

Quarterly magazine of the National Council of Priests of Australia

The Swag

theswag.org.au | Vol. 29 No. 1 | Autumn 2021



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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.

Non-members and interested lay people are most welcome to subscribe.

Annual print subscription

\$42.00 per calendar year (four editions).

Annual online subscription

\$42.00 (four editions).

Pro-rata subscription for the print edition

\$10.50 (inc GST) per edition.

Please contact the NCP National Office for all subscriptions.

The views expressed in *The Swag* are not necessarily those of the NCP executive, the editors or NCP staff.

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Paddy Sykes



Greetings to our loyal readers of *The Swag* which, under the gifted editorship of Peter Maher, continues to go from strength to strength. I thank Peter and all who contribute to the content of our much-anticipated magazine.

President Joe Biden – 46th President of the United States of America

If you did not watch the inauguration of Joe Biden live or watch it on iView after the event, I thoroughly recommend you do. Besides the pomp and ceremony of the event and the amazing celebrities who performed (Lady Gaga's rendition of the American National Anthem was spectacular), Joe's inauguration speech could have been delivered in any respectable Christian Cathedral. Given the division among the American population, he spoke of ***working together; being focussed on the same goal; respecting each other's differences and looking forward and not looking back.*** These are themes that we in the Australian Catholic Church should embrace as the Democrats and the Republicans of our Catholic world steer a way forward in our post-Plenary Council church.

Working together and being focussed on the same goal

At the end of 2021 my term as Chairman will conclude, Brian Mathews will complete three years of a possible six-year term and Jim Clarke will complete the final year of what was Greg Barker's term. Later this year we will be calling for nominations for these three positions. As the NCP confronts the challenges of the Australian Catholic Church, the priesthood in Australia and other issues relevant to the life of our church, it is so important that we have dedicated committee members prepared to address these issues.

If you are willing to share your time, energy and expertise – we need you. Please consider your own suitability for these roles or if you know someone who would be a suitable candidate, encourage them to accept nomination. The call for nominations will be included in the Winter edition of *The Swag*, with nominations closing midnight, 30 September 2021.

The Coronavirus pandemic has changed our lives in ways we could not have imagined 12 months ago. Who would ever have thought that our churches would be shut down?

Hand sanitising and tap and go stations have become a regular feature of our church life – as has livestreaming of church services. Whilst some people couldn't get back to church quickly enough to receive the eucharist, some parishioners are still to return.

Are they concerned about their health safety? Have they become used to watching mass online or on television? Finances, keeping people connected, keeping the parish community united – these have all been challenges for pastors and their parish pastoral councils. Who knows what the roll

out of the coronavirus vaccine will mean for Australian parish life?

Respecting each other's differences

I am constantly being told how refreshing, engaging and challenging *The Swag* is.

It provides a forum for publishing progressive but responsible thinking within the Church. The People of God are thirsty for the content of *The Swag* and we will continue to make every effort to make it available to them. Many of my older (and you would think more conservative) parishioners are so happy to pick up the free copies I make available in my parish. Bulk Parish subscriptions are available through the National Office.

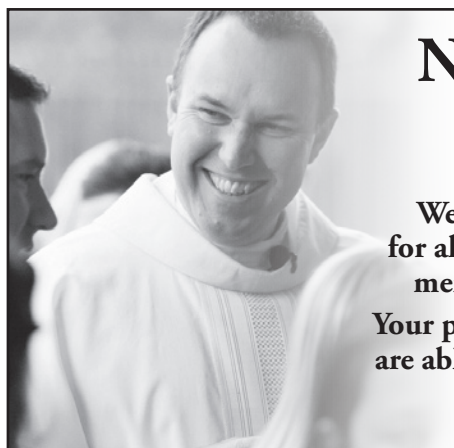
Looking forward and not looking back

The most anticipated event in the life of our Australian Catholic Church, The Plenary Council 2020, has also been impacted by COVID-19. As you well know the gatherings have had to be postponed and the first gathering will happen via Zoom.

Many Catholics who are seeking deep reform of our structures and accountability in the Catholic Church are concerned that the delay and the way in which they will be held (Zoom), will conspire to inhibit the possibilities that many hoped the Council would deliver. Let us pray that we will not be disappointed.

I wish you all every blessing as we advance in this new year together.

Shalom,
Paddy. ☺



NCP Memberships 2021

2021 Membership Renewals were sent out during the third week of January.

We recognise that 2020 was a tough financial year for all Australians and the continued generosity of our members does not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

Your prompt renewal (by 17 March 2021) will ensure we are able to continue to meet our financial commitments.

Thank you one and all!



True churchmen for our time

On January 6 we said farewell

to a very special Australian churchman, bishop Geoffrey Robinson. I first met him as a Canon Law

teacher at St Patrick's College Manly in the 70's. He was a serious operator and he seemed to me to be a bit aloof. He was shy and a man of few words and he remained so till the end. I shared a meal with him and a few friends just weeks before his death and he was typically measured in speech.

But what he said was thoughtful, generous and compassionate. I recall a time when I experienced the stress of parish leadership and I approached Geoff for advice. I had a sense that I needed a few months break, but was not sure that was possible. Geoff checked to make sure I had necessary supports in place, asked me what I thought would help and immediately told me not to worry, he would talk to Cardinal Clancy and make sure everything went smoothly. And he did. I didn't have to worry about any diocesan arrangements. Geoff took care of all that for me. He understood what I needed, confirmed it was what I needed and that I could manage, and then made sure it happened with the minimum of stress on me.

I worked with him for years after that as diocesan university chaplain's co-ordinator when he had responsibility for that field of ministry in the diocese. Geoff remained a friend and supporter of my endeavours. He supported chaplaincy, parish ministry, pastoral supervision, ministry with LGBTIQ+ Catholics and *The Swag*.



There has been much written about Geoff's courageous work in Canon Law, his stand at the Oceanic Synod in Rome, his approach to various church teachings and his groundbreaking support for victims of clergy sexual abuse. Geoff would side with the one unjustly treated in all these situations.

You can read more on Geoff's life and achievements in bishop Peter Ingham's homily and Michael Kelly's obituary printed in this edition of *The Swag*.

Another churchman featured in this edition is the story of Tony Flannery, Irish Redemptorist, who has been banned from ministry for many years. In the review of his book, *From The Outside, Rethinking Church Doctrine*, in this edition of *The Swag*, he explains how integrity and justice demand he not sign a document created by the Congregation for the Doctrine and the Faith. It is inaccurate, a misrepresentation of his position and offered no dialogue. It was communicated through his superior and there was no personal communication. So, of course he won't sign it.

Geoff and Tony's stand and advocacy for women, those abused and LGBTIQ+ people and critique of clericalism now seems commonplace in the church in Western countries among all but the keenest misogynists and homophobes. Pope Francis' statements condemning power abuse, clericalism and supporting gay people and, most recently, formally changing canon law to include women in 'minor orders' of lector and acolyte are not groundbreaking in terms of practice. These are standard justice issues and women already do the roles of lector and acolyte. Pope Francis however has done something unusual on these matters – he has named them and formalised a common practice.

Women don't need a law change so they can be 'acolytes', they already know they can and do fulfil this ministry beautifully. Gay people don't need to have their civil partnerships accepted by the church. Victims and survivors of sexual abuse don't need the church's acknowledgement to know they were abused. But we all need our leaders to be transparent, honest and to name the reality we are living. Haven't we learned yet that to say and do nothing, to cover up, hide or mislead is to collude and sustain the injustice, to leave victims dangerously vulnerable and to leave the faithful open to complicity or, at best, ignorance. Injustice has to be named and acted upon not covered up or mired in unclear justifications. History has taught us how dangerous this path is for everyone.

Pope Francis' prophetic ministry is not so much in the normalising of what we might expect of a gospel Christian, but in naming something clearly and speaking truthfully without the bureaucratic doublespeak that passes for explanation, when in practice most are getting on with the job. It might even lead to less demonising of people calling for a more just, inclusive and equitable church and world.

In this edition there are some important articles on the bishops' response to *The Light of The Southern Cross* (Leahy and Johnstone); interesting perspectives take on Christmas (Scanlon and Hodgens); clericalism (O'Loughlan, Page and Talbot) and some spiritual reflections (Candappa).

I want to recognise the death of Frank O'Dea SSS on January 9 at 92 years of age. He was a regular contributor to *The Swag* over many years up to 2020. ☹️



The Swag Winter Edition

Closing date for letters and articles is Monday 26 April 2021.

Please email submissions for consideration

to: editor@theswag.org.au

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



Clericalism – visible and invisible

THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN

Thomas O'Loughlin is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and professor of historical theology at the University of Nottingham (UK). His latest book is *Eating Together, Becoming One: Taking Up Pope Francis's Call to Theologians* (Liturgical Press, 2019). Reprinted with permission from *La Croix International* December 14, 2020.

The horrors we read about in the *McCarrick Report* and the UK's *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse Report* – both of which appeared by coincidence almost simultaneously – will continue to send shockwaves through the Catholic Church for decades to come.

Even Catholics who have defended the Church's good name during the last three decades of scandals have found these indictments to be the last straw. Moreover, the failure of leaders to fall on their swords has led to gasps of incredulity.

One cannot fall back on the defence of "I am following orders" if that means, in actual fact, that one is denying moral responsibility.

Yet that is what is happening and often Catholics are left wondering: why do they not see that if they have been so found wanting, they must cease to claim any sort of leadership.

We need the equivalent of "dishonourable discharge"

It is not that they – be they priests, bishops, cardinals or even a pope – should resign and leave the limelight, but they should see that their continued appearance as anything other than failures should be manifest.

In effect, we need the equivalent of the military sentence of "dishonourable discharge".

The actors concerned must be seen to be no longer senior figures in the Church. They must not even be seen in their clerical uniform lest they bring dishonour on that uniform, which is in turn dishonour on the ministry of the Church, and in turn the integrity of the Gospel's proclamation.

But many Catholics are not simply shocked at the affront given by those who appear not to recognize their own responsibility. They are also bewildered that men who are supposedly dedicated to the Gospel cannot see that their behaviour is undermining the credibility of the whole Church.

How, they ask, is it that these men – from the retired pope down to diocesan officials – think they still are somehow witnesses to Jesus?

Clericalism as a fundamental disordering

The simple answer is clericalism – as is clear from both of the reports.

Clericalism: the notion that their solidarity as clerics is greater than their solidarity with the whole of the baptized People of God.

They imagine their duties to support one another is greater than their duty to support those who are the victims of criminal violence. They see loyalty and esprit de corps (given a pious sugar coating as "the fraternity of the priesthood") as more important than personal responsibility for doing the truth in charity.

But surely clericalism is on the wane, right? Clericalism does affect everything, surely?

And – for many clerics – it seems to be a charge that sweeps them along and for which they, just ordinary parish priests, cannot be blamed!

Unfortunately, as both reports show – the report on England far more explicitly than that carried out by the Vatican – clericalism is pervasive and perverting. But it is often hiding in plain sight!

Seeing clericalism close to you

Here is a photograph of a church – it could be any small parish church. It is a small older building that was updated to implement the needs to reform the liturgy that were identified in the mid-twentieth century by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).



Moreover, unlike in so many places where this renewal was only half-hearted, minimally implemented, or just botched,

this is a very good example of seeking to do what the Council asked.

At a glance, we can see that the table of the Eucharist is distinctly made to look like a table and there is room for people to move around it as befits a table. As an object it is free from clutter: it is the table – the table of the Lord – that is significant, and this is not distracted by other images, decorations, or signs attached to it.

Second, there is a permanent place for reading the scriptures. The table of the word has an intrinsic and clear place in the liturgy. The two tables – of word and sacrament – are clearly the focus for the gathering.

This is helped by the fact that the place for the reserved sacrament has been moved to the side wall. It still has a place of honour, can be the focus of private prayer outside of the liturgy by anyone visiting the church, but it is not in such a central position that it is distracting attention during the actual celebration of the Eucharist.

Anyone with a tick-box list for items that should be included in any renewal would give this layout almost full marks. Indeed, a great many churches could learn a great deal from it. It is because it is such a good example that it is also a warning about clericalism.

Now focus on the picture's foreground. What do you see?

Barriers

This church pre-supposes that the liturgy is made up of two groups separated by a set of rails. On one side is the holy space – "the sanctuary" – and on the other the ordinary. On one side is the sacred person and on the other those who are "merely" the people.

One is, quite literally cut off from the other. One is the part of the man who offers the Eucharist, the other is for those who take part by attending.

Fundamental to this view is division – the Church is a binary reality rather than a unity. While the old binaries of a special language and a minimal vision have been removed, the underlying attitude of separation is alive and well.

Now look at this photograph taken from the back of that church.

It is clear that there are two groups: the clergy and the people. They are as different as any two groups can be in a building.

Continued page 6



Think of a hospital. There are special places for the doctors and nurses only, and places where they interact with the patients.

Think of a school. There is there is students' areas and the teachers' room where no student enters. Think of a bank where there are also grilles and barriers between the bank employees and the customers.

On those gates in the photograph, they might as well hang a sign that says, "STAFF ONLY".

As long as we live and worship in a Church that thinks in these secular terms of the staff and the customers, the first loyalty of those who see their place as beyond those rails will be towards one another.

They will think of themselves as men apart – and justify this with high-sounding theological words – rather than as fellow disciples with every other baptized sister and brother on our common pilgrimage of faith.

But my church does not have rails anymore!

Few churches now have actual rails, but just look at this: When this church is full of people for a celebration of the Eucharist, I wonder if someone sitting in the fifth pew down feels that they are as much a celebrant as the man sitting in the big chair behind the table?

And, more importantly, does that man in



the special chair think that the person in the tenth pew is a celebrant? As long as we have to ask that question, we will have clericalism – and its problems.

We will not fix clericalism with architecture. But architecture may maintain and reinforce the attitudes we claim – listening to Pope Francis – we are abandoning.

And, certainly, architecture can provide a means for making the problems visible. ☞



Eucharist and Creation

ESMEY HERSCOVITCH RSCJ

Esmey Herscovitch RSCJ recalls some theologians' words and some prayers that make the connection between creation and Eucharist.

I read with interest the article by Terry Kean in the summer issue of *The Swag*. The naming of Climate change and Eucharist as two of the major issues to be addressed by the Plenary Council has prompted me to add some reflections that link climate change/environment/care for the earth with Eucharist/liturgy.

My starting point is a book by Patricia Fox RSM entitled *God as Communion* – John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson and the retrieval of the symbol of the Triune God. Elizabeth Johnson, a member of the Sisters of St Joseph of Brentwood, is an American feminist theologian and John Zizioulas is a Greek Orthodox theologian and prelate.

In one part Patricia Fox writes: (John Zizioulas) argues that it is the liturgy that provides the basis for a positive approach to the world and creation. Within the liturgy the faithful offer the gifts of creation – bread and wine – to God as Eucharist (thanksgiving), and this represents, he claims, a journey of cosmic dimensions (he) claims that within a Eucharistic vision of the world, the dichotomy between time and eternity ceases to exist and that the unity of the

past, the present, and the future enables a complete acceptance of the sanctification of time and of history.

He believes that the liturgy is the key formative source of initiation into a way of being that can shape and transform humanity's relationships and behaviour toward every other identity. My (i.e. Patricia Fox's) reading of his work is that this is the sense in which he holds that a redeemed humanity has a key role in the "salvation" of creation.

At another point she writes:

Zizioulas's analysis is that the ecological crisis is fundamentally a crisis of culture and that placing hope in rational and ethical solutions alone, as western societies have appeared to do, is doomed to ultimate failure. He suggests that there is a prior need for a new culture in which the liturgical dimension has central place and determines the ethical principle. He proposes 'education through worship': By this I mean the acquaintance of a human being from childhood with a holistic approach to reality involving all of creation.

Seeking to come to grips with this link of Eucharist and creation I have sought



references that do this, and I offer just a few. I found far more than I had expected.

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* says:

Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love: 'Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world' (Pope John Paul II – *Ecclesia de*

Eucharistia). The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration.

Denis Edwards in *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* says: When humans come to the Eucharist they bring the fruits of creation and, in some way, the whole of creation to the Eucharistic table. In the Eucharist, creation is lifted up to God in offering and thanksgiving.

The gifts of creation are lifted up to God and the Spirit is invoked to transform the gifts of creation and the assembled community into the body of Christ. The exercise of this priesthood is not confined to the ordained but is the God-given role of all the faithful.

Brendan Lovett in *It's not over yet* says: The Eucharist is the great sacrifice of praise by which the Church speaks on behalf of the whole creation. For the world which God has reconciled is present at every Eucharist: in the bread and wine, in the persons of the faithful, and in the prayers they offer for themselves and for all the people The Eucharist thus signifies what the world is to become: an offering and hymn of praise to the Creator, a universal communion in the body of Christ, a kingdom of justice, love and peace in the Holy Spirit.

Denis Edwards in *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* says: We remember the vulnerable state of the community of life on earth today and bring this to God. ... this is caught up in the mystery of Christ celebrated in each of our Eucharists.

The One we encounter sacramentally in the Eucharist is the One in whom all things were created and in whom all will be transfigured.

Prayer for the 17th Sunday of Ordinary Time (Sunday Missal 1982): (Gracious) God, open our eyes to see your hand at work in the splendour of creation, in the beauty of human life.

Touched by your hand our world is holy. Help us to cherish the gifts that surround us, to share your blessings with our brothers and sisters, and to experience the joy of life in your presence.

Tony Kelly in *The Bread of God* says: In the Eucharist these elements (symbols, gestures, words, relationships, and biological processes of our world) reach their most intense and comprehensive. There the risen Lord takes fragments of creation – the elements of our earthly reality that nature and history have

combined to produce – to transform them into something more in anticipation of a new totality: 'This is my body; this is my blood'.

Daniel O'Leary in *An Astonishing Secret* says: The first step towards a deeper understanding of sacraments is to see them in the context of a world already permeated and filled with God's presence. Grace is oriented to our humanity in its fullness. The 'holy' life can be lived only in the context of everyone's everyday existence.


The Eucharist 'in a fragment of matter' penetrates, gathers up and embraces all Creation. Human, non-human and all created entities form a single spiritual community, each worshipping God in its own way.

In the form of Bread and Wine, humanity offers back to God what is God's own, and time and space are sanctified. Beyond a very individualistic explanation of 'going to Mass' and mostly irrelevant arguments about the rubrics of it, Pope Francis and his two predecessors ask us to open our minds to a magnificently richer understanding of what our Sunday celebration means.

It is a holy communion of heaven and earth, a moment of true vision of the divinity of our human lives, a time for the whole universe to sing a song of thanks to its Creator, an experience of the abundant and eternal horizon – all somehow focussed on a piece of bread. The Kingdom that is to come, the Omega we strive for is already around us. This Earth, the whole universe in the light of the Incarnation, is a kind of theophany of God's Real Presence. We are living now in that astonishing milieu where we perceive every sensation of every sense as the touch and whisper of God!

In addition to the above we might also take note of the scripture readings in the liturgy so many of which abound in the wonders of creation not to mention the prayers that constantly draw our attention to creation.





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The laity speaks

PETER JOHNSTONE

Peter Johnstone, Co-Convener, Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform, reflects on the role of the laity after reading a new book, *We too: The Laity Speaks!*

We too: *The Laity Speaks!* (Berise Heasly & John D'Arcy May, Coventry Press, Bayswater VIC, 2020) focusses on the most critical aspect of Church reform, the involvement of the laity, and particularly the shameful exclusion of women from the governance of the Church.

The book is about the failure of the Church to draw adequately on the talents and wisdom of the Church's people in the work of the Church.

The title *We too: The Laity Speaks!* is particularly apt and well-chosen – the exclamation mark recognises that speaking is not something that Catholics are encouraged to do. Neither our bishops nor we the laity are used to any critical views of the laity being openly expressed, or acknowledged, let alone listened to or respected. That's not healthy.

Truth can be harsh and there are some truthful and harsh judgements in this book that must be spoken and that cry out for remedies. That requires courage on the part of the laity, and courage from our leaders.

We Catholics find ourselves somewhat conflicted in criticising our Church. Our faith is by its nature at the centre of our lives, but those demanding renewal of our institutional Church are dismissed by the Church's leaders and clerics. Rarely are the concerns of the laity respected, even acknowledged. Letters are binned and public criticism is condemned. But a true commitment to faith demands that the faithful hold their institutional Church to account, a Church that in many ways acts contrary to that faith.

Those seeking reform simply want a Church that models our faith and is seen to practise what it preaches, a Church that faithfully reflects the teachings of Jesus in pursuing his mission. 'We too' contains informed comment on the state of our Church and commitment to our faith. This book is the work of truly committed Catholic Christians who recognise that faith has no room for hypocrisy.

The book's theme is for the laity to 'wake up' and to 'speak up'. We the laity, the 'People in the Pews', must accept our responsibilities, note the desperate signs of the times and, in the words of the editors,



"we must fuse secular and sacred elements of life into a balanced and evolving experience of faith . . ."

'We too' has excellent contributors to attempt that fusion. Berise Heasly builds on her excellent work in 'Call No One Father', in which she names and shames the evils of clericalism in the context of a call for accountability, transparency and inclusion. Berise and John D'Arcy May have done their job as editors in bringing together a wide range of views and expertise to ensure a balanced and thoughtful consideration of that unifying theme. They challenge the Plenary Council to "take full account of the issues raised".

That challenge has certainly not been taken up by the bishops at their Conference meeting in November where they approved a less than enthusiastic response to their commissioned report, "The Light from the Southern Cross", a considered assessment from a range of well-qualified people from Australia and overseas on the Church's governance. The response does not commit to implementation of the more substantial and critical governance recommendations, those that would ensure the ongoing and effective nature of renewal. In response to LSC's call for diocesan pastoral councils in all dioceses, the bishops state that the establishment of diocesan pastoral councils

is 'voluntary', a clear misrepresentation of canon law. The fact is that very few bishops in Australia have established diocesan pastoral councils despite an actual requirement of canon 511 that: In each diocese, in so far as pastoral circumstances suggest, a pastoral council is to be established. That is not 'voluntary', and I am not aware of any bishop suggesting pastoral circumstances that preclude such a council. Other responses reinforce this apparent lack of respect for the laity's contribution to Church governance.

I'm reminded of some words in an Open Letter back in 2011 to the Australian bishops and Pope Benedict auspiced by Catholics for Renewal: The Church. . . does not yet embody the vision of Vatican II for a truly collegial Church in which decisions respect local cultures, communities and circumstances. Rather, it appears as an institution focussed on centralism, legalism and control, with few effective structures for listening and dialogue, and often more concerned with its institutional image and interests than the spirit of Christ (my emphasis).

'We too' is much more than a listing of the Church's shortcomings. The experience and knowledge of the contributors presents an informed picture of the mission of our Church in the context of our faith and the facts of the Church straying from its mission.

I offer the following very selective comments on some contributions:

Sue Phillips draws on her extensive experience as a woman leader in the Church dealing with the anachronistic male leadership, noting that 'we must hold our leaders to account', ensuring that we are 'permanently in a state of mission'

Marilyn Hatton focuses on the shameful lack of equality in our Church, proclaiming the devastating impact of an all-male hierarchy.

Eleanor Flynn asks why 'we, the laity and especially women, allow ourselves to be talked at, talked down to, not given the facts and in general treated as second class citizens ...?'

Janette Elliott focuses on the all-important spiritual context of our faith noting a powerful lesson from Julian of Norwich, that 'the struggle for justice is at the centre of desire for the divine'.

Constant J Mews offers a sobering insight that the 'roots of both synodality and clericalism go back to the time of Jesus', noting the history of the people of God in selecting pastoral leaders.

Ian Hamilton asks: 'Is it too harsh to say

that the hierarchical, institutional and clerical world-views have been, and are, inimical to the demands of the truly spirit-filled mission of the church, as exemplified by the spirit-filled mission of Jesus?'

Paul Collins refers to Church leaders who 'seem to be besotted with a narrow range of issues, focussing on gender, sex and reproduction.' Tellingly, Paul notes that the 'monumental' challenge of evangelisation 'doesn't even seem to have entered the purview of those running the 2021 Plenary.' He insists 'evangelisation begins with pre-evangelisation' for which 'we have a massive amount of recovery work confronting us', at the heart of which is the challenge of 'connecting ecology with belief and theology'.

John D'Arcy May leaves us with this thought: 'If the Plenary Council takes up and develops the legacy of Vatican II, there is a fair chance that these deeper relationships could be achieved. But it is a very big 'if'.' Yet our bishops claim as the primary aim of the Plenary Council 'to bring to fuller realization within Australia the vision of the Second Vatican Council regarding the nature and mission of the church.' And there's the rub!

Berise Heasley highlights the need for courage amongst our bishops – an implicit theme of the book, noting 'the defiance of some in the Australian hierarchy, for whom not even the manifest evil of child abuse was enough to prompt them to acknowledge that change was urgently needed.'

'Speaking up' is the great challenge facing us all as the people of God. 'We too' insists that the Australian Plenary Council be a vehicle for addressing the institutional Church's lack of accountability, transparency and inclusion which has enabled so many failures.

A current issue in Victoria shows the dangers of the Church hierarchy presenting views publicly without hearing the laity. The Church has responded poorly to Victorian legislation to prohibit the injurious practice of so-called gay 'conversion' therapy, essentially practices that are designed to make young people of non-heterosexual orientation repulsed by their God-given sexuality. The legislation is intended to prevent injury to vulnerable people already suffering from societal prejudice; the legislation is consistent with Jesus' instruction to 'love one another'.

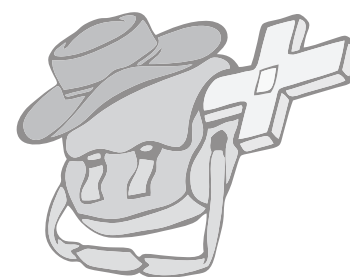
However, official Catholic responses have been to misrepresent grossly the legislation as: (t)he Andrews Government's sinister and cynical attack on people of faith, claiming absurdly that the bill could crush any Christian expression of human

sexuality, capturing homilists, scripture teachers and parents. These statements, presented as the Catholic response without any accountability to the faithful, are patently false and are demonstrably unChristian; they are not views representative of Catholics generally.

