of James’ first year at college his attraction to men still felt wrong and it was then that he sought out electric aversion therapy to make him “straight”.

James recounts that Peter was horrified when he learnt of his friend’s intention to partake in the week-long inpatient therapy at the Prince Henry Hospital in Sydney, which was to be followed by six months of outpatient follow-up with a treating psychiatrist.

“I could only assure him that it was something I felt I had to do. I was desperate to be ‘normal’,” James said.

Prior to his hospital admission James mustered the courage to confess his sexuality to his mother. “My mother withdrew, feeling it was all her fault,” he said.

“Jack noticed she was acting differently and asked if I knew what was going on,” James said. “I had been too nervous to tell him; after all, it took him a while to recover from me converting to Catholicism.”

“But to my surprise Jack was wonderful about it and simply responded with “is that all? I came across that all the time in the army”. It was such a relief.”

Not surprisingly the aversion therapy did not work, and at the end of 1972 James turned to the Charismatic Movement founded by Alex Reichel to “pray the gay away”. That didn’t work either and in 1974, while working as a primary school teacher, James approached his then parish priest, the late Fr Peter Morrissey, for guidance.

Finding a new way

“He was my salvation,” James said. “I went to him, and I said, “what is wrong with me? I am gay and I can’t seem to form a romantic attachment with other people.” He responded by saying, “you think too much about yourself, go out and help others”.

“He then asked me, “who made you?” and after fumbling with the answer before arriving at ‘God’ he responded with, “and James, God does not make rubbish, God loves you just the way you are – just the way he made you”.

With Fr Morrissey’s wisdom ringing in his ears, James began volunteering at St Vincent de Paul. After Mass one evening he met a fellow parishioner who he fell “madly in love with”, and in 1975 the two entered James’ first ever relationship.

Unfortunately, the relationship did not last and almost seven years after James left the Oblates, now a qualified teacher, and partway through a psychiatric nursing course, he felt a call from God to return to the seminary.

Having come a long way in reconciling with his sexuality, James applied to the Oblates to be accepted back into training for the priesthood. The refusal was swift: “we don’t accept former students back into the Congregation”.

At various points in the decade that followed, while forging a successful career in psychiatric nursing and later as a general nurse, James formally enquired with three bishops about joining the priesthood but to no avail. The reasons he was given varied, but in part he always felt it came back to his sexuality, whether he disclosed it or not.

James does not resent the Church for this response but is hopeful that Pope Francis’ encouragement of ministry to LGBTIQ community will enable the Church to evolve.

After his retirement from nursing and subsequent move from Sydney to Nelson Bay in 2013, James strengthened his commitment to God, and himself, by resolving to attend daily Mass and to pray the Hours of The Divine Office.

Since arriving in our diocese, James has taken up the ministry of providing Holy Communion to parishioners who, for whatever reason, cannot attend Mass and forms part of the choir at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

He describes his belief in God, his commitment to his Catholic Faith and great love of Our Lady and the Saints, as well as the Sacraments, as being the mainstay of his adult life. “It is these things that have formed the background of my coming to terms with my sexuality,” James said.

Mass with LGBTIQ Catholics and allies

Asked about his thoughts on the LGBTIQ Mass, he acknowledges that

there will be those who will question it.

“To me the LGBTIQ Mass celebrates my inclusion in the Church, in the People of God, as a loved and welcomed LGBTIQ person. The Mass acknowledges my right and role to walk together with all God’s People in the journey to build the Kingdom of God together,” James said.

It is for this same reason he has admiration for the current pontiff. “Pope Francis is not changing the rules, but he is trying to understand, which is at least a step in the right direction,” James said.

So, while James does not labour over what could have been if there was more widespread support for the LGBTIQ community by the Church and broader society in his youth, he takes comfort in knowing that, “Catholics – including the lay and many in Clerical roles – have come a long way since my early days in Western Sydney.” ☺

Can we find you?

If you move, please let Sally and Chris know, otherwise you may not receive your copy of the next edition of *The Swag*.

A pilgrimage to Catholic Parramatta

JOHN BOYLE

Monsignor John Boyle, Parish Priest and Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta from 1991 to 2000, tells stories of early Parramatta and current rugby league.

Seventeen seminarians from the Holy Spirit Seminary, Harris Park, all of whom are students for the Diocese of Parramatta, went on an immersion experience in February, becoming acquainted with some of Parramatta's historical sites. They were accompanied by the new Rector of the Harris Park seminary, Very Reverend Paul Marshall, and the new Vice-Rector, Reverend Dr John Frauenfelder.

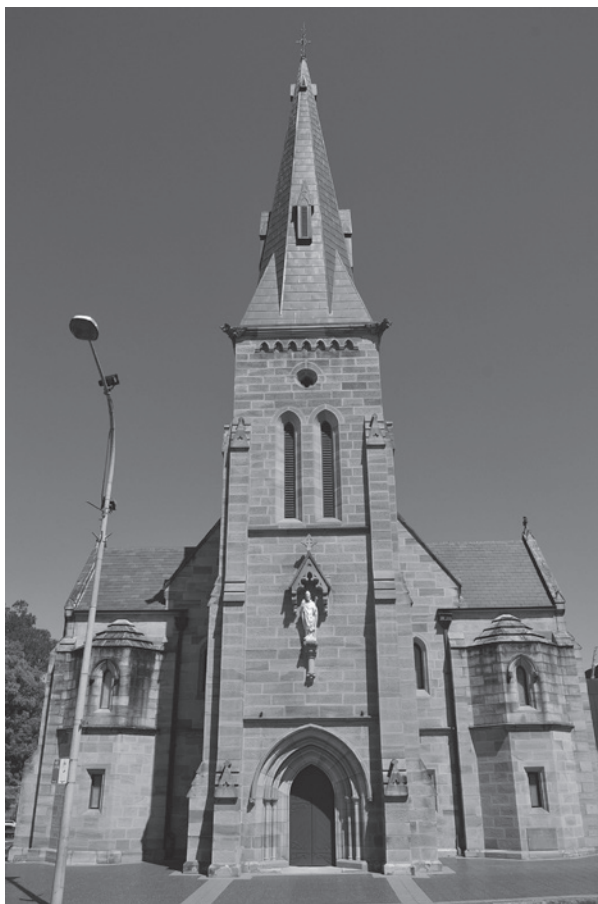
While Parramatta is described as the Cradle of the Nation, it is also the cradle of Catholicism.

Parramatta claims the oldest convent in Australia, the oldest mortuary chapel, the oldest Catholic cemetery. In Parramatta's parish church the first profession of a religious took place. The present St Joseph's Hospital, Auburn, began on the site opposite the present cathedral. The façade of St Patrick's Orphanage, 500 metres from the cathedral and administered by the Good Samaritan Sisters beginning in 1859, has recently been cleaned and will be repurposed. Next door is the old Female Factory where, from 1840, the Sisters of Charity worked, teaching needlework and sewing, giving some dignity to the women in what was a wretched and godforsaken institution.

It was in the bell tower of the cathedral, looking at the newly installed ring of bells, that the seminarians heard the oft-repeated story that the original St Patrick's bells were on the Dunbar, which sank while attempting to enter Port Jackson on a dark and stormy night in August 1857. So powerful was this legend in the oral history of Parramatta parishioners that the ninth Parish Priest of Parramatta, Monsignor Joseph McGovern, paid divers to look for the bells when the Dunbar wreck was "rediscovered" by SCUBA divers in the 1950s. Alas, the legend was disproved

when the manifest of the ship's cargo was produced and nothing resembling a ring of bells appeared anywhere.

It is a good story and sits alongside the belief that the first Mass celebrated in



Parramatta was celebrated in the loft of the gaol in Hangman's Green opposite the present cathedral. This error is repeated in the St Patrick's Parramatta Centenary Magazine, May 1936. (The gaol had been burnt to the ground by persons unknown at the time Father James Dixon said the first Mass in Parramatta in 1803.) To misquote Galadriel in *The Lord of the Rings*, "History becomes legend and legend becomes myth." Such legends, however, make telling-the-story interesting!

Parramatta's cathedrals

For the purposes of a pilgrimage to the Parramatta Catholic historical sites, the

concept of the magic lantern slide was used. This was a technology fashionable for education and entertainment in the 19th Century but has now morphed into the ubiquitous PowerPoint presentation. The slideshow was downloaded onto the seminarians' iPhones. When sitting in St John's Anglican Cathedral in Church Street, it was possible to see what the building looked like in 1803 by going to the downloaded photo. The seminarians were able to access photos of the fire that destroyed St Patrick's Cathedral on the afternoon of Monday February 19, 1996. They could view a photo of the police interviewing the arsonist.

Fr James Dixon, convict priest

The seminarians climbed up Rose Hill to Old Government House in Parramatta Park. Here Governor King summoned the Catholics in the colony to hear the proclamation that their prayers for a priest had been answered, and that Father James Dixon, a convict priest, would be granted permission to officially celebrate Mass in May 1803. This site is of historical importance for Catholics because that muster of Roman Catholics, ordered by Governor King, was fulfillment of the wishes of the five Parramatta Catholics, who had petitioned Phillip for a priest way back in 1792.

That document, given to Phillip on the eve of his embarkation to England, informs him of "the inconvenience we find in not being indulged with a pastor of our own religion." It shows that these Catholics were determined to hold on to their religion. "Our present opinion is that nothing could induce us ever to depart from the colony here, unless the idea of going into eternity without the assistance of a Catholic priest." Four of the petitioners were men. The fifth, Mary Macdonald was a woman. It was dated, Parramatta, November 30, 1792.

Governor Lachlan Macquarie and Rev Marsden

Like all the historical buildings in Parramatta, the present Old Government

House was closed because of Covid-19, but a guide came in to lead the students on a tour of Governor Lachlan Macquarie's house, an elegant Palladian style country residence in the English manner. It was begun in 1815 and is maintained in pristine condition by the National Trust of Australia.

Macquarie, who came to the colony in 1810, was not a particularly religious man, but he had a Catholic view of redemption. He believed that once convicts had served their time, they were truly free. Their sin was expunged, and they could re-join society with their past crimes erased. This was the understanding of the layman, Macquarie, but it was not the view of the professional religious man, chaplain and magistrate, Reverend Samuel Marsden, who had been working in the colony some 14 years before Macquarie arrived. It was said of Marsden that "he came to the colony to do good and did very well".

In 1795, Governor John Hunter made the Church of England chaplains magistrates. Marsden's role as magistrate at Parramatta attracted criticism amongst his contemporaries because he inflicted harsh punishments on convicts. It was compulsory for Catholics to attend Protestant services. Punishments were directed against the absentees, such as a reduction in the food ration or floggings in the later years. History has remembered Marsden as the 'Flogging Parson'.

He wrote that Catholics "were composed of the lowest class of the Irish nation; who are the most wild, ignorant and savage race that were ever favoured with the light of civilization; men that have been familiar with ... every horrid crime from their infancy. Their minds being destitute of every principle of religion and morality render them capable of perpetrating the most nefarious acts in cool blood.

As they never appear to reflect upon consequences; but to be ... always alive to rebellion and mischief, they are very dangerous members of society. No confidence whatever can be placed in them... [If Catholicism in Australia] were tolerated they would assemble together from every quarter, not so much from a desire of celebrating Mass, as to recite the miseries and injustice of their banishment, the hardships they

suffer, and to enflame one another's minds with some wild scheme of revenge." [Samuel Marsden, *A Few Observations on the Toleration of the Catholic Religion in New South Wales*, memorandum, cited in Hughes, p. 188.]

Reading this today would incline us to think that Marsden was not a big fan of ecumenism. He certainly put himself in a conflict-of-interest situation when pronouncing sentence on Catholics who refused to attend his Protestant services.

It is an irony that Mamre, Marsden's country estate (see Genesis 13:18), has recently passed from the hands of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy to CatholicCare Parramatta. Marsden would wince if he knew of this turn of events. It could be apocryphal, but people have said that they have heard noises coming from Section One, Row U, Plot 3, St John's Cemetery, Parramatta. Could it be that Samuel Marsden is turning in his grave?

Parramatta Leagues Club

After a tour of the new Parramatta stadium, the seminarians had a lunch break at the Parramatta Leagues Club. Here was more Catholic history. The Leagues Club is on the present site in O'Connell Street because of a decision taken by the local parish priest in 1958.

It came to pass that an innocuous advertisement was placed by the secretary of the Parramatta Leagues Club, Jack Argent, in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 11 February 1958. It announced that the new club was applying for a liquor licence for premises 4-6 Ross Street, Parramatta.

Now, 4-6 Ross Street just happens to be opposite the prestigious Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC) and over the road from St Patrick's Primary School, a successor of Father Therry's little school begun in 1820 in Hunter Street, Parramatta.

The Parish Priest, Monsignor Joseph McGovern, sprang into action. Together with the Mother General of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, Mother Mary Thecla, a barrister, Mr Bowie, was hired to object to the club's application for a liquor licence.

The Metropolitan Licencing Court met on St Patrick's Day and again on the

Feast of the Annunciation, at 42 Bridge Street, Sydney. Arguments against the proposed licence included children being run over by inebriated persons as they left the licensed premises, and the fact that patrons would be able to look over the convent wall and into the dormitories of OLMC.

On the second day of the hearing continuous rosaries were prayed in the classrooms of St Patrick's Primary, OLMC and Marist Brothers' Parramatta. With Our Lady on side, it was inevitable that the Catholics would win.

The decision, in favour of the parishioners, was handed down by Licensing Magistrate E J Forrest on the Friday of Easter Week, 1958. The City Engineer, Mr F C Smale, killed off the Ross Street project by recommending that Council reject the proposed development application because, as the *Cumberland Argus* headlined, 'Club's additions clash with religious area'.

This decision meant that the club needed to look for a new location. In October that same year the Secretary of Parramatta Leagues Club Limited, put a second notice in the *Sydney Morning Herald* advertising that he was applying for a liquor licence for premises "situate at 15 O'Connell Street, Parramatta". This is where the club now stands at the corner of Eels Place and O'Connell Street, next door to the new stadium. This was truly a win-win situation for both the parish and the club.

Nevertheless, the rumour went around the parish that for the cost and inconvenience of the court action, Monsignor McGovern, although winning the case, had put a hex on the Parramatta Eels, the team that joined the NRL 75 years ago this year, with the effect they would never win a premiership.

Parishioners thought that the curse had worn off in 1976 when Parramatta reached the grand final for the first time. But the Blue and Golds were unsuccessful. Parramatta made it again to the grand final the following season. This match against St George was a draw. A grand final replay was played the following week. Parramatta lost 22 to nil. Obviously, McGovern's Curse had not been lifted!

In May 1981, Mehmet Ali Agca shot Pope John Paul II in St Peter's Square.

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From Rome's Gemelli hospital, where the Pope was recovering, word spread that Papa Wojtyla had forgiven the would-be assassin.

With forgiveness the new buzzword of 1981, and Monsignor McGovern dead for 17 years, the Eels supporters at St Patrick's Parish felt that the jinx should be lifted. In late September Parramatta won against Newtown, the team they

had first played against in 1947. Parramatta had won their first premiership. The football gods were appeased. As a token of appreciation fans burnt down Cumberland Oval. This was the end of an era. The fire that destroyed the oval was a purifying experience and conclusive proof that the curse had died or was at least dormant.

McGovern's Curse is a case where myth

has become legend and legend has become history. In the telling of the story it might be prudent to remember the adage, "never let the truth get in the way of a good story".

The Chinese may be celebrating the Year of the Tiger, but the Parramatta supporters are convinced 2022, the 75th anniversary of Parramatta joining the NSWRL premiership, is the Year of the Eels. ☞



Synodal virtues: valuing a sense of agency

THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN

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In order to build a synodal Church, all the baptized must be valued and listened to lest they just "drop out"

One of the most dis-spiriting things in life is when we have no sense of "agency". The notion of agency is one that originated in sociology but it refers to something that most adults have felt at one time or another.

Agency is the sense that I can do something about a problem, that I can make a difference, that I have some control over the situation in which I find myself. Agency is the exact opposite of feeling like a bit of wood floating on the sea, buffeted by waves, and drawn along by the currents. We so like to feel we have a rudder, a steering wheel, a chance to decide what will happen.

We rarely feel we have any sense of agency. We only become aware of it when we do not have it: when we have a sense of a lack of agency. This can be quite frightening. It is the feeling that there is nothing I can do to change the situation that is bearing down on me. It is the loneliness of realizing that no one will listen to me. The problems just goes round in circles and are ignored. Nobody cares!

Opting out

We see this sense of "I have no agency" in societies, social networks, clubs,

businesses ... and also in Churches.

A sense of a lack of agency can be quite dangerous, both to us as individuals and to the society, because we can feel that we are irrelevant.

People who sense a lack of agency usually just opt-out. A metaphor of lack of agency.

We dislike situations where we have a sense that can make a difference. We describe them with phrases such as being 'in a vice' or 'being ground down.' But opting out of the Church is not simply "lapsing". That is seeing the world from the clerical perspective.

Opting out often means giving up on our individual mission and calling. It means no longer seeing and acting in union with the Christ as part of our lives.

Acknowledging the problem

One of the rarely noticed difficulties felt by many Catholics is a sense that they have no agency when it comes to matters related to the Church. They often feel that if they try to make their views heard, they are simply ignored.

It might be to point out to a bishop that the presbyter appointed is unsuited to the situation.

And then the bishop's reply: you are lucky to have one! It might be related to larger issues, but again such Catholics

have a sense that, no matter what "they" think or say, it will make no difference.

The sense that "it will make no difference" is the experience of a loss of agency. And this leads directly to indifference and then to a gradual unannounced departure.

But many bishops reply that they have never heard such a complaint. And the reason is simple: those who have a sense of a loss of agency do not waste their breath any longer in telling those who will not listen that they are not being listened to.

Curiously, we have just had a demonstration that this is a problem in the Roman Catholic Church from no less a voice than that of Pope Francis.

In telling women religious not to be silent in servitude, he is acknowledging that many sisters acutely feel a loss of agency and that they need to make their voices heard. However, the problem remains: we can make our voices audible, but we cannot make them heard.

