

Quarterly magazine of the National Council of Priests of Australia

The Swag

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

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ABOUT THE NCP

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

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Paddy Sykes



Greetings to all readers of our great publication *The Swag*.

The NCP Committee meet at our offices in Geelong, 10-12 February for our annual Face to Face meeting. We welcomed our new members Jamie Collins from Roma (Diocese of Toowoomba) and Lenin Thenamiratham MGL from Greensborough (Archdiocese of Melbourne). We met with Sally and Christine from the office and received reports from Peter Maher (*The Swag*) and Greg Trythall (ACCRAF – Australian Catholic Clergy Remuneration Fund). The NCP finances were presented by our accountant Peter Lenehan, Lenehan & Associates Pty Ltd. It was a busy but very productive few days and the minutes and financial reports will be available on the NCP Members' section of our website in the coming weeks. The password to this closed area of the website will be printed on your 2020 Membership Tax Receipt which will be emailed to you after payment has been received.

While we were meeting in Geelong, Pope Francis issued his Apostolic Exhortation from the Pan Amazonian Synod held in October of 2019 entitled *Querida Amazonia* (Beloved Amazonia). Perhaps the two most controversial issues discussed at the Synod – ordaining mature married men and the diaconate for women – are not addressed in the document. This could be seen as a win for the Cardinal Sarah (and Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI) camp. The secular press will be disappointed not to have these two issues to discuss as they create lively debate!

The document instead emphasises other issues that Pope Francis thinks are important. Pope Francis wants justice for the 33 million people of the region, including 2.5 million indigenous. He wants their lives to be

protected along with their cultures, their lands, the Amazon River and the rainforests against the crime and injustice of the powerful economic interests (national and international) that risk destroying the people and the environment. Pope Francis is clear that we must stand with the people of the Amazonia region and bring them the Good News of Salvation. Both issues are important. Almost half the document is concerned with radical missionary renewal of the Church with a heavy emphasis on inculturation and a greater role for the laity, especially women.

The Plenary 2020 process is beginning to get to the climax of a long period of preparation, discussion and discernment. In many ways, there are similarities between the Amazonian Synod and the Plenary 2020 processes and there are some differences also. The Synod placed the indigenous cultures at the heart of the process. At the Synod 16 different cultural groups were represented. Some Amazonian indigenous groups face extinction due to economic vandalism. Our indigenous Australians face some of the same challenges as the Amazonian cultural groups, but have we put them at the heart of our Plenary 2020 process?

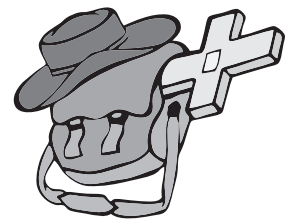
Querida Amazonia calls for a conversion in all of us at a pastoral, cultural, ecological and synodal level. There will be no changes to the way things happen if there is no deep conversion. Remember the mantra of Gerardine Taylor Robinson at the 2018 NCP Convention '*If nothing changes, nothing changes.*' The burning Amazon had made people realise that 'it could not continue to be business as usual.' Archbishop Coleridge made that statement at the conclusion of the Royal Commission into the Institution Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The burning fires around our country over last summer have caused many to state 'it can't continue to be business as usual.' The call to conversion is for all of us – not just the people of the Amazon.

The final Synodal document, that was the platform for the Exhortation, had 120 paragraphs which were all passed by the two thirds majority of the delegates. This included the more controversial topics of ordained mature married clergy and women deacons. What this shows us is that sensitive language can lead people from different perspectives down the same path and it also included topics that previous papacies would not allow to be discussed.

The Plenary 2020 process and the process that has produced *Querida Amazonia* have both been privileged places of discernment and conversion. The long preparation process – the opportunity for many lay men and women to be involved, the freedom to speak openly on controversial topics and the small group discussions – has all been a blessing for those involved and for the process overall. They have both been places of encounter, listening and dialogue with others and the Holy Spirit. Participants have had to be open to others with different opinions and leave behind the safety of their usual arguments.

Querida Amazonia has provided disappointment to some who were hoping that Pope Francis would tackle some of the 'hot button' issues of our church. We can't let that disappointment take away from all the spiritual and missionary depth that Pope Francis has provided us in the Exhortation. As the Church in Australia comes to the conclusion of our Plenary 2020 process, I expect some will be disappointed with some of the outcomes. Let us continue to pray for the Plenary 2020 process that it will be able to achieve the conversion and change in each one of us to be a more radical missionary presence in the Great South Land of the Holy Spirit.

Shalom,
Paddy. ☺



The Swag Winter Edition

**Closing date
for letters and articles
Monday 27 April 2020.**

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

Articles: 700 words

Major Features: 1,400 words.

Conversion and the Plenary Council



Christos Tsiolkas' latest book, *Damascus*, reviewed by Michael Elligate in the current edition of *The Swag*, is not for the faint-hearted – it is brutal and

messy – filled with all the challenges of humanity and revelation in the churches of St Paul. It is a work of the imagination. Tsiolkas says he was scarred and angered by Paul's writings in the Orthodox scripture group at the age of 15. He found the interpretation of the text in that group made him afraid and hate himself as a boy who identified as gay.

Now in his 50's, Tsiolkas has a Damascus moment during his research into his family background and rethinks the character of Paul. What does it mean to have a conversion experience and what is the conversion experience Paul has? Tsiolkas is not converted to his Christian past but he does discover a radically inclusive Paul who seems to him to have been misrepresented to his 15 year-old self. Tsiolkas discovers the meaning of conversion as Paul, Timothy, Lydia and Thomas, the main characters of the book, discover their own deep humanity in the light of a Jesus who won't stand for mediocrity and whose story demands radical hospitality and inclusion.

The book is full of the guilt and shame that is transformed into hope and humanity through a conversation with those who experienced something mystical. It allowed them to break with tradition and redesign the shape of the community that can offer

inclusion, healing and hope to a divided, patriarchal and hierarchical religion and society that left some out while others were generationally privileged.

This left me wondering about the church that this early Christian community spawned. It so quickly became the very thing Jesus life, death and resurrection repudiated to his personal cost and the cost of the early community daring to think and act differently.

A comment made to me about recent editions of *The Swag*, suggested we were not publishing enough on the Plenary Council 2020. My response was we publish what people send us. This edition might help balance previous editions. Apart from Peter Wilkinson's careful and scholarly look at the 1937 Plenary Council, part of his series over many editions, there are numerous articles that comment on hopes and challenges for the 2020 Plenary Council.

There are a number of articles about the need to reform clericalism in the church (Bent, Crafter, Geraghty, Hoban, Hodgens, Kavanagh, Louys, Mickens, Power and Warhurst). Eleanor Flynn et al write powerfully about the participation of women in the light of the Australian Bishops' closure of the Office of Participation of Women and the message this sends in this Plenary Council year.

The challenges facing the council are addressed in articles by Warhurst, Geraghty, Hodgens, Kavanagh, Ryan, Scanlon and Stone. Bede Heather offers thoughts on how ecumenism, a landmark strategy of Vatican II, could enhance the Plenary Council.

Moses' article comparing and contrasting Aboriginal Spirituality and Western

spirituality, an interesting article about the way we image God (Francis) and the place of music in spirituality (O'Dea) offer some thoughtful reflections.

As we move toward the Plenary Council, let's hope the voice of the people of God is heard. Vast resources, both institutional and through the generosity of many who have made submissions, have been spent on this project. It will be a shame and a renunciation of the tradition of Paul, Lydia, Timothy and Thomas if those resources are used to prop up an already failed agenda, instead of offering a chance to begin a conversation about a daring road ahead that is radically inclusive, just, compassionate and loving.

Let's be guided by the daring acts of the early church community that was not bound by the past but galvanised by the possibility that a new world is possible now that Jesus has broken the prison of repeating past practices and embracing strategies that favour and value the views of those pushed to the peripheries.

We might be inspired by Isaiah (43:19): *I am about to do a new thing* and Pope Francis' reminder that *the goodness of God has no limits and discriminates against no one. Because of this, the banquet of the Lord's gifts is universal, for everyone... Everyone is given the possibility of responding to his invitation, to his call; no one has the right to feel themselves privileged or (to have) an exclusive claim. [We can overcome] comfortably placing ourselves at the centre, like the chief priests and the Pharisees. [Instead, we learn to place ourselves] on the peripheries, recognizing that also those on the margins are the object of God's generosity. (Sunday Angelus Address, The Vatican, Oct 12, 2014).* ☪

NCP MEMBERSHIPS 2020

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

Membership renewals for 2020 were mailed at the end of February and are due before Easter. Perhaps you haven't been a member for some time – maybe you have never been a member ... 2020 is the time for you to come on board.

We warmly invite you to join us!

Accountable, inclusive and transparent: A better church for Australia

JOHN WARHURST

John Warhurst, Chair of Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, presented this speech at a forum at the Commercial Club, Wagga Wagga on October 24, 2019. It presents an overview of the possibilities for church renewal in Australia.

Introduction

We can do much better and we must do much better by becoming more accountable, inclusive and transparent – at all levels of the church – parish, diocesan, national and ultimately international.

This is not a radical conclusion to reach because it is shared by a wide range of faithful Catholics in Australia (shown by the official summary of submissions to PC2020), by what we are told by our church leaders including Popes Benedict and Francis and Archbishop Mark Coleridge, by our own Truth Justice and Healing Council, and by an expert outside body, with a distinguished Catholic representative, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I can't put it any clearer or stronger than the words I will quote to you shortly. Nevertheless, it is a position which unfortunately still faces plenty of opposition and apathy within the church.

I should say by the way that it's no good to say that many other institutions are similarly in need of reform. That's true, but our own Catholic Church is our focus. We are interested in the state of the church itself.

In saying this I am speaking from my position as chair of Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, formed in April 2017 to be a ginger group inside and a lobby group outside of faithful Catholics committed to reform. Our vision is for a church in which the talents, gifts and wisdom of all Catholics, lay, religious and ordained priests and bishops, contribute to all levels of participation and decision-making as spelled out in Canon Law and encouraged by Pope Francis.

What is the problem?

We are a shrinking church which has lost touch with our younger generations and older faithful Catholics in staggering numbers. We frequently neglect the talents and leadership abilities of our laity, especially our lay women. We have failed to live up to our own standards laid down by Vatican II in governance and culture.

We have been found guilty of widespread of abuse of morality and power by a Royal

Commission and by numerous courts.

We have failed to be inclusive, transparent and accountable to our own people and to the Australian people.

We are a powerful source of good in Australian society, but we must realise that we have not lived up to the privileged position that that society has accorded us.

We have a lot to learn about principled organisational behaviour from society at large. We are lagging, not leading.

Principles and Support for Church Renewal

The quotations I am about to share are encouraging for those of us who are attentive to church renewal. Some are from well-known figures, others less so, but they are all important. They range from official recognition that we are in an era of change in which impediments and crises can be admitted to the fact that the urgency and necessity of lay co-leadership must be accepted. They outline what must be done, participation must be the core principle.

Vatican II: *Ours is a new age of history with profound and rapid changes... we are entitled then to speak of a real social and cultural transformation whose repercussions are felt at the religious level also.* (December 1965, *Gaudium at Spes*).

Pope Benedict: *The laity should not be considered as collaborators with the clergy, but as the people truly co-responsible for the life of the church.* (quoted by Noel Connolly).

Pope Francis: *It is impossible to think of a conversion of our activity as a Church that does not include the active participation of all the members of God's People. ... Without the active participation of all the Church's members, everything being done to uproot the culture of abuse in our communities will not be successful in generating the necessary dynamics for sound and realistic change.* (August 2018, *Letter to the People of God*)

Canon Law: *The Christian faithful have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful* (Canon 212.3)

Archbishop Mark Coleridge (President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference): *The crisis in the church can't be met by business as usual. "It is hard to believe that the Church's response would have been so poor had lay people been involved from the start in shaping a response.*

The Royal Commission: *The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should conduct a national review of the governance and management structures of dioceses and parishes, including in relation to issues of transparency, accountability, consultation and participation of lay men and women. This review should draw from the approaches to governance of Catholic health, community services and education agencies.* (Final Report, R. 67).

Robert Fitzgerald (Royal Commissioner): *Current Church governance, and some of the canons that underpin it, are based (intentionally or unintentionally) on fear of the non-ordained, especially women, a fear of outside influence (even where that is good), an arrogant assertion of the position of the Church in the world, and maintaining the unique privilege of an ordained class. It too often dismisses open, transparent and accountable approaches in favour of secrecy, complexity and legalistic approaches. It shuns genuine participation. And there are strong forces within the Church that seek the status quo.* (2019, *Getting Back on Mission*).

Elizabeth Proust, (Deputy Chair, Truth Justice and Healing Council): *"It is clear from the Royal Commission's findings that the dysfunctional governance of the Church aggravated the harm done by sexual abuse. The need for reform in this area is long overdue and the delay and obfuscation in responding to the Royal Commission on this topic, and on many others, will only worsen the alienation felt by the people of the Church, and continue to make the Church an irrelevance in our society"* (2018, Final Report).

Shane Dwyer, (Outgoing CEO, The National Centre for Evangelisation and the Catholic Enquiry Centre): *Many of our problems are of our own making, and any authentic spiritual journey is going to regularly encounter the challenge to get back to what's essential and to scrape off the accretions that inevitably attach themselves as we make our way. The hull of a ship as old as ours will always need to be scraped clean of barnacles. The pope has identified clericalism as one such barnacle. Another is the desire to*

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put rules above people. They tend to go hand in hand. The prioritising of rules over people frequently involves the prioritising of an ordained elite over the baptised majority.” (October 2019, *Catholic Voice*).

Pauline Connelly (Chancellor, Archdiocese of Adelaide): *I want to see a governance structure where the laity have a legitimate governance role. A workable structure, an accountable structure, a transparent structure, an open structure.* (March 2019, St Ignatius Parish, Norwood, Lenten Address).

Fr Noel Connolly SSC (PC2020 Facilitation Team Member): *But unfortunately because of the Royal Commission, clericalism, the laity's sense of being excluded from ministry and governance and a growing feeling of distrust in institutions across society we have now reached a serious level of distrust in the Church. In a few decades we have moved from uncritical respect to deep criticism.”* (November/December 2018, *The Far East*).

Final Report on Submissions to the Plenary Council 2020: *The structure of church life drew a great deal of attention with respondents discussing issues about leadership and governance. Amidst it all, there was a passionate desire expressed for a greater involvement of the laity at all levels”* (2019, Pastoral Research Office, ACBC).

What needs to be done and how?

We have now reached the “how” stage. What needs to be done is both general and specific. The general includes adoption of accepted civic and corporate standards in our governance, transparency and participation in the appointment of bishops, the general introduction by bishops and priests of Diocesan Pastoral Councils and Parish Pastoral Councils.

It also requires greater financial accountability at all levels of the church, co-responsibility of laity and clergy, greater transparency in all its forms at all levels, wider consultation between leaders and those affected over episcopal and priestly appointments, media freedom within the church and horizontal communication rather than top down communication within the church, continued debate about the PC2020's composition and leadership, training in synodal leadership for all of the People of God so that cultural practices not just official structures change, etc.

A practical Example: Pastoral Councils

An example of specific renewal is the matter of parish pastoral councils, which are not mandated in canon law (though parish finance councils are), and diocesan pastoral councils, which are mandated but have a miserable history of introduction and operation in Australia in clear breach of canon law.

Parish pastoral councils are the building blocks for lay participation. They should be mandated and act in a spirit of co-responsibility in advising parish priests on all matters. Diocesan pastoral councils to advise bishops should bring parish pastoral councils together through their representatives and carry out their business in a spirit of co-responsibility.

What is the Church doing?

There is a lot going on in the church. Firstly, there are church responses related to the Royal Commission, child safety and

implement the 100+ recommendations made to the church by the Royal Commission.

The Governance Review Panel Team is the largely-lay sub-committee of IAG, of which I am a member, created late last year to implement Recommendation 67 of the Royal Commission regarding a review of culture and governance in the church. Its stated purpose is: *To review the governance and management structures of the Church and make recommendations of reform to ensure that the contemporary standards of good governance are mandatory elements of the Church in Australia at all levels. The governance and management of dioceses and parishes adopted by Church leaders must focus on an unending commitment to protect the most vulnerable and rebuild trust and credibility among the Catholic and broader community.”* Its March 2020 report will be both a general resource for the church and an input into the preparation for PC2020.

Individual Parishes and Dioceses across the country are taking some leads in co-responsibility and lay participation. One example are the various diocesan assemblies which are now belatedly taking place.

There is no need to wait. Those that are ahead of the pack should be recognised and congratulated and used as models of best practice.

Plenary Council 2020 preparations have been underway for more than 18 months and will culminate in two sessions in October 2020 in Adelaide and

May 2021. It is a massive exercise in public consultation which like most such exercises is flawed, but it still provides opportunities for lay involvement. These are patchy opportunities because that is the fragmented nature of the Australian church. It all depends on your parish and diocesan location. My opinion also is that the whole process has been too tightly controlled from the centre and more could have been done, including publishing the 17,500 submissions, to facilitate debate and discussion within the church.

Where to from here?

Get informed and involved, be sceptical, support those clergy and bishops in favour of renewal, do things locally rather than wait for diocesan, national (Plenary Council 2020-21 and others) or international developments. Be ready for some opposition and disinterest; but take heart that you have wide-spread support. ☞



governance reform. Secondly there are a few shining examples of dioceses and parishes moving independently towards renewal. Thirdly there is the Plenary Council scheduled for 2020 and 2021.

Participation in the National Redress scheme providing financial compensation up to \$150,000 pp for thousands of survivors and victims of child sexual abuse, which began operations in July 2018. This depends on hundreds of Catholic organisations signing up to the scheme. Most will have done so by the designated date of July 2020.

Catholic Professional Standards Limited is the independent body tasked to ensure that all Catholic institutions, especially parishes and dioceses, have child safe systems in place.

The Implementation Advisory Group is the largely-lay body created in 2018 tasked to

The Church must learn to discern charisms for service – uprooting clericalism

ROBERT MICKENS

Robert Mickens, editor of *La Croix International* writes about how a new approach to what service looks like, might help in the reform of a clericalist church. Reprinted with permission from *La Croix International* (8 November, 2019).



Catholics, particularly those in the clerical caste, tend to be pretty lousy at group discernment – especially when it comes to identifying those in the community who possess the unique spiritual gifts ordered to the various ministries of service in the Church.

There is lack of true discernment when it comes to charisms.

The ordained priesthood (presbyterate) is a good example. Generally, the process begins through the initiative of a male adult who believes (or his mother believes) that God is calling him to be a priest. The man will then seek to affiliate with a diocese or join a religious order.

If he can tie his own shoelaces and is not a convicted felon, he'll likely pass his initial audition. Unfortunately, that's no joke.

The most important thing in order to get to the next stage is to manifest the will to be celibate and convince the Church authorities that he does not 'practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called 'gay culture.'" If all that checks out, our man with the vocation will likely have more interviews, undergo psychological testing and be subjected to other background checks.

Jumping through hoops.

If there are no glaring signs of mental illness or personality disorders he will then

be admitted to a seminary or novitiate program. At this point, the standard trope is that the seminarian is discerning and the diocese or religious order is discerning, as well.

Thus begins a series of 'hoops' the candidate for priesthood will be expected to jump through in order to make it to ordination. He will learn that very special and necessary skill – creativity with the truth.

There are elaborate programs of priestly formation that are drawn up by national episcopal conferences. They must receive the Vatican's seal of approval before being implemented.

The daily regime differs somewhat from one seminary to another. Every house of formation has its own variation of a dress code, liturgical schedule and style, types of pastoral experience, curfew (or not) and a number of rules and regulations.

Then after three or four years of theological studies the candidate must face his first major hurdle. Will the seminary staff recommend him to be ordained to the transitional diaconate? Occasionally, one or two don't make the cut. But that is rare.

The second and final hurdle is ordination to the presbyterate. The seminary rector and his staff can advise a bishop not to ordain a man for reasons they deem to be serious.

But, again, and for a variety of reasons, there are few people who are blocked. Usually a questionable candidate has been weeded out already in the first couple of years. If he is not, it is because he enjoys the favour of his bishop.

Where is the voice of the community?

During the Rite of Ordination a priest presents the candidates to the bishop. 'Most Reverend Father, holy mother Church asks you to ordain these, our brothers, to the responsibility of the priesthood,' he says. 'Do you know them to be worthy?' the bishop asks. And the priest responds: 'After inquiry among the Christian people and upon the recommendation of those responsible, I testify that they have been found worthy.'

How, exactly, have the 'Christian people' been questioned or involved in the process of finding these men worthy? And which people – their parents, their friends?

Every diocese and house of formation is unique, of course. Some involve the laity in the task of reviewing applicants for seminary or preparing them for ministry. But the origins of a man's path to the priesthood – or at least the exploration of it – is mostly of that man's own initiative.

Obviously, there are people – especially priests – who encourage certain men (usually young men) to consider the priesthood. Hopefully, they see qualities in these men that would make them good presbyters. But, again, this is the initiative of an individual.

What if an entire community – say, a parish – were able to do something similar? Rather than waiting for someone to come forward on his own initiative, what if the community engaged in prayerful discernment to identify those in their own midst who have the charisms of service?

The system of seminary selection and formation is broken. The truth is that the Church's system of selecting and preparing presbyters is seriously flawed.

We've known this for a very long time. And in light of the clergy sex abuse crisis, which has been like an ever-replenishing Pandora's box of horrors, the bishops have been emphatic that they have improved the screening of candidates and tightened standards of well-rounded formation. But the system is still not working.

Just in the past several weeks, two priests from archdioceses in the United States and England were charged with sexual abuse of minors. One of them was ordained five years ago and the other only four. The Englishman has been sentenced to four years and three months in prison. Both will likely be booted from the priesthood.

How did they ever make it to ordination? Who discerned they had a vocation to the priesthood? Was the community involved in this decision in any meaningful way?

The recurrence of sexual abuse – even if it involves only a small percentage of the clergy – is just one proof that the system of selection and formation remains inadequate.

There are other indicators, as well. Among them are pathologies that stem from deep-seated tendencies – not only towards

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homosexuality, but also and especially towards clericalism; even when the candidate for Holy Orders tries to deny or hide them.

Identifying the variety of gifts

Synodality could lead to communal discernment of the charisms. Pope Francis is trying to implement synodality at every level of the Church. And why should that be any different for identifying the best candidates to serve the community in various ministries and positions of leadership.

But rather than focus on the ministries or the leadership roles themselves, the work of a community engaged in group discernment might aim to do something even more profound. It would seek, through the help of the Holy Spirit, to identify those persons who have been graced by the same Spirit with charisms proper to the various ministries.

‘There are many different gifts, but it is always the same Spirit,’ St. Paul tells the Christian community in Corinth. ‘There are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord... The particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each one is to be used for the general good’ (cf. 1 Corinthians 12).

Paul tells the Romans: ‘*Since the gifts that we have differ according to the grace that was given to each of us: if it is a gift of prophecy, we should prophesy as much as our faith tells us; if it is a gift of practical service, let us devote ourselves to serving; if it is teaching, to teaching; if it is encouraging, to encouraging. When you give, you should give generously from the heart; if you are put in charge, you must be conscientious; if you do works of mercy, let it be because you enjoy doing them.*’ (cf. Romans 12).

Bishops confirm what the community has discerned. In a synodal Church the entire body of believers would engage in communal discernment to identify those with specific gifts. The pastors (bishops) would then ratify and ‘ordain’ these people to exercise their charisms – God’s gifts – for the general good.

‘*To some, his ‘gift’ was that they should be apostles; to some prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; to knit God’s holy people together for the work of service to build up the Body of Christ.*’ (Cf. Ephesians 4)

As it is now the presbyters and the bishops are expected to fulfill almost all the tasks. But there are currently non-ordained people – men and women, celibate and

married – who clearly have the charisms of preaching, presiding over prayer, being in charge, healing and so forth.

However, the authorities of the Church, the bishops, rarely allow these people to officially share these charisms with the rest of the community because, for centuries, they have been reserved to the ordained.

The Second Vatican Council’s dogmatic constitution on the Church says the bishops ‘*know that they were not ordained by Christ to take upon themselves alone the entire salvific mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary, they understand that it is their noble duty to shepherd the faithful and to recognize their ministries and charisms, so that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one mind.*’ (Lumen Gentium, 30).

But the bishops cannot and must not take upon themselves alone the task of recognizing the ministries and charisms of the faithful, either. That is something for the entire Church.

As Pope Francis told the crowd in St. Peter’s Square right after his election: ‘We take up this journey, bishop and people.’ It is a journey that must be made together. ☩



Fourth Plenary Council of Australia & New Zealand, 4-12 September 1937

PETER WILKINSON

This is Part 1 of the seventh in the series of articles looking at the particular councils of the Catholic Church in Australia held between 1844 and 1937 by Peter J Wilkinson. It examines the background and factors leading to the Fourth Plenary Council of Australia & New Zealand held in Sydney in September 1937, which brought together all the particular churches of both nations for the second time. Part 2 will appear in the Winter edition of *The Swag*.

After the Australian Plenary Council in 1905, only four particular (provincial and plenary) councils were convened in the English-speaking mission territories under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide (‘Propaganda’): the Provincial Councils of Tuam and Cashel in Ireland held in 1907, the Provincial Council of Melbourne in 1907, and the 4th Plenary Council of Australia and New Zealand in 1937.

Developments in church governance, 1905-1937

Fewer councils were held in the English-speaking mission territories in this period as Pope Pius X (1903-1914) had

announced in his 1908 Constitution Sapiienti Consilio that the hierarchies of Great Britain, Canada, and the United States were ‘established’ and the churches there were no longer considered ‘mission territories’. Australia and New Zealand, however, were to remain mission territories under the jurisdiction of Propaganda. The Church in Australia remained a ‘mission territory’ until 1976. The Church in New Zealand is still (2019) a designated mission territory.

In 1911, Cardinal Patrick Moran died, and was succeeded by his coadjutor, Archbishop Michael Kelly (1911-40). Moran had convened three plenary councils in 1885, 1895 and 1905, been Australia’s most

powerful Catholic prelate, and for 27 years had functioned as the Holy See’s *de facto* apostolic delegate for Australia and New Zealand.

The 1905 Plenary Council had proposed that the Archdiocese of Sydney be made the ‘primatial’ see of the Catholic Church in Australia. However, the Holy See rejected the idea, with other plans in mind. It wanted an official apostolic delegate on the ground, to settle disputes and play an active role in the selection of bishops and, in 1914, Pius X established an Apostolic Delegation of Australasia with Archbishop Bonaventura Cerretti (1914-17) the first appointment.

Pius X was succeeded by Benedict XV (1914-1922) who, in 1917, promulgated the new *Code of Canon Law*. He also issued the 1919 landmark Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, setting a new course for missionary activity in the 20th century. Benedict wanted more indigenous or locally-born clergy and bishops in all mission territories, including Australia.

Cerretti was replaced by Archbishop Bartolomeo Cattaneo (1917-33), who saw his principal task as implementing the new *Code of Canon Law* throughout Australasia. Moran had ceased convening meetings of the metropolitan bishops in 1894, and plenary meetings of all the bishops in 1897. Cattaneo immediately convened three meetings of the Australian and New Zealand metropolitan bishops in 1918 and 1919, set their agendas, and insisted on presiding at each. All were focused on a single question: which set of laws had precedence – those of the previous plenary councils or those of the *Code of Canon Law*? For Cattaneo the answer was clear – those of the *Code*. This view caused tensions, but Archbishop Kelly and his fellow bishops, rather than take a firm stand, hesitated and procrastinated, with serious consequences for the next plenary council.

Demographic and ecclesiastical developments, 1905-1937

In 1905, Catholics in Australia numbered 824,363 and constituted 20.4 per cent of the total population of 4,032,977. By 1937, though Catholics had increased by 53 per cent to 1,261,220, their growth had not kept pace with the general population and, as a result, their percentage of the 6,871,492 total had fallen to 18.4 per cent (Table 1).

By 1937, parishes (only designated as ‘parishes’ from 1928) had increased by 358 (+85%), priest numbers had more than doubled to 1,911 (+108%), as had those of religious sisters (+112%) and religious brothers (+118%); there were 13 more seminaries (+325%) and 478 more seminarians (+646%); and an additional 435 Catholic schools (+ 41%), and 88,162 students enrolled (+83%).

The new ecclesiastical Province of Perth was established in 1913 with Perth as the Metropolitan See, and 3 new dioceses had been erected: Wagga Wagga in 1917, Toowoomba in 1929, and Townsville in 1930. Australia now had 5 ecclesiastical provinces, with 6 archdioceses, 16 dioceses, 1 abbacy nullius, and 2 vicariates apostolic (Table 2).

Seminary developments, 1905-1937

In 1905 St Patrick’s College, Manly, was the sole seminary in Australia preparing candidates for the diocesan priesthood. Operating since 1889, it was educating 54 seminarians from all dioceses (including those in New Zealand) and 71 candidates, mostly Australian-born, had been ordained. Several religious congregations also had formation houses in 1905: the

Table 1: Changes in Catholic population, religious personnel, parishes, seminaries, Catholic schools and students: 1905-1937

	1905	1937	Change 1905-1937
Catholic Population	824,363	1,261,220	+ 436,857 (+53%)
Districts (akin to parishes)	421	779	+ 358 (+85%)
Priests	921	1,911	+ 990 (+108%)
Seminaries (diocesan & religious)	4	17	+ 13 (+325%)
Seminarians (diocesan & religious)	74	552	+ 478 (+646%)
Religious Sisters	4,645	9,828	+ 5183 (+112%)
Religious Brothers	429	934	+ 505 (+118%)
Catholic schools (P & S)	1,052	1,487	+435 (+41%)
Students in Catholic schools	105,824	193,986	+ 88,162 (+83%)

Source: Official Catholics directories, various years.

Benedictines at New Norcia in WA (novitiate in 1904); the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in NSW (scholasticate in 1897, novitiate and apostolic school in 1904); the Passionists in NSW (novitiate in 1890) and SA (scholasticate in 1896); and the Jesuits in NSW (novitiate in 1890). The 1905 Council legislated to establish “a foreign missionary college” to train Australian priests for missions in the Philippines, China and Japan (Decree 18), and St Columba’s Seminary in Springwood was opened in 1910.



St Columba’s Seminary, Springwood, NSW

Archbishop Kelly convened two plenary meetings of the Australian bishops in 1912 and 1913, and their priority concerns were two: the ‘nationalisation’ of the Manly seminary, and obtaining annual reports on the progress of their own seminarians.

For the first concern, Melbourne’s Coadjutor Archbishop Daniel Mannix had a proposal: that Sydney’s Manly and Springwood seminaries be administered by the Bishops of Australia; that the Manly seminary become the Australian National Seminary with the Catholic Hierarchy of Australia as the Governing Board; that both properties be vested in Trustees nominated by the Sydney Archbishop; and that any profits be returned to the Board for seminary use. Most bishops favoured the proposal, but some senior Sydney priests balked at the transfer of ownership and control of the assets.

In 1914, Australian-born Manly professor

Terence McGuire criticised the bishops for continuing to prioritize the importation of overseas-born (mainly Irish) priests, and claimed they were damaging an Australian priesthood. He called on them to rely on Australian-born priests and to establish an ‘Australian national seminary and Catholic University of United Australia’, possibly at Manly. Shortly after, the Manly *alumni* established the Manly Union with the aim of nationalising the Manly seminary and making it ‘the great ecclesiastical University of the Commonwealth’. They told the bishops that if they supported the Union and its aim, the priests would give their financial support and cooperation. But World War I intervened and the issue to be dropped.

The 1917 *Code of Canon Law* defined seminaries as “ecclesiastical corporations and non-collegiate moral persons, with the right to own and administer property for the purpose of training young men for the priesthood”. It wanted to keep young boys (adolescents) showing signs of a vocation from “the contagion of the world” (c. 1353), and emphasised the need for every diocese, or cluster of dioceses, to have a diocesan or inter-diocesan seminary, and preferably both a minor and major seminary (c. 1354).

Benedict XV’s *Maximum Illud* called for all missionary activity to break with the existing Eurocentric and colonialist mentality, move to a greater appreciation of cultural differences, and separate missionary activity from political alliances. The promotion of colonialism through religion had to cease, for the Catholic missionary is “an ambassador of Christ, not a messenger of his own nation”. He wanted the local churches to become independent of foreign missionaries, and have their own indigenous (locally-born) priests and bishops.

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FEATURES

Table 2: Demographic and ecclesiastical data for the Catholic Church in Australia, 1937

State/ Territory	Total Population	Catholic Population	Province: Archdiocese/ Diocese/Abbay/ Vicariate Apostolic	Year Est.	Parishes ¹ /Mission Centres	Priests (Dioc. /Relig.)	Relig. Sisters	Relig. Bros.	Catholic Schools (Primary/ Second)	Catholic Students
			Province of Sydney	1842						
NSW	2,711,543	304,187 38,343 51,416 23,000 35,928 30,570 29,685 <u>25,000</u> 538,129	Sydney (AD) Maitland (D) Goulburn (D) Armidale (D) Bathurst (D) Lismore (D) Wilcannia (D) Wagga Wagga (D)	1842 1847 1862 1862 1865 1887 1887 1917	118 29 36 22 21 24 23 <u>20</u> 293	267/165 63/8 67/15 35/0 53/8 42/8 32/0 <u>36/0</u> 595/204	2,031 440 410 210 353 269 218 <u>200</u> 4,131	299 22 31 12 31 12 11 <u>11</u> 416	179/43 47/9 56/17 32/11 41/26 37/15 27/19 <u>26/4</u> 445/144	48,272 7,848 6,741 3,783 6,027 4,936 3,942 <u>4,230</u> 85,779
ACT	11,043									
			Province of Melbourne	1874						
VIC	1,856,991	250,000 55,412 35,833 <u>13,208</u> 354,453	Melbourne (AD) Ballarat (D) Sandhurst (D) Sale (D)	1847 1874 1874 1887	104 38 29 13 184	187/137 90/21 48/9 <u>23/0</u> 348/167	1,563 398 250 89 2,300	190 20 8 6 224	220/57 47/10 29/18 13/3 309/88	40,083 6,752 5,150 <u>1,272</u> 53,257
TAS	239,570	33,106	Hobart (AD)	1842	25	36/4	187	15	26/8	3,651
			Prov. of Brisbane	1887						
QLD	994,580	121,000 23,500 11,000 22,500 <u>20,366</u> 198,366	Brisbane (AD) Rockhampton (D) Cooktown (VA) Toowoomba (D) Townsville (D)	1859 1882 1887 1929 1930	75 26 10 19 <u>19</u> 150	120/27 41/5 0/17 38/12 <u>29/3</u> 228/64	875 257 91 168 <u>143</u> 1,534	67 18 0 22 <u>15</u> 122	61/67 34/7 13/4 17/7 <u>21/9</u> 146/94	14,500 4,805 1,839 4,173 <u>3,664</u> 29,981
			Prov. of Adelaide	1887						
SA	591,797	52,339 11,127	Adelaide (AD) Port Augusta (D)	1842 1887	42 15	59/31 23/0	558 62	47 0	56/26 15/2	7,516 1,122
NT	5426	<u>1500</u> ² 64,966	Victoria & Palmerston (D)	1847	<u>5</u> 622	<u>0/6</u> 82/37	<u>9</u> 629	<u>5</u> 52	<u>0/0</u> 71/28	<u>0</u> 8,638
			Province of Perth	1913						
WA	460,542	62,000 2,600 6,500 <u>1,100</u> ³ 72,200	Perth (AD) Geraldton (D) New Norcia (AN) Kimberley (VA)	1845 1898 1867 1887	42 9 10 <u>43</u> 65	78/16 1/32 11/1 <u>0/7</u> 90/56	877 34 112 <u>24</u> 1,047	46 29 20 <u>10</u> 105	60/27 9/10 15/4 <u>3/0</u> 87/41	10,856 500 1,115 <u>209</u> 12,680
Australia TOTAL	6,871,492	1,261,220 (= 18.4% of the total population)	5 Provinces 6 Archdioceses 16 Dioceses 1 Abbacy Nullius 2 Vicariates Apostolic		779	1379/532 Total (all): 1,911	9,828	934	1,084/ 403 Total (all) : 1,487	193,986

Notes: 1. The term 'district' was replaced in the *Official Directory* by 'parish' in 1928. 2. The Summary of Statistics in the 1938 *Directory* does not give any data for the Diocese of Victoria and Palmerston, but the 1939 *Directory* does provide data for 'Darwin'. 3. The Summary of Statistics in the 1938 *Directory* gives data for the VA of Kimberley in a special table for 'Vicariates (Missions to Aboriginals in Australia and Oceania)'. Parishes are listed as 'Mission Centres'. 4. This is the European population only. Full-blooded Aboriginal people were not included in the official Australian Census until 1967.