We too: The Laity Speaks! is about a dying autocracy no longer fit for purpose which must die as an autocracy for the Church to live, pursuing the mission of Jesus Christ. Courage is needed from both the people in the pews and from our leaders to ensure that our Church pursues one goal – to seek and do the will of God!

Our pastoral leaders constantly claim that the Plenary Council is the work of the Holy Spirit – a presumptuous claim at best, heretical at worst. The Holy Spirit will not be summoned. 'Sophia' expects us and our leaders to use our God-given skills to do everything in our power to discern and fulfil God's will, and to pray that the Council be inspired.

There is much in this book to guide all the faithful, including our bishops, as we approach a critical opportunity for renewal offered by the Plenary Council. That Council desperately needs the knowledge, the spirituality, and the life skills of the people in the pews – and the courage of our bishops! ☺



The Swag Winter Edition

Closing date for letters
and articles is

Monday, 26 April 2021.

Please email submissions

for consideration to:

editor@theswag.org.au

Articles: 700 words

Features: 1,400 words

Return to the scene of the crime

JIM DOWLING

Jim Dowling, Catholic Worker member and peace activist, discusses a recent demonstration at an SAS training base on Swan Island in the wake of the revelations of the assault by SAS soldiers on Afghan civilians including children.

In 2014 Greg Rolles, Tim Webb, Sam Quinlin, and Dave Sprigg were brutally assaulted by SAS soldiers on Swan Island, a highly secretive training base at the bottom of Victoria. They were hooded, stripped naked, threatened with rape and drowning, dragged along the ground kicked and walked on.

Last weekend I returned with Greg to Swan Island along with Dominican priest, Fr Peter Murnane and a friend, Shane Anderson. We went there once again to offer ongoing witness and resistance to Australia's war crimes in the Middle East. For Greg it was also a chance to face the demons of his own home-grown torture at the hands of the SAS.

We received a very different reception from Greg and friends four years ago.

You see the Australian military is facing the most shameful exposure in its history. A long investigation has concluded SAS troops murdered at least 39 unarmed Afghans, often for no other reason than the desire to kill another human being.

This is Australia's Mai Lai.

For ten years prior to the release of this report, a group of Christians had been offering nonviolent resistance to Australia's illegal and immoral wars, by blocking the gates or walking onto Swan Island, to place their bodies in front of the war machine.

In 2014 while being assaulted, more than one of the victims told later of the thought going through their mind – If this is what they do to us, imagine what they do to Afghans and Iraqis? Now we know.

As I said above, our own reception last weekend was nothing like that one. I believe the change reflects the universal shame the military, and indeed all Australians are feeling right now.

We entered the Swan Island base before dawn, walked to the training area right near the scene of the assaults, and held our banner, Stop Training Killers – Abolish the SAS.

When we were finally spotted by a security guard, he calmly told us the police were coming. Soon after we heard over the loudspeakers: There are peace protestors on the base. All personnel are to remain in their quarters till further notice. Greg live-streamed all our activities. No attempt was made to stop him. In fact, he continued to record in the back of the police van.

The police were ultra-polite. They drove us off the base and released us. Summonses for trespass would be sent in the mail they said.

An interesting feature of Swan Island is that there is a public golf course on the front part of the Island. For some years we have blocked the gates for a number of days and faced the ire of golfers.

This time the gates were once again closed to the golfers. But even golfers know shame.

Two golfers separately stopped to chat. Neither expressed anger at our actions. One said he had friends in the marines in the US. He corresponded with them regularly. He said we needed the military because there are real 'bastards' in the world.

When I pointed out that sometimes the bastards are us, as when we're fighting wars for the US empire in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, he agreed. 'You won't get any argument from me there', he said.

And so we didn't. Instead, he wanted to talk about the problem of kangaroos on the island. The second golfer who came later asked us if we knew why the gates were closed. When we explained, he had no complaint either. His tone was the most meek and mild.

Is there no one to condemn us?

On the same day as we entered Swan Island the Chinese published the mock picture of an Australian soldier cutting the throat of an Afghan boy holding a lamb. Of course, the post was inspired by the section of the Brereton report claiming the SAS cut the throats of two 14-year-old boys and left them on the side of the road

'for others to clean up the mess'.

The prime minister immediately demanded an apology. But none was forthcoming. The China/Australia diplomatic war has just opened its most shocking front.

On the long drive home to Brisbane, Greg and I turned on the radio for the first time. The voice of MP Jacqui Lambie greeted us. She was demanding the head of Defence Chief Angus Campbell resign over the whole issue. But mostly she was talking about the terrible problem of Defence force suicides. Of course, the recent developments can only dramatically exacerbate the problem.

It is indeed a tragedy.

But the solution is not to cover up the horror of war with empty platitudes. Empty platitudes about our brave and noble troops. Such platitudes help ensure each succeeding generation of youth, who have not seen the horror of war, will bravely sign up for it.

We need to see a time when the truth is told. That war is a terrible evil. It dehumanises all who take part. We need to face up to fact that war crimes are not just committed by individual soldiers, or even the generals who Jackie Lambie seeks to blame.

Surely the first war criminals are the politicians who sent young men off to kill people who posed no threat to us. As someone once said, 'War is about killing people who are not our enemies for people who are not our friends'. The Howards, Abbotts, Gillards, Morrisons of this world should all be put on trial for instigating and/or continuing this mindless bloodshed. Bloodshed for the rich and powerful to become more rich and powerful.

Once the initiators of the war crimes are held accountable, maybe we can honestly face the shame. ☹️

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

The festive season over – what of 2021?

ERIC HODGENS



Eric Hodgens, Melbourne priest, looks at the year ahead and the dangers inherent.

We are now launched into the third decade of the 21st Century – but where are we headed?

Easter is the greatest Christian feast. Life wins over death. Christmas is number two. Our God is incarnate in our world. Jesus is God taking flesh – the human face of the invisible God and the reassurance that God is intimately involved with humanity.

Both concepts are central to Christianity as it tries to make sense of human reality. But as stories go, Christmas tops the pops. The images of Christmas engage us more. The crib with Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Christmas carols, Christmas trees, gift-giving and a bit of indulgent eating and drinking. Our imagination is full of scenes which scream Christmas.

Many of these images come from the gospels of Luke and Matthew. As evangelists, they wrote their stories because they believed the life, death and resurrection of Jesus was an intervention by God in human history. The puzzle of life itself is solved firstly by Jesus showing us how to live full and peaceful lives and secondly, reassuring us by his resurrection that life wins out in the long run. That was the main story of the evangelists.

The stories of his birth and childhood are only in Luke and Matthew. These seem to have been written after the main story was composed. Like overtures to the main act, they weave stories which seem to mix recollections and fables – fables using Old Testament images applied to Jesus, thus linking him up to Israel's personal tribal story.

The infancy narratives are very different stories. Luke's is bright and hopeful; Matthew's is darker and more political. Luke has angel choirs singing joyfully; Matthew has Herod's soldiers out to kill Jesus. Luke focuses on Mary's gracious 'yes' to the angel's announcement; Matthew focuses on Joseph as the protector escaping with the child and his mother as refugees to Egypt.

Bethlehem is more important for Luke; Nazareth is for Matthew. Luke has low-born

shepherds as the first to recognize Jesus; Matthew has soothsayers from the East follow a heavenly star to find him and worship him. They inadvertently set Herod on a murderous rampage to kill the child. These intricate stories forewarn the reader that there is much to 'make merry' about, but also, a lot to be wary about.

Christmas and new year greetings in troubled 2020 needed a warning alert to keep an eye out for danger. So, perhaps Matthew's story is the more fitting today.

Forest fires are almost inevitable. The virus has wrought havoc round the globe leaving a trail of death, illness, disruption and depression. Worldwide the political balance is moving to more authoritarian than participatory government. Old wives' tales are crowding out established scientific facts.

The inescapability of social media demands more effort to establish balanced policy. Identity politics cuts out the middleman of argued compromise. A new nationalism creates a dog in-the-manger prejudice against the poor and oppressed who face barriers as they seek refuge or the chance to live decently. Statesmen have vacated the political stage for sectarian ideologues – often enough, also demagogues. Reason has left the scene. Simple decency is in short supply.

But one threat overwhelms all the others – climate change. Despite the skepticism of deniers, the fact is that the earth is warming and that we are contributing to it by our carbon emissions and by changing the flora balance on the planet. Rainforests are the lungs of the planet working symbiotically with human existence.

The destruction of these is a major factor in the warming. Increase of temperature of the atmosphere will make life increasingly more difficult for the human species leading to the possibility of extinction. David Attenborough walks us through the scenario in his testament film *A Life on the Planet* (Netflix). His quiet presentation outlines an alarming challenge to humanity.

He still thinks that the danger can be contained – but not without serious policy intervention from governments. He walks us through the remedy.

It's no use wishing people a Happy New Year unless we are personally committed to sustainable living. And that call to action is central to the Gospel message of Jesus. We are called to be a commonwealth of peoples working together for the common good, not a conglomeration of self-interested individuals – Margaret Thatcher notwithstanding.

International awareness of the need to live sustainably on our planet is becoming more generally agreed on by world leaders. Even in Australia the state premiers are active on the challenge even though there is a glaring lack of leadership at federal level.

Add to this the demands of refugees and the developed world has an increased responsibility to organize help – not to refuse or persecute.

So, let's read Luke and Matthew again, take to heart Matthew's warning, and identify the dangers of our time.

If we follow up on those warnings, we are entitled to join Luke's angelic choirs singing glory to God and peace to people of good will. Only then will our best wishes avoid being a cliché. ☺

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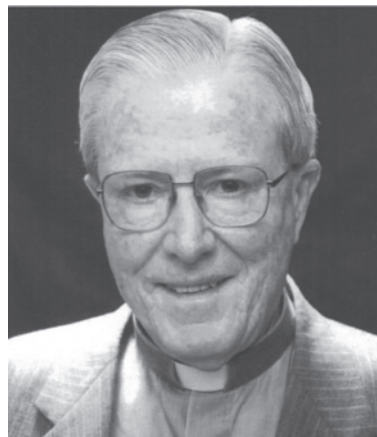
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Bishop Geoffrey Robinson remembered

PETER INGHAM

Bishop Peter Ingham preached the homily at Bishop Geoff Robinson's funeral at St Joseph's Enfield. Geoff was an important Australian churchman and his courage and commitment is explored in the homily.



Bishop Geoff Robinson

My friends whenever somebody we love dies, I believe, we too die a little bit ourselves. We know that we can never be exactly the same again. An area of life – a familiar voice, footstep, a shared memory – has suddenly disappeared and cannot ever be recreated. It is a heart-rending experience because Geoff, whom we loved and still love, has a place in our hearts, but we can no longer find a place in his. A violence has been done to us, because we have lost a place where we loved to rest.

So, mixed with our sadness and grief there may well be even some anger, that the balance of our lives has been so roughly upset. And there's nothing wrong if our prayer is telling God we feel angry – God is big enough to take that.

Yet woven into all this mixed emotion, there is also a deep gratitude to God for all that Geoff has been to us.

In our different ways we came to know, to love and to appreciate Bishop Geoff Robinson. Geoff played a part in our lives and has left his influence upon us – that's the power of goodness and love, generosity, justice and truth.

Our love and appreciation for Geoff and his love and appreciation for us have, even if only in a small way, affected all of us. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here today or be tuning in to this Mass.

Act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God

Geoff has chosen the scripture for today's

Mass and, if he is measuring himself up against the ideal God asks of us, namely to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God, we would say Geoff has passed the test admirably.

The Canon Law Society Journal has described Geoff as a man of truth and integrity, a dedicated priest, a pastoral Bishop, a renowned Canon lawyer and a humble servant of the people of God.

People have spoken to me about Geoff's courage, that he has been a prophetic voice for the Church, that he has been someone who really made a difference, made a great contribution to humanity, that he has been a light in the darkness. Others have spoken about Geoff's superb intellect, his clear mind, his ability to focus, his determination. Whatever he undertook, there were no half-measures with Geoff. Everything he did, he did well with all his heart. He had an open attitude that was inclusive particularly of marginalised people. Anyone who knew Geoff realised they were in the presence of a thoroughly good man.

To mark Bishop Geoff's 60th anniversary of priesthood, a plaque on the wall of Saint Joseph's Church, Enfield, expresses that the parishioners are grateful and blessed to have had Bishop Geoff in residence since October 1988. The parishioners are honoured to call him 'our Bishop'. It says he is our preacher, our counsellor, our teacher, our listener, our friend and faith-journey companion. This community is blessed to have been brought closer to Christ by his ministry. He has shown us that he is a true disciple of our loving God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

On everyone's behalf, I offer our deepest sympathy and the comfort of our presence and prayers to Geoff's brother, Denis, his sisters Patricia, Frances and Helen and to their families, to the Archdiocese of Sydney which he served so wholeheartedly, to the parishioners of St Joseph's, to his many collaborators and colleagues, and to his many friends and admirers among the people of God, laypeople, religious, bishops, priests and deacons.

Geoff had a coronary bypass on Christmas Eve in 1992, which he said became a deeply spiritual experience that caused him to go back to the foundations of his own

beliefs and to look at everything in his life again in the light of his near encounter with death.

Scripture first love

Bishop Geoff's love of Holy Scripture still flourished and sustained him right to the end. As a young priest in Rome, he had obediently accepted Cardinal Gilroy's wish that he study Canon Law. His own preference would have been to study Sacred Scripture.

Scripture has nourished Geoff's spirituality and prayer and this has always flowed through to his commitment to his moral sense of truth, of justice, and of charity.

When Geoff successfully organised a series of Scripture seminars throughout Sydney in the 90s, teachers and parishioners flocked to them showing a thirst for the Word of God. Geoff wanted to improve the biblical literacy of teachers and of the wider community.

In 1994, Geoff was granted a 10-week study leave. It was a field study during which he spent a week in the Sinai desert, three weeks in Turkey (Asia Minor of first century Christianity) and six weeks in Israel. His study leave led to a book he published in 1997 called *Travels in Sacred Places*. Geoff dedicated the book to all people who struggle with their ideas of God, people who seek to hand on to others a knowledge and love that will sustain them.

In October 1994, Geoff published his book on Saint Mark's Gospel (almost 600 pages) entitled, *A Change of Mind and Heart*. This began as a series of talks to teachers in Catholic schools. Geoff's writings through his many books and through his homilies easily reached and enlightened his readers and listeners. Geoff sought to promote conversation within and beyond the Catholic Church exemplified by his organisation of the Ecumenical Halifax-Portal Lectures and his involvement in Catalyst for Renewal and Spirituality in the Pub. As someone said: Geoff always saw beyond what he saw.

Canon Law career

In 1967, Geoff became Lecturer in Canon Law at Saint Patrick's Seminary, Manly, during those challenging years of the revision and renewal of the Code of Canon Law, to accommodate the teachings of the 2nd Vatican Council.

Geoff not only was part of the unanimous vote of Canon Lawyers to form the Canon Law Society of Australia and later

of New Zealand, but he also served on its Executive for 14 consecutive years, serving as Secretary for six years and as President for eight years.

Our Bishops' Conference enlisted the Canon Law Society to comment on the draft texts of the Church's new Code of Canon Law by way of amendments and the drafting of new canons. Geoff was the convener, the organiser and was inspirational in his ability to bring others with him.

On the international level, Geoff was part of a core group of canonical advisors who made a positive contribution to the shape of the Church's new code of law promulgated in 1983.

Geoff was the architect of an Institute of Tribunal Practice in 1978 to train people who work in Church Tribunals. Geoff devised its structure and content and organised the lecturers. It is still ongoing, now under the Canon Law Society and reaches out beyond Australia, to Papua New Guinea, to the south west Pacific, and to south east Asia. Geoff's 1984 book, *Marriage, Divorce, Nullity – a Guide to the Annulment Process in the Catholic Church* was revised to accommodate changes in Vatican jurisprudence and re-printed in 2000. It has since been translated into other languages.

When, in 2008, Geoff received the Owen Oxenham Award for Outstanding Service, the President of the Canon Law Society, Rev. Professor Ian Waters said: Bishop Geoff's superb intellect, his generosity and his availability have resulted in significant contributions in the areas of Sacred Scripture, of Catholic Education, of Ecumenism, of Spirituality and Professional Standards.

Education and Professional Standards

Any of us who were at Geoff's ordination as Auxiliary Bishop in 1984 would have heard him say that, as important as it was to be ordained the Bishop, the most important day of his life was the day he was baptised. In respect of that, Geoff simply wanted to be buried 'as a Christian'.

Bishop Geoff's appointment as Vicar for Education in the Archdiocese of Sydney, as Chair of the Catholic Schools Board and Chair of the Education Commission NSW opened up a new field for his conscientious pastoral engagement. People who worked with Geoff in this capacity speak of how he was always fully informed and alert to the wide-ranging agenda impacting on Catholic Education and able to respond in a clear and highly intelligent manner.

Geoff could balance sometimes competing demands of the State political agenda impacting on Catholic schools and the rightful position of the Church on such matters.

He maintained and prioritised an excellent relationship with the Catholic Education Office and the Executive Director of Schools. He promoted strong relationships between School and Parish, particularly between the Principal and the Parish Priest. Geoff would always insist on considered, balanced and evidence-based decision-making in relation to major restructuring, such as with school closures, amalgamation of schools, or the founding of new schools.

Geoff was always available as a source of wise counsel on sensitive issues, giving his time to discuss options, implications while respecting the role of the person seeking his advice. In general, he always acted with integrity and a strong sense of justice, particularly for those for whom life was challenging. Geoff was always the pastor with the mission of the Church uppermost in his mind.

Bishop Geoff always seemed ahead of the game. Another good example of that was his perception which led to his intuition about the impact of what the sexual abuse crisis would bring.

Geoff stood for a truth we didn't like and did not want to own, because so many, at all levels of the Church, were in denial of what was coming to light. Geoff's commitment to truth and justice made him suffer for his beliefs.

I joined the Bishops' Conference in 1993 when Geoff was chair of the Bishops' Committee now designated Professional Standards. By 1996 it was largely Geoff's leadership that gave us *Towards Healing* – pastoral protocols on how to receive complaints of abuse by church personnel.

Next step was *Integrity in Ministry*, a code of conduct setting standards of behaviour for those involved in the ministerial life of the Catholic Church. Geoff outlined further steps in the process of the church facing up to this issue, an issue which has done irreparable damage not only to victims and survivors, but also to secondary victims: their families, the parish, the school communities and other people as well as to the credibility of the Church at large.

Geoff began by personally listening to victims, hearing their stories, witnessing the pain and damage done to them. Through that, he began to understand something of the complexity of factors which lead to abuse. He also realised the

need to get into the mentality of those responsible for abusing.

Geoff urged us, his brother bishops, to listen to victims and to deal decisively with complaints of abuse. He saw the need to go further, trying to understand the weaknesses and failures in the Church's systems which enable such a betrayal of trust and power. All this was years before the Royal Commission of 2014. At the time, some thought Geoff was going too far. Subsequent events have shown that we all owe Geoff a tremendous debt of gratitude. Didn't Jesus say, 'The truth will set you free'?

I believe history will show Geoff Robinson to be one of the very significant leaders of the Catholic Church in our country, a real champion. His focus was on the pastoral side of reaching out both to victims and perpetrators with compassion and mercy. He was a light in the darkness, ahead of his time – prophetic. As with all prophets, he suffered for his honest appraisal of our situation.

In many ways, the wheel has come full circle. For while the Vatican was initially alarmed at Geoff's proactive stance and he was even taken to task by the Nuncio at the time, we now have Pope Francis setting up the Vatican's Commission for the Protection of Minors, and the Pope's spokesman Fr. Hans Zollner endorsing the very insights Geoff had taken, back at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st-century. A prophet is not welcome in his own country.

Confronting power

As Bishop Power wrote: [Geoff] was a faithful son of the Church wanting the Church to be its best self while knowing it was *ecclesia semper reformanda* – the Church continually in need of reform.

Bishop Geoff's courageous book, *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church – Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus* came from his deep-held desires for the Church to be true to its mission of bringing Christ to the world and from his own great honesty and courage in naming the challenges facing the church today.

Through the liturgy of this Mass of Christian Burial, we gather in friendship here, to ask God to forgive whatever sins Bishop Geoffrey may have committed through human frailty. We ask God to take care of Geoff, now that his earthly life is over. We commit his bodily remains to the earth, but his spirit lives on. We all cherish many happy memories of what Geoff has been to each of us.

Through this Mass we share in the sacrifice of our redemption, the mystery of Christ who has gone before us through death on the Cross and has, by his resurrection, bequeathed to us all, the one sure ground of hope and fulfilment. Death is a mystery with which we can hardly grapple at all satisfactorily without faith; death, without faith, leaves us puzzled and disturbed.

Pope Saint John the 23rd said: The priest is to be a good Shepherd who seeks to reach souls and to look upon the truth." The

Pope then added, Truth and goodness are like two wings to keep us airborne. Any bird will testify you need both the left and the right wings to be able to fly!

So today let us not so much more mourn Geoffrey's death as celebrate his homecoming, his birth to eternal life. We give thanks to God for Geoff's life, dedicated to the Lord in the service of his Church. We give thanks to God for the example Geoff's goodness, generosity, and consistency gives us; and we give thanks to

God for the lessons that we have learnt from Geoffrey Robinson.

May Bishop Geoff's gentle soul rest contentedly today in the happiness of God's home where Jesus, the way, the truth and the life...has gone ahead to prepare a place for him and for each and everyone of us.

May Geoffrey rest in the Lord's peace and receive the reward of his goodness. Amen.

✠

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, authentic holy man

MICHAEL KELLY SJ

Michael Kelly SJ writes on Bishop Geoff Robinson's life and his commitment to supporting the abused.

Saying farewell to Bishop Geoff Robinson as we did when he died on December 29, 2020, is saying goodbye to one of the few Australian Catholic bishops with his integrity and reputation for honesty and championing the defence of the weak and the abused still intact.

He was outstandingly intelligent and compassionate. He lent his considerable knowledge of Church law to ease the burden of those who suffered the effects of failed marriages.

He focused on what is essential in Christianity by his very accessible, popular commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels. His commentaries were well appreciated by preachers and believers of all denominational allegiance

While our paths overlapped from time to time, it is what he will be best remembered for most – caring for and promoting the rights of children abused by Catholic officials, including priests – that brought about a very significant intersection of our paths in 1997.

I vividly recall the day I was in Melbourne in 1997 and I got a phone call from Sydney on my recently acquired mobile phone from Geoff. He was then the assistant Catholic bishop of Sydney and champion of justice for victims of clerical sexual abuse.

He was ringing me to get advice on how to settle a score with a journalist and have a record corrected. He was furious with a young reporter from Rupert Murdoch's *The Australian* over a report Geoff had presented the previous day on his work with victims of abuse.

It was the first of what became annual reports on what Church authorities were doing to improve management procedures, supervise the processing of complaints and remove pedophiles from its workforce.

But Geoff was responsible for the care of victims and seeing they got some justice from Church authorities, not supervising miscreant clerics, disciplining them or seeing to their removal from the workforce.

His was a report on what he and his team were doing to assist victims. He had nothing to do with abusers. But the reporter persisted, believing Geoff was being deliberately evasive on the number of Catholic clerics guilty of child sex abuse.

Geoff told the reporter that his work was serving victims in different ways and not with those abusing people. That he said was a matter for the police and the reporter would be best advised to press her questions there.

But that didn't deter the reporter and despite Geoff's telling her repeatedly that he didn't know how many clerics had been charged, he appeared on the front page of the paper the next day saying it could be between 50 and 100.

As anyone who's ever had anything to do with newspapers in particular and news media in general knows, these things happen. Geoff was in high dudgeon and wanted to take the paper and the reporter to the Press Council to get a retraction and a correction.

I told Geoff that move was a waste of time, that the Press Council was a toothless tiger and that there was a better way forward.

That better way was to approach the editor in chief of the paper, put the case and then leave it to him and his colleagues to sort out.

It was a high-risk strategy because the editor was well within his rights to just ignore our complaint. But I had known the editor for over a decade then and I believed him to be a good, ethical and intelligent man who would respond well to a reasoned argument.

We made an appointment to meet the editor, David Armstrong. He, of course, told me he stood by his reporter, had examined her notes but would listen to our complaints.

Geoff and I met the day before our appointment to see how we would handle the meeting. I told Geoff that I didn't think the reporter would be there, that the editor would have some of his colleagues there and that we should be ready for vigorous cross-examination.

Then came the atomic bomb! I asked Geoff if he wanted to lead 'our side' in the presentation or would he prefer me to do that. He replied: 'I should warn you that if I'm met with any level of denial of just how bad the situation of abuse in the church is, I won't be responsible for my behaviour.'

This happened at the bishops' conference when Ted Clancy (then archbishop of Sydney and President of the bishops' conference) made light of what I was saying and I just exploded. I haven't spoken to Ted since then.'

Geoff had a reputation for losing his block at times. I never understood why he did that and why the issue just pressed his buttons.

Now that he's passed away, the verbatim story can be told: 'When I was a student in Rome in the early 1960s, I got sick and

was hospitalized. I was regularly visited by the spiritual director of students at the seminary (Propaganda Fide College) and when he'd come, he'd move his hand under the sheet, up my thigh and start to masturbate me'.

'I just froze. And I didn't start to address the experience till many years later with the help of a therapist.'

Geoff carried this baggage all through his decades' long tenure as leader of the bishops' committees – constantly reconfigured and refocused – with responsibility for the care of the abused and making the church accountable.

As the years passed, I came to appreciate more about Geoff that made him an outsider in the Church.

But he only discovered that long after he had been appropriated by the clerical system, rewarded and promoted by it, made a bishop very young and on track to be archbishop of Sydney.