We have, moreover, a backlog of problems that need to be aired in each Church, but many of the voices have given up. We may speak of evangelization and preach the good news.

But what of those who have heard it and have still departed because those who are to lead the evangelizers could not be bothered to listen?

Agency and belonging

Groups of Catholics around the world are looking with hope at the ongoing preparation (synodal process) for the upcoming assembly of the Synod of Bishops, seeing it as giving them a

chance to make their concerns heard.

We could reframe this hope thus: they are looking to the synodal process as a moment when they will have a sense of agency. One of the challenges facing a synodal Church will be to give the baptized a sense of agency as Catholics. With a sense of agency goes a sense of belonging – I am a real part of something “bigger than me”.

Agency is a key to adult faith as a member of the Body of the Christ. This manifests itself in a sense that “I am wanted here” – not because someone wants to recruit me or convert me or get me to consume something, but because I am listened to and seen as having insight.

Exclusion

Many in the Catholic Church seem not worry that people do not have a sense of agency or that they might feel “second class members”. To them, this is not an important matter!

A metaphor of agency. We like the sense that we have choices and can exercise our choices. Even simple choices (shoes or sandals – which to wear?) involve our sense of agency – but we only notice it when it is absent!

But to those who think that a sense of agency does not matter, please note what you probably already know: that if you want to exclude someone, the best way to do it is just to keep passing over them!

This is a nasty little trick that many who are involved in running organizations have learned and practice: it is the simplest means of dealing with someone who is seen as “awkward”. But turn that logic around. Anyone who feels that they have no agency, already feels passed over. They believe they are already excluded!

Vocation and the sense of agency

The vocation of each Christian is to act as a light among the nations, and this requires every other Christian to enhance each other's sense of agency as a member of the People of God. If a sense of agency is diminished – or is extinguished, causing them “to opt out” – then that constitutes a failure of the Church in its ministry.

Empowering and enhancing a sense of agency must be part of any agenda to create a synodal Church. ☪

Deported from Philippines, Sr Patricia Fox stays in solidarity over the distance

FIONA BASILE

Fiona Basile, Melbourne freelance writer and photographer, is the author of a children's book, *Sbbb... God is in the Silence*, (Loyola Press). Recalling the life and ministry of Sr Pat Fox, this article is reprinted from *Global Sisters Report*, Apr 7, 2022, a project of the *National Catholic Reporter*. Reprinted with permission. <https://www.globalsistersreport.org>



More than three years after Sr. Patricia Fox was forced to leave the Philippines and return to her hometown of Melbourne, Australia, the Our Lady of Sion sister admits she is still adjusting to her new life. She'd been ministering for 28 years among poor agricultural workers across the Philippines, advocating for their rights to land, livelihood, peace, justice and security.

Fox was arrested at her convent in Quezon City, northeast Manila on April 16, 2018, and held overnight by Bureau of Immigration officials. The administration of President Rodrigo Duterte accused her of taking part in illegal political activities – attending protest rallies and visiting prisoners – and of speaking out against the government.

Following her release, Fox and her legal team for six months fought the cancellation of her visa and deportation. The legal battle ended abruptly on October 31 at 4pm, when immigration officials told Fox that she had been ordered to leave the country by November 3 or be deported. The bureau ‘played dirty,’ she said, by waiting until the last minute – just before two public holidays – to issue the order. She left under protest. ‘I had no choice but to leave.’

Today, sitting in the comfort of the congregation's home base in Kew, a suburb of Melbourne, Fox explained that she is still ‘not settled in Australia.

It all happened so quickly, and I wasn't prepared in those last days,’ said Fox, now 75. ‘We'd been fighting the deportation cases for months and months – much longer than we thought possible – and I'd been led to believe that I could stay in the Philippines at least until December when the appeal was being considered.’

Consequently, Fox said, she flew straight back to Melbourne in shock. She'd spent so many years immersed in the lives and struggles of the urban and rural poor, and had come to deeply love the people she served.

Upon her return, Fox was welcomed by the congregation's Australian regional director, Sr. Mary Barbuto and three other sisters, whom she now lives with.

Barbuto said, *Naturally, we welcomed Patty back – she's part of us and we've always been a small, close congregation here in Australia. It was a matter of giving Patty time to readjust to life back in Australia and supporting her in that transition.*

Having experienced moving out of a ministry she had loved, Barbuto said she could understand a lot of what Fox was going through.

To ease the change, Fox accepted many invitations to speak about her work and experience in the Philippines to local community and Filipino solidarity groups. She also travelled to cities in other states – Sydney, Perth, and Brisbane – giving talks. The experience ‘was very therapeutic,’ she said. ‘All the talking and talking and talking helped.’

Difficult adjustment

For the first 12 months, ‘it was as though I was still in the Philippines,’ she recalled. As well as her speaking engagements, she joined rallies, meetings and online events. She kept in contact with friends and people who had been ‘very much

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a part of life back in the Philippines, though in a different capacity.'

She'd been used to spending time with people in their homes and with their families, but now she was involved from a distance, in solidarity. 'That's been a difficult adjustment for me. In fact, I still don't think I've adjusted to that,' she said.

Fox misses the people and being with them in the joys and struggles of their everyday life. 'Even though I lived in Quezon City, I knew the people around me and I had my local store where I bought the newspaper or bread,' she said. 'The neighbours were always around, and they'd say, 'You had a visitor today' or 'You have mail.'

She learned the local language, joking that she got by with her 'kangaroo Tagalog.'

She was born and raised in suburbs of Melbourne, and attended schools run by Our Lady of Sion sisters. She says she was attracted to how well the sisters related to her and other students, particularly one sister who taught her in seventh and eighth grades and 'was full of fun and really spent time with the so-called 'naughty kids.'

I was a good kid, but she always took an interest in me.'

Inspired by the sisters, Fox joined the congregation when she was 21. She was professed in the chapel of her college 50 years ago – she has just celebrated her jubilee.

Her own heart was sparked by the plight of the struggling poor of the Philippines in the mid-1970s when she met a Filipina Franciscan Missionary of Mary in Israel, where she was based for three years – the Notre Dame de Sion congregation's roots are Jewish so it's common for sisters to spend time at their pilgrim house in Jerusalem's Old City.

The Franciscan sister spoke to Fox of her people's struggles and how they 'took to the streets' protesting during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos

(1972-86). 'She was dying to be back with her people, to be among them, and that really spoke to me,' said Fox.

Liberation theology in practice

This experience highlighted for Fox liberation theology in practice, a topic she'd been reading about and interested in for years.

She returned to Australia to study law in Sydney and became involved in Filipino solidarity movements. She also volunteered at a local legal aid centre.

In 1984, she had an opportunity to travel to the Philippines during a semester break of her studies. While there, she found: *no distinction between the church and movement for justice. I met some amazing people who were so committed to being with the people, to*



being with their struggle for justice, and that stirred something within me.

The experience added to her growing desire to be among the poor, working for a world of justice and peace.

In 1986, the congregation held a general chapter where they discussed seeing the world through the eyes of the poor. They realized they weren't ministering in any parts of Asia where most of the people – the majority of whom are poor – are located.

After some research and having contacted several bishops and Fox visiting the Philippines again, this time with Sr. Oonah O'Shea, another Australian Notre Dame de Sion sister, the congregation decided to establish a presence in the Prelature of Infanta in Quezon province. Fox and O'Shea

commenced their ministry in the Philippines in 1990.

The first year focused on getting settled and enculturated, but it didn't take long for Fox to take on more active and public roles in advocacy. 'The Filipinos have a way of drawing you out,' she said.

She joined the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines in 1991 and became the regional coordinator of Central Luzon in 1998 and then national coordinator in 2000, a role she served in for seven years. Fox travelled extensively across the country, getting to know the farmers, fisherfolk and Indigenous tribal people, immersing herself in their stories and lives.

A lot of her work involved human rights advocacy, including speaking out on issues affecting the rural poor and

working with them for change. She joined street protests, lobbied against mining companies that sought to strip farmers of their land, and visited military camps or prisons, trying to locate people who had been arrested.

Just prior to her own arrest, Fox had been involved in a fact-finding mission in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines. Together with representatives from church, farming and Indigenous groups, and a couple of more progressive politicians,

as she describes them, they investigated the deaths of several people who'd been defending their local lands and environment and visited others who'd been arrested.

Solidarity in Australia

Now back in Australia, Fox remains active in this ministry by focusing on solidarity work online with those in the Philippines and with like-minded groups in Australia.

She has joined Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), working for the rights and protection of overseas agricultural workers, a subset of ACRATH's work to eliminate human trafficking across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. And she is secretary of Pax Christi Victoria, which is part of Pax Christi

Australia and International, advocating for peace across the world.

Fox has given several talks at Pax Christi functions and parish settings focusing on human rights issues. Fox said she has 'tunnel vision on human rights advocacy and raising awareness about the human rights violations in the Philippines.'

As national elections in the Philippines approach on May 9, she said, "the violence has already started, with some people already being killed. We're constantly trying to monitor the situation and to get it out into the public."

This ties in with Fox's current lobbying to prevent Australia from providing military aid to the Philippines as it's being used against the people, she said. *It's going to the military who are killing Filipino people, and we have to stop that. This is an ongoing issue and it's important for people to know what's going on, so we're doing letter-writing and lobbying members of parliament across Australia to stop the aid.*

Reflecting on the violence inflicted on Filipinos, particularly those in rural areas fighting for their land against large mining corporations and the military who enforce the government's brutal policies, Fox believes the violence has gotten worse since her departure three years ago.

'The imprisonments have kept going, too, and no one is immune. Whether you're a politician, a religious, a farmer or worker, it doesn't matter. You are at risk.'

She's also aware of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused many rallies, meetings and movement among the people to stop.

The pandemic has only compounded the situation for poor rural and urban dwellers, unable to access adequate health care or COVID-19 tests, Fox explained, *some of the young farmer organizers that I knew sent me a message saying, 'Can you send over some money because we need to get tested' – it was 4,000 pesos [approximately AU\$110 or US\$77] or something like that per test and these are people struggling to put rice on the table."*

I really feel the distance

Fox is also mourning two friends in the Philippines who recently died, she believes, at least in part because of actions by the repressive government. One died of COVID-19 while in custody last year,

arrested on false charges, she said. The other was a National Democratic Front peace negotiator she had worked with who was tortured and killed a year ago. Fox suspects government agents were behind the killing, but nothing has yet been proven.

So that's hard because at times like that, I'd love to be there with the family, just to hug the family, she said. "That's when I really feel the distance. I used to love being with the people, the closeness, and how I was so much a part of their lives, and how much I loved being in the rural areas with the people."

Fox takes some consolation in knowing there were some 'small victories' for those for whom she advocated. She had spent several years with the Justice and Peace Action group in Aurora, a rural and mountainous area north of Manila, where land was under threat from mining and logging companies.

Working with local farmers and Indigenous peoples to gather information and data and engaging with government offices, including the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, mining never commenced in the area. Fox attributed this to the 'strong and coordinated movement' of everyone involved.

'You could see the confidence growing in those speaking out for their rights,' she said.

She was also heartened when farmers were granted land from corporations, enabling them to grow their own vegetables and crops. *They were so excited to be able to offer you something when you visited. They have such dignity even though they were still so poor and still under some threat.*

Fox was motivated in being with the people because of their *determination, enthusiasm, love and support.* "And, she added, *"their sense of humour! Despite everything, they have a sense of humour and manage to make a joke about everything.*

She also takes some solace in knowing that there are still seven other Our Lady of Sion sisters in the Philippines ministering in various capacities – conducting biblio-drama with different groups, ecumenical church work in supporting poor communities around

Manila, educating children, counselling and supporting a women's cooperative. One of the sisters is employed by the Department of Social Welfare.

Even though she is not personally in touch, Fox is determined to remain connected with those fighting for justice in the Philippines, and to make their issues and struggles known in Australia. She has been chair since last year of the Australian chapter of the International Coalition of Human Rights in the Philippines, a role that keeps her informed of abuses that are taking place. Only last month, she received a message that the military had ambushed and killed five people – two teachers, a health worker and two drivers – who were involved with an Indigenous school in Mindanao.

In difficult times, Fox finds consolation and inspiration in spending time in nature and in reflecting on Bible passages. Two of her favourite Scriptures include Isaiah 65:17-25 and Isaiah 42:1-4.

That idea, that no one will build a house and not live in it, no one will plant fruit and not eat it, no one dies young, the farmers will be able to get what their produce is. It's a beautiful reading, Fox said. That first passage meant a lot in the Philippines, where I saw children dying, and people who grew food going hungry. And the second passage is a reminder that God is acting when sometimes it really doesn't look like it.

Fox celebrated the 50-year anniversary of her profession in January. Several friends from the Philippines gathered on Zoom to celebrate the special occasion and there was a small gathering among the sisters for prayer and afternoon tea. On April 2, there was an ecumenical celebration at the Dandenong Regional Uniting Church, in the southeast of Melbourne, in recognition of Fox's golden jubilee and 75th birthday.

She is hopeful that the national elections in the Philippines will see a change in government that will allow her name to be struck off the blacklist so that she can return, or at least visit, sooner than later. If not, in two years she can apply to the courts to have her name struck off the list.

In anticipation, she joked, her 'bags are packed.' ☺

A way of transformation in ministry: A reflection on pastoral supervision

EVELINE CROTTY RSM

Eveline Crotty RSM, is Institute Leader of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea and past President of Transforming Practices, a group of autonomous practitioners offering support for people in ministry through pastoral supervision. She explores the meaning of pastoral supervision and why it is so effective in understanding and developing values, attitudes and skills in pastoral ministry. This article is an updated version of the original article published in *The Swag* Winter 2012.

When I am about to set out on a journey there are always a couple of essentials that without thinking automatically go into my travel bag. I keep them with me to sustain my journey.

In ministry when we plan to be in it for the long haul, we also have essentials that we have in our 'ministry kit bag' that we wouldn't do without.

Prior to assembling our 'ministry kit bag' we all would have been taken quite seriously a period of discernment and preparation. When we left the novitiate, seminary, or training institute we gathered together a 'ministry kit bag' of essentials that we were sure would sustain us in our ministry for a lifetime.

Now looking back some items I suspect, have never left our bags. There are other things that we have outgrown, adapted or even taken out and replaced when we found they no longer sustain our personal and communal spirituality or way of being in ministry. Over the years have I added to my ministry kit bag new essentials that are life giving, refreshing, sustaining and energizing me in my ministry?

Or, is the kit bag only full of its original contents only? Or at worst that 'ministry kit bag' has been dis-guarded.

Ministry in all of its forms has many demands but never so much as is expected today. In all roles each of us is expected, along with other professions, to bring the best possible practice to our field of ministry. People presume that we are persons 'continually reflecting and learning' taking our spiritual, theological, professional, and personal development seriously.

This we know we must do if we are to stay relevant and resilient, and offering deeper meaning to the many issues



confronting us in this ever changing and demanding world.

Over the past few years Bishops, priests, pastoral workers, chaplains, laity have added to their ministry kit bag, a regular facilitated time for reflection on their ministry practice. This is something they never thought they needed years ago or would find to be of benefit to them in ministry.

Yes, many did attend spiritual direction on a regular basis but pastoral supervision offers another dimension to reflecting on ministry?

What is Pastoral Supervision?

In describing pastoral supervision one priest said: *My basic reason for seeking supervision in ministry was to find a place where I could reflect on my ministry as a priest with a skilled person who could help me understand what was happening.*

What I needed was to work on strategies to help me in the challenging ministry situations in which I found myself... Over the years of regular supervision, I have been encouraged and affirmed in my ministry.

For me, supervision has become an essential part of my ongoing growth and development as a very human priest. It has enriched my life.

A pastoral worker commented: *I felt I needed to debrief in a safe space.*

I felt holding on to traumatic and challenging issues that I was hearing about, at times created an anxiety that

would sometimes spill over to my personal life and blur my view.

I realised I needed to explore my emotions with a professional pastoral supervisor in a way that helped to see how I relate to people and to best channel my experience of life's challenges – theirs and mine.

I have also heard individuals ask: *Why do I need to do professional development, further theological education, or have pastoral supervision, I am too busy? I say my prayers. I meet my mates for a chat regularly. I am very clear what my role in ministry is?*

But I wonder: What is the unnamed fear that holds such a person back from wanting to be stretched in his/her thinking, naming one's vulnerability when life gets tough and knowing that professional support is available which will support and challenge us so that we continue to be effective in ministry?

The call to ministry is a 'life giving vocation' but within this vocation is also a need for 'professionalism.' This means, in this context, that I am to bring the best of who I am at every stage of my life to the service of the people to whom I am called to be in ministry with. If I believe this I know deep down that I must be called to 'life-long learning in many different areas, and regular reflection on one's ministry in an ever changing world.' If I do this, this is the best giftedness I can bring to ministry and my ministry will be relevant and ever evolving to meet the needs of a changing world.

Ministers and priests don't always feel comfortable with the word 'professional' but the word 'professional' came into prominence in the Middle Ages. Religious nuns and monks 'professed' their vows. They testified and make a public commitment to the community as they do today. As Richard Gulu in his book 'Just Ministry' (Gulu, Richard M. Just Ministry, Paulist Press USA. 2010) says: *... the term professional no longer applies only to religious, but it continues to carry the connotation of being motivated by love to commit oneself to acquiring expert knowledge and skill in order to*

service human needs with good moral character.

So if I want my ministry to be relevant in a world and Church that is very different to 50, 20, 10 or even 5 years ago, how do I ensure that I am being refreshed, sustained, and supported when the needs of people in a world and Church is in crisis and challenges us on a daily basis?

In further discussion with people in ministry they confirmed that to-day more than ever they needed not only professional development, expertise in their field of work including updating their theological education and spiritual direction. They also needed a space to be reflective on their ministry at a regular, protected time so that they could reflect deeper on the issues facing them in their day to day ministries.