Key to this was Benedict's insistence on the formation of locally-born clergy who would "one day be able to take up the spiritual leadership of their people". His successor, Pius XI (1922-1939), followed up with the appointment of numerous indigenous bishops in India (1923), China (1926), Japan (1927), Indochina (1937) and Africa (1937). In Australia, where by 1919 only 4 Australian-born priests had been appointed bishops, and then only to the smallest rural dioceses, change was slow, as there was much resistance.

Benedict was also critical of mission churches producing local clergy of inferior quality, insufficient local priests for spiritual guidance, and few local bishops for governance. He abhorred feeble and faulty formation programs and insisted on more and better seminaries to develop local clergy.

After WWI, discussions on Mannix's 1913 proposals resumed, but soon floundered on a range of issues. The Holy See had offered the Australian bishops a building in Rome to serve as an Australian College (seminary), but they rejected it. By 1921, the bishops were deadlocked on the seminary issue and, unable to resolve it, they sought a decision from Rome. In 1922 Propaganda instructed them to set aside the 'national seminary' proposal, and for all the dioceses to 'make provision for the establishment, as soon as possible, of provincial and diocesan seminaries'.

In 1923 a Victorian provincial seminary, Corpus Christi College, was opened at Werribee, and by 1937 a total of 3 diocesan seminaries and 19 religious houses for clerical formation were operating, with a total of 552 major seminarians.

Selection of bishops, 1905-1937

The 1885 Plenary Council had legislated that the 'senior priests' – understood as diocesan consultants and irremovable rectors – of each diocese had the right, whenever a new bishop or coadjutor bishop was required, to gather, consult, and propose the names of the best three candidates (*ternus*) and present them to the bishops of the province, who would then forward the *ternus* to the Holy See with their own comments or, if opposed to some names, add or substitute their own recommendations with their stated reasons. This process was only slightly amended by the 1895 Plenary Council.

Up to 1905 only one Australian-born priest, Patrick Dwyer, had been selected for Episcopal ordination. From 1905 to 1937 another ten were selected and ordained, the most significant being the new archbishop of Hobart, Justin Simonds. He had been

the unanimous choice of the senior priests of Hobart and took office just four months before the 1937 Council.

Following *Maximum Illud*, the Holy See wanted more locally-born bishops in Australia. To achieve this, it appointed the tough and abrasive Archbishop Giovanni Panico (1935-48) as Apostolic Delegate, who immediately set about diluting the influence of the six Irish archbishops, especially the powerful troika of Mannix (Melbourne), Duhig (Brisbane) and Killian (Adelaide). Panico executed his plan with three swift moves: Kelly's long-standing coadjutor, Michael Sheehan, was 'invited' to resign and retire; Australian-born Bishop Norman Gilroy was appointed Kelly's coadjutor with right of succession; and John Lonergan, Mannix's vicar-general and trusted deputy, was appointed to the vacant see of Port Augusta. He died before Episcopal ordination.

The Holy See also had a plan to radically change the system for selecting candidates for Episcopal appointment. In the 1937 Council's *schema*, Propaganda had drafted legislation to: 1) further limit the number of priests to be consulted for the *ternus*, and then only 'singly' under a grave obligation to secrecy, and only before the 2-yearly meeting of the bishops; 2) allow the bishops to draw up names only every second year at their plenary meetings and not, as before, when a new bishop or coadjutor was needed; and 3) have all lists of names sent first to the Apostolic Delegate. The bishops were told that the changes were 'the explicit mind of the Holy See', and the sole concession they could get was to have the phrase: "the bishops will take care that ... they will send to the Apostolic Delegate only the names of the most suitable candidates" inserted in the decree. It was a last ditch attempt to ensure that their *terna* might get preference over the *terna* of the Delegate.

Evangelization of Aboriginal peoples, 1905-1937

The 1905 Plenary Council had received reports on the missions to the Aborigines in Beagle Bay (WA), New Norcia (WA) and the Northern Territory and had approved an offer from the New Norcia Benedictines to establish a priory in the Kimberley vicariate. It had also considered Geraldton Bishop Kelly's request to be relieved of the administration of the Diocese of Victoria and Palmerston (NT), and repeated all the earlier decrees on Aboriginal evangelization.

Up to 1937 very little direct effort had been made by the Irish bishops and priests

to evangelize Australia's indigenous peoples. The exceptions were Bishop Matthew Gibney and Fr John Creagh CSsR. Similarly, few Irish female religious congregations had established dedicated ministries to Australia's indigenous peoples, with the notable exception of the Irish Sisters of St John of God in the Kimberley and the Irish Sisters of Mercy at Mackay (QLD).

By 1931 the Communist media were declaring Australia's Aborigines 'an oppressed class', and missionaries as 'agents of colonial oppression'. They demanded the 'liquidation of all missions and so-called homes for Aborigines, as these are part of the weapons being used to exterminate the Aboriginal race by segregating the sexes and sending the young girls into slavery' (*Workers' Weekly*, 24 September 1931).

Beagle Bay (WA) Pallotine mission

In 1905 the German Pallotine mission at Beagle Bay was in crisis. The superior lacked support from his congregational Brothers, and more Pallotines were desperately needed. A new superior removed the trouble-making Brothers in 1906 and gathered sufficient mission staff to retain the land lease.

In 1907 nine Irish Sisters of St John of God arrived at Beagle Bay and the WA Government began sending Aboriginal girls to the mission. By 1909 there were 94 girls in care. When five more sisters arrived, a convent was opened in Broome.

With the promulgation of the WA *Aborigines Act, 1905*, the Chief Protector became the legal guardian of every Aboriginal and half-caste child under 16 years of age, and the WA Government looked to the church missions to care for and educate the 'removed' children of mixed-blood born to Aboriginal women who had been prostituted to lugger crews by their own tribesman.

Though financial and personnel problems persisted at Beagle Bay, the government adopted a more positive attitude and offered the Pallotines the Filipino/Aboriginal community of Lombardina, a government feeding station, which they accepted and staffed. An exceptional cyclone there in 1910 caused severe damage and took 40 lives.

In 1910 Bishop Kelly was relieved as Vicar Apostolic of the Kimberley and replaced by the Spanish Benedictine Abbot – and recently ordained bishop – Fulgentius Torres, who retained the position until his death in 1914.

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With the mission's continuing debts, the Pallotine superiors in Germany sought to withdraw from Beagle Bay in 1911, but no other religious order would take it over. A massive effort by one of the Pallotine priests turned the financial situation around and the WA Government now authorised more girls, mostly of mixed descent, to be sent to the mission. By 1913, the mission was caring for 84 girls (28 full-blood and 56 half-caste) and 36 boys (3 full-blood and 33 half-caste), while another 11 children lived with their parents. No new Pallotines had arrived from Germany since 1904, and no more would arrive until 1925.

When war with Germany broke out in 1914 government officials became concerned that the German missionaries might be aiding the enemy. They were watched closely, security measures tightened, and all mail censored. The Superior, Fr Bishofs, was labelled a spy.

With a change of Chief Protector, fewer children were sent to the mission, government support was reduced, and surveillance increased. In 1914 the Irish Redemptorist priest, John Creagh, was appointed administrator of the Kimberley Vicariate, but not ordained a bishop. Creagh too was not trusted by the authorities, due to the 1914 Easter Uprising in Dublin. All the missionaries had movement restrictions imposed. Creagh returned to Perth in 1922.

Apostolic Delegate Cattaneo now recommended that the Kimberley Vicariate be entrusted to the Salesians of Don Bosco and divided into two mission fields, with the Salesians and Pallotines sharing the burden. The suggestion did not sit well with the Pallotines, whose heroic efforts to keep the mission alive and intact, but the Italian Salesian, Ernesto Coppo, was appointed Vicar Apostolic of The Kimberley in 1922, ordained bishop, and arrived in 1923 with a multinational Salesian group of 4 priests and 3 brothers. He made his base in Broome, left the Pallotines in charge of the Beagle Bay and Lombardina missions, and opened a third (Salesian) mission at Carnarvon. His request to open a fourth mission at LaGrange was turned down. However, by the time more German Pallotines had arrived in 1925, the Salesians had vacated the Kimberley Vicariate. Most had moved to Melbourne and Brisbane to minister to the Italian immigrant communities there, and in 1927 Bishop Coppo resigned.

The Pallotines continued their ministry in the Vicariate and in 1927, when Fr Püsken was appointed Protector of Aborigines, all



Pallotine Bishop Ottone Raible (1887-1966), Apostolic Administrator (1928-35) and Vicar Apostolic (1935-58) of the Kimberley Vicariate

government surveillance was lifted. An offer by the St John of God Sisters to care for lepers was, however, turned down.

The German Pallotine, Otto Raible, arrived as Apostolic Administrator in 1928, and when he was appointed Vicar Apostolic and ordained a bishop in 1935, the Pallotines finally had full authority.

Though the Pallotine mission continued to struggle financially, Raible expanded the Pallotine's activity into anthropology and ethnology, acquired a second cattle station lease at Rockhole, and purchased a farm at Tardun in the southern wheatbelt which, cultivated by the Pallotines, became a productive asset. Another 11 Pallotines arrived from Germany between 1930 and 1934 and in 1935, Raible received Episcopal ordination in Europe. On his return he brought an expert in tropical medicine and extra staff to establish a missionary training college in Melbourne.

By 1934 leprosy had become a major problem in the Kimberley, as had police brutality and the chaining and massacre of Aborigines. In 1935 a massive cyclone claimed 141 lives in the Broome district, and almost completely destroyed the Beagle Bay mission buildings. They were still being rebuilt when Bishop Raible travelled to Sydney for the 1937 Plenary Council.

*Acknowledgment: In preparing this article many primary and secondary sources were consulted. However, special acknowledgment is given to the original research of Dr Ian B Waters published in his article "The Fourth Plenary Council of Australia & New Zealand" in *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum*, Vol. 38 (2006) No. 2, pp. 451-466. ☪*

Women still listening for leadership from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

FLYNN ET AL

Eleanor Flynn, Gail Grossman Freyne, Agnes Dodds, Claire Renkin and Suzanne Philips who are all members of Women's Wisdom in the Church (WWITCH) and Marilyn Hatton who is a member of Catholics Speak Out (CSO) and a partner of WWITCH, speak out about the closure of the Office for the Participation of Women in the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and the message that sends to women as we approach the Plenary Council.

As a group of women who seek the equality of Women in the Australian Church, we are appalled by the recent abolition of the stand-alone Council for Australian Catholic Women, and the closure of the Office for the Participation of Women in the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC).

By the acts of disbanding and downgrading these organisations the Bishops demonstrate that they have no plan to engage actively with the women of the Church.

This is an egregious error. Women are not a special interest group in the Church; we make up more than half of all Australian Catholics and 70% of many congregations.

We keep the churches running on a day to day basis as parish secretaries, pastoral associates, and as members of Parish Councils, Finance Committees and Safeguarding teams. We work as lectors and eucharistic ministers, musicians and organisers of children's liturgies, and provide the eucharist to the sick, all the while maintaining the 'traditionally female' roles of church cleaning and flower arranging.

This so called restructuring ignores the pleas of national and international renewal groups across the world who understand that full equality for women in the Catholic church, including ordination of women, is central to ridding our Church of crippling clericalism.

The move by the ACBC is all the more bewildering given its context. In the late 1990s a major research project was conducted to assess the participation of women in the church. Not surprisingly, significant barriers to women's full participation were reported leading to a strong sense of pain and alienation from the Church by Australian Catholic women. These results were published as 'Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus'.

In 2000, as a direct response to this alienation, and in an attempt to better engage women in the life of the Church, the Bishops established, and have now disbanded, both the Council for Australian



Catholic Women and the Office for the Participation of Women. These bodies were tasked to "find ways within the integral Church Tradition to engage the wisdom, talents and the experience of women for the enrichment of the Church and society, and for the fulfillment of their own lives." (ACBC response to *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus*, 2000).

Did anything change? Last November, a further report was commissioned to assess what progress had been made. *'Still Listening to the Spirit: Woman and Man Twenty Years On'* is the result. (You can purchase this book at: catholic.org.au/shop/acbc-shop for \$24.99). While Archbishop Christopher Prowse and Bishop Vincent Long van Nguyen OFM Conv admit in the Foreword that "There is unfinished business from the action commitments made by the bishops in 2000", the ACBC then turn around and dismantle both offices. The gap between the nice things that the Bishops say and their patronising tone (which has the effect of rejecting their own recommendation) could not be more glaring. The title itself, *Still listening to the Spirit* is unfortunate at best. Women are indeed still listening, but it is a moot point that it is the Spirit who tells them to be subservient to male clerical voices. Australian Catholic women feel they have been listening to such men for far too long while they in return have not been listened to with any seriousness.

This is borne out in the suggestions by Dr Sandie Cornish of the Bishops' Conference's Office for Social Justice, one of the editors, that the issues in *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus* 'remain live

and contentious'. What is even more dispiriting is her quote at the recent launch: 'While there have been advances in some areas, little seems to have changed in others, and in some matters, things seem to have gone backwards' and '*Despite disappointments and difficult experiences, the contributors to this collection are still listening to the Spirit and waiting for the opportunity to participate in a full and conscious way in the life of the Church for the sake of God's Reign.*' (*Still Listening to the Spirit; Woman and Man Twenty Years Later* p XXXI).

We are told by the ACBC that the closures are due to financial difficulties. That may well be so when we see the ever-declining number of active parishioners and the need to finance just redress schemes. However, the lack of explanation about the changes, and the reason for them, does not inspire any confidence from Australian Catholic women that their voices will be heard. There are 5.3 million Catholics in Australia, with a conservative estimate of 2.7 million Catholic Women. In 2018 there were a mere 253 men studying for the diocesan priesthood. (*Australian Catholic directory 2019*). However, there is no notice about closing eight seminaries where one would clearly suffice. It is clear that a small group of men are being privileged over the majority of practising Catholics. 'I can't understand the rationale or media sense of publicly claiming that because of the criminal actions of many bad men the bishops have to cut back on women's services.' (John Warhurst, *Canberra Times* 16/1/20).

This 'restructuring' is taking place in the year of the Plenary Council. It simply ignores the many submissions to the Plenary Council that emphasise steps to full equality for women, such as recommendations for inclusive language, a new ecclesiology, the full participation of the baptized in decision-making and the review of ministerial roles.

The restructuring signals that there is an enormous gap between the expectations of the baptised and the ordained leadership of the Church.

The Bishops' actions clash outright with the priorities of Pope Francis. The pope has several times suggested that women need to be a greater presence at all levels of the Church, including at decision making levels. His recent appointment of a woman

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the swag



undersecretary, Dr Francesca Di Giovanni, at the Secretariat of State, demonstrates that he is beginning to match his words with concrete actions. And following the recommendations from the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon he has signaled that the admission of women to the diaconate remains an open question that will continue to be studied.

Francis' encouragement of women to become lectors, highlights the issue in the Australian Church of women lectors with doctorates in sacred scripture who must listen to their parish priests providing basic thoughts on texts they do not seem to understand at any depth. This exemplifies the massive underutilisation of the talents of the majority of the parishioners.

Since 1998 when 73.5% of those enrolled in undergraduate theology courses were women (*Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus*, p361) the numbers have continued to increase. This means there are many women who understand theological and scriptural matters as well as, if not better than, their parish priests. Unlike the members of other professions in their congregations, priests are not required to attend continuing education courses once they are ordained.

We welcome the Bishops' avowed focus on evangelisation but question any strategy that continues to exclude women as equal partners in the revitalisation of the Church in Australia.

People of faith in Australia have done all in their power to respectfully emphasize their desire to work co-operatively for reform and to rebuild trust and credibility in our Church following the horror of child sexual abuse. Women and men of faith are committed to working with our leadership to develop the inclusive practice of faith we all yearn for, with equal representation in decision-making forums as a central tenet. We know that there can be no justice in a church that does not treat all its members as equal. We are not going away and we are determined to make our Church relevant to the world and will continue to work for full equality for all in the Catholic Church.



Ecumenism the missing dimension in the Plenary Council

BEDE HEATHER

Bede Heather, retired bishop of Parramatta, writes about the state of ecumenism after the initial fervour in the post-Vatican II church and the importance of consultation with all Christians in the upcoming Plenary Council.



In his Encyclical Letter on Christian Unity, Pope Saint John Paul II says the following: *How do we proclaim the Gospel of reconciliation without at the same time being committed to working for reconciliation between Christians? ...It is absolutely clear that ecumenism, the movement promoting Christian unity, is not just some sort of appendix. Rather, ecumenism is an organic part of the Church's life and work, and consequently must pervade all she is and does.* (*Ut Unum Sint*, Pope St John Paul II's Encyclical Letter on Commitment to Ecumenism, May 25, 1995. n20).

Against this background, I ask whether the non-Catholic churches and Christian communities have been involved in the

preparation of the Plenary Council. Is there any reason why they should be?

When Pope St John XXIII announced on January 25, 1959 that he would convene an ecumenical council he had already in mind the promotion of Christian unity. Through his diplomatic postings in Eastern Europe he had become familiar with the Orthodox churches, and from that standpoint was drawn to the prospect of unity. As a means to that end he established the Secretariat (later the Council) for Christian Unity under the leadership of the German Jesuit from the Biblical Institute, Augustin Bea. It was destined to play a critical role in the Vatican II Council.

In making this announcement Pope St John met the aspirations of a number of Catholic theologians. The official Catholic attitude to the modern ecumenical movement had been negative. There was however an official Catholic observer in Amsterdam at the establishment of the World Council of Churches in 1948, and a number of Catholic theologians such as Gregory Baum and Yves Congar had been tentatively looking for at least the possibility of co-operation with non-Catholic groups. And there was the ever-present reminder of Taizé.

Vatican II

An ecumenical awareness pervaded the Council. There was eventually the Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*). The Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), and the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) also reveal a strong ecumenical awareness. The first major document approved at the Council, the Constitution on the Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) in its opening sentence mentions among the four goals of the Council: *To nurture whatever can contribute to the unity of all who believe in Christ*. Some prickly moments in the Council were reached through the work of a joint theological commission in which the Secretariat for Christian Unity played an important part. Cardinal Bea became a major contributor to the Council.

A feature of the Council was the presence of non-Catholic observers. Their number grew from session to session as non-Catholic bodies came to recognise the importance for them too of what was happening in Vatican II. As far as I recall, the observers

did not speak on the Council floor; but they met regularly with the Council for Christian Unity through which their opinions and sentiments were regularly taken into account. The observers were a presence in Rome over those years. I remember myself attending a lecture by the renowned Protestant theologian, Oscar Cullman, at the Waldensian theologate. He expressed his admiration for a draft of *Lumen Gentium*, but thought it needed to go further if it were to be a basis for a reunion.

An Ecumenical Summer

The ecumenical orientation of the Council had an almost immediate effect on popular Catholicism. Joint services of prayer became commonplace to mark significant seasons of the year and major misfortunes. Inhibitions about attending non-Catholic services were forgotten. Guidelines were issued about Eucharistic sharing and the mutual recognition of baptism. On the official level, there were changes that could not have been imagined before the Council. Pope Paul VI met with Patriarch Athenagoras in Jerusalem, and later accepted an invitation to address the World Council of Churches in Geneva. The Council for Christian Unity initiated multiple theological dialogues, not only with the churches that might be considered near neighbours, but with other seemingly distant groups like the Disciples of Christ and the Baptist World Alliance. Some of these dialogues produced substantial documents of theological agreement, like the Lutheran document on Justification and the ARCIC statements on the Eucharist and Primacy. In these projects there was considerable Australian participation, not only nationally but internationally.

Now, 50 years later, the ecumenical temperature has cooled. Reunion has not been achieved with any other Christian group; indeed, one wonders whether the idea of corporate reunion is not a fantasy. There are many factors beyond doctrinal consensus involved in reaching unity. An amount of the energy and time given to ecumenical matters has been re-directed into interfaith relations, particularly with Islam. In Australia, the scandal of sexual abuse and the proceedings of the Royal Commission have directed the attention of many Catholics to the state of their own church.

Is there a lasting residue of the ecumenical summer which needs to be taken into account in preparing for the Plenary Council of the Catholic church in Australia? It may be useful to recall some of the Principles of Ecumenism as outlined in the Decree on Ecumenism (No 2-4).

Principles of Ecumenism

The decree clearly teaches that the fullness of the means of salvation is to be found only in the Catholic church. Nonetheless many elements, even very significant elements of Christian faith, are to be found outside the boundaries of the Catholic church; it instances the written word of God, the life of grace, the theological virtues and gifts of the Spirit. All those who have faith in Jesus Christ and are properly baptised are brought into to a certain communion with the Catholic church as brothers and sisters.

It goes on to say that the principal duty of Catholics involved in ecumenical dialogue is to make an honest and careful appraisal of what needs to be renewed in the Catholic household itself. These statements are more than courtesies. The Catholic church needs to take account of non-Catholic churches and communities. This is affirmed also in the profound statement of the Constitution on the church that deserves careful reflection: *The church, constituted and organised in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and although many elements of sanctification and truth can be found outside of her visible structure (n.8).*

Conclusions

How then could non-Catholic churches be involved in the Plenary Council? I suggest the following. Following extensive consultation and voluminous responses, six large focus areas for the Council have now been determined. The head of each member of the National Council of Churches could be invited to make a submission on behalf of his/her community to any or all of those areas. The replies received could be processed by an appointed group and fed into the considerations to be put before the Council.

To the Council itself, each member of the National Council could be invited to send an observer. As at Vatican II, the observers would probably not address the Council, although one representative could be invited to do so if that seemed appropriate at the time. In any case, the observers could meet regularly with a sitting member of the Council, through whom their views could reach the Council process.

The involvement of our Christian brothers and sisters, I suggest, would correspond with the spirit of Vatican II and of the statement of Pope St John Paul II (*Ut Unum Sint*) quoted at the beginning of this article. The conclusions of the Council would likely be more compelling as a result. ☪



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The truth about the Porteous case

MARTINE DELANEY

Martine Delaney is a long-time LGBTI equality advocate. She brought a formal complaint on Archbishop Porteous concerning his dissemination of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference pastoral letter for the same-sex marriage debate, *Don't Mess with Marriage*. This complaint has been Exhibit One in the case for Religious Freedom's Bill. In this article Delaney describes what actually happened in response to the mention of this case in *The Swag Summer 2019 News*.



Recently, Federal Attorney-General, Christian Porter, unveiled a draft Religious Freedoms Bill that includes an override of the offensive language provision (section 17) of the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act.

Since, Mr Porter's cited my Anti-Discrimination complaint against Tasmania's Catholic Archbishop Julian Porteous, as the prime example of why the legislation's needed.

Mr Porter claimed the complaint related to statements of doctrine, ... *no more than statements, Christian statements about their preference for a traditional view of marriage.* (7.30, ABC, 29/08/19)

Other commentators (Gerard Henderson, *ABC Insiders*, 01/09/19) and the Archbishop himself, (*The Australian*, 23/08/19) claim he was *simply circulating Catholic teaching among the Catholic community.*

They've all said the complaint was taken to silence the Archbishop, limit freedom of religious expression, with federal legislation needed to stop such actions.

Completely untrue, and deliberate misinformation to continually publish this as fact. Here's what happened.

In mid-2015, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference distributed a booklet through parishes, schools and online.

Don't Mess with Marriage claimed to simply set out the Church's reasons for opposing marriage equality. It caused immediate uproar, across the country.

Thousands of Australians took to social media, wrote to papers, highlighting the harm the booklet was doing. There were student protests, walk-outs, Catholic school principals visiting families to apologise, priests doing the same. Why the anger?

The booklet presented dogma as fact, frequently failing to mention particular statements were Catholic belief, not fact. It used questionable, cherry-picked research to lend unwarranted authority.

The document told us same-sex-attracted people are 'not whole'; their relationships are friendships, inferior to heterosexual couples; they raise unhealthy children; and, most offensively, that same-sex parenting is 'messing with kids' – a term used, across Australia, to describe paedophilia.

The outpouring of anger and hurt showed the booklet was widely viewed as more than a simple statement of Catholic doctrine, by and for Catholics. For thousands, it was an attack on the worth of same-sex-attracted people and their families.

After many weeks of public outcry, much of it from Catholic communities, the bishops did nothing – except continue to distribute the booklet. So, months later, I lodged the complaint.

The complaint was very clear. I wasn't against Catholic bishops putting the Church's view on marriage. I was against them presenting beliefs as fact, as well as the demeaning language they used to make their case.

Initially, Archbishop Porteous released video statements, insisting the booklet was simply Catholic doctrinal advice for Catholics and continued distributing the booklet.

When the Archbishop told the media he'd like to discuss these issues with me,

I immediately sought a conciliation meeting.

There, I offered a written statement of my commitment to ensuring the Church could voice its opposition to marriage equality, and express its beliefs on marriage.

Personally, I found the Church's position on secular marriage absurd, but completely respected their right to those beliefs.

I simply asked them to express those beliefs as clearly statements of Church doctrine, and to re-word more offensive phrases so they weren't overtly accusatory and demeaning to LGBTIQ Australians and their families.

I'd have been happy with a booklet I wholeheartedly disagreed with, as long as it didn't imply a factual link between same-sex relationships and sexual abuse.

I also offered a possible solution – an edit of the booklet, to achieve the above. They declined. I withdrew.

My complaint was never about silencing the Church, limiting religious freedom. It was always about finding a better way.

I believed the bishops and I could set a very public benchmark for a respectful national debate on marriage. They wouldn't consider this. And, we now know, that national debate damaged so many.

Worse, a complaint taken with the hope of creating respectful debate is being used to justify privileging religious belief above any other human right.

Tasmania's laws against hateful and offensive language have helped many people assert their human dignity in the face of stigma and prejudice. The bulk of them have been people with disabilities.

For their sake, and the sake of the more inclusive Tasmania our laws have created, it's time for lies about the Porteous case to stop.

To read the documents offered to the Bishops at conciliation: www.equal.org.au/delaneyvsbishopsCouncil

CORRECTION

In the article by Cardinal John Dew in the Summer 2019 edition of *The Swag* titled *Call me John not 'father'*, we mistakenly spelt the author's name 'Drew'. We apologise for this.

Catholic formation for all

GREG CRAFTER

This is a precis of a talk given by Greg Crafter to the Catholic Social Ministry Conference in Melbourne late last year on *Lay Formation in the Australian Catholic Church – A personal reflection 1961-2019*. Greg, a former SA Minister of Education, has had many positions of leadership within the church, more recently as a member of the Truth & Justice Commission.

This paper explores the calling of Catholics to 'a faith that does justice', awakened and informed by Catholic Social Teaching and able to freely access the formation for mission that is the right of the laity.

As Catholics we are alarmed to see our Church change before our very eyes. There are fewer persons engaged in ordained ministry and candidates for the priesthood, fewer women and men engaged in religious life, smaller and ageing congregations. The sexual abuse scandal that has engulfed the Church in Australia for the last decade has weakened the community standing of our Bishops, priests and religious and the institutions of the Church. The Church's teachings are being challenged in the Courts and in our Parliaments and by authoritative commissions of enquiry.

Further, the Church's teachings are being challenged by many devout and loyal Catholics. With 220,000 submissions to the historic 2020 Plenary Council to be held in Adelaide there is clearly a laity that wants to have its voice heard on the issues facing the Church. A Church that has been at the centre of their lives and their families but is now being critically challenged like never before in Australia – celibacy, the role of women in the life of the Church, lay formation and involvement in church decision making, clericalism and good governance, Catholic education standards and pedagogy, the inhibiting dependence of Catholic hospitals on expensive private health insurance, and the provision of contemporary seminaries and training infrastructure for the formation of the laity as well as religious are all issues that confront the Church.

So today we come together to reflect on the role of the laity in the Church and in the world around us. We do so in this time of uncertainty, distress and hurt within the Church and a time of turmoil and almost unbelievably poor and confidence sapping leadership of many of the western democracies.

Pope Francis has reminded us on many occasions that, while the Church's social engagement is essential, the Church is not

an NGO. Lay formation requires a spiritual link between the individual Catholic and the great social issues of the day and the personal needs of the individuals around us.

Saint Therese of Lisieux said: *Miss no opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word, always doing the smallest things right, and doing all for love.*

A personal dimension

I joined the Young Christian Workers (YCW) in 1961, 58 years ago. Throughout all of those years one way or another I have belonged to a small group of friends who have reflected on our daily life in the light of the Gospels. It was a time when many of us were deeply influenced by the documents of Vatican II, especially in regard to 'reading the signs of the times'. (Vat II *Gaudium et Spes*)

Having worked as a full-time worker for the YCW in South Australia and North Queensland from 1965-1970, I then began university studies. On Saturday mornings a group of us met in a tutor's office and over several years we discussed and debated and reflected on St Matthew's Gospel. We are still friends today and meet regularly for lunches and family gatherings. The boys' executive of the YCW in Adelaide each donated \$1 per week over several years and bought me a Volkswagen beetle so I could travel with a degree of safety if not comfort on the enormous distances travelled as part and parcel of working in remote Australia. A group of former Adelaide YCW Executive members and their partners have met regularly for the last fifty-two years. That group of trusted friends were of great assistance to me and my family during the roller coaster years when I was in public life.

I have maintained my fidelity to the Church as an institution for many reasons, the principal one being it is still engaged in my formation, and sustains me as I try to live my life according to the Gospels.

It has not been easy because the lay movements I grew up with and which provided my formation are regrettably no longer supported by the Church. The opportunity over these intervening years to

build a contemporary culture of deep lay formation has been lost.

I wish to comment on the enduring legacy of the Cardijn (the founder of the YCW) or Jocist method of formation: See, Judge, Act.

See, Judge, Act

The SEE section, the awareness component of the See, Judge, Act paradigm – the proven *formation for mission* formula, that gained universal acceptance and the support of Popes and Bishops over the last 100 years. Cardinal Joseph Cardijn founded the Young Christian Workers Movement at a time of children working in mines and factories in Belgium in appalling conditions. Cardijn observed this dehumanisation of young people at close hand and it remained with him. It has been observed as the source of his motivation for his work over the following seventy years. The SEE section of our meetings opened our eyes and hearts to the needs of others.

This leads into a discussion about the JUDGE section which distinguishes good works that are discerned carefully and thoughtfully, usually based on a sound knowledge of the Gospels and informed by Catholic Social Teaching. It is the spiritual component of formation which brings things into context and completeness. At most YCW leadership meetings we asked 'What would Christ do in this situation?'

And so from the Judge section of the many YCW meetings I attended over the years and through action, alone and with others my faith became more meaningful and practical. A bright light was shined on my life, I could see the world around me more clearly and I knew Christ was with me through thick and thin. This took me to a desire to know more about the Catholic Church its origins and history, its liturgies, theology, Canon Law, Church administration and more.

Sadly very few Catholics are able to access formal opportunities to gain greater knowledge of their faith. The adult movements of the sixties and seventies provided such opportunities as did many parishes.

As a regular Mass attender and participant in many Church gatherings it is noticeable that the faithful are ageing and more middle class, apart from newly arrived migrants and overseas students. There is also a much greater involvement of Church employees in the management and

Continued page 18



organisation of the Church's affairs. Less room appears to have been made for the participation of the laity and their formation.

I am often bemused by those in the Church who believe that the faith formation of young people, particularly those attending Catholic Schools, can be delivered by RE classes alone. A good pass in RE does not necessarily mean a lively faith. The actual practice of the faith and the living of that faith in daily life seems to be assumed or a belief it will be acquired along the way. Nowadays there is a much greater understanding of the need to provide opportunities for students to reflect on their lives and through service discover the deep relevance of their faith.

ACTION – What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

(James 2:14-26). Service to others particularly those in need is thus at the centre of a living faith.

Action took two forms in the YCW: personal action and social action.

Personal action involves a greater awareness and responsiveness to the perfectly ordinary acts of everyday life...in his own home, with his father and mother, with his brothers and sisters. The same holds good for where he works. At each meeting there was a discussion around this topic which was referred to as the review of life.

Social action was the next agenda item at YCW meetings where the group decided on a course of action in which all would be involved. Once again there was always a reflection at the next meeting of social action and its success or otherwise, and the

learnings from it. The needs today of course are vastly different, but the challenge is for this to be better understood, acknowledged and supported.

Catholic Social Teaching is a rich resource largely untapped within our schools – for the application of teaching and learning to daily life and to the world around us in the light of the Gospels.

Lay formation and the role of the laity in the Church

Having described my personal understanding of a proven methodology for lay formation I now move to discuss the right the laity has to access quality formation for mission.

Cardinal Cardijn said often the words 'formation through action' and went on to describe formation in these words: *'Just as there are no priests without seminary training and no monks and nuns without their novitiate, so there cannot possibly be young Christian workers without formation. Each one needs it because he/she is a human person at the age of formation when you must see your vocation and prepare for life.'*

The impact of reflection following concrete action is palpable. Action alone is valuable but when accompanied by structured reflection then it becomes deeply formative and empowering.

