



Quarterly magazine of the National Council of Priests of Australia

The Swag

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

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ABOUT THE NCP

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

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Paddy Sykes



Greetings from southern NSW to the Membership of the NCP and all readers of our great NCP publication *The Swag*. The devastating effects of the prolonged dry period are spreading their tentacles into more and more of regional Australia. The dust storms we have already experienced this year are an omen of what is ahead. Water and fodder shortages are now a common occurrence. The Australian Catholic Bishops have asked us to pray for those affected by the drought especially during the month of November. I commend that initiative to all of you as we face this challenging time together. In the light of climate change, Australia may have to re-evaluate some of its traditional water and farming practices to adjust to the change in our national climate patterns.

As I write this, the three-week Synod of the Amazon is coming to a close in the Vatican. Pope Francis called this Synod to deal with the many complex issues of that huge part of the world: the degradation of the forests, the impact on the rivers and

water quality, forced relocation of Indigenous peoples, pastoral care of remote communities, unscrupulous exploitation of natural resources and shortage of ordained priests were just some of the topics that the bishops from this region and the other Synod delegates would be discussing. The footprint of the Amazon covers many countries and many cultures and so is a microcosm of the planet as we seek to find a way to live in a more sustainable manner.

Pope Francis has received criticism from some quarters of our church in relation to the Synod. The exploration of ordaining married men as priests, finding new roles for women in the life of the church and concern about syncretism (respect for local Amazonian spiritual traditions) have made some in our church anxious about the direction our church is heading. The final Synod recommendations to Pope Francis from the voting bishops of the Amazon is to look at ordaining married men to the priesthood in certain situations. The Synod of the Amazon is a very good example of what Pope Francis is trying to encourage in our church. He wants a Synodal church where the particular churches engage with their own issues and determine a way forward. What the Amazon needs may not be what is needed in Australia and visa versa. The universal Catholic church is not to be characterised by uniformity but a responsiveness to the issues of the various local churches.

The Plenary Council 2020 is the Australian Catholic Church's opportunity to respond to the issues of our particular church. We will find resonance with some of the issues of the Synod of the Amazon (married clergy, the role of women etc) while having our own particular issues (divisions in the church, falling church

attendance, incorporating overseas born clergy into our church etc). Archbishop Coleridge recently identified on a Compass program that in the Australian church we have people very willing to embrace change on one end of the spectrum and people who are fearful of change (and don't want it) on the other and people at every gradation in between. As the Plenary Council 2020 moves forward, I encourage all of you as individuals and parish communities to enter into this important process for the Church in Australia.

Welcome and Thankyou

On 31st December 2019 the six-year term of two of our NCP Committee members will finish. Rev Mark Freeman from the Archdiocese of Hobart and Rev Boni Buahendri SVD who has recently left Victoria to work in a parish in Queensland have made a significant contribution to the NCP. On your behalf, I thank Mark and Boni for their commitment and their expertise which they have given so freely to the NCP. Rev Lenin Thenamirtham from the Archdiocese of Melbourne and Rev Jamie Collins from the Diocese of Toowoomba join the NCP Committee on 1 January 2020. We welcome Jamie and Lenin and look forward to their contribution to the NCP over the next three years. I also want to acknowledge and thank Ms Sally Heath and Mrs Christine Moore for their contribution to the work of the NCP. Our Belmont office is a most important nerve centre and support to our many members.

Finally, I want to wish all our members, their families, communities and parishes a Happy and Holy Christmas.

Shalom,
Paddy. ☺



An annual subscription to *The Swag* would be a great Christmas gift.

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Learning from the Pan-Amazon Synod



Recently I attended the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Alumni Awards ceremony which is held each year to recognise the remarkable

achievements of past students and their contribution to the social, academic, health and business worlds. Pandora Shelley, who at 28 years of age was CEO of Fishburners, a not-for-profit online start-up space for entrepreneurs, commented in her acceptance speech that what we can do to create a safer more productive world is to 'challenge assumptions and question the status quo'. Annabelle Sheehan, CEO at New Zealand Film Commission, another recipient, said she learnt that the way to grow in her field of film production that brings hope to the world and makes her work satisfying is something she learnt to do at UTS. It is about 'drilling down, mapping out, using structural analysis and question privilege'.