They knew they needed to be sustained, critiqued, sometimes challenged to look again at their approach to an issue or personal behaviour or even the broader issues in our world affecting our earth and people worldwide. Pastoral supervision also offers time to debrief after an incident eg. a funeral, death of a baby, marriage breakdown, people coming to them with all manner of issues. Today they were finding that by contracting with a pastoral supervisor on a regular basis this gives them the space to come prepared, to be intentionally reflective on their ministry practice on a regular basis.

They echoed the words of Hawkins and Shohet in their book 'Supervision in the Helping Profession':

Supervision can be a very important part of taking care of oneself and staying open to new learning, as well as an indispensable part of the person's ongoing self-development. We have found that when we have been able to accept our own vulnerability and not defend against it, it has a valuable experience both for us and our clients (parishioners). The realization that they could be healing us, as much as the other way around, has been very important both in their relationship with us and their growth.

It is another reminder that we are servants of the process. (Hawkins, P & Shohet, R. *Supervision in the Helping Professions*, 2nd ed. Berkshire: Open University, 2000. p15)

The Reflective Practitioner, learning from experience

Pastoral supervision is not therapy, counselling or spiritual direction.

It is reflection on practice touching the edges of counselling and spiritual direction but its main focus is always – reflection on my ministerial practice, personally, communally and in the context of the Church and of our world today.

As one priest said: *it gives me the chance to articulate details of events in my pastoral encounters whether successful or not or not yet happened and notices what I am doing, what I am trying to achieve and how I am going about it. I value the reflections and the prodding's of my supervisor to assist me to see things in a broader context.*

He give an example *"I was trying to understand how to approach a parishioner knowing it would be a difficult and sensitive interview. My supervisor asked to talk about the person I was to interview – what was he like; what were his skills and what did I think mattered to him. This allowed me to be more aware of the giftedness of the person I needed to interview rather than just the topic I was concerned about. It challenged me to see this interview as an encounter with a person, with needs and fears like us all, and I noticed some of my own fears which were being triggered by this person. Knowing my own fears meant I could leave them aside in the interview and concentrate on being with this person with dignity and honesty."*

A Church official for another denomination said: *"I have had to deal with the obsessive behaviours of three people and handling the aftermath of paedophilia, each without a ready solution and each with some unpalatable implications. I have been able through pastoral supervision to reason my actions, validate them and see the benefits of the debriefing with good outcomes, good mental health and maintenance of a happy relationship with my wife."*

Pastoral supervision is an educative process not a therapeutic process. It is a reflective process in the context of our Christian theological framework.

Even though we have had other avenues to reflect on our ministry in the past, pastoral supervision is an emerging ministry offering a service to priests, deacons, laity and chaplains to reflect more intentionally on the evolving aspects of their ministry.

Pastoral supervisors today are professionally trained to take up this ministry.

Not everyone is accepted into training. Many new training programs are emerging.

To name one as an example, the website of Transforming Practices Inc gives information about:

- the concept of pastoral supervision,
- the training of pastoral supervisors
- the names of pastoral supervisors who have completed their training and are recognized as pastoral supervisors with the Australasian Association of Supervision.

See www.transformingpractices.com.au as an example.

To conclude one supervisor describing supervision said: *Supervision interrupts practice. It wakes us up to what we are doing. When we are alive to what we are doing, we wake up to what is, instead of falling asleep in the comfort stories of our clinical routines and daily practice. The supervisory voice acts as an irritator interrupting repetitive stories (comfort stories) and facilitating the creation of new stories.* (Sheila Ryan adapted from Bond and Holland, 1983)

People across the world are crying out for compassion, a listening ear, and understanding as they cope with the changing face of our earth and interactions with each other. Women and men who minister in the name of the Church are being called to walk beside them, feel their pain and distress and discern together the deeper meaning of faith so that they can cope to live in a world and Church in crisis.

Pastoral supervision is one tool that can assist us to be that minister who is relevant, unafraid to be humble, often have no answers but the ability to listen from a deep theological heart and be a person who is prepared to work through the issues together. ☺

A Pathway but for whom and to where?

MARY MONAGLE

Mary Monagle advocates on behalf of survivors of sexual abuse. She looks at the new Pathways process for Victoria from a perspective built on years of personal contact with people damaged from sexual abuse by church-related perpetrators.

A new process aiming at restorative journeying with survivors of abuse within the Catholic Church has been provided by the Bishops of Victoria. This model, named *Pathways Responses Victoria Ltd*, has been designed to replace *The Melbourne Response* (for offences linked to the Archdiocese of Melbourne) and *Towards Healing* (for all other church-related offences within Victoria). The Bishops believe *Pathways* is an alternative to existing mechanisms such as the National Redress Scheme and civil litigation.

Established this year (2022) on January 1, *Pathways* is the Victorian implementation of the Catholic Church's new National Response protocol, and the means by which "Safeguarding" into the future, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (CaseStudy 50, 7 February 2017), is effectively carried out.

Having examined *Pathways Victoria* model, and with a passionate interest in the need for true justice and genuine pastoral care for survivors, I am drawn to the words of Dr Thomas P Doyle OP, American Dominican priest, canon lawyer and survivor advocate, in his evidence to the Royal Commission – also Case Study 50, 7 February 2017: *If there is one hole in all the processes, the procedures and the protocols that have been issued from the top down, it is proper care to the victims. Over the number of protocols and reports that I've read, promoted and created by different church entities, one of the things that I hardly ever see mentioned is something comprehensive about caring for the victims. It is not enough to say, "Give them money to go to the psychologists."*

Respecting and valuing Dr Doyle's observations about caring for the victims, I believe *Pathways Victoria* is unfortunately selective as to for whom

it will care, and is arguably indifferent to addressing the outcomes of unresolved past church harm for the innocent victims, the truth tellers/whistle-blowers, and especially the generational harm inflicted on and absorbed by the survivors' families. Indeed, for those who believe pastoral care should be the cornerstone of the mission of the Catholic Church, especially those severely impacted by church-related sexual abuse, *Pathways Victoria* appears to fall short of the mark in genuine pastoral care.



Against this background, it is not surprising to learn that, sixty years on, the Melbourne Archdiocese has still failed to respond to the strong urging of the Second Vatican Council that dioceses establish a Diocesan Pastoral Council. All Melbourne Archbishops since Vatican II seem to have neglected this. (Diocesan profiles prepared by Dr Peter Wilkinson, Catholics for Renewal Inc., statistic data for Melbourne Archdiocese – 2001 to 2021). The result has been a significant compromising of any hope for a full expression of a true and effective pastoral pathway within our Melbourne Archdiocese, and regrettably, the opportunity for the laity to participate in diocesan governance and leadership has been, and remains missing.

Sadly too, the printed *Pathways* document has a corporate glossy look,

as well as current woke language. Many survivors, their families and supporters, and those rightly concerned for them will see *Pathways Victoria* as more of the same old, same old dressed up as a modern looking governance model. But is it simply window dressing to appease the critics?

Pathways presents itself as caring for the well-being of the claimant/survivor during the process, but in its current form, it is minimal in detail on the needs of survivors, including but not limited to compensation and the amount and kind of help they require. For survivors, it is a process many will find hard to trust, with the same bureaucrats and often the same lawyers guiding if not directing this 'new' response to their plight.

Thankfully, ten years ago the day-to-day support for survivors of church abuse was recognised by a small group of dedicated people in Geelong, Victoria. Their concern led to the establishment of the *Lifeboat Geelong Foundation*. This self-funded Foundation is now a registered charity and provides meaningful care to more than 100 survivors of church-related abuse across every state in Australia. *Lifeboat's* service continues and expands, supported by generous and caring individual donors. However, donations from dioceses and religious orders total less than 5% of contributions. Despite this, the Foundation can now employ two part-time Client Support Officers (based in Geelong and Melbourne), and is in contact with over 100 survivors. ☺

Further information on *Lifeboat Geelong Foundation* can be found at: www.lifeboatgeelong.com.au
Email: cath@lifeboatgeelong.com.au
Phone: 0439 199 400
P.O. Box 400, Geelong Victoria 3220.

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When bishops play dirty

TERRY FEWTRELL

Terry Fewtrell is a retired consultant in organisational change and leadership. He is involved with *Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn*.

The Australian Catholic Church's Plenary Council is heading for the rocks amid sharp recriminations. By refusing to deal openly with legitimate criticisms of an indefensible process, the Australian bishops are being more than stubborn. They are revealing their latent opposition to Pope Francis.

What was meant to be a showcase of genuine listening and walking together is unravelling with an unedifying lack of goodwill from the bishops. Francis has work to do if his local bishops are to be on-side with his call for a synodal church.

The bishops called a Plenary Council in 2018 in the wake of the Royal Commission report. It was meant to be a long overdue reset and an opportunity for the local church to take stock and adjust its course. President of the Australian Bishops Conference, Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, has proclaimed loudly to local and international media that 'business as usual' outcomes are not an option.

Coleridge is an outspoken supporter of Pope Francis and his emphasis on Synodality – a model that Francis invokes to describe a church in the spirit of Vatican II, that respectfully engages all the People of God, listens genuinely to their voices, and moves forward together. In this Coleridge is a stand-out among the Australian bishops, as some give the impression of having reached a point where they are prepared to 'sit out' the rest of this pontificate in the hope the next will return to a more comfortable orthodoxy. Not that they would admit that, but their actions, or sometimes lack of action, betray them.

Draft resolutions from First Assembly

These differences of view seem to be playing out in the management of the Plenary, which has admittedly been severely impacted by the pandemic. The first Assembly meeting was delayed a year and finally held 'virtually' in October 2021. Plans and draft resolutions are now emerging for the Second and final Assembly in July 2022 and it is this

First Fruits document that has finally provoked outrage from large parts of the Catholic community and calls it be withdrawn.

This latest document shares a characteristic of others released during the process, in that it gives the clear impression that there is an invisible hand, intent on ensuring real issues are avoided and meaningful change is pushed off the table. On this occasion various propositions and ideas are being advanced 'out of the blue' and certainly without any obvious connection to discussion at the October Assembly. They are unattributed to individuals or discussion groups, and Members report they are at odds with the general thrust and focus of discussions in the First Assembly. Not surprising the propositions are skewed towards a traditionalist view.

Individual Members of the Assembly have objected to the lack of provenance and transparency in the document and sought clarification as to the origin of certain propositions. Their enquiries and objections have been ignored – sadly a stock standard approach for the Australian hierarchy.

Part of the problem may be explained by the confusion that surrounded the winding up of the First Assembly and a failure to outline clearly how proceedings from the 2021 gathering would be distilled and brought forward to the 2022 Assembly. A subsequent lack of communication with Members left the impression the process was suspiciously opaque, even secretive. A lesson from each stage of this process has been that to take things on trust is to be repaid with deceit and manipulation.

An outdated model proves to lack legitimacy

A Plenary Council is effectively a mechanism from the Middle Ages, based on a monarchical and triumphalist model of church, with ridiculously antiquated statutes and procedural rules. Membership was expanded from its



historical size, which essentially included only clergy and religious, to a small number of representatives from each diocese, selected by the local bishop. There was never any doubt about who controlled the numbers. In the end however, the attempt to bolt-on some semblance of consultative engagement with the wider People of God was probably a forlorn hope – with goodwill not part of the hierarchy's tool kit, it was probably never going to work.

The process began with submissions from more than 17,000 groups and individuals. These revealed that the Catholic community was highly engaged and the document that summarised the overall input was clear in stating there was a widespread call for significant reform. Equally there was strong and strident criticism of the Australian bishops, along with deep distrust and lack of confidence in their leadership.

Sadly, the reasons for that distrust and lack of confidence soon manifested themselves in subsequent stages leading to the agenda for the first Assembly. Despite retaining absolute decision-making authority, senior bishops inserted themselves, in a previously foreshadowed way, into the Discernment Groups stage after the initial input. It was as if the intensity of submission content prompted the bishops to intervene crudely to try and retrieve the process. Leaks from some of the groups indicated that their input was forceful,

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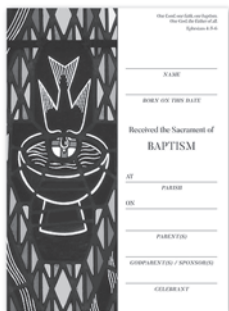


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and in some cases thuggish. The resulting confusing papers ultimately led to a preliminary document from which an agenda was to be determined.

This document clearly lacked a consistent logic or rationale, being variously described as contorted, confounding, and opaque. Instead of illuminating and facilitating a meaningful agenda, it seemingly aimed to confuse and confound – bearing all the hallmarks of conflicted shared authorship.

The agenda that finally emerged was simplistic and by professional standards not fit for purpose or designed to plumb the real issues facing the church in Australia at this time.

Whereas the archaic statutes of the Plenary required that ‘the agenda be received with acclamation’, several strong objections were registered, along with calls for the agenda to be revised. These were dismissed but the agenda’s inadequacies became increasingly obvious as the week-long session unfolded.

The unprofessional manipulation and deception that has now emerged is just the latest in a process purporting to seek genuine sharing and listening in the name of the Holy Spirit. Based on what has transpired to date it is likely that the Holy Spirit would want nothing to do with it! But procedural integrity is not the only matter of concern.

Some important issues not addressed

There are real issues of substance that the bishops seemingly do not want considered in any open way. Among these are the role of women and clericalism, described by the Royal Commission as a major contributing factor to the sexual abuse scandal. Pope Francis has been very clear in referring to it as an evil that must be removed from the church.

However, the Australian church is attempting to downplay the significance of clericalism and essentially dismiss it as a major problem. They are doing this by defining it very narrowly, suggesting it is rare, when it is cultural and widespread.

It is on matters like this that the ‘cover-up’, so much a part of the local church’s response to the sexual abuse scandal, is being re-run as a key finding of the

Royal Commission is massaged away. It is also clear that an agenda very different to Pope Francis is being revealed.

Australian Catholics are realists about the pace of change in their church. They know they must fight against a force of institutional inertia which Francis Sullivan has accurately described as being used by the hierarchy as a management tool.

However what ordinary Catholics are rightly indignant about is the blatant manipulation and deception that seems to emerge repeatedly. This is the direct antithesis of Francis’ Synodality. Worrying though, the local bishops seem determined to present the Plenary as a model of Synodality.

Complicating the whole Plenary process is a recent initiative of Francis to hold a global Synod on Synodality. He has commissioned a process that seeks input from every diocese in the world culminating in a major assembly in Rome in 2023.

Cynically, what the Australian bishops have decided to do is restrict the opportunities for separate input to this process and to instead attempt to pass-off the outcomes from the Plenary as expressing the views of the Australian church. They don’t just want to manipulate one process, but two.

All Australians, not just Catholics, should be worried by these developments. They would amount to a betrayal of commitments to reform in the face of the Royal Commission report.

They would also render Australia a laggard when it comes to injecting ideas and theological insight to a major international process. This gets to the nub of the overall problem. The bulk of Australia’s bishops are defensive, fearful and lack the imagination to grasp the need for change and move to create it. The irony is that their people and their boss, Pope Francis, are open to the challenges.

Unless there is decisive intervention soon from key moderate bishops, not only will the Plenary Council unravel but things are likely to get a lot messier for everyone. ☹️

A new era: Roman Curia, Australian Government and President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Peter Maher, Sydney priest, comments on some changes we face in Australia today with the reform of the Roman Curia, the new president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Australian Government.



The saga of the Downton Abbey continues in the latest movie, *A New Era*. There are a number of changes taking place at Downton in different ways. This justifies the title of a new era. Pope Francis famously announced the current time as a change of era, not just an era of change.

There are a number of moments in this time that could be an expression of a new era. By the time you read this we will have decided on the next Federal Government. Whichever party holds power, let's hope it ushers in the kind of changes that will shape Australia as a fair, just and compassionate country that respects diversity, embraces Indigenous recognition, supports the poor, elderly, sick and disabled and enhances the chances of all to share in the wealth of this country.

There are two other changes afoot in the Church that offer an opportunity for a change of era. One at the international level with Pope Francis' reform of the Roman Curia and the second at the national level with the election of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference President at their May meeting.

The Roman Curia

As important and symbolic as the elevation of the Dicastery of Evangelisation and

the demoting of the Doctrine and Faith Dicastery are, the real change in Praedicate evangelium ("Preach the Gospel"), the document establishing the Curia reforms, is the issue of governance and primary responsibility.

For the first time the positions of leading Dicasteries may be anyone suited and competent including laymen and laywomen. This is a major change as it means non-ordained people can exercise power of governance in the Church. Therefore, the link between the power of governance and the sacrament of Orders has been broken.

This very significant change is coupled with a new stance on the purpose of the Curia. It is no longer the way the Church is controlled in the name of the pope, but will be in service of the bishops and pope and the Church. The document makes it clear that the Curia is to move from policeman and overseer to being a tool of the pastoral and evangelical mission of the Church.

Other key changes that will have pastoral and practical implications include appointing members of the dicasteries from different cultures to reflect the Church's catholicity, and that appointees return to their dioceses or religious congregations after five years. These

appointments may be extended to a maximum of ten years.

Also those who work in the Curia must attend to "the health of souls" in addition to their office tasks, be committed to regular personal and communal prayer, and carry out their work "with the joyful awareness of missionary disciples at the service of the entire People of God."

If these changes are implemented a new era has arrived indeed.

New President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

On May 3, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Media Blog announced that Archbishop Mark Coleridge will resign at their May meeting. Archbishop Mark Coleridge's tenure as president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) will conclude after the Holy See asked that bishops not serve in leadership roles in bishops' conferences past 75 years.

We do not know who will be the next President of the ACBC as I write, but it is certainly true that the new president will have an important part in the new era of the Australian Catholic Church as we embrace the Plenary Council and the Synod on Synodality. The new president might find in the significant changes and new attitudes embodied in Pope Francis' reform of the Curia a way to make the next phase of the Australian church one that prioritises pastoral and practical reform.

The new president will be leading a church heading into the implementation of the Plenary Council. This will require facilitating a church ready for a new era that respects diversity as gift and embraces all the gifts with which the church has been blessed.