In the Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium – The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis makes the following statement about lay formation which I believe deserves wide consideration by the Australian Catholic Church and by the 2020 Plenary Council:

Lay people are, put simply the vast majority of the People of God. The minority – ordained ministers – are at their service. There has been a growing awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church. We can count on many lay persons, although still not nearly enough, who have a

deeply-rooted sense of community and great fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis and the celebration of the faith. At the same time, a clear awareness of this responsibility of the laity, grounded in their baptism and confirmation, does not appear in the same way in all places..... The formation of the laity and evangelisation of professional and intellectual life represent a significant pastoral challenge.

When these words are unpacked the following assertions can be made. They are great comfort to the laity but is there a will within our Church to embrace deep lay formation?

1. Priests and religious have a fundamentally important role in lay formation.
2. There is a rightful place for the identity and mission of the laity in the Church.
3. There are many lay persons who can be relied upon and who possess a deeply rooted sense of community and fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis and the celebration of the faith.
4. In some parts of the Church (Parishes and Dioceses) a clear awareness of this responsibility of the laity has not been evident.
5. Some lay persons have been denied the formation needed to take on important responsibilities.
6. In others it is because room has not been made for them to speak and to act due to an excessive clericalism.
7. Often the role of the laity is seen as performing tasks within the Church without a real commitment to the transformation of society.
8. The formation of the laity and the evangelisation of professional and intellectual life represent a significant pastoral challenge.

Proposals for change

I now wish to share with you some personal reflections on the way forward for our Church, for our communities and nation.

The Catholic Church employs some 224,000 people in Australia. It is the largest provider of non-government hospital health and aged care services; Catholic schools teach one in five students across the length and breadth of this vast country with 40% being located in rural and remote communities. These services continue to enjoy high public recognition and support. Sadly, the Catholic Church as an institution does not. We are at a low point in our history and the standing of our leaders, priests and religious is suffering.

It is difficult to envisage that the Church in Australia can rebuild itself, reform its culture and modernise its governance without a much greater participation of competent, committed and a deeply formed laity. Australia needs a Church that is transparent, accountable and responsive, a Church that earns the respect of the nation for what it does and the way it does it, a Church where it is not left to Bishops to be the lead public advocates but where committed lay people highly skilled in their professions take on a greater responsibility in the public realm.

Recommendations

1. A national vision and strategy for a greater participation of the laity in the life of the Australian Church. Perhaps this could be a matter addressed at the 2020 Plenary Council.
2. Any strategy developed to meet lay formation will need to tackle the vexed issue of who are the formators and how are their roles developed and supported. Fewer clergy and religious are able to fulfil this role, many of whom are now in retirement. Within the major Church works of education, health and welfare there are substantial resources which could be applied to lay formation and leadership and more generally mission. A national and Diocesan coming together of key leaders in these fields may provide some illumination in the following ways:
 - a. A sharing of experience in what programs are most effective in lay formation for mission
 - b. Identifying national and diocesan leaders experienced in lay formation
 - c. Identifying programs and courses and organisations that are effective in enabling deep formation to occur
 - d. Identifying the source of experienced lay formators, their availability to engage in a broader program and the support they may need to ensure success in this work
 - e. An analysis of the personnel and resources applied to professional development and staff training, education materials and leadership programs that all fall within the sphere of lay formation
 - f. The chaplaincies and other supports that the broader Church provides to schools, hospitals, aged care services, prisons and welfare programs
 - g. The substantial contribution the Catholic tertiary institutions are making to lay formation within their

own staff cohort but also in the preparation of students many of whom will work in key human service vocations

- h. The resources and facilities that exist in religious congregations that may contribute to lay formation.
3. An assessment of the capacity of each of the major works of the Church, education, health and welfare.
4. Consideration be given to a national key leaders’ program which would identify and engage more formally in the formation of those lay persons who occupy or are considered suitable for appointment to senior roles within the Church. It appears that often appointments are made to key positions, but any formation in the main is then concentrated on post appointment. I have chaired several Church bodies where I have been the only member not in the employ of the Church.
5. The most hopeful dimension of rebuilding the Church and the development of a strong discipline of lay formation is with our youth. Much good work is being done in our schools and universities but I suggest a much greater strategic focus is required.
6. Parish based lay formation programs have traditionally in the main been centred around youth groups and adult lay movements. Whilst some of these continue others have not. Is it not time to ensure that lay people are given the opportunity to access programs of formation within their parish or across a deanery or at a Diocesan level?
7. My experience through life has been that the most effective and embracing formation experiences have come through small groups. Groups that have regular meetings, have a structure, reflect on the Gospels, have a review of life component and engage in personal and group action. At the following meeting there is reflection on action taken. This I know is the ideal.

The Plenary Council: an opportunity

Finally, I would remind you that in the Catholic Church in Australia there is much for which to be thankful. It is the largest non-government provider of health and education services in the country and a major provider of welfare services.

With 224,000 employees the Catholic Church is an enormously important player in the economic, social and spiritual life of this country and in the building of civil

society. By contrast the active Australian Defence Force personnel numbers 58,000 and there are 27,000 Reservists. The annual Defence budget of \$34.6B which is less than the recurrent budget for Catholic Health services in Australia. Catholic education employs 96,000 staff.

There are sufficient resources available to build a contemporary vibrant Church through its greatest asset which is its faithful. However, this cannot occur without a commitment to lay formation.

The Plenary Council will address governance issues (which may be vexed), but we have to recognise that the Church is not an NGO, much less a ‘for profit’ organisation. The principles of good governance need to be applied having regard to community standards and expectations, but the structures of Church governance have to follow mission and be best adapted to that function.

Is the Plenary Council the opportunity for the coming together of good people to address this subject? To chart a way forward? To commit to building a Church where there are opportunities for the laity to gain the formation that allows them to participate fully not only in the life of the Church, but in the transformation of the world?

In conclusion I can only reiterate the importance for the Australian Catholic Church committing to a plan of structured lay formation.

The historic Plenary Councils to be held later this year and a following year provide the opportunity to create a strategic plan to gift to our Church a confident and hopeful future. With the rise of PJP’s (Public Juridic Persons) assuming the governance of many of the major works of the Church in health, education and welfare which comprise the great majority of the 224,000 people working in Church agencies, entities and parishes there will be a continuing demand to identify people who are not only suitably qualified to take on these responsibilities but who also possess a deep sense of mission.

We need lay women and men who cannot only serve the Church and its vast outreach of services but who can engage in the transformation of society. A nation and world that cries out for leaders and representatives whose values and vision resonates with all that is good and just and true rather than protecting vested interests, victimising refugees, the disabled and the poor, and blithely setting aside the sacredness of human life. ☪

Living in a nation that distrusts Catholics

JOHN SCANLON

John Scanlon writes about the place of Catholicism in Australian culture.



Anti-Catholicism in Australian History

From the beginning of European settlement in Australia, Catholics have been regarded with varying levels of suspicion by their non-Catholic fellow citizens, but rarely with complete trust. It was natural that British officials in Australia and their supporters were hostile to Catholics during the first half-century of settlement, because Catholics were subject to legal disabilities before Catholic Emancipation was achieved in Britain in 1829. Moreover, Catholics at that time were overwhelmingly Irish, and regarded by others as actually or potentially disloyal to established authority. From the point of view of the non-Catholic population, the 'allegiance' of Catholics to a foreign potentate, who ruled in a backward part of southern Europe, was disturbing. So was the unmarried state of the Catholic clergy, and so were the mysterious powers over the lives of lay people that were exercised in deep secrecy in the Confessional.

Since those early days the acceptance of Catholics as citizens, and of their public exercise of Catholic religious rites and ceremonies, has greatly increased. My personal view is that the peak in cordiality of relationship between the Catholic Church as a public body and the rest of Australian society came in the mid-1960's. However I believe there continues to be a potential for outbursts of instinctive anti-Catholic feeling in the depths of the Australian psyche, in much the same way as anti-Semitism was never far below the

surface in all of Europe before World War II. The most recent outbreaks of this anti-Catholic feeling, in Australia as elsewhere, have followed the public exposure of epidemic levels of clerical involvement in child sex abuse. Because this epidemic of non-familial abuse largely involved priests and religious as abusers, and bishops as concealers and spreaders of the infection, it has been the clerical establishment that has attracted distrust and suspicion rather than, or more than, Catholics as a whole.

The Confessional Seal

One example of this lack of trust was in the news in mid-January, when Archbishop Coleridge issued a public submission against proposed Queensland laws that would impose a penalty of up to three years in prison for priests who failed to report confessions from abusers. Similar laws are being processed in other states, and are the result of a recommendation made by the Child Sexual Abuse Royal Commission in its final report. While acknowledging that the royal commission 'did many positive things for the Catholic Church', Archbishop Coleridge said it 'seemed not to grasp the nature of the sacrament of penance when it handed down its final report.' He went on to say 'It is claimed at times that the seal must be abolished in law because it is the linchpin of a culture of secrecy and cover-up in the Catholic Church that has been identified by the royal commission. The Church rejects such a claim, insisting that the seal is the guarantee of a culture of disclosure, which is the opposite of cover-up.'

It is of course true that the royal commission report appeared not to understand precisely what the confessional seal involves, and over-estimated its importance in this context. It is not the 'linchpin of a culture of secrecy and cover-up'; that description would apply more properly to the recently restricted 'pontifical secret' provisions. The real significance of the confessional seal is impressionistic; it perfectly evokes the air of exoticism, 'Gothick' atmosphere, menacing confessor figures and faint wackiness that non-Catholics and particularly the non-religious see when they look from the outside at Catholic practices.

The royal commission did at least make an honest attempt to achieve an understanding of what the seal involves, when it arranged a hearing at which the commissioners and counsel put questions on the subject to a panel of four Australian archbishops. One question asked precisely what matters were covered by the confessional seal.

To the undying shame of the Australian hierarchy, the archbishops were unable to agree on precise definitions, leaving the commissioners more unenlightened than ever. In the end, it would seem the commissioners felt that the Church was permeated with a culture of unnecessary secrecy which had probably intensified the damage done to children by Catholic institutions. They wanted to highlight an aspect of the secrecy culture that could be accepted by the mass of Australians as symbolic of the whole and obviously worthy of condemnation. They seized on the seal as, in a sense, the scapegoat to stand for all the aspects of institutional secrecy that they found so repellent.

How should Catholics React?

With regard to the public controversy over the confessional seal, I do not believe that Catholics should react with the melodrama of Archbishop Coleridge's submission. The aim of calm and rational discussion is not helped by statements such as 'clergy have died because they have refused to submit to the claims of the state and preferred to defend the rights of the penitent before God.' And, later on; 'The state would effectively be saying that there is some sin that cannot be forgiven, that God has no part to play in this, that clergy should be agents of the state, that the sacrament of penance is outlawed.'

It was predictable that several Queensland parliamentarians reacted angrily. They obviously felt that the church must have something serious to hide if it had been provoked into such intemperate language.

In actual fact, the combination of circumstances that would need to happen before a prosecution could be launched under the proposed acts has an infinitesimally low probability. The laws will be dead letters from day one because the action they forbid will never take place. I am assured by many priest friends that any experienced priest knows this.

Instead of spending high emotion on the fighting of battles that are unwinnable but also unnecessary, we should be looking for opportunities to make common cause with

our fellow-citizens of all religious persuasions or none, on issues where we can seek unity rather than isolation. We should accept that we live in a pluralistic society in which the majority of people are not convinced by Catholic teaching on a range of moral and ethical issues, and resent what they see as political pressure tactics to enforce minority views on the majority. We need to learn the gentle arts of evangelisation by persuasion and good example, rather than by bludgeoning our neighbours with our claims of moral superiority. Above all, we need our interactions with our non-Catholic neighbours, as well as those among ourselves, to be open, transparent and honest.

There will be obstacles to open, peaceful and honest dealing, and some of them will be generated by fellow-Catholics, if not fellow-Australians. A good example is the current unseemly spat in which one or more out of the emeritus Bishop of Rome, Cardinal Sarah and Archbishop Gaenswein are trying to pressure the Pope into maintaining the status quo on clerical celibacy, and lying heroically as he or they do so. From such exemplars, good Lord deliver us.

Our Hope for the Future

The clerical sexual abuse crisis has caused a massive reduction in the level of trust that our fellow-Australians are prepared to place in Catholic institutions and their spokespeople. Public vilification of Catholic clergy and religious is probably the worst it has been for at least a hundred years, if not for ever. The shape of the abuse crisis has ensured that the most severe loss of trust has been suffered by the most senior and militant public figures in the Church.

But if we learn our lessons from the abuse crisis and its consequences, there is room for hope. New generations of church leadership, clergy and lay, will emerge in the fullness of time. They will include the women whom the Church has shamefully ignored or repressed until now, but who will in time receive justice.

They will find the themes that can unite all societal groups in the search for the common good. If we can make our own church communities more Christ-like, and by our example make our wider community more Christ-like, we will have done what the Lord urged us to do. That is the way to prove ourselves good and trustworthy Australians. ☪

The beginning of the end of our 'European' Church?

NOEL CONNOLLY SSC

Noel Connolly SSC is a member of the Adult Formation Team with Catholic Mission Australia and is a member of the Facilitation Team for the Plenary Council 2020. Reprinted with permission from *Columban Newsletter* November 12, 2019.

It is probably only now that we are starting to realise the significance of electing a Pope from Latin America, part of the Global South. If we needed any further proof, it was the Amazonian Synod. It was heavily criticised by many European Cardinals, and others. First, they criticised the indigenous headdress, while being unconscious of the origins of their own birettas, soutanes, etc. They were even more upset with the statue of a pregnant woman that the indigenous peoples gave to the Pope. Despite all the explanations, they regarded it as 'pagan' and someone stole it from the Church where it was enshrined, and threw it into the Tiber. Once again, they seemed to be unconscious of how much the Church in its feasts, worship and devotions had drawn on pre-Christian feasts and culture. [I try never to use the word 'pagan' because it is a completely negative word with no positive content. It ignores the deep religious values inherent in the culture of indigenous peoples.]

While I do not agree with Pope Francis' critics, I think they had an accurate sixth sense for what was at stake. The European monopoly of Christianity is being challenged. As early as *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis had said, "We cannot demand that peoples of every continent, in expressing their Christian faith, imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history, because the faith cannot be constricted to the limits of understanding and expression of any one culture. It is an indisputable fact that no single culture can exhaust the mystery of our redemption in Christ." [EG 118]

For centuries, we in the West have 'owned' the church and the Gospel. We have dictated the terms in which people in the Global South have understood doctrine, lived Christian morals and celebrated the liturgy. Those days are ending.

By 2050, there will be three billion Christians in the world and only one in six of these will be non-Hispanic whites. By 2050, 80% of Catholics will live in or trace their origins to the Global South. The typical Christian will soon be a poor coloured woman from a shantytown in Kinshasa,

Buenos Aires, Manila or some other large city in the majority world. These cities will be important Christian centres and Pope Francis has already appointed many of their bishops as Cardinals.

Australia is an island and we tend to become isolated, superior and preoccupied with 'western issues'. However, if we are not to be left behind, we need to build bridges to this wider Church. Increasingly the important Church decisions will be made in the 'South'. They are more conservative both in belief and in moral teaching, and strongly supernatural or charismatic in orientation. We can already see this in Australia with the overseas priests and religious and with our ethnic brothers and sisters.

So, ironically, we have lots to gain by coming to grips with being a 'Southern' church. As missionaries, we went to margins and now the margins have come to us. Forty-nine percent of all Australians are born overseas or have a parent born overseas. We are a multicultural and multi-faith society. We need to learn how to be more open and humble, to live in a healthy intercultural way, to appreciate difference and to learn how to dialogue.

We are also challenged to partnership with our neighbours in the Pacific as Archbishop Peter Loy Chong of Suva, Fiji and Cardinal John Ribat of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea have both called for a Synod for Oceania. ☪

The Swag Winter Edition

Closing date
for letters and articles
Monday 27 April 2020.

Please email submissions
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Articles: 700 words
Major Features: 1,400 words.

The world has changed and so must the Church

BRENDAN HOBAN

Brendan Hoban, founder member of the Association of Catholic Priests (Ireland), looks at the decline in the small number and overworked state of the priesthood in Ireland and asks, “What are the bishops doing about this?” There are some similarities with Australia.



Pope Francis keeps on beating the same drum, but is anyone listening? His Christmas message was that ‘the world has changed and so must the Church’.

If you wouldn't mind, dear reader, could you please read those two short sentences again?

Is there anything complicated about them? No. Is there anything that any Catholic, ordained or non-ordained, could possibly misunderstand? No. They simply sum up what Francis has been saying since he was elected pope. And saying again and again and again.

So, if Catholics see something that needs to change, what should we do?

A template emerged a few years from a chat Francis had with his friend, Bishop Erwin Kräutler, who worked most of his life in the Amazon basin. Kräutler lamented the scarcity of priests in his area and the resulting fact that so few could attend Mass. Francis told him to work through the Brazilian bishops. The result was the discussion at the Amazonian synod and the expectation that by March of this year, Francis will announce the ordination of married men for specific regional areas.

Here's another question. At what stage will it become clear that Ireland qualifies as such a regional area and have the help of a married priesthood?

While opinions on the answer to that question may vary, one thing is clear, priests are disappearing in Ireland. We're an endangered species. Just give it a decade or more. I've used this space before to make a plea for the introduction of a married priesthood (and indeed a female priesthood) but my interest here is not in the priesthood issue.

Rather it's on how the failure to address this issue by the leadership of our Church is impinging on the immediate victims (the present priests) caught in the slipstream of an on-going decision by the Irish bishops to continue to avoid ‘the elephant in the living room’.

While the presenting problem is the virtual disappearance of priests – and it follows as night the day, the virtual disappearance of Mass and the Catholic Church in Ireland – the immediate victims of the bishops' abdication of responsibility are the present priests.

We've watched for decades as vocations to the priesthood have melted away. Now there are hardly any young priests, a few middle-aged, with most either elderly or old. (An indicator of the present age profile of Irish priests is that the new bishop of Clonfert, who's edging towards his 50th birthday, is younger than all the Clonfert priests!)

The simple truth is that the present priests are left carrying the can for at best the prevarication of their bishops or at worst their conspicuous lack of leadership.

We remember a time when we had the wind on our backs: full churches, teeming vocations, and the respect of our people, the support and appreciation of society. We had our place in the sun – though, in retrospect, the jury is out on what that was worth.

Now, the present cultural context for the Catholic Church in Ireland is almost invariably hostile.

What we say is ignored as our authority has diminished if not disappeared entirely; brash and ambitious movers and shakers use us as a handy punch-bag confident that their knee-jerk dismissal has popular support; those who support us opt to do so in silence or in private; and, at best, we're figures of fun, banished to the periphery of things, unless we're needed by the media for quirky appearances dressed in Roman collars and black suits. Now, as an ageing and progressively more fragile ‘lost tribe’, we're swimming against the currents of Irish life.

It isn't just that in the main, we're elderly and old, with few coming after us prepared to put their shoulders to the wheel. As we get older, with the number of priests ever-decreasing, our workload is ever increasing. The issues we're expected to deal with are becoming more complex; the demands of parishioners getting more and more out of hand. And we're now at the stage where it's obvious that the increased pressures and stresses of a priest's life in Ireland today are leading to a breakdown in health.

If there was some hope, some light even at the end of a distant tunnel, it might make the present situation more tolerable in the short-term. But all we can see is more of the same – fewer and fewer priests, older and older priests, ever-increasing workloads and progressively more and more ill-health.

We're not being offered any hope. There's no Plan B – just a vague, unconvincing sense that we all have to keep doing what we always did, keep saying what we always said, yet (against all the odds) keep expecting something different to happen, as if someday we'll meet a bend in the road that will lead to some promised land.

We're expected to give credence to vague and sometimes daft ideas about importing priests from abroad or amalgamating dioceses or other versions of the deck chairs being moved on the Titanic; nothing more significant than giving the impression that something is being done.

Priests are struggling to cope. Full stop. Over-work, difficult to get a break, health breaking down. Nothing to look forward to except late retirement and death. The tread-mill, it seems, is expected to continue until the very last.

‘The world has changed and so must the Church’. All the evidence would suggest that we're at the beginning of the end, a fracturing of church life that wasn't just predictable but avoidable. Yet the Irish bishops still seem to be sitting on their hands.

Are there not a few bishops who might do a Bishop Kräutler on it and have a chat with Pope Francis about the implications of his Christmas message – ‘the world has changed and so must the Church’?

What is it about that sentence that the Irish bishops don't understand or refuse to accept, even though almost every Catholic in Ireland seems happy to acknowledge?

☪

The enemy – clericalism

CHRIS GERAGHTY

An extract from the talk by Chris Geraghty at the Sydney launch of the book *Getting Back on Mission* produced by *Catholics for Renewal* – their submission to the Plenary Council 2020. This article focuses on how clericalism works to subvert the hopes of reform.

Jesus' enemy was clericalism – and our enemy today is the same beast.

What is it? And how does it manifest itself? What does clericalism look like?

It's the attitude that you don't have to pay for lunch – that you don't need to pay your hotel bill – that someone will pay it for you and feel privileged to do so – that you are somehow important – and entitled – that you don't have to consult because you know everything that matters – that you have an ordained right to tell people what to think, what to do. You know better than anybody.

Clericalism is a church form of cronyism – an exclusive club for bachelors in which members protect one another even when they're in the wrong and doing dirty deeds – where loyalty is king and secrets can be shared among brothers – but no dobbing – a club where reputations are protected and communications inside the brotherhood have a different tone to what is said to others outside the cell. It has been described as an ecclesiastical form of narcissism.

Pope Francis told his cardinals and bishops that clericalism was an elitist, an exclusive vision of a priestly vocation which views priesthood as a personal power rather than a service to others. It is an institutional sickness infecting both the powerful and the powerless; those in the robes and those in the pews; those who command and those who obey; the celibates who speak with authority behind them (the authority of God, of the pulpit or the institution) and those whose role and duty is to listen. It involves a relationship of excessive deference and reverence, the assumption that some of us enjoy a moral, even ontological superiority and others are inferior.

Clericalism is a sub-culture within a church which involves privilege, the centralisation of power (no councils, no synods, no discussion and no votes). It is a world of secrecy with no accountability to lesser mortals. You don't even have to answer letters. Clericalism at its heart is an exclusive membership in a men's club, an established elitism, a system of extreme dogmatic thinking with an inflexible adherence to a theology of separation and hierarchical superiority, a culture

of respect, reverence, restraint and obedience – and no voice for critics or agents of change. We used to burn them and their books. More recently the bureaucrats at the Vatican simply crushed them in the name of Jesus – Congar, Chenu, Feret, de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin, Charles Curran, Liberation theologians such as Leonardo Boff and closer to home – Paul Collins.

Clericalism is the enemy – and the bishops who will meet next year at the Plenary Council are almost at the centre of this sub-culture – trained to be super-clerics and to maintain the system; selected by superior clerics at the centre of power in the Vatican, ordained to take control of some of the levers of power, and commissioned to perpetuate the system. These mortals are going to have to dig deep, to tap into subterranean sources of liberation to shift the cultural forces underpinning the sclerotic life of the Catholic Church in Australia. They're going to need courage and humility – and wisdom, of course.

In their submission, Catholics for Renewal have confronted the enemy and provided the bishops with a winning war strategy – tanks and aircraft to bombard the enemy and reduce it to rubble. As you see from the cover, *Getting Back on Mission* seeks to shine a light into dark places. It is full of information about the church in Australia, facts and figures, theological insights and a raft of recommendations for the bishops to consider.

The author or authors of the Gospel of Matthew paint a portrait of Jesus as a passionate and furious critic of the established religious authorities. These authors begin their depiction of Jesus by showing him delivering a colourful diatribe against the vanity of those religious clerics who ran the show in Jerusalem. He was reputed to have unleashed devastating



attacks on the scribes and Pharisees, on the religious elite, on those who exercised authority over the people in the name of Yahweh, on the teachers, the lawyers and the leaders. He called them hypocrites, blind guides, white-washed tombs, neat on the outside but full of putrid flesh and maggots. Serpents. Brood of vipers. Fools. Idiots. He mocked them for their clerical dress and for demanding the best seats at feasts and in the synagogue.

Imagine the reaction of these important men, dressed with long fringes and broad phylacteries, seated in the places of status and privilege, treated with customary reverence and respect, greeted in the market places and called 'Rabbi'. They were not evil men – just vain and stupid. Part of the system – part of the cold, cruel, self-righteous, dogmatic, self-absorbed clerical system. Imagine their reaction to a preacher man come down from the north, uneducated and with a heavy rural accent – someone who was gifted with a *sensus fidei fidelium* and who spoke with authority. Let's look at it from their point of view. Outrage. Horror. Puzzlement and perhaps a dose of amusement. Is this man mad? What's he talking about? Doesn't he know who we are? From their elevated position, they could treat this critic from the mountains with the cold disdain he deserved. Patronizing superiority from those Jesus considered spiritually disabled, religious cripples.

It must be a sobering thought at night for those who are preparing themselves to participate in the forthcoming Plenary Council to reflect, as they drift off to sleep, on what Jesus thought of the clerics, the religious leaders of his day, about how they behaved and how they treated God's people. It's to be hoped they will be troubled as they turn over in their minds, restless on their episcopal beds, the tone and contents of the Catholics for Renewal's submission to them – *Getting Back on Mission*.
✪



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Pastoral planning – A church crisis



ERIC HODGENS

Eric Hodgens comments on the failure of pastoral planning and its implications.

Church Pastoral Planning languishes – ignored and unloved. Yet, with the church being in freefall, it is needed today more than ever. It's time to bring it in from the cold.

Church affiliation is dropping throughout the whole of the developed world. This includes Australia, the USA, Britain and Ireland. Within twenty years, a third of Australia's catholic parishes will be closed.

The world-wide shortage of clergy is obvious, as is the dearth of lay ministers. Celibacy of the clergy is not helping recruitment but is not the fundamental obstacle. People are simply not attracted to the package.

No leaders, no ministry – the show collapses. We have accurate data on the relentless decline of church affiliation. No members – the show collapses. Income will inevitably drop as a result. No money – the show collapses.

Other factors aggravate the situation. Firstly, many of the priests in charge of parishes are struggling in their role. Home-grown priests are aging. Bishops are extending retirement age or encouraging priests to stay on the job longer. Some priests agree to this request out of a mistaken sense of duty.

The nettle must be grasped. Putting off the bigger decisions about ministry only makes it worse as a weakened church flounders for a solution. Old priests staying on longer only aggravates the problem.

The strategy of importing foreign priests has failed because of their inability to adapt to local culture as well as communication difficulties. Further, they are being recruited from areas where the priestly shortage is worse than ours. That is simply not fair.

Next, a preponderance of local seminary graduates sees their vocation as personal, clerical and ritualistic rather than communal, collaborative and pastoral.

They lack the vision and skills necessary in pastors and leaders. Self-preoccupied, born-to-rule personalities will be dysfunctional in the hurly burley of declining parish life. This will do little

good for their parishes or for them. Seminary rectors take note.

Thirdly, the aftermath of the clergy sexual abuse crisis is getting worse. The bishops are at last acknowledging their bad handling of the issue. But they have lost all credibility. They can now look forward to dealing with a follow up tide of civil action cases. Pity the beleaguered bishops – but don't expect a leadership they cannot give.

Parishes will close. Will it be a third within ten years? Nobody knows – because there is no forward planning. It's a guess – and probably on the optimistic side.

Pastoral planning is needed today more than ever. Yet it has been missing in action throughout the western world as this crisis has grown into a monster over the last fifty years.

Beginnings of pastoral planning emerged during the eighties but stalled with time. In Australia, Melbourne established a Catholic Research Office for Pastoral Planning (CROPP) in the eighties. Its pastoral research component developed during the nineties.

It stimulated the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference to set up a pastoral research office. This is now called the National Centre for Pastoral Research. It is a mine of information and draws heavily on the national census and the ecumenical National Church Life Survey.

Pastoral research is strong in the USA instanced by the Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and some Catholic universities. St Mary's University, Twickenham does research in England.

Pastoral research goes ahead at national level. It is its application in the form of pastoral planning in dioceses that research meets a dead end. Few dioceses have pastoral planning officers or departments. And yet this is where local data is gathered, and the wider research applied.

Currently the collapse is managed on an ad hoc basis. To avoid directionless confusion each diocese needs a planning group to manage the rationalisation.

The steps are simple (the old see, judge and act model): Get the facts and work out

what they mean in the light of wider research; Elaborate the various options for responding; Prioritise and implement them.

The diocesan planning group will need an experienced priest familiar with current diocesan personnel, culture and structures. But it must also include professional members who are able to understand demographics and planning, who are able to apply research information to the local scene.

These, too, need to be familiar with the culture, structure and finances of the diocese. Such expertise is abundant in the professional world and is even close at hand in other church organizations.

Parish and diocesan life is declining and will never return to what it was. The question is what, if anything, will replace it and whether the collapse will just happen or be competently managed. ☪



SAVE THE DATE!

Joan Chittister OSB

will speak in Sydney at the Catalyst for Renewal Forum.

**Tuesday 15th September 2020
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Sexual ethics and the Plenary Council

JOHN RYAN

John Ryan is a priest of the Diocese of Sandhurst. He has been a regular contributor to *The Swag*, sometimes as *The Restless Believer*, sometimes as John Ryan. In this article he looks at spiritual, emotional and physical damage caused by current Catholic teaching on sexual ethics.

My cherished aunt's dilemma about sex (*The Swag*: Vol 27 No 4/ Summer 2019) gave me a chance to address one of the main 'elephant in the room' challenges facing our current Plenary Council. The present Church's official position on sexual ethics and human relationships could alone explain the millions of baptised sons and daughters who no longer 'practice' or call Church their home. Clearly, we are in need of a renewed synthesis that might be expected of the Council.

I need to say up front that I am deeply saddened by the often puerile attempts of too many who I believe are hell bent to abort new wisdom before any effective discernment process is run. I will note as one example of many such blocking attempts. In an article that features in *The Sydney Catholic Weekly* of September 2019 Archbishop Julian Porteous, while attempting to lay down the foundations for the Plenary Council, engages with the thoughts of Cardinal Reinhard Marx, the Chair of Germany's Bishop Conference. If indeed such an engagement were to take place it would be a paring of David and Goliath proportions!

In many 'blocking tactics' as evidenced in the above example, there is a flaw in the interpretations given to discernment. That critical power goes into opinions, prejudices, common sense and beyond to embrace the possibility of the opposite possibility. That is such an important insight that I am surprised that it isn't highlighted more often. In the thinking of Ignatius, the modern-day doyen of discernment, the possibility of a counter possibility has to be taken on board, and indeed be experienced. Out of this caveat all we have is prejudices, opinions, fears and cloudiness! Please, Council organisers BEWARE!

I believe I can point to an example where this openness is critical and too many are seemingly scared to engage in. This example encompasses in a special way the issues I alluded to earlier. Recently I was privileged to receive a copy of an article entitled *Pastoral Care with LGBTIQ+ Catholics in the 21st Century*, prepared by Rainbow Catholics InterAgency for Ministry, Australia (see: <https://tinyurl.com/u6jxl3v>).

The authors seem incredibly sensitive to the fact they are talking about challenging matters for many of us, myself included, and will sadly face opposition from many. This document speaks for God knows how many thousands, nay millions from the family of the baptised. They offer a critique of current Church teaching and practise.

They witness to the struggles that many have, trying to reconcile their sexuality and gender identity with their Catholic faith. They note that they have learned somewhere that God and/or the Church does not accept them, as they are an 'abomination', 'seriously disordered' and 'objectively evil. Of course, many leave the Church. Remember the numbers we are referring to are considerable as they join the hordes of sexual exiles I referred to earlier!

A striking statistic claims that 'the most vulnerable to suicide and self-harm of any group in Australia today is LGBTIQ+ young people who have been raised in a faith context.' It is reasonable to aim at least some of the blame at the feet of our inadequate sexual ethics.

No doubt you will have picked up where my leanings and my heart lies in the above matters. However, I must remain true to my Jesuit teachers who taught me the discernment process.

Of course, I have visited the other side of the issues and must acknowledge that I have lived there and taken sides there. I am an ordained priest of fifty-seven years. I still regard myself as orthodox and true to my original commitments. I have always been a student and spent countless years in accredited faculties delving into issues of priesthood and sexuality until I could claim to be an expert in current matters. I dare to claim that I can hear and understand the claims of the 'doctrinal warriors' as I have been one of them. I do not claim to know well enough where God



is calling me to be tomorrow; one day at a time is all I believe I am asked to pray for!

Coming now to the Plenary Council I acknowledge I am not as patient as my LGBTIQ+ friends and even as patient as many other reformers seem to be. I do believe we are called by God to fight fire with fire, and if he has not demanded us to so, I think he intended to!

I do not see my call at this time is to engage with the arguments of 'the other side'. I believe that is what the Council is being called to dialogue on. As I draw my painfully written words to a conclusion, I must note that I have lived to see too many highly costly processes aborted by our warriors of 'righteousness'. I trust you will know where my heart is and where my discerned fears are.

By way of an epilogue I dare to add a story that I came upon when reading *Universalis* (Sunday 2 January Ordinary Time). It comes from a recently unknown saint and it is an adjunct to my earlier offering in *The Swag*:

In the Chapel of St Oliver Plunkett at Downside Abbey, a stained glass window depicts a less official story concerning Wulstan: that one day, whilst celebrating Mass, he was distracted by the smell of roast goose, which was wafted into the church from the neighbouring kitchen. He prayed that he might be delivered from the distraction and vowed that he would never eat meat again if his prayer were granted.

The modern world needs stories like this more than it realises. The watered-down puritanism that serves so many of us as a moral code today equates pleasure with evil – cream cakes, the advertisements tell us, are 'naughty but nice' or even 'wickedly delicious.'

Messages like this are a libel on the name of God, who created the pleasures, and on his Son, whose first recorded public act was turning water into wine. There is nothing wicked about delicious food in itself, or in any other pleasant or beautiful thing. Let us enjoy God's creation all we can and rejoice in its creator as we do so, and if, like Wulstan, we have to deprive ourselves of something for our spiritual or bodily health, then let us suffer our deprivation cheerfully, blaming the weakness in us that made it necessary.

Let us never devalue our sacrifices by denigrating the things we sacrifice, or the sacrifice will be pointless. Let us remember what God did, day after day, as he was creating the world: he looked at it, and saw it, and behold: it was very good. ☺

Our images of God

RICHARD FRANCIS

Images are powerful and work positively and negatively. Richard Francis looks at how some images of God might influence our relationship with God.

It was like getting hit behind the ear with a lump of 4x2. As I blessed myself on entering the parish church to participate in weekday Mass the prayerful little group were up to the 'trimmin's' on the Rosary: *to thee do we cry poor banished children of Eve* assailed my ears and here was I thinking of myself as one of God's beloved children, loved in spite of myself, loved unconditionally!