Geoff died at the age of 83 on 29 December, 2020. I've met a lot of bishops in my life. I'm absolutely certain that Geoff is one of the holiest among them I have ever met.

✂

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RICHARD FRANCIS

Richard Francis invites us to bring the science of evolution and a new cosmology to our understanding of our faith life and the way we have imagined it in the past. Could this be a call to 'metanoia' for us?

'The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measure of flour until all of it was leavened.' A marvelously subtle image of the Kingdom from Jesus, taken right out of an everyday event from the lives of every one of his listeners. And who doesn't love the smell of fresh bread just out of the oven. Just to walk into a Bakers Delight lifts my spirit as well as my appetite!

Let's tease out this image a bit. The woman measures exactly three measures of flour into her bowl, adds the yeast, water, and kneads the leavened dough till it has just the right consistency. She lets it stand for the right amount of time, at the right temperature, before she puts it into her oven. When it's ready she takes it out and lets it rest for the right amount of time! It's quite a very precise and scientific exercise which she pays little attention to. But the result is a beautiful fresh loaf of bread – put some honey on it and it's fit for a king!

Is this Teilhard's Omega Point? And does my analogy limp? Of course, it does. There is such a process of random selection and attraction going on in the evolving world that any part God has in it is quite invisible; or is it?

The new cosmology

I wonder if this poor analogy can't be brought to our own time with images from our common cosmological knowledge of evolution that we all share in today. For it would seem that God has been kneading the dust and gas of Creation, infusing it with the yeast of the Spirit until four and a half billion years ago the first molecules and atoms, by random attraction, transformed in just the right conditions into the first primitive forms of cellular life. And another four billion years later, from the Spirit-leavened dough of Creation, rises forth 'consciousness'. The Kingdom is coming towards that fulfillment that St Paul sees in his ecstatic visions and the 'new heaven and new earth' that Peter sees.

The Christ of God will be all in all – the yeast of God's presence in creation will transform the whole of creation into the image of Christ, 'so that there is only Christ, he is everything, he is in everything'. 'He is the first born of the



new creation', and the new Adam. 'Creation, groaning as it gives birth to the Reign of God'. These are not views of a static reality, but of an evolving, transforming process moving towards the Kingdom on Earth. Science now tells us that the power of 'attraction' is going on all the time between all created matter, connecting, diversifying, coalescing and becoming more complex (Laudato Si).

The Kingdom is here now, and the Kingdom is coming. As the decision-making consciousness of Creation, humanity is called to co-operate with our God in bringing about the Kingdom.

The genius of Teilhard de Chardin is not that, like any good paleontologist would, he looked back to see where we have come from, but he looked forward and asked, 'where are we going?' He saw Creation, the whole Cosmos, evolving – rising like the leavened dough towards the fullness of the Kingdom – Creation was infused with the incarnation, transforming it through the presence of the Incarnated One to its fulness. Teilhard's writing has an extraordinary focus on the Incarnation of God in Creation.

It follows then, that our universe is naturally spiritual, on a naturally spiritual journey to the Kingdom because it is constituted with the Divine Energy, the Divine Presence. Our Creating God by God's very presence is transforming the whole Universe. We humans are 'caught' up in a naturally spiritual journey; and our journey is transforming us into inhabitants of the Kingdom! This is happening now, even as I write! It is so common for people to talk about their 'spirituality' these days as something that comes naturally to them.

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Creation and sin

But, it has to be asked: does the 'religion' our Church is offering, with its emphasis on man's 'fallen' state in a 'fallen world' seem 'natural' to the enquiring people of our age? If we see the whole of Nature (Creation) moving towards its fulfillment into the Kingdom of God as a natural progression it challenges a lot of the popular presumptions we have grown so used to over time and that even have Biblical interpretation on their side.

And seeing that Creation is being transformed into the Kingdom as an evolving God-infused process we have to reassess our interpretation of the authors of early Genesis. We may need to move beyond the Genesis myths of 'Garden of Paradise' and 'Fall', and the need for a Divine expiatory sacrifice to atone Adam's sin, that was the Original Sin; that death is the result of sin.

In this view the world became a 'fallen' place that we were 'cast into' from Paradise, a sinful place to be avoided, rather than an evolving creation suffused with the Spirit and heading towards the Kingdom in its fullness! I am not questioning the self-sacrificing love of Jesus' death and resurrection that brings us forgiveness for our sins. However, the Genesis construct of reality, of pre-human history, led to a very static view of our existence – we are all stuck in the mud of Original Sin and can't move until Christ comes and, with his expiatory sacrifice that satisfaction theology requires, saves us; and now we can be in the state of Grace! Christ came when 'all was ready', when it was time for the 'leavened dough to go in the oven', to continue my early analogy!

Surely, our own experience of prayer and reflection tells us that God is drawing us closer to Godself, that the Spirit is drawing us to our own 'yes' to the Kingdom, and

not just us but the whole of creation, and it is an evolving process! Sin is a reality in all our lives, as is suffering, and we can't cling to the idea that the first primitive homo sapiens was in some kind of perfect happiness in a perfect relationship with his and her Creator, and because they sinned, we are subject to sin and death. Death is as natural as life. The earth is evolving and we with it. Our faith takes us beyond death; only our faith can do that. And on our journey to the Kingdom we all need the forgiveness of our loving God that Jesus' death assures us we have. We have all thought that the Kingdom was where it ain't!

If the whole of Creation is in a naturally spiritually trajectory towards the fullness of God's Kingdom do we need to speak of the 'natural' and the 'supernatural' anymore? Is not everything 'spiritual' in that it is a manifestation of the Divine. Even the littlest flower that comes forth from what we call a 'weed' is a spiritual manifestation of the Divine – if you don't believe me just ask Francis of Assisi!

Can we be encouraged to see that deep down inside each one of us is a love for one another, a self-sacrificing love, that, in imitation of Jesus of Nazareth, leads to the Kingdom. Infused with the Spirit of the Divine Attractor, each one of us, and all of Creation has this Divine Attraction within us, and it is a transforming power, until the Kingdom is fully realized in each one of us. Faith, then, becomes a belief in the living transforming power within us that we need to become aware of and co-operate with.

This challenges us to take a slightly new approach to our faith lives, to the way we pray, not just for forgiveness, but for the grace of ongoing cooperation with the Divine Energy that is intent on bringing the Kingdom into our world. We are challenged to reassess our liturgical expressions that no longer adequately

express the reality of a Creation evolving towards its fulfillment into the Kingdom.

Evolution and evangelization

How are we to evangelize humanity with an approach that no longer makes any sense given the science of evolution.

All this makes the two encyclicals of Pope Francis so extraordinarily pertinent – Our Common Home and Our Common Humanity. These challenge us to cooperate with God and with one another in working towards that Kingdom of justice, equality, and peace – they could not be more timely and they are addressed to the whole of humanity, because we will get to the Kingdom together or we won't get there at all! He sees the need for a paradigm shift – a 'metanoia' in the way we think that precedes our actions!

What is the place of the Christ of God in this transforming evolution? Do we need to tweak our Christology a little? Do we need to ask again, 'Who are you, Lord', and hear Jesus say, 'Who do you say I am'?

Christian discipleship becomes more than a call to live a good 'moral' life and accept forgiveness and so get to heaven when I die. Discipleship calls me to cooperate with all who strive for that Kingdom where the 'deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk'; to strive for Martin Luther King Jr's dream, 'We hold these truths ... where all men are equal.... Where the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice'.

I don't think I can continue to adore that god of early 'Genesis' that sees me stuck in a 'fallen' state in a 'fallen' world that doesn't contain the idea of evolution towards the Reign of God. I do fall on my knees and adore the God whose Spirit is bringing me and this evolving universe into God's Reign...in Him, with Him, and through Him in the unity of the Holy Spirit. ☪

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De Bono and the 5th Australian Plenary Council (PC): relevance?

RENE POLS

Rene Pols, semi-retired consultant psychiatrist, suggests Edward De Bono's strategic thinking model might assist us to move effectively to a successful Plenary Council.

A need for different perspectives on the PC and the time for preparation that is left.

Edward de Bono is a remarkable Maltese 87-year-old physician and psychologist who was short-listed for the 2005 Nobel prize in economics for his contribution to problem solving processes that has greatly helped productivity in industry. He also has an honorary doctorate in design from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology; he has many talents. As a psychologist, he has focussed on perception, thinking-processes and decision making.

'CoRT thinking' was introduced experimentally into the South Australian primary school curriculum in the 1980's and was brought home to us as parents through the 'six hats of thinking': blue for the open-minded expansive, 'big-picture' framework; black for critical thinking, looking for weakness in arguments for and against, and making judgements; yellow for the positive and optimistic framework; red for the lens of the emotions both positive and negative; green for creative, new ways of examining issues and white for the facts and information.

To make it more concrete, children were posed problems that required a solution: not right or wrong but they were problems to be solved. So also, do we as a church, have a problem to be addressed in the form of the PC with its first session in Adelaide in October 2021.

Purpose of this paper

I would like to explore how a bishop, preparing for the PC could, and perhaps should, prepare if he is to be able to properly fulfil his serious obligations to consult (including with the laity) and to be well informed under Canon Law. Bishops should of course be fully aware of the agreed beliefs of Our Church and in particular, its most recent seriously intensive collegial update, as promulgated in the documents of Vatican II. If not, perhaps the important documents from Vatican II need to be read or re-read. In addition, the urging from Pope Francis about the need for our bishops to embrace synodal processes

may need further consideration.

The meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) in November will no doubt address the PC and the *The Light of the Southern Cross* (LSC) report. The framework for consultation in each diocese with its recommended structural developments and consultation processes published by the PC facilitation group are a good start. As the LSC states, many of their recommendations do not need to wait for the PC.

Any bishop and in particular a Metropolitan Archbishop, seriously preparing for the PC should ask himself a number of questions



from different perspectives. Some such questions least, amongst many that a bishop may need to ask of himself, are raised in this paper. The first of these is: *Do I have a plan for preparing myself for the PC that takes into account the time line, my responsibility to be well informed and to seriously and openly consult with the people of God?*

Why should de Bono have anything to do with the Plenary Council?

Perhaps it is because our bishops all wear a purple hat and with that come particular perspectives that will inevitably create particular answers, unless their mode of thinking is challenged.

Paul Collins in a recent paper described it as the bishops involving themselves in 'a game', played 'according to their rules' which he perceived as excluding many people, women especially, and many ideas from seeing the light of day and that the laity needed to take action separate from

Church hierarchy, as part of our responsibility as baptised Christians.

Kevin Liston added to this, our responsibility as created sentient beings, who by our God-given nature, are programmed for self-actualisation and thereby have the responsibility to become who we are created to be; intelligent, critical thinkers, who to the best of our ability have the responsibility to contribute to the common good. He argues that this is so, in addition to, and quite apart from, the added responsibilities conferred by Baptism as priest, prophet and king.

Such thinking from these thoughtful men, arguably take us down the path of inevitable conflict and of winners and losers.

That is not necessarily the most productive process that the Spirit would be hoping for. De Bono would suggest to us a more collaborative approach enabling all ideas to be respectfully and systematically considered.

Is church scholarship appropriately informed and up to date?

It also is the perception and some might say a reality, that it is necessary for our institutional Church to reclaim some of the scholarship that has gone missing over the years. Church scholarship in many areas is simply not up to date. Questions posed challenging literal and outdated interpretations

of the message of Jesus in many areas of history, archaeology, science, sociology, psychology, medicine, politics, management and economics, have simply not been addressed adequately, over the last century, particularly with the explosion of new knowledge.

Institutional church leadership and those entrusted with church scholarship, have by omission and constraint, left the traditional moral, historical and apostolic authority of church teaching to be considered sufficient in itself: this is simply no longer the case.

The LSC report has clearly demonstrated, that updating management practices and governance in the church is well overdue.

Other areas of knowledge have also shifted.

For me as a follower of Jesus grounded in and surrounded by critical and experimental thought and method professionally on a daily basis, requires a much deeper questioning and interpretation of what Jesus taught. I need to repeatedly ask:

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What is central, what is historical and cultural and what metaphors are appropriate to the 21st century?

Richard Rohr's thought about 'the Eternal Christ', the work of Teilhard de Chardin and the historical, archaeological and anthropological approaches to the early 'Jesus movement', as brought to life study tours by Fr Michael Trainor, are examples of such deeper thought and interpretation which is relevant to me.

Scholarship in all areas is continuing to reveal more and more wonderfully the greatness of Our Creator and many insights have posed important questions for every bishop who will vote at the PC. Of greatest importance is the sociology of role behaviours and the ways that these affect the analysis of issues and the systematic errors in decision-making that follow: sex-role stereotyping of women and clericalism are two of these that systematically distort the teachings of Jesus. There is no doubt that both need to be seriously and urgently addressed.

They are crippling our church.

We now know that holding onto traditional, narrow, historically and culturally biased interpretations is deeply dishonest because such interpretations deny what is now known to be true. Ultimately truth does not differ and truth is God.

Perhaps a bishop may want to ask himself about these issues and ask if he is suitably informed about the nature of systematic error and how this leads to serious errors in decision-making? Perhaps it could be put thus: *Do I welcome the awesome revelations that new knowledge discovers about Our Creator, with honesty, humility and openness and am I prepared to trust Jesus when he told us 'I will be with you until the end of time' (Matt: 28;19) even if such knowledge creates difficulties in our interpretations of Jesus' teaching?*

Of course, many more issues need to be updated where new knowledge and the re-interpretation of history is required: The coalitions formed between the church and state at many times of history are key issues that require courage by our bishops. One such issue is the vehicle of colonisation that was used by the church in its role as fellow travellers with state and commercial interests, leading to gross systematic disenfranchisement of land, languages and culture; death and diseases; the conversion of many and the consequences since. Even today the church, or sections of the church maintain and in places and at times, appears to seek and enmesh itself with other financial and political institutions or

powerful entities; at the same time and in the same place we see grossly immoral public actions that receive but whimpering sanction from church members and leaders. *How do these equate with what Jesus is asking of us?*

We can claim some excuse for the limited insights of past church leaders; but no longer is this so. The decisions and actions of our forebears require acknowledgement; there is no longer any excuse for continuing such dishonesty, or to keep people in slavery, institutionalised poverty or by continuing to use people or systems as deterrents.

This is no more acutely the case in Australia than in our relationship with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers and our refugee boat people. *How should a bishop respond to these seriously sinful, systematic abuses facilitated, at least by acquiescence, when good Christian, Catholic people have done nothing or worse?*

The PC in Australia: a serious obligation for bishops and a test case for the Universal Church?

A key issue in the 'signs of the times' is the fortuitous fact that this PC is actually occurring in our well-educated, multicultural Australian society in 2021 that has a larrikin tradition.

Australia is an interesting 'international melting-pot' of races, ancient and very recent traditions and languages that nevertheless has a measuring stick called 'the pub test', and a populace that reviles against the hypocrisy of double standards, is sick of 'spin' and is yearning for the 'public interest' to be truly and consistently served by our leaders.

There is a pervasive disillusionment within the Australian populace that I described previously and one could well imagine Jesus describing us thus: *'When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'* (Matt: 9; 36-38); the people of God in Australia are being asked to 'put their money where their mouths are'.

Australia is a nation gathered from around the globe over the years, adding to the ancient traditions and stewardship of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Although far from perfect, our people have done well to weld into one nation but one that remains 'a work in progress'. We are a well-educated people who have culturally, a

somewhat 'anti-authoritarian stance', in keeping with our convict roots.

We also have a tradition of Royal Commissions that expose the wrongdoings of institutional corruption. Our independent press does not easily 'let go' of such wrongdoings; our church has been the target, highlighting them. The sexual abuse of minors by clergy and consecrated people and the shielding and movements of perpetrators to continue such abuse have been exposed, condemned and found wanting.

As a consequence, any moral authority, possessed by the church, like that developed by the amazing contribution to Australia by our own St Mary MacKillop of the Cross and her sisters and supporters, has been almost totally destroyed. Our Australian community and the world is watching, waiting and is keen to hear our response to this evil that has been facilitated by ministers of the church: perceived by many as having been done in the name of Jesus. This scandal is profound and is yet to be addressed in a truly meaningful way. *What meaningful response could any bishop enact in his own church and what should the Council have to say about this evil?*

The PC in Australia: 21st century methodology

The 5th Plenary Council is a once in a century missionary event to the Australian community and the world is watching. The consultation by the Facilitation Team under the direction of Archbishop Costelloe and the Plenary Council commission has clearly been inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Asking the faithful to listen to the murmurings of the Spirit within their hearts in response to the question: *'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?'*

has led to an incredibly rich data set which has been analysed using NVIVO software and the thematic analysis program.

That has led to the next stages of the discernment, the writing groups and now the *Instrumentum Laboris*.

The consultation with the People of God in Australia to ascertain the *sensus fidei* fidelium, has not been done before in any group of churches within the universal church. It makes the process and outcomes of the consultation seriously important; honesty, completeness and transparency are clearly central to an authentic process.

This is a 'white hat' de Bono process of

information, facts and figures and should be fully used and understood.

Unfortunately, it may also have had only a limited analysis of the data. The NVIVO program also has the capacity to conduct content analysis. This counts the number of times that particular issues are raised within a data set and allows the development of a hierarchy of issues that could be addressed in order of perceived priority, as expressed by the frequency of their enumeration by participants.

Such a hierarchy could potentially indicate significant differences between people, more so than similarities or themes. It is understandable that consensus rather than conflict should be sought by a facilitation group. Both thematic and content analysis would give a more complete picture and indicate potential issues and differences within the *sensus fidei fidelium*.

The incomplete data analysis provided to date, may only be providing part of the reality of the consultation and participants have a right to know all of the results of the consultation, not just those results that could simply suit the agenda of those in control of the data set.

The question needs to be asked whether Collins is right that the bishops, in their use of the Facilitation Team, are in fact playing the game of converting the realities spoken by 17,000 submissions and the 22,000 people represented in those submissions ('people speak'), into 'church speak'. The hierarchy of issues has not been fully covered because we have no clear indication of the content; only the themes. This partial data analysis produced the 14 themes which were condensed into the 6 'themes' as discerned by the Facilitation Team. This was followed by the further discernment process on these themes, the brief given to the writing groups and now the *instrumentum laboris*, setting the agenda for the PC. This paper suggests that perhaps a bishop could ask: *Have I actually been fully informed about the content of the consultation or simply been given a 'watered-down' version?*

The LSC: more 21st century methodology

The ACBC and the Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) are to be commended for commissioning the LSC report which has been widely commended internationally. The methodology is another Holy Spirit inspired action by the ACBC.

This is another, 'white hat' de Bono process of information gathering and a modern

interpretation of how Canon Law could be applied to synodal processes. It explores the requirements for genuine synodality from biblical and theological perspectives and indicates that a synodal interpretation of Canon Law would require each bishop to engage deeply with his church prior to the Council.

Again, it is a report that is of relevance to each of our Australian churches and particularly the Metropolitan Archbishops who could implement many of its recommendations even now before the Plenary Council.

It is also a 'test case' as it were, for the Vatican and the international church, much as the Brazilian Synod 'Querida Amazonia' was and that will be for the German Council that has been called to follow that in Australia. The central question is: *can the Feudal structure of church law accommodate a 21st century church?*

The proposed consultation plan put out by Archbishop Costelloe and the Facilitation group suggests the conduct of Diocesan Assemblies and formation of Diocesan Pastoral Councils by July 2021.

The time-lines are such that bishops had better get on with these proposals if there is any likelihood of them coming to pass.

Without such consultation and bishops taking very seriously the many messages coming from Lay Catholic organisations gathering around the more than decade long work by the Canberra- Goulbourn 'Catholics for renewal', will be likely to result in a parallel meeting of lay people during the Council gatherings.

That would be difficult, a pity, a failure of wisdom and discernment on all sides and potentially schismatic. However, it is an increasingly likely reality; more so, if our bishops do not engage more respectfully, openly and more urgently with each of their churches.

Time is short!

Bishops could be wondering: *How can we manage to do this with such a short time-frame and what are the risks of open conflict?*

Following in the footsteps of Jesus the disrupter

In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter goes to stay with Simon the tanner at Joppa (Acts 9:43) becoming ritually unclean. He was there when Cornelius the centurion invited him to come to Caesarea for his household to become Christian.

Peter struggled with this as a Jew, because

in his dream at Joppa he was asked to eat the meat of unclean animals (Act 10: 1-36) but it was not until then that he understood that the message of Jesus was for everyone; tanners and gentiles included and that Jewish, ritual cleanliness was no longer appropriate law that should constrain him.

Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman (John: 4; 1-44); allowed the disciples to eat ears of corn on the Sabbath (Matt: 12: 1-8); ate with tax collectors and sinners (Luke: 5: 29-33); would be the cause for divisions even in families (Luke: 12: 49-54) and told us to love our enemies (Matt: 5: 43-48); he was a disrupter who challenged conventional ways of thinking about life.

Vatican II was a disruption which has been responded to conservatively. However, it posed many questions that remain to be answered. The PC in 2021 follows in this tradition and the lead up to it will also be filled with disruption.

Our Australian community needs to be called to conversion, as does our church.

How should a bishop respond courageously to Jesus' disruptive behaviour?

The leadership of Pope Francis

The Papacy of Francis is key.

Massimo Faggioli suggests that it has run out of steam and energy; Fratelli Tutti suggests otherwise. The synods and councils within the universal church cannot be stopped.

Francis has outlined the need for change and synodality particularly in *Laudate Si*. Change will happen: what sort of change is unclear; continuity, partial or total disruption? The processes of these synodal consultations and decision-making will determine the outcomes to a very large degree.

The Australian public and the Australian laity will simply not tolerate anything but an open process, typical of 21st century dialogue; even about hard questions.

The 'pub test' will be whether or not each bishop will engage authentically with the local church laity before the PC or at the latest, before its conclusion.

Servant leadership is central to the leadership modelled by Jesus (John: 13: 1-20); dialogue, consultation and collaboration is central to such leadership. As a part of self-evaluation and continuing, personal, professional development, a bishop may want to ask himself and seek feedback on the question: *'How is my servant leadership viewed by my people and how would it be viewed by Jesus?'*

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FEATURES

How could the insights of de Bono help?

De Bono was a leader in the area of the facilitation of organisational change.

Change comes slowly in institutions or organisations through a process of iterative, successive approximations, often following a process described as a series of PDSA cycles (Plan, Do, Study, Act).

He used the 6 hats as part of such processes to gain wisdom, objectivity, consensus and collaboration.

Our churches in Australia are much in need of collaborative endeavours such as these.

Bishops and lay people could come together to explore ways of implementing organisational change that do not need to wait for the 5th Australian PC.

Those laity and clergy who lead dioceses, could learn to apply 6-hat strategic thinking (or similar) by being trained for collaborative decision-making that does not only or simply rely upon prayer, discernment, the reading of scriptural passages using the

lectio divina method and waiting for some sort of 'magical intervention by the Holy Spirit'. I do not think for one moment, that prayer, discernment and reflection are not important or central to any process of change.

It is my view that the Holy Spirit is only able to act when everyone is open, trusting, faith-filled and courageously confident that the Spirit is present within each of us and within the wisdom, knowledge and skills that are to be found in God's creation within its people.

Perhaps a bishop could ask himself: *Am I standing in the way or am I facilitating the work of the Spirit in this great missionary opportunity for all our Australian people?*

Conclusions

There is little time to make the 5th Australian Plenary Council be what the Spirit would want it to be: relevant, meaningful, missionary and able to touch the hearts, not only of our Catholics, but all baptised Australians and indeed the Australian community as a whole.

There is a great thirst for real leadership where the common good is placed before all else in our community and in our world. The decisions to be made need to 'pass the pub test'; the Australian community and the laity are not fools. The PC is a God-given place and time where a start can be made that is unique and much needed. Prior to voting on any of the proposals that will be before the Council will require serious personal preparation for all PC participants but particularly for those with a deliberative vote. Bishops should not underestimate its importance, their personal responsibility for the processes of dialogue in their own churches, nor what it is that each of them is being called to, deep within each bishops' own heart.

All of us need not only to challenge our bishops, we need to support them, pray for them and make our time and talents available to them if the journey to the end of the PC is to be what Jesus would want it to be: after all together, 'we are the church.'



Catholic schools – their role in the mission of the Church and in society

AENGUS KAVANAGH FSP

Aengus Kavanagh FSP, Patrician Brother, Sydney, has been involved in Catholic Schools at all levels of administration for many years. This article is the first of two that look at the history and development of Catholic Schools in Australia after 200 years. The second part of this article, to be published in the next edition of *The Swag*, asks questions about the where Catholic education is going, the challenges ahead and some hurdles to be overcome.

Bicentenary

In the decades following British settlement in Australia small 'schools' began to emerge, mainly as an initiative of Christian denominations. Such schools were generally of a modest nature, often single 'teacher' extensions of Sunday schools and held in improvised annexes to places of worship. Any Catholics among the early arrivals were mainly Irish convicts.

In time, they too sought to provide some basic education for their children, giving rise to an increasing scattering of Catholic schools from 1800 onwards.

It was almost 30 years before any Catholic priests were officially permitted to reside and minister in the new colony. Among them was Irishman, Fr John Therry. A George Morley convicted for 'grand



larceny of a chest of tea' was among 300 convicts to arrive in NSW in November 1800. It was he, with the support and patronage of Fr John Therry, who is credited with the establishment of the first more officially recognised Catholic school in Australia.

The year was 1820, the location is deemed to be close to the intersection of the present Hunter and George Streets, Parramatta.

This is the reason why 2020 was chosen as the Bicentenary of the birth of Catholic schools in this country. In small ways, the important anniversary was marked in a number of dioceses and schools last year, but the pandemic ruled out the holding of any major events. The hope is that all partners in the Catholic education sector may fittingly celebrate the proud story of Catholic schools in Australia, as circumstances permit, in 2021.