As with the Curia, how we renew governance, practise justice and compassion, decentralise, bring people in from the periphery and emphasise pastoral outreach and mission will be the gauge of success in enabling a church appropriate to the new era we have begun. ☪

Mission anniversaries

BRIAN LUCAS

Rev Brian Lucas, National Director of Catholic Mission charts the history of the *Congregation de Propaganda Fide* on its 400th anniversary.

The year 2022 is the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the *Congregation de Propaganda Fide*, known today as the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. It is the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* by Pauline Jaricot in Lyon, France. Pauline Jaricot's beatification is scheduled for 22 May 2022 in Lyon. It is the 100th anniversary of the formalisation of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Rome by Pope Pius XI.

Propaganda Fide is usually associated with new world missionary territories and Western European colonial expansion. But it had an important role in reversing the consequences of the Protestant Reformation. The entry for Gregory XV in *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* notes that he was the first Jesuit trained pope who “strove not only to continue the inner renewal of the church but to regain ground it had lost.”

Propaganda Fide had a twofold agenda. One motivation was to strengthen Rome's hand in the formulation of missionary policy in the huge colonial territories of Spain and Portugal.

Also at stake was the religious character of the missions which had become too closely identified with secular political and commercial interests and European colonialism.

This connection between mission and colonial expansion frequently has plagued missionary work. Officially it was laid to rest in the 1919 Apostolic Letter of Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud — On the Propagation of the Faith Throughout the World*. Benedict XV wrote that he was “deeply saddened by some recent accounts of missionary life, accounts that displayed more zeal for the profit of some particular nation than for the growth of the kingdom of God (20).”

Missionary initiatives, especially by some evangelical churches, still today can have links to the political and economic interests of the countries of origin.

The modern role of the Congregation was defined by the Second Vatican Council in its Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (ad Gentes). It specified (29): *For all missions and for the whole of missionary activity there should be only one competent office, namely that of the “Propagation of the Faith,” which should direct and coordinate, throughout the world, both missionary work itself and missionary cooperation.*

Pauline Marie Jaricot

The first of the four Pontifical Mission Societies, *The Society for the Propagation of the Faith* was formally founded in Lyon (France) in 1822. The venerable Pauline Marie Jaricot is credited with its creation, but the precise origins of the new institution and Pauline's involvement are ambiguous and the story complex.

Pauline Marie Jaricot was born on 22 July 1799 into a family of rich Lyon silk merchants. After hearing a Lenten homily against worldly vanities, the then 17-year-old experienced a radical conversion, abandoning the worldliness of her previous life, and began to visit and take care of the poor.

In 1820, Pauline received a letter from her brother Phileas, a student at the Seminary of St. Sulpice, in which he explained the needs of the members of the Paris Foreign Missions Society. Pauline gathered the workers in her father's factory into groups of ten to donate a sou (a penny/cent) to support the foreign missions. Each participant would then recruit another “ten”. The “tens” become “hundreds” and eventually gathered momentum beyond Lyon.

In 1822, Father Angelo Inglesi, Vicar-General of New Orleans, was sent to Lyon by Bishop Louis Dubourg to visit his benefactors and reanimate their zeal for supporting the Louisiana mission. Father Inglesi called a meeting of the friends of the missions that was attended by “the twelve” – two ecclesiastics and ten laymen who were members of a



Reach out. Give life.

pious association known as *La Congrégation*. On 3 May 1822, they established themselves as a provisional council and adopted the name Society for the *Propagation of the Faith*.

Pauline Jaricot brought her own collection groups into the generalized Society which adopted her fundraising method. The system of collecting and distributing funds was thus institutionalised. On 15 March 1823 Pius VII authorised it and it had already spread widely throughout France, then Europe, then by 1826 throughout the whole world.

Joseph P Ryan, in his review of Katherine Burton's work, *Difficult Star: The Life of Pauline Jaricot* concludes: *Pauline Jaricot was one of the many extraordinary lay persons whose sanctity and zeal did so much for France and the world during the nineteenth century. Mrs. Burton portrays the hopes, aspirations, efforts, and sorrows of 'a poor old woman who thought she could save the world.'*

Another popular biographer Mary Windeatt concludes, with some hyperbole, that “this is a wonderful story of how a spoiled rich girl came to be one of the greatest lay apostles in the entire history of the church”.

Fr Edmund Campion has described the Society for the Propagation of the Faith as “the first formal Catholic organisation in Australian history”. It provided funds for the early missionary activity in Australia especially in Western Australia.

Today, through Catholic Mission, Australia is (per capita) one of the leading supporters of those churches we might describe as “missionary” but are perhaps better understood to be those that are young, fragile, persecuted, are a social minority, or lack local resources for the work of evangelisation. ☪

Details of the projects and work of Catholic Mission can be found on its website www.catholicmission.org.au

Being trans, being present

NICOLETE BURBACH

Transness is something exciting, dynamic and beautiful, and it's a source of rich meaning for the Church, writes Nicolette Burbach, social and environmental justice leader at the London Jesuit Centre. Her research focuses on resourcing Pope Francis to navigate the difficulties facing trans people and the Church as they come into new forms of contact with one another. Reprinted with permission from *The Tablet*, (Inspire supplement, Feb 25, 2022). Web: <https://www.thetablet.co.uk>

Annoyingly, when trans people try and talk about their lives, the discussion often devolves into a debate about whether trans life is justified: whether it's ethical to do the things trans people do, and whether the Church and society can rightfully accommodate them. The result is that trans people are constantly subject to the demand to justify themselves.

This is not only tiresome but impoverishing. It is impoverishing because we only have a finite amount of time each day, and it stops us from spending it exploring our faith and life in a deeper way.

Some might say that, regardless of this, the demand to justify ourselves can't simply be ignored: we have to reach out to others in the Church and find a way to become right by them in order to be part of the community made up by them.

There is a point to be made here about the fact that this kind of 'reaching out' is not the only thing we need to do to be members of the Church. Consequently, we need the opportunity to have different kinds of conversations too.

But I think this also evokes a superficial understanding of what this 'reaching out' might mean. During the 1990s and 2000s, trans studies became established as a topic for research in universities. Theorists built on philosophy and critical theory to develop sophisticated accounts of what it means to be trans and live trans life.

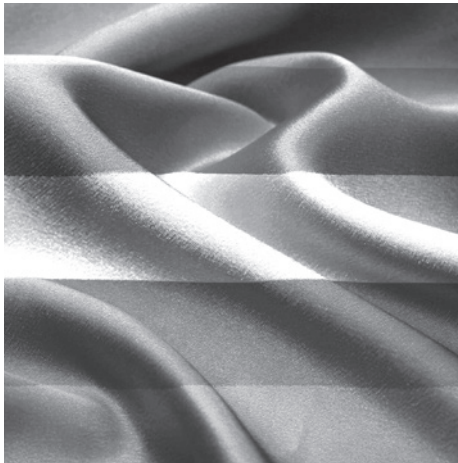
Meaning and language

One influential idea was to do with transness as a source of meaning. This idea drew from the philosophical idea that meaning and language cannot be separated out from the world as we know it. According to this idea, to know the world is to figure it in language. Our language gives us a set of concepts that

make the world and ourselves meaningful to us, and thereby understandable.

This doesn't mean that there is no world outside of language – just that this world is quite literally meaningless to us. We cannot know it because we cannot even 'think' it: to 'think' something is to put it into language, and thereby render it meaningful. As soon as we try and think about the world apart from language, we have therefore already put it back into language!

Under this view, we don't get to simply choose our language: it is received from our broader culture. However, we can allow it to change and transform, particularly by bringing it into contact with things that don't fit neatly within



the kinds of meanings it provides. These things disrupt those meanings, appearing unintelligible or meaningless, and this in turn prompts language to reorganise itself to make them meaningful.

Theorists like Susan Stryker used this idea to understand what it is about transness that is so challenging to people. According to Stryker, trans people disrupt the meanings provided by the language of modern Western society. They do this by breaking down traditional boundaries and associations, for example around sex, nature and artificiality.

Trans lives create new understandings

For Stryker, this also means that trans lives are an occasion for creating new meanings. This disruption opens up a space for new associations and ideas to come about, and therein new ways of understanding ourselves and the world around us.

Transness here is something exciting, dynamic and beautiful. To be trans is to embody the capacity for the world to be endlessly, inexhaustibly surprising. As a theologian, I might say that it reveals the true bounty of creation.

Indeed, it is to participate in this creation. It is to create with your body, which itself is bound up in language and therein bears the very meaning it disrupts and reconstructs.

The problem, for Stryker, is that some people don't recognise these new meanings. Transness just appears to them as a disruption without creation; only unintelligible or meaningless, with no possibilities for new meaning to be understood or appropriated by those that encounter it.

This gives another view of the conflicts in which the demand to justify ourselves comes about. But the solution to this is not just to do apologetics.

The first step is for trans people to explore these new meanings and how they can be expressed and embodied in our lives. It is only through exploring and living out these meanings that we can make them present to others. We need to live our trans lives, and live them richly, not just for our own sake (because we all need to live our lives), but in order that others might recognise their possibility and their richness.

This is also a kind of 'reaching out', but in a way that is prior to explaining or justifying oneself: that of simply being present. Conversely, and perhaps paradoxically, the kind of demand to 'reach out' discussed above ends up being a demand to reach out without being truly present – to reach out from nowhere. This is not truly 'reaching out', which, while always aimed at someone we are reaching out 'to', must originate 'from' somewhere else.

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FEATURES

The body of Christ

This kind of 'reaching out' should be familiar to Catholics. It is the reaching out that we do when we come together in communion.

The Body of Christ is a communion not of people who have all adequately explained themselves to one another, but of people who are simply present to one

another in the most intimate way possible.

I am not in communion with you because we understand each other. I am in communion with you because your body is my body is Christ's body.

And I think trans people should also be familiar with this sacramental reaching out: in our bodies, new meaning

becomes present. Where new meaning is present, there is the possibility for an encounter with alterity and novelty. And, just like in the Church, which reflects the plenitude of creation in the many different groups of people who meet at the altar, although this encounter can be a cause for incomprehension and conflict, it can also engender creativity and hope. ☪



Do Australian Catholic schools have an Irish history?

EOIN DE BHALDRAITHE OCIST

Eoin De Bhaldráithe OCist, Bolton Abbey, Co Kildare, Ireland, explores the history of the separation of Catholic schools from the state system in Ireland and how this may have influenced the history of Australian Catholic schools.



In the volume of *The Swag* for Summer 2021, a writer states that 'the epicentre of evangelisation has moved from the parish to the schools'. Perhaps, he says, 'the epicentre has always been in the schools'.

Here I would like to offer a short history of schools in Ireland from which the Australian schools have descended.

In 1831 the government took the matter in hand. Edward Stanley, was the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and would later be Prime Minister as 14th Earl of Derby. This was some thirty years before similar legislation was passed in England.

Stanley explained that the practice of reading the scriptures without note or comment was obnoxious to Catholics. The aim the new education will be 'to unite in one system children of different creeds'.

The two archbishops of Dublin agreed to sit on the Board and they were to be the pillars of the system. On the day the schools opened, a 'lesson' was displayed which was to be taught in every school; it was composed by Richard Whatley, the Church of Ireland Archbishop. James Doyle, Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin (JKL) was pleased with

Whatley's 'Lesson' and commended it to his clergy in a circular as the schools began in 1831. Later Doyle spoke as follows: *I do not see how any man can think that peace can be permanently established, if children are separated at the commencement of life on account of their religious opinions.*

This is how he sees it from a political point of view. Then he deals with the effect of separation on the children themselves: *I do not know of any measures that would prepare the way for better feeling in Ireland than uniting children at an early age, and bringing them up in the same school, leading them to commune with one another and to form those little intimacies and friendships which subsist through life. Children thus united know and love each other, as children brought up together always will, and to separate them is I think, to destroy some of the finest feelings in the hearts of men.*

Doyle believes that the separation of children is against the very order of nature. When we read those words it is surprising how far we have departed from his ideals. These are words 'that will not go away', they remain as a judgement upon us today.

The National Board of Education

We have a good account of how the commissioners worked together. Whatley wrote *Lessons on the truth of Christianity*. Murray (Archbishop of Dublin) bound by his *magisterium*, objected to the first two chapters. Rev James Carlisle, the Presbyterian on the Commission, took it in hand and produced a new edition that won the approbation of Murray. It is very likely

that as they met regularly, they grew more closely together as we see happening in ecumenical meetings in our own day. Carlisle argued for an undefined general Christianity and so could not be accused of being sectarian. It was then published by the Commission and could be used in all schools. Next, they published *Scripture lessons*. It comprised four volumes and could be used for common religious education. In many respects the work was simply an edition of the Bible with the confusion removed. It was almost complete agreement on the whole of Christian doctrine and taught to Catholic and Protestant children together even in 'Protestant Ulster. The books were of high quality, were the popular around the Empire and in 1861 were the most widely used school books in England.

Irish people educated before 1960 will have heard strong statements about the impossibility of a 'common denominator Christianity'; yet here it was: begun in the 1830s and abolished in the 1860s!

Archbishop Murray of Dublin put great pressure on Edmund Rice to get the Christian Brothers join the national system, and was very angry when Rice refused to do so. Among other things they objected to the Model Schools which were for teacher training.

Paul Cullen was born in Prospect in Co. Kildare. His father was friendly with the Quakers in Ballitore, so Paul had to walk a mile to get to school. There he learnt the elements of Latin and Greek as the Quaker ideal was to get pupils to the stage of being able to read the New Testament in Greek.

In 1850 he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh but two years later came to the much more important See of Dublin. He reacted against common education when he came to Dublin and he also opposed government plans for universities in Dublin, Cork and Galway, calling them called 'godless colleges'. He openly stated his objection to the *Scripture Lessons* and to *Evidence of Christianity* in a pastoral just one year after he came to Dublin. He put pressure on Whatley who felt himself constrained to resign from the Education Board,

Separation of the schools

An all-out attack on the Model Schools was begun in 1862. The new policy is

best seen in his attack on the Model School in Athy about five miles from where Cullen was taught alongside many Protestants in Ballytore. The Brothers and Sisters of Mercy were dispatched to counteract the School. Cullen imposed a ban of excommunication on any Catholic who sent children there and was soon able to announce that not a single Catholic remained in the School. In fact, this discredited all the Model Schools.

To help us to grasp the extent of the change involved, we may remember that Murray told a government inquiry that there could be no possible objection to a Protestant teaching secular literature to Catholic and Protestant children together. Later Cullen was to say that 'keeping company continually with Protestant children and teachers [weakened] the faith of the Catholic child'.

Joseph Doyle has detailed, blow for blow, how Cullen broke down the National system and obtained almost a full denominational system. Here I will comment on just one point.

Ten or fifteen years ago the British Government tried to get the Catholics in Belfast to agree to have the two teacher training colleges on the same campus. It seemed to be an obvious economy for any government and yet the Catholics were able to thwart the plan.

Apparently, Cullen's fear of contamination by contact with Protestants was still alive and well.

By this time the proselytising campaign in the West of Ireland had made many converts. It is generally agreed that at least 5,000 native speakers were converted in Connemara. It was open territory as there were no National Schools there. This was the main factor in turning Cullen against any kind of contact with Protestant teachers.

Desmond Bowen, a Canadian clergyman (Anglican) came over to investigate it all and left us the remarkable book, *Souperism: Myth or Reality* dealing mainly with counties Galway and Mayo but also telling how JKL, began his campaign of 'hatred of tithes' in his parish of Graiguenamanach. This was followed more recently *Soupers and Jumpers*, an astonishing account of

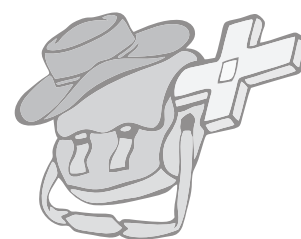
what happened when Archbishop McEvilly began the fight-back in Connemara.

When George Mitchell and his international team came to negotiate the Belfast Agreement. their first report claimed that the arms possessed by each community in Northern Ireland were only "a symptom of a larger problem: the absence of trust." Many people came to tell the commission why the other side could not be trusted, and for this they used "arguments steeped in history": One Sunday morning in 2010, I took the risk of walking up the Shankhill and down the Falls Road.

Later, I had a dream that I was accompanied by JKL. I showed him the huge iron gate at the bottom of the Shankhill, which we call the 'peaceline'. It was still closed at weekends. I reminded him of his words him of his words on separate education. He said that he foresaw the difficulties but he never thought that separation could be so complete and thorough.

His advice, of course, was that we must get back to the joint education of the early days.

Of this the School in Athy remains a model of what should have been for the whole country. ☞



The Swag Spring Edition

Closing date for letters
and articles is

Monday, 18 July 2022.

Please email submissions

for consideration to:

editor@theswag.org.au

Articles: 700 words

Features: 1,400 words

Statement by Pax Christi Australia for peace in Ukraine

PAX CHRISTI

Father Claude Mostowik MSC, President of Pax Christi Australia, issued this statement on March 8, 2022.



Pax Christi Australia absolutely condemns the recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia, as we do the invasion of any country. We believe that war is always a defeat for humanity and breaks the connections we have with one another on this planet.

We wish to send a message to the people of Ukraine that we stand with them in their suffering and are opposed to those who are creating violence and hate and this strange need for war. We wish to send a strong message of solidarity with the thousands of people in Russia, and beyond, who are calling for peace and nonviolence. We applaud the unprecedented action of Pope Francis in going to the Russian embassy in Rome to condemn the invasion. We still await to see the Russian Orthodox Patriarch break his silence and deplore the invasion.

Our hearts are with all those in Ukraine who tremble in fear at the violence which has overturned their lives. Our hearts break for the losses already experienced, the suffering, displacement and death that cannot be erased. We stand with the people of Ukraine and all who are crying out for peace, and we join with Pope Francis as he says: *'War is madness.'* *'Put down your weapons!'* *'Those who wage war forget humanity.'* *'Let us all together cry out from our hearts never again war, never again a clash of arms, never again so much suffering.'* As the Dalai Lama

recently said 'war is outdated' and called on us to develop a sense of oneness where we consider every person a sister and brother.