What kind of God banishes us 'poor children of Eve'? What images of God does this bring to our imagination? Surely, an aloof God, hard to reach, into retributive justice and recrimination, an authoritarian God! I know our theology tells us God didn't banish us, that we banished ourselves by turning our backs on God, but the powerful image remains. This God we constructed was remote, a deaf to our pleas from this 'vale of tears' God. As well, the language of our paraliturgical and devotional prayers so often betrays our thinking and our images of God and hence our relationship with our God. These images of God still haunt so many 'good' Catholics; how else do you explain the popularity of the 'Mercy of God' devotions that have proved so popular with so many? Let's not count the thousands who have given away this God of ours! I recently heard a priest say, 'Let us ask Mary to intercede for us with her Son'.

What does this say about what we think Jesus is like? Is he too busy to care about us? Is he niggardly in handing out his love? Are we talking about the same Jesus that loved us enough to die for us? It would seem that we have carried this unforgiving, distant male God over to His Son! I'm sure Jesus never imagined that when he called his God, 'loving Father' and 'Abba' that we would produce the ideas and images of God that we have. How beautifully easy it would have been for Jesus to go from calling gentle, loving, Joseph 'Daddy' to calling the God he experienced at prayer, 'Daddy' ('Abba').

Look further into our liturgical language: Almighty, all-powerful God, Omnipotent. From words like these we constructed, over centuries, a patriarchal, hierarchical God, a God whose rule over us and whose image was so easily transferred to our church with a hierarchy who so often ruled over us and not for us! Is it too far to go to say our

male dominated patriarchal world, and dare I say Church, became grotesque in the way it has dealt with the feminine and with creation! I've read that there are thousands of married deacons ordained into the American Church... 'Come on boys, let's keep the male domination going at all costs, no matter what the cost to half the world's population'. Our world, our environment, our hearts can't survive another year of the rampage that has been done to the earth because of our inability, our failure, to embrace the feminine side of our God!

I'd like to propose some different images of our all loving God. Images that may stop the exploitation of our planet for profit that makes men and women slaves to an economy that must grow bigger and 'better' no matter what the cost to human beings – us men are intent on building our kingdoms!

Let's start our feminine images of God with my lovely Labrador. If ever there was an image of God it's she! Ever faithful, she is total unconditional love no matter how I treat her – I forget to feed her, does she stop loving me, never! I forget to bring her in from the cold at night; does she hold a grudge and not talk to me for days? Not her; tail wagging, cheerful of eye, she just forgives and gets on with life with me with all its shortcomings. Is she not like our forgiving loving God who holds us against her cheek and does not remember our sins?

Let's be a little more sophisticated than this, a little more respectful! We have discovered so much about our universe in our times with its ever expanding, evolving, raw power and tumbling, seemingly planned chaos. What sort of an image of God do we need for this? How fertile can our imaginations be to gather up the wonder and awe we feel when we see pictures from outer space that just astound us with their wild beauty? What can we say of the One who created all this, of the One who holds all this in being? A limping image I'd propose is the image of a pregnant woman with her hands lovingly, caringly, supporting her extended womb.

Let's image the whole of creation existing in the womb of our Mother God: 'In Her we live and move and have our being'! This Mother longs painfully, expectantly for the



birth of her 'second' born, fashioned in the image of her first born. The whole of creation is in the painful process of coming to birth; the life-blood, her Spirit, flows from this Mother giving life and nourishment to her unborn child. Her one desire is that this child will look just like her first-born. She feels the pain of her unborn; its development is not going well, but there will not be the terrible sadness of a miscarriage or some pitiable abortion. She will see this pregnancy through to the end. Her love will prevail. This Mother will look for a home for her new born, 'for Wisdom has built Herself a home'. And as it is for the whole of creation so it is for me. She longs to transform me into the image of her first-born! Not for Her a powerful kingdom, she wants a reign of peace out of justice for her child and for me and you...we need new images to take us into a deeper relationship with our 'God who is Love'.

One of the biblical words for compassion, *racham*, as in God's compassion for Her people, is derived from the word for womb, 'rehem'. Now there's a feminine image for you!

Jesus taught us to pray, 'thy kingdom come', I'm sure he never thought we would turn his phrase into a monstrosity of an authoritarian, male, hierarchical idol of a kingdom or a God!

Loving Mother, all powerful Father are human words, constructs, images that only point to the incomprehensibility of our God who is pure Love. Let us treat them with wise suspicion for 'Jesus is the image of the unseen God'! And 'Look up for your deliverance is close at hand'! 'A new heaven and a new earth'. ☪

Plenary Council 2020 & 2021 – can it meet the expectations?

AENGUS KAVANAGH FSP

Aengus Kavanagh FSP, Ryde NSW, looks at the challenges facing the Australian Plenary Council.

Senior churchmen in Australia in 2018 expressed appreciation and joy when the Vatican approved the holding on a Plenary Council of the Australian church. Putting it simply, such approval for a Plenary Council would elevate the status of the Council to a more formal level and would ascribe a binding authority to the outcomes in Australia.

Whereas this aspiration has merit, this Council reform pathway may have introduced hurdles which limit the focus and scope of desired outcomes. In a *Eureka Street* article (11 Sept., 2018) by Emeritus Professor John Warhurst, Chair of the Canberra-Goulburn advocacy reform group Concerned Catholics, sounded a misgiving: 'If the 2020 Plenary Council is not fully representative of Australian Catholic voices it will prove to be a monumental waste of time.'

The Council Executive Committee and the Facilitating Team certainly expended much energy, expertise and enthusiasm in setting up and promoting a pre-Council process in 2018-2019 to canvass relevant issues and ideas as widely as possible. The fact that there were 12,758 individual responses and 17,457 group submissions to Council was a heartening reflection of the widespread interest and yearnings among Australian Catholics for a renewed and a reformed church. The process really did invite a bringing of voices of ordinary Catholics to the table.

Council or Synod?

In looking to the first meeting of Council in October 2020 some clouds hover on the horizon. Is it possible that juridical constraints in decreeing the composition and voting rights of Council delegates may make the formal meeting of Council less representative than many might have hoped for as well as giving undue precedence to caution in formulating issues for submission? Canon 443 sends out 'protectionist' messages dampening hopes for open dynamics. This canon outlines in two categories: i) those who MUST be invited, and (ii) those who CAN be invited. Those who must be invited: all diocesan archbishops and bishops, all auxiliary bishops, other titular bishops with special functions, all vicars general, all episcopal vicars, some leaders of religious orders, some rectors of seminaries.

Those who can be called: other clergy, lay people, religious, retired bishops. The number who must be invited has to be double those who can be invited i.e. if there are 160 in the MUST category the CAN category may not exceed 80.

Again, voting rights at Council are divided into two categories. Category i): A *deliberative* vote, restricted to diocesan bishops, coadjutor and auxiliary bishops, other titular bishops. Category ii): A *consultative* vote on offer to vicars general and episcopal vicars, some leaders of religious orders, rectors of ecclesiastical and Catholic universities, deans of theology, priests and others of Christ's faithful. The number of the second category voters is not to exceed half of those voting from the first category. The deliberative votes only are sent to Rome for approval.

From this perspective the Council is very heavily skewed in favour of influence by the hierarchy. A vote on decisions forwarded to Rome denies direct voices for the thousands of lay faithful, priests and religious who invested much time and energy in leading the process of dialogue and discernment that evoked so much commitment within Catholic communities throughout the country. A strict adherence to the letter of Canon 443 has potential to rule out a strong advocacy for the themes surfacing in the 17,457 submissions to Council which include 115 focused and well-articulated recommendations submitted by the active Catholics For Renewal movement. (See *Getting back on Mission: Reforming Our Church Together*, 335 page book, Garratt Publishing, 2019.)

Obviously the bishops in casting their deliberative votes will be influenced by trends emerging in the consultative votes but given that clergy constitute a sizeable majority of the delegates one wonders whether the *sensus fidei fidelium* (sense of the faith of the faithful) may be authentically reflected in this scenario?

Synods in Action

There are many differences of composition and ambit between a particular Plenary Council and a synod. Nevertheless, there may be learnings from the Amazonian Synod held in the heart of the Vatican from the 6th to the 27th October, 2019.

Indicators are that what was deemed best for the Catholic communities of the Amazon region was a dominant driving force ahead of adherence to a framework of church law. Echoes of the response of Jesus to the Pharisees who sought to chastise him and his disciples when they dared to crush heads of grain for food on the Sabbath, loosely paraphrased: 'The law was made to serve man, not man to serve the law.' (Mark 2:27)

At the conclusion of the synod in Rome the Pope was presented with a 120-page document which was approved by the necessary two-thirds majority. Given the diversity in cultures, and the participation of a number of different language groups, the 120-page document would have contained a wide range of recommendations. Two 'hot button' issues which attracted public attention were: married priests, 128 YES, 41 NO; continued studies on the possibility of diaconate and other ministries for women, 137 YES, 30 NO. At least the Amazon Synod had the courage to test boundaries and many in the Catholic world eagerly await the release of the Papal response to the synod's recommendations!

Synod reports do not mention deliberative or consultative votes. This is hardly surprising as such categorisation would seem to be out of alignment with the Pope's vision for a future church. Speaking to bishops in Rome in early October 2019, Pope Francis said: *The journey of synodality is the journey that God wants from his church in the third millennium. A synodal church is a listening church, aware that listening is more than hearing. It is a reciprocal listening in which each one has something to learn.*

Another synod worth noting is the national synod of the German Catholic church which had its opening session in Advent 2019. The holding of such a synod did not meet with the approval of all the German bishops. Fears surfaced about the possibility of some synod outcomes being at variance with the teachings of the universal Catholic church. However, after dialogue between Pope Francis and President of the German Bishops' Conference, Cardinal Reinhold Marx of Munich, Vatican approval was given. It probably helped that Cardinal Marx is a member of the C-6, the Pope's inner cabinet. In a release statement Cardinal Marx said: *We will continually inform Rome of the Synodal way. However, we are aware that the synodal way will alter the church. A synodal process without reform is unthinkable.*

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It is of interest to contrast the composition of the German synod with the composition of the delegates to the Australian Plenary Council. Unencumbered by canonical requirements, delegates to the German synod are more broadly representative of the church generally. All German bishops were called to the synod. Each diocese was also invited to send 7 delegates: 3 priests and 4 lay people. The influential lay, and the sometimes controversial National Committee of German Catholics was allowed to send 40 delegates. All in all, the synod has an almost 50:50 composition, clergy to lay.

It is good to realise that Plenary Council 2020 need not preclude the holding of diocesan synods in Australia now. In fact, it could be a fertile time while 'the pot is boiling' with consciousness and expectations raised about the need, and the possibility of, significant change in our way of 'being church' in Australia. Under the title *Building the Kingdom Together*, the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle, Bill Wright, convoked a diocesan synod in August 2019. The process threads through 2019, 2020, and 2021 with a plenary assembly towards the end of each year. The 2019 synod assembly was held in November 2019.

The best way forward now?

Looking at the potential for different dynamics between synods and a Plenary Council, along with a Vatican filtering of outcomes in the case of the latter, the question arises as to whether Australia chose the better pathway in opting for a Council? Only time will tell. So far the Council preparation process has been a positive experience in the life of the Catholic church in Australia. The six themes derived in Phase 1 resonate with most Catholics of goodwill and form a framework for meaningful reform. Unfortunately, Australia though is already awash with diocesan and parish initiatives in pastoral planning in recent decades but with little evidence of significant renewal. A possible reason for the unfulfilled expectations may be that the main thrust of such initiatives has been on what the lay faithful need to do to bring about renewal. In itself that is a legitimate aspiration but, in most cases is unattainable in the absence of serious change in institutional church mind-sets, policies, practices and structures. Hence a need for the Plenary Council to focus as a priority on institutional elements that may enable the desired change.

At times in the public discourse about the Council voices have been raised proclaiming that the Council cannot 'change church teaching', or more fundamentalist still

'we cannot change what God has said'. It is beyond time to consign such such renewal-blocking mindsets to the dustbin and to start thinking about evolution in church teaching.

Think of Galileo's conviction of heresy by the church in the 17th century because he dared to question the theological claim that the earth was the centre of the universe with the sun circling the earth instead of vice versa. Think of the fact that it is but 55 years in 2020 since the Mass was first offered in the vernacular, in Italian by Pope Paul VI. Up to then the Mass was in Latin throughout the world.

Congregations would dutifully answer *Deo gratias* at the end of the Epistle and *Laus tibi, Christe* at the end of the Gospel while in most cases not having the slightest understanding of what they had just heard.

What of the 'church teaching' that for centuries prevented the faithful from hearing the Word in their own language, where seemingly control and uniformity were preferred to trust and inclusiveness? As is often said, Vatican II gave the Bible back to Catholics after centuries of push-back against the serious Protestant embrace of the Bible during the 16th century Reformation. Reluctant evolution in teaching has been a feature of the church's history over the centuries but too often self righteousness and complacency have hindered the pace of change needed to nurture a Gospel community through changed and ever-changing circumstances.

Members of the Plenary Council Committee, the Council Facilitating team, and collaborators, having journeyed closely with the huge amount of issues raised so far, have a good feeling for the *sensus fidelium*, the perception of what God is asking of the Australian church now and into the future. Most likely, there would be parallels in the hopes and expectations of Catholics in the Western world generally. And so, because of the high profile of a particular Council many church leaders and interested lay faithful throughout the world will eagerly watch outcomes in terms of commitment to reform.

Challenge and opportunity

This scenario presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the Australian Plenary Council. A main challenge arising is that of being seen to do justice in a courageous presentation to the Vatican of issues carrying a level of consensus among the many submissions originally received. In various ways, senior churchmen have been saying in recent times that the church in Australia is in need of a radical re-

culturing. New mind-sets, policies, and strategies calculated to bring about such institutional re-culturing need to be articulated clearly in a request for approval. This may be a last throw of the dice in the fashioning of a church that may find resonance in the Catholics at heart, especially among women and younger generations, who tick the 'Catholic' box at census time but who retain no affiliation with their local faith communities.

Given that the Plenary Council submissions and Vatican's response will attract widespread interest throughout the Catholic world, this is an opportunity for the Australian Catholic church to model a brave, enlightened, and respectful stand for ways of being church that will restore the trust and moral leadership our world desperately needs.

Take heart, the Pope is on our side

In its commitment to take such pathways, the Plenary Council can be emboldened in the knowledge that its quest for renewal is in alignment with the recurrent pleas of Pope Francis for a reformed church. All of his Apostolic Exhortations from *Evangelii Gaudium* in 2013, along with his many less formalised pronouncements, have reformation as his clarion call. Implicit in his statement 'We are not living in an era of change but in a change of era' is his invitation to read the signs of the times and to respond in the spirit of the Gospel.

The whole focus of the annual address given to the Curia and senior Curia staff by Pope Francis on 19th December, 2019, was on reform of the Curia and of the church. He warned to avoid that 'rigidity and self-preservation, a rigidity born of fear of change, which ends up erecting obstacles on the terrain of the common good.' Speaking of a fixation on tradition he challenged a common self-preservation stance: 'Nor is tradition static; it too is dynamic... tradition is the guarantee of the future and not a container of ashes.'

In his Curial address, Pope Francis recalled a popular archbishop of Milan, and a one-time serious contender for the papacy, Cardinal Martini, as follows: *Cardinal Martini, in his last interview before his death, said something that should make us think: 'The church is 200 years behind the times. Why is she not shaken up? Are we afraid? Fear instead of courage? Yet faith is the church's foundation. Faith, confidence, courage ... only love conquers weariness.* Questions to ponder ?

The Plenary Council has good company in its earnest quest for reform in the Australian Catholic church. ☪

Clericalism and ontological change

LAURIE BENT

Laurie Bent, retired priest of the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn.



Do many of our problems within the Church stem from this pernicious element of our religious life – clericalism? What do we understand by clericalism?

Pope Francis has given the following definition: *Clericalism arises from an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation received as power to be exercised rather than as a free and generous service to be given. This leads us to believe that we belong to a group that has all the answers and no longer needs to listen or learn anything. Clericalism is a perversion and is the root of many evils in the Church: we must humbly ask forgiveness for this and above all create the conditions so that it is not repeated* (Pope Francis: Address to the Synod Fathers at Opening of Synod 2018 on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment)

What stands out in this definition is the suggestion that it is the understanding of power bestowed during ordination that makes some priests think they are superior to the non-ordained. Yes, ordination gives to a human certain powers that enable him to perform the various aspects of his priestly life, but it does not make the priest superior to others. Indeed, if anything, it should make the priest a humble person, because, though a sinner himself, he has been given the ability to perform actions others are unable to do. He has not merited it in any way. He has been called to it.

But this is true of many professionals and trade persons. I cannot weld. I might have the ability, but I have not had the education nor the experience. Welding is not my calling in life. However, I have been called to the priesthood which must be seen as a calling to service. To this end, I am given certain powers, the power to consecrate the Eucharist, the power to forgive sins in the name of the Lord, the power to celebrate the various Sacraments of the Church for the good of the Faithful. When

people come seeking advice, the Lord will be with me so that I might be of assistance to those seeking help. When I speak of spiritual things in homilies or my ordinary teaching, I know the Spirit will be with me to prompt and assist.

I can be happy with my priesthood and what the Lord allows me to accomplish, but I dare not be proud of my abilities. They come with the grace of ordination. I should be thankful for the help and grace that has been given me to be the priest that God wants me to be.

The Pope refers to *an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation*. How does this manifest itself in clericalism? Firstly, you have those who set themselves apart from the general run of Catholics by special garb. They wear a uniform that states quite clearly, *We are in charge; you do as you are told*.

When the priest is at the altar performing the rituals of the Eucharist or he is celebrating a Sacrament, it is right and proper that he wear the vestments appropriate to the occasion. But in his everyday life, when he visits his parishioners, when he goes to the shops for purchases, or heads down the coast for a holiday, there is no need to dress in black with a thick collar which says *I am different from you*. And when are we going to do away with those silly hats that Bishops wear? What do they say? *We are different!* Or are they selected as leaders for a purpose? Fortunately, gone are the days when we had to grovel before them and kiss their ring – a symbol of power.

This reminds me of the lady in the hospital who was visited by a young priest dressed in the ordinary clothes of a layman. She said, *Thank you for not wearing a collar and all that. The way you are is saying that you are one of us. I like that*. You are one of us. Isn't that what we should be? Why pretend we are different? Yes, we can do things that others can't do, but so can a doctor, a sculptor.

This brings us to that popular misconception that priests are *ontologically changed*. St Thomas, expanding on Aristotelian philosophy, spoke of ontological change. Certainly, when transubstantiation takes place in the Eucharist there is ontological change. That is, the very being, substance, of bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. But ordination does not change us in our being. It does,

like Baptism and Confirmation, confer an indelible spiritual character which cannot be repeated. But we are still the same person.

To be ontologically different would make priests not human. And we have, unfortunately, learnt recently how human many priests can be. Ontological change does not occur in any of the documents of Vatican II, nor in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nor in Canon Law, nor in any of the missives relating to priesthood. A Sacramental character is conferred on the ordinand whether at Diaconate, Presbyterate, or the Episcopate.

Priests are not, by rite of ordination, granted some magical change to their souls. Ordination does not make them any holier, wiser, better preachers, better leaders. It was Baptism that brought them into the Body of Christ, and ordination allows them to serve the Body of Christ in a special way through the various Sacraments and through pastoral concern, example, and education.

There are things that the grace of ordination brings to a priest. I think most priests would have at some time had someone come up to them after a homily and say, *What you said there touched me deeply* or words to that effect. This is beyond the priest himself; this is the Holy Spirit working through him and his words to reach out to those who are in need of help. Thank God when that occurs.

Clericalism also reigns supreme in much of our institutionalized religion. It is enshrined in the hierarchy and the obsequious nature of our relationships with those above us. Have you ever noticed papal audiences? The front rows are full of bald heads covered by scarlet zucchetos, then there are rows of purple zucchetos, then some black zucchetos and tonsured heads, then some nuns' veils and a few cowls and finally some ordinary heads of the lay faithful. All in serried ranks assembled.

How was it in the early Church? We have it in Peter's letters. Here is the one to whom Christ said, *You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church* (Matt 16:18). Here was the first Pope, but in his letters, he refers to himself simply as *apostle of Jesus Christ* (1Pet 1:1) or as *servant and apostle of Jesus Christ* (2Pet 1:1) or *I am an elder myself and a witness to the sufferings of Christ* (1Pet 5:1). He was leading them as Christ wanted him to do so, humbly, and with an understanding of his own weaknesses.

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FEATURES

See also how Paul speaks of himself, simply as *Apostle* and occasionally *servant* (Rom 1:1, etc). James, likewise, refers to himself as *servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ* (James 1:1). Jude refers to himself as *servant of Jesus Christ* (Jude 1:1). John refers to himself as *The Elder* (2Jn 1:1; 3Jn 1:1). The title given to the leaders of the Church at the time.

I can't imagine any of them wearing something in their everyday lives that would set them apart and let all know that they were ontologically different.

No, they were ever the humble leaders of the flock they were asked to pastor. Why can't we be like that?

So much is also made these days about the

sexual abuse of minors in the Church that it is often a product of the sense of power that some delight in.

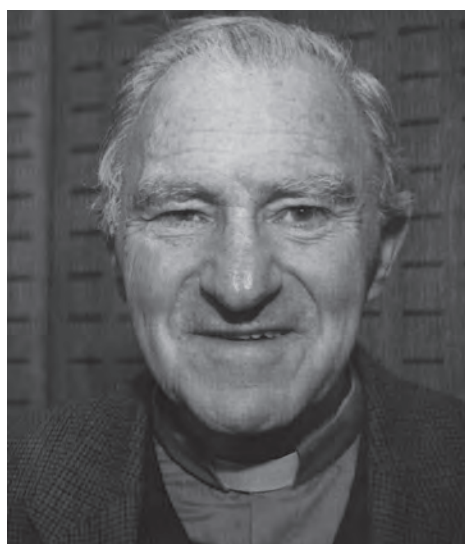
We must beat our breasts and ask for forgiveness for our sins. Let us, as priests, be humble ministers of God and his Word. Let us be one with the faithful we serve and with Christ whom we must image to the faithful. ☩



A priest's humanity and shame

PAT POWER

Pat Power, retired bishop of the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn, offers some thoughts at his priest classmate's funeral. Peter Lewis Comensoli was convicted of child sex offences in 1994. Pat Power visited Peter in jail throughout his 18 month sentence and remained in close contact with him from the time of his release until his death. These reflections offer another perspective on this complex reality we are trying to navigate today in the Church. These words were the homily at the funeral at Chapel of St Michael the Archangel, Rookwood NSW on January 31, 2019.



If I were asked to use one word to describe Peter Lewis Comensoli, our friend whom we mourn today, that word would be *loyalty*. Peter's loyalty to his friends and theirs to him, especially when he was so much in need of love and acceptance in the dark times of his life.

Sadly, the events which unfolded in the early 1990s which led to Peter going to prison for eighteen months in 1994 are what people will quite naturally always remember. I don't wish to gloss over any of that, but to say simply that that is not the whole story.

Paula has given an outline of Peter's life. Others here will know more details. God alone, Peter's merciful judge, knows the whole story. I suspect that even Peter himself did not know the whole story either or at least understand many of the

complexities of his own character. Who of us has such self-understanding?

Peter and I spent a year together in the same class at Chevalier College, Bowral in 1957 and I joined him at Springwood in 1959. They were the beginnings of a friendship which I have cherished ever since. I recently looked over some old photos to see a number of Cos and me together both at my home in Queanbeyan and during seminary times at Springwood and Manly. Many, too, feature the younger faces of other loyal seminary classmates here today. On 17 July 1965, Peter was ordained to the priesthood in Corrimal by Bishop Thomas McCabe, while on the same day, Albert Havas and I were ordained in Queanbeyan by Archbishop Eris O'Brien.

I often reflect that my seven years in the seminary (eight for Peter) were the least happy years of my life. That is not to say that they were unhappy, but I found the restrictive atmosphere of seminary life difficult after the more homely and relaxed environment at Chevalier and for a lot of the time I failed to see the relevance of much of the curriculum and whole approach in terms of preparing us for the priesthood. In some ways, I think that Cos coped better with the regime than I did. Although not brilliant academically, he passed the exams, kept the rules, had a good singing voice and most of all, I believe, had a deep spirituality where he always seemed to be at home with the things of God.

But for all that, I believe that whole seminary system did Peter Comensoli a

great disservice. I said that in his defence in court at his sentencing in 1994 and again a couple of years ago when other similar charges were brought against him. An all male environment in the seminary where sexuality was dealt with solely in negative terms and where the value of healthy relationships, male and female, hardly rated a mention was part of some very poor human formation. Added to that, any questioning of the system was forbidden. It affected us all in various ways, but its impact on Peter was greater because the nature of his childhood and adolescence left him without the secure family life which most of us take for granted.

He sought to be accepted and loved as we all do, but in many ways the need to please was part of Peter's downfall. Bishop Alo Morgan used to say that our strengths are our weaknesses and our weaknesses are our strengths. In our seminary days, Cos was kindness itself. If anyone was laid up in the infirmary, it was our old mate who would bring us a meal and he was always on hand to do a favour. Being in different dioceses after ordination, he and I did not see a lot of each other, but I often heard reports of his acts of kindness to parishioners well beyond the call of duty. When his reputation was tarnished, understandably many people condemned him but in the face of that a great number of people came forward with stories of their positive experiences of his pastoral care.

In my own family, Peter was very much at home and loved and accepted by the various family members. Two of my four sisters, Loretta and Margaret are here today and Maria and Pauline would have been if circumstances had allowed. One of Pauline's sons, Geoffrey, was particularly close to Peter. During his time as an Army officer, he served in a number of challenging postings, including Afghanistan. He made a point of inviting Peter to his wedding and he and Gabbi visited Peter in hospital just two days before he died. Loretta and her family

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Ordination Anniversaries 2020



Congratulations and Thankyou!

Ordination dates supplied to NCP
by individual clergy.

ORDAINED 74 YEARS

Rev Joseph Kearney SAC, 28/07/1946

ORDAINED 72 YEARS

Rev Mgr Raymond Pope, Port Pirie, 28/07/1948

ORDAINED 71 YEARS

His Eminence Idris E Cassidy, Sydney, 23/07/1949

Rev Harold Baker MSC, 24/07/1949

Rev Russel Morison CSsR, 04/09/1949

ORDAINED 70 YEARS

Rev Christopher Baker SSC, 23/09/1950

ORDAINED 65 YEARS

Rev Patrick Keenan CSsR, 13/03/1955

Rev Mgr Paul Ryan, Wollongong, 16/05/1955

Most Rev David Cremin, Sydney, 12/06/1955

Rev Ivan Hernon, Cairns, 29/06/1955

Rev Peter Liu, Armidale, 29/06/1955

Rev Emmanuel Khoshaba, Chaldean, 29/06/1955

Rev Stephen Cooney OPraem, 02/07/1955

Rev Peter Quinn, Sandhurst, 24/07/1955

Rev William Melican, Ballarat, 26/07/1955

Rev Martin Wilson MSC, 29/07/1955

Rev Peter Morrissey, Sydney, 30/07/1955

Rev Wilfred Plunkett, Wagga, 02/08/1955

Rev Kevin Flynn, Can & Goul, 03/08/1955

Rev Anton Hesse, Perth, 06/08/1955

Rev James Littleton MSC, 31/08/1955

Rev Peter Wilkinson, Adelaide, 03/12/1955

Rev Bernard Cleary SSC, 17/12/1955

Rev James Duggan SSC, 17/12/1955

ORDAINED 60 YEARS

Rev Joseph Hynan, Melbourne, 11/03/1960

Rev Benedict Sant MSSP, 02/04/1960

Rev Larry Nemer SVD, 02/04/1960

Rev Anthony Castelli, Armidale, 27/04/1960

Rev Peter Hayes OSA, 04/06/1960

Rev John Kelly, Lismore, 12/06/1960

Rev Patrick Ruane, Bathurst, 19/06/1960

Rev Daniel Carroll, Brisbane, 29/06/1960

Rev William O'Shea, Brisbane, 29/06/1960

Rev Anthony Moester SDB, 01/07/1960

Rev Francis Freeman SDB, 01/07/1960

Rev Anthony King SM, 09/07/1960

Rev James Harding SM, 09/07/1960

Rev Joseph Walsh OSA, 10/07/1960

Rev Robert Brogan, Broken Bay, 16/07/1960

Rev William Kennedy, Can & Goul, 16/07/1960

Rev Mgr Kerry Bayada, Sydney, 16/07/1960

Rev Paul Garland, Melbourne, 24/07/1960

Rev Eric Hodgens, Melbourne, 24/07/1960

Rev Frank Arnold, Melbourne, 24/07/1960

Rev Karmel Borg, Melbourne, 24/07/1960

Rev Barry Moran, Melbourne, 24/07/1960

Rev Robert Maguire, Melbourne, 24/07/1960

Rev Patrick Flanagan, Ballarat, 24/07/1960

Rev Edward McCormack MSC, 24/07/1960

Rev Bernard Maxwell OP, 22/10/1960

Rev Mgr Kevin Barry-Cotter, Can & Goul, 21/12/1960

Rev Adrian Head, Port Pirie, 21/12/1960

Rev Edward Murray, Toowoomba, 21/12/1960

Most Rev Geoffrey Robinson, Sydney, 21/12/1960

ORDAINED 50 YEARS

Rev Warren Kinne SSC, 01/01/1970

Rev Paul Gurr OCarm, 31/01/1970

Rev John Boyd-Boland OFM, 09/05/1970

Rev John O'Connor MSC, 09/05/1970

Rev Michael Reis MSC, 09/05/1970

Most Rev Geoffrey Jarrett, Hobart, 14/05/1970

Rev Alfonsas Savickis, Perth, 17/05/1970

Most Rev Brian Finnigan, Ballarat, 23/05/1970

Rev Kevin Burke, Melbourne, 23/05/1970

Rev Barry Hughes, Melbourne, 23/05/1970

Very Rev Ian Waters, Melbourne, 23/05/1970

Rev Kevin McIntosh, Melbourne, 23/05/1970

Rev Francis Young, Sale, 23/05/1970

Rev Mgr Ronald McFarlane, Parramatta, 04/07/1970

Rev Trevor Trotter SSC, 04/07/1970

Rev Michael Pullar, Sandhurst, 04/07/1970

Rev Michael Kelly OSB, 11/07/1970

Rev Prof Francis Moloney SDB, 11/07/1970

Rev John Daly, Rockhampton, 05/08/1970

Rev Mgr John Grace, Rockhampton, 06/08/1970

Rev Brian Sparksman, Toowoomba, 06/08/1970

Very Rev John Garrahy, Brisbane, 06/08/1970

Rev Thomas Chapman, Lismore, 08/08/1970

Rev Eugene Weber, Wollongong, 14/08/1970

Rev Peter Caruana, Wollongong, 15/08/1970

Rev James Ware SM, 15/08/1970

Rev John Andersen, Sydney, 22/08/1970

Rev Peter Matheson, Melbourne, 22/08/1970

Rev Arthur Cook, Parramatta, 22/08/1970

Rev Christopher Dixon, Parramatta, 22/08/1970

Rev David Vaughan, Sydney, 22/08/1970

Rev (Bernard) Paul Hart, Wagga, 29/08/1970

Rev Maurice Shinnick, Adelaide, 05/09/1970

Rev Peter Sheedy, Adelaide, 05/09/1970

Rev Guy Hartcher CM, 19/09/1970

Rev Ben Macajes SVD, 28/11/1970

Rev Thanh Nguyen, Sydney, 29/11/1970

Rev Paul Goodland, Military, 01/12/1970

Rev David Strong SJ, 05/12/1970

Rev Stanislaus Lim SJ, 12/12/1970

Rev Brendan Byrne SJ, 12/12/1970

Rev Colin Mason, Sydney, 18/12/1970
Rev Joseph Rathnaraj, Perth, 18/12/1970
Rev Peter Gaughan CP, 19/12/1970
Rev Michael Gilbert CSsR, 19/12/1970
Rev Dominic Carrigan CSsR, 19/12/1970
Rev Brian Fitzpatrick OSA, 19/12/1970

ORDAINED 40 YEARS

Rev Stephen Monaghan, Sydney, 22/01/1980
Rev David Hofman OCarm, 01/02/1980
Rev Francisco Mascarenhas, Perth, 01/05/1980
Rev James Kyaw Hoe SDB, 10/05/1980
Rev Peter Carroll SDB, 10/05/1980
Rev Stanislaw Skibicki, Broken Bay, 15/05/1980
Rev John Gibson OH, 17/05/1980
Rev Michael Kolodziej, Wil-Forbes, 22/05/1980
Rev John Mulrooney MSC, 24/05/1980
Rev Mgr Henryk Micek, Sydney, 07/06/1980
Rev Bernard Nolan, Brisbane, 27/06/1980
Rev Ciril Bozic OFM, 28/06/1980
Rev Martin Kenny, Cairns, 05/07/1980
Rev Paul Purcell, Sandhurst, 12/07/1980
Rev Andrew Fewings, Sandhurst, 15/08/1980
Rev Thomas Thornton, Can & Goul, 15/08/1980
Most Rev Christopher Prowse, Can & Goul, 16/08/1980
Rev Brian Lucas, Sydney, 16/08/1980
Rev Norman Healey, Melbourne, 16/08/1980
Rev Shane Hoctor, Melbourne, 16/08/1980
Rev Brian Egan, Sydney, 16/08/1980
Very Rev Dr Gerard Kelly, Sydney, 16/08/1980
Rev Joseph Ruys, Melbourne, 16/08/1980
Rev Roderick O'Brien, Adelaide, 16/08/1980
Rev Brian Nichols, Hobart, 27/08/1980
Rev Gerard Hayes, Armidale, 28/08/1980
Rev Paul Smith OFM, 29/08/1980
Rev Kevin Kerley SM, 06/09/1980
Rev Menardo Mercene, Sydney, 08/09/1980
Rev Michael Head SJ, 29/11/1980
Rev Dr Paul O'Donnell, Wil-Forbes, 03/12/1980
Rev Denis Andrew OCarm, 05/12/1980
Rev Paul Mullins SJ, 13/12/1980
Rev Davidanthony Davies, Wollongong, 13/12/1980
Rev George Mankuzhikary, 19/12/1980

ORDAINED 30 YEARS

Rev Eduardo Orilla, Sydney, 27/01/1990
Rev David King CP, 17/02/1990
Rev John McKay, Hobart, 16/03/1990
Very Rev John Conway, Brisbane, 16/03/1990
Rev Anthony Rathinam OSM, 03/04/1990
Rev Dominic Manakil, Townsville, 09/05/1990