A defining decision

Christian denominational schools were a strong feature in the evolution of providers of education in the early decades. In this period, most of these schools received modest government funding which helped in the payment of teachers. However, along with a strong prevalence of sectarianism imported from the British Isles, the whole education scenario was a bothersome one. To address the 'ad-hoc-ery', the Premier of NSW, Sir Henry Parkes, introduced a Public Instruction Act in the early 1880s.

The Act decreed that, henceforth, all education in the jurisdiction would be compulsory, free, and secular.

Because of the conviction of the bishops, the clergy, and Catholics generally that religious faith was an integral dimension of a balanced education, and because of a suspicion that the new Act intentionally targeted transmission of the Catholic faith, a decision was taken by the Church to withdraw from State jurisdiction and to go it alone. This was a brave decision, entailing as it did, the forfeiture of any future government funding. An immediate fall-out was the cutting off of a major source for the meagre remuneration of generous-spirited women and men who had pioneered Catholic schooling.

And so it was until the late 1960s when the NSW State government introduced a modest trickle of per capita grants for students in Catholic schools. The decision taken in the early 1880s, and the decades of hardship and struggle to follow, marked a defining era in the story of Catholic schools, an era which testified to the commitment of the Catholic Church to religious and spiritual formation as integral dimensions of Catholic school education. This commitment needs to be retained as 'the light on the hill' for present and future Catholic educators that justifies the continuance of Catholic schools as a separate sector.

Emergence of supply to meet the demand

As we enter the third decade of the 21st century, the Catholic school generally projects a positive face of the Catholic Church across a variety of suburban settings, in regional centres and in small remote rural locations, across Australia. Catholic schools educate about 20% of all school students in this country. There are over 1,700 Catholic schools employing almost 70,000 staff. Never in the history of Catholic schools have they been so well resourced and so professionally staffed. It has been a long and arduous journey from there (1880s) to here (2020s).

To mark the Bicentenary, Volume 1 of a biographical dictionary of outstanding Catholic educators was published in December 2020 by Coventry Press. This rich resource, edited by Anne Benjamin and Seamus O'Grady, bears the evocative title: *Not Forgotten*. An introductory comment captures the essence: The story of Catholic education over 200 years is a story of struggle, courage, imagination, faith, tragedy and persistence. Above all, it is a story of the women and men of faith who

believed in the power of education for the children of this country and who worked, often heroically, to provide an education of mind and spirit. (p.2)

In their brave call in the 1880s to 'go it alone', the bishops were not completely taking a leap into the dark. Two Religious Sisters' Congregations, whose main mission was Catholic school education, had been founded in Australia, the Good Samaritan Sisters (1857) and the Sisters of St Joseph (1872). With the passing of the Act of Catholic Emancipation in the British Parliament (1829), there was a repeal of the draconian Penal Laws which had forbidden public Catholic worship and Catholic education from 17th century Reformation times. Ireland had been under British occupation and jurisdiction for centuries and would remain so for almost another 100 years. However, the relaxed conditions following the Emancipation Act witnessed a springtime in the birth of Religious Congregations in Ireland whose mission was to elevate and to make holy the human condition through Catholic education.

A bit like St Mary MacKillop, the founders saw a need and had the vision and the courage to do something about it. Thus, the following foundations ensued: Presentation Sisters (1775); Christian Brothers (1802); Brigidine Sisters (1807); Patrician Brothers (1808); Sisters of Charity (1815); Mercy Sisters (1831); and Holy Faith Sisters (1867).

Most of the bishops in Australia at the end of the 19th century were Irish and, during their occasional holidays home, this flourishing of foundations provided them with rich pickings for the vineyards back in their dioceses. The mainly Sisters and Brothers who, for subsequent generations, would come to Australia, along with the many members of European foundations with a similar mission, would give Catholic education in this country its own unique history and brand. Significantly too this coalition, including the Good Samaritan and Josephite Sisters, would provide an unsalaried workforce to sustain and expand the Catholic system of schools in the absence of government funding.

Survival and expansion challenges

From the 1880s until the late 1960s most Catholic schools subsisted on modest school fees, generous support from parish communities, and annual programs of fundraising, including fetes, raffles, Golden Holden dinners, etc. A public perception is captured in a corny joke of the times: 'Don't park your car near a Catholic

school, it will be raffled by the time you get back!'. In such economic circumstances, school facilities and resources were often less than basic. Pressures increased significantly in the 1950s and 1960s especially due to the post-war influx of European migrants, many of whom were Catholics and opted for a Catholic school education for their children.

In addition to the need for new schools it became necessary to engage lay staff. Each school had to pay its lay staff from its own financial resources. An added problem was the very real difficulty in teacher recruitment. Lay women and men had no access to Catholic Teacher Training colleges in this era. The sources of a majority of present teachers in NSW Catholic schools were decades away, Australian Catholic University (1991), Notre Dame (Freemantle 1991, Sydney 2006), Campion College (2006).

To cope with challenges, class sizes of 60+ were not uncommon, especially in expanding city suburbs. All staff taught full loads, including principals, and the Religious on staff carried out a multiplicity of after-school non-teaching roles. The species now known as 'non-teaching staff', and occupying 15% + of school staffs, was an unthinkable and non-existent role. In time, parents volunteered assistance, especially in clerical support roles. So too, many schools had weekend working bees which would attend to repairs, maintenance, and facilities improvements.

A positive spin-off in this scenario was the great sense of community built up in schools. A background bonus was that most families had some level of affiliation with their parishes up to the 1960s.

Huge transitions

By 1965, the number of Catholic schools had increased significantly. Likewise, for a substantial increase in the number of lay teachers. Still, in 1965 there were 3,654 (69%) Religious staffing schools in NSW, while the number of lay staff had increased to 1,628 (31%). However, there were yet no lay principals in Catholic schools and it would be 1972 before the first lay principal was appointed to a secondary Catholic school in NSW, Peter Donnan, to bring to an end 56 years of Brother principals at De La Salle, Ashfield.

By 2005 the number of lay staff had expanded to 17,835, with less than 1.0% Religious remaining. Now, 2021, staff levels stand at almost 70,000, with just a handful of Religious actively involved in Catholic schools throughout the country.

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These statistics reflect a massive change in the scope and in the character of the Catholic school sector over a comparatively short period. By far, the determining expansion factor was the inflow of per capita government funding. The following figures tell the tale: prior to 1968 – NONE!; 1968 – Primary \$24, Secondary \$28; 1979 – Primary \$479, Secondary \$745; 2005 – Primary \$5,261, Secondary \$7,056; 2017 – Primary \$10,689, Secondary \$12,280. Base funding formulae have varied in recent years and different amounts apply in different socio-economic areas.

However, as a ballpark estimate, current per capita average would approximate to \$12,000 per primary student, and \$14,000 per secondary student. In the case of diocesan schools, none of the grants go to the schools. All go to the diocesan education offices. The continuation of the comparatively generous funding cannot be taken for granted. Already there is a strong push-back from public education advocates suggesting an over-funding of some independent schools.

Parallel with this gigantic increase in funding, with its unprecedented growth impact on facilities and resources, there was the smooth staffing transition from Religious to lay. For generations, Religious Sisters and Brothers, with smaller numbers of Priests, had maintained and expanded the Catholic school sector. For them, Catholic education was not just a job, or even a career or a profession. It was a vocation, an intentional and active participation in the mission of the Church. In their modelling and mentoring, they played a major role in the preparation and

formation of potential lay leaders to take their places in the leadership of schools. For their part, lay women and men of faith, highly professional, stepped forward to honour the legacy, to grow what was best and of essence in the story, in inspiring expressions of their own faith and spirituality. By the end of the 20th century, maintaining the Catholic identity of the school had become much more challenging in a society where there was a spiralling indifference towards things religious, and in a Church struggling to maintain moral leadership and relevance, even for a majority of baptised Catholics.

Structures – Diocesan Education Offices

Up to the 1960s, Catholic schools generally enjoyed a high level of autonomy. Beyond complying with some basic statutory requirements, each school virtually ran its own show. Certainly, there were levels of accountability at parish level, but there were no centralised regulatory bodies even vaguely approaching those that are currently in operation. The simple reason was the absence of funding to enable such bodies. An added reason was an implicit trust that schools would do the right thing by their students, staffs, and parents. In most instances, dioceses had Catholic education offices, sparsely staffed, generally with a priest 'director' along with a handful of part-time staff, mainly retired, or semi-retired, clergy and religious.

With the advent of State and Federal funding to Catholic schools, the need suddenly arose for increased structures and resourcing in the distribution of moneys

received and in accountability to government agencies. There was the consequent need also for the development, the formalisation, and the implementation of policies and procedures on a whole range of fronts to upgrade the Catholic sector professionally and to deliver support services to schools to help them in the pathway of new funding-induced possibilities.

The good news was that financial resources were now available to enable this process. Hence, the emergence of entities now commonly called Catholic Education Offices, or Catholic Schools Offices.

These bodies have played an essential and pivotal role in the evolution of diocesan systems of schools in recent decades. Likewise, these bodies have been central in raising the professional profile of Catholic schools generally. A window into the improved educational capacity of the schools was evident in the pandemic-induced home-schooling spells of 2020.

Parents were generally impressed at the ease with which their children took to home-learning, facilitated by the specially designed online programs sent to homes by the teachers. It became obvious that the teachers were to the fore as architects of an evolving pedagogy aligned to the world of contemporary technology. Arrival at this state was an outcome of strong collaboration between schools and system authorities who had set in place a reliable infrastructure and had helped in the skilling of staffs.

As the cliché goes however, the good is often the enemy of the better. The Bicentenary provides an occasion to celebrate the past, to affirm the present and to look to 'recalibration', as may be needed, for the future. Whereas the evolution and consolidation of diocesan education offices has been a necessary and positive development, it may be necessary to bring some scrutiny to their continuing role. We live in times when transparency and accountability on a range of fronts are no longer negotiables.

They are imperatives, and diocesan offices are the enablers and the monitors. Increasingly though, school principals complain of accruing layers of hoops to jump through, permissions to be sought. In general, there seems to be a rise in galloping bureaucracy, the purpose of which is not always immediately obvious. So too for occasional changes in policies and structures without much consultation, and often appearing to be but an expression of the ideology or preferences of new leaders. External changes are easy, but,

at best they get compliance. Commitment and transformation make the difference and are more challenging, requiring as they do leadership, which is far less common than management.

Another emergence in recent decades has been a 'silo-syndrome' among offices, driven by a 'WKB' philosophy – 'We Know Best'. In such instances, practices and insights deemed not to be aligned to the particular 'strategic intent' of the Office are outlawed. The proliferation of professional services to schools may also have given rise to disempowerment of school leaders, creating a culture of co-dependence where healthy expressions of school autonomy may be stifled in a constant need of 'Office approval and regulation'. In turn, arrival at this condition too frequently leads to the incremental accumulation of 'numerical fat' in staffing.

Whereas all diocesan systems share a common mission and general aims, there is little evidence of intentional sharing of programs and resources across systems. It is right and understandable that each system wishes to retain its own identity but surely there is ample scope for a pooling of special resources in a variety of initiatives and programs across diocesan boundaries.

A matter also inviting scrutiny is the rationale underlying the need for each diocese to have its own Religious Education curriculum. Are not all Catholic schools at one in their ownership of the common mission, within the Catholic tradition, to be the transforming presence of Jesus in the world? Are issues to do with fiefdom, ecclesiology, personality, etc., at the heart of this 'going it alone'? At least at State level, the collaboration of forces with the necessary knowledge, experience, expertise and skills could surely develop a worthy Religious Education program for all diocesan schools in each State?

In turn, this would enable inter-diocesan collaboration in the development of a rich on-line reservoir of resources to support the curriculum implementation. In turn again, such a reservoir could become a home for a wide range of offerings suitable for school use: purpose-specific prayers and non-sacramental liturgies; ongoing faith development initiatives for students and staffs; theme specific Church music, etc. No need to re-invent the wheel! Such practical support could be available to teachers in any corner of the State with the mere touch of a keyboard. ☪

Farewell to Garry Eastman

MICHAEL MCGIRR

Michael McGirr, writer and teacher, delivered this address on October 23, 2020 at the funeral of Garry Eastman, founder of Garratt Publishing.



Thank you. It is a sad day and I feel very honoured to be asked to say a few words, because I know so many people would have things to share.

Garry leaves a huge gap in our lives and part of that is because of his energy. He brought so much energy into every conversation and encounter we ever had. And it always seemed to me it was energy with a purpose, and that purpose was to push a little deeper. Garry laughed a lot. And he enjoyed all the discoveries he made, the discoveries of mind, but I can't remember ever having a conversation with Garry that didn't challenge me at some level. It'd often start in one place, and go to another, he'd have something to share, something he'd read, something he'd thought. Such a rich, fertile, energetic mind. I'm so grateful for the challenges, and the challenges he made to the Christian community.

Garry was a man of great faith, but it was a discerning and a discovering faith. He wanted the Catholic Church to grow up. And he never stopped hoping it might happen. He wanted us to accept the ways that God actually works in people's lives.

And he published books, many books, I believe, because he didn't believe that God worked from a tightly-wound script, but that actually we, all of us, worked with God to create the script. And that's what his publishing was about. And he'd tell you about the business side but there was always something deeper.

I'd like to reflect briefly, perhaps a scriptural moment, and if we had scripture today I think we'd have to read the whole of John's gospel, which I think Garry loved. And not just because it's the gospel that has so much of the great outdoors in it, so many wild places, the lake, the open places where

Jesus fed people; and not just because it's the gospel in which Jesus turns water into wine – which Garry thought was a good idea – but it starts: 'In the beginning was the Word', and the Word was hugely important for Garry. The gospel tells the story that word came among us bringing light.

It's a big story and Garry got it. He understood that the things we say and write bring God into the lives of others, and the things we fail to say keep God bottled up and hidden. Garry loathed any kind of spirituality that suggested captivity. It was about justice, Vinnies, a vision of the world. And this was in so much of his creativity, creativity for justice.

Later in John's gospel we find a place where Jesus says, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' Garry was a person of the way. We've heard about his travels. All the Camino trips with Lynne, miles and miles, miles, hundreds of miles, that you walked together. And then the different kind of camino of recent years: first with prostate cancer, and then with pancreatic cancer, a different kind of walking, the walking of stillness, the walking when you can't walk.

But Jesus says, 'I am the way, the truth.' You don't reach any kind of truth by staying still. Nicholas said he kept trying. That was Garry. He didn't stay still. Having a go.

I'd just like to mention something from the many books that Garry published, one I love of St Benedict. It has a picture of St Benedict on a journey. It says 'Conversion', that in the journey we are made new, that we take a turn, turn towards where we're supposed to be.

Sometimes the journey is painful, a few blisters. But, the way and the truth belong together. Garry saw that. There was no truth without a way.

And finally, that moment at the end of John's gospel where Jesus encounters Peter by the lake. They've been fishing. It's early in the morning. They're out of doors. You could smell the water. And they've had a barbecue. And Jesus takes Peter aside because Peter has stuffed up – big time. And Jesus says to Peter, Peter, do you love me? Peter says, Yes, Lord, you know I love you. It's the 'you know' that's tricky.

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the swag



You've got to say things. And Jesus says, Peter, no, do you love me? Yes, Lord, you know I love you. says Peter. Jesus says, Peter, do you love me? Three times: Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me? And Peter says, Yeah, I love you, I love you. Jesus needs to hear it. And he does.

So much of what Garry published – and I've read a lot of it – so often it's a love story. You might use a word like 'theology' or 'justice', but there's love there, really, love for the human family, and hope, hope that we can grow and improve.

Garry leaves a huge gap in the Australian Christian community. Nobody is taking on

the kinds of projects apart from John Garratt. It's in a place of its own. We should be thankful. I am thankful.

Then Jesus says to Peter, 'Well look, when you're young you do what you like, but you're gonna get old and they're gonna take you where you'd rather not go. You up for this?' Peter says, Yep.

And then the clincher, the little line at the end: 'There were many other things that Jesus did, but if we wrote them all down, the world itself would not contain all the books that would have to be written.' And that was Garry: producing the books. John's gospel starts: 'In the beginning was

the word', singular, and there's such a release of energy that by the end the world itself wouldn't contain the books. This little seed. Fantastic. Garry was part of that.

I'm so full of thanks, gratitude for that irrepressible energy. They're just a few very scattered thoughts, but they come from a deep place for me.

I love this image of Garry with a book. I love the fact that his mind is in two places with that book at the same time, because he's got a book-mark in one place and he's reading another. Great. He's not going from cover to cover. He was not a cover-to-cover guy. ☺



Stop being half-hearted about the incarnation

JOHN SCANLON

John Scanlon reflects on the meaning of the Incarnation in the post-Christmas season.



The week between Christmas and New Year's Day provides multiple occasions for reflecting on the theological mysteries surrounding the

birth of Jesus Christ to his mother Mary. At the Christmas feast our attention is concentrated on the birth itself, the culmination of the Word becoming Flesh which joined the Divine and Human in one person. On the Sunday after Christmas, we celebrated the Holy Family, as the basic societal unit in which Jesus grew from infancy through childhood and adolescence to adulthood. Then on New Year's Day we nowadays celebrate the Feast of Mary, the holy Mother of God, which is a rather more theologically significant event than the circumcision of a Jewish baby boy that used to be the dedication of this day.

Now these three events or topics are necessarily intertwined, but if we consider them as separately as it is possible to do, by far the most important of the three has to be the Incarnation. It is hard for us to comprehend the concept of God taking upon himself the nature and attributes of a creature that had evolved from His own creation of matter, space and time. Our inability to fully understand the Trinitarian nature of God makes it even harder. But however hard it is to comprehend, we can at least see that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God made man, form

the most important event in the history of humanity.

And yet there seems to be an analogue of Newton's third law of motion in the field of theology, which says in effect that "to every belief there is an equal and opposite disbelief." The history of the first several centuries of Christian theological argument is littered with heresies which cover just about every conceivable deviation from the belief that Jesus Christ was both fully divine and fully human. Most of these represented a refusal to accept the full humanity of Jesus. As Diarmaid MacCulloch says in his book *Christianity: The problem is simple in its utter complexity: how can a human being be God?* Christians can be passionately convinced that they meet a fellow human being in Jesus who is God, but they may not like the implications of this; how can God be involved in the unhygienic messiness of everyday life and remain God?

The reluctance to recognise Jesus as both fully human and fully divine was not overcome by the many attempts to reach a firm definition which culminated in the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The formula that was adopted at Chalcedon, which remains the formal Catholic teaching today, was not accepted by those on the extremes of both sides of the argument, and left Nestorians on one side and Monophysites on the other separated from the Christian mainstream. However, at the less high-flown level of popular religiosity, the reluctance to accept the consequences of the full humanity of Jesus has always

been with us and can still be seen today.

One factor that makes so many people nervous about associating Jesus with the human condition is, almost inevitably, sex. We are sexual beings and our reproduction is achieved through sexual acts. If our emotional growth has been distorted by the fear and loathing of sex, which was a significant element of Hellenistic thought and consequently an infection of early Christianity that has never gone away, we cannot cope with speaking of God and the filthy flesh in the one breath. Then we try to de-sexualise every element of the human lives of Jesus and the mother who bore him. The consequence is the growth of belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary, which would bar us from thinking about the circumstances of the birth of Jesus and the nature of the family group in which he grew up. Instead, we are fed stories about Mary not suffering labour pains, of Jesus being born with no disruption of Mary's virginal state, and attempts to explain away the New Testament references to the brothers and sisters of Jesus as meaning anything other than what they plainly say.

There is no logical reason why a belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary is a necessary part of belief in the Incarnation. But neither is her virginity in itself the aspect of Mary that makes her the most revered human being in history except her son. Her free-willed assent to what God asked of her is what matters most about Mary, and it is for this that we rightly revere her as the holy Mother of God. All the other descriptions under which we revere her are secondary to the title she won by saying 'let it be done' and taking her vital place in the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation. ☺

Ordination Anniversaries 2021



Congratulations and Thank you!

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

ORDAINED 73 YEARS

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

ORDAINED 72 YEARS

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

Rev Harold Baker MSC, 24/07/1949

Rev Russel Morison CSsR, 4/09/1949

ORDAINED 71 YEARS

Rev Christopher Baker SSC, 23/09/1950

ORDAINED 70 YEARS

Most Rev Bede Heather, Sydney, 15/07/1951

Rev Stanislaus Barry CM, 21/07/1951

Rev Mgr Francis Hickey, Sandhurst, 22/07/1951

Rev Mgr John Allman, Sale, 22/07/1951

Rev Paul Bateman, Canberra & Goul, 23/07/1951

Rev Mgr Vincent Tiggeman, Adelaide, 21/12/1951

ORDAINED 65 YEARS

Rev James Esler SM, 4/01/1956

Rev Kevin Burman OSA, 4/02/1956

Rev Henry Byrne, Perth, 3/06/1956

Rev Mgr Peter Shannon, Bathurst, 17/06/1956

Rev Thomas O'Connell, Sale, 17/06/1956

Rev Patrick McKenna, Cairns, 29/06/1956

Rev Martin Arnold, Ukrainian Eparchy, 29/06/1956

Rev Robert Curmi SDB, 1/07/1956

Rev Kevin Condon OP, 8/07/1956

Rev Paul Pidcock SM, 14/07/1956

Rev Mgr Dr Robert Rice, Adelaide, 21/07/1956

Rev Reginald Callinan, Mait-Newcastle, 21/07/1956

Rev John Readman, Sale, 22/07/1956

Rev Daniel Arundell, Ballarat, 22/07/1956

Rev Damien Heath, Ballarat, 22/07/1956

Rev Kevin Mogg, Melbourne, 22/07/1956

Rev John Dacey, Lismore, 25/07/1956

Rev Mel Cotter OFM, 25/07/1956

Rev Austin Cooper OMI, 16/09/1956

Rev Maurice Cahill, Mait-Newcastle, 1/12/1956

Most Rev Bernard O'Grady OP, 1/12/1956

ORDAINED 60 YEARS

Rev Marius Dawson OCarm, 6/01/1961

Rev Ferruccio Romanin SJ, 6/01/1961

Rev Anton Bulla SVD, 29/01/1961

Rev John O'Reilly, Melbourne, 4/06/1961

Rev Thomas (Mick) Carroll, Toowoomba, 29/06/1961

Rev Edward Houlihan, Brisbane, 29/06/1961

Rev Clement Hodge, Brisbane, 29/06/1961

Rev Patrick Tynan, Brisbane, 29/06/1961

Rev Joseph Baxter, Townsville, 29/06/1961

Rev Paul Castley MSC, 29/06/1961

Rev Michael Fallon MSC, 29/06/1961

Rev John Chambers, Adelaide, 1/07/1961

Rev William Ryder SM, 8/07/1961

Rev John Burke SM, 8/07/1961

Rev Garry Reynolds SM, 8/07/1961

Rev Edmund Campion, Sydney, 15/07/1961

Rev William Challenor, Sydney, 15/07/1961

Rev Mgr Vincent Redden, Sydney, 15/07/1961

Rev Peter Clifford OFM, 15/07/1961

Rev John Alt, Sydney, 15/07/1961

Rev Pat Rooney, Bunbury, 16/07/1961

Rev Kevin Murphy, Wilcannia-Forbes, 17/07/1961

Rev James McGee, Wagga Wagga, 17/07/1961

Rev Ross O'Brien, Armidale, 18/07/1961

Rev Michael Mullane, Armidale, 18/07/1961

Rev Desmond Magennis, Melbourne, 23/07/1961

Rev Noel Mackay, Melbourne, 23/07/1961

Rev Brian Gleeson CP, 23/07/1961

Rev William Moran SSC, 23/07/1961

Most Rev Peter Connors, Melbourne, 23/07/1961

Most Rev Adrian Doyle, Hobart, 20/12/1961

Most Rev Kevin Manning, Bathurst, 20/12/1961

ORDAINED 50 YEARS

Rev George Wilkins, Bathurst, 5/05/1971

Rev Ronan Kilgannon, Wollongong, 5/05/1971

Rev Ronald Davoren CP, 15/05/1971

Rev Romuald Hayes, Sandhurst, 21/05/1971

Rev Peter Hudson, Ballarat, 22/05/1971

Rev Michael Linehan, Ballarat, 22/05/1971

Rev Brian Glasheen, Melbourne, 22/05/1971

Rev Terry Kean, Melbourne, 22/05/1971

Rev Gerard McKernan, Melbourne, 22/05/1971

Rev Paul Connell, Melbourne, 22/05/1971

Rev Gerald Medici, Melbourne, 22/05/1971

Rev Ronald Nissen SM, 22/05/1971

Rev David Wilson SM, 22/05/1971

Rev Edward Tyler, Parramatta, 26/06/1971

Rev Phillip McCormack, Hobart, 30/07/1971

Very Rev Bryan Hanifin, Rockhampton, 4/08/1971

Rev Michael Peters, Toowoomba, 5/08/1971

Rev John Ponting, Brisbane, 5/08/1971

Rev John Hayes, Rockhampton, 5/08/1971

Rev Patrick Richards, Brisbane, 5/08/1971

Rev Graham Gatehouse, Brisbane, 5/08/1971

Rev Dudley McMahon, Brisbane, 5/08/1971

Rev Terry Rush, Hobart, 6/08/1971

Rev Mgr Gregory Flynn, Sydney, 21/08/1971

Rev Richard Foley, Lismore, 21/08/1971

Rev Mgr John Boyle, Parramatta, 21/08/1971

Rev Peter Lynch, Sydney, 21/08/1971
 Rev Terence Herbert MSC, 21/08/1971
 Rev Leonard Helm MSC, 21/08/1971
 Most Rev Terence Curtin, Melbourne, 28/08/1971
 Most Rev Gerard Holohan, Perth, 3/09/1971
 Rt Rev Mgr John Butler, Adelaide, 4/09/1971
 Rev Peter Fountain, Adelaide, 4/09/1971
 Rev Richard Morris, Adelaide, 4/09/1971
 Rev Allan Winter, Adelaide, 4/09/1971
 Rev Leon Quinn, Port Pirie, 4/09/1971
 Rev Angelo Buffolo CS, 4/09/1971
 Rev John Vildzius, Adelaide, 4/09/1971
 Rev Brian Ebert, Wilcannia-Forbes, 9/09/1971
 Most Rev Max Davis, Benedictines, 21/10/1971
 Rev Lawrence Moate SDB, 23/10/1971
 Rev Francis Buhagiar, Melbourne, 4/12/1971
 Rev Bruce Duncan CSsR, 11/12/1971
 Rev Joseph Sobb SJ, 11/12/1971
 Rev Aidan Carvill SM, 18/12/1971
 Rev Edmond Nixon CSsR, 18/12/1971
 Rev John Papworth SDB, 29/12/1971