As we unequivocally condemn the behaviour of Vladimir Putin and his minions, we must equally acknowledge and condemn US and Western foreign policy that has pursued a provocative agenda of destabilisation and threatened Russia's national security through NATO's expansion up to its borders. Without in any way condoning the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we must never forget that no country on Earth has invaded more countries, overthrown more democratically elected world leaders than the USA.

Pax Christi Australia is deeply disturbed by Russian insinuations of a possible use of its nuclear weapons in the conflict. Pope Francis has repeatedly condemned such threats as well as the possession of nuclear weapons. Such threats are also prohibited by the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*.

Pax Christi condemns the popular but dangerous assumption that violence keeps us safe. Pope Francis has identified several things that we place our trust in but do not cultivate peace:

- The accumulation of material goods
- Control over scarce resources
- The possession of weapons, especially nuclear weapons

- A balance of power
- Closed borders and keeping 'strangers' out.

We believe that there is no such thing as a just or legal war and that there is no sanity left in the preparation for war. *Rather than the grotesque idiocy of the global military budget* – not to mention the maintenance and upgrading of those nuclear weapons mostly in Russian and American (USA) hands – *we need to begin consciously creating the future of oneness and a future in which war is not inevitable.* Peace, security and the flourishing of people and the planet are grounded in right relationships with God, each other, and the whole of creation. Each of these relationships is wounded and in need of reconciliation. 'Everyone is connected'. Security and peace are global questions in which the whole human family must be engaged. A recent Pax Christi Australia Conference on Peace and Security reinforced this very insight.

In Australia, this means that we must spend more on diplomacy and peace making; it means rejecting AUKUS and our dangerous military alliance with the US; it means we must question the nature of Australia's defense expenditure and the ambition to become a major player in the arms trade; it means hospitality towards all people, their experiences and perspectives; it means seeing dialogue as essential to developing of encounter where seeks points of contact, building bridges and inclusivity; it means that the major political parties must be persuaded to relinquish the politics of fear and exclusion which will happen when enough people stop responding to the dog whistle; and, it means creating spaces where we can listen to one another, accept differences, and seek the truth together. We need to 'hear the true stories' of victims of violence and people pushed to the edges, to 'look at reality through their eyes' and to 'listen with an open heart to the stories that they tell' (*Fratelli tutti*, # 261). The use of slogans such as 'an arc of autocracy' does not help nurture a climate of peace and peace building. We need to do much better. ☺

Confirmation: the sacrament in search of a reason to exist

HARRY MOORE SM

Harry Moore SM discusses the history of Confirmation and its meaning.

Bougainville

In the early Seventies it was the custom on Bougainville to confirm kids when they were twelve or in their sixth year of school. I would get the Baptismal book and list all the children baptized twelve years earlier, then I would go over to Grade Six to find out where the missing kids were. I would read out the names of all the twelve-year-olds who were not in school. "Michael Tamunka" – back would come the answer "In the village." "Elizabeth Arisimba" – "Dead."

"James Ntampo" – "Moved to Port Moresby." They knew where every kid was. A surprising number of them were dead. I would then send word for all the twelve-year-olds in the village to make sure they were at Mass on the day the bishop came for Confirmation.

On one occasion I baptized an adult plantation worker from New Guinea highlands. I asked Bishop Leo Lemay what we should do about Confirmation, and Bishop Leo said, "You do it." I was surprised. I thought bishops were the only ones who could confirm. I did not know that Paul VI in 1971, had instructed bishops to feel free to delegate the giving of Confirmation to their priests. That was not all I did not know about Confirmation.

What I did know about Confirmation

What I did know about Confirmation was that those children did not have a Pentecost experience. They did not immediately start speaking in tongues nor miraculously heal people, but I also observed that when the civil war came, these now "strong and perfect Christians" had no problem taking up arms and trying to kill each other. I had my suspicions that Confirmation had been oversold.

What I did not know about Confirmation

Like the Jews, the early Christians had a rite of initiation into the Tribe of Jesus, and it was called Baptism and involved a symbolic washing with water for those



who had received the Spirit. They seemed to be less obsessively compulsive about formulae in those days because the author of Matthew has Jesus telling Peter and the lads in Mt 28: 19, "Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Yet, the author of Acts has that same Peter in Acts 10: 48 ordering people to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Spare a thought for the poor bloke in the USA who got the sack for saying 'We' instead of 'I' when he baptized people. Spare a thought also for those poor people he baptized who are now destined for hell unless our Holy Mother the Church can come up with some pretty fancy footwork. What must the punters think of us?

Like the trimmings in John O'Brien's poem, *Trimmings on the Rosary*, baptism started to acquire its own trimmings to emphasise the reception of the Spirit: imposition of hands and anointing with sweet-smelling oil, and let's remember the bulk of people who received the Spirit and were then baptized, were adults. It was different all over the Christian world. As early as the third century AD, the ritual began to be seen as a cause of receiving the Spirit rather

than a sign that the Spirit had been received. By 416, Pope Innocent announced that only bishops could give the Spirit by "consignation".

From about 500 to 800, consignation went out of fashion until the French bishops had a row with the French Aristocracy about money. The bishops got a forger to produce fake Papal decretals that gave the bishops special rights to tax the public, and also decreed that people needed a booster shot of the Holy Spirit to get them through their adult life, and the only ones authorised to give the jab were bishops.

It is helpful to remind ourselves here that the trimmings of consignation were always connected to baptism, and baptism in those early days was normally for adults.

Later, when consignation morphed into the separate sacrament of Confirmation, baptism of infants had become widespread and the reception of Confirmation for infants was deemed inappropriate; however, in the case of adult baptism a case could be made for receiving both sacraments together.

Somewhere around the middle of the thirteenth century along came Thomas Aquinas and his Aristotelian "matter and form". All the sacraments had to have matter and form. What was the matter of Confirmation as it was now being called?

- Laying on of both hands by the bishop?
- Laying on of one hand by the bishop?
- The bishop extending a hand over all the assembled candidates as a job lot?
- The anointing with the Chrism?
- Or was it the Chrism itself?
- Or perhaps the prayer of the bishop calling down the Holy Spirit?
- Or perhaps the abstract exact words of the formula?

It was decided that the matter was the Chrism and the form was the formula. It was thought at that time that Confirmation conferred the gifts of the Holy Spirit: fortitude, understanding, counsel, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord. But Thomas also thought that

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these precious gifts were more appropriate to adults and were wasted on infants, and so the recommended age for Confirmation gradually went up to the age of discernment (knowing right from wrong) until the 1280 Council of Cologne decreed that no child under seven could receive Confirmation.

The Reformation

In the sixteenth century along came Luther and Co. with slight variations, they claimed that Confirmation had no scriptural basis and was just an excuse for Episcopal aggrandisement and money-making. Pius X, in 1907, condemned as modernists any priest who said that there was no separate sacrament of Confirmation in early Christianity or that it was not conferred by the Apostles. In 1964, I took a solemn oath in Latin not to be a modernist. God help me!

The Sacraments as anthropology

George McCauley SJ gave a course at the University of San Francisco in 1978, and I was one of his students. As I remember it, all those forty-four years ago, George was saying that most cultures have rituals to celebrate the rites of passage in their cultures and so too does the Catholic Church in the Jesus Tribe. In the cultures I have lived in, there have been ceremonies of initiation

into the tribe: long complicated rites for marriages; a formalised ritual for reconciling disputes; ritual community feasts; and certainly, rituals for marking the passage from childhood to adulthood. I found George's insights instructive and formative.

Where to now?

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master – that's all."

Various eras of the Catholic leadership have been doing a Humpty Dumpty in regard to Confirmation for the last 1700 years. In other words, they have been making it up as they went along. Confirmation meant whatever the Church at the time said it meant. They defined things and then quietly allowed their categoric definitions to slip into oblivion when it was no longer convenient.

It is now my turn to be Humpty Dumpty. This is what Confirmation means. It is an intensification through a meaningful ritual of an adult commitment to the

person and mission of Jesus. That ritual will be appropriately different for different cultures. The Australian ritual will be different from the ritual in Vietnam or the ritual in Nigeria.

Just as couples have to ask to publicly declare their mutual love and commitment in a marriage ceremony, so too Australian Catholic adults can request to publicly declare their love and commitment to the person of Jesus and his mission.

Unless candidates wish to permanently remind themselves of their commitment by getting a tattoo of the Chi Ro on their forehead, it will be forbidden for anyone to use gobbledygook holy words like indelible characters or seals on their souls or modified DNA.

The choreography of the ritual will be so good and the actors, that is, the bishop/priest and the candidates, will play their parts so well that the impact of this powerful theatre will intensify the commitment to our Brother Jesus, not only of the actors but of all those present who witness the drama of the Sacrament. The Sacrament will then actually effect what it signifies. In the old days that phenomenon was called "ex opere operato". ☞



Clericalism: we need to de-construct just what it means

RENE POLS

Rene Pols from South Australia discusses the many aspects of clericalism.

There is general consensus that clericalism is indeed a serious problem in the church.

It strikes a chord for many, Whilst the term "clericalism" is a good descriptor of a gestalt that comprises a wide range of beliefs, attitudes, problems and behaviours that surrounds men ordained to the catholic priesthood, it conflates a number of important issues that need to be examined and disentangled; issues, many of which undermine "church credibility" in the 21st century.

A process of deconstruction will help us to focus on the underlying problems

that need to be addressed, quite apart from the current focus which is on the resented and criticised behaviour of all the ordained.

This can contribute to an "us and them" antagonism, unhelpful responses and unnecessary conflict between ordained and lay catholics.

The task of seeking a deeper understanding of clericalism

Firstly, naming the word "clericalism" as a component problem is a start to deconstructing the phenomenon.

The culture of clericalism that has built

up over centuries, has left us with a term that conflates many things. The term itself results in an emotional response that leads to withdrawal and divisions within the Christian community without respectful dialogue. Such withdrawal enables dissention to grow and fester; there is more heat and less light.

In its extreme, it can lead to claims that some lay renewal movements are simply "demolitionists" wanting to do away with bishops and insultingly describes large numbers of deeply committed lay people as "a micro-swarm of gnats" as expressed recently by one of the former periti to the Plenary Council (*Catholic Weekly* 2.12.2021). This is simply an outrageous suggestion or conclusion to

draw; its vitriol borders on the delusional. Alternatively, this is an extreme example of clericalism afflicting the laity. The need to defend the current “clerical status quo” for some lay people in positions of leadership can be a serious problem also potentially affecting the advice given to bishops. These senior lay leaders risk becoming more clerical and less objective or approachable than some bishops themselves.

As an active member of the SA Catholics for an Evolving Church, I have the deepest respect for my brother priests who have consecrated their lives for the People of God wherever they have found them to serve as their priests. I have worked with many and count some of them amongst my very good friends; I admire the work they have done and continue to do and I respect them for their fortitude and forbearance during this terrible time, since they have had to live through the daily pain of being treated as suspect paedophiles within the Australian environment as a consequence of the terrible crimes committed by consecrated people against children.

And even more so, because of the fact that some bishops have been accessories before and after the fact of these heinous crimes. The latter have possibly even been the greater crimes. Systemic failures often cause greater harm than individual failures and this has simply not been acknowledged. It remains unspoken and our priests carry the stigma of this every day.

Clericalism is such a systemic failure. The bishops owe their priests an apology.

Superiority and ontological change at ordination

Ontological change, as held by some priests, can lead to an attitude of superiority which is seriously problematic in all areas of interaction between priests and the laity. It interferes with genuine hospitality and

friendship; relationships of all kinds including in the celebration of the Eucharist, reconciliation and even saying hello. In developing relationships, it results in distance and shame, or a sense of being less than the priest, for lay people. In counselling situations, it can violate the requirements in the therapeutic relationship of unconditional positive regard; it makes the priest less approachable.



Arrogance, a “holier than thou” demeanour, even the way a priest dresses, can contribute to such a demeanour that is in fact offensive to many and can become a quite grotesque caricature of holiness that is insulting for other priests.

A further problem is that many lay people share this belief which can lead to “father knows best” decision-making. It creates distance and makes for the frequent occurrence of systematic error in many areas. Many lay people now, have much greater knowledge, experience, wisdom, skills and education than priests. This makes for conflict that is often denied. Mistakes made because of ignorance or simple lack of expertise, can be costly not only financially, but by the withdrawal of, often the most appropriately educated in the parish community, away from decision-making. This affects men disproportionately and is possibly one component as to why there are so few men coming to mass. Covert lack of respect for the priest often results.

This in turn results in those in the parish who are in the inner group who attend mass during the week, pick up after

father, work around and manage him, superficially fitting in with his views of how things should be done. Surrounded by ‘yes women and men’, he is not challenged; mediocre outcomes are inevitable. This split in a parish between the good people and the also-rans who are on the fringe, is a cancer that grows. What is worse is that canon law that pertains to the parish priest clearly gives him the responsibility and legal power to veto anyone he wishes. People simply fall into line; some/many stay away.

Clericalism as a way of denying previous limitations of our understanding

Some clerics are poorly informed, ill-educated and not up-to-date. For some, their clericalist behaviour is the tip of an iceberg of ignorance and disdain for new knowledge held by some in the ordained hierarchy.

Some new knowledge challenges the way that our Christian beliefs are currently enunciated. In part, clericalism comprises the underlying problem of the failure by the church to keep up to date in its adaptation to new knowledge and change.

This is a serious problem for the church in many areas where new knowledge and data sit side-by-side with simplistic, outdated examples, beliefs or the ways that beliefs are expressed. This affects pious practices particularly and traditions that have grown over the centuries.

These have been portrayed in wonderful art and music, mystical writings and great scholarship; great and good work. New knowledge clearly cannot negate these magnificent expressions of our deepest held beliefs about our relationship with our God. However, new knowledge and the current expression of Christian beliefs appear to be in conflict. These need to be clarified, better understood and better enunciated if we are to be true missionaries in Australia in 2022.

Alienation and lack of respect for the ordained by the educated laity

Clericalism magnifies the alienation experienced when a pompous, arrogant, superior demeanour is accompanied by homilies with simplistic examples, incorrect information or errors of logic or simple disorganisation or lack of structure. Often such behaviour is a cover for lack of knowledge. These clericalist behaviours cover over the deep fear of new knowledge and its implications for the way we conceptualise Christian beliefs expressed over many centuries, when our current new knowledge was not available. God the Father, creator of the universe “saw and it was good” (Genesis: 1).

He made humankind in his own image and indeed, as we slowly evolve in our understanding of cosmology and the creation of the universe, we start to see how awesome our Creator God really is, and it poses problems for the way that we have expressed the cosmological realities many years ago, in ways that need to be updated rather than denied.

This is an extremely serious problem for Christianity as a whole. It is clear that there are many things that require a much more sophisticated approach to the expression of Christian belief than is the case now.

Another component conflated with “clericalism” is the abuse of power. This has been most graphically documented in the Royal commission on the Institutional Responses to Childhood Sexual Abuse (2017).

However, it manifests in many other places within the church and it points to the outdated monarchical structure of the church and its historical roots, distorted by the confluence of church, state and in modern times, economic, predominantly capitalist power (for example the Vatican bank scandals, or bishops at the lunatic far right of politics in the US funded by rich Trump people; or the influence of the Medici family on the papacy).

As clearly analysed in *The light of the Southern Cross* report (2020) it persists in the structure, history and jurisprudence of canon law that needs a more modern interpretation, as has been done in that report. It shows that there is nothing to

fear when we honestly and openly go back to canon law and re-examine how it is interpreted.

Our beliefs do not change but how we understand what we believe, does. The report shows very clearly what needs to be done to stop such abuse and to bring church governance up to date and at a level of transparency and excellence expected for any multi-million-dollar enterprise in 2022.

Clericalism as a way of ignoring mistakes made by many powerful ordained men

There are many historical consequences of the confluence and confusion of power, roles and loyalties. Many evils have been perpetrated by powerful, ordained men both at the individual level but particularly in systematic ways. These include: colonialisation and missionary endeavours in the name of the church; the inquisition, the crusades; the evils perpetrated during the reformation; and many others. Each of these grave errors need a new analysis and reconciliation with modern understandings of history, politics and social anthropology.

These decisions implemented with good intentions in many cases, resulted in many hundreds of thousands of deaths and incalculable harms to children, families and nations: including Christians being perpetrators and the church hierarchies, accessories to the genocide of many native peoples.

Modern scholarship needs to reconcile Christian teaching and such knowledge. A humble, synodal dialogue is required and an acceptance of the fact that knowledge then, is not the same as knowledge now.

Such evils and error need acknowledgement if the church is to regain any credibility in the 21st century and Sullivan (*The Swag* 2021) alludes to this also. Any year 12 student of history or English literature cannot but be confronted by these issues, where simplistic catholic teaching about our glorious and wonderful missionaries, many of whom have been beatified and in fact often did great things individually, is contrasted with huge inconsistencies with the facts of history taken over time and reflected upon now.

This creates gross cognitive dissonance

for these young people that is simply too great for them to continue to treat their faith seriously. The church needs to update and disentangle its understandings of all these connotations between power, history then and now, infallibility, ordination, gender and morality.

We need to reconsider what all these things mean in the light of our modern insights into scripture, theology, philosophy, biblical studies, archaeology and the gospels; let alone the sciences, history, social anthropology, neuroscience and psychology.

Ultimately truth is sought by all Christians and truth does not differ when sought in the many ways we are gifted to perceive what scholarship reveals to us. These new understandings have been gained from the great gift to human kind of human intellectual capacity by our Creator God: “He saw that it was good” (Genesis:1). The church needs to have a new and deeper respect for the “creative good of the Father” and the emergence of whatever new knowledge may have for us.

It is the Father’s gift to us and for which we have stewardship.

New knowledge in many areas need to be studied and reconciled with the message of Jesus.

Clericalism stands in the way of such scholarship through papal and curial injunctions and absolute denial of undeniable errors made in earlier times; papal infallibility, as defined in Vatican I is a serious problem of our limited understanding of what this really means because it was not directly or fully confronted during Vatican II; the ostrich trick simply does not work in the 21st century!