Very Rev Kelvin Lovegrove, Sydney, 19/05/1990
Rev Brenton Taylor, Geraldton, 23/05/1990
Rev Paulino Tui Kolio, Sydney, 19/06/1990
Rev David Srumpf OFM, 29/06/1990
Rev Tibebeselassie Abza, Sydney, 01/07/1990
Rev Brian Morgan, Bunbury, 09/07/1990
Rev Harry Dyer OMI, 13/07/1990
Rev Stephen Bliss OFM, 14/07/1990
Rev Peter Nguyen MSC, 14/07/1990
Rev Neville Stanislaus, Ballarat, 31/07/1990
Rev Christopher Sarah FSF, Parramatta, 11/08/1990
Rev Aloysius Nato SVD, 12/08/1990
Rev Dr Brendan Reed, Melbourne, 25/08/1990
Rev Philip Son, Melbourne, 25/08/1990
Rev Vincent Jewell, Melbourne, 25/08/1990
Very Rev Joseph Caddy, Melbourne, 25/08/1990
Rev John Madden, Melbourne, 01/09/1990
Rev Kym Spurling, Adelaide, 08/09/1990
Rev Justin Driscoll, Ballarat, 08/09/1990
Rev Peter Dresser, Bathurst, 21/09/1990
Rev Gary Perritt CP, 17/11/1990
Rev John Darbyshire, Lismore, 23/11/1990
Rev Geoffrey Bugden, Broken Bay, 23/11/1990
Rev Paul Gooley, Lismore, 30/11/1990
Rev Ross Jones SJ, 01/12/1990
Rev Donald White, Rockhampton, 13/12/1990
Rev Anthony Percy, Can & Goul, 14/12/1990
Rev Max Gow, Lismore, 14/12/1990
Rev John Armstrong, Can & Goul, 14/12/1990
Rev Varghese Kurisingal, Melbourne, 18/12/1990

ORDAINED 25 YEARS

Rev Gerard O'Dempsey OFM Cap, 27/01/1995
Rev Michael Hickey CP, 18/03/1995
Rev Henry Tran, Parramatta, 21/04/1995
Rev Stephen Kumyangi, Brisbane, 07/05/1995
Rev Piotr Rzucidlo OFM, 13/05/1995
Rev John Fleming, Adelaide, 20/05/1995
Rev Mark De Battista, Wollongong, 24/06/1995
Rev Paul Winter, Lismore, 01/07/1995
Rev Francis Tran, Wollongong, 01/07/1995
Rev John Ho, Wollongong, 01/07/1995
Rev Patrick Njenga, Sydney, 01/07/1995
Rev Joel Nyongesa, Broome, 01/07/1995
Rev Charles Lukati, Adelaide, 01/07/1995
Rev Roland Maurer, Parramatta, 15/07/1995
Very Rev Maurice Thompson, Sydney, 22/07/1995
Rev Daniel Meagher, Sydney, 22/07/1995
Rev Alan Gibson CM, 05/08/1995
Rev Oleh Stefanyshyn, Ukrainian Ep, 28/08/1995
Rev Mark Hanns MSC, 23/09/1995
Rev Deacon Jim Curtain, Melbourne, 23/09/1995
Rev Huynh Nguyen, Perth, 17/11/1995
Rev Philip Perreau, Perth, 17/11/1995

Rev Joseph Van Vo, Brisbane, 18/11/1995
Rev Thu Nguyen, Sydney, 25/11/1995
Rev Stephen Fletcher MGL, 08/12/1995
Rev Michael Twigg OMI, 16/12/1995
Rev Shane Reade SDB, 16/12/1995

ORDAINED 20 YEARS

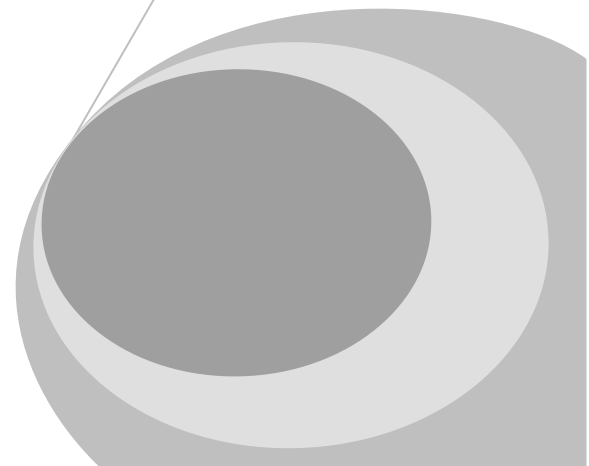
Rev Dominic Dinh, Sydney, 21/01/2000
Rev Bijo Adichilamackal, Melbourne, 29/01/2000
Rev Phillip Alstin, Adelaide, 25/03/2000
Rev David Catterall, Wollongong, 25/03/2000
Rev Gregory Walsh CM, 05/05/2000
Rev Michael Tate, Hobart, 19/05/2000
Rev Paul Ghanem OFM, 27/05/2000
Rev Jim Shelton, Perth, 03/06/2000
Rev Giosue Marini, Perth, 03/06/2000
Rev Anthoni Adimai SdM, Adelaide, 13/06/2000
Rev Prof Lawrence Cross, Melkite, 25/06/2000
Rev Richard Robertsen, Perth, 30/06/2000
Rev Melvin Llabanes, Perth, 30/06/2000
Rev Emil Milat, Can & Goul, 30/06/2000
Rev Douglas Harris, Perth, 30/06/2000
Rev Peter Meo, Perth, 30/06/2000
Rev James D'Souza, Perth, 30/06/2000
Rev Deacon Joseph Blackwell, Can & Goul, 14/07/2000
Rev Deacon Francis Zacka, Sydney, 15/07/2000
Rev Deacon Louis Azzopardi, Sydney, 15/07/2000
Rev Walter, Fogarty, Parramatta, 22/07/2000
Rev Peter Krigovsky, Sydney, 29/07/2000
Rev Adrian Sharp, Brisbane, 14/09/2000
Rev Gabriel Ballawig, Sydney, 28/09/2000
Rev Peter Day, Can & Goul, 20/10/2000
Rev Simon Falk, Can & Goul, 17/11/2000
Rev Paul Crotty, Port Pirie, 25/11/2000
Rev Chris Heffernan, Wagga, 25/11/2000
Rev Daniel Benedetti MGL, 01/12/2000
Rev Leonard Size, Melbourne, 08/12/2000
Rev Eugenio Zurias-Diaz, Perth, 09/12/2000
Rev Francis Sundararajan, Perth, 09/12/2000
Rev Francis Nguyen, Perth, 15/12/2000
Rev Phong Nguyen, Perth, 15/12/2000
Rev Charles Waddell, Perth, 15/12/2000
Rev Son Nguyen, Perth, 15/12/2000
Rev Paul Chackanikunnel CMI, Bris, 26/12/2000
Rev Anto Chiriyankandathil, Wagga, 26/12/2000
Rev Shibu Jacob MSFS, 28/12/2000

ORDAINED 10 YEARS

Rev Luca Park OSA, 12/01/2010
Rev Anthony Nagothu, Ballarat, 23/01/2010
Rev Anwar El Khoury, Melkite, 02/02/2010
Rev Elie Francis, Melkite Eparchy, 02/02/2010
Rev Rajasehkar Kodavatikanti HGN, 19/04/2010

Rev Stephen Pilly Kotaiah SVD, 28/04/2010
Rev Adel Tabbaa, Melkite, 02/05/2010
Rev Tony Bouchaaya, Melkite, 21/05/2010
Rev Minh-Tan Hoang OSA, 04/06/2010
Rev Kim Ha, Sydney, 11/06/2010
Rev Joseph Guinea, Sydney, 11/06/2010
Rev Robert Doohan, Brisbane, 11/06/2010
Rev Nen Dang, Sydney, 11/06/2010
Rev Joseph Gedeon, Sydney, 11/06/2010
Rev Andrew James, Sydney, 11/06/2010
Rev Thanh Van Tran, Melbourne, 19/06/2010
Rev Anthony Casamento CSMA, 03/07/2010
Rev Simon Kitimbo, Sydney, 04/07/2010
Rev Deacon Peter de Haas, Cairns, 04/07/2010
Rev John McHugh, Armidale, 16/07/2010
Rev John Purnell, Broome, 23/07/2010
Rev Gregory Bellamy, Bathurst, 23/07/2010
Rev Martin Tanti SDB, 28/07/2010
Rev Deacon Tim Shanahan, Brisbane, 31/07/2010
Rev Rodrigo Mujica, Perth, 06/08/2010
Rev Benny Calanza, Perth, 06/08/2010
Very Rev Bernard Hancock OCD, 20/08/2010
Rev Aurelio Fragapane, Melbourne, 11/09/2010
Rev Nicholas Pearce, Melbourne, 11/09/2010
Rev Jossy Kuriakose, Melbourne, 11/09/2010
Rev Richard Rosse, Melbourne, 11/09/2010
Rev Edwin Ocho, Bunbury, 23/10/2010
Rev Robert Galea, Sandhurst, 05/11/2010

**Ordination dates supplied to NCP
by individual clergy.**



Continued from page 30

living in Cooma had a very special relationship with Peter. While he was 'doing time' there, she visited him regularly in prison, facilitated mine and other people's visits and acted as his sponsor in the time leading up to his release on parole. I say all that, because those family members, like me, knew of Peter's offences but they were also aware of the many endearing qualities that most of you here would have also encountered in him. There is no denial or cover-up in any of that, simply a belief in redemption and God's unconditional love for all of us.

St Paul summed it up in today's second reading: *Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.*

Pope Francis has been a regular visitor to people in prison. Just over two years ago at the end of the Year of Mercy he reflected: *Our life with its joys and sorrows is something unique and unrepeatable that takes place under the merciful gaze of God. This demands, especially of priests, a careful, far-sighted spiritual discernment, so that everyone, none excluded can feel accepted by God, participate actively in the community and be part of the People of God which journeys tirelessly towards the fullness of his kingdom of justice, love, forgiveness and mercy.*

Peter Comensoli's journey has come to an end just short of the 80 years he would have clocked up on 18th March. I visited him in hospital twice in the days leading up to his death, once on the day before he died and the first time a week before that. On the occasion of the first visit, he spelt out to me quite definitely and bravely that death was not far away. When I asked him explicitly how he felt about the prospect of meeting God, he replied that he was at peace relying on God's mercy and Our Lady's motherly care. I shared with him the sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and the Blessed Eucharist and another great classmate, Paul Hanna, did likewise the next day, at the same time inviting Peter to bestow those same blessings upon him.

I am sometimes applauded for the support I gave to Peter over the years, but it is Paula Kerr and Peter Blayney, Peter's long-time friends from Tribunal days who have stood by him in countless ways. They visited him almost daily when he was in hospital. It

was mainly they who helped Peter be at home in Parramatta Diocese when that was no longer possible in the Diocese of Wollongong. I acknowledge not only Paula and Peter but all those in Parramatta Diocese who were brave and kind enough to stand by Peter in the face of possible public criticism. You gave him security in the face of his health and accommodation issues, kept him calm when he was about to panic and, most of all, enabled him to continue to believe in himself and in God's love for him no matter how much he felt threatened or 'at sea'. Finally, I wish to say how greatly Peter appreciated the loyalty, friendship and love of Julia and Charles. Peter had been part of their family as he ministered to their parents when he was a young priest. They never lost faith in him, always remained in contact and welcomed him into their home especially at Christmas. It is so right that Peter was to spend his last Christmas with them even though he was so unwell and they had moved further afield.

In our Gospel reading, the Apostle John shares with us what is known as the priestly prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper: *Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see the glory you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world....May the love with which you loved me be with them, so that I too may be with them.*

Pope Francis points to what that means to Peter and to us when he writes: *Death must be faced and prepared for as a painful and inescapable passage, yet one charged with immense meaning, for it is the ultimate act towards those we leave behind and towards God whom we go forth to meet.* I alluded earlier to Peter's devotion to Our Lady. The Pope's final words in his letter at the end of the Year of Mercy are particularly apt. *The Holy Mother of God always looks upon us with her eyes of mercy. She is the first to show us the way and to accompany us in our witness of love. As she is often shown in works of art, the Mother of Mercy gathers us all under the protection of her mantle. Let us trust in her maternal assistance and follow her perennial counsel to look to Jesus, the radiant face of God's mercy.*

Go gently dear Peter, our old mate. You have made a unique contribution to our lives. Eternal rest grant unto Peter, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. ☪



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Can the Plenary Council get us back on track?

CHRIS GERAGHTY

At the Sydney launch of the book, *Getting Back on Mission* produced by *Catholics for Renewal*, Chris Geraghty offered some recommendations inspired by the book. This is an extract from the launch speech.

On behalf of the Bishops and Archbishops of Australia may I congratulate Catholics for Renewal and thank them for the remarkable submission that they have made to our forthcoming Plenary Council. There is a significant contribution which, try as they might, the bishops will find difficult to ignore.

A Plenary Council is a meeting of bishops to plot and plan the future of their institution – no, our institution. The council which the bishops and others are planning for 2020 will be the fifth Plenary Council which has been held in Australia – and the first to be held in Adelaide. Archbishop Coleridge has been elected chair and is charged with herding those planning the future of the Catholic Church in Australia.

We are charged with planning the future of the church in this country at a very complex time.” Coleridge continued: *‘There is need to consider deep questions of culture and the church’ – can I add, the clerical and the Australian cultures?* He continued – *‘And there must be a genuine and thorough response to what has been uncovered by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.’*

Past Plenary Councils

The 1895 Plenary Council, where Cardinal Michael Francis Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, presided over 72 participants, exclusively clerics, issued a number of decrees, declaring, for example, that regular confession should be promoted, especially for children; that priests should be careful around women; that young people should be warned about the dangers of certain dances and that temperance societies should be promoted, especially for the clergy.

In 1905, Cardinal Moran was again in the chair at St Patrick’s College, presiding over an assembly of clerics including a superfluity of theologians, thirty-seven at last count – but no lay men or women. Clerics were forbidden to attend the theatre, the opera and horse-racing, and they could be suspended from exercising their supernatural powers if they were caught.

These councils lasted one or two weeks and were exercises of the Church Triumphant. The bishops were tinkering at the edges of

a perfect institution. The church was still eternal and infallible, and the unique agent of salvation. They only needed to fiddle a little here and there.

But the 2020 Plenary Council is promised to be different. It has been advertised far and wide, and preached at least by some bishops and clergy as THE answer to the Australian Roman Church’s self-inflicted woes. Some of our bishops have promised their people there’ll be no change, that they don’t have to worry. It’ll be a tragedy if they are proven right. Many of the non-voting male and female members are more inclined to see it is the last throw of the dice by an institution in deep shit. There’s no denying that the voting participants will be confronted with a Herculean task – to drag a heavy institution, unwillingly, out of a messy bog. No band-aiding will do the job. It’s a radical, root-and-branch heart and lung transplant recommended by Catholics for Renewal.

Recommendations for 2020 Plenary Council

The operating transplant surgeons will have enormous assistance and support from the many thousand submissions which Catholic groups and individuals around the nation have produced and which until now have remained under wraps – all except the weighty submission of Catholics for Renewal which has been published in book form for all to read by Garrett Publishing. They are to be congratulated – the publisher and the authors.

There is an attractive freshness about the text. The material consists of a number of introductory topical essays or theological vignettes to set the tone. These are accompanied by facts and figures about the church in Australia and a series of recommendations.

I was particularly delighted by the authors’ emphasis on the kingdom of God preached so beautifully by Jesus in stories which have fascinated the masses for centuries. I was brought up short by the authors’ liberating insistence that the mission we must all return to is God’s mission, not the church’s – a mission which involves the church, which it shares in, though the church does not cover the field and cannot claim ownership of the territory. The authors also

invite the bishops to have regard to the *sensus fidei fidelium* or the innate feeling of the faithful for the faith. This idea might prove troubling to those on top, those charged with protecting the citadel.

The recommendations which the Catholics for Renewal offer to the participants of the Council are so detailed and far-reaching, drafted to penetrated deep into the life of the diocese and the parish, into the life of each bishop and priest, of each minister or servant on the mission. The book contains a wealth of recommendations. You will read them – and each seem so obvious, so reasonable, and yet in the light of the Roman church’s recent history, so innocent, so utopian.

What will the bishops and archbishops do with them? You might ask. These men, many old men, almost to the last one, conservative men, all unmarried and without grandchildren, have all been educated in the Church’s closed system and clerical sub-culture. They were nominated as *episcopabile* in secret by elite members of the system, vetted by the system and inducted into office by their clerical confreres. Many of them live a parallel universe. They will need a few sessions of spiritual electro-convulsive therapy to come to terms with *Getting Back on Mission*.

The list of recommendations have been labored over, discussed in large and small meetings, chiseled and refined by members of Catholics for Renewal, presented to you for your consideration and offered in faith to the Council members as a way forward for a weakened, wrinkled and wounded institution. You will read them and come to your own conclusion. For myself, I found them balanced, reasonable and compelling – and a genuine expression of what Rome and theologians refer to as the *sensus fidei fidelium*.

Addressing a group of theologians five or six years ago, Pope Francis said: ‘By the gift of the Holy Spirit, the members of the Church possess a ‘sense of faith’. This is a kind of ‘spiritual instinct’ that makes us, you and me, and the member of Catholics for Renewal, think and feel with the mind of the church and able to discern that which conforms with the teachings of Jesus. You sense the vibes of the Gospel; you dance to the music of the apostolic tradition. The Holy Spirit makes sure that the little people of Jesus, people like Catholics for Renewal, are on the correct wavelength and dancing joyfully to the right tune.

Deliberation for change

A great majority of us expect the participants of the Council in their deliberations and decrees, to embrace a new world of transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, integrity, a world of freedom rather than petty legalism, of justice and fairness, and respect for the primacy of the individual conscience.

They will be obliged by their exalted office to try to find a common language in which to communicate with the modern world, with peoples of all colours and sizes and who embrace a vast variety of beliefs, values and attitudes – not just with the old, obedient, conservative, nostalgic members of an increasingly arthritic flock. If they continue to inhabit the world of the Middle Ages, the world of Trent and the First Vatican Council, of the modern Pope Piuses, we might as well give up now. That's not going to work.

Getting Back on Mission has important suggestions about how to implement the liturgical reforms envisaged by the Second Vatican Council, and how to re-invigorate diocesan and parishes liturgical celebrations – a program of formation and education – a trained team of liturgical experts – public praying, preaching, singing, celebrating – and reforming (once again) the terrible English translation of the Roman Missal we have been lumbered with by a Cardinal who will remain nameless.

Getting Back on Mission also sets out a series of recommendations on how to select a bishop and who should be involved; what qualities are essential, and what ones would be quite helpful; suggestions on the training of bishops, of parish priests and seminarians; the production of a Charter of Rights and Duties for the faithful; a range of proposals on the governance of the diocesan and parish communities; on leadership and pastoral ministries; on how the Plenary Council should be constituted and a recommendation that the Catechism should be revised to include in the fold our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters.

But I'm not going to ruin your reading by revealing all the recommendations. You'll have to buy the book.

Instead, (and not being one to miss an opportunity), I'd like to add a few suggestions of my own to the excellent recommendations so helpfully set out by Catholics for Renewal.

Australian Aborigines and Asylum seekers

Our church is in desperate need of redemption and a totally new program for

getting back on mission. One doesn't have to look far to see the wounds in our society which are calling out for some healing ministry.

The fate of the original inhabitants, after two hundred years of settlement, is a horror most Australians cannot bear to face. In this existential void, our Church should seize the opportunity and work hard to be recognized as the best friend of the Aboriginal peoples and the first port of call for those in need.

I say nothing of our nation's despicable and cruel treatment of those seeking refuge among us in a wealthy nation; of the neglect of those with a serious mental illness; of the bullying and discrimination visited on the disabled among us; of those condemned by a harsh government to eke out an existence on Newstart; of our nation's failure to take the urgent steps to alleviate the effects of climate change; of desperate mothers and frightened, confused little children who are homeless and the victims of domestic violence. When has Jesus' voice been shouted from bell-towers and pulpits demanding justice and fair treatment for these beautiful creatures of God?

I want the bishops and the church leaders to speak out – no – to shout out – and to put their wealth where their mouth should be.

Sexual Abuse and Ordination of women

As Archbishop Coleridge has hinted, the Catholic Church in Australia still needs to cleanse its soul of the damage its clerical and religious members inflicted on innocent little boys and girls in their care, in schools, in orphanages and local parishes, and purify itself of the stain caused by episcopal leaders and senior clergy choosing to disbelieve the victims if they complained, in neglecting the little ones in their care, in moving offending perpetrators from parish to parish, hiding their crimes and facilitating their grooming. There is much to be acknowledged and forgiven.

I recommend to the participants of the Plenary Council that they pass a motion of profound gratitude to the former Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, who initiated the Royal Commission, to the five commissioners who ran the show, to the witnesses and wounded who came forward to disclose their secrets of abuse, to the experts for their considerable contribution to the expose of criminal behaviour hidden deep within the life of the church.

Not one bishop or archbishop took the time to attend the final, solemn session of

the Royal Commission. Their absence on that occasion was a disgrace – and they should express their regret.

I recommend that the Plenary Council should humbly admit that the task of reforming the sub-culture within our institution is beyond them and take steps to engage the services of a number of experienced professionals to assist them in plotting and planning the future. There is any number of futurologists, social commentators and PR gurus out there in the world who could help them read the signs of the time and plan some future directions for the church in Australia. If the Labor Party can do it, so can bishops. Their telephone numbers are in the book – or is that an old-fashioned way of speaking?

Getting Back on Mission deals at some length with the thorny question of the ordination of women to the priesthood and the diaconate. Why women would want to join the priesthood in the modern world and get around in clerical gear is a puzzle to me – though frankly I can see no theological or scriptural objection to their ordination. But new ministries have to be found, for men and women – commissioned ministers to care for the dying, to support the bereaved, to teach, to preach, to make music, to minister to those in prison, to those in nursing homes, to promote the cause of refugees, conduct safe havens for women and children struggling with domestic violence, spiritual directors, financial managers, team leaders – and a small team of ordained prophets and prophetesses in each parish or community – to stir, to challenge, to read the signs and demand that we should be *Getting Back on Mission*.

In the early church, each community had a little band of prophets and prophetesses who were responsible for making public interventions in the faith gatherings, dreaming dreams, seeing visions, outbursts of spirit-inspired revelations. These men and women enjoyed a special status in the community, exercised a recognizable and important mission and were ranked in the hierarchy just behind the apostles. It was their task to bring the community back on mission, to receive messages from beyond and pass them on, to read the signs of the times, to divine where the community was heading, to warn, advise, to criticize and direct. Social commentators – futurologists – ecclesiastical stirrers like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and the rest of the team. Where have all the prophets gone? We need them back with us. ☞

The baptised and their ministry – theology and reality

PIERRE LOUYS

Pierre Louys explores the way lay participation needs to change in the Church if it is to reflect the movement of theory and practice in the minds of the people. The implications for an effective Plenary Council are considered and the possible dangers unmasked.

Yves Congar is a ‘must-go-to’ reference when one is looking at the growing theological importance of lay people in the life of the twentieth century church.

His work (*Jalons pour une théologie du laïc*) published in 1953 and therefore before Vatican II, has without doubt, brought lay people back to the centre of the theological and religious dialogue within and outside the church.

He highlighted the major imbalance in the church legal constitution which gave a predominant place to its hierarchy and almost a non-existent passive role to the laity.

He offered a range of theological arguments in support of changes which were eventually enacted in the proceedings of Vatican II and beyond.

The teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerning the laity was an enormous and lasting achievement, particularly when it is listed in conjunction with John Paul II’s later-contributions. Major developments since the Council include the publication in 1983 of the new Code of Canon Law, with its fairly extensive treatment of lay people’s rights and duties.

Then the 1987 general assembly of the world Synod of Bishops focused on the laity, and the subsequent publication of John Paul II’s post-synod document, *Christifideles Laici* (The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People), released in January 1989 and the Catechism of the Catholic Church promulgated in 1992.

Since Vatican II, Catholic laity have become increasingly knowledgeable about the Code of Canon Law as well as being aware of their rights within the church.

The document, *Book II – The People of God*, is available online on the Vatican website.

The fracture

Whilst the sexual abuse of children by clergy and members of religious orders, has widened the deep fracture between Catholic leaders and their ‘sheep’ in modern times, tension between a more differentiated, traditionally hierarchical understanding of ministry and a more fluid, charismatic understanding of

ministry has been a regular part of the history of the church. Many in the flock have ‘left the church’ or even asked to be removed from the register of baptisms when they were confronted with stern moral dictates, instead of compassion and insight, or when they were seeking a dialogue with their bishops on social problems such as contraception, abortion or same sex marriage.

So far, in the context of the present crisis, the majority of lay people have either left the ‘repair work’ to the clergy and the church hierarchy or have taken that final step out the door. That reaction is mainly complying with the passive role they’ve been taught over the centuries by a theology that dispenses divine authority in the ordained ranks and expects lay people to pray, pay and obey.

Now, that neat formulation has been contested as more ordinary Catholics, but not just them, disagree with the authorities on particular teachings. In Australia and abroad, this adjustment has reflected the dominant culture’s passion for individual rights and the Second Vatican Council’s reminder that an informed conscience can overrule doctrine.

Absolute truth may be in the hands of the church hierarchy, but the daily life struggles and street-level truths are in the minds of each citizen of a democratic society. Whilst the church canonical structures and the Code remain the legal and favourite instrument of the church leaders to confront the dissenting baptised, the fear of disobedience or eternal damnation has largely disappeared from the ranks of those lay people calling for a transformation and renewal of these antiquated structures which are now seen as ‘structures of sin’.

As early as the late 90’s Gabriel Ringlet, a priest and vice-chancellor of university of Louvain was adding his voice to the call for reform and renewal of the church’s structures. In his book (*L’Évangile d’un libre penseur*) he wrote: *One must not underestimate the ecclesial malaise: it is deep. Like Yvette Chabert, I am convinced that a majority of Christians – lay people, priests and even bishops – are suffering because the public voice of the church, is spoken from above on*

their behalf and constructed without them... Statements which often misrepresent the enthusiastic work of the local synods and discard vital questions. (My translation)

Ringlet was not the only academic voice to advocate structural changes, back then almost 20 years ago, he was also talking about synodality, a word which has become a leitmotiv for Catholics supporting Pope Francis. Ringlet said: *If it (the church) dared the conversation... By organising a true public opinion, accepting the ‘right to diverge’, learning or relearning to make synod which means, at all levels, deliberating before deciding. To recover an authentic synodality, it is also finding an evangelical way to live with conflicts and welcome them as a sign of healthy discourse with critical Christians whose words may sometimes blow your hat off.*

Closer to home, in a different time and space but with the same spirit, John Warhurst, an Emeritus Professor of Political Science at ANU, has written an article published in December 2019 in Eureka Street. I quote from the first paragraph: *The wider community should be aware that the Catholic renewal movement in Australia continues to grow. It has been stimulated by Vatican II teachings and more recently by the inspiration of the vision of Pope Francis. Within Australia the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse’s recommendations helped generate special interest in reform of church governance, structures and culture. Then the preparations for the Plenary Council 2020 (PC2020), a national gathering to discuss the future of the Catholic Church in Australia, opened up more possibilities for local and diocesan discussions mandated by church leadership.*

To paraphrase Leonard Cohen, there is a crack in everything and that’s how the light gets in.

A diocesan reality

Whilst there is a hope for the church in Australia, that the PC2020 will be ‘the crack’ and will bring much needed canonical changes that the laity and many forward-thinkers like Ringlet have cried for. The resistance to change – despite the injunction of the Royal Commission (recommendation 16.7) – and the deliberate disdain for the rights of the laity is still the norm at the ‘coal face’ of the diocesan world. Any attempt by the baptised to raise concerns about the delivery of pastoral care provided by the diocesan leaders is met with silence, suspicion or outright rejection.

In dealing with the consequences of the clergy and religious sexual abuse of children scandal, many dioceses were forced to consider their financial situation and their capacity to provide compensation to the victims as Anthony Fisher explains: *Archbishop of Sydney Anthony Fisher said the Church was 'expecting to be paying out for survivors for many years to come, ...and we stand ready to do that. We are going to back that [with] our insurance and our assets. We are determined to bring justice and full redress, healing if we can, to the victims of this terrible crime.'* *The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse heard evidence from 2,500 people who had been abused in Catholic-run institutions. This was 62 per cent of all survivors who reported abuse in a religious institution.* (Source ABC)

Political and legal pressures have forced many bishops to give priority to the business side of their diocesan 'operations' and examine all diocesan agencies with due regard to their operational costs and their sources of revenue. Some have hired business consultants and managers to address the drain of pastoral care services on the diocesan 'bottom line'.

A number of managerial decisions have followed and have caused a number of lay people and even priests to question the decision-making process and the consideration (or lack of) given to 'the good of the church' in such re-structuring process.

In his 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, John Paul II spoke of 'structures of sin' that, if left unchecked, would inexorably desecrate our natural world and undermine the solidarity that is an essential feature of human personhood.

Paramount among these structures, he argued, were rapacious economic practices associated with post-industrial capitalism – which in effect if not by design, were not only fast eroding the beauty of creation and the dignity of the human person, but also the political, legal and ecclesial institutions designed to ensure a flourishing human community.

It is feared that the 'structures of sin' are firmly in place in many dioceses. My recent experience with the leaders of my diocese supports this sad reality. Before, during and after our recent synod session, I raised some questions and concerns which I thought were related to pastoral matters, with the diocesan leaders. I was first given the silent treatment. Then after many emails, the bishop and his vicar general replied in a dismissive and patronising manner, avoiding any reference to the

main issues of concern and then thanks to my perseverance I received a final response: *Thank you for your email. I do not propose to respond to this or further emails on the subject matter.*

Another sign of the diocesan negative transformation from the 'structures of participation' to the 'structures of sin' is visible in the conduct of the diocesan synod session (in parallel with the PC2020) and the reporting procedures.

It is my opinion what happened at the synod session can be considered a reflection of the diocesan community life and a microcosm of the Australian society at a particular time and place. It is very important to record and report on the proceedings in the most objective and comprehensive manner.

Any truly constructive rapprochement between religious leaders and the baptised of the diocese must begin with our acknowledging the full scope of devastation that afflicts our material and spiritual ecologies. There can be no meaningful change without an unsparing analysis of what has brought about a dismal and perilous state of affairs that has also deracinated the mission of the diocese and continues to undermine the theological, spiritual and moral integrity of most diocesan agencies.

Compliance

It is understood that not every diocese is handling questions and concerns about pastoral care from the baptised in the same way, although they all have in place a range of processes, procedures and standards which have been developed at various times and for different reasons.

The Royal Commission is now demanding consistent professional standards in all dioceses.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia approved the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards in May 2019. This approval indicates a clear expectation that Catholic entities across Australia are now required to implement *the Standards*.

The recent audit report shows that there are 141 out of 262 Catholic Church entities have formally engaged with the independent Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL) compliance requirements at the end of November 2019.

There are currently three levels:

1. NCSS training: indicates that at least one representative from the Church entity has attended a CPSL facilitated training

about the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

2. Service Agreement: indicates that a Service Agreement between the entity and CPSL has been executed; 'in development' means the entity has initiated contact with CPSL with the express intention of signing a Service Agreement once scoping has been completed.

3. Audit status: Where a year is listed this is the year an audit is scheduled to occur; links to published audit reports are provided.

Whilst this is a positive development, its focus is solely on safeguarding standards. There is a need now to implement a similar approach to audit how diocesan leaders match their performance with the *Integrity in Ministry* pastoral care standard and how existing structures are transformed in order to implement Pope Francis's proposed reforms. The pope has again recently given priority to mission and relationships over efficiency. He said: *We too are part of this people, we were chosen to be servants, not masters or managers.* The pope told the bishops in Thailand, to be *unafraid to take to the streets and come face to face with the lives of the people entrusted to their care.*

It is my wish that our diocese (and all dioceses) embraces Pope Francis' injunction to become 'part of the people' and accompany them with patience, whilst valuing their initiatives or validating their concerns instead of becoming a 'Catholic Corporation' driven by economical necessity and canonical justifications. ☪

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Creatively receiving the Aboriginal gift

GREGORY MOSES

This article by Rev Dr Gregory Moses follows on from his articles in the Autumn and Summer 2019 editions of *The Swag*, where he looked at Process Theology. These articles taken together are a re-writing of a paper given in Sydney in July, 2019 at the Australian Catholic Theological Association conference.

As I stated in the Autumn 2019 edition of *The Swag*, I suggest we might need to do this (Process Theology) not just as individuals but as believing and worshipping Australian church, as local communities and as a nation, and as if the possibility of living a harmonious life in the country which claims us partly depended on it. We need to take it into our heart, our liturgy and our lives, not just as something peripheral, exactly like John Paul II said in Alice Springs. Finally, we need to do this not as an alternative to doing justice, but as an intrinsic part of that, as one of the ways in which we express respect, beyond just some 'acknowledgement of country'. This would in other language constitute a kind of *embedding* in Australian general culture and Church culture going beyond just using Indigenous language also for place names, though that might be a start.

We can try to do this much at least, for the sake of working towards a semblance of harmony in our personal and communal lives in the country which claims us, while we await and perhaps try to shape what is going to happen next in the economic substance of our lives and what might be the superstructural consequences of that.

My question then, which I will explore in this paper, is whether our metaphysically grounded Process Relational Spirituality of Life and Creation as Gift (see last edition of *The Swag*) can help us in any way for doing this. But first a no doubt extremely inadequate expedition into Indigenous Australian culture and spirituality.

Indigenous Spirituality from Bangalore paper:

At a conference in Bangalore in January I began a paper I gave with an attempt to evoke something of Indigenous Australian culture and spirituality, something better than nothing for an Indian and international audience. I tried to do this with the help of three examples.

With particular acknowledgement to Mudrooroo, *Us Mob: History, Culture, Struggle: Introduction to Indigenous Australia* (Angus and Robertson/Harper Collins, Sydney, 1995), and to Margaret Kemarre Turner, *Iwenhe Tyerrtye – What it*

means to be an Aboriginal Person (as told to Barry McDonald Perrurle, with translations by Veronica Perrurle Dobson) (IAD Press, Alice Springs, 2010). Also to *Elders: Wisdom from Australia's Indigenous Leaders*, photographed and recorded by Peter McConchie (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003). I have read a lot, for going on two years, most recently David Mowaljarlai and Jutta Malnic, *Yorro Yorro* (Magabala Books, Broome, 1993), I have tried to get it all right. I apologise in advance for any misunderstandings.

Example 1: there is the story told to me about Australian Aboriginal artwork in traditional mode. I am told (initially by Fr. Frank Fletcher, MSC, would you believe, in a paper he gave at ACTA in the 1980's when I was at Kensington) that in its traditional setting and for people whose country that artwork is, Australian Aboriginal artwork is capable of functioning symbolically on multiple levels. The painting will have geographical and ecological functionings, mapping the lay of the land, waterholes, where the animals and plants are etc., a guide for biological survival and flourishing for the people claimed by that bit of country. On another level it will have a sociological, individual and communal narrative identity functioning, helping to tell people who are owned by the stories and song lines and ceremonies of this country exactly who they are in respect of their total natural, social and spiritual environments. On yet another level it will have what we would call a 'religious' functioning, tapping into the Dreaming and events in the Dreaming about journeys of Ancestors e.g. Rainbow Serpent or whatever which produced the lay of the land and determined the sociological and the individual and communal narrative identity constructive functioning of the land and how people can get to flourish in the context of that land. Not that the levels are separate: they are inextricably interwoven, one story, one pattern, it is we who make the separation.