ORDAINED 40 YEARS

Rev Thomas Chirackal MST, Mait-New, 2/01/1981
 Most Rev Michael Morrissey, Geraldton, 31/01/1981
 Rev Christopher Warnock, Port Pirie, 7/02/1981
 Rev James McEvoy, Adelaide, 28/02/1981
 Rev Dr Joseph Parkinson, Perth, 14/03/1981
 Very Rev Mgr Kevin Long, Perth, 21/03/1981
 Rev Berislav Hunski, Hobart, 11/04/1981
 Rev Jerzy Chrzczonowicz, Sydney, 25/04/1981
 Rev John Keane, Ballarat, 8/05/1981
 Rev Timothy Deeter, Perth, 8/05/1981
 Rev Joseph Pullanappillil CMI, 11/05/1981
 Rev Gerard Kalinowski, Brisbane, 29/06/1981
 Rev Francis Ferriggi, Townsville, 11/07/1981
 Very Rev John Hogan, Parramatta, 18/07/1981
 Rev Michael McKinnon, Ballarat, 1/08/1981
 Rev John Monaghan, Ballarat, 7/08/1981
 Rev Michael Moody, Melbourne, 8/08/1981
 Archpriest Michael Kalka, Melbourne, 8/08/1981
 Rev Gregory Bourke, Melbourne, 8/08/1981
 Rev Paul Slyney, Parramatta, 22/08/1981
 Rev Trevor Simons, Perth, 22/08/1981
 Very Rev Paul Finucane, Broken Bay, 22/08/1981
 Rev Gregory Donovan, Perth, 22/08/1981
 Rev Gordon Howell, Perth, 22/08/1981
 Rev Jose Koyickal CM, 27/08/1981
 Rev Owen Gibbons, Bathurst, 29/08/1981
 Rev Peter Reedy CM, 26/09/1981
 Rev Joseph Dooley SJ, 28/11/1981
 Most Rev Joachim Rego CP, 28/11/1981
 Rev Christopher Monaghan CP, 5/12/1981
 Rev Vincent Ryan OMI, 15/12/1981
 Rev Leo Mifsud OMI, 15/12/1981

ORDAINED 30 YEARS

Rev Josip Grubisic, Melbourne, 1/01/1991
 Rev Rafal Rucinski, Brisbane, 25/01/1991
 Rev Deacon Laurence Sorensen, Bunbury, 1/02/1991
 Rev Sunny Abraham OCD, 7/02/1991
 Rev Timothy Norton SVD, 2/03/1991
 Rev James Elmore CP, 20/04/1991
 Rev Clifford D'Souza MSFS, 4/05/1991
 Rev Jan Bialasiewicz, Brisbane, 21/05/1991
 Rev Eric Alleaume OMI, 31/05/1991
 Rev Minh-Thuy Nguyen, Perth, 6/07/1991
 Rev Christopher Ford SDB, 6/07/1991
 Most Rev Gregory Homeming OCD, 20/07/1991
 Rev Paul Berezniuk, Ukrainian Eparchy, 18/08/1991
 Rev Patrick Vaughan, Wollongong, 24/08/1991
 Rev Gerard Keith, Melbourne, 31/08/1991
 Most Rev Shane Mackinlay, Ballarat, 6/09/1991
 Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP, 14/09/1991
 Rev Mgr Minh-Tam Nguyen, Adelaide, 19/10/1991
 Rev Deacon Les Baker, Adelaide, 26/10/1991
 Rev Dcn Roger O'Donnell, Canb & Goulb, 2/11/1991
 Rev Deacon Gerard Lanigan, Bunbury, 24/11/1991
 Most Rev Anthony Randazzo, Brisbane, 29/11/1991
 Rev Morgan Batt, Brisbane, 29/11/1991
 Rev Dr Arthur Bridge, Parramatta, 29/11/1991
 Rev Deacon Brian Myers, Parramatta, 1/12/1991
 Rev Eugene San SAC, 7/12/1991
 Very Rev David Taylor, Broken Bay, 7/12/1991
 Rev Robin Koning SJ, 14/12/1991
 Rev John Martis SJ, 14/12/1991
 Rev Sunny Mathew CMI, Brisbane, 27/12/1991
 Rev Joseph Amal, Melbourne, 28/12/1991

ORDAINED 25 YEARS

Rev Joseph Nguyen Minh Vu SVD, 23/03/1996
 Most Rev Amel Nona, Iraq, 5/05/1996
 Rev Troy Bobbin, Canberra & Goulburn, 17/05/1996
 Rev Zenon Racki, Ukrainian Eparchy, 27/05/1996
 Rev Darryl Mackie, Maitland-Newcastle, 1/06/1996
 Rev Alan Layt, Parramatta, 5/07/1996
 Rev Michael Hardie SVD, 3/08/1996
 Rev Bernard Krotwaar, Sale, 24/08/1996
 Rev Francis Tawil, Adelaide, 28/08/1996
 Rev Dominic Gleeson MSC, 31/08/1996
 Rev Benjamin Mkuchu, Port Pirie, 22/10/1996
 Rev Samir Haddad, Melkite Eparchy, 26/10/1996
 Rev Joseph Liem, Brisbane, 16/11/1996
 Rev Vinh Dong, Perth, 13/12/1996
 Rev Michael Separovich, Perth, 13/12/1996
 Rev Tony Schick MGL, 13/12/1996

ORDAINED 20 YEARS

Rev Richard Tomelty, Perth, 9/01/2001
Rev Gerard Totanes, Geraldton, 17/03/2001
Rev John Pallippadan OCD, 17/04/2001
Rev Michael Willemsen, Sale, 18/05/2001
Rev Michael De Stoop, Sydney, 8/06/2001
Rev Daniel Szewc OMI, 22/06/2001
Rev Christian Fini OMI, 29/06/2001
Rev Francis Nguyen, Brisbane, 6/07/2001
Rev Hillary Rotich, Broome, 28/07/2001
Rev Scot Armstrong, Wagga Wagga, 4/08/2001
Rev Marcello Colasante, Ballarat, 31/08/2001
Rev Michael Alcock, Lismore, 14/09/2001
Rev Brendan Connell CP, 21/09/2001
Rev Mark Sexton, Adelaide, 22/09/2001
Rev Brendan Lee, Wagga Wagga, 6/10/2001
Rev Mgr Paul Mingana, Chaldean, 13/10/2001
Rev Freddy Hernandez, Perth, 9/11/2001
Rev Linh Tran, Melbourne, 24/11/2001
Rev Deacon Paul Rummery, Canb & Goul, 1/12/2001
Rev Saminathan Arockiasamy SdM, 20/12/2001
Rev Varghese, Vavolil, Syro-Malabar, 26/12/2001
Rev Manu Kumbidiyamackal, MSFS, 30/12/2001

ORDAINED 10 YEARS

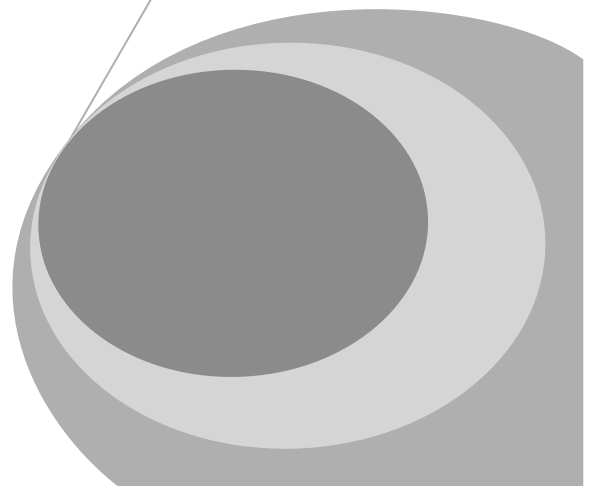
Deacon Michael Suliman, Melkite, 30/01/2011
Rev Edward Khaemba CSSp, 26/02/2011
Rev Emmanuel, Dimobi, Perth, 4/03/2011
Rev Anibal da Cunha, Perth, 4/03/2011
Rev Daniel Boyd, Perth, 4/03/2011
Rev Cyprian Shikokoti, Perth, 4/03/2011
Rev Michael Quynh Do, Perth, 4/03/2011
Rev Albano Da Costa SVD, 10/05/2011
Rev January Mkude CSSp, 12/05/2011
Rev Victor Pringle, Sydney, 13/05/2011
Rev Simon Apablaza, Sydney, 21/05/2011
Rev Luca Infantino, Sydney, 21/05/2011
Rev Peter Kwak, Sydney, 21/05/2011
Rev Emmanuel Seo, Sydney, 21/05/2011
Rev Gregory Morgan, Sydney, 21/05/2011
Rev Ohannes Boudakian OAM, 11/06/2011
Rev Nigel Sequeira, Brisbane, 29/06/2011
Rev Trung Nguyen SJ, 2/07/2011
Rev Shane Kelleher OCD, 16/07/2011
Rev Peter Zwaans, Adelaide, 16/07/2011
Rev Deacon Remo Patroni, Adelaide, 6/08/2011
Rev Chris Webb, Perth, 12/08/2011
Rev Thomas Zureich, Perth, 12/08/2011
Rev Mark Payton, Perth, 12/08/2011
Rev Porathur Joy MS, 26/08/2011
Rev Deacon Paul Crowe, Hobart, 4/09/2011
Rev John Corrigan, Ballarat, 16/09/2011
Rev John Macdonald, Armidale, 22/09/2011
Dean Junjun Amaya, Sandhurst, 28/09/2011

Rev Bosco Son SVD, 1/10/2011
Rev Deacon Gary Stokes, Port Pirie, 4/11/2011
Rev Marcelo Parra-Gonzalez, Perth, 18/11/2011
Rev Wilson Martins, Perth, 18/11/2011
Rev Antonio Scala, Perth, 18/11/2011
Rev Tuan Do CSsR, 3/12/2011
Rev James Foster, Lismore, 8/12/2011
Rev Shelwin Fernandez, Lismore, 8/12/2011
Rev Roland Agrisola, Lismore, 8/12/2011
Rev Samuel Chua OCSO, 10/12/2011
Rev Joseph Chua OCSO, 10/12/2011
Rev Paul Durkin, Broken Bay, 17/12/2011
Rev Duane Fernandez, Wollongong, 17/12/2011
Rev Geoffrey Allen, Wollongong, 17/12/2011

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by individual clergy.**

**If your anniversary is not on this
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Mission and a new generation

BRIAN LUCAS

Fr Brian Lucas, National Director of Catholic Mission, looks at a new program to engage young people in mission.



Most priests are constantly on the lookout for creative ways in which to engage with young people.

The Brisbane Archdiocese was the focal point for a new initiative run by Catholic Mission on the weekend of World Mission Sunday (Oct 17/18). It is a model that could be used to develop other opportunities for engagement between parish and school.

For the first time, Catholic Mission invited students to conduct the annual appeal talks. In nine of the thirteen deaneries, congregations at local Masses heard from over 100 young people, from 20 local primary and secondary Catholic schools, about the missionary work of the Catholic Church in Cambodia.

Staff from the Brisbane office of Catholic Mission trained the students in how to deliver an appeal talk, including references to donating.

Diocesan Director David McGovern, who helped present some of the online training workshops, reported that the students were clearly aware of the responsibility and privilege being entrusted to them.

He was thrilled that they did such a good job of not only telling the story of Chen and Bishop Kike but also emphasising the need for people in Australia to continue to support the work of the Arrupe Centre in Cambodia (the focus of this year's appeal).

The concept began with the Brisbane team approaching parish priests and sending out postcards inviting them to consider having young people as a "presence" during the appeal campaign period in October. From the ensuing responses, the team then approached parish schools or local secondary

colleges run by different religious orders or congregations.

Sue Williams, Schools and Youth Engagement Officer in Brisbane, reported that the response from schools was 'quite humbling and exciting.'

During some of debrief sessions following their speaking engagements, in which I was privileged to participate by zoom, students offered a range of comments about the experience.

One said: walking into Mass felt very different – there were posters everywhere and you could feel something special was happening. It was different to a normal Mass but in a special way. Another said: I'm not really a social person and while it was quite nerve-racking [getting up to speak], it was good to spread the story of hope.

When asked what words they would use to sum up their experience, this is what some of the student Mission Ambassadors said: Inspirational – it was good to see people inspired to donate and for them to learn about Chen's story; Nervous – there was a lot of people in the congregation; Compassion; overjoyed; privileged.

When I asked one young girl how her parish priest felt, she told the group that he congratulated her and said, 'I felt really supported'. Everyone said they would love to do it again next year.

Their responses and the experience of all the students bears out the words of Sr Roberta Termarelli, the Secretary General of the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood. This Society – which also is known as the Society of the Holy Childhood (POSI) – is one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies for which Catholic Mission works to raise financial and prayerful support. The society's motto is: Children evangelise children, children pray for children, children help children all over the world.

Speaking on the eve of World Mission Month, and in a fitting precursor to Brisbane's roll out of the Mission Ambassador Program for Students (MAPS), Sr Roberta described the role of children and young

people as protagonists of the missionary month and of missionary animation in the whole world.

She said young people were missionary disciples who evangelize, through prayer and the testimony of Jesus in schools, in their own homes, in places they frequent with their peers... All the baptized are called to share the Gospel, regardless of their age.

Sr Roberta stated what is obvious in saying that children, young people and adolescents should be encouraged to develop their missionary spirit helping them to share faith and material means, especially with the most needy children. When they become young or adults, this seed, through the work of the Holy Spirit, will sprout and give them a heart and a look towards others, open to the challenges of the mission. The opportunity to speak about the missions helps young people broaden their horizons to others and become less self-absorbed.

We all know this is the ideal, but implementing strategies to realise it is more challenging. This initial experiment shows the potential for a wider engagement. Anyone interested in finding out more is welcome to send me an email to director@catholicmission.org.au ☺



– BEQUESTS –

Have you considered leaving a bequest to NCP in your Will to help us continue working to support priests in Australia?

Further information contact the NCP National Office.

COVID-19: The Sabbath we had to have?

PETER DAY

Peter Day, Canberra & Gouburn Priest, asks what the COVID experience teaches us about being human.

As we lament this interminable time of suspended animation when even healthy human contact is potentially a criminal offence, or, at the very least, frowned upon as an egregious social sin; a searing question emerges from deep within: 'What does it mean to be human – to be a citizen?'

This is an especially challenging question for a society splashing about in a frenetic consumerist, post-Christian, post-modernist/Critical Theory stew: a grand, if tasteless, main course featuring an assortment of new flavours including subjectivism, scepticism, and nihilism; while tossing out some of the traditional spices such as reason, logic, objective truth, natural law; not to mention, God.

For the post-modernists, and this is by no means definitive: It is meaningless to speak in the name of, or against, Reason, Truth, or Knowledge – there is no objective truth, no objective moral values, no metanarratives; logic and reason and science are merely social constructs: better, then, to side with the 'poet' as a source of truth, rather than the 'physicist'. Consequently, there is a tendency to privilege feelings and emotions ahead of truth and facts.

Amidst this cultural, intellectual, and political re-positioning – and unmooring – confusion abounds: that is, we're not as polite, but more sensitive; not as forgiving, but more tolerant; not as resilient, but more 'heroic'; not as narrow-minded, but more tribal; not as reflective, but more awake; not as responsible, but more rights-centric; not as chaste, but more judgmental; not as thought-diverse, but more inclusive; not as reasonable, but more compassionate; not as sexist, but more fractious; not as conservative, but more self-righteous; not as religious, but more dogmatic.

What has also blossomed under this post-modernist/Critical Theory canopy is the intellectual revanchism of the neo-Marxist metanarrative; most notably its collectivist approach to personhood: that is, who-I-am is determined by the group I belong to.

Thus, instead of being a person who happens to be white, I am now, first and foremost, WHITE, or, first and foremost, BLACK, or GAY, or STRAIGHT – just



fill-in the BLANK that distinguishes you from other.

This stands in sharp contrast to the Judeo-Christian approach to personhood exemplified by the immortal words of Martin Luther King Jr: "I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin – by their sexuality or gender, by their belief or diet – but by the content of their character."

Under Group Identity ideology, life is defined as a power struggle: it's the oppressed v the oppressor; its man v woman, black v white, LGBTIQ v straight, binary v non-binary – my tribe over and against your tribe... on and on it goes; no wonder the grievance culture, no wonder the anger and resentment, no wonder the imposition of collective guilt and punishment.

C.S. Lewis's critique of post-World War II Europe seems germane. Writing in the *Abolition of Man* he lamented that Western society was denying the sources of virtue and wisdom while expecting people to go on being virtuous and wise. 'We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful,' he quipped.

Similarly, the overarching narrative today, at least within academe and the commentariat, is to treat our Judeo-Christian heritage with disdain while assuming that the virtues it has produced will endure.

This is not to say, of course, that our heritage doesn't have its pathologies; all human enterprises do.

Nor is it about hankering for the so called 'good old days!' But while none of us can 'live in the past, the past sure lives in us'. And, while the West, like the individual, can tend towards tyranny and sin – think institutionalised slavery; it also has the

capacity to self-correct, to repent and redeem – think the abolition of slavery.

Whatever about our personal belief systems, ideologies, political leanings; since Emperor Constantine's embrace of Christianity in the 4th century, the West has been soaking in a Judeo-Christian marinade.

And while its flavours are certainly not to everyone's taste, to deny its pervasive reach and impact is at best careless, at worst ideological disinformation and propaganda.

One of the blessings of COVID-19 – Lord knows, the miseries are countless – is that, in forcing us to slow down, to rest, to spend more time at home and with each other; it has inadvertently re-introduced the concept, and importance, of the Sabbath in our lives: that quaint Day of Rest all but eradicated in the name of progress and competition – note: the focus here is not just the religious practise, but 'sabbath' as a culturally instituted gift of space and quiet and rest.

The threefold beauty of the Sabbath is powerfully elucidated by Jonathan Sacks (Chief Rabbi of London 1991-2013). Firstly, it gifts our culture with the idea of limits. We can't go on producing, consuming, and depleting our resources with no constraints, with no thought for future generations. A planet without a Day of Rest not only ensures, but hastens environmental devastation.

Secondly, it affords us a day a week in which values are not determined by money – by the buying and selling of goods and services. This 'non-productive' time, so to speak, also tunes us in to the moral limits of markets.

Thirdly, the Sabbath reminds us that what binds us, what nurtures interdependence and community is not shaped by transactions of wealth or power.

Alas, having lost our Day of Rest, we find ourselves immersed in a hyper-paced society saturating in, among other things, the unreflected noise of a pervasive, shallow, and prurient 24/7 social media. Every minute of every day we are bombarded with audio and visual messages that preach the joys of materialism, trivia, gossip, and productivity.

Amidst this globalization of superficiality, we are left overwhelmed and bereft: the 'unbearable lightness of being'. As Jesuit Media Consultant, Myron Pereira, says: This seriously damages the natural rhythm of our interior life – our imagination, our

capacity to reflect and decide; our ability to meditate and contemplate.

Indeed, so distracted are we with lifestyle-and-competition-and-acquisition-and-things, that we have become oblivious to our deepest yearnings. We no longer have time for ourselves, let alone others – too busy, too noisy. It's as if we're running ahead of grace; gosh, running ahead of love. We are leaving our very selves behind: our institutions are exhausted – the citizenry is exhausted.

No wonder the Western take-up of contemplative eastern spiritual practices over recent decades. No wonder the flowering of meditation and mindfulness. No wonder the phenomenon of secular households enrolling their children in religious schools. No wonder the emergence of corporate 'retreats'.

The Greeks and Romans, says Rabbi Sacks: could not understand the Sabbath at all. They wrote that the Jews kept it because they were lazy. The interesting fact is that within a relatively short space of time after making that judgment, Greece, and later Rome, declined and fell. Without institutionalized rest, civilizations, like individuals, eventually suffer from burnout.

There are three metaphysical questions that sit deeply in the heart of every human-being regardless of creed, culture, or ethnicity:

1. Who am I? 2. Why am I here?
3. How ought I live?

These inner musings compel us to set out on that most noble of quests: the search for meaning. This search requires space and time and rest. We cannot live well, or love, or find meaning at pace – let alone when we are burnt-out; lest we morph into human-doings (mere consumers) beholden to a sleepless and insatiable master: the unreflective market economy and State. Under such a system, what we do defines and determines what we are. Alas, for those doings who cannot compete, or produce.

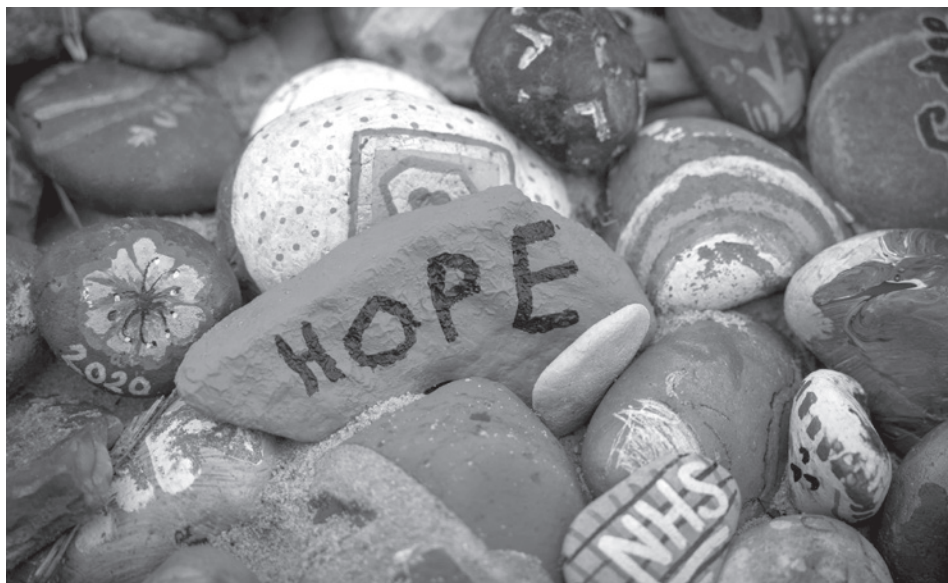
The Sabbath, on the other hand, reminds us that we are, first and foremost, human-beings (citizens) 'born free and equal in dignity and rights... endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood/[sisterhood].' Here, individual being is afforded an inherent dignity that transcends gender, colour, ability, performance, productivity – and the grouch!

This is the sovereignty of the individual, and we replace it with the collectivist notion of personhood at our peril. ☺

COVID time reflection

CHRISTA MURPHY SSPS

Christa Murphy SSPS offers a thought around finding hope in times of trouble.



Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. He leads us in our faith, and brings it to fullness. He didn't give up because of the cross; because of the joy held before him, he embraced it... (Heb. 12:2-4/adapt.)

Jesus, you didn't live in an easy time either. As a man of Galilee, you belonged to one of the most backward provinces of the glorious Roman Empire. Nazareth was so minor it didn't even rate a spot on the official map. You grew up (in wisdom, age, grace) among a despised, oppressed and deprived sector of Jewish society. You had no status. You owned nothing. *Can anything good come out of Nazareth? ... Where did this man get all his wisdom?*

And the almost certain end of someone like you, who stuck to your life's mission, and dared to challenge and call out the religious leaders, was the ignominy of death on a cross. You didn't have to be God to know that, did you? You belonged among the losers.

Contemplating what's happening all around us now, the numbers of those joining the ranks of losers is frightening, isn't it? Losing their lives. Losing loved ones. Losing their jobs, their careers, their creativity, their dreams. Losing their mortgages, their businesses, their properties, their homes, their planned-for futures. Losing day to day sustenance, day-to-day freedoms. Losing certainty about tomorrow; certainty about anything. Losing control of their lives. Losing self-belief – or belief and hope in anything, or anyone.

Where do we, your declared disciples, stand in all this, Jesus? *To whom shall we go?*

And from somewhere comes the Voice: *Please, beloved ones, keep your eyes and hearts fixed on me. Do not forget my long and lonely times of prayer; my calling out for help from deep within; my surrendering myself, and all I loved, to the One who gave me life; my re-discovering in each struggle that Someone greater than I dwelt within, was living my life with me, and would never let me go.*

That someone is my divine spirit, the life-giving breath of all creation. She is love. She is living your life with you, and will never let you go.

Keep reminding yourselves of my passover, from the dark hopelessness of good friday into the new life, light and hope of my resurrection. And live it, in memory of Me.

Spirit renewing the earth, renewing the hearts of all people. Burn in the weary souls, blow through the silent lips. Come now, awake us, Spirit of God!

All the creatures you have fashioned, all that live and breathe in you, Find their hope in your compassion, strong and true. You, O Spirit of Salvation, You alone, beneath, above, Come, renew your whole creation in your love! (Marty Haugen) ☺

After the COVID-19 epidemic – what then?

JOHN SWANN

John Swann, Adelaide priest, discusses the consequences of COVID for parish Eucharist and the effects of online Masses. He also looks at pastoral practice in light of the pandemic.



John Swann

Almost every country in the world has been affected by the Coronavirus, some of course more than others. We in Australia have been relatively lucky, being an island continent. Thus the Church too has been affected in many ways, especially in Mass attendance where religious services have been forbidden or at least permitted under certain conditions regarding spacing and numbers.