Clericalism has had a systematic type II error-effect upon the jurisprudence associated with the church’s canon law over the ages.

Clericalism has the consequential problem that it has introduced systematic bias into the scholarship required when making laws and in their interpretation; jurisprudence. Jurisprudence within canon law is affected and afflicted by cultural biases as can be seen when we examine laws made within other cultural systems, such as those by totalitarian states.

Critically reviewing laws made within a particular context from the outside can often clearly identify the flaws in logic made when such flaws cannot be seen from the inside.

Such new insights from safety engineering about perceptions from within the tunnel, developed from catastrophic disasters, is critically important. This is a very serious problem for the law-makers in the church and for those who interpret and apply these laws.

Another component of clericalism is that the ordained are male

To simply “fight the good fight” against “clericalism” by seeing it as simply being a gender issue also has serious costs. It places women against men.

The importance of general gender equity and equality issues in Australian society, the safety of women in the home, walking home alone at night and in the workplace are all important; as are the changes in our understanding about gender, power

and sexual issues; same sex unions; contraception and fertility control. Whilst related to women’s ordination, they are separate issues caught up in the many, highly charged changes occurring within Australian society. The nature of the soul, its gender and its ordination is caught up in the gender debate that is in fact separate from clericalism per se.

The ordination of people is clearly a theological question that requires review in the light of our current understanding of the teachings of Jesus who gave a totally new egalitarian message for all, at a time when culturally then, and historically since, gender issues have clouded this debate. It is also clearly a women’s issue.

Genetic issues and power hierarchies also conflate clericalism. Ancient, genetically based power hierarchies have been innate to the evolutionary survival of some invertebrates and all vertebrates for hundreds of millions of years and to human kind also. They are not simply

human, social constructs. Some are gender-based where females are dominant such as some arachnids where the dominant female devours the male after mating, whilst others, including chicken and human hierarchies, which are established based on environmental constraints as well as genetic gender. We need to be much more careful in the ways that we discuss clericalism.

Conclusion

Much further thought and discussion is needed when we think about clericalism. Each of the above issues have ways in which we can come to conclusions that take it out of an ‘us and them’ emotional Mexican standoff, where we, the laity, are ok and they, the clerics, have to change.

Change is required by us all. Most of all, the church really needs to address and reinterpret the message of Jesus in a way that is meaningful for our Australian people in 2022. ☺



Pope’s Palm Sunday Homily

POPE FRANCIS

Pope Francis offered these reflections on Palm Sunday in St Peter’s Square. This is an edited version of the homily. The full text is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/3tr7usd3>

On Calvary, two ways of thinking collided. In the Gospel, the words of the crucified Jesus are in sharp contrast with the words of those who crucified him. The latter keep saying: “Save yourself”. The leaders of the people said: “Let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One” (Lk 23:35). The soldiers said the same thing: “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself” (v. 37). Finally, one of the criminals, echoing their words, said to him: “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself” (v. 39). Save yourself. Take care of yourself. Think of yourself. Not of others, but only of your own well-being, your own success, your own interests: your possessions, your power, your image. *Save yourself*. This is the constant refrain of the world that crucified the Lord. Let us think about it. Against this self-centred mindset is

God’s way of thinking. The mantra “save yourself” collides with the words of the Saviour who offers his self. Like his adversaries, Jesus speaks three times in today’s Gospel (cf. vv. 34,43,46). Yet he did not claim anything for himself; indeed, he did not even defend or justify himself. He prayed to the Father and offered mercy to the good thief. One of his words, in particular, marked the difference with regard to the mantra “save yourself”. He said: “Father, forgive them” (v. 34).

Forgiveness

Let us reflect on the Lord’s words. When did he say them? At a very specific moment: while he was being crucified, as he felt the nails piercing his wrists and feet. Let us try to imagine the excruciating pain he suffered. At that moment, amid the most searing physical pain of his Passion, Christ asked

forgiveness for those who were piercing him. At times like that, we would scream out and give vent to all our anger and suffering. But Jesus said: Father, forgive them.

Unlike the other martyrs about whom the Bible speaks (cf. *2 Mac* 7:18-19), Jesus did not rebuke his executioners or threaten punishments in the name of God; rather, he prayed for the evildoers. Fastened to the gibbet of humiliation, his attitude of *giving* became that of *forgiving*.

Brothers and sisters, God does the same thing with us. When we cause suffering by our actions, God suffers yet has only one desire: to forgive us. In order to appreciate this, let us gaze upon the crucified Lord. It is from his painful wounds, from the streams of blood caused by the nails of our sinfulness that forgiveness gushes forth. Let us look to Jesus on the cross and realize that greater words were never spoken: *Father, forgive*. Let us look to Jesus on the cross and realize that we have never been looked

Continued page 30

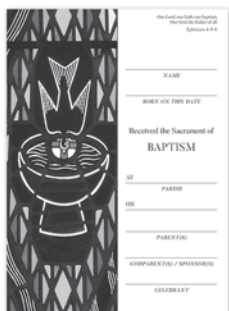


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upon with a more gentle and compassionate gaze. Let us look to Jesus on the cross and understand that we have never received a more loving embrace. Let us look to the crucified Lord and say: "Thank you, Jesus: you love me and always forgive me, even at those times when I find it hard to love and forgive myself".

Love your enemies

There, as he was being crucified, at the height of his pain, Jesus himself obeyed the most demanding of his commandments: that we love our enemies. Let us think about someone who, in our own lives, injured, offended or disappointed us; someone who made us angry, who did not understand us or who set a bad example. How often we spend time looking back on those who have wronged us! How often we think back and lick the wounds that other people, life itself and history have inflicted on us. Today, Jesus teaches us not to remain there, but to react, to break the vicious circle of evil and sorrow. To react to the nails in our lives with love, to the buffets of hatred with the embrace of forgiveness. As disciples of Jesus, do we follow the Master or do we follow our own desire to strike back? This is a question we have to ask ourselves. Do we follow the Master or not?

If we want to test whether we truly belong to Christ, let us look at how we behave toward those who have hurt us. The Lord asks us to respond not as we feel, or as everyone else does, but in the way he acts toward us. He asks us to break out of the mindset that says: "I will love you if you love me; I will be your friend if you are my friend; I will help you if you help me". Rather, we are to show compassion and mercy to everyone, for God sees a son or a daughter in each person. He does not separate us into good and bad, friends and enemies. We are the ones who do this, and we make God suffer. For him, all of us are his beloved children, children whom he desires to embrace and forgive. Just as in the parable of the wedding feast, where the father of the groom sends his servants into the streets and says: "Invite everybody: white, black, good and bad, everybody..." (cf. Mt 22:9-10). The love of Jesus is for

everyone; everyone has the same privilege: that of being loved and forgiven.

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. According to the Gospel, Jesus "kept saying" this (cf. v. 34). He did not say it once for all as he was being nailed to the cross; instead, he spent all his time on the cross with these words on his lips and in his heart. God never tires of forgiving. We need to understand this, not just in our minds, but also in our hearts. God never tires of forgiving. We are the ones who get tired of asking forgiveness. But he never tires of forgiving. He does not put up with us for a while and then change his mind, as we are tempted to do. Jesus – so the Gospel of Luke teaches us – came into the world to bring us forgiveness for our sins (cf. Lk 1:77). In the end, he gave us a clear command: to proclaim forgiveness of sins to everyone in his name (cf. Lk 24:47). Let us never grow tired of proclaiming God's forgiveness: we priests, of administering it; all Christians, of receiving it and bearing witness to it. Let us never grow tired when it comes to God's forgiveness.

Brothers and sisters, in the course of this week, let us cling to the certainty that God can forgive every sin. He forgives everyone. He can bridge every distance, and turn all mourning into dancing (cf. Ps 30:12). The certainty that with Jesus there is always a place for everyone. That with Christ things are never over. That with him, it is never too late. *With God, we can always come back to life.* Take courage! Let us journey toward Easter with his forgiveness. For Christ constantly intercedes for us before the Father (cf. Heb 7:25). Gazing upon our violent and tormented world, he never tires of repeating: *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.* Let us now do the same, in silence, in our hearts, and repeat: *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.* ✠

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

Do not stop the little children from coming to me

BERNIE THOMAS

Bernie Thomas, since retired, was parish priest of Koorinal Parish in Wagga Wagga when *Mainly Music* was introduced to the parish. He writes of his experience.

Babies are born. We baptise them. Many parishes have baptism programs that tell the parents how important God is in their little lives. And then what?

If we are lucky, we might see them a few times before they start school. Then the process with their parents starts with sacramental programs at or after school.

Mainly Music is a program that keeps child and parents in touch with God and the Church. The program uses music, song and stories to help in the development of the child and it also helps parents identify with the church community as well as relating with other parents with young children and so form their own special interest community as well as being part of the wider church community.

In 2013 a member of the Koorinal parish in Wagga was inspired to try and find something for the birth to five year-olds – an age group that she saw was being neglected by the Church. Her investigations led her to *Mainly Music*, a parent and child based faith program that was started in New Zealand in 1990 and has spread to many countries throughout the world including Great Britain, Spain and USA with over 400 groups in Australia and over 200 in New Zealand.

Mainly Music brings together the children, a parent (or guardian or grandparent), and members of the church community who have various roles. The philosophy underpinning the *Mainly Music* program is based around five core principles or values: generosity, honour, creativity, celebration and connection.

The groups are predominately run in Anglican or other Christian churches. It took some level of convincing the world leaders of *Mainly Music* that, as Catholics, we would uphold the basic Christian values that is the thrust of the program and so were the first Catholic community to be affiliated with the

world body and granted a licence to use the title and program. The support of the parish council was, and still is, vital.

Bernadette, the parish convenor said, “*Mainly Music* provides a way for our parish to connect with and support young families through music, play and friendship. In so doing we model the life of Christ in our words, deeds and actions.”

The *Mainly Music* program

The *Mainly Music* morning commences with the volunteers coming together for prayer (to ensure they understand the program is not just a form of playgroup but it is living the love of Jesus) and then they welcome the children and the parent (or guardian) with their name tag. For the next half hour, parents sit with their child as they sing and bounce-dance to the music provided by *Mainly Music* on power point (specifically written for *Mainly Music* and the young children) and each session must include at least two ‘God songs’. Christmas and Easter must be celebrated.

The children then have their morning tea, supervised by their parents. After this the children are grouped for a play time and supervised by the volunteers. This is a fun time and it leaves the parents free to have their own morning tea during which they can talk with each other and with the morning tea volunteers about anything, including church and spirituality. After this time (30-40 mins.) the parents return to the children and, with them, listen to stories. When the children and parents leave, the volunteers spend some time in spiritual reflection (the Jesuit 3min. retreat has proved popular as a reflection point).

A quick review of the mornings program is then made. At the present time, a donation of \$5 per family is requested to help keep costs to a minimum. As the morning tea time is most important, a ‘kitchen staff’ is different to the volunteers who work with the children.

They are most important because they are the ones who talk with the parents during parent morning tea. In many Anglican etc parishes, *Mainly Music* is so successful and popular that they are now running two separate sessions each week.

Program advantages

In spite of the difficulties of COVID, *Mainly Music* continues to thrive in the parish with over 30 children attending with a parent each week (and a continuous waiting list). As the parish priest of the parish when *Mainly Music* was introduced, The advantages I see in the *Mainly Music* program are:

For the children *Mainly Music* aids their health and development, enhances their movement skills, helps their social skills with people of all ages, teaches them and enhances their trust in people and themselves while introducing them to an understanding of God, spirituality and church culture in a fun, gentle way.

For the parents *Mainly Music* gets them out of the house and into a relationship with parents of their own age and with children of their child’s age. With other parents they have time to meet together and discuss anything, especially things relating to parenting. For a time of ‘parent sharing’ they leave their child with those running the program and so learn to trust the community and learn to trust their children being ‘separate’ from them.

Because it is a church-based program, parents are put into a spiritual environment and spiritual community in which they feel accepted. Many parents become active church members. It also is an aid to help the parents discuss spiritual things with their children at the earliest age – like God, prayers, creation and related topics. In meeting the church community through *Mainly Music* parents and families find a need to join the church community on Sundays and other occasions. It gives the parents an insight into the church community and church culture.

For the parish Community *Mainly Music* offers an outlet for those who are at home (single people, retired, active

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FEATURES

grandparents whose grandchildren live a distance away) to volunteer their time, effort and skills in a fun and rewarding time – sharing the life and excitement of new family life in their community. Skills needed for the program range from children skills, music skills, cooking skills, welcoming skills and listening skills. It was the experience at Koorringal that once the wider parish community understood what *Mainly Music* was about, volunteers were not

hard to find because the program did as much for the volunteers as it did for the children and parents. Volunteers are both male and female with males reinforcing the 'father figure'.

Mainly Music, besides being a very good introduction and preparation for kindergarten/infants school, it can be a challenge to a parish school to reflect upon its own children's program.

It may cost the parish a little but for equipment (children's tables and chairs

etc) but the outlay is certainly worth it. The program co-ordinator has to have good co-ordinating skills but they train others along the way so that the program does not rely on one person. The priest and the Parish Council need to support it. The priest drops in from time to time when he is able.

Google *Mainly Music* for more information and find a group near you that you can visit and learn from. Phone Bernadette on 0477 887 783. 📞



The why and the how we do things

TANYA PLIBERSEK

Tanya Plibersek, Shadow Minister for Education: Shadow Minister for Women and Member for Sydney, gave the 38th Archbishop Daniel Mannix Lecture at Newman College, Melbourne on March 23, 2022. This is an extract. The full text can be seen here: <https://tinyurl.com/rx3wasb4>. Thanks to Fr Frank Brennan SJ for sending this text to *The Swag*.



There is no doubt in my mind that growing up Catholic has influenced my politics, as it has for so many in the Labor Party and the labour movement. And not just in the obvious ways that history has recorded...

I want to speak tonight about the essential role that values play in political leadership.

Good political leadership requires making your values clear, as much it requires laying out your plans for practical action. It's about answering the 'why' as well as the 'how' of what you're fighting for.

Too often progressive political parties jump straight to how we want to make the world better. We assume that people understand our reasons for pursuing these changes, and sometimes we miss the opportunity to find common ground and persuade.

In the modern world, our values come from many different places. There's no longer a single pulpit or a universal source of truth. Secular philosophy and religious faith live side by side, largely in peace.

But it's clear to me that, even in our fractured world, the timeless lessons

of Christ continue to inform progressive politics today. Love thy neighbour. Turn the other cheek. The first will be last and the last will be first. The meek shall inherit the earth.

These are simple statements. But that shouldn't hide just how radical they are. If we take it seriously, Jesus' message was incredibly demanding. Have you ever tried to love your neighbours? All of your neighbours

The call to universal love will always be profoundly difficult, whoever we are. But it's especially challenging in our polarised world.

A world where disinformation is weaponised; where culture wars are stoked; where cynical actors try to divide us for political gain.

Where empathy and love are equated, by some, with weakness. It's harder to love thy neighbour when the internet spreads lies about them – they're out to take your job, crowd your cities, even threaten your safety...

There's a reason why about a quarter of Australians voted for minor parties and independents at the last election. In part, it's because they don't feel like major parties are listening to them. Or that we share their values. They feel we don't understand or see them...

Leaders must address the underlying economic insecurity and other frustrations that drive people into the arms of minor parties and independents – and we need to offer them something more hopeful instead.

The role of leaders in Australia should be to strengthen what binds us together as a nation. Not to ignore division and difference, but to remind us of the values we share – like our belief in democracy, our faith in the rule of law, and our commitment to essential rights and liberties.

And it's the role of leaders to show that, where the differences do exist, they can be managed civilly. This is only possible when we strive, in good faith, to empathise with each other; to see each other as the full, complex human beings we are.

And despite some who try to tell us all otherwise, empathy isn't soft. It's not weakness. It's a superpower.

This is where the lessons of Christianity can teach us so much. Because the call for universal love was a truly earth-shaking idea.

I still find inspiration in the ordinary people of faith, the nuns and brothers and lay people, who live out their love every day. Who love fiercely, practically, and without judgement. When my husband was struggling to get clean from his heroin addiction, it was the Salvation Army that took him in and gave him the support he needed.

When the NSW drug summit proposed a medically supervised injecting centre, so drug users could reduce their risk of overdose and access rehab services, it was the nuns at St Vincent's Hospital in my electorate who were the first to volunteer to set it up.

People in aged care facilities, homelessness services and hospitals; advocates for refugees, prisoners, exploited workers and trafficked women. These Australians are on the front line of justice: are taking in the sick and the hurt and the lonely. And they are not just engaged in individual acts of charity, either. They are the advocates fighting for a fairer world.

Not all of them are driven by religious faith – but each of them, to a person, is driven by a powerful set of values. And they're living those values in the world.

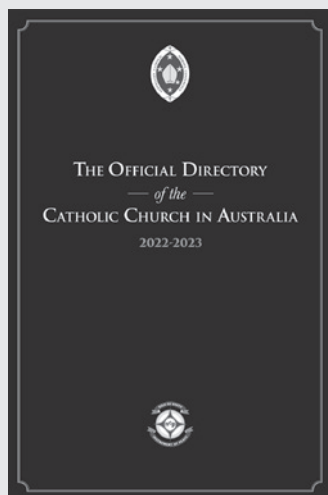
Now, politics is not always a saintly profession. But I've always been drawn to people who live their values openly; and I've tried to learn from them too. Because it's clear to me that belief and practical action are not in opposition; they are the why and the how of our lives and of leadership. ↻

Can we
find
you?

If you move, please let Sally and Chris know, otherwise you may not receive your copy of the next edition of *The Swag*.

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This edition will be Sally's 25th and Chris' 19th.

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IMAGINE

Imagine belonging to a Catholic Church that valued women.

Imagine being a Church unaffected
by some influences of St Aquinas and the like,
who referred to us as defective and misbegotten,
a gateway to a sewer, and the devil,
our very nature thought to evoke feelings of shame in us.