Example 2: what anthropologists sometimes call totems, a spiritual relationship of a particular group of people with a particular kind of animal. Let us say, kangaroo people. This indicates a kin like

closeness with and responsibility for the wellbeing and flourishing of kangaroos and their young in a particular region. This could mean we might not hunt or eat kangaroo meat, except on important ceremonial occasions. More importantly for the kangaroos and their joeys, our country gets to be like a sanctuary or reserve for kangaroos, thus helping to ensure their survival and continued flourishing across the whole area. The close spiritual connection in turn becomes another important identifier and connector in a network of connections and relations in this case reaching beyond even the language/intermarriage kinship group sometimes called the nation. And thus we have a spiritual relationship grounded in the Law and the Dreaming which has important ecological, psychological and sociological effects.

Example 3: marriage laws, right and wrong way marriages, always exogamous, sometimes very complicated. These laws, founded in the Dreaming, and adapted to the kind of country, are far from arbitrary and contribute to flourishing on a number of different levels. At one and the same time they stop inbreeding, strengthen and solidify extended family relationships across a wide area in a sophisticated manner, while seeing at the same time to the balanced appropriate care of country and its different creatures.

In terms of the theme of the January Bangalore conference on harmony of cosmic, ethical and religious spheres: for all its historical fragility in the face of the threefold invasion of European diseases, European addictions and European settlers, this in its structural features seems or seemed in principle to represent almost the ultimate in integration and harmony of cosmic, ethical and religious orders. There is a harmony and integration of content, and of people into their total social, natural, spiritual and religious environment. This is matched by a harmony and integration of form: the artwork gives visual expression to the stories and the song lines which are reflected in the dancing and ceremonies and expressed in the way people live their lives in country, with each other and with the world of spirits, all founded in the Law and the Dreaming.

This is obviously a long way from where we are right now, wherever that may be. It is also at a greater or lesser distance from our First Nations people, caught, sometimes lost, at various places in the spectrum

between the Dreaming and the Market (cf. Frank Brennan). Though in my limited experience and reading very often even in the cities retaining a strong sense of close and extended kinship beyond us Lebanese! And even in the cities in many cases some kind of connection to country. On the other hand it may serve as one exemplification of something like where all our cultures may have started out, and also a possible resource or resources provided for us by Elders past and present (and available in every public library) for getting back some of what we so obviously need.

A first step: receiving our Gift Spirituality

I think the first thing our Process Relational Spirituality of Life as Gift might do for us Latter Day Australians is to put us into the right place. It is important how we receive this: it may not be organic; our culture is beyond that. But not to appropriate this either as a consumer product, a spirituality off the shelf among all the other spiritualities, which is our master narrative default cultural attitude, let alone as an extension of our colonising stealing their soul and spirit having stolen their countries. This needs to be received as an important gift or a bundle of important gifts, which have been and are being given. In terms of another image sometimes used it needs to be conceived as a stream to be properly and fully received and embedded in the general culture and in our church culture, to the extent to which it is being given, which I among others have found very generous, with the appropriate acknowledgements and protocols. Though maybe as previously noted it will be mediated for most of us initially by people of our own who have been given and have received the gift (like Eugene Stockton or Frank Fletcher, or for someone coming from the Atherton Tablelands in north east Australia the Augustinian Rod Cameron).

Beyond this, I find the Process Relational conceptuality (see last edition) does help me also with the content.

Firstly there is a congeniality between traditional culture and the strongly relational character of what the Process Relational people propose, one is like a particular enfleshment of the other. Even in a received creatively adapted form, the

inheritances from our First Australians are going to be a lot closer to what is proposed as the likely metaphysical structure of reality than is our individualistic consumerism, in Marjorie Suchocki's terms a much less shallow spirituality. Though Process conceptuality does make for a somewhat greater degree of creativity: I will come back to this.

Secondly, I find it useful to think of the Dreaming, stories, song lines, ceremonies, law as something like more or less successful clan-in-nation-in-country appropriations of the Divine Lure for the sake of integration into and overall flourishing within a particular social and natural and spiritual environment. As has been noted a lot lately, there is enormous variation across the continent, but I think still maintaining a certain structural



similarity or similarity of style, and in a lot of cases at least changing in a manner which is more or less coordinate with the changing environment.

Theologically speaking the Dreaming creation stories are not creatio ex nihilo of course (Genesis probably isn't that anyway). They are more like the transformation of amorphous landscape into meaningful country in which everyone and everything is given a place: see above. Traditional stories sometimes using the very same ancestral beings can also be used as a technique for passing on technologies across generations, for example technologies having to do with agriculture or aquaculture or the preparation of certain kinds of food or the proper use of fire, all important elements of integral ecological flourishing in particular environments. See Bruce Pascoe, *Dark Emu* (Magabala Books, Broome, 2014) pp. 46-47, 56, 122-123, 142-144 for some examples. Getting introduced to

the stories and song lines and ceremonies and law then becomes the counterpart of what we call education, more effective in context than much of what goes on under that title in our culture!

Divine mystery breaking through

My personal perception would be that, while the telling of the stories might function to bring people into a relationship to what we Christians aim at when we call God, it might be a comparative theological mistake on our part to consider the ancestral beings as the counterpart of the Divine Mystery, in spite of their creative and law giving functions. (See later for a qualification.) With some exceptions which may or may not include an indigenous creative reception of input from Christian missionaries, I think the

Divine Mystery breaks through rather on the margins of everything: in the numinosity, the sense of sacredness and awe, evoked in the telling of the stories about these beings and their doings, and singing of the song lines and the performance and involvement in the ceremonies and presence in the sacred places (I have experienced a little bit of this last). Perhaps it is there also in the wonder of the integration being achieved by all of this. Beyond this there might also be elements of the mystical, particularly in the processes by which the Dreaming got set up in the first place and by which the Dreaming gets to be adapted to changing circumstances with the

help of certain kinds of people, people of high degree for example. But or in addition there is also a species of everyday mystical, e.g. what has been referred to as 'Dadirri' (Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr), a certain habitual contemplative mode of living, "a deep listening and quiet still awareness" (quoted in Eugene Stockton, *Martha and Mary of my Mind: Studies into Deep Consciousness* (Blue Mountain Education and Research Trust, Lawson, 2018), p. 23). Also, as has been noted, e.g. by Bruce Pascoe, there is a kind of democracy at work, high degree is high degree of what everyone potentially has, and everyone involved in passing on the stories plays a role.

[The most interesting exceptions I have come across are as recorded in *Yorro Yorro: Spirit of the Kimberley* by David Mowaljarlai and Jutta Malnic (Magabala Books, Broome, 1993). In the Kimberley stories there seems to be a belief in something like a High God, Ngadjar, the Above One, above all, the Incomparable

Continued page 42

One and before our time. This is followed by Wallanganda, the master of our galaxy the Milky Way, who appears on earth in the form of a Wandjina Raingod to install all of nature and bring life to the planet. See esp. Ch. 23, pp.132-144, and Appendix 3 Time periods, p. 204. There is also a Flood story and even a Wandjina who died so that people could have Life, to be reborn through the love of the Wandjina who gave his life for them (Ch. 31, pp. 195-198). By way of comment on this, whether or not it is Christian influence: to think that the traditional stories should be purified of Christian or other e.g. Makassan Islamic influences, to my mind is to treat the cultures as if they were museum pieces, or like a species of native fauna and flora to be preserved in its pureness, rather than living cultures of living people with inbuilt resources capable of absorbing new insights and adapting themselves to changing circumstances.]

Beyond this, I have had a go at using Process Relational conceptuality to make sense of the 'Every When' character of the Dreaming (W.E.H. Stanner). In its relationship to Time it is structurally similar to the Consequent Nature of God available to every concrescence in the particularised form of what they call Divine Initial Aims or the Divine Lure specific to that situation, also Every When.

This structure comes into play in respect also of what I am now going to talk about, my own personal experience and how I originally got to be interested in Aboriginal Spirituality.

Aboriginal spirituality

My initial interest in Aboriginal culture and spirituality came out of my experience as a presider at Eucharist in Atherton Tablelands parishes coming to a certain point maybe five or six years ago. In the midst of the intensity of involvement in the mode of presider at liturgies in the parishes I found myself sometimes to be taken over, particularly but not only in the bigger liturgies, and my people noted it also and caught some of it. I used to think, Jesus said take this all of you and eat of it, take this all of you and drink of it. When we at the Lord's command take and eat, when we take and drink, we latter day disciples attach ourselves to that 'you', and thereby get attached like the original disciples to the Saving Death the next day and the Resurrection and the Coming of the Spirit. But I soon came to think, this is too much activity on our part. I now think something more like: when we get involved in our Ceremony, our Last Supper

Dreaming takes us over and at the end of it churns us out as People of the Christian Last Supper Good Friday Easter Sunday Pentecost Sunday Dreaming, that is as Christians, sent out to glorify the Lord with our lives. Or something like this. I then transposed this structure to the Readings and the Deacon reading the Gospel, bringing our Gospel Dreaming into the present, and beyond that to what we were doing in the various seasons. Not this was the Word of the Lord, this is the Word of the Lord, not this was the Gospel of the Lord, this is the Gospel of the Lord. Why try to get back to the way we think people might have experienced Liturgy in the early centuries when we Australian Christians have a ready made conceptuality given to us on our doorstep?

This requires only one change or reinterpretation in our theology which I think some people already do: namely to think of the Ascension as not just the taking up of the physical Jesus into God but the taking into God of the whole Christ Event, which then gets to be an Every When possibility, something that can then come into presence and take us over when we do ceremony. For this to happen it helps that God is allowed to have a Consequent Nature, that bits of important history can be taken up into God and made available not just as past events.

There is a difference, but I think it is all to the good. We Christians are churned out not just as People of the Christian Dreaming founded in a certain story, but also as People of the Dream, people who long for and pray for and work for the Coming of the Kingdom. Dream here as previously also is as in Martin Luther King "I have a Dream", the dreams of the prophets, God's dream for us and for and with our communities and for and with the natural world. Nor is it just a dream, it is a dream which lures us into itself. The Divine Lure in this sense doesn't just make a certain present possible, it lures us into a certain future. I say this is all to the good, because it means our reception of the Aboriginal Gift has maybe gotten to the point where we might have something to give back.

Another personal learning probably more generally available is by way of an hypothesis that there might be transformational value in moving from attachment to and care for Nature in a generic sense to attachment to and care for particular bits of Nature. In other words, it might be good for us and for the rest of creation to try to go, as individuals and as families, from Care for Nature to something more like Care for Country! This relates particularly to my

experience since I got into kayaking around 2002. It got to be enhanced by my move from Sydney and Brisbane back to my father's country on the Atherton Tableland in 2006 and then in retirement to my mum's country on the Shoalhaven in mid 2017. It was also helped by the transition from kayaking for fishing to just kayaking, and noticing the different mode of consciousness involved. Though that also had to do with catching too many turtles in Lake Tinaroo! Of course hiking in a certain mode is probably just as good if not better. I'll leave this for people to make whatever they can of it.

By way of a concluding reflection: it has to be acknowledged that we have to do with a different way of doing business, sometimes called mythic which I don't find very helpful, but in any case making a lot more use of the imaginative pole of consciousness than we are accustomed to.

In respect of this I would make two comments. Firstly, even if we cannot ourselves engage in this, I think it needs to be acknowledged that this is a legitimate and in context largely effective way for human beings to do business, in terms of the above for taking account of the Divine Lure for the sake of integration into and overall flourishing within a particular social and natural and spiritual environment.

Secondly, as Frank Fletcher contended long ago, for the sake of our own future as church and as society we ourselves could maybe do with something of a rehabilitation of the imaginative pole of consciousness. Or, better yet, while making the very best of the wonders of the sciences hard enough not to be infected with the spirit of late capitalism, it might be a good idea to find ways of tapping into what Eugene Stockton calls "Deep Consciousness", of which the imaginative pole of consciousness is like what he calls the "Playground" (*Martha and Mary of my Mind*, pp. 10-11). This by the way is something you can come at also from a Process angle, in the distinction they/we make between two modes of perception, perception in the mode of 'presentational immediacy' and the deeper, much less processed, more immersed perception in the mode of 'causal efficacy'. The metaphysical and theological poetics I have tried to be engaged in above in its background theory tries to take this deeper consciousness into account. Or, I guess it must be acknowledged, people could do with something a bit more user friendly! We are going to need every resource we have. So, while most of us cannot go exactly the same way, there may well be learnings in respect of form as well as in respect of content. ☺

The Pope speaks to the World Economic Forum

FRANCIS

Pope Francis sent a message to the delegates of the World Economic Forum which was delivered by Cardinal Peter Turkson. The Vatican released the text on 15 January, 2020.



As the World Economic Forum celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, I send greetings and prayerful good wishes to all taking part in this year's gathering. I thank you for your invitation to participate and have asked Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, to attend as the Holy See's representative.

In these years, the World Economic Forum has offered an opportunity for the engagement of diverse stakeholders to explore innovative and effective ways of building a better world. It has also provided an arena where political will and mutual cooperation can be guided and strengthened in overcoming the isolationism, individualism and ideological colonization that sadly characterizes too much contemporary debate.

In light of the ever growing and interrelated challenges affecting our world (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 138 ff.), the theme you have chosen to consider this year – Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World – points to the need for a greater engagement at all levels in order to address more effectively the diverse issues facing humanity. Throughout the past five decades, we have witnessed geopolitical transformations and significant changes, from the economy and labour markets to digital technology and the environment. Many of these developments have benefitted humanity, while others have had adverse effects and created

significant development lacunae. While today's challenges are not the same as those of half a century ago, a number of features remain relevant as we begin a new decade.

The overriding consideration, never to be forgotten, is that we are all members of the one human family. The moral obligation to care for one another flows from this fact, as does the correlative principle of placing the human person, rather than the mere pursuit of power or profit, at the very centre of public policy. This duty, moreover, is incumbent upon business sectors and governments alike, and is indispensable in the search for equitable solutions to the challenges we face. As a result it is necessary to move beyond short-term technological or economic approaches and to give full consideration to the ethical dimension in seeking resolutions to present problems or proposing initiatives for the future.

All too often materialistic or utilitarian visions, sometimes hidden, sometimes celebrated, lead to practices and structures motivated largely, or even solely, by self-interest. This typically views others as a means to an end and entails a lack of solidarity and charity, which in turn gives rise to real injustice, whereas a truly integral human development can only flourish when all members of the human family are included in, and contribute to, pursuing the common good. In seeking genuine progress, let us not forget that to

trample upon the dignity of another person is in fact to weaken one's own worth.

In my Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, I drew attention to the importance of an 'integral ecology' that takes into account the full implications of the complexity and interconnectedness of our common home. Such a renewed and integrated ethical approach calls for 'a humanism capable of bringing together the different fields of knowledge, including economics, in the service of a more integral and integrating vision' (ibid., 141).

In acknowledging the achievements of the past fifty years, it is my hope that the participants in today's Forum, and those to be held in the future, will keep in mind the high moral responsibility each of us has to seek the integral development of all our brothers and sisters, including those of future generations. May your deliberations lead to a growth in solidarity, especially with those most in need, who experience social and economic injustice and whose very existence is even threatened.

To those taking part in the Forum I renew my prayerful good wishes for a fruitful meeting and I invoke upon all of you God's blessings of wisdom. ☩



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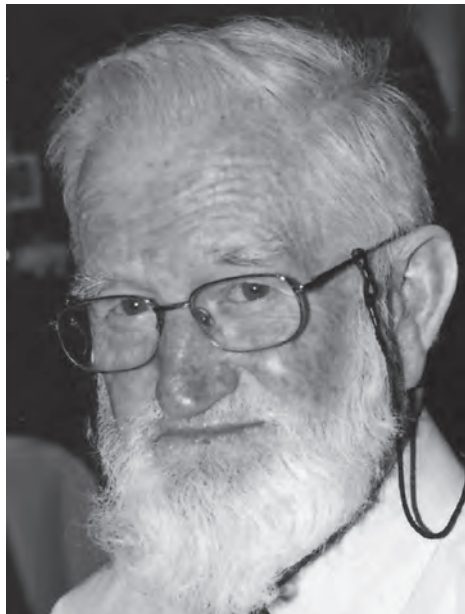
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Spirituality and music

FRANK O'DEA SSS

Frank O'Dea SSS explores the relationship between various forms, styles and eras of music in the search and celebration of the divine.



Beethoven (1770-1827) composed nine symphonies, all masterpieces. In the final movement of his ninth symphony the singers join the orchestra in the glorious setting of *Ode to Joy* expressing this wonderful human emotion. The choral symphony is one of the most sublime of all human achievements.

Searching for the Divine

Within the human psyche there is a yearning for the divine which can be expressed in beautiful music. This applies to every person, believer or not.

I believe that composers, whether they know it or not, are looking for God. Their compositions show a search for ultimate beauty which can move us to tears as we are transported into a higher sphere of consciousness.

We cannot define the ultimate reality which we call God, Allah or any other name, so we use some form of art to express what we mean.

Plato (427-347 BCE) said, *Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, flight to the imagination and charm and deity to life and everything.*

Beauty Truth Goodness

Beauty, Truth and Goodness are tightly interwoven like the strands of a garment. Humans have always tried to express their deepest feelings in dance and music.

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) said that composing music was like 'wrestling with God.'

Music has always been a very rich way of celebrating sacred events. Every culture has developed its own characteristic style of music to express its feelings about the mysteries that are beyond our ability to put into words. The human voice was the first form of music. Drums of all kinds, wind and string instruments were developed.

The Australian aborigines use voice, clapping sticks and the unique didgeridoo. In Buddhism the monks chant Om to keep the mind focused on the ultimate reality. In Hinduism music 'is considered to have mythological roots and is associated with the heavenly singers, the Gandharvas. It is considered a means of redemption rather than mere entertainment.' (Wikipedia)

Judaism uses music. After the victorious crossing of the Red Sea, *Miriam the prophetess ... took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines, dancing.* (Ex. 15:20)

The 'king of instruments' is the pipe organ which may have several manuals; it has stops to control the selection of pipes so that there is a huge variety of effects such as clarion, oboe, trumpet, clarinet, flute... The biggest organs have up to seven manuals and 20,000 pipes. They also have keys for the feet to play; these give a really deep rich sound.

A very popular organ piece is the *Organ Symphony Number 3* by Camille Saint Saens (1835-1921). It explores the full range of organ sounds and evokes extraordinary power.

Forms of Music

Christianity has developed many different forms of music. Perhaps the most sublime is Gregorian chant, waves of sound unaccompanied by instruments, giving a sense of mystery hidden in the depths.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) composed beautiful sacred music similar to Gregorian.

Polyphonic singing for choirs is also very beautiful. People like Palestrina (1525-1594) were masters of this form. Some wrote not just for the usual four voices but up to forty parts! Imagine trying to knit a jumper with forty strands instead of two!

Classical Composers

Handel (1685-1759) composed wonderful spiritual music; perhaps the most renowned piece is his *Messiah* including the popular *Hallelujah Chorus*.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was a prolific composer of sacred music. Who could not be moved by the wonders of *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring* or *Sheep May Safely Graze*?

Mozart (1756-1791) composed spiritual songs such as *Ave Verum Corpus* and many masses. He was driven to find the ultimate reality.

Karl Barth said, *When the angels sing for God, they sing Bach; but I am sure that when they sing for themselves, they sing Mozart – and God eavesdrops* (*The Tablet*, 21 December 2013).

Thousands of masses have been composed by musicians. These masterpieces help us to lift our souls to God as we go through the various parts of the mass: the Kyrie, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei.

When I was young, singing at mass was regarded as an optional extra. I would say now that music is an essential part of any religious ceremony.

Vatican II promoted singing for the ordinary person, so popular music with guitars became common. Some thought this music was too secular but it got people singing, hence more in touch with the sacred. Hymns have become more scripture based.

Creativity and emotions

God is the ultimate creator of all things as we see in the extraordinary diversity of plants and animals and is very generous in pouring out this gift to composers of great music.

I enjoy listening to classical music marveling at the inventiveness of the composers. It's like a meditation, putting me in touch with a higher dimension of reality. The whole range of human emotions is covered in music.

Perhaps Chopin was the greatest composer to express emotion. His *Revolutionary Etude* was written to show his anger at the brutal putdown of a revolution in his native Poland; you can hear the anger sparking out from the keys. He drew from the piano all the emotions of romance, tenderness and delicacy. There is power in his *Military Polonaise* and in his third Ballade there is a melody so delicate it's like egg-shell porcelain.

Asking forgiveness for one's failings is set to music in the *Kyrie* of all masses. Perhaps the most wonderful composition in this genre is the *Miserere* by the priest Gregorio Allegri probably written in the 1630s for two choirs and including a boy soprano who is required to sing astonishingly high notes.

Death and Resurrection

Death has prompted a lot of music, helping us to cope with grief and loss.

In German mythology, the Erlking is a malicious spirit who kills children and can only be seen and heard by children. Schubert (1797-1828) put to music a poem about a man riding home in the dark with his son on the saddle with him. The boy hears and sees the Erlking and cries out to his father 'My father, my father...' in a very poignant voice, but the father says it's only the wind in the trees, but when they arrive home the boy is dead. The piano imitates the galloping horse. Extraordinary emotion in just four and a half minutes!

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) called his second symphony *The Resurrection*. It is his most popular and most successful work and expresses his lifelong view of the beauty of the afterlife and resurrection.

At the funeral of a friend he heard the words 'Rise again, yes, you shall rise again/ my dust.' These words were his inspiration for this magnificently spiritual work, featuring a large orchestra, a mixed choir, a soprano, a contralto and off-stage brass and percussion.

Anzac Day which commemorates the tragedy of Gallipoli draws thousands of people of all persuasions to the dawn service every year. When the trumpet plays the *Last Post* I get a lump in my throat.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) composed his most famous work *Bolero* as a ballet. It takes just one single theme and explores it through various harmonies and instrumentation with a snare drum playing an infectious rhythm throughout.

When the first performance finished the audience went wild with applause and a woman was heard to call out, 'The madman! The madman!' When Ravel was told of this, he replied, 'That lady ... she understood.' For me, this music sings of mystery which explores the depths of the human spirit, even madness.

Contemporary Composers

The tradition of writing music which inspires the spirit continues today. Peter Sculthorpe (1929-2014), an Australian composer, describes vividly the Australian

landscape in music. *Small Town* is based on the fact that every town has a memorial to those who died in war. He uses the *Last Post* to wonderful effect. Philip Glass (born 1937), American, writes repetitive music suitable for meditation. John Tavener, English, 1944-2013, composed some beautiful spiritual music such as *The Protecting Veil* for cello and orchestra.

Arvo Pärt (born 1935) is an Estonian composer and joined the Russian Orthodox Church. His music is in part inspired by Gregorian chant. He is regarded as a mystic minimalist writing beautiful sacred music such as the *St John Passion*, *Te Deum*, *Magnificat* and *The Beatitudes*.

The Frenchman Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) wrote some beautiful spiritual music drawing on his Catholic faith. When a prisoner of war in 1940 he wrote *Quartet for the End of Time* for the only instruments available: piano, violin, cello and clarinet. It was first performed for the other prisoners and guards. A moment of heaven in conditions of hell! Other compositions include *Twenty Gazes upon the Child Jesus* and *Three Small Liturgies of the Divine Presence*.

Music as Therapy

Music has been used since primitive times to help people cope with pain and to recover from all kinds of illness. In modern times it is being used to help sick adults and children including victims of cancer and autism.

Greg Barns wrote a very good article in *The Age* on 5 December 2015 on how music helps people suffering from depression. He says that after listening to Mozart, Bach or Beethoven, 'Suddenly physical energy courses through veins that had seemed dormant for too long.'

He says that when two groups were compared, one hearing music, the other not, there was a reduction in depression-related symptoms among the group that listened to classical music each week. He continues, 'It is comforting to know that Bach, Mozart and Corelli are not just placebos. The notes, chords and passages of crafted sublime beauty you hear and feel are lifting your head off the pillow because that is how our bodies and minds react to such sounds.'

Music is being used to help elderly people with dementia. When music they knew when they were younger is played for them, patients who had been listless suddenly became lively and beat time with their feet or hands or body movements and smiled with enjoyment. Some who could barely walk began to dance.

The whole brain is involved in listening to music. Folk music has a beauty of its own; it's the music of ordinary people and easily appreciated. Some folk music has been handed down from generation to generation, and no one knows the composer.

Spiritual Folk music

Some of the most spiritual folk music comes from the African American slaves of Southern United States. While oppressed they expressed their feelings in music.

Were You There? is about the crucifixion of Jesus and challenges us about sharing in Jesus' suffering. 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble... Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?'

Let Us Break Bread Together sings 'When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun, oh, Lord, have mercy on me.'

Amazing Grace has the beautiful words '...how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.'

Many folk songs are laments, grief at the present conditions. An example is *The Wearing of the Green*, an 18th century Irish Folk Song which laments that the English have forbidden the Irish to wear green; they must wear 'England's cruel red'. But there's hope: 'I've heard whispers of a country that lies far beyond the sea where rich and poor stand equal in the light of freedom's day.'

The American folk song *The Cruel War is Raging* laments, 'The cruel war is raging, Johnny has to fight, I want to be with him from morning till night. Won't you let me go with you? No, my love, no. I'll tie back my hair, men's clothing I'll put on and I'll pass as your comrade as we march along. Won't you let me go with you? No, my love, no.'

Romance features prominently in folk music. *Aupres de ma Blonde (Nearby to my Dear One)* is a good example. 'Nearby to my dear one, how I love to be nearby to my dear one.'

In *Aura Lee*, the lover sings, 'Aura Lee, Aura Lee, maid with golden hair, sunshine came along with thee, and swallows in the air.'

The Polish song, *Krakowiak* sings, 'Darling maiden, hark, I ask thee I would like to make a bargain. I'll sing you some love songs if you will kiss me sweetly and gently.'

Many folk songs of romance are tinged with sadness.

Danny Boy sings of a woman's love for

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FEATURES

Danny. She mourns her own death but still longs for Danny, 'Ye'll come and find the place where I am lying and kneel and say an Ave there for me and I shall hear tho' soft your tread above me and all my dreams will warm and sweeter be. If you will not fail to tell me that you love me then I shall sleep in peace until you come to me.'

The Scottish folk song *Loch Lomond* sings of lovers enjoying the banks of the loch, but one must take the high road, the other the low road, 'But me and my true love will never meet again on the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond.' At the words, 'never meet again' the music has beautiful descending chords to fit the mood of the words.

The old Welsh air, *The Ash Grove*, sings, 'Amid the dark shades of the lonely ash grove, 'twas there while the blackbird was cheerfully singing I first met that dear one, the joy of my heart . . . Ye echoes, oh, tell me where is the sweet maiden? She sleeps 'neath the green turf down by the ash grove.'

Death and Joy

Death is a frequent theme. *Will the Circle be Unbroken* has the lines: I was standing by my window on one cold and cloudy day when I saw the hearse come rolling by to

take my mother away. I told the undertaker, "Undertaker, please drive slow. For this body you are hauling, Lord, I hate to see her go." The chorus sings, 'Will the circle be unbroken by and by, Lord, by and by. There's a better home awaiting in the sky.'

The traditional song, *Blood on the Saddle*, mourns the death of a cowboy. 'There was blood on the saddle and blood all around. And a great big puddle of blood on the ground. A cowboy lay in it all covered with gore. And he never will ride that bronco no more. Oh, pity the cowboy all bloody and red. Oh, the bronco fell on him and mashed in his head.'

Joy is a frequent theme. The lovely waltz, *Carnival of Venice*, sings, 'O come to me when daylight sets, my sweet, then come to me when smoothly glides our gondolets over the moonlight sea. When mirths awake and love begins beneath that shining ray with sounds of guitars and mandolins to steal young hearts away . . .'

'If You're Happy and You Know it' is a clapping song. 'If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap, clap). If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it.' The song continues with toe (tap, tap), head (nod, nod).

Humour is a very important element in

the human psyche and composers used it in their works by including a *scherzo* in their symphonies. Scherzo may be loosely translated as a joke, providing some light relief.

My favourite scherzo is in the *Concerto Symphonique* by Henry Litoff (1818-1891). It's very fast and the main theme is repeated over and over but I never get tired of it as it's so delightful.

Our spiritual life is not complete without some fun. *Mrs Murphy's Chowder* is a wonderful example: "It had ice cream, cold cream, benzene, gasoline, soup beans, string beans, floating all around; sponge cake, beef steak, mistake, stomach ache, cream puffs, ear muffs, many to be found, silk hats, door mats, bed slats, Democrats, coco bells, door bells, beckon you to dine, meat balls, fish balls, moth balls, canon balls, come on in, the chowder's fine."

Pop Goes the Weasel: 'All around the cobbler's bench the monkey chased the weasel. The monkey thought 'twas all in fun. Pop! Goes the weasel.'

God Sings

God's first language is silence. In meditation I listen to the voice of God singing silently to me. I don't need hearing aids! ☺



Can they be one at the Plenary Council?

GARY STONE

Gary Stone, permanent deacon, comments on the challenges of having strong divergent views on what the Church needs for the future at the Plenary Council.



In Jesus most passionate prayer recorded in John 17 he prays: May they be one as you and I are one. . . . may they be one so the world will know that you sent me.

Much positive energy has been put in by many people to help us discern a way forward for the Catholic Church in Australia through the process of the Plenary Council

The Holy Spirit is certainly leading us in positive ways that will help us be missionary disciples – making a positive contribution to not only the way our church functions but also to making Australia a better place to live especially for those that are in need. In the course of this journey it is clear that the majority of Catholics who are participating in this discernment seek to improve ways that we go about being

church, but it is also clear there is a small but very loud and vocal minority who are resistant to any change and indeed seek to turn the clock back, as well as denigrate our holy Father the Pope, some Bishops and the riches of came out of the Second Vatican Council.

How do we graciously relate to these people and indeed how can our plenary council recommendations and follow-up actions be communicated and delivered in ways that promote unity and not discord?

Within our broader society we already see significant adversarial attitudes promoted by interest groups that go beyond just verbal dissent to include active disruption of our lives.

I'm sure this must be a great concern to our bishops as well as the ordinary people in the pews. We would much prefer to see harmony in our relations with each other.

In October 2019 I participated in the Brisbane Archdiocese Assembly on the

Plenary Council. It was an excellent event of respectful listening and dialogue but clearly there was an orchestrated attempt at disruption by extreme opponents to the concept of a plenary council and making any improvements in the church. In a workshop on inclusion and participation I was shocked to find myself and others being verbally attacked by several people who were opposed to any involvement of women in church leadership. My suggestions that we should embrace married clergy to broaden our missionary base were met by incredulous statements that the church had maintained a 2000 year old tradition of exclusive celibacy for church ministers and any change to that constituted heresy.

In my many years of service as a peacemaker in the military I had successfully mediated peaceful outcomes and indeed reconciliation between previously warring parties but I experience these local belligerents as seemingly impervious to any rational or reasonable dialogue as we move forward in the church.

We must assume there will be inevitable opposition to whatever proposals emerge from the Plenary Council. I would hope that the organisers are implementing an intentional change management strategy with appropriate qualified professionals engaged to assist in this process. Clearly, we would desire to follow the example of Jesus in the ways that he dealt with his detractors. We need to seek to gracefully listen and hear from those who would disagree with us. We need to seek to find those matters we do agree upon and graciously explore every possibility of maintaining unity within the church.

But I think we also need to be realistic enough to know that there will be some people who will maintain a completely unreasonable stance, and we need to have the courage of our convictions to go ahead with those improvements that will further the reign of God in our country without fear or favour. May we pray that our bishops do not succumb to the pressure of vocal minorities, for to do nothing is not an option.

In the meantime, we would do well to pray Jesus prayer: May they be one as you and I are one. May we pray for those who disagree with us. May we pray for new insights into how we can accommodate differing views, while still retaining organic unity in the church.

May the Holy Spirit work in the hearts of all of us involved in improving how the mission of God is conducted in Australia.

✞

The Beauty of His Feet

NIMMI & MANNY CANDAPPA

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
The feet that tramped the dusty lands
Reaching out to hurting hearts
Bridging the gap between God and me.

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
The feet that stepped in to The Jordan
As head bowed under a trickle of water
And Spirit and Father affirmed.

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
The feet that climbed atop the mountains
Seeking solitude to pray, to rest
Descending to set the multitudes free.

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
The feet that strode in to the Temple
Kicking down stalls, scattering tills
Standing firm for The Father's home.

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
The feet that defied nature's laws
Walking on water as on solid rock
Creator controlling the created.

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
The weary feet that trudged far and wide
Stopping by a well to quench a thirst
And release a soul from bondage.

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
The feet that sought the blind, the lame
The mentally disturbed, the physically dead
Bringing healing and life abounding.

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
The feet that stumbled under unyielding cross
Tired, scraped, bloodied and yet,
Intent on the goal in sight.

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
The feet roughly gathered atop each other
Cruelly nailed to the foot of the cross
Their final task accomplished.

Ever noticed the beauty of his feet
And wished that you were Mary
Caressing, scenting, washing with tears,
The feet that brought us back Home.



Compulsory celibacy 'damaging' says Irish priest

Broadcaster and journalist Fr Brian D'Arcy said the Church's discipline of 'compulsory celibacy is illogical' because 'a compulsory gift' is a contradiction in terms, reported Sarah MacDonald in *The Tablet* on Dec 17, 2019.

Speaking to *The Tablet* as he celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his priestly ordination this week, Fr D'Arcy said that though there was a great value to celibate witness, he thought 'compulsory celibacy is damaging'.

The Passionist priest said companionship and having somebody else in your life is 'a very maturing thing'.

D'Arcy said Catholic sexual teaching was 'well past its sell-by-date', basing his thoughts on the experiences of many of his friends who are former priests.

He said: *I saw how hard life was for them before they left the priesthood and I've seen what fantastic people they are now, both spiritually and socially and within their families, and I just ask why did we lose those gifts over celibacy.*

National Evangelisation Centre to take over Office for Participation of Women, Lay Ministry and Refugee Office.

Malcolm Hart, the director of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's Office for Youth, has been appointed director of the National Centre for Evangelisation, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference Communications office posted on Dec 16, 2019.

Mr Hart said: *The new National Centre for Evangelisation will continue its central task of educating the faithful and those who are searching, including through the Catholic Enquiry Centre, and will take on the critical work of promoting the participation of lay people, including young people and women, in the life of the Church.*

Archbishop Christopher Prowse, chair of

the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry, said: *Our new National Centre for Evangelisation will work across a broader range of areas, utilising the skills of the new team in the most effective way possible, rather than asking them to work in discrete parts of the Church.*

While the work of the offices abolished will be taken on by the National Centre for Evangelisation, the advisory bodies associated with each of those offices will cease.