Neither of these comments would surprise a student of Jesus, Joseph Cardijn, Paulo Freire or Pope Francis. Jesus learned inclusive method from the Syrophoenician woman. Cardijn believed that beginning with the experience of work, a worker could challenge the status quo and create a more just workplace. Freire's insight that to facilitate the oppressed to articulate the problem clearly is the way to empower them to take action in their own interests and the emancipatory interests of the world. Pope Francis starts with the existential experience and asks questions about what is happening and how we might address the realities of the lives that are swallowed up by ideology, materialism, capitalism, greed and selfishness. Each is in the tradition of examining the human reality first and then unmasking the assumptions and vested interests that deny dignity and justice to the poor, women, children, refugees, people with a disability, the suffering, LGBTI people, those denied the sacraments and the elderly.

The Synod of Bishops' special assembly on the Pan-Amazonian region has attempted to use this kind of thinking according to Dr John O'Loughlin Kennedy. He is a retired economist who founded the international relief and development organization, Concern Worldwide, which

now employs about 3,800 indigenous people on development work in 28 of the world's poorest countries. He wrote in *La Croix International* (Sept. 19) that the Synod has the potential to influence the future life of the Church.

He claims the *Instrumentum Laboris* reopens questions such as 'the exclusive pairing of ordination with celibacy, administration, seminary training, life commitment and sacramental ministry that has constrained missionary activity in a diverse world'

Kennedy notes: *Generations of Roman Catholics have been schooled in the idea that current teaching, structures and discipline are an exact implementation of God's unchanging plan. They were taught that everything in the catechism was certain. If you questioned one item, you were a heretic, destined for hell. Despite the fact that at least 50 doctrines have changed over time, one still hears the anxious cry of 'doctrine cannot change.'*

Kennedy suggests the synod offers an opportunity to organise the available talent flexibly in response to the situation, with the primary objective of serving the people and ensuring the availability of the sacraments. He notes that the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the early church long before bishops or priests appeared (Titus 1:5, Acts 14:22,23). Only with the introduction of ordained ministers were the laity excluded from celebrating.

The fact that Rome could easily accommodate married Anglican priests becoming Roman Catholic priests, but still cannot even discuss the possibility of married Catholic men becoming priests, let alone women, is a denial of reality by the Curia that the Amazon Synod might address. That the many catechists in the Amazon could immediately supply the Eucharist is undeniable and if contextualised by drilling deep, questioning the status quo and unmasking privilege, as the UTS alumni recommend, there is no end to the way the Amazonian Catholics could participate in what is essentially Catholic, the sacraments.

The Synod concluded with the voting members ratifying many proposals, the most important of which include the valuing of diversity in the church but especially ecological diversity in the Amazon, called the 'biological heart' in the final document. This diversity and embracing the signs of the times includes ordaining married men and exploring the possibility of women permanent deacons.

The potential for this to be ground-breaking for renewal and change in practice well beyond the Amazon is yet to be seen and worked through.

It offers an opportunity to have unity in diversity, a fine ideal of Vatican II, but yet to be tried, as a real way ahead in our multicultural, multivalent and non-binary world where the church is now entrusted to embody the values of the gospel. To the extent the Catholic church can do this, it will remain relevant; to the extent it resists this challenge or opposes it, peril awaits. Pope Francis understands this. He has lived in and reflected upon this world and is open to its lessons. But the essential point is not so much the nature of these proposals as the climate of the three weeks of the Synod assembly, which allowed the bishops gathered in Rome to express themselves on subjects that had been banned for too long. Pope Francis summed up this attitude at the end of the last General Assembly of the Synod saying: *Tradition is the safeguarding of the future and not the conservation of ashes.*

☪

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

Our two new committee members (01/01/2020 – 31/12/2021)

Jamie Collins

I was born in Warwick, Queensland in 1968, the eldest of three children and educated by the Christian Brothers and Sisters of Mercy at their schools in Warwick.

At that time Catholic education in Warwick ended in Year Ten and so I completed senior studies at the Warwick State High School. I worked for six years for Australia Post in Roma, Gold Coast and Stanthorpe before commencing studies at Pius XII Seminary at Banyo in Brisbane in 1992. I was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Toowoomba by Bishop Bill Morris at St Mary's Church in Warwick on January 15, 1999.