Many of us are concerned about the lasting effects of these conditions. And this is something addressed by Pope Francis, in his new book, *Let us Dream*, where on the first page he says: The basic rule of a crisis is that you don't come out of it the same. If you get through it you come out better or worse, but never the same.

Most of us have had the experience of lockdowns prohibiting attendance at Mass. There has been widespread use of 'live-streaming' allowing people to watch services from the comfort of their home. But will this have a long-lasting negative affect?

Now, after lock-downs have been withdrawn there is widespread concern about the massive decline in attendance at Masses.

No doubt many, especially the elderly or infirm may consider it more prudent to stay away from crowds, which is understandable. A number of people have personally admitted to me their concern re their own health.

Another concern of course is that many may have found the comfort of watching Mass from home less burdensome and

more attractive. On the other hand some have developed a new appreciation of the Mass, even virtually attending Mass on a daily basis.

Furthermore live-streaming has enabled people to 'shop around' and experience a diversity of liturgies of varying quality. Some interstate friends of mine have admitted that they prefer to watch Mass at a certain TV site because the quality of the liturgy and the homilies was far better than in their own parish.

Therein lies a real challenge to us as priests and to our parishes.

We must realise of course that the televised Mass does not offer the same sacramental experience as being really present at the celebration. It is not true participation in the Eucharist which requires personal presence, sharing in the responses and the singing and receiving communion, plus of course the experience of the community dimension.

That community dimension will of course vary from parish to parish, and unfortunately some people avoid this aspect of parish life, or possibly they simply do not feel welcome. Again, therein lies a real challenge to all parishes.

The Coronavirus experience has prompted a number of theologians to reflect more deeply on the real meaning of true participation in the Eucharist and the community aspect of the celebration. This is something we need to reflect on and share with our parishioners.

The absence of many older and infirm parishioners should prompt us all to think about the quality of care within our parish communities, maybe a call for visitation and taking communion to the sick at home. And, of course, many of our parishes have a predominantly elderly congregation. Let us remember too that many elderly have been deprived of visits from family due to travel restrictions, possibly causing a sense of isolation and loneliness.

Again some parishes have faced this challenge in a positive way by developing an outreach mission by arranging regular visitation or phone contact with the housebound or isolated.

Maybe all parishes should develop a checklist to examine the quality of our liturgy and homilies; explaining the substantial difference between a televised Mass and being really present; plus the importance of communion; how developed is our sense of parish community and are we a really caring community, especially for the elderly and frail?

Rather than seeing the Coronavirus as a curse wrought upon us, perhaps we might ultimately see it as a wake-up call to strengthen and enliven our parish communities. It is both a challenge and an opportunity. And yes, I know there has been a real financial impact on our parishes, but that should not be the main driving force for attracting people back to regular Mass attendance. Rather let us be guided by the true meaning of Eucharistic celebration.

Pope Francis has declared this a year to focus on the family. We know COVID-19 has impacted families in many ways. There is evidence that there had been an increase in domestic violence with couples having to spend more time together. On the other hand, others have found this an opportunity to strengthen family ties, for example spending more time with children, or parents having more time for in-depth discussions.

Pope Francis draws our attention to so many issues linked with the outcome of the epidemic – ecology, world finances, distribution of wealth, care for the poor and many more.

Coronavirus is certainly a challenge, but hopefully we can also see it as an opportunity to do things better. ☺

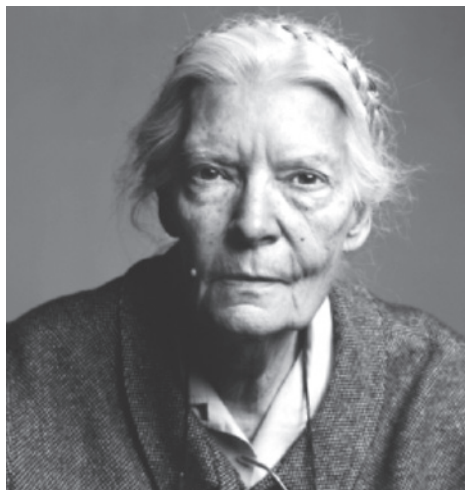
*We take this
opportunity to thank
John Swann
for proof reading
each edition of
'The Swag'.*

Dorothy Day still influencing Australian Catholic life

PETER MAHER

Peter Maher, Sydney priest, is inspired by a new book by Val Noone, *Dorothy Day in Australia*, which recognises the influence she had in Australia.

Fr Kevin Burke reviewed this book in Summer 2020 edition of *The Swag*.



I recall on my first meeting in 1989 with Ted Kennedy, then priest at Redfern, recommending I read *The Long Loneliness* by Dorothy Day if I intended to live a gospel centred life as a priest. It would not be my only link with the Dorothy Day's legacy. I subsequently became involved with some houses of hospitality run in Catholic worker style in Sydney celebrating Mass and sharing a meal. I spent a week in what I think is the only Catholic Worker

house in Australia in Brisbane's West End baking bread, cooking and sharing meals, and having discussions and prayer/reflection time with those who would drop by from time-to-time.

I was not aware that there is a long history of connections with Dorothy Day, the Catholic Worker and key people and movements for a more just society in Australia before and after Dorothy's visit here in 1970.

Seminarians, including Roger Pryke and John Heffey, and newly ordained Guilford Young, trying to find their way home in 1940 as war broke out in Europe, stopped by the Catholic Worker in New York and met Dorothy Day. Val Noone, in his recent book, *Dorothy Day in Australia*, charts the connections and networks that read like a who's who of the transforming and progressive movements of the Australian Catholic church over the last 60 years.

Young Christian Workers, Young Christian Students, University chaplaincies, Pax, Pax Christi, The Newman Society, Melbourne's houses of hospitality (Whitlands et al), Santamaria's Melbourne Catholic Worker (later the National Civic Council) and

even the Labour party and the Democratic Labor Party, all had links to the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker and all owe a debt to her.

Dorothy was an enigma of Catholic thinking and practice. She embodied a strange mix of conservative spiritual and doctrinal practice with a radical Catholic view on social and economic reconstruction firmly based in Catholic social teaching and a reading of the gospel that put first the preferential option for the poor. For Dorothy the poor are not the objects of charity but partners and teachers in living a gospel life.

Dorothy was a pacifist, a firm supporter of negotiation, a believer in non-violence and willing to go to jail to resist the evils of the State. She opposed conscription, atomic and nuclear weapons and the Vietnam War in times when these were considered obligatory for national security. She immediately opposed the barbarism of dropping the atomic bomb in Japan long before the now known fact that Japan was already preparing a negotiation of surrender. She opposed the Vietnam War and supported Ho Chi Minh well before the student protests of the 60's.

Her thought and action have had a deep influence on many in Australian Catholic Social Action, including me, thanks to those she inspired in the 60's in the USA and in 1970 in Australia. ☺



The Ministry of Deacon today and tomorrow

DEBORAH TALBOT AND BRUCE TALBOT

Deborah Talbot and Rev Deacon Bruce Talbot look at the role of deacon and the how this could be promoted at the Plenary Council. It is an abridged version of the original article, *The Ministry of Deacon*, found in *Pastoral Liturgy* Volume 51, issue 1. This issue can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3baftxk> and reprinted with permission.

People often ask why do we need deacons? They say priests can do everything a deacon does and more. They say this because they misunderstand the ministry of the diaconate.

As stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1593): "Since the beginning, the ordained ministry has been conferred and exercised in three degrees: that of the bishops, that of the presbyters, and that of the deacons." There have always been deacons in the Church. For the first millennium deacons were the evangelists and messengers for the apostles and

bishops. Early deacons included Stephen (Acts 7) who preached outside the temple; and Philip the evangelist, also known as Philip the deacon, (Acts 8) who baptised and taught. Because of this diaconal ministry the Church grew. There were both male and female deacons well into the first millennium.

Around the 12th Century the seven steps to priesthood became set in practice, and the penultimate step was that of ordination to the diaconate, at which point their ministry was focused on their final training towards priesthood, like an apprenticeship.

The focus on the true ministry of the diaconate became lost.

It was not until Vatican II that the episcopate and the diaconate were restored to their rightful place among the three orders of ordained ministry. The diaconate should be detached from presbyteral ordination returning to how it was in the first millennium. This would have the advantage of giving the diaconate its proper identity.

However, many still do not understand these ministries and how they are differentiated. History has caused many to still think that presbyteral ordination is the pinnacle of success in Holy Orders. Vatican II has restored the Episcopate, the Diaconate and the Laity to their rightful place within the ministry of the Body of Christ – the Church. Each, together with

Continued page 34

FEATURES

the presbyterate, have their own ministry and charisms for the whole Church.

Servant myth

Another reason people misunderstand the ministry of deacons is that the false translation of the diacon group of words to mean servant, instead of their original meaning of ministry.

The bishops of the Second Vatican Council left open 'how' that reinstated order would manifest itself, leaving room for the Holy Spirit to continue to develop that ministry. Statistics presented at deacon's conferences over the past decades are showing a worldwide trend in the growth of the permanent diaconate and still many Catholics have no understanding of what that ministry entails.

Post Vatican II

Following the flood of documents coming from the second Vatican Council, great changes emerged in the Church. Religious and laity were moving into pastoral roles; liturgies took on the vernacular language; religious chose to put aside their habits and dress more informally; and a burgeoning lay ministry was developing at the same time as the permanent ministry of the diaconate was flourishing." Ministries were becoming confused and what people understood as the role of the priest was becoming blurred.

No wonder people could not understand the difference between a priest and a deacon, or a deacon and lay ministry. The changes within the Church took place at an incredibly fast pace after the slow changes pre-Vatican II and the hierarchy often had difficulty communicating those changes, tending to be more prescriptive than necessary in order to keep control over those changes

Deacons today

More than 50 years have passed since Vatican II so it is timely to ask "How has the ministry of the permanent diaconate grown with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in that time?" Today, as it has always been, the deacons' ministry has two aspects: Liturgical and non-liturgical but remains, as always, a ministry to the dispersed, an ambassador of the bishop.

Their liturgical ministry is clearly outlined in various section of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM). The GIRM assigns various tasks to the deacon in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. At Mass the deacon has his own part in proclaiming the Gospel, in preaching God's word from time to time, in announcing the intentions

of the Prayer of the Faithful, in ministering to the priest, in preparing the altar and serving the celebration of the Sacrifice, in distributing the Eucharist to the faithful, especially under the species of wine.

Ministry to the dispersed

The priest's primary ministry is to the gathered i.e. their parish or community for those who fulfil teaching roles, or as theologians, canon lawyers etc within the archdiocese/diocese because of their special charisms.



The deacon's primary ministry is to the dispersed. Though they will worship in their parish and minister there liturgically, their focus will be on those who are dispersed from parish life, those who are not regularly ministered to in a gathered sense. These include but are not limited to seafarers, migrants, those disenfranchised from the church. They will also include ministry to married couples, families, those in hospitals and prisons, and those who feel alienated from the church for various reasons.

Deacons are often called to conduct a Catholic funeral service. It is often the funeral directors that contact these deacons requesting a Catholic service. Other areas of ministry deacons have been effectively undertaking include running RCIA programs in parishes as well as RE programs for children outside the Catholic School system, running youth groups and family activities, visitation to schools and to the sick. In some dioceses there are deacons in prison and hospital chaplaincies, school and university chaplaincies, deacons as directors of various diocesan agencies, directors of vocations to the permanent diaconate, even running a faith community in the absence of an available priest.

Misunderstood and under-valued ministry

Most permanent deacons today also run into questions like 'when will you be ordained?' and thus follows discussion on who a deacon is, why their ministry is different to that of a priest and an

explanation that they are already ordained. They often have to explain that because of the ordination they have received they are members of the clergy and have a right to wear a clerical collar. The deacon is an ordained minister and sees his vocation as a permanent deacon, not that of bishop or priest.

The upcoming Plenary Council would be an excellent forum to discuss how deacons can fully contribute to the Church. At the preliminary group discussions held in parishes in 2019 the permanent diaconate was one of the topics of discussion along with how to overcome the clericalism that has crept into the church and is rife among some clergy and some parishioners. Perhaps a review of the ministry of the deacon together with a questioning of the sequential ordination process, which would necessitate a revision on the curriculum for preparing for presbyteral and diaconal ordinations, would go a long way to reduce this clericalism.

Conclusion

Deacons are primarily those who proclaim the Gospel, in the name of the bishop, to the assembled community and those dispersed. Like the bishop, whom they serve, they have a diakonia to build up the community of faith and reach out to dispersed Christians and to those who have yet to hear the Gospel.

Perhaps at this time of preparation for the Plenary Council in Australia, it is appropriate that this great opportunity for the delegates of that Council to look at the three orders of Clergy within the Church and the role of each in ministry should be considered. It would be an opportunity for the lesser orders (porter, lector etc) to be revitalised for the laity with appropriate training and preparation and be an opportunity for women to be included in these minor orders, not as a precursor to priesthood but as a permanent lay ministry in its own right.

Anecdotal evidence shows that the majority of permanent deacons in Australia today are in full time diaconal ministry. Those in paid employment are limited in the most part to teaching in Catholic schools, directors of church agencies etc. The role of deacons as evangelists, proclaiming the Word of God, not only at Mass but also in the community, as was the ministry of deacons for the first millennium, has become more evident as the focus of the active ministry of deacons today. They are active in the lives of community members breaking open the Word of God and being the face of the Church where it is missing. ☪

Is there room for dialogue when an Archbishop can be censored?

RODNEY PAGE

As we move towards the Plenary Council, Dr Rod Page asks some critical questions about which voices are privileged and which ones are silenced. Rod, a retired research scientist, has lived in the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn for 54 years and is part of Canberra's St Christopher's Cathedral Parish (St Peter Chanel's community, Yarralumla ACT). He is a member of Concerned Catholics of Canberra and Goulburn (concernedcatholicscanberra.org) and a local coordinator of The World Community for Christian Meditation (ACT).

There's a Plenary Council coming up in October 2021 and it is slated to be an opportunity for renewal for the Catholic Church in this country.

At such a critical time in the history of the Church, however, it is disheartening that some of its media remain inwardly focused and, in a recent case, brazenly censored. This ensured that reformist views of a long serving bishop were gagged.

Six months ago (June 2020) the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn's official publication *The Catholic Voice* published online a feature article on Archbishop Francis Carroll, who is retired and lives in Wagga Wagga, NSW. Within a day, however, his thoughts on issues around church renewal were selectively taken down, and parts removed altogether. The journalist, also *The Catholic Voice's* Editor at the time, was not informed of the deletion of these key components of her article.

The initial (pre-censored) version of her interview, headlined 'Strong views from bishop with farm-boy charm', was a warm and encouraging account of 90 years' of wisdom, the outlook from an esteemed pastoral elder. The long-serving Archbishop of Canberra-Goulburn (1983-2006) shared in this interview of the rich joys he had experienced and promulgated as a result of Vatican II.

The report of his 'strong views' included many matters, dear to the hearts of Catholics across Australia, indeed across the world. Yet these views were expunged, and the new headline became 'A bishop with farm-boy charm'. No more 'strong views'.

The reporting journalist's commitment, integrity and professional objectivity inherent in the initial report were given a back seat. Evidently, a censor had decided that Fr Francis' thoughtfully expressed wisdom on church reform should be kept under wraps.

Some will recall that Francis Carroll openly reflected on reform when he was President of Australian Catholic Bishops Conference some 20 years ago. Hence, unremarkably,

the thrust of his current (censored) views on reform is echoed in a huge proportion of the 17,457 Plenary Council submissions from other Australian Catholics.

Censorship doesn't do much for our church's credibility. It demonstrates that the hierarchy does not like to be critiqued even from within its own ranks. It begs more profound questions too: can this be within a church guided by the Spirit and founded on the rock of Christ?

Will such an opaque mindset permeate the workings of the Plenary Council process? Has it already done so? If we laity remain mute, we only perpetuate this unhelpful, non-transparent and wily practice.

The purging of Fr Francis' ideas on church renewal issues, including consideration of women's ordination, married clergy, optional celibacy, and his perception of the power of conservative elements within the church, demonstrates a wanton disregard for openness.

It is censorship, and it clearly misrepresents his position. It sends a message that the hierarchy don't much value his views, don't want Catholics to know of them, and certainly don't trust Catholics to discern them and decide for themselves.

Fr Francis' uncensored 'strong views' included 'hopes for a Plenary Council that fosters genuine discussion and openness to change'. However, in his usual humble and self-effacing manner, he chuckled 'not that anyone would take notice of me'.

He went on to observe 'that, in my view, conservatives hold the power and the numbers'. He also mentioned that his diocese is divided like others, 'with conservative Catholics dominating and people seeking change viewed as troublemakers'.

This hush-up smacks of systemic secrecy. Selective cutting of the article is the chosen tactic, and sorry to say it has worked. Such an approach is reminiscent of adverse findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

We have still not yet got things quite right.

It mocks the Plenary Council's promises that our bishops would genuinely listen to the People of God.

Had this censorship remained undetected, the contemporary views of a much-loved bishop would never have been known to Australian Catholics, either now or in posterity. As a friend commented: 'it is a perverse world when the views of Australia's longest serving bishop are censored. It can only lead one to conclude that some people are very fearful of open discussion'.

The time for window dressing is over. Ideas such as those raised by Francis Carroll should be welcome and open. But our Catholic media that's controlled and opaque doesn't want to go there because the institution still fears daylight. Its press is either not willing or not allowed to stop punching below its weight.

Commentary that challenges the status quo or does not follow the party line goes missing. If previously we hadn't been aware of this hallmark of church, Francis Carroll has now enlightened us. We thank him!

Adult Catholics in 2021 realise that their Church is not the inert and immovable apparatus of an exclusively male hierarchy. It is a living Spirit-led community. It's the catholic and Catholic you and me, including about 90 percent who are no longer churchgoing.

A censor has excised the substance of an otherwise challenging article – the views of Australia's longest serving bishop, Francis Carroll. In so depriving us of his views, Fr Francis has been misrepresented. But this unadorned censorship has had its cover blown.

Is it any wonder that laity, with a keen interest in the goings-on of a much loved institution, ask if and how the hierarchy is standing up for them? And with some urgency it asks the explicit question: is this the benchmark of what's going on in the leadup to the Plenary Council?

Put simply, I have skin in the game... I'm a Catholic and I'm concerned. I am at a point when I need to stand up and ask questions of my Church, even if this does rock the ideological boat. Why didn't I do so three decades ago when I was in my 40's, when I had more energy and was a bit feisty? Mine is merely another call for transparency.

Secrecy does not cut it any longer. It's dishonest. If you're reading this, you're perhaps coming from the same place as me.

Continued on page 36

FEATURES

If we comply with this *modus operandi*, built solely within an ecclesial pecking order and being male, it means we continue to contribute to just another counter-productive and distasteful form of clericalism.

This is a pivotal moment for leadership in church media. Catholic news and information can become a lighthouse for

the people of the Church, or it can remain an exclusive, clerically controlled clubhouse.

Matthew's gospel (10:26) has an encouraging takeaway when it comes to Catholic media and propensity for censorship: 'So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be

made known'. Thomas Merton's words also sustain us: 'courage comes and goes, hold on for the next supply'.

Which leaves the question: if an Archbishop is so blatantly censored, what opportunity is there for honest dialogue with the laity anytime, especially now in the leadup to the Plenary Council? ☞



Catholic culture and Evangelii Gaudium

ERIC HORNE

Eric Horne, member of the St Leonard's Glen Waverley Parish, VIC discussion group, looked at the results of their discussions and how the Church needs to change.

At the first meeting of the St Leonard's parish discussion group in 2015 we considered some of the problems facing the Roman Catholic Church with a view to supporting Pope Francis in his call for Church reforms. It was decided to focus on the following questions: What defines Catholic Culture and makes us uniquely Catholic; how should we respond to contemporary problems and is there a risk that by our efforts we may do further harm to our Church?

In 1871 the anthropologist Sir Edward Tyler defined culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Our members decided that whilst we were comfortable

as a whole with our parish culture under the ministry of the much loved and respected Father Brendan Dillon (now retired) we saw a need to study the culture of the Holy See, the mysterious body named the Vatican and the Roman hierarchy of our Church.

We decided that a guide to our studies would include the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG) by the Holy Father Francis to all the people of the Church. At section 26 of the letter he refers to Paul VI's invitation to deepen the call to renewal and to make it clear that renewal does not only concern individuals but the entire Church: The Church must look with penetrating eyes within herself, ponder the mystery of her own being... This the source of the Church's heroic and



impatient struggle for renewal. We were aware that the study intended would be complex, ambiguous and subject to contemporary changes.

Encouragement to continue with the study was provided by EG section 28 which states that the parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in

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Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.

It was at this stage of our discussion that I was loaned a copy of *The Swag* by group member who was a student of philosophy. Never having heard of this journal I was astonished at the frankness of bishops, priests and laity contributing criticism, explanations and some recommending significant changes to the Vatican's control over the liturgy, theology, law and procedures.

The co-editor of *The Swag*, then Hal Ranger, enthused my reading by his entry that: We are still on a journey, filled with hope; in many ways we are constantly leaving home, taking with us only the things which matter. We priests are in many ways *swagmen*.

Since then I have assiduously read the journal learning much about the workings of the Catholic Church in Australia and the needs of evangelization as well as reform. Father Terry Kean of Montmorency and Eltham parishes gives a voice to many of us that the imminent Plenary Council will be a Vatican curial view of the management of Australian Catholicism for the future. (*The Swag* Summer 2020).

We hope and pray that the wishes of the contributors, particularly the young, have been heeded. In his conclusion Father Terry said that it will not be institution that reforms the Catholic Church but the Spirit of God leading all Church members to a new story.

Whilst Pope Francis is inspirational in many ways to mature age Catholics how many teenagers are inspired. I hope that the Plenary Councils findings and decisions will provide incentives for young people to relate to God as their Creator and to Christ as a teacher of how to live.

Pope Francis writes in his apostolic letter of an evangelization capable of shedding light on the new way of relating to God, to other and to the world around us, and inspiring essential values, (EG 74).

For me this is a challenge. My life experience as a soldier, police officer and a tutor of anthropology and history tells me that our relations with God are not just shared with Christians but in many other ways with diverse people created by God and dwelling on his earth.

For example, our Australian indigenous peoples had and have a rich spiritual life over sixty thousand years and in many ways are more Christian than most of us.

I note that Professor Elkin in his book, *The Australian Aborigines* writes that we

should respect their religious convictions. Their Dreaming is of course sacred. In Islam, there are the millions of people who submit to God and mostly pray five times a day and who recognize Jesus as a Holy prophet and also the Bible as Holy Scripture.

I can't accept that God created a world of people and only communicated with a small group of people from the beginning of time in the Middle East. I note the Bible records that Christ said: In my father's house there are many dwelling places, (John 14).

I mention these things because Australia is not only multi-national, multi-racial but is increasingly multi-religious. If Catholicism is to remain effective, we need to know and understand our own spiritual beliefs and those of others.

We should consider showing leadership of the peoples in the Kingdom of God in Australia. In the Easter issue of *The Tablet* 2020, Pope Francis is asked by Austen Ivereigh if the Church will become more missionary, more creative, less attached to institutions. The Pope firmly replied that the Church is institution.

It is the Holy Spirit who institutionalises the Church, in an alternative, complementary way, because the Holy Spirit provokes disorder through charisms, but then out of that disorder creates harmony.

Later in his answer he asserts that canon law is helpful, lets make good use of it, it is for our good. But the final canon says that it is for the salvation of souls, and that's what open the door for us to go out in times of difficulty to bring the consolation of God.

Finally, our discussion group sent a note of gratitude to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse which included the following: On reflection, we lay people bear some responsibility.

We have allowed our bishops and priests only to guide our Church; rather we should all work together as the people of God to guide our Church as set out by the great Council of the Church, Vatican II, (1962-1965) Our failure to do this has promoted clericalism which Pope Francis calls the Great Modern Sin of our Church.

Our discussion group at St Leonard's was suspended during 2020 but intends to renew a study of Australian Catholic Culture this year. ☺

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Archbishop Wilson and Bishop Matthys die



Archbishop Philip Wilson (pictured), who served as Bishop of Wollongong and Archbishop of Adelaide, died on 17 January, at the age of 70.

He was from the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and was ordained Bishop of Wollongong in 1996 where he responded well to the issue of child sexual abuse.

He was Archbishop of Adelaide from 2001 till 2018 and president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference for three terms, from 2006 to 2012.

Bishop Luc Matthys, retired bishop of the Diocese of Armidale, was born in Belgium and moved to South Africa. He moved to Australia after being ordained and was appointed Bishop of Armidale in 1999. He retired in December 2011.

He passed away at the age of 85 and his funeral was held on February 5. A tribute from the Diocese of Armidale described Bishop Matthys as “a noble spirit”, someone who was “kind and gentle of heart” and “a man of profound faith and wisdom”. Bishop Matthys on his 50th anniversary of ordination reflected on the joy of his episcopal ministry. He spoke especially about the joy of administering the sacraments. He also mentioned the joy he and the faithful received on the occasions when he ordained men to the priesthood.

Women still second class

Robert Mickens (La Croix International, January 16) notes that, in a time when women's ordination seems almost certain sooner or later and when the practice of females reading and serving at the altar has been common in many catholic churches for decades, it seems a bit strange to see the recent ‘motu proprio’ juridically

recognizing women lectors and acolytes. The door closed by John Paul II on discussing women's ordination is now being opened, Mickens argues.

The arguments for this change will include ‘the needs of the times’ and ‘doctrinal development’ and ‘a consolidated practice’, says Mickens.

Offering lay persons of both sexes the possibility of accessing the ministries of the Acolyte and the Lector (sic.), by virtue of their participation in the baptismal priesthood, will increase the recognition, also through a liturgical act (institution), of the valuable contribution that a great number of lay persons, including women, have offered to the life and mission of the Church for a very long time, the pope notes in his letter to the CDF prefect.