The Office for Clergy Life and Ministry will also cease, with the existing staff of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office, which will also close, taking on the responsibility for the formation of overseas priests and religious and the other essential roles of the Office for Clergy Life and Ministry, the statement said.

The decisions arose from a review of the Conference's finances, conducted by experts from within and outside the Church's employment. One of the review's goals was to ensure the financial sustainability of the Bishops Conference and its various agencies, continued the statement.

There is an article on the closure of the Office for the Participation of Women elsewhere in this edition of *The Swag: Women still listening for leadership from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference*, by Eleanor Flynn et al.

With many voices, but one vision – equality and dignity for Catholic women

Catholics from 5 continents and different areas such as universities, religious orders, associations, initiatives, journalism as well as theologians, volunteers, reform activists and pastoral workers in church service, came together in Rome (January 24-25) to bring together decades of commitment to equal dignity and equal rights for women in the Catholic Church worldwide.

The group's media statement said that 'dignity and equality are inseparably linked. Only when women have equal rights in the Catholic Church is their dignity fully respected. For a sustainable church, the voices of 600 million Catholic women must be heard'.

As a result of the meeting, the CWC calls for a global pilgrimage. A journey in which women around the world are called to travel together virtually and physically. In different countries, each with their own cultural contexts, the voices of women will be gathered. We want to hear and read the stories of Catholic women on this journey,

sharing their realities, pains, hopes, joys and sorrows.

The pilgrimage will end in Rome in September 2021 with an inaugural global Catholic Women's Council event – where women come together to pool their experiences and insights and find ways to heal their broken church and make it a more sustainable, inclusive one.

Joan Chittister OSB to visit Australia in September



Joan Chittister OSB is a practical theologian embodying the voice of wisdom and experience. She has supported many in their spiritual journey and her prophetic views on justice and equality challenge all who would silence women and those at the margins.

You can hear Joan at the following places:

Melbourne (8 September)

Melbourne Town Hall

7:00 – 9:00pm

Bookings: www.trybooking.com/BFSNU

Sydney (15 September)

Hosted by Catalyst for Renewal.

Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College

McQuoin Hall

128 Miller St, North Sydney

7:00 – 9:00pm.

Bookings: www.trybooking.com/BICTI

Tina Beattie to speak at women's conference in Sydney

The Woman as Church Conference, *Some Women of Our Company Amazed Us*, is to be held at Baulkham Hills in Sydney on Wednesday 29 April to Friday 1 May 2020. The keynote speaker is Professor Tina Beattie, Professor of Catholic Studies, University of Roehampton, London and Director of Digby Stuart Research Centre.

The conference will ask question: How do we open new spaces, construct a new

framework, and live a renewed calling, for a 'discipleship of equals' in which men and women engage in ministry, in various forms, and are equally valued?

Full details of the conference can be found on the Broken Bay Institute website: bbi.catholic.edu.au/courses-conferences/women-as-church-conference/

Pope tells Curia not to fear change

The ongoing reform of the Roman Curia is a necessary part of the Catholic Church's fidelity to its mission to proclaim the Gospel, Pope Francis said.

But attempts to meet the new challenges are threatened by 'the temptation of assume an attitude of rigidity,' the pope said Dec. 21 during his traditional pre-Christmas meeting with cardinals and top officials of Vatican offices, reported La Croix International (Dec 21, 2019).

'Rigidity, which is born of the fear of change, ends up erecting fences and obstacles on the terrain of the common good, turning it into a minefield of incomprehension and of hatred,' the pope said. 'And today this temptation of rigidity has become very evident.'



Quoting Cardinal Martini, former Archbishop of Milan, the Pope said: 'The Church is two hundred years behind the times. Why is she not shaken up? Are we afraid? Fear, instead of courage? Yet faith is the Church's foundation. Faith, confidence, courage... Only love conquers weariness.'

The pope discussed the changes proposed for the Congregation for Doctrine and Faith and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. These offices assume that a Christian west needs to evangelise a non-Christian missionary territory. This situation no longer exists said the pope. The changes in the Curia need to reflect the changes in the world.

Number of priests refusing to be bishops on the rise

Wearing the mitre is not what all priests want. On the contrary, more and more of them refuse the episcopal ordination when offered to them, Xavier Le Normand reported in LA Croix International (December 13, 2019).

According to Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops responsible for appointment and management of bishops, about three out of 10 priests refuse when asked to be a bishop. This proportion has tripled in a decade, says the Quebec cardinal.

'Perhaps it is because they do not feel capable, lack faith, have difficulties in their lives and prefer not to risk harming the Church,' the prefect said

Nevertheless, the number of bishops increases slightly each year. There are now nearly 5,400 of them worldwide.

In fact, the episcopal ministry is probably more exposed than it had been in the past and the bishops are more concerned about the exercise of their office, especially for example, in the management of sexual abuse cases committed by clergy in the diocese.

The Code of Canon Law stipulates a number of criteria for the episcopacy. The candidate needs 'a high degree of solid faith, high moral standard, piety, zeal of souls, wisdom, prudence and human virtues.'

In addition, he must have a 'good reputation,' be at least 35 years old, have been ordained for more than five years, and have at least a degree in theology or canon law.

Cardinal Ouellet said bishops should be less proficient and more pastoral and to have empathy for the poor.

Rainbow Catholics InterAgency for Ministry publish LGBTIQ+ Pastoral Guidelines

Catholic LGBTIQ Pastoral Care organizers and leaders around Australia gathered for the first Australian National Catholic LGBTIQ+ Pastoral Care Symposium on February 1, 2020 in Sydney. The theme was 'I am about to do a new thing'. The symposium considered the religious, spiritual, social and political context in which LGBTIQ+ Catholics, their families and friends live, and what it means for the Australian Catholic Church's Plenary Council 2020, the debate around 'religious freedom' after civil marriage



equality became law and how Catholic leaders and organizers can respond to this as well as other pressing issues of church reform and renewal.

The group also launched *Pastoral Care with LGBTIQ+ Catholics in the 21st Century*, an online document detailing a model of Pastoral Care to assist all who wish to develop affirming and respectful pastoral care with LGBTIQ+ Catholics. The document is available here: (see: <https://tinyurl.com/u6jxl3v>).

Fallen Priests: should we hear their stories?

Richard Rodriguez, speaking about the church's sex-abuse scandal at a September conference on the Catholic Imagination at Loyola University in Chicago raise the issue of the offenders' stories and what they might teach us, reported Paul Baumann in *La Croix International* (Dec 4, 2019).

Rodriguez said in the *National Catholic Reporter*: *What do we know about these priests? We know nothing about the burden of these fallen priests. We don't know their stories. What do they think they were doing?... We have no idea who they were, or what they suffered.... Our imaginations have gone dull.*

Rodriguez was criticized by some for showing concern and even sympathy for priests most people regard as monsters deserving nothing but condemnation and social oblivion.

Rodriguez makes an important point. Is it possible to understand the sexual abuse if the stories of priest-abusers are regarded as untouchable and irrelevant? Will such ignorance help us prevent future abuse? Don't journalists have an obligation to pursue such stories, no matter how unpalatable?

What Rodriguez appears to be calling for on an imaginative level is no different from what Truman Capote accomplished by writing *In Cold Blood*. In order to make

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some sense of the brutal and seemingly motiveless murders of the Clutter family, Capote had to show who the murderers were.

He didn't diminish their culpability or the horror of the crime; he painted a broader and deeper picture of the tragic collision between two different sides of 1950s American life, each largely and tragically ignorant of the other.

But he was right to insist that the actions of Catholic priests cannot be understood without taking into account the much larger societal problem of sexual abuse.

Rodriguez asks: *What do the reports tell us about the psychological states of the offending clergy, their seminary formation, their understanding of their offenses, and the contextual causes of their offending? Did offenses result more from ignorance and weakness or from clerical power and arrogance....*

As Richard Rodriguez urges, it would be good to know more..... If we allow disgust to keep us from hearing such stories, we are protecting no one but ourselves. ☺



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Delight and dismay

I found myself noting notions embedded within a number of articles of the 2019 Summer issue of *The Swag*, some evoking delight, others dismay.

Richard Francis in *Catholics and our Indigenous* offered a rather refreshing expression that I think can get us to where we Catholics want to be when challenged with reform: just as our Indigenous brothers and sisters 'try to recover their languages and ritual to express where and who they are... so must we go back to our Dreamtime – the story of Jesus...'. For me, the Plenary Council 2020 process will be hollow without a concerted approach to re-claim 'our Dreamtime'!

Nick Kerr's anxious-ness (if I may put it that way?) in *Why is the Permanent Diaconate Growing so Slowly in Australia?* left me ambivalent when he stated: 'The grace of ordination strengthens us in our ministries'. From one angle, one wouldn't contest such a statement. But in the context of the article, it almost felt like Kerr's lament failed to recognize the graces of non-ordination; as if having so few deacons was compromising the effectiveness of those who were carrying out some of what deacons do but without the conferring of ordination! Despite the clear way Nick Kerr revealed the beauty of the diaconate, it seems we still suffer from the dis-ease of shortage of vocations! Who can really understand the mystery of 'call'?

I was highly delighted by the article *Call me John, not 'father'* by Cardinal John Dew from Wellington, New Zealand. Herein lies an inconspicuous pearl to address clericalism. A challenge to clerics with a penchant for titles (be they the newly ordained or otherwise): the will to begin the slow process of letting go of their history-laden entitlement of status in the eyes of the traditional laity, and, at the same time, to encourage the laity to see themselves as equal however resistant they may be. As John Dew writes, 'Making a choice to tell people we serve not to call us (clerics) 'Father' might seem a very small thing to do but it may be the beginning of the reform...' we are seeking.

I must be honest: resentment welled up within me when reading the caption above the photo in *Three New 'Beacons of Hope'* which read 'Newly ordained priests... reached the ultimate vocational goal as brothers-in-Christ when they were ordained...' Are we still peddling the notion of grades of vocation? Such a statement ever so subtly supports the curse of clericalism & elitism.

Eric Hodgens in *Where do We Find the Authentic Catholic Voice* reflected what we need to keep our eyes on if our Australian Church is to discern authentically: 'Vatican II shifted the centre of gravity of the Church from hierarchy to the People of God. This decentralising movement led on to a new doctrinal development – Receptive Theology. For a doctrine or moral opinion to be authentic, it must be received by the body of the faithful'. Can't be said any clearer than that! How hard is the Plenary 2020 national commission working to adopt this shift initiated by Vatican II?

Leonard Blahut, Hazelbrook, NSW

In the Summer 2019 edition, Cardinal John Dew suggests priests should not be called 'Father'. In the Letters pages, Rob Egar suggests reducing 'sartorial trappings' of bishops would be a good thing.

Both moves would find a lot of support from many of us Australian lay-people, with our tradition of egalitarianism. But I'm not sure they would be wise moves. Anglo-Celtic Australians, 'Skippies' as some migrants call us, people like me and like most of the contributors to *The Swag* would accept such moves easily. We need to be careful that we don't think we Skippies are the Australian Church.

Many other Australian Catholics do put the priest on a pedestal, do think it is right, for example, to kiss his hand and then claim a blessing by placing that hand on their own foreheads. Many Australian Catholics would find it difficult to call the priest anything else but 'Father'. Many priests now working in Australia, and probably under-represented among contributors to 'The Swag', would not be comfortable if not being addressed as 'Father...'. One African priest working here told me his ordination day was the last time his mother did not call him 'Father'. We Skippies might think that weird, even unhealthy, but it is a reminder that we need to be respectful of the personal and cultural realities of people's lives.

Rob's little ditty celebrates the possibility of our being "no longer Byzantine". It's true that we members of the Latin Rite have a liturgy marked by "noble simplicity" (Vatican II). But there are plenty of Australian Catholics, not to mention Orthodox Australians, who love and glory in their Eastern or Byzantine Rites with liturgies that so impressed early Russian envoys to Constantinople they thought they had been transported to heaven.

As we move towards the Plenary Council, Skippies, myself definitely among them,

need to be careful we are not thinking the Australian Church is made up of people with a distaste for tall poppies and whose ancestors may have carried a swag and fought at Gallipoli.

Gerard Hore, Toowoomba, QLD

Catholic marriages outside a church

'The young know the rules', Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, 'The old know the exceptions'. I read these wise words in a delightful book by Joan Chittister entitled, *The Gift of Years* with the subtitle *Growing Older Gracefully*. I transitioned out of having responsibility for being in charge of a parish in July of 2019. I was very fortunate to hear of the book and even more fortunate to purchase a copy and to have reflectively read this book many times, both in the lead-up to transitioning and subsequently.

There is a wonderfully honest wisdom in this book by Joan and an affirming and encouraging sense of promise. With the stepping back from responsibility for a parish, comes both a degree of uncertainty as to the unknown and yet a wonderful hint of what is to be. Joan captures these two diverse yet related emotions within her book and she does so, in my opinion, magnificently! It is a great read!

It was Jesus who said that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Jesus also referred to himself as the Good Shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep. At this point in my journey of life, I have a deep sense of loss, that as a Church in some areas of church policy we are not able to recognise 'the exceptions' in the application of policy.

One area that is especially troubling to me, is how we respond to couples who wish to have their marriage, by a Catholic Priest, celebrated outside a church. These applications are more likely to be granted if one of the parties is not a Catholic. However, where the application involves two baptised Catholics, enormous difficulties are encountered. Where there are no extenuating circumstances, in other words, the couple make a simple request to marry outside the church; the application is refused. The couple are honest about this application, they have approached the church and our response is to say, 'I am sorry, but your application does not meet the requirements of the Church', or words to that effect! Door closed, couple walk away hurt, and an opportunity for the Church to be a part of this wonderful step in young people's lives is lost!

Further to that families are also hurt and

are led to question the nature of the pastoral care of the church for their children and their families. Why do we not embrace these couples, who at least, ask for the Church to be involved in their wedding? By all means speak of the significance of a wedding ceremony in the Church but when they have made their decision why do we not see where is the greater good, a wedding ceremony in a church, or a wedding ceremony with the Sacrament of Marriage gifted by the young couple to each other in another place.

Fr Ian Johnson, Geographe, WA

Bishops' appointments

Anyone who knows any history would know that the Peter Principal (The Peter Principal is a managerial principal that states that many people are appointed one level above their competence and there they stay) is alive and well in the Papacy and the episcopate. Any catholic who is over fifty would know that in Australia some of our appointments of Ordinaries have been rather ordinary appointments. The problem is that no one knows how a bloke is going to go until he gets a go and if he proves to be out of his depth the poor old long-suffering faithful are stuck with him until he is seventy five.

One solution would be to restrict the terna to over sixty fives.

A better alternative in my view would be to appoint men in their late forties or early fifties but only for a ten year period after which they would retire to the coal face for at least five years. Men who proved particularly gifted and did well at the coal face would still be young enough for a second appointment.

Another solution would be to make the terna the responsibility of diocesan chancellors of whom there seems to be lots of lay people and several women. I wonder will the Plenary Council have anything to say about the role of Bishops and their method of selection and length of their tenure.

Harry Moore, Kyogle, NSW

Questioning the permanent diaconate

To the question 'Why is the permanent diaconate growing so slowly in Australia?' [*The Swag*, Summer 2019], I would respond with another question, why should we have the permanent diaconate at all? It is another rung in the clerical caste when clericalism has been shown to be a bad thing for the Church. To say that

permanent deacons 'are a bridge between the Church and the world, but also between the bishop and his diocese' only shows that there is still a long way to go in eradicating clericalism. The Church, its bishops and clergy, should be *in* the world, not separate from it, no bridge needed.

The Church has a shortage of people authorised to celebrate Eucharist. However, there is no such shortage of people 'doing diaconal work – for example in chaplaincy, in pastoral care, in evangelisation, in administration, in social ministries [to which I would add preaching] – that demonstrate Christ's love to the world.' The fact that so few are ordained so as to receive '[t]he grace of ordination [that] strengthens us in our ministries' is because a significant number of those people are women, shut out of the clerical circle due to the chromosomal lottery at conception.

All baptised people are called to 'diaconal' service of one sort or another. Why should some receive the grace of ordination and others not? Men have the choice and clearly many choose not to be ordained. Women have no choice at all. Often women are not even recognised as acting in diaconal-type roles. All people need grace in the performance of their work. No one should need to be a cleric to be so blessed.

Margaret Callinan, Balwyn, VIC

Living with contradictions

Perhaps contradictions can be described as contrary realities that people are uncomfortably living with. Jesus of Nazareth addresses this reality when he said; "if you hold on to your life you will lose it but if you lose it for my sake you will find it." (Matthew 16/25)

Below are some ongoing contradictions that I struggle with and perhaps they might also resonate with other people:

- I am a great grandchild of Irish immigrants who came to Australia to find a better life and definitely found it, yet I am now a citizen of this country that keeps finding obstacles for other migrant people to come here for a better life. The unjust length of time that genuine refugees are spending in our inhumane detention centers is shameful.
- I am also a relative newcomer to the country of Australia compared to the aboriginal people. The wise care and control that aborigines have implemented of our natural waterways and bushland has often been ignored. This neglect has now created many long-term problems.

Continued page 52



- I am also a member of an excessively male dominated Church where so many of her leaders are consistently reluctant to even discuss the need for more female involvement in Church liturgies and governance. And these same people also wonder why so many women find that the Church is irrelevant for them!

It is only in naming and owning own contradictions that hopefully in time new life can happen!

Fr Martin R Maunsell, Eastwood, NSW

Were there ever lay cardinals?

Could I dare to take issue with Massimo Faggioli and simultaneously annoy a lot of people by disputing a small point he makes in his October article in *La Croix*, reprinted in the Summer issue of *The Swag*? He takes for granted the existence, 'albeit in small numbers', of 'lay cardinals'. I find precious little evidence of this.

He associates their 'disappearance' with that of the Papal States, and thus puts his finger on the misunderstandings about their existence. Giacomo Antonelli, Secretary of State to Pius IX, is a good starting point. He is frequently described as a 'lay cardinal', but, besides being a cardinal deacon, he was, as were all the cardinal deacons of that pope, in deacon's orders.

The same is true of Ercole Consalvi, Secretary of State to Pius VII, often cited as an example of a lay cardinal. Leo XIII began the practice of creating cardinals only those who were in priest's orders, and Pius X made it law; and so it appears in the 1917 Code. John XXIII restricted the cardinalate further, allowing only bishops to qualify (unless dispensed, as were Congar and de Lubac), and this is the rule in the current Code. Deacons, however, we are all agreed, are not laypersons; they are clergy.

But other examples could be adduced from further back in church history. Here I would urge caution. Most of the so called 'lay cardinals' were, in fact, in minor orders. Because minor orders were abolished by Paul VI in 1971, there is a tendency, for those who never experienced them (in themselves or in others) to think of them as some sort of lay state; they were, in fact, part of the clergy – and there must be some priests still alive (like myself) who were, albeit for a short period of time, in minor orders. They may have been abolished, but they did exist for most of the history of the Church. Strictly speaking, a cardinal should have been at least in that major order to which his rank belonged – cardinal bishops were to be in

bishop's orders, cardinal priests in priest's orders, cardinal deacons in deacon's orders – and so a person in minor orders had to be dispensed in order to receive the red hat. This dispensation has to be seen in the wider context where a bishop was nominated (often by his king) to be a cardinal: if he was to remain in the diocese where he was, he could only be made a cardinal priest, since cardinal bishops were in charge of areas near Rome, and cardinal deacons were ordinarily officials of the Curia. This is still the case, except that John XXIII removed direct pastoral responsibility from cardinal bishops, making them as titular as the other two ranks.

Nominating those in minor orders had the further advantage that if the cardinal concerned changed his mind about his clerical state and chose to pursue a military or political career, then the way out was easy. The renunciation of major orders was always difficult, but relatively uncomplicated for minor orders.

This was the case with Albert the Pious (1559-1621), often cited as a 'lay cardinal', who was, besides being a cardinal, Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain, while all the while only in minor orders, and who relinquished it all in 1598 to marry the Infanta Isabella and take over the government of the Netherlands. It was also the case of Odet de Coligny (1517-1571), who revelled in countless benefices, including the dioceses of Toulouse and Beauvais, besides his red hat, and who, when he became a protestant, took care to wear his cardinal's robes at his marriage.

It might be urged that, even if this explanation disposes of most claimants to the lay cardinalate, there are still those who were in the lay state when they were made cardinals. The answer is that these were generally too young to be admitted to minor orders, and so they were dispensed from that requirement until they reached the canonical age. Others, like de Coligny, put off minor orders for as long as possible, relying on the original dispensation. The assumption, in all these cases, was, not that the persons concerned could be laymen and cardinals, but that they were destined for a clerical career and could meanwhile draw the income from their various benefices. This was especially the case with 'crown cardinals', nominated by various kings, often from among their own children.

To say, as Faggioli does, that the cardinalate was not 'clericalized' until the twentieth century is very misleading and cannot be supported by evidence. We may not like it, but it was always 'clericalized'.

John Hill, The Entrance, NSW

Drought on the Murray Darling again

In the *The Swag*, Summer 2010, in the article, *Murray Darling Basin*, Frank Marriott wrote 'Action gentlemen please!' While many people are still heeding this advice, stronger voices get media attention. I took an active interest in our rivers after returning from a two-decade IT stint in water-conscious Holland.

I may have helped get rivers into a few State Constitutions. They were in the process of recognizing Aboriginal groups as the owners and occupiers of the land of South Australia. They added the words 'and waters' shortly after I wrote to Government requesting that our rivers be included in The Australian Constitution. Other countries have similar clauses.

Our sewerage system is more efficient these days and this was reported in The Sydney Morning Herald on February 2, 2009. Many twelve liter single flush toilets were replaced by four liter dual-flush ones, resulting in considerable water efficiencies. This was shortly after I wrote to Government and spoke to many local councils, several of whom sent positive replies to me.

I do professional Mathematics. The Statistics show that rural communities were stronger when the rivers flowed more freely. Other countries laud their life-sustaining rivers in poetry and song.

I am doing some research in this area, as are many other people such as Professor Karskins (see *The Australian*, October 2019 and 'Secret River'). My current research is into historical records and poetry about our rivers. I would appreciate any poetic references you may have from the early days, please. You could email them to me at straal19@hotmail.com or write to David Allen, GPO Box 1865, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

We are all *River People* and rivers are mentioned on the first page of Genesis. Israel did not find it necessary to impose fishing restrictions on a biblical lake until a decade ago, this approach appears to work. Aboriginal people have a similar philosophy.

I applaud the sterling efforts of all whose Water-work may result in improved outcomes in health, security, culture and climate. While Aboriginal people take a keen interest in rivers, *The Swag* readers help provide critical support that is necessary to achieve positive outcomes.

David Allen, Sydney, NSW

Male and female he created them

In 1989 I had a sabbatical year, the first half of which I spent at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. Towards the end of my time there I had some lengthy conversations with a priest who subsequently went to work in the Roman Curia. We exchanged emails occasionally until I tackled him about the CDF's teaching about homosexuality. We exchanged quite a few emails, him defending the CDF teaching, me attacking it. At one point he said that this teaching was near to the very heart of Revelation. I fired back, 'What revelation', to which he responded 'Male and Female God created them.' That was the end of our correspondence on that matter.

Pope Francis has not hidden that there are aspects of LGBTIQ that he just doesn't understand. Nevertheless, when a group of them came from England to Rome, and asked to speak with him, he rightly and courteously received them, and agreed to be photographed with them. No doubt, for some that action is further proof that Francis is a heretic, nay the antichrist.

I was helped to understand transgender a bit by an incident early last year. I was visiting some friends in Hamilton, Victoria. Where I had twice been a Curate and then the Parish Priest.

One person I visited happened to have her daughter visiting her. At the time I left Hamilton that daughter was a very rebellious teenager. Now she had a grown-up family, and was a grandmother. As the conversation around the table developed, she happened to mention that one of her children had been born physically a girl; but, apart from her genital organs, everything said 'boy.'

As she grew up it became more and more obviously to everyone that she was a boy in a girl's body. Eventually, she had a sex change.

I happened to mention that to my twin sister a few weeks back. Then she told me

that during her training as a nurse in St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne two babies had been born hermaphrodites.

From that I take it that God is saying to us, 'things aren't as neat as human beings, with your wanting to categorise everything, think they should be.'

So what of 'male and female God created them.' Is that anything like the heart of God's revelation to us? As it stands, it is nowhere near that. If God had never spoken a single word to us, we would easily have worked out for ourselves that the human race has two sexes, male and female.

I decided to see what the scholars have to say about Genesis 1:26-27. I have a Scripture program on my computer called Logos. It enables me to look at quite a number of commentaries on the Bible.

In their exegesis of Genesis in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary, Roland Murphy and Richard Clifford observe that royal language is used to describe us human beings; we are images, statues of God, to rule like God.

This contrasts with Mesopotamian cosmogonies, which picture us as slaves of the deities. Male and female he created them is tied in with the following verse, 'God blessed them saying, Be fruitful, multiply, fill the Earth and subdue it.'

The important thing to notice is that 'Male and female God created them' is not seen as elaborating on 'Let us make man in our own image and likeness.'

The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, the Continental Commentary, the Interpretation Bible Commentary (Walter Brueggemann), A Handbook on Genesis, Opening up Genesis, the Brazos Press Commentary, the New American Commentary, Commentary Critical and Explanatory of the whole Bible, the Faithlife Study Bible, Commentary on the Old Testament, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the whole Bible, Haydock's Catholic Bible

Commentary, the KJV Bible Commentary, Philo, the New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, the Catholic Study Bible, none of these suggests that 'Male and female God created them' is Revelation. The Expositor's Bible Commentary sees the statement as part of expressing that we humans are special, in that differentiation of sex is not mention in regard to other animals. The (old) Jerome Biblical Commentary says that the differentiation of sexes is divine origin, and therefore good.

One commentary notes that the phrase has been used to say that Adam was a hermaphrodite, and then dismisses that interpretation. In the commentaries on these verses, by far the most attention is given to 'Let us' and none reach a wholly satisfactory conclusion as to why the plural is used.

But the point I am trying to make is simply that we can't use that phrase to hit LGBTIQ on the head. That is not use but abuse.

Patrick J Flanagan, VIC.

Humane Vitae

I remember when I was a Sister of Mercy in Trundle in 1968, when we were delayed by women the Saturday following the proclamation of *Humane Vitae*. As one woman put it: 'I've got six kids and he only has to put his boots under the bed and I'm pregnant again! What am I going to do?'

I will be purchasing *Celebrating Freedom of Speech* reviewed in *The Swag*, Summer 2019. How typical of that era of the church for clerics telling women what they can or cannot do!

The irony of that was the mother superior saying after they left: 'I can't understand why they are so upset, because they would only have intercourse when they wished to have another child, wouldn't they?' Ignorance isn't always bliss.

Clarice Melville, Sydney, NSW. ☺

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From filth to faith

Michael Elligate reviews the latest book by Christos Tsiolkas, *Damascus*, 2019 Allen and Unwin Paperback. Tsiolkas novel is set in the early church in the Greco-Roman empire.

Christos Tsiolkas is a Melbourne writer now reviewed in literary pages across the world. He is well known for his hard-hitting novels. As a gay man he has a savage volatile writing style that plunges us into the rugged mess that is humanity.

Yet unexpectedly in all his works he allows affection and friendship to be found.

The language is rough, the erotic surge is raw yet hope is often born amongst blood, sperm and menstrual fluids.

Here sexuality is strident, and humanity is such a mixed bag of fierce self-absorption, a quest for sensual pleasure, and a harsh recognition that human experience is so transitory.

People remember Tsiolkas's novel serialised into a popular television series *The Slap*. A gem that explores migrant life in suburban Melbourne. A cousin slaps an uncontrollable child threatening to hurt and disrupt other children. The heat around the barbeque explodes into tangled trauma. Many television reviewers were moved by the novel then the T.V. series *Barracuda*. A poor boy from the working-class side of the tracks is offered a place in a prestigious public school because of his amazing swimming ability.

Now Tsiolkas takes another challenge – he dares to explore the intense humanity that defined Paul as a vital preacher and founder of many early Christian communities. Jesus of Nazareth was dead and Paul was determined to stamp out this absurd

threatening message that confronted not only the Jewish establishment but the many religious cults and spiritualities of the ancient world.

Damascus is the new novel that is already predicted to be awarded some of the highest literary honours. Christos Tsiolkas has left behind the Orthodox faith of his Greek mother. Yet his memories of Christian teachings, rituals and church organisation still intrigues as much as it also disgusts him.

The author of this exploration of St Paul's life set himself an enormous research project. His understanding of what the eucharist meant and how it was celebrated in the early years in Antioch, Jerusalem and the parts along the Mediterranean has much to teach us.

This was a dangerous meal on the run that affirmed faith. The steps were clear – recall Jesus' life and message (remember the New Testament was inaugurated in Paul's writings to struggling nascent communities). Ritual was basic, choreography irrelevant and improvisation permeated prayers of remembrance, thanksgiving and the pledge to be a community that offered services to those in need.

Current debates about the institution of priestly ordination and the sacred installation of bishops, just look silly as Tsiolkas explores the movement centred around Jesus the Crucified and Risen one.

The book is not an easy read, it is confronting and dirty. But remember we



often recite the line that 'the word was made flesh' – real flesh with all its passions and possibilities. It would be good to hear what our New Testament scholars find insightful in this novel.

The church has never been comfortable with sexuality and has imposed so many taboos around sexual experience that these so-called teachings have mangled and destroyed so many women and men's lives.

When we read about the tension in transition as Jewish and Gentile converts searched to find ways of living with what Paul called a life in Christ, we find the dubious text of the novel offers us many wise insights.

Our spirituality devoid of scripture was often pious and sentimental. Tsiolkas offers us a whole set of perspectives that allows us to accept our humanity and find communion with others that are pledged to live the life offered to us by the one we call The Light of the World. ☪

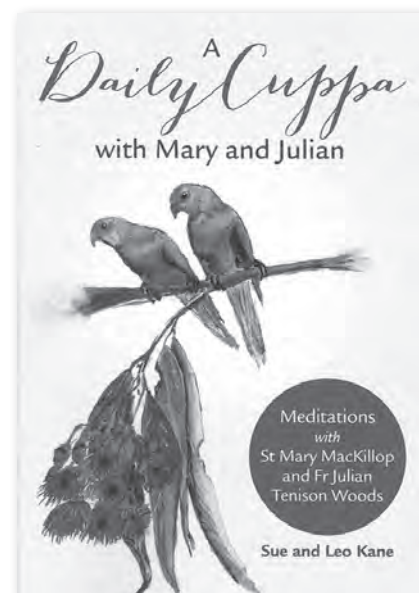
Daily reflections for 2020

A Daily Cuppa with Mary and Julian, Sue and Leo Kane, 2019, St Pauls Publications. *God's Word Daily Reflections 2020*, Michael Goonan SSP (editor), 2019, St Pauls Publications. Reviewed by Peter Maher.

For those who like the daily reflection approach to prayer and appreciate some helping hints here are two very different approaches to this model. In the two books reviewed here, *A Daily Cuppa with Mary and Julian* by Sue and Leo Kane and *God's Word Daily Reflections 2020*, the first is based on reflections from St Mary MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods, the other is based on the lectionary readings for each day of 2020. *A Daily Cuppa* offers a short quote from Mary or Julian along with a reflection and a short

scripture text for each day of the year. The reflections are taken from a wide range of sources such as Mary Oliver, Matthew Fox, Daniel O'Leary, John Donohue and Jessica Powers.

God's Word Daily Reflections 2020 has a short inspirational piece written for each day of the liturgical year to accompany the reading which are printed in full for each day. Each month's reflections are written by a different author giving a freshness and variety throughout the year. ☪



Australia is the promised land

Enza Di Franco Russo, *Towards the Promised Land*, 2019, St Pauls Publications.
Reviewed by Peter Maher

This book is a collection of stories by an Italian immigrant mother who followed the often-travelled road of coming to Australia some years after their husbands. Enza Di Franco Russo and her three children set sail for Australia four years after her husband. Here the family made a home and now she and her husband have just celebrated 55 years of marriage.

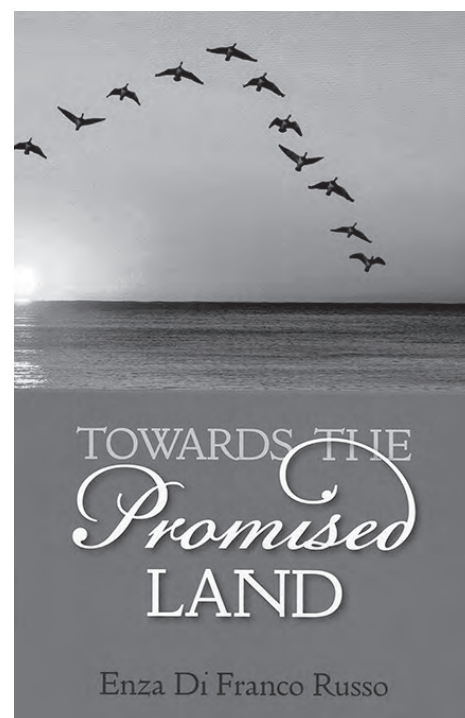
The book offers a series of stories that are moving, beautifully crafted and spiritually relevant. Enza offers the migrant experience in all its wonder, adventure and terror. It is in this context that a deeply and deceptively simple incarnational spirituality is honed.

Readers will find the gentle and poetic style of the stories reveal a journey of hope and

lamentation, excitement and wonder, personal and cosmic. The topics range from memoir of an Italian Catholic girl, challenges of cultural and religious change, reflections and poems on the spiritual dimension of everyday life and the implications of disorder caused by environmental and climate change.

This modest volume is enjoyable reading for the spirit without suppressing the tougher questions of marriage, parenthood, transmigration and the unsure future.

The promised land of the title is Australia but it could just as easily be the land of hope we all have to live a life that is integrated and yet unsure, open to the mystery and the surprise. ☪



Pope promotes openness to God's word

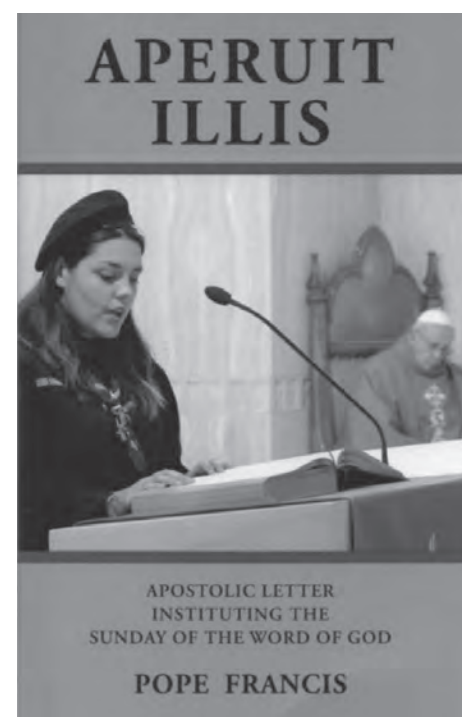
Aperuit Illis, Instituting the Sunday of the Word of God, Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter, 2019 St Pauls Publications. Reviewed by Peter Maher.