Imagine being part of a Church
that recognised, honoured and empowered us,
rather than criticised, excluded and abused us.
A Church that might imagine what it is like for us,
knowing we have a lot to give
yet, for bias, compelled to keep it to ourselves.

Imagine feeling at home in our Church.
Recognising ourselves on the altar
rather than a sea of males.
Listening to Scripture as though it related to us,
not addressed only to men.

Imagine being able to delight
in the mighty treasures of the Catholic Church,
feeling as though we belonged,
rather than needing to draw on every sinew
to stop ourselves from walking away. Fed up.

Imagine encountering courage, openness and wisdom
when seeking to reignite our Church.
Not rigidity and indifference, territorialism and fear.
Imagine a Church that learns from its mistakes,
not reinforces these for the sake of tradition.
Imagine a Church that knows Truth is found in a soft heart,
mellow and ready, to give in and give way, change and accommodate,
in order to expand, and flourish, and nourish.

Imagine explaining our Church to God,
the servant Church that buried its talents for fear of the Master.

The servant too controlling, too fearful:
to change things, to take risk, in case it gets things wrong.
The servant from whom all will be taken,
talents stripped and given, to other Churches more willing
to trust in the goodness of their Master,
and work from a place of love and generosity and surrender,
in order to grow the Kingdom of God.
Multiply the talents given for safe keeping,
all the while, soft-hearted, receptive, humble,
working for the other, not for self-gain.

NIMMI CANDAPPA

Melbourne academic and member of the Plenary Council

The dream of women in ministry

The Summer 2021 edition of *The Swag* is full of interesting and inspiring reading. In particular, I found Nihal Abeyasingha's article on the revival of the ministry of catechist very interesting. My archdiocese of Melbourne has recently launched an exciting initiative it calls Take the Way of the Gospel (TWG). The brochure that has been distributed calls TWG "a long-term journey" and clearly it will need to rely on the training of parish members to evangelize as catechists. It invites both laypeople and clergy to renew their sense of mission and to dream of and explore a missionary way forward.

The inspiration for this initiative comes from Pope Francis' 2013 apostolic letter, *Evangelii Gaudium*, where we are encouraged to dream and re-imagine a Spirit-filled renewal of parish life. I see Nihal's article and TWG as a happy coincidence. In his article, Nihal notes the opening of the existing ministries of Lector and Acolyte in January 2021 to persons of both sexes. This has been followed in May 2021 by the ministry of Catechist "to be exercised by lay persons". I assume a lay person includes women.

This marries in well with Elizabeth Young's article on the way ministry could be enhanced by the development of the diaconate. She explores Re-visioning the diaconate and tells us about St. Phoebe, a deacon of the early church of Cenchræ.

She expresses her admiration of Pope Francis for calling together a commission to study the question of restoring women to the permanent diaconate. My dream is for this commission to give the pope the go-ahead he wisely wants to be seen to be in place before proceeding with such a restoration. Maybe he could then establish the Society of St Phoebe for all the women deacons of the future.

As the TWG develops over its journey, mission teams in Melbourne will consist of priests, deacons, and catechists all working together with enthusiasm. I have no doubt, the majority of catechists (and hopefully later, of deacons) will be women responding to their vocations for such work. I can imagine a future where the Melbourne mission is overwhelmed by the number of women coming forward to help with this exciting venture.

In this regard I take heart from the comments of Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Cap quoted by Patricia Gemmell in her Letter to the Editor at page 42 where he hopes for our church to have a "better future" but laments our continuing "to make women invisible and inferior in church language, liturgy, theology, and law".

This is a pretty big (and welcome) statement from one of our bishops. He apparently contrasts sharply with the bishops referred to by Francis Sullivan in his Feature on the Plenary Facing Change where he notes the hesitancy among some bishops to adopt changes to governance in the Church. He goes on to comment that initiatives such as expanding the diaconate to women are being weaponized by those determined to keep women in their place. So much for "fresh eyes" and a "new creation"!

Clearly our current Plenary Council does not provide the correct process to raise questions such as women deacons but that doesn't stop petitions being sent direct to the pope if his commission process fails. Something similar to petitions worked with Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) in the 1880s. At that time the industrial revolution had been in full swing for more than 50 years with its appalling exploitation of working-class people living under the yoke of laissez-faire capitalism.

The Church with its conservative hierarchy took little or no notice. Leo, a conservative aristocrat who opposed freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, and freedom of the press, considered democracy to be based on false liberties but to be tolerated only for the sake of some greater evil. He denounced socialism and insisted on Catholics he received in audience kneel before him throughout the interview. Lucien Hamel was a Catholic French industrialist who was sensitive to the miserable plight of working people. He launched an experiment in social partnership at his factory by introducing model housing, health benefits, and workers' councils.

The experiment was an amazing success. Productivity and profits both improved and the misery of workers was shown to be unnecessary. In 1885 he decided to enlist Leo in his campaign, so he took

100 of his workers on pilgrimage to Rome. Within two years that number had grown to 1800 workers. By 1889 it was 10,000. Eventually Leo formed the view that industrial society need not be conflictual and that social peace under the Gospel was a possibility.

At the same time American Catholic Labour had formed bodies like the Knights of Labour which were not communistic or irreligious. Also, European social thinkers had since 1884 been meeting in Fribourg.

In 1888 Leo had in fact received members of the Union of Fribourg and accepted their draft proposal of a papal document addressing social issues. Finally, Leo's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, (of new things) was published in 1891. It was followed nearly word for word by an Australian court in the Harvester case in the first decade of our Australian federation and now forms the basis of Catholic social teaching.

So, my dream for the TWG is for growth in the training of catechists, and a huge boost in about six or so years when newly ordained women deacons join the mission in large numbers thus achieving a successful and on-going mission in the Church.

Ted Fennessy, Western Port Parish VIC

Will they return to church?

Barry Lamb is to be commended for persevering in the work he describes in "Reaching out to those who don't come to church." I remember participating in something similar in the dim past when a member of a "Renew" group. It didn't last long at all. It was a lot of work!

I'm sure people do enjoy the contact with a friendly local. But if any return to the pews it would be a miracle.

People leave the Church for all sorts of reasons, not only because they have "lost their faith" as JP II always insisted of all of us. The August issue of *The Swag* in several articles, especially those about or mentioning the Plenary Council and the Synod on Synodality, mentions a lot of those reasons. No amount of evangelisation will work until the Church changes and practises what it preaches.

All we want is to be welcome in the home we were baptised into. A home of

Continued page 36

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

sinner with a variety of talents to share in building and nurturing the Christian family. Or sometimes where we ourselves need to be built up and nurtured.

We're all supposed to be in it together. It should not, and to God does not, matter that we are gay, or divorced or women. We, all of us, are equal, we only vary in the talents we have to be used and the sins we commit to be tamed.

Until the Church is open, transparent, and welcoming to all of us, those pews will remain empty. Bring on the revolution!

Margaret Callinan, Hawthorn VIC

Finding pastoral bishops

Bernard Guy's analysis in *The Swag* (A Simple Guide to Local Ecclesiastical Politics, Autumn 22) of the covert ecclesiastical politics certainly reflects the political machinations regularly exposed in the media.

The lack of transparency and the patronage of the powerful have characterised the 'discernment' of diocesan leaders until recently.

Informed Catholics should have derived some hope in the last decade(s) with the increased number of bishops from religious orders. These leaders have been nurtured in a community with a specific charism and spirituality. Professing poverty, chastity and obedience orientates a leader to a life of service rather than power.

I am aware that most secular priests are pastoral and strive for holiness but I also suspect few are willing to accept the invitation to lead local churches in these turbulent times.

Kim Crawford, Springwood NSW

Marking the seasons

This is another liturgical reminiscence. In the Diocese of Ballarat, we often had in-service seminars prepared by various groups. Sometime around 1990 the Liturgy commission held a seminar during the school holidays at Damacus College, Ballarat East. Some of the input came from Frank Anderson MSC, author of quite a number of still popular hymns.

He raised the fact that there were many complaints that the Entrance Rite of

Mass is pretty complicated. In fact, if you look at the Entrance Rite carefully, you will find that quite a number of different things happen in a short space of time.

Having brought us to recognise that, he then suggested a number of things we could do to simplify this procedure. One of his suggestions, I took home with me to Hamilton where I was PP. I was able to convince Bryan Woodward, the then choirmaster, to give it a go the following Lent.

It went like this; After the Introduction to Mass had been read, and the people invited to stand, the choir began to sing slowly the Israeli Lord have mercy.

When the procession had reached the sanctuary, the choir continued with the Israeli, but just humming softly while the celebrant welcomed the people to this First Sunday of Lent.

Then the choir sang the Israeli Christ have mercy. When they finished this, they again began to hum softly while the leader read allowed three short lines from the day's scriptures. This completed, they sang again the Israeli Lord have mercy, after which the celebrant prayer the Opening Prayer for that day's Mass.

It was done properly, and worked well. From then on until I retired this practice continued in the parishes entrusted to me, as a way of marking Lent as different.

I developed something similar for Advent each year, with this difference – instead of the Israeli Mass Kyrie, we sang the Godspell 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.'

In both cases it was, I believe, a helpful way of marking the seasons.

Fr Patrick Flanagan, Maryborough VIC

Can church teaching change?

The changes in theology we have experienced in the last hundred years can't be explained away by saying they were just fine tuning or were clearer explanations, or even a few preferred new insights.

We have to come to realise that some of the things we have been taught in the past, and that includes some aspects of Vatican II, were just plain wrong. Biblical studies, the nature of human

sexuality, the primacy of *conscience et alia*, have all come in for radical rethinks, not without serious angst on the part of many loyal theologians.

This penchant of past Church teaching authorities for getting things wrong should make present day theologians and various church magisteria very hesitant about what they opine.

We will need large amounts of faith, humility, and courage, and a fierce commitment to the never-ending quest for the genuine message of Jesus to be able to say that we were wrong and that our hubris has caused untold harm and suffering to the People of God.

To paraphrase the words of the great Jewish poet and atheist, Jahuda Amichai: the ground where one is always right is hard ground. No flowers grow there.

Anyone interested in making a study of the fallibility of the teaching authority of the Church would find Rahner's writing on the matter rewarding.

Harry Moore SM, Kyogle NSW



We congratulate Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB on his election as President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.



Archbishop Balvo new Nuncio to Australia



Archbishop Charles Balvo was appointed by Pope Francis as ambassador to Australia in what the 70-year-old believes will be his final assignment after having served 35 years in the Vatican's diplomatic service said the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Media Blog on April 8, 2022.

He has served as papal ambassador to New Zealand, Kenya and South Sudan and, most recently, to the Czech Republic. He had held earlier diplomatic postings to Latin America, the Baltic States, Africa and the Middle East.

Archbishop Balvo said a visit to Rome last November to meet with Pope Francis had an unexpected outcome: He was to take up the Australian post vacated last year when Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana was named Apostolic Nuncio to Israel and to Cyprus as well as Apostolic Delegate to Jerusalem and Palestine.

Archbishop Balvo said the task of any Apostolic Nuncio is to be "the eyes, ears, hands, if you will, of the Holy Father, an extension of the Holy Father's Ministry, because the Holy Father has his concern for the Church, all aspects of its life".

Having served in New Zealand, Archbishop Balvo said he had visited Australia on a few occasions, including for a meeting of the bishops of Oceania and for World Youth Day 2008. With his new appointment, he knows visiting the local Churches and meeting with the People of God will be the best way to get to know the bishops and the faithful.

"It's a question of being in personal contact and to understand in some way the life of the Church in the country to which you are sent," he said.

"That's how you see what are the conditions of the Church. You talk to people and let people talk to you."

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson's book, *Towards the End of My Days*

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson has written a book that has been published after his death. He wrote it just before his death. After a life's work in canon law, teaching and pastoral work as well as his role in unmasking sexual abuse, this book discusses the many issues facing the church in these times.

Bishop Robinson's book, *Towards the End of My Days*, supports the agenda of the reform movement in the church on their key areas of interest. A book launch will take place in North Sydney on June 1. There is a book review in this edition of *The Swag*.

What Good News

A new resource has just been launched to assist all who have responsibility for breaking open the Word of God each week.

Now available free of charge on www.whatgoodnews.org are brief commentaries on all the Mass readings throughout the liturgical year, as well as other presentations and articles.

The commentaries are written by Fr Adrian Graffy, parish priest in England and member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Biblical text and commentary are accessible for each day by going to the home page: www.whatgoodnews.org and clicking on *Discover More*.

Sr Joan Chittister OSB visits Australia

Joan Chittister OSB, a practical theologian embodying the voice of wisdom and experience will speak in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane during May and early June. Her prophetic views on justice and equality challenge all who would silence women and those at the margins.

Through her call to uncommon courage she can help us develop a spirituality of engagement so together we can work to reform the clerical culture that has shattered so many and damaged us all.

Catholic film reviewer wins international award

The work of Australian film reviewer Fr Peter Malone MSC was honoured at the recent International Catholic Film Critics Association awards, reported Australian Catholics. (March 9, 2022)

Fr Malone took out the Honour for Outstanding Criticism (ICFCA member) section. 'It was an honour and a pleasure to be named for the award,' Fr Malone said. He said he sees himself less as a film critic or academic and more as a mediator between films and the readers of his reviews. 'I highlight what is interesting and finding ways of alerting to aspects which may cause difficulties in viewing.'

Fr Malone said American Catholic reviewer Michael Augsberger set up the International Catholic Film Critics Association a few years ago. Last year they were invited to nominate for the association's inaugural awards, which as well as the usual categories of Best Picture, Best Director, etc, include the Human and Gospel Values Award, the Honour for Outstanding Criticism (non-member) and Honour for Outstanding Criticism (ICFCA member).

Can you support multicultural research?

Joseph Armah, a priest working in the Diocese of Armidale, has been studying at Notre Dame and hopes to complete a Master of Counselling degree at the end of this year.

Joseph needs your help with his research project: *Aliens, foreign visitors, or compatriots: A qualitative study on the perspectives of service providers on Sub-Saharan African immigration to Australia.*

Are you an Australian service provider, counsellor, social worker, health worker, immigration lawyer, religious leader/worker? Do you have a minimum of two years working experience in your field of profession? Have you had a minimum of six months professional working relation with clients originally from Sub-Saharan Africa?

If you answered YES and would like to find out more about this study and possible participate, please email Joseph 32008663@my.nd.edu.au or his supervisor, Dr Cathy Bettman catherine.bettman@nd.edu.au

Bishop Robinson reformer to the end

Towards the end of my days, Theological and Spiritual Reflections by Bishop Geoffrey Robinson. Garrett Publishing 2022. Reviewed by John Swann.

This book, described as his last testimony, was written by Geoff not long before he died on 20 December 2020. Seamus O’Grady, the Co-ordinating Editor, was a good friend of Geoff and describes how he visited Geoff a few days before his death and asked him if he had done any more writing. To his surprise he said Yes, I have written a book, and handed him a book of 26 separate chapters, entitled ‘towards my dying days’ and asked him to critique them. Seamus said that he thought there were better qualified people to do this, to which Geoff replied: “They would regard it as heresy.”

You will recall that back in the early 90’s Geoff was chosen by the Bishops’ Conference to be the spokesman on sex abuse in the Church. He was frank and forthright in his recommendations and some bishops thought he went too far, but history has shown he was correct.

This book will be welcomed by many, but no doubt rejected by others.

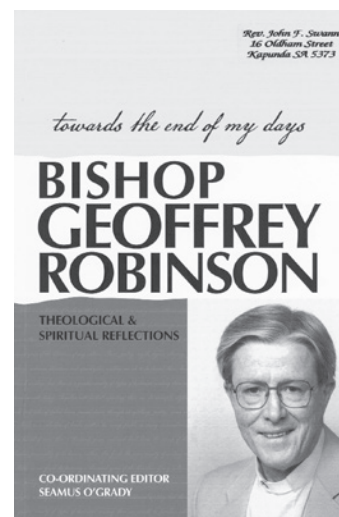
In the Foreword, Mary McAleese former President of Ireland, writes: The late Geoffrey Robinson leaves the members of his troubled Church with a powerfully argued, accessible and thoughtful agenda for a credible debate on Catholic Church reform. Regrettably, not a single one of his ideas is likely to get past the 2023 Synod on Synodality censors which is a pity at one level for it is a ready made hugely insightful schema for discussion

of everything that is relevant to the contemporary Church.

One of the early chapters is on the Bible which Geoff describes as *The Story of a Journey*. The Scriptures are so important as the basis of our understanding of God and our lives as humans. He points out how so often Scripture is misunderstood through poor translations and often too literal interpretation. Throughout the book he often comes back to the importance of the scriptures in our understanding of various aspects of theology.

There is a lengthy discussion of morality, sexuality, marriage – which he describes as a Union of Equals, contraception, homosexuality, celibacy and many other questions. Of course, sexual abuse and how the Church has handled it is covered, as is our understanding of priesthood. The need for structural change in the Church is also examined.

The chapter on the priesthood is, I believe, particularly relevant to us priests. Titled ‘The Smell of the Sheep’, it is practical and down to earth. While Professionalism is important, so too is Simplicity, Fidelity and Service. He lists many of the qualities of a good priest. He writes: Throughout more than thirty years as a bishop I have heard many complaints about priests and I could not help noting that very few were about failures in their priestly duties. Overwhelmingly they were about failures as human beings.



And again: One of the saddest sights in the Church today is that of some newly ordained priests insisting that there is an “ontological difference” between them and laypersons and they enthusiastically embrace the mystique of superior priesthood. Whenever I see young priests doing this, I feel a sense of despair, and wonder whether we have learned anything from all the revelations of abuse.

Finally in an Appendix, ‘The Structure of a Council’, Geoff suggests the entire Church should take part in a new Council which should not be restricted to bishops. He reminds us that even at the Council of Trent there were laypersons, including the Roman Emperor, the King of France and the King of Spain and they had a profound influence.