The problem here is that Baptism is the prime sacrament and the only one necessary for one to be instituted in a particular ministry – whether that be conferred through a liturgical act (institution) or ordination ... Either men and women are equal through Baptism or they are not, noted Mickens.

PALMS Australia seeks Mission recruitment assistance



For 60 years Palms Australia has been recruiting, preparing, sending and supporting Catholics from all around Australia to fill overseas professional placements in response to requests from international community partners.

With COVID preventing the gatherings Palms would normally hold to facilitate recruitment for mission, they are instead asking for the assistance of our entire faith community to recruit the qualified and

The Dry starring Fr Eugene McKinnon



Eugene, new PP at Sebastopol/Redan/Linton in the Diocese of Ballarat and former Parish Priest of the East Wimmera Parish, is currently starring in the acclaimed film, *The Dry* – alongside no other than Eric Bana!

Partly filmed at St Joseph's Church, Banyena, 40kms west of St Arnaud, it is based on Australian author, Jane Harper's novel of the same title

– an Australian mystery drama thriller set in a small town in drought times about a family who died under suspicious circumstances.

The director, Robert Connolly, rang Eugene and asked if he would be interested in playing the role of the pastor in the film and also if he knew of any parishioners who would be willing to play extras. Mr Connolly also needed an organist for the funeral scene, so Anne Walsh from Donald was also invited to be part of the production.

On the two days of filming in Banyena, a large production crew recreated the scene described in Jane Harper's book and the Director asked Eugene to conduct the funeral scene as he normally would. Eugene's cue, as written in the novel, was one line: *"The fat old padre made his way to the lectern and began the funeral."*



Hours later, after many takes and after the other extras had departed, he was still repeating the same lines as camera angles were assessed and readjusted. It was suggested to Eugene that if he wanted to give up being a priest he could easily get a job as an actor!

Several months later, Eugene received a call to join actor's equity and be a member of the cast. This involved re-recording his words in a studio in Port Melbourne so that extraneous noise could be removed from the background (eg. passing traffic) and sound effects, such as the organ music, could be added.

We look forward to Eugene's next starring role!

experienced Australians requested by partner organisations in low-income communities. These partners believe that the people Palms prepare and send for between one and three years provide the most effective and sustainable solutions to poverty.

Palms Executive Director Roger O'Halloran says: It is difficult to be precise, but it seems we need to be ready to meet partner requests and begin sending again in the second half of this year, or early 2022.

Palms thoroughly prepares and supports those recruited for mutual development and therefore welcomes enquiries today to ensure an appropriately paced preparation.

The Palms website (www.palms.org.au) provides background to positions currently available.

Volunteers are offered living allowances and accommodation when on placement. For placements of two-three years, return airfares and insurance are also covered as well.

Palms' experienced staff provide personal and professional support for all transitions from enquiry through to placement and returning home.

If you would like to find out more you can enquire online at www.palms.org.au or call Palms on (02) 9560 5333 or 0422 472 567

Civil weddings in Japanese Catholic churches provides a way forward for the rest of Church

The Japanese practice of providing civil marriages in Catholic churches for couples where neither partner is a Catholic, shows that the Church is capable of providing some ceremony and blessing for a marriage that is non-sacramental and even totally unconnected with the Church, William Grimm writes in UCAnews on Jan 27, 2021.

Grimm suggest this could offer a model for including people in church rituals where a sacramental marriage may not be possible. Permission for such weddings was sought and given for a long time in Japan. This supported parishes financially where numbers of Mass attendees is small.

It was called an experiment which in effect meant getting around restrictions. Rome made two conditions. It must not be the same ceremony as the sacramental marriage. This never happened. Secondly, there must be marriage preparation. This often meant offering a wedding rehearsal.

Grimm suggests we could use a similar practice in response to Pope Francis recent call to accommodate civil marriages with those who are in committed relationships,

specifically same-sex ones, where the pope said: Homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God and have a right to a family. Nobody should be thrown out or be made miserable over it. What we have to have is a civil union law – that way they are legally covered. This could also apply to couples in various stages of their relationship or divorced people.

Paul Stenhouse MSC OAM



Fr Paul Stenhouse who died in December 2019, received the Order of Australia Medal posthumously in the 2021 Australia Day Honours. Paul was well known for his many years as editor of *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* magazine. He was involved in many church works including chaplaincy to migrant students and Aid to the Church in Need. ☪

Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM named 2021 Senior Australian of the Year

Miriam-Rose, a prominent NT Catholic, renowned artist, activist, writer and public speaker from Nauiyu (Daly River – 230 km south of Darwin), was recently named 2021 Senior Australian of the Year.



Miriam-Rose and Sally Heath (Sally visited Miriam-Rose and the community with her family in July 2018)

In 1975, Miriam-Rose became the Northern Territory's first fully qualified Aboriginal teacher. As an art consultant for the Department of Education, she visited schools in the Top End, advocating for the inclusion of visual art as part of every child's education.

After completing a master's degree in education, Miriam-Rose became the principal of St Francis Xavier Catholic School in her home community of Nauiyu, before being appointed to the Federal Government's advisory body, the National Indigenous Council.

In recognition of her leadership, Miriam-Rose was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia medal and an Honorary PhD in Education from Charles Darwin University.

In 2013, she established the Miriam Rose Foundation, to bridge the divide between Aboriginal culture and mainstream society – driving reconciliation at a grassroots level through education, art, culture and

opportunity – to develop pathways to help Indigenous youth learn to “walk in two worlds” – those of Aboriginal culture and Western culture.

The foundation produces resources to help spread the message of *dadirri* (da-did-ee)-the spiritual dimension of Aboriginal culture – and creates opportunities for people to learn more about it.

Miriam-Rose describes *dadirri* as “The deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call ‘contemplation’. When I experience *dadirri*, I am made whole again. I can find my peace in this silent awareness. *Dadirri* also means awareness of where you’ve come from, why you are here, where are you going now and where you belong. A big part of *dadirri* is listening.”

You can read more about the foundation at www.miriamrosefoundation.org.au

Congratulations Miriam-Rose!



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The plenary and confession

As I continue to observe the number of empty seats increasing in the churches that I attend, I find it difficult to understand why some real attempts are not being made to address this issue in a meaningful way.

Many years ago, I heard a very good politician state that: without democracy, accountability and transparency, the ground is always ready for the sowing of corruption. Some time ago I raised this with a highly regarded priest and whilst he agreed with the accountability and transparency, he did not agree with the democracy.

This I could understand as I myself realise that the best ruler is a benevolent dictator. These however very rarely appear and I for one will stick with democracy until something better comes along. Without democracy I cannot see how we can get accountability and transparency.

I would like to think that our Australian Catholic Church would begin to work on the introduction of democracy as a matter of some urgency.

The Plenary Council could do worse than look at this issue in a serious manner. Given the basic rules governing the council, I am not at all confident that this will happen, and in fact, I do wonder whether or not the council has been set up to fail in regard to the hope of lay people. I sincerely hope this comment proves to be wrong but can only hope, wait and see.

The summer edition of *The Swag* excelled its own high standard of content with some extremely good and thought-provoking articles. I note that much attention was paid to the Seal of Confession.

Given that forgiveness relies on the sincerity of the penitent being essential to receiving the said forgiveness from God and not from the priest, I see no reason why the Third Rite should not be used as common practice.

Should the penitent wish to speak more to the priest, there would be no problem with them doing so. I am of the opinion that should the Third Rite become common practice, one would see many more people begin to utilise the vacant seats in churches.

In my readings of Christ's life on earth, I recall no occasion where he obliged people to go into detail of their transgressions.

Having read about the early days of communism, I believe confession was an integral part of their program. This would make one consider its use as a control mechanism.

If the Church wishes to return to some semblance of its former years, the years of credibility and respect, it must face constructive change and all the leadership needs, is to adopt an open and just system of leadership and get back to fundamentals.

The infrastructure both human and otherwise is already in place but has certainly been damaged by a minority of people allowing greed for power, wealth and inflated egos to get out of control. This can only change by a culture change led by the vast number of good people working for justice and fairness.

We must get back to basics and practise what we preach. The Ten Commandments together with Christ's two Commandments need to be retrieved from where they have been left in the past in order that the Church can once again begin to move forward and be the great assistance to humanity that it has certainly the wherewithal to do.

Vince Ptolemy, Kyogle NSW

Priest: from lord of the manor to wise guide

The time has come for us priests to re-invent ourselves. The Royal Commission into the Sexual Abuse of Children has shown up a clerical culture that can perpetrate and cover up shameful crimes. What can be done now?

To do nothing is to acquiesce silently in what has gone before. The Gospel injunction is a start: Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand (Matt. 3:1-2, 4:17). Repent does not mean breast-beating but a change of heart and mind, opening up to what is new, recognising the signs of the times.

The shock of the Royal Commission is one such sign. So, also, the sad realisation that most Catholics have turned away from the Church, many blaming the faults of priests: instances of clergy scandal, poor preaching and theology, seigniorial standing, aloofness, consumerist life style. There is too the sign of the shortage of vocations: if God is the one who calls, is the message to us now that a different kind of priest is called for. Or has the once noble ideal since lost its savour?

As seminarians we learnt that Ordination imprinted on the recipient a special character or mark which lasts forever. Some imagined this made the priest ontologically distinct from others.

He is the *alter Christus*, special above the rest of humanity. The adulation he received at Ordination and thereafter reinforced the

difference. Distinctive attire, titles, abode added to his special standing in the Catholic community.

The feudal structure of the parish in the diocese, with the 'Lord of the Manor' owing allegiance and accountable to the 'Sovereign', and not to the 'peasants', gives the parish priest a leadership which holds back leadership among the laity. The old image of the priest has been shattered by the recent revelations and now he is more often the object of suspicion.

I experienced a different kind of priesting in my involvement with urban Aborigines. The Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, modelled on local Aboriginal Medical and Legal Services, was managed through elected officers by the local Indigenous Catholics, who might seek outside expertise (priests, religious) for the services on offer.

My designation was changed from Chaplain to Priest Assistant to the ACM. Personally, my main objective was to foster Aboriginal leadership in various fields. Later as Parish Priest of Riverstone I experimented in applying this experience to parish ministry, with notable success.

I propose that now the ideal is that the parish community be run by the parishioners through an elected Pastoral Council and Management Team. Rather than heading the parish, the priest may rather see himself as a missionary (as in parish missions or overseas missions) coming in to challenge and stir, announcing the coming of the kingdom.

He is the wise Elder (presbyter), discerning and guiding those who are active in the parish, counselling those in need.

At the invitation of the community, his particular task is teaching doctrine and administering the sacraments, where possible with the co-operation of lay ministers.

The ideal is that the parish, the local church, be the Body of Christ in this place, with all its diverse members fully exercising the charisms imparted to them by the Holy Spirit.

Eugene Stockton, Lawson NSW

Let my people go

Well done *The Swag* (Summer 2020) on collecting articles that clearly describe the lack of real partnership in the local Catholic Church. Sadly, the articles read like a lament. Thankfully, they are written in faith and hope – their depth of faith believing that the Holy Spirit is active among us, upholding our hope for change.

Continued page 42

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I trust that bishops and priests will heed the third gift, charity, and be urged on by love to act for church change within the People of God. The cumulative message in *The Swag* articles seemed to be an appeal to let local church communities grow up.

On just one issue, the Church has legislated for parish and diocesan councils so, why are they non-existent or not working well? Why are many clergy afraid of them? I suspect that church authorities' lack of trust of believers is one cause of non-function. This lack of trust shows an unwillingness to share responsibility so that the role of councils is undermined.

However, the faithful are graced by baptism to take on church governance roles, not merely to be consulted; called to vocational responsibility and not just to be compliant children.

Beyond governance issues, many of faithful have proved their theological and ethical expertise by exercising roles in building communion at every church level.

The three encyclicals of Pope Francis and his 'dreams' give clear support for dialogue with the world (*Evangelii Gaudium*), loving earth and all it holds (*Laudato Si*) and to living as an example of communion to the one human family (*Tutti Fratelli*). Maybe we should drop the term laity? The People of God is one.

Bishop Long appealed to his fellow bishops to reassess their roles. In the current apocalyptic like crisis, it is a time of purposeful discernment and intentional discipleship. Crisis awakes in the disciples a sense of deep listening that leads to alignment with God's will and courageous action. (*Catholic Outlook* 26.11.2020)

Chapters 1-11 of Exodus come to mind – the struggle of the Israelites to be free from slavery under Pharaoh (even though life in Egypt had been good before plagues spread across the land). In verses 5:1 and 9:1, Moses and Aaron told Pharaoh that the God of Israel says, Let my people go. The people would wander in the wilderness but they would be free to worship as God wanted.

Church history has lessons for us. The clash of the Celtic and Anglo church traditions caused division and pain. The monastery under Abbess St Hilda (614-680) hosted the reconciling Synod of Whitby. A trusted advisor to kings and bishops, in her senior years she wrote:

Trade with the gifts God has given you. Bend your minds to holy learning, that you may escape the fretting moth of littleness of mind that would wear out

your souls. Brace your wills to action, that they may not be the spoil of weak desires. Train your hearts and lips to song which gives courage to the soul. Being buffeted by trials, learn to laugh; being reproved, give thanks; having failed, determine to succeed. (Mary C. Eerle, *Holy Companions: Practices from the Celtic Saints* Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2004, p 107, quoted by VKMcPax@gmail.com)

Charles Rue SSC, Strathfield NSW

Presenting the gospel in our educated society

With this letter I may be condemning myself to a barrage of criticism! I do hope not! While ordained, currently I am in full-time study, so I am not regularly presiding at weekday and weekend masses. Instead, I visit different local churches and sit in the congregations to be nourished spiritually both with the Sacrament and Word, and with the general prayerful atmosphere of the service.

A couple of aspects of the presiding at these masses concerns me when I imagine myself being a returned Catholic (after many years) or a newcomer unfamiliar with the ritual. I believe that if I were such a person I would not return to some churches. What am I talking about?

Firstly, the introductory rite. When the priest begins by going straight into the Penitential rite ('Lord, have mercy'), what is the newcomer to make of it?

Those presiders who begin with acknowledging who we are as disciples of Jesus or children of God, and why it is that we have gathered again this Sunday, and who acknowledge recent state or national events that connect our daily lives and concerns to our faith, it is this presider who contextualises and makes sense of what the mass is about.

Secondly, the homily. I have heard many well prepared and well-structured sermons that exhort us to live our faith, and describe how we can do this, without any reference (again) to current events or history or literature or scientific or technological advances, or a story to illustrate a point.

Imagining myself, again, as a stranger to this community, I wonder what this has to do with my daily life of dealing with small children, work colleagues, a recent novel I have read, the mistreatment of asylum seekers, concerns about the environment, Covid, my financial insecurity, etc.

My intention with this letter and my observations is not to undermine the commitment and hard work of my fellow

priests, but to bring to the attention of all of us a couple of aspects of the mass that I believe may be having a significant influence on the numerical growth of each congregation. Perhaps if we were to imagine that there was one newcomer at every weekend mass we celebrate we might approach our communication a little more effectively.

Iain Radvan SJ, Parkville VIC

Thanks to *The Swag* team

I congratulate you on the quality of *The Swag*, which contains a breadth of opinion and helpful insights on the church's mission in the modern world.

The church faces a difficult task in developed countries with educated populations, as evidenced by the fact that only 20% of Australian marriages are now conducted by ministers of religion.

Tony Eagleton, by no means a Christian apologist, has criticised the new atheism in societies such as ours, and has commented that the meaning of life question is now in the hands of spiritual masseurs, the technologists of perfect contentment and the chiropractors of the psyche.

While Christian fundamentalism and its equivalent in other religions show humanity's capacity to believe anything, there is a problem in educated societies in persuading people of the relevance of the Gospel and why it should be believed.

Many of the 'barnacles' on the Gospel result from a literalistic interpretation of the Bible or of church teaching. Educated congregations need reassurance that they are not expected to have the ability of the queen in Alice in Wonderland to believe 'six impossible things before breakfast'.

Christians impede their message if they deny or denigrate the findings of science, and the controversy over evolution is a good example. Creationists limit God's activity to their belief system and promote a literal interpretation of the Genesis stories, thus providing atheists with a lot of useful material.

An article in *The Swag* of Autumn 2020 was the first time I'd seen a full statement of the facts in the Porteous case. Churches have been eager to press for greater religious freedom without much regard for the multicultural and multifaith nature of our society.

A number of legal organisations have recommended the scrapping of the religious freedom bill.

It seems an obvious answer as the existing anti-discrimination laws have operated for the benefit of the whole society. *The Swag* writer recognised that any extension of freedom to one group, usually involves a reduction in freedom for others.

Pope Francis has supported civil marriage for same-sex couples and has referred to them as 'children of God'.

If homosexuality is the result of genetic, hormonal and environmental influences, as many scientists believe, and is not a matter of choice, discrimination against homosexuality is just as logical as discrimination against people with blue eyes. The biblical condemnations of homosexuality were written by people who had never heard of genetics.

The Catholic, Anglican and Greek Orthodox archbishops of Sydney wrote a joint letter to the Prime Minister saying that the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine was 'morally tainted' because it made use of tissue from an aborted foetus.

The Swag article in the Summer 2020 issue presented the issues involved and quoted Archbishop Fisher's advice that he would not call on Catholics to boycott the vaccine if it became available.

If the vaccine was not developed by the deliberate abortion of a foetus for that purpose, the situation seems to me to be similar to organ or tissue donation, which is approved by both Church and State.

Vaccination is an important public health issue for society and is designed to protect human life. Christians need to avoid giving the impression that they are more concerned with tradition or philosophical issues than they are about the problems people face in their daily living.

I wish *The Swag* every success in its efforts, and trust it will long continue to provide a reasoned and inclusive commentary on the issues affecting our society.

James Moore, Kogarah NSW

May I congratulate you on your leadership in producing *The Swag*. It is a timely magazine for church life and Plenary Council at this time. The mix of articles, book reviews and general comments are so open, prophetic and a vital resource for our faith communities.

It is very encouraging to see an increasing number of the whole People of God contributing.

I have been involved in ministry for over sixty years all around Australia and a number of countries. As one who participates in church renewal I have constantly looked

out for highly relevant resources for adult life and faith development.

The Swag certainly fulfills this aspiration and hopefully will be increasingly read and discussed in all parishes and seminaries.

I highly recommend *The Swag* to my circle of contacts.

Thank you for producing such a vital resource for church renewal.

Kevin Treston, Wilston QLD

I have a dream

I have a dream. Thus spoke Martin Luther King Jr in 1963. He ended up assassinated.

I, too, have had a dream. I could well be assassinated for it, well, not necessarily physically. When I woke from the dream, I definitely did not have a fever. Bear with me as I tell it.

I was entering St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney to attend Mass. As I entered, I could not see the altar as there seemed to be construction works going on everywhere. I skirted around this construction and that. There were workers all over the place.

I ended up outside and there were further construction sites. At one stage I came to a tiny chapel where there was a number of foreign bishops robed and ready for Mass. One of them seemed to be on his deathbed. The principal celebrant of this Mass was called Bishop Toxic. I moved on.

Back inside the cathedral, I came across a kindly old bishop whom I had met before.

He was not wearing a mitre. And he was waiting for his medley of altar servers to catch up to him so he could continue into the sanctuary. We chatted for a while. I moved on.

I never did get to find Mass among all the changes that were going on.

What was this dream saying about our Church? Christ gathered together a small group of followers, the early Church. Down through the ages so many changes have been made.

So many toxic elements have been introduced. So many sad consequences of human willfulness.

Today's Church, I am sure, is not what was envisioned by Christ. The desire for power has led to a hierarchy of prestige that has fostered child sexual abuse and financial wrongs, highlighted by George Pell's incarceration. Many cardinals and Bishops have seen their positions as careers rather than as positions of service to God's People. Power corrupts.

Will the Church see its way clear to remedy this situation? Will we ever return to a humble Church, poor and serving the poor. We have many good priests who do work well with and for the lowly and oppressed. But too many, like the cardinals and bishops, are careerists.

Clericalism is rife, especially among many of our young priests. Christ set us the standard, Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart (Matt 11: 29).

We seem to have lost that humility of which Jesus gave such an example. Can we change? Or am I merely a dreamer?

Laurie Bent, Canberra ACT

Does *The Swag* need a new name to attract more readers?

A concern that I think all of the active members of the NCP share, is the lack of young blood in our body. Active NCP members are very largely elderly, European-background men, who are no longer the face of the Australian Church. Efforts to attract priests from other ethnic backgrounds have not been successful, as obviously few of our younger clergy see the NCP as being relevant to them.

The NCP's public face is found in our excellent publication, *The Swag*. I wonder, though, if in some way the name of this magazine is contributing to a perceived irrelevance of our organisation. On the NCP website, there's a feature, 'Why is it called *The Swag*?' which describes the beautiful symbolism of the name.

But if a symbol needs to be explained, doesn't this mean that it lacks something? How many priests would know what a swag is? I venture that none of our overseas-born brothers would. I am in my 70s, and while I do know what a swag is, I cannot ever remember actually seeing one being carried by one of those legendary 'swagmen'.

Instead of looking to the past, possibly our magazine could have a name-change that reflects our desire to serve the Church that is moving forward. In 1969, the NCP's publication was *The Priest Forum*. Then in 1973 it became *The NCP Newsletter*, before evolving into *The Swag* in 1973. Could a new name for the magazine be just one step towards making an NCP that is more relevant?

Bill Burt SVD, Box Hill VIC

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What constitutes a sacred marriage relationship?

I would appreciate an opinion from our sacramental theologians – women and men who concern themselves with realities rather than rules and regulations.

Anyone who has worked in a marriage tribunal will tell you that many couples who have had a catholic wedding are not, and in fact never were, married.

Most Catholics would also be aware that in a sacramental union the couple administer the sacrament to each other, and the priest is only an official witness.

Now here is the case I need help with.

Alice and Sam are in their eighties now. They have been together over fifty years but for reasons of their own they have never had a Catholic wedding.

Sam and Alice met and fell in love at university in their twenties. They were both teaching there. Each owned their own home and both knew exactly what they were letting themselves in for.

They both sold their homes, bought a bigger one in both their names and moved in together. So as far as they were concerned, they were in this partnership for life. Until they came together neither of them had ever been sexually active with anyone else.

In their fifty years together, they have remained faithful and intend to continue being faithful until death them do part.

Alice and Sam didn't have children of their own but early in their partnership a great sadness befell them. Alice's sister, her only sibling, was a single mother with twin boys aged three and a newborn when she was tragically killed in a car accident.

Alice and Sam adjusted their academic careers and adopted the three children. All three became doctors married happily and are all grandparents themselves. Sam and Alice's home has been full of kids for fifty years and they still babysit the great grand kids.

Since childhood Sam and Alice have been committed and well-informed Catholics. When they came together, they made a conscious and informed decision to continue practising their faith. Except for illness in their fifty plus years together they have never missed Sunday mass at the Cathedral.

In short, the situation is this; when Alice and Sam decided to commit to each other in an exclusive, enduring relationship, they were of age, had due discretion and were obviously open to children but have never had a Catholic wedding.

My question to our sacramental theologians is this. Is the relationship of Alice and Samantha a sacramental union?

Harry Moore, Kyogle NSW

A welcoming parish

As a regular visitor to the U.S., San Francisco, CA was occasionally a stopover city. So Mass at Old Saint Mary's Cathedral was always inspiring and engaging, combined with great singing and hospitality.

Whilst Parish Mission Statements can be construed somewhat as work in progress, I was impressed with what I found in their bulletin. It reads:

WE WELCOME People of All Faiths & All Races; Divorced or Separated Persons; Gays and Lesbians; Homeless Persons; Families with Children; Loving Relationships; Single Persons; Married Couples; those in recovery; Travelers far and near; Widows & Widowers; Visitors.

WE CELEBRATE Diversity; A Spirit of Hospitality; The Unity that God Wills; Enlightening Those who Seek God; Forming Small Faith Communities; Reaching Out to Alienated Catholics; Reverencing the Dignity of Each Person; Caring for the Needs of the Less Fortunate; Empowering Christians to Realize their Call; Providing an Oasis in the Financial District; Honouring Understanding among all Faiths; Nurturing the Arts through Concerts; Pursuing New Ways to Serve; Being a Good Neighbor.

In a changing world with all the current issues, this is still meaningful and relevant. I just wonder how many parishes/churches in Australia reflect the same compassion, courage and vision.

Drew Porter, Wagga Wagga NSW. ☺☺

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

Knowing self: joy and also surprise and challenge

John Swann looks at a new book by Hugh Mackay, *The Inner Self— The joy of discovering who we really are*. Pan Macmillan, Australia, 2020. John suggests this book might assist in the exploration of our inner selves which for priests might help us understand how clericalism diminishes and subverts ministry.

Hugh Mackay has written 20 odd books, but this one is quite different. As he says in the Preface this book 'represents a significant departure from my work in social research'. This is a book that really makes the reader ask him/her self: Who am I really?

The first part of the book is an analysis of the human person, the soul as he calls it, with many references to Carl Rogers, a well-known name in counselling techniques. Then he goes into a whole number of reasons why we hide from who we are – and we all do it from time to time, some of course more than others.

I think any reader will become emotionally involved looking at oneself. There is a whole list of reasons why we hide ourselves, and as we look at those reasons we will

identify with them, if not personally then certainly in others we know.

Among the ways we 'hide' you will find discussion of addiction, ambition, arrogance, busyness, perfectionism, guilt and shame, and many others. It is likely this book will rub some people up the wrong way, and they'll want to put it aside, but that's probably because they are in denial!

Throughout the book Mackay rather cleverly uses many personal stories to demonstrate examples. Many of these you will identify with, either within oneself or in people we know.

I think every priest would do well to read this book. In these days when there is so much debate about clericalism this book will help us discover the 'masks' we often



wear to conform to an image. There is a whole section on masks and labels!