The document begins with a quote from Luke's Emmaus story – He opened their minds to understand the scriptures. In the document Pope Francis announces that the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time will become the *Sunday of the Word of God* to promote the love of the scriptures and their unique spiritual value among Catholics. Apart from suggestions for promoting the scriptures on this day such as celebrating the Word in special ways in the Sunday Eucharist, installing or commissioning readers and lectors and holding bible study sessions, Pope Francis offers a very accessible and brief overview of how to read the scriptures with simple explanation of historical and textual criticism that avoids the simplification of literal or fundamentalist readings of the text. He draws on the Vatican II document, *Dei Verbum*, to explain biblical inspiration and how

human authors with human words and stories can carry divine inspiration.

In this short letter, Pope Francis covers the relationship between Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, scripture as prophecy and scripture as incarnational spirituality. This little book of just 20 pages could become the source of a parish or community study that would lead people in an understanding of scripture, how to read it, how to make it personal and thus how to proclaim it well. The text covers all the key aspects of interpretation and exegesis that avoids over literal or fundamentalist tendencies that lead to interpretations that are either pietistic or lacking scholarship and useful application to today.

This document is a good summary and reminder of the key elements of a Catholic approach to scripture. Recommended reading for all adult Catholics. ☪



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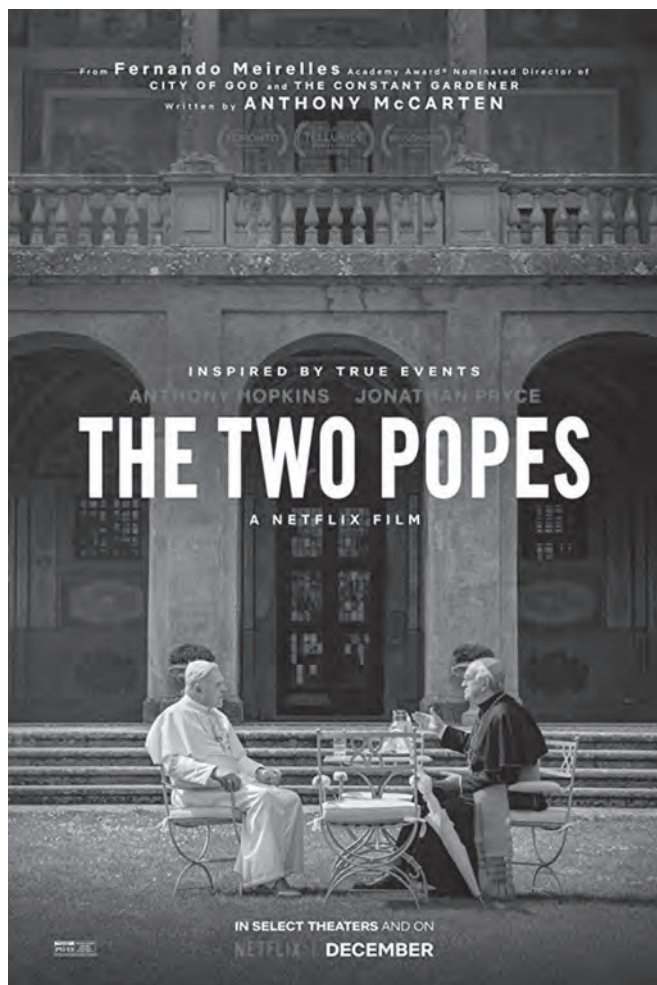
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The battle for the papacy

Peter Malone MSC reviews the film *The Two Popes*. He recommends it not for historical accuracy but as of interest for those following the trajectory of the papacy and the Catholic Church at this time.



There are many reasons, good reasons, to see *The Two Popes*. There is the articulate and elegant writing by British screenwriter, Anthony McCarten. He has done his research on Pope Benedict and Pope Francis, drawing on many of their statements as well as using his imagination to create conversations between them.

Anthony Hopkins makes a credible Benedict XVI, a ‘behind the scenes’ performance, Jonathan Pryce a vigorous Francis. The film has a fine Brazilian director, Fernando Meirelles.

And the look of the film is striking, the stylish photography, the Vatican settings, the 2005 conclave, the Sistine Chapel, the papal apartments, St Peter’s and the Piazza, the Cardinals staying at Santa Marta, a visit to Castel Gandolfo. By contrast, the film brings Buenos Aires alive, first of all in the 21st-century, the outdoors ministry of

Cardinal Bergoglio, then black and white flashbacks to his younger years, his vocation decisions, and then a dramatisation of the drastic years of the Generals, especially in the 1970s. There are also some surprises with the musical score, not just the expected serious and religious themes, some classical music, but a number of more contemporary songs, creating atmosphere.

Some of the issues include the stances of each of them concerning belief and doctrine, the traditional teachings of the church, contemporary moral issues. Part of the drama is that they do not see eye to eye on some of these issues, the difficulties of combining authority and tradition with pastoral demands. But, as indicated earlier, there is quite a deal of God-language,

discussions about faith and prayer, the two men devout, a confession sequence, Benedict to Francis, which takes the film beyond ordinary dialogue.

The portrait of Francis is extensive, black-and-white photography of him as a young man, searching for his vocation, the possibility for marriage, his choices and entry into the seminary (filmed in black and white). There is also the controversy about Bergoglio and the generals, his turn as provincial wanting to protect the lives of the Jesuits, asking them to close some of their ministries because they were considered too dangerous, some defiance and him on the part of social-minded confreres. Cardinal Bergoglio admits mistakes publicly, sorry for the decisions that he had made, reconciling with some of his conferences. These experiences enable him, as Archbishop of Buenos Aires to reach out to the poor, a social-minded pastor, an extrovert who is comfortable in

meeting all kinds of people, enjoying their company (especially in supporting his football team, San Lorenzo), familiar with aspects of popular culture.

By contrast, there is no visual portrait of Benedict’s life. There are verbal references, and his saying that he was more introverted, bookish, intellectual, and had not any of the pastoral outreach of the Bergoglio. (Audiences may well enjoy a sequence where the two are in a side sacristy of the Sistine Chapel, tourists arriving, Benedict’s decision for the two to walk through the Chapel, the tourists becoming excited – and a number of selfies!).

Towards the end of the film there will be the 2013 conclave, the discussions, the assembly, the voting, the acceptance – and Francis not wanting special shoes, not wanting the ermine cape (“the carnival is over”), emerging to the cheering crowds and simply saying, “Buena Sera” (good evening).

Which means then that involved Catholics, with faith and loyalty, will find this two hour immersion into the life of the church of great interest, of encouragement. For nominal Catholics, the film offers an occasion, even an invitation, to more thought and assessment, re-assessment. It will be the same for lapsed Catholics. For ecumenical and interfaith audiences, the drama is both attractive and thought-provoking. And for non-religious audiences, they will appreciate good drama, good writing and performances, character studies – and an opportunity to give further thought to the credibility, life and mission of the Catholic Church.

At the core of the conversation is Benedict’s resignation. There is a dramatic build up in so far as Cardinal Bergoglio travels to the Vatican, continually tries to persuade Benedict to accept his resignation. Because of the differences in perspective between the two, Benedict says that the resignation might be interpreted as a criticism of Benedict’s direction of the church. So, there is much discussion to illustrate the different perceptions of each of the men.

The film then takes the advantage of quoting Francis’s words of social concern, his first trip outside the Vatican to Lampedusa to meet refugees who had sailed across the Mediterranean from North Africa, images of small boats and overwhelming waves, the faces of those in need. To that extent, the ending is a venture into preaching, social preaching. ☪

The first temptation of Christ

Peter Malone MSC reviews two short films from Brazil available on Netflix. He has some notes of caution for prospective viewers.



Here is an alert concerning two 48 minute Brazilian films screening on Netflix, worldwide, since December 2019 titled: *The Last Hangover* and *The First Temptation of Christ*.

With the word 'Hangover' instead of 'Supper' in the title of the first film, it is clear that these films would be not straightforward Gospel films. And they are not. They can be described as parodies. Some angry bloggers, for example on the Internet Movie Database, have been using the word 'blasphemy' and have been calling for action against Netflix.

Bloggers have also been noting, critical of Netflix, that a parody of Islam or the Prophet, Mohamad, would not be streamed. We remember the violent consequences of Danish cartoons in the past as well as the shootings at Charlie Hebdo.

The Christian tradition, on the whole, has incorporated humorous interpretations of biblical episodes. Many contemporary political cartoons make their point with reference to biblical characters and biblical themes, especially for justice and for peace. And there have been some films which relied on audience knowledge of Gospel events to make their points by humour. Prominent was the 1979 *The Life of Brian*, and a Last Supper episode in Mel Brooks' *The History of the World Part I* (1981). By and large, Christians and Catholics around the world saw the humour and recognised the Gospels while

Christians of a more fundamentalist persuasion, with their adherence to literal interpretation without knowledge of literary forms, did not.

It would be very surprising if many, even any, Christians found these Brazilian films truly humorous. They are exaggerated parodies. If looked at as comedies, that would be judged as exercises in the broadest type of comedy for which the adjectives raucous, course, crass, irreverent quickly come to mind. Slang would call them 'ratbag' humour. And, it would seem, that they have been calculated to be offensive to a wide range of people, especially Christians. The writers of the films indicate in their screenplays that they are familiar with the Gospel texts and with the theological/spiritual meanings of the texts. But then they 'go to town' on them.

The Last Hangover is basically a drunken binge, the effect of the supper felt the next day, the mystery of Jesus' behaviour and his disappearance. The apostles are presented as a group of gross 'boofheads', not a spiritual thought in the heads, welcoming prostitutes to the meal, Peter particularly promiscuous, some Roman soldiers arriving, Jesus moody and erratic.

The First Temptation of Christ (with title echoes of *The Last Temptation*) offers another party, presided over by a rather cautionary and a somewhat clownish Joseph. Jesus is returning from his 40 days in the desert and is being welcomed home

but wanting to leave. Once again, a lot of the behaviour is boorish, raucous and coarse. And the characterisations seem particularly crass. There has been a lot of criticism of the presentation of Jesus, implications of a gay orientation, some camp behaviour. However, the gay character he met in the desert turns out to be Satan himself, initially camp but ultimately vicious and vindictive. One of the strong criticisms of the film's screenplay would be the character of Uncle Victor who turns out to be an incarnation of God the Father, Mary and Joseph revealing to their son that Uncle Victor is truly his father. There is a grubby parody tone when Uncle Victor is made to have lascivious designs and desires towards Mary – and she seems something of a willing accomplice.

Which raises the question of how to describe these films and whether they are blasphemous. Blasphemy implies explicit intent in mockery. Whether these films are blasphemous can be debated. Perhaps that was not the intention but rather the use of the usual explanation/ excuse: 'just having a bit of fun'. At the least, the film-makers are quite profane in their interpretation of situations, creation of characters, crass dialogue (of the four-letter kind in the English subtitles), certainly an attempt to bring characters from sacred writings and traditions as far down to earth as possible.

In general, there can be too kinds of responses to films like this – the crusading response, the educating response. Crusaders prefer a militant approach, an attack on Netflix, urging customers to boycott the streaming service. Some would argue that this approach gives too much air and publicity to the films which might be better ignored. On the other hand, educators prefer to explore the phenomenon, offer some analysis, enable viewers to look at the material with some informed critical judgement.

There will be more nuanced responses to these films according to different sensibilities and sensitivities, cultural differences. This response echoes an English-speaking world culture. The most telling commentaries would be from Brazil, commentaries both religious and secular, and other responses from Latin American countries.

Eventually, after the controversies, the question would be raised whether these films are worth this kind of attention. ☪

Returned to God

PATRICK BAKER SSC

1938 – 17/10/2019

✠ Pat ended a long battle with cancer in the early hours of October 17, 2019 at the Palliative Care Unit of St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne. Born Patrick John Baker in the Victorian country town of Cobden, he was the youngest of eight children of John and Mary Baker.

He is survived by his brother, Des, and two sisters, Denise and Nell, as well as the now only remaining Columban, Chris, who along with their late brother Leo, was one of the three Baker boys to join the Society. It was Chris, as rector of the seminary at North Turramurra, who approved him for ordination to the priesthood.

Pat suffered from ill health during his seminary days, which saw his first appointment to Korea changed to promotion work in Australia, leading to years in which he travelled wide and far in this vast land in his trusty old Volkswagen.

Although ordained in St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, on 21 July, 1962, it was to be 10 years before Pat would set foot on what was referred to at the time as *mission soil* when he arrived in Manila in 1972. A long missionary career in parishes, formation, priest associate programme and lay mission promotion followed, with his final commitment in the Philippine regional archival office a salute to his refined ability to classify and document information.

Pat was buried from the chapel at the Columban house in Melbourne in the Society plot at Carlton Cemetery on 22 October, 2019. Many members from Pat's large extended family travelled to Melbourne to farewell him.

The sun shone on Melbourne on the day of Pat's funeral, as it has shone on the lives of the many people to whom he ministered over so many years. Pat is especially remembered for his courage and commitment in all that he undertook. His presence will be missed in the Society halls of wisdom and fellowship. *May he rest in peace.*

JOHN EDMOND BARRY OSA

13/02/1933 – 25/12/2019



John Edmond Barry, the eldest of the children of Thomas and Eileen Barry (nee O'Hara), was born in Townsville. John lived and undertook his early schooling in various places in Queensland during his early years. John's mother's family had strong Cairns connections and it was there John came to know the Augustinians. The family eventually moved to Brisbane settling in Nundah. John undertook his high school education at Nudgee College.

John entered the Augustinian novitiate at Whinstanes, Hamilton (Brisbane) in 1951 and professed his first religious vows in 1952. The following years of study in the United States where John was ordained on the 8th February, 1958.

In 1959, after returning to Australia, John briefly served in the parish of St James, Coorparoo and began teaching at Villanova College, Coorparoo until 1970. John was held in high respect by his students many of whom were present for the Requiem Mass held at St James.

In 1970, at the age of 37 years, John was elected as Provincial of the Australian Province of the Augustinians, the first Australian born Augustinian elected to that position. He served as Provincial until 1978. These were years of renewal in the Church in the post-Conciliar period. For the Augustinians it was a period when the Order was rediscovering the riches of Augustinian Spirituality. John's leadership served the Augustinians well.

John's appointment as Parish Priest at Echuca in 1979 was interrupted by a serious heart attack and the following months of recovery. Eventually John was appointed to assist at St Joseph's Parish, South Yarra. This would become the ministry which would become a major focus for John. He served in the parish from 1980-1982 and then again from 1987-2010. For 1990-2008 he was Pastor. He developed extensively the parish's existing commitment to community outreach initiatives and a justice and peace focus.

For a brief interlude (1983-1986), John was director of the Augustinian Prayer House at Clayfield in Brisbane. In 2011, despite being in his late 70s, he accepted a request to be Prior of the Augustinian Formation Community in Brookvale, Sydney. John was an inspiring mentor and example to those in formation as well as to those formally appointed to formation ministry.

In January, 2019, John returned to his beloved South Yarra. His health declined significantly over the year and he died on Christmas Day. Requiem Masses were held at both South Yarra and Coorparoo and John is buried at Nudgee Cemetery. *Rest in Peace.*

JOSEPH FLANNERY

16/04/1929 – 27/11/2019

✠ Joseph Francis Vianney, one of three children born to John Flannery and Mary O'Leary, was born in Clonmel, Ireland, Joseph attended Christian Brothers in County Tipperary and studied at the Waterford Seminary in the Waterford & Lismore Diocese, Ireland. Following his studies, he was ordained in Ireland and travelled to Australia where he was Incardinated into the Archdiocese of Brisbane on 29 December 1956.

His first appointment in the Brisbane Archdiocese was as an Assistant Priest at the Cathedral of St Stephen from 25 December 1956 to 01 January 1960. Following this, Joseph went on to serve as an Assistant Priest and Administrator in a number of parishes, with his first appointment as a Parish Priest beginning at St Benedict's, East Brisbane in April 1980. He later went on to become Parish Priest at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Everton Park and faithfully served this Parish for close to 40 years.

Joseph, who died peacefully in his home, will be remembered as a great pastor and friend.

PATRICK NICHOLAS CODD OSA**26/04/1927 – 09/09/2019**

Patrick Codd was one of seven children born into a farming family in the area of New Ross, County Wexford, Ireland. Pat's secondary education was at Good Counsel College, New Ross, an Augustinian school. Upon the completion of his schooling Pat entered the novitiate at the conclusion of which he professed his first religious vows in 1946. After studies in Rome, Pat was ordained to the priesthood on 8th March, 1952.

Following a few years' ministry in Ireland and the United Kingdom, Pat arrived in Australia in late 1956, the beginning of over 42 years of ministry in this country. Following early brief appointments at Echuca Parish and Villanova College, Coorparoo, Pat served for a few years as Novice Master in Rochester. Then followed a long period (1960-1974) back teaching at Villanova College. From 1979 to his return to Ireland in 1999, Pat was a member of the Augustinian community at Brookvale during which time he taught at St Augustine's College, was Director of Formation and, in latter years, helped with supply work in the Order's parishes in Northern Victoria. At both Coorparoo and Brookvale, Pat had several terms as Prior of the community. Pat also served many years as Provincial Bursar.

Upon his return to Ireland, Pat actively immersed himself in the life of the Irish Province of the Order. His last years were spent in the community residing at his beloved Good Counsel College, New Ross near to family. After his death in Dublin at the age of 92 his body was taken to the College for the Requiem and burial.

More important than a recording of the facts of Pat's life are the qualities of the person himself. Pat lived his vocation as Christian, Augustinian religious and priest with gentleness, humanity and focus on the well-being of others. Pat had a great love and interest in Augustinian Spirituality and was strong on the community life focus of Augustinian religious life. These gifts of Pat served the Order well during his time in Australia.

Rest in Peace.

GRAEME STUART DURO SSS**14/06/1947 – 14/11/2019**

Graeme was professed in the Blessed Sacrament Congregation on 3 March 1975 and ordained on 19 August 1978. Prior to joining religious life, he played professional Aussie Rules footy (St Kilda Football Club) and later served in the Victorian Police Force in the Melbourne Metropolitan Region. During his time away from the Congregation, he worked in the Victorian State Government office.

Graeme served the Lord and the church faithfully and generously over many years accepting various appointments within the Province. During his time as Province leader (2006-2014) he also served on the Executive Council of Catholic Religious Victoria and Yarra Theological Union. Graeme spent his last years at St Francis' Community, Melbourne. He will be missed by his family, his SSS brothers and his many friends. He will be remembered for his courage, kindness, generosity and prayerfulness.

Graeme died peacefully at St Vincent's Hospital, Fitzroy aged 72 years.

At peace in the Lord's embrace.

ALBERT (BERT) FULBROOK SDB**03/12/1936 – 12/11/2019**

Albert (Bert) Fulbrook was born in Floriana, Malta, the youngest and only male of ten children, of whom only four survived beyond infancy. Life in Malta during World War II was very difficult, particularly for Bert's family after his father died in 1940, and he spent his early education in orphanages/boarding schools including with the Salesians of Don Bosco.

At the age of 13 Bert was given an opportunity, along with many other youths from Europe, to migrate to Australia as a child migrant. On arrival in Australia he was placed at the Christian Brothers school at Tardun, WA.

Feeling the call to religious life Bert was accepted into the Christian Brothers and was professed on 9 March 1959. He then spent nearly three decades teaching in various schools conducted by the Brothers in five States. Discerning a call to the priesthood he requested a transfer to the Salesian Congregation which took place in 1987. He made his Salesian Profession on 31 January 1990 and was ordained on 13 July 1991 in Adelaide by Archbishop Faulkner. From his ordination until 2018 he was involved in Parish Ministry in dioceses right across the nation – Perth, Sale, Adelaide, Sydney and Perth.

Bert was a man of the people, universally liked by all who appreciated his wit and humour, his ability to touch hearts and lives and his warm pastoral approach and love of the scriptures. As his health began to deteriorate due to Motor Neurone Disease he moved into full time care with the Little Sisters of the Poor in Melbourne.

May he rest in peace.

WILLIAM GEORGE GRUNDY**23/11/1958 – 12/12/2019**

Bill was born in Stanthorpe, second child and first son of George & Molly Grundy, to whom five more children were born. He received his primary schooling in a number of Queensland country schools, taught almost exclusively by his father and his Secondary education was at St Joseph's Christian Brothers College, Brisbane.

Continued page 60

RETURNED TO GOD

From 1952 to 1955 Bill was a student at Pius XII Seminary Banyo, Brisbane, joining the Cairns Diocese in 1954. From 1955-1959 he studied at Propaganda College, Rome and was Ordained in Rome on 23rd November 1958 by Cardinal Gregory Peter Agagianian.

Bill's appointments: 1959-1964 Assistant priest at St Monica's Cathedral, Atherton and North Cairns; 1965-1967 Parish Priest of Malanda, variously Inspector of Schools, Director Catholic Education, Propagation of the faith, Auditor Marriage Tribunal. 1981-1989 Parish Priest of Babinda, 1981-1989 Parish Priest of Edmonton. 1989-1990 Sabbatical: post-graduate studies in Nemi (Italy), Louvain (Belgium), tour of the Holy Land and a Summer supply in the parish of St Boniface, Bay City, Michigan, USA. 1991-1993 Parish Priest of Parramatta Park and 1993-2014 Parish Priest of Babinda. He resigned due to ill health in 2014 and retired to Babinda.

Bill's vigil was at St Rita's Church, Babinda on 22nd of December and his Funeral Mass held the next day at St Rita's School Multi-Purpose Court, Babinda with Bishop James Foley presiding and assisted by Fr Dan (Bill's brother) and priests of the Cairns Diocese. Bill's other siblings – Brother Bob (CFC) Sr Rosemary (PBVM) and Sr Patsy (PBVM) participated in the Liturgy. Parishioners past and present came, honouring his pastoral ministry over twenty-nine years.

Bill, a much loved Pastor in Babinda, was laid to rest in the Babinda Cemetery.

WILLIAM HANNON

31/05/1924 – 15/11/2019

✠ William Hannon, much loved Parish Priest of St Catherine's Gymea for a quarter of a century (1979-2004), died in Galway, Ireland.

After his Requiem Mass at Caltra, Co Galway, on 18 November, Bill was buried in the adjoining graveyard. Meanwhile at Gymea, more than 400 parishioners attended a Memorial Mass concelebrated by Bishop David Cremin, Mgr Brian Rayner (PP Gymea), Fr John Grieg (PP Miranda), Fr Robert Stephens and Fr Bill Challenor.

The youngest of seven children of Michael and Mary Hannon (nee Hoare), Bill was born in the townland of Newtown, Caltra, near Ballinasloe and educated at Summer Hill College, Sligo. After ordination at St Patrick's College, Carlow on 4 June 1950, he arrived in Sydney on 1 December 1950 and devoted his life to the 'Australian Mission'.

His early appointments included Surry Hills, Tempe and South Hurstville, followed by Administrator at Camperdown, Maroubra, Gymea, and Manly, and Parish Priest of Katoomba and finally Gymea.

In his homily Mgr Rayner said Bill was a kind and loving priest who could not say no! He served his people as 'another Christ', being a gentle and holy priest. His love and generosity were always to the fore.

A keen golfer, Bill played weekly at St Michael's Golf Club, where in 1993 he scored a hole in one! He was an avid South Sydney League fan from his first appointment at St Peter's Surry Hill, and he remained a loyal supporter for nearly 70 years.

Bill was once reported to the Cardinal for displaying imaginative liturgical style as he endeavoured to be more inclusive of lay participation.

In the eulogy, life-time friend Tony Baine said Bill was a deeply pastoral priest. He impressed everyone he met and enriched their lives. He embraced them regardless of their religion or position in society, which drew him much acclaim.

May he rest in peace.

LIAM MACKLE OSM

15/09/1931 – 24/10/2019



As if predestined to become a Friar of the Servants of Mary (Servites), Liam Mackle was born on the traditional feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, the particular devotion of the medieval, mendicant Order. The year was 1931 and the place was Derrykeeran, County Armagh, Northern Ireland. The clash of political and religious traditions in that area were the daily fare of his upbringing. Shortly after the conclusion of the Second World War, Servites from the United States made a foundation centred on the historical buildings of Benburb Castle, famous as the location of the Battle of the Boyne. This sent shock waves as well as delight through all of Ireland. Liam entered the Order's novitiate in 1951 and after studies on both sides of the Atlantic was ordained in 1958.

Only a few years later Liam joined the young band of friars in Perth, Western Australia. He did secondary teacher's training, which set his destiny in the field of education. He taught for many years at Servite College in Tuart Hill and in 1967 became the last of the friars to hold the position of Principal there. His energy and insight were proverbial as the administration moved to the laity.

After the Servites made a foundation in the northern suburbs of Melbourne in 1976, Liam's ministry centred there. For many years he was the chaplain at Latrobe University, and he furthered his own education by a Graduate Diploma in Applied Theology from G.T.U in Berkeley, California.

In the meantime, Liam was called upon by the Aussie friars to lead and guide them. He was elected and re-elected several times over. He usually did this while also engaged in other ministries, both in Melbourne and Perth. When eventually the Order found it necessary to leave Melbourne, he moved with the others back to Perth. It was here that he showed the first signs of Alzheimer's. Gradually his health and awareness declined, and he returned to God on 24 October 2019. He had in the meantime been moved to the Little Sisters of the Poor and eventually to Hollywood Private Hospital.

May he rest in peace.

ANTHONY MANNIX CM

29/04/1935 – 09/12/2019



Anthony was born April 1935 and baptised the same day. He was educated at Bethlehem Convent school, Ashfield and then De La Salle College, Ashfield. He entered the Vincentians in 1952 and was ordained in July 1959 with quite a number of other candidates including five other Vincentian classmates at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. Among Vincentians they became known as "The Big Six".

Following his ordination Tony began his advanced studies in and deep love of the scriptures. He was sent to Catholic University of America to learn the biblical languages. This was followed by studies at the Angelicum University and the Biblicum, Rome.

There followed very fruitful and exciting years of teaching and going deeper into the scriptures in the light of Vatican II. He commenced at Guilford at St Charles Seminary, Western Australia, then St Francis Xavier Rostrevor, South Australia and Mosgiel New Zealand.

Tony was meticulous in his study, preparation and delivery of lectures to students and priests alike. "His biblical expertise earned him a great respect from his colleagues both Catholic and Protestant."

Tony was also called to Leadership in the Community: he was Director of the Daughters of Charity (1984-1990); he was asked to be the Provincial Leader of the Vincentians (1991-1996); and he became the President of St Stanislaus College, Bathurst (1999-2002). This was followed by a number of parish/pastoral appointments, the last ten years here in Bathurst, resident at Rose Street, Bathurst.

There are three, striking theological areas to which Tony always returned in his talking, thinking and research: the pervasiveness of the Word of God: to live in the presence of God in the Scriptures, dwelling deeper and deeper in that presence; the centrality of Baptism: as core to identity and mission; being attentive to the Spirit as we listen and respond to the local Church.

A good Priest, a loyal friend, a highly regarded scripture scholar and a thorough gentleman. *Rest now in peace.*

SEAN McGEARTY

15/01/1934 – 20/12/2019



Sean McGearty, the last of the Irish missionary priests to serve in the Archdiocese of Adelaide was born in Ballinor, County Meath, Ireland. His ecclesiastical studies were at St Kieran's College, in Kilkenny and he was ordained priest in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny on 8 June, 1958.

After arriving in Adelaide in December that year Sean served as Assistant priest at a number of parishes before being appointed Parish Priest at Christies Beach and later at Naracoorte. He never lost his love for the home country and made many visits throughout his time in Australia. In December 1979 he received word that his mother was dying. He returned home immediately and was told he could stay in Ireland until his mother died. However his mother did not die until some years later. Sean stayed in Ireland and during the 1980's he assisted in the local parish of

Tullamore and was the foundation member of the Irish Families Genealogical Society. He returned to Adelaide ten years later.

After eight years as PP of Naracoorte, Sean resigned and took up a new ministry of service to country priests, supplying while they were on holidays or study leave. Despite declining health he maintained this work almost until his death.

He died on 20 December 2019. Many attended the Requiem Mass which was celebrated in St Joseph's Church, Brighton on 7 January, and Sean's body was returned to Ireland to be interred in his home town.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam

JOHN BERNARD O'CONNOR

30/06/1958 – 10/12/2019



John was born in Toowoomba, educated at the Helidon and Cooparoo Convents, the Boondall State School and Nudgee College (Scholarship & Junior).

He was first employed in the Mines Department as a record clerk. He enlisted in the RAAF on his 18th birthday; trained as a wireless Air Gunner in Australia and England; posted to 460 Squadron RAAF Bomber Command, Lincolnshire on 2nd April 1945; discharged on 3rd December 1945.

Became a forester with the Forestry Department in 1947. In 1950 graduated from Queensland University with a degree in Forestry Science. Resigned from the Forestry Department in 1951, "realising I had a vocation to the Priesthood." After six months study of Latin, he entered Pius XII Seminary Banyo in 1952. John was ordained on 30th June 1958 at St Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane, volunteering to serve in the Cairns Diocese from 30th January 1959.

John was appointed as assistant priest to Tully where he served from 1956 to 1962. He was next appointed Parish Priest of Dimbulah serving there from 1963 to 1979. Next he was appointed Parish Priest of Silkwood and served there from 1979 to 1990. In June 1990 John moved into semi-retirement, living at his 'shack' at Tully Heads and continuing on in his ministry of Visitation and supplying for Masses in the Tully Parish, while able to fish more.

John was a much loved country Priest, well known for his 'turn of phrase', his love of the Priesthood, his astuteness, his successes in coaching athletics and for his passion for fishing. He was an avid supporter of the Cowboys in the NRL being photographed on occasions with Jonathan Thurston. His Vigil was at Silkwood and his Funeral Mass was at Tully, being buried in the Tully Cemetery.

Rest now in peace.

JAMES O'LOUGHLIN

25/05/1931 – 11/12/2019

✠ James O'Loughlin came from the small SA country town of Pinnaroo. He entered St Francis Xavier Seminary at an early age, completed his secondary education, commenced theological studies and was then chosen to complete his studies in Propaganda College in Rome. He was ordained in Rome on 7 December 1954. After seven years as Assistant at Thebarton, he was appointed Parish Priest in the Barossa Valley. He later served as PP of St Marys and Payneham.

Throughout his ministry Jim held a number of leadership positions in the Archdiocese and served on several committees, including several terms on the Council of Priests. Notably he was part of the inaugural Diocesan Pastoral Team set up by Archbishop Faulkner in 1986, the first to establish a leadership team including a Religious sister and a lay woman. In that position he was also Vicar General. In April 2002 Jim was appointed a Prelate of Honour with the title of Monsignor.

Jim retired in May 2006, but remained active for some time. He always kept a lively interest in the activities of the Diocese and the wellbeing of fellow priests, and regularly attended Senior Priests gatherings where he often stirred up vigorous debates.

Mgr James O'Loughlin died with grace and dignity at Estia Health on Wednesday 11 December. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St Augustine's Church Salisbury, his final parish, and he was buried in the nearly Pioneer Catholic Cemetery.

In the words of Madge Maguire (fellow DPT member) Mgr Jim is remembered "as a priest, mentor, spiritual director, enduring supporter of his fellow priests, a promoter of the role of lay people in leadership, a firm believer in the Universal Church, an irascible disrupter and more particularly as a man of deep prayer and contemplation." *May he rest in peace.*

PETER FREDERICK SCHULTZ

26/04/1961 – 05/08/2019

✠ Peter was born in Wangaratta, Victoria on 26 April 1961 to parents Patricia (Caldwell) and John Schultz. He is preceded in death by his father and survived by his mother, brother Gregory and sisters Catherine and Leanne.

Peter's early education was in Victoria, attending primary and secondary schools in Wangaratta, East Brunswick and St Kilda. He commenced his study for the priesthood at Corpus Christi College, Clayton in 1979, later moving to the Pius XII Seminary at Banyo in 1985. Peter was ordained to the priesthood on 24 January 1990 by Bishop Edward Kelly at St Patrick's Cathedral, Toowoomba. Continuing his study, Peter obtained a Licentiate in Canon Law from the Catholic University Leuven in 2001.

Peter spent time in various places across the Diocese of Toowoomba as well as holding a variety of diocesan ministry positions. He spent time at Warwick, Cunnamulla, Cambooya and Helidon, and was available as a supply priest from 2010 onwards taking him to many more communities. Peter was also Vocations and Youth Ministry directors, both positions held for most of the mid-1990s. He was part of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission since 1996 and the Diocesan Tribunal since 2001. Peter was appointed Diocesan Chancellor in 2014. On 13 August 2019, St Patrick's Cathedral, Toowoomba, was filled with family, friends, clergy and parishioners to farewell and celebrate his life.

May he now rest in peace.

Returned to the God, we hold them in prayer.

✠ Denis Callahan, Diocese of Broken Bay.....	31/01/2020
✠ Anthony Casey, Diocese of Lismore.....	08/01/2020
✠ Martin Doyle, Archdiocese of Brisbane.....	03/11/2019
✠ John Flynn LC, Archdiocese of Sydney.....	07/11/2019
✠ Milton John (Tim) Foster, Archdiocese of Perth.....	03/01/2020
✠ Peter Grice, Archdiocese of Brisbane.....	17/12/2019
✠ Barry Nobbs, Diocese of Broken Bay.....	02/11/2019
✠ John O'Kelly, Diocese of Sale.....	13/01/2020
✠ Rodney Pitts, Archdiocese of Melbourne.....	15/02/2020
✠ Gerald Scott, Vincention Fathers.....	19/01/2020
✠ David Shelton OMI, Oblates of Mary Immaculate.....	12/12/2019
✠ Paul Stenhouse MSC, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.....	19/11/2019

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Letter from Rev Brian Mathews, NCP Treasurer

I hope you will enjoy/have enjoyed reading this edition.

The Swag provides a forum for publishing progressive but responsible Catholic thinking within the Church, featuring a wide range of topics from local and international contributors.

This Autumn edition is sent to every priest in Australia as our way of supporting you in your ministry and making a connection with you. If this is the first time you have received *The Swag* I welcome you and warmly invite you to take out NCP Membership for 2020. This will ensure you receive each edition on a regular basis, which will help you keep up to date with local, national and international Church issues.

To all our clergy readers, please act promptly when you receive your NCP Membership 2020 invitation/renewal at the end of February. Your financial membership will ensure we continue to produce *The Swag* and keep working on your behalf.

The ever growing lay readership fills us with great hope as *The Swag* continues to be a voice to the wider church community. Individual subscription numbers increase with each new week, as do the number of bulk orders sent to parishes and schools around Australia.

If you are a lay person reading this edition, I warmly invite you to consider becoming a financial Associate Member of the National Council of Priests of Australia as a way of supporting and encouraging us, the clergy of Australia, in our ministry. Please make contact with the NCP National Office for details (see page 53).

Thankyou one and all!

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.