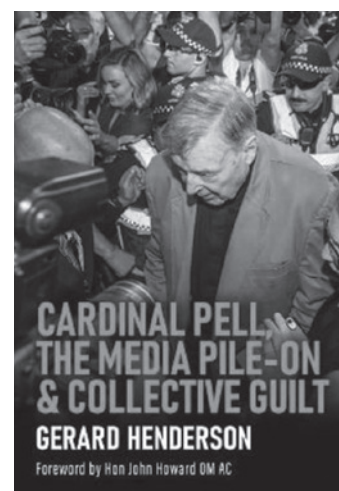
This book I am sure will be welcomed by all who are interested in Church Renewal. ☺

Cardinal Pell and the media

Cardinal Pell, the Media Pile-On & Collective Guilt, Gerard Henderson. Connor Court Publishing, 2021. Reviewed by John Swann.

Gerard Henderson has undertaken a detailed analysis of the proceedings that led to Cardinal Pell’s conviction, his subsequent acquittal and the various accusations made against him. This is certainly a forensic study of all the allegations made, the evidence provided and especially the media coverage of all the various stages of court proceedings etc. It is a long book of 455 pages.

There is very strong criticism of the media coverage, especially by the ABC in several of its programs. Hence the phrase “The Media Pile-on”. The 7.30 Reports were extraordinarily biased and particularly damaging to George Pell’s reputation. No wonder one episode in particular has now been removed from the ABC’s archives.



As Hon John Howard writes in the Foreword: “Henderson has painstakingly addressed not only the substance of the charges finally brought against the Cardinal, but other allegation which fell by the wayside. He has done so in a systematic, convincing fashion.”

A number of media protagonists came in for sharp criticism, especially Barrie Cassidy, Virginia Trioli, Leigh Sales and the 7.30 Report, Sarah Ferguson, David Marr, Paul Barry and of course Louise Milligan and her book “Cardinal – The Rise and Fall of George Pell”. There were others too who were numbered

among the “Antagonist Band”.

The Victorian Police Force came in for sharp but justified criticism for their handling of the court cases. The way Cardinal Pell was treated throughout the court proceeding is a sad reflection on the Victorian legal system.

A number of those who spoke up for the Cardinal are also listed. Fr Frank Brennan, though not friend of the Cardinal, received favourable comment on the many occasions he defended Pell.

There is also a long chapter on the Royal Commission into Institutional

Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, pointing out many of the deficiencies in those proceedings.

Cardinal Pell has long been a controversial figure in Australia society, so I think it is unfortunate that Henderson seems to imply that anyone who did not fully support him was numbered among the antagonists.

Regarding the victim of this sorry saga, Henderson says: “Despite the humiliation of being convicted for pedophilia ... and despite his long incarceration for a crime he did not commit, Cardinal Pell was gracious in victory.” ☺



An Orthodox saint

Man of God, Greece, 2021. Aris Servetalis. Alexandre Petrov, Christos Loulis, Tonia Sotiropoulou, Mickey Rourke. Directed by Yelena Popovic. Reviewed by Peter Malone MSC.

Here is a cinematic invitation to visit the world of the Orthodox Churches. This has been a welcome film for members of the Greek Orthodox Church. It is a Greek production, a Greek cast plus some Russians, and a cameo at the end of the film by Mickey Rourke as a paralysed patient in the hospital. Those not familiar with Orthodox Christianity will be intrigued by differences from their own experiences.

The man of God of the title is a Bishop, Nektarios, who was declared a saint in 1961.

The film opens in Alexandria in 1890, plenty of atmosphere, an introduction to Nektarios as a good man, encountering the poor, talking with Muslims. But, then we enter the world of ecclesiastical politics and this is a pervading issue throughout the film, deep effect on the life of Nektarios himself. Many want him to find a high place in the hierarchy, eventually to become the Patriarch. However, he has been denounced, out-of-favour with the authorities, accused of being a fraud. The scenes of the bishops arguing the case, their reasons for condemnation, are the familiar discussions in all aspects of politics, church and secular.

The action then moves to Athens, Nektarios, labouring under the reported suspicions, unable to be given an appointment for ministry. We see him working with the poor, living the life of the poor. In some ways, he is the image of the traditional saint, absolutely devoted entirely to God, stern, rarely smiling, self-sacrificing. Later, he will be engaged in a discussion about asceticism – and he is the model of the ascetic. He also finds that he was born in a part of Greece now seconded into the Turkish Empire, and his not being recognised as a Greek citizen.

However, we see that there is a providence in his life. He is asked to be the head of the seminary in Athens. Once again, complete dedication, not always approved of by the Board of the seminary, especially one member, Christos, continually antagonistic towards Nektarios (the discussion about asceticism is with him), apologising to seminarians involved in petty disputes because he has provoked anger, determined to do penance, and in another case, apologising again and offering to go on a hunger strike. When the janitor is ill and his job threatened, Nektarios cleans the toilets.

In the early 20th century, there is another election in Alexandria, with



Nektarios travelling, some wanting him elected patriarch – but the malevolent authorities continually undermine him.

In the latter part of his life, he accedes to the wishes of a group of women in Athens, the leader an earnest blind woman, who wish to be nuns. They move to the island of Aegina, building it up, living a poor life, but fulfilling their ambitions to live a community life. Again, church authorities suspicious, civic authorities sending the police to interrogate him, the mother of one of the nuns having gone to accuse him of misbehaviour – but he and the women are vindicated.

All the time, Nektarios has had the support of Kostas, deciding not to go on for priesthood, but a firm supporter of Nektarios, faithful over the years, but pleading with him not to go to the island, ultimately visiting him and concerned about him in his old age. Nektarios’ health declines, and he dies – leading to further veneration and the declaration of his sainthood.

In many ways, severe hagiography and the portrait of an ascetic, maligned, but caring for the poor and oppressed. ☺

Returned to God

JOHN PATRICK ALLMAN

18/08/1925 – 10/12/2021



The 'great life' of Monsignor Allman will echo for generations to come across the Diocese of Sale. A young man from Denison, via Heyfield was ordained on 22 July 1951 at St Mary's Cathedral Sale. It was a day of rejoicing as a local man responded to the call of God in Jesus Christ to become a priest for the Diocese of Sale. He was a man of Gippsland. His deep spiritual life was formed by his sense of his home and its people. He had been formed in faith at the hearth of the family farm in Denison.

How does one measure the influence which Monsignor Allman has had upon the Catholic Diocese of Sale? So many years of his ministry had been centred upon St Mary's Cathedral, and in service of the bishops of Sale who relied upon his administrative skills, vision, business acumen and his gifted pastoral outreach. His love of St Mary's Cathedral and the profound influence which shaped its history and restoration will resound. Above all he was a dedicated pastor to the people of Sale, Traralgon and surrounding districts.

His last Mass was celebrated at his bedside at O'Mara House. He whispered every prayer. He gazed upon the consecrated host and chalice with eyes as though fixed on heaven: A moment when time and eternity were united. He blessed his bishop, clergy, people of Sale invoking the intercession of Our Lady. There was nothing more to do other than await the great victory he had preached through his words and actions the promise of eternal life.

May he rest in peace.

KEVIN CONDON OP

31/01/1932 – 14/06/2021



Kevin Liam Condon was born in Glenroe, Co Limerick, in 1932. He had two brothers, one of whom, Sean, is a diocesan priest in California. His older brother Seamus predeceased Kevin, and his sister Mary is in Ireland.

After completing his secondary schooling at Newbridge College, Co Kildare, Kevin joined the Dominicans in Cork, and was ordained in Tallaght, Dublin in 1956. After studies in Rome, he returned to Ireland only to be posted to Australia shortly afterwards. And he remained in Australia for most of the rest of his priestly life, making this country his home and its people his own.

Kevin will always be remembered as a gifted parish priest, and he served in Dominican parishes in Canberra, Perth, Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne. He made it his business to know every one of his parishioners, carrying out parish visitation every year. Over the years he followed closely any one of the various movements aimed to renew parishes, and the one he eventually adopted was the New Image of Parish, developed by the Vatican II/Fr Lombardi-inspired Movement for a Better World – a program aimed to create communities within the parish.

Aware that one has to work at one's own spiritual development, Kevin took advantage of a number of renewal programs himself, some overseas, always returning encouraged and enthusiastic about his parish work.

He had a special gift with the sick and dying, and would pray with and for each person and their families. He liked to make frequent contact with the diocesan clergy, and relished occasions when they were together.

Kevin loved following all sports but especially horse racing and football. He was an occasional, and according to his own admission a very average golfer, but he loved it just the same. After retiring from parish work, Kevin acted as chaplain to Nazareth House in Ballarat, then came to Nazareth House in Camberwell as a resident where he died on 14 June, 2021.

May he rest in peace.

MEL COTTER OFM

23/09/2024 – 13/01/2022



Mel (John) Cotter lived in the Cooma district before joining the Franciscans in 1949. After ordination in 1956, he spent nearly all his years based at Edgecliff or Waverley in Sydney's east. From 1965 onwards, Mel took up a significant role in the spirit and tradition of St Francis – 'begging for alms'. Having assisted his predecessor on a part-time basis, he now became the primary promoter of the Franciscan Educational Building Maintenance Fund (FEBM), raising funds for the construction and upkeep of the novitiate and formation houses when the Franciscans were at their peak of numbers.

Ever a respectful and attentive gentleman, Mel was conscientious in maintaining pastoral care of the Order's generous benefactors by visiting them in their homes and workplaces in the eastern States. Friendships with generations of benefactors and loyalty on both sides continued long after the earlier desperate need for fundraising had waned. He officially retired from this work at 80 years of age but retained phone and written communication with many benefactors until his death at 97 years of age.

Parish work at Edgecliff (1981-1986) and its proximity to St Vincent's Hospital then led to a ten-year appointment as resident chaplain at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney (1987-1997). Mel often spoke of care for the sick and aged as his favourite ministry. He was highly regarded for his availability to patients and staff, his pastoral manner in the wards and consoling words with patients.

In semi-retirement at Waverley friary from 2005, Mel kept a keen interest in the garden and feeding the local birdlife. Then, in 2017, he was one of the first applicants to be welcomed into the new St Vincent's Care Services facility at nearby Bronte. His funeral in Waverley parish church was attended by friars, friends and benefactors, Sisters of Charity and other connections of St Vincent's Hospital. Those who knew him well spoke of his kindness, interest, discretion, and gentle pastoral care.

May he rest in peace.

OWEN JOHN DOYLE

30/05/1924 – 07/03/2022



At the time of his death, Owen was the oldest Priest in Victoria and we believe the second oldest in Australia. Owen was married and the father of nine children. After his wife died in 1982, he felt the call to become a priest and was accepted by the Bishop of Sandhurst. After studying at St Paul's Seminary, he was ordained on 8 September 1988.

Apart from several initial appointments at Beechworth, Numurkah, St Kilian's and Bendigo (Diocese of Sandhurst), Owen spent 21 years as Parish Priest at St Mary's, Rushworth serving that community and also the communities at Murchison, Cornella and Stanhope.

This he did with great attention to detail, being proof reader to the local *Warangal Times*, as well as to many Diocesan publications. He delighted in regaling people and sometimes congregations with stories of his family – his beloved wife Margot and of his children and multiple grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Owen won over the people of Rushworth Parish, not because he was a good lawn bowler, but because he had a honed wisdom, crafted by 40 plus years in the classroom, positive people skills, a solid prayer life, married experience and a humble but firm approach to parish management. Many said he was the right man at that parish at that time.

A true Magpie supporter, addicted to a cuppa – morning, noon and night, and more than an adequate cook, Owen served with love and distinction. All this topped off by happily reminding people that one of his earlier pastoral duties was a marriage at the Beechworth Gaol, but quickly followed by the joy of being celebrant at the marriage of one of his children.

A long life of 97 years, one who received all seven sacraments, a grand human being, a faithful husband and a devout Priest.

Owen will be sorely missed and we are so grateful to have had this wonderful man in the Diocese of Sandhurst.

May he rest in peace.

PENISIMANI (PENI) FOLAUMOETU'I

26/03/1942 – 25/01/2022

✠ Peni, a former dearly loved Tongan chaplain for the Archdiocese of Sydney was born on Niuafu ou, the northern most island of Tonga. After his time at St Paul's Seminary, Kensington, NSW, Peni was ordained at St Michael's, Lapaha, Tonga in 1978.

In 2002 he was appointed chaplain to the Tongan Catholic Community with the Archdiocese of Sydney, before going on to serve as Administrator of Cronulla and later of Holsworthy (2010) followed by Meadow Bank (2011). Peni was incardinated into the Archdiocese in 2012 and then made Parish Priest of Meadowbank in 2013, before retiring in 2017.

May he rest in peace.

KEVIN MOGG PE

23/04/1932 – 26/02/2022

✠ Kevin served the Church in a very positive and pastorally enriching manner, giving fine example to both his brother priests and the community for over 65 years. The Archdiocese is most grateful for his untiring service to the Church of Melbourne. After his ordination at St Patrick's Cathedral on 22 July 1956, Kevin was appointed temporarily as Assistant Priest at Bentleigh parish and then appointed at West Heidelberg (1957). In 1964, he was appointed Chaplain in the Youth Welfare Division of the Social Welfare Department and then undertook studies in Rome from 1970.

Upon his return to Melbourne, Fr Kevin was appointed as Rector at Corpus Christi College (Glen Waverley and then at Clayton) in 1972. In 1979, Fr Kevin was appointed as Administrator and then Parish Priest of Ringwood North.

In 1996, Father Kevin was appointed Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare. He served as Parish Priest of Mornington (2002) until his retirement in 2007 whereupon he was appointed Pastor Emeritus.

May he rest in peace.

Continued page 42

RETURNED TO GOD

JOSIP VRANJES

29/03/1959 – 20/03/2022

✠ Sadly Josip passed away as a consequence of COVID-19. Born in Rostovo, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Josip was ordained a priest on 29 June 1986 for the Archdiocese of Vrhbosna. After his ordination, he was appointed Chaplain at the parish of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Komusina. However, Josip did not stay there long and on 28 December that year he journeyed to Australia. On 2 February 1987, Josip was granted permission to work in Sunshine as Assistant Priest to Fr Ivica Zlatunic at the Croatian Catholic Centre. Upon Fr Zlatunic's departure from Australia, Josip took over the administration of the Centre.

On 1 February 2018, Josip was appointed Chaplain at the Croatian Catholic Centre – St Anthony, Geelong, where he ministered until his death. The Archdiocese is most grateful for Josip's special service to the Croatian Catholic Community and to the Archdiocese in general. He will be missed by his community and all who loved him. A Pontifical Requiem Mass was celebrated on Wednesday, 30 March 2022 at Holy Family Church, Bell Park, Geelong.

May he rest in peace.

ANTHONY STOTT OFM

28/06/1929 – 18/12/2021



Anthony Stott joined the Franciscans from New Zealand in 1956 after working for several years as a surveyor. After ordination in 1963, he was assigned to Collie and Midland parishes (WA) before he volunteered for the Franciscan mission based in Aitape, north-west Papua New Guinea. There he was a missionary pastor (1969-1979), and occasionally put his surveying skills to work for construction of mission roads and churches. Legend has it that he was once asked to check the actual boundary for a new fence between the Poor Clares Monastery and neighbouring St John of God Brothers house. Tony's survey showed that the Sisters' property included the Brothers' kitchen! An oversight by an earlier surveyor or haphazard builder or just the way things were done in Papua New Guinea? The Sisters enjoyed the story and the Brothers provided tasty treats for the Sisters.

Returning to Australia in 1980, Tony was soon assigned back to where he began in Collie parish in Bunbury Diocese (1984-1989), thence to Riverside West (Tasmania) and Waverley (Sydney). From 1996 until retirement in 2008, Tony took up 'resident priest' roles in Townsville parishes. In Bowen, a religious Sister was the parish leader and, in Mundingburra, a lay person was the parish administrator. It was a new experience for Tony and he managed to adapt gradually to such team ministry in the circumstances of a clergy-poor diocese.

Tony retired to the Franciscan friary in Waverley NSW and was later transferred to St Joseph's Nursing Home, Kensington, when his health declined. There he resided for two years with men and women religious, some of whom had also worked in Papua New Guinea. Tony was a mixture of a gregarious man and one who was happy in his own company. He was observant and curious about the idiosyncrasies and peccadillos of friars and acquaintances. He enjoyed food and wine, music and theatre, the company of others, and speculative discussions about life, church and people.

May he rest in peace.

PAULINO TUI KOLIO

05/12/1954 – 04/02/2022

✠ Paulino was born in Safotu, Samoa and following his training at the Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon, USA, he was ordained in 1990 at St Michael the Archangel Church, Leauva'a, Samoa. Paulino arrived in Sydney in 2003 and worked as Chaplain to the Samoan Catholic Community before being appointed Administrator of the parishes of Bondi Beach (2008) and then Sadlier-Miller (2008). He was incardinated in the Archdiocese of Sydney in 2017 and continued to serve as administrator of Sadlier-Miller until he was appointed Assistant Priest at both Holsworthy and Morebank.

He will be lovingly remembered for his kind and caring ministry and dedication to his parishioners.

May he rest in peace.

Returned to God, but no obit received. We hold them in prayer.

✠ Henry James Byrne, <i>Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn</i>	15/02/2022
✠ Reginald Callinan, <i>Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle</i>	05/04/2022
✠ Felix De Candia OFM Cap, <i>Capuchin Franciscan Friars</i>	07/03/2022
✠ Ian Howells SJ, <i>Jesuits</i>	23/04/2022
✠ Vladimir Novak OFM, <i>Franciscan Friars</i>	28/02/2022
✠ Michael Mulcahy, <i>Archdiocese of Melbourne</i>	26/04/2022
✠ Tadgh Tierney OCD, <i>Carmelite Friars</i>	28/03/2022
✠ Joseph Walsh, <i>Archdiocese of Perth</i>	01/02/2022
✠ John Worthington SM, <i>Marist Fathers</i>	01/04/2022

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The National Council of Priests of Australia (NCP)

The National Council of Priests (NCP) is an Australia-wide organisation of Catholic Clergy (Bishops, Priests & Deacons) and Associate Members (Lay, Religious & Seminarians) who join together to support each other in their ministry in the Church.

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

The Objects and Purposes of the Council

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