I encourage you to read this book with an open mind, enter into the spirit of the book and you are sure to discover more about your inner self. ☺



Tony Flannery after CDF ban

From The Outside, Rethinking Church Doctrine, Tony Flannery, Red Stripe Press, 2020. Reviewed by Peter Maher.

In 2012, Tony Flannery, Irish Redemptorist priest, was banned from ministry by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). While this was very disturbing for Flannery, in his new book, *From The Outside*, he begins to explore how it has been a gift, all be it a painful one. He remains a priest and a Redemptorist.

He opens the book's Introduction which chronicles his life's pathway since the banning from ministry by the CDF, with a quote from Teilhard de Chardin: *It has sometimes seemed to me that there are three weak stones settled dangerously in the foundations of the modern church: first, a government that excludes democracy; second, a priesthood that minimises women; third, a revelation that excludes future prophecy.* (p.x)

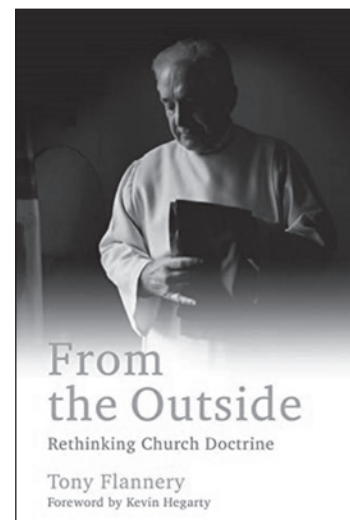
Flannery comments that these issues identified by Teilhard de Chardin over 90 years ago as critical to church development are broadly the issues he seeks to explore in the book. If you are interested in the story of his removal from ministry read his 2013 book, *A Question of Conscience*. This book is the fruit of the freedom to think, read and reflect over the years since the ban

– what he calls the gift of the ban.

At the end of the Introduction he sums up his approach: *I no longer believe that there is one set of doctrines that encompass the truth and that all other belief systems are false. Life is Mystery, and none of us can encompass the vastness of it; there is space and an open door for all, for those who are searching, for those whose faith does not pose any problems.... The best any of us can do is get some glimpse of the mystery, and open ourselves to it in so far as we can recognise its working in our lives and in the world.* (p.xii). Flannery hopes this book will support people on that journey.

Flannery then goes on to address what he considers the key issues that need to be addressed in the church today. He analyses the effects of clericalism naming the failure of the hierarchy to see the damage being done by a priesthood that ruled the roost and abused power, not only by spiritual, sexual and emotional abuse but by the assuming the role of final decision maker in all things.

He follows with chapters on the mystery of God, Jesus, Son of God and the place



of Mary in the church. Then Flannery addresses the question of clergy sexual abuse. With interesting anecdotes from his own life and the work he has done with priests and religious, Flannery attempts to address a question that he finds missing in the approach and response of the bishops.

Apart from the theology of ontological change and clericalism, often explored as sites for power and sexual abuse, Flannery explores mandatory celibacy and seminary training hidden and divorced from the community. He finds both culprits, not in themselves, but in how they play out in the current social, sexual, political and ecclesial

Continued page 46

context. He sees the key to their success in messing with priests as the fact that these have become the bishops' blind spots. While bishops continue to ignore and deny these areas, the abuse of power and the failures of priestly abuse will continue in Flannery's opinion.


Another interesting idea he posits is part-time married priests that connects the priest with the world in two ways – marriage and the daily life of working people. This could operate with a full-time priestly ministry. Flannery also questions the idea that priesthood forever is a given. Why not be more in keeping with reality today where many people explore many

occupations over a lifetime? This could help demystify the priesthood and help bishops who increasingly find themselves with priests who either can't or won't undertake the priestly ministry with professional ethics or who are no longer suited to priestly ministry and merely need or wish to change their profession.

A priest who cannot or will not perform the tasks essential to that ministry are in positions of pastoral care in ways that are not only denying the people in their care competent pastoral care, but it is dangerous for the mental, emotional and spiritual health of the priest and risks leaving a priest in a position where stress and

depression can result in dangerous behaviour.

Flannery also looks at ordination of women and the difficulties caused by a sexual ethic that identifies all sexual thoughts and acts as 'mortal sin'. He also looks at the 'seal of confession'.

The other chapters cover liturgy, governance, eternal life, the church of the future and the Congregation of the Faith's list of statements they required Flannery to sign. An important book with some strong challenges to current doctrine and practice. 

The many faces of God

***Profiles of God*, Eugene Stockton, Blue Mountains Education and Research Trust, 2020. This book explores biblical images of God in exciting and modern ways. This review is the Afterward chapter of the book by Carol Teodori. Reprinted with permission. For copies contact Tel: (02) 4758 7049 or Email: secretary@bmert.org**

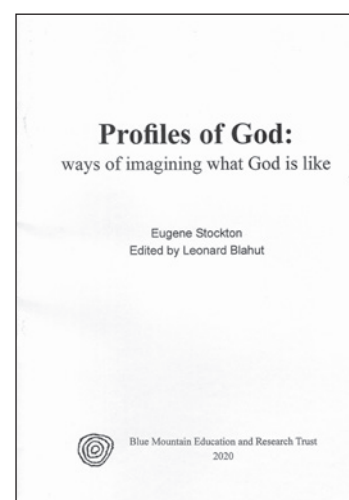
What a series of rich images of God Eugene Stockton has presented. As a woman, to think particularly of the Womb of God – God's way of bringing forth created life – is a compelling invitation. At one point, Eugene poses, *But how does it feel like to be a baby just before birth?*

Think about that. Each of us has had the experience of leaving the soft, safe place; being pushed into this tight passage, then being freed into the cold, noisy place; having to breathe on our own, even hearing our own voice, crying. I wonder if we each have a subconscious memory of this experience.


The next sentence has been with me since I first read it. *Life is a series of calls to come out into larger space, a continual tug into transcendence beyond the reality that we know.* Is that not so true? My life has been a constant 'call to come out into larger

space, a continual tug.' Each invitation requires courage to move beyond my comfort zone. My 'yes' has taken me to larger spaces of goodness, truth and beauty.

I recently heard a quote from Basil the Great (328-378 AD): *There are many more annunciations than there are incarnations.* Annunciations are the invitations to birthing something new. The incarnations are the actual birthing – saying 'yes' to new life whilst bearing down, panting, pushing and delivering. The joy of making the journey and the memory of that joy enables me to say 'yes' again to the 'continual tug into transcendence beyond the reality I know.' That birth canal is still a struggle and sometimes I groan and grumble at the length of the labour, but the joy of the goodness, truth and beauty that follows encourages me when the next annunciation comes. Is this God's way of 'pushing' us into greater life.



As I think of my images of God over the years, I realise how much they have changed as I have grown. As I reflect on the images of God that have been reflected upon herein, I am led to think of the Trinity in another way – God is Lover, Beloved and Love, and just recently, God is Goodness, Truth and Beauty.

Thank you, Eugene, for the encouragement to find new words for the living experience of the Spirit of God in our lives. 

Films and Aboriginal history

Peter Malone MSC looks at two new films that explore Aboriginal encounters in their historical context, *The Furnace* and *High Ground*.



The 2021 discussions about the date for Australia Day, the Uluru Statement of the Heart, discussions about the voice of indigenous people in Australia remind newcomers to the land (from 1788) that many do not know so much about aboriginal history.

This is a justice challenge that continues.

One of the ways of fostering awareness of history is through story. Recently, two films dramatized this little-known history for us: *The Furnace* and *High Ground*. They offer fine resources for discussion, in classrooms, parish groups.

The Furnace: The time is 1897. The place is Western Australia – and beyond

Kalgoorlie. There are gold mines, especially at Mount Magnet. There are avid miners. There is the local constabulary, ready on horseback, to maintain order and to right wrongs. Mines are robbed. Thieves travel across the desert to a remote homestead, home to Chinese who have a special furnace to melt the gold and reshape it without the Royal seal. There are wandering aborigines, stories told about massacres, about pursuits, about tribes to disappearing into the vast land.

But, it is also the world of the cameleers, men who have come from Afghanistan, India, Muslims, Sikhs, who transport the loads through the desert with that strangest of imports, the camel. In fact, the central character of this story is a young Afghan, Hanif (played by an Egyptian actor, Ahmad Malek), far away from home, conscious of his father's expectations of him, working with fellow cameleers, but in many ways, lonely, thinking about his returning home. He does have regular work. He does have a working companion. And he has good friend, Woorak (Baykali Ganambarr), a young aboriginal – who bonds with him even more strongly when they are confronted by two white men wanting water, who threaten them, fire, and the shooter is killed by a spear.

That is the setting. However, the main part

of the story is a journey, Hanif encountering a white man, Mal, who is part of the gang who have stolen gold from Mount Magnet. The action does not go as might have been expected, making demands on Mal, making demands on Hanif, who wonders where his future will lie, here in Australia, in the towns, with the other cameleers, or, perhaps, returning to Woorak and the aboriginal tribe.

High Ground: The first part of this film is set in 1919, the aftermath of World War I, where aboriginal soldiers served. The action, however, is in Arnhem Land, and the scenery of Arnhem Land is sweepingly beautiful, along with the flora and fauna, many birds, reminding audiences of the links between the aborigines and the land, the various totems.

We are introduced to a group of aboriginal people, rituals, paint and dancing, preparations and execution of the hunt. However, we are also introduced to white trackers who are pursuing the group. With the attack, a number of the pursuers are speared, many of the aborigines are shot – and a young boy, nephew of the leader, is cared for by the women and hidden under water with a reed for him to breathe. One of the pursuers is Travis, played by Simon Baker, a crack sniper from the war who has an overview of the attack but is not immediate party to the killings. In fact, he

rescues the boy from the water and takes him back to the local mission where he is cared for by the pastor and his sister (Ryan Corr and Karen Pistorius), the pastor invited to come with the attacking party and dismayed by the events. The massacre is covered up by the authorities.

The transition in the narrative moves to 1931. The mission continues. The young boy has grown up and is now called Tommy (Jacob Junior Nayinggui). It seems inevitable that he will be caught up in further tracking and police action.

The white group, presided over by the police chief, Moran, played by Jack Thompson, is led by a man, consumed with anger, some guilt, racist, who participated in the 1919 attack, Eddy (Callan Mulvey). Also present is Moran's brash and inexperienced nephew. News has come that there has been an attack by an aboriginal gang and a white woman has been killed. Travis is also present.

Once again, there is confrontation, spears and bullets, many deaths. The effect of this dramatising of the conflicts between white and black, the experiences of injustice, harshness of racism and vengeance, continue to be a challenge for a contemporary audience – and an invitation to honesty, retrospective acceptance of the facts of racism and violence. ☺



Fatima revisited

Fatima, film directed by Marco Pontecorvo, US/Portugal, 2020, 113 minutes.
Reviewed by Peter Malone MSC.

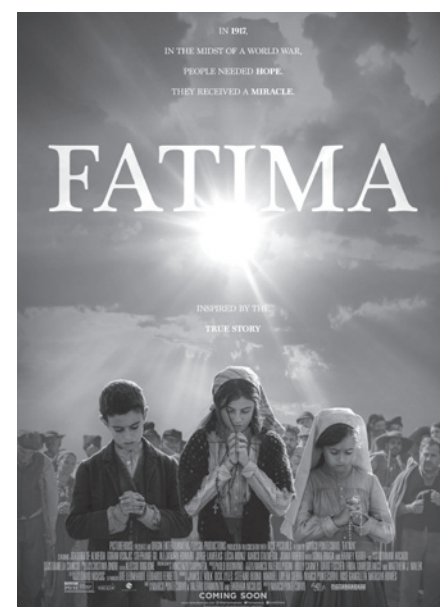
Who would have anticipated a version of the apparitions at Fatima, 1917, in 2020? There had been a Hollywood version in the early 1950s and the British *The 13th Day* in 2009. But, here is a well-mounted account, filmed in Portugal, an international cast, and a reverential portrayal of the three children, their experience of the apparition of Mary, opposition, devoted pilgrims, the miracle of the sun (including some photographs of the event in October, 1917, and the glimpse of someone filming the event).

Older Catholics were brought up in the period of the popularity of Our Lady of Fatima, especially in the 1940s and the early 1950s, with the touring statue, devotions and processions. By this time, Catholics took Our Lady of Lourdes and the apparitions to Bernadette for granted (and the popularity of the film, *The Song*

of Bernadette in 1943). But, Fatima was nearer to our own times, just before our own times, devotion for the post-World War II years. And, of course, Fatima has become one of the major shrines, Marian shrines, in the world.

Lourdes had its sceptics and critics. Fatima has had its sceptics and critics. While there has been a recent increase in popularity of faith-films, audiences who don't respond to faith-films will not be impressed by miracle stories like this.

Interestingly, while the Internet Movie Database has many responses, some of them ridiculing the story as superstitious, many of those responding are older Catholics who are complaining about quite a number of details, old favourites for them, the three secrets, the conversion of Russia, the consecration of the world to Mary... which have not been explicitly included.



The value of this version of Fatima, for Catholics of a later generation not so familiar with apparitions (except, perhaps, with Medjugorje), is that the story is well situated in the political climate of Portugal in 1917, Republic, secular-minded,

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REVIEWS

oppressive of religion and the Church. It is also well situated in the climate of World War I, the deaths of Portuguese soldiers and those missing in action (including Lucia's brother). Memory suggests that back in the 1940s and 1950s, we were not so conscious of these real/actual settings.

The other aspect, important for many contemporary audiences, for younger Catholics, are the questions about Mary appearing to 3 small children, in the context of devotions of the time, the responses of the time. The screenplay provides a 1989 framework, a professor (Harvey Keitel) visiting Sister Lucia at the Carmelite convent of Coimbra, Lucia in her 80s played by Sonia Braga. The Professor asks the expected questions which might be rising in the minds of questioning audiences: the reality of the apparitions in the language and iconography of the visionaries, of the period, the image of Mary and statuary, the language of rosary and prayer. There is also the issue of the penitential aspects of devotion at the time, self-inflicted penances in reparation for sinful offence or for emphasising prayers of petition. The professor also raises the issue of the effect of little children being the instrument of preaching peace and prayer rather than an adult appeal.

Stephanie Gil is very convincing as Lucia. And the two actors for the smaller children are also very effective, Jacinta and her spontaneous talk, Francesco and his not hearing the words of Mary. This is shown in the context of their village, poor and

hard-working, and of the deaths and injuries during the war, the family support, Lucia's mother harsh, her farmer father supportive. The local priest does the expected questioning, fearing that they are making everything up, but eventually believing them. It is much harder for the Mayor, with orders from Lisbon, with his anti-religious and anti-clerical stances (despite the challenges from his wife), trying to suppress the pilgrimage mentality. People from the village are at times sceptical, hostile, believers. They are desperate for miracles. And, even then, there was commercialism, children with their trays of rosary beads for sale to the pilgrims!

There is an odd evocative, nightmare sequence where Lucia dreams of a Pope and bishops walking through the devastation of the battlefield with guns firing at the Pope.

The 21st-century seems to be an age more sceptical about this kind of religious experience, so hallowed in the past. Here is an opportunity to give some consideration to the credibility, the question that there are more events and experiences than matter-of-fact realism believes in.

A number of photos appear during the final credits, a reminder that Jacinta and Francesco died during the Spanish flu epidemic, that Lucia spent many decades as a Carmelite nun, that the Popes have been enthusiasts of Fatima with their visits, that Pope Francis canonised Jacinta and Francesco and that Lucia's cause is under consideration. ☺



Fr Kerry Costigan has published a book of jokes and stories he has used over 56 years as a priest.

Proceeds from the sale of his book will be used to assist sick and elderly priests.

Cost: \$20.00 which includes postage in Australia.

To order contact:

Fr Kerry Costigan
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P: (07) 4634 1102

The Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia

Sally and Chris are currently working on the 2021-2022 edition of *The Official Directory* – the official and historical record of the Catholic Church in Australia which NCP publishes on behalf of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference as a service to the Church.

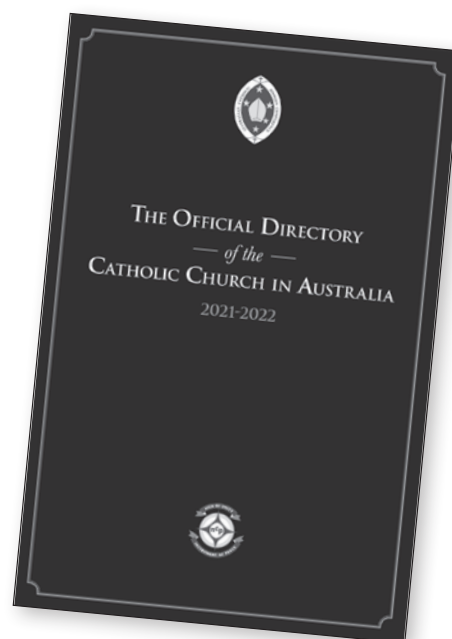
The Directory, a 1 July publication, gives the rich picture of the Australian Church, listing all ACBC Committees and Secretariats; Diocesan information – parishes, schools and organisations, as well as Religious Orders and Catholic Organisations.

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Returned to God

LIAM FLOYD

29/7/1928 – 14/10/2020

✠ William 'Liam' Francis Floyd, the last Irish-born priest remaining in Tasmania, passed away at the age of 92 and his death marks the end of 199 years of the continuous presence of Irish-born priests in Tasmania.

Liam was born in Drogheda, Ireland, one of three sons to James and Catherine Floyd. One of his brothers, Patrick, also became a priest and served in the United States. His other brother, James, married and had four children and is survived by his wife Margaret, who lives in Dublin.

Liam studied for the priesthood at All Hallows College in Dublin, a seminary founded to form priests for overseas ministry. The year he was ordained – 1953 – saw priests ordained to serve in places such as Oklahoma, Seattle, and Dallas in the United States; Auckland in New Zealand; Cape Town in South Africa and the Australian dioceses of Sale and Bathurst.

He was ordained on 21 June 1953 and arrived in Tasmania on 7 December that same year. Liam served as assistant priest in New Town, Ulverstone, Devonport, at St Mary's Cathedral, and in Lower Sandy Bay and Taroona.

As a parish priest he served in Oatlands, Richmond, Franklin, and Westbury. By the time he retired in February 2000, he had served for 47 years in the Archdiocese of Hobart.

During his 20 years of retirement, Liam continued to celebrate Mass from Monday to Saturday at St Canice Church, Sandy Bay at 8am each morning.

He had a great devotion to Our Lady and was known to pray fifteen decades of the rosary each day. From Ireland he brought a love of Irish poetry, and he also had a great knowledge and love of classical music – an interest he enjoyed sharing with others.

His final days were spent at Mary's Grange aged care facility in Taroona.

Rest now in peace, Liam.

FRANK GIBSON

09/04/1941 – 04/10/2020

✠ Born in Launceston, Francis 'Frank' Gibson was the eldest of seven children born to Archie and Iris Gibson. As a boy he was an altar server and attended St Mary's School and St Patrick's College in Launceston.

By the time he was a teenager he was focused on a vocation in the priesthood, but he needed to improve his Latin to meet seminary entry requirements.

After leaving school he had various jobs in the Launceston area. He worked as a telegram boy; at the Patons and Baldwins woollen mill; and as a railwayman. Meanwhile, he had Latin lessons with a former Mayor of Launceston, Dorothy Edwards, for two years.

He never did pass Latin, but he was accepted into the seminary at Corpus Christi College in Victoria.

He was ordained at Church of the Apostles in Launceston on 20 October 1969 by Archbishop Guilford Young. The following day he celebrated his Thanksgiving Mass at St Peter's Church, Kings Meadows.

After his ordination, he served in parishes in the Hobart area for four years; followed by stints in Devonport, Queenstown and Smithton; and then five years in George Town. He retired in 2003.

During his 16 years in the Circular Head parish, Frank oversaw the building of a new Catholic school, church and convent at Smithton.

Frank lived in retirement at Glenara Lakes Aged Care Facility in Launceston's southern suburbs where he celebrated Mass twice a week at the adjacent nursing home chapel. He suffered significant health issues for a number of years and passed away on 4 October 2020 in Launceston, Tasmania.

May he rest in peace.

FRANCIS (FRANK) JOHN O'DEA SSS

19/01/1928 – 09/01/2021



Frank entered the Congregation back in 1953 and was professed on 5 February 1956 as a Religious Brother – Br Baylon.

Frank was in the Novitiate with Kevin Gallagher SSS and after Profession, Kevin became the chief cook at Bowral. When the Haymarket was preparing to open, Kevin was transferred to Sydney and Frank, still a Novice, took Kevin's place as chief cook at Bowral; with Joe Fernando SSS in the Juniorate, Fr James (Jim) Tough SSS as the Director. As Bowral had an over-supply of eggs, Frank was instructed by Jim Tough to cook eggs for the 3 meals a day. While the Community had to endure eggs 3 times a day, Jim would go to his mother's place for dinner at Mount Eymard!

Eventually Frank was accepted to study for the priesthood and studied with Graeme Duro SSS, Mark Rigney SSS, and Don Mulholland. Following his ordination on 2 December 1978, Frank went to America for a three-month Sabbatical and part of that time was spent studying Dream Analysis. Returning to Perth he asked the then Community to see a Dream Analysts. On one occasion whilst been driven into Allendale Square for ministry along with Jack Frawley SSS [driving] and Joe Fernando SSS [a passenger] Frank wanted to

Continued page 50

RETURNED TO GOD

share one of his dreams, to which Jack abruptly retorted “who wants to listen to one of your @#*@ dreams Frank!” The rest of the trip to Allendale Square where we had a Chapel, was in utter silence.

As Parish Priest of Como and Kensington, WA, Frank was a much-loved pastor. He reached out to many in the parish and beyond who needed help both financial and spiritual support. His ‘charismatic’ side was a great source of relational development in his own spiritual journey.

Frank lived in Box Hill, VIC from the late 90s up until January 2020, where he spent a short time living in Community at St Francis’. Frank eventually went into permanent care at Mercy Place in Parkville, VIC, where he was eventually received into the loving embrace of God and Blessed Sacrament Founder, Fr Eymard on 9 January 2021.

He was an incredible boss, so extremely supportive and encouraging to delve into new aspects of ministry. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by all, especially his two surviving sisters, Geraldine and Josephine.

May he rest in peace.

FRANK YOUNG

30/04/1944 – 07/12/2020



People could say of Frank Young that he was a mixture of ocker larrikin, serious thinker and warm-hearted friend. He loved to portray a somewhat larger than life persona. The motor bike and leathers, including his “chaplaincy” to the grand prix circuit at Phillip Island, the hard driving, the outdoor work and the gathering with cattlemen all created an impression.

This was topped up with a deep throated laugh that went on and on, a rumble from deep within. He always had some story of his exploits to share and he would laugh in the retelling. At the same time, he continued to think about questions of theology and religious practice. He would compare Catholic Christian faith with various Protestant positions seeking to understand these and uphold his own conviction.

He had a strong faith and trust in Christ. Frank attended the Cloverlea State School and later boarded at St Patrick’s College in Sale where he learnt the rule of the refectory that leftovers after the first doling out of meals went to the other end of the table.

When Frank practised this rule of survival at the seminary and took his place regularly at the end of the table he became “Ender”; a nickname that stuck among his seminary confreres.

He was ordained in St John’s Trafalgar, on 23 May 1970. He served as assistant priest in Sale, Maffra and Leongatha. He was parish priest in Omeo, Foster, Iona and Maryknoll and Maffra. The Eucharist meant a lot to Frank, as did the pastoral ministry of priesthood.

He loved to draw people in to the mystery celebrated and offered in the Mass. After 11 years in Maffra, and with his health causing increasing problems, he accepted the offer of retirement, choosing to continue to live in Maffra and celebrate or concelebrate Mass when he could. His courage and good humour were evident through these later trials and continued to refine his faith in the Lord.

May he rest in peace.

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

† Isidore Anantharaj (Archdiocese of Sydney)	20/01/2021
† Timothy Cahill (Diocese of Bathurst)	08/01/2021
† Joseph Dooley (Diocese of Bathurst)	25/12/2020
† Patrick Dowd (Archdiocese of Brisbane)	10/02/2021
† Jim Doyle (Diocese of Bunbury)	01/12/2020
† Luc Matthys (Diocese of Armidale)	26/01/2021
† Patrick McKenna (Diocese of Bathurst)	02/12/2020
† Bernard O’Brien OMI (Oblate Fathers)	16/01/2021
† Reginald Smith (Archdiocese of Perth)	23/11/2020
† Maurice Sullivan CM (Vincentian Fathers)	09/12/2020
† Barry Swift (Archdiocese of Sydney)	22/01/2021
† Philip Wilson (Archdiocese of Adelaide)	17/01/2021

Please email obits to Sally at: national.office@ncp.catholic.org.au

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The National Council of Priests of Australia (NCP)

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

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

The Objects and Purposes of the Council

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

Prayer to St Joseph

Lord God, Sprit of Creation,
You have formed and fashioned our earth, our being and our living.
At the dawn of Creation you breathed in us the spirit of justice.
You are our dreamtime,
You are our hope,
You are our strength.
Bless us, and bless those who share the riches of this earth.
From the seed to the sapling, to the great forests of the world.
The timbers give us shelter, the timbers give us warmth.
We call upon St Joseph, the carpenter, craftsman of the timber.
We dedicate ourselves to serve others as he did.
A common Jewish tekton – carpenter – man of wood.
St Joseph be our guiding hand, our model of compassion.
A man of dreams,
A man of hope.
A man of strength.
As hammer against nail, inspire us to be strong.
As timber against timber inspire us to be tall and proud.
As craftsman among humanity, inspire us to dream.
Let us welcome the cross of timber,
the sign of our faith in Jesus, earthly son of St Joseph.

Michael Carmody (10/08/1983 – 22/12/2007)

*Written by Michael when he was a student at St Joseph's College, Geelong
and reprinted with the permission of Michael's family.*