Most of my priestly ministry has been spent in the rural parts of our Diocese, although I did spend three years at St Patrick's Cathedral in Toowoomba. I was Parish Priest of St George for six years and have been Parish Priest of Roma for the past eight years. I have also had pastoral oversight for the neighbouring parishes in each of these communities during this period.

I have been Dean of the Mid West Deanery which takes in communities from Dirranbandi and Hebel in the south to Injune in the north and Mitchell and Mungallala in the west.

I have spent around sixteen years in the Vocations Ministry as Vocations Director and I have been a member of the Diocesan Council of Priests all the years I have been ordained. The NCP has had a rich and colourful history and I have always experienced great friendship and moral support from fellow priests at the Conventions I have been able to attend. I believe the NCP has an exciting future and by accepting an appointment to the executive I am enthusiastic about the possibility of being a part of that future.



Lenin Thenamirtham

I am 34 years old and I come from the Southern part of India called Tamil Nadu. I have an older brother and an older sister.

I have been a priest for four years and I was ordained in Melbourne for the Missionaries of God's Love. Now I am working in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Currently I am an assistant priest at the partnered parishes of St Mary's Greensborough, St Thomas North Greensborough and Sacred Heart Diamond Creek with Fr Steven Rigo. Before I was appointed to Greensborough I was in Parkes (country NSW) as an assistant priest.

I also was a chaplain in Red Bend Catholic College for a year which was truly a life-giving ministry. Prior to that I was in Darwin as an assistant priest for a year and half. I came to Australia in 2008 to join the Missionaries of God's Love seminary in Canberra. In 2010, I came down to Melbourne for my major seminary studies. I love Melbourne and the 'Mighty Geelong' is my footy team.

My Hopes and Dreams

I was approached by Fr Arnold Heredia who encouraged me to join the team of NCP and nominated me. I am pleased that my nomination was successful. I believe this opportunity will help me to learn about NCP and its ministry. I am simply happy to be involved in a ministry where priests form a body at a national level as brothers.

I am passionate about my faith and ministry. I would like to share that with others. I hope I can be a service to this team to celebrate our fraternity and grow closer to Jesus and one another.



The Swag Autumn Edition

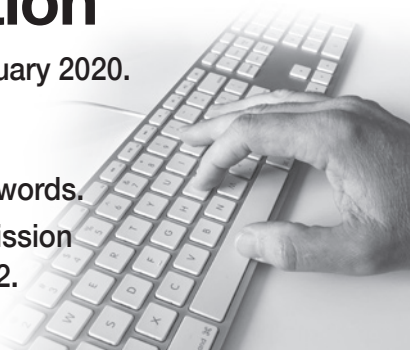
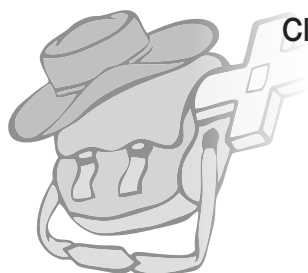
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The emergence of synodality and the inadequacy of Canon Law

MASSIMO FAGGIOLI

“Historically the Church has never been regulated exclusively by legal codes,” says Massimo Faggioli in *La Croix International* October 2, 2019. Reprinted with permission. Faggioli is an historian and theologian at Villanova University.



Catholic bishops around the world are responding in various ways to the crisis the Church is currently facing. Some have tried to show that the bishops in the United States and Germany are doing so in a similar fashion.

But this is a false equivalence. On one side of the Atlantic, the US bishops, whose predecessors eagerly embraced the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), have refused to even imagine how synodality can be implemented today at the local and national levels. Internal divisions have effectively paralyzed the national episcopal conference.

On the other side of the pond, the German bishops are doing just the opposite. They are charging ahead, as they did with their national synod of 1971-75, to make sure collegiality and synodality are not just empty slogans.

The tendentious effort to equate two very different ways that two churches are trying to deal with the present ecclesial crisis reveals a bigger issue. It is the fundamental misunderstanding, pushed especially by legal-minded and self-described “orthodox Catholics”, about the governance system of the Church and the limits of what can and cannot change.

These same Catholics continue to interpret Pope Francis’ efforts to usher in a synodal model for their Church within the strict boundaries of existing Canon Law.

For sure, the ecclesiastical law is one of the reference points for understanding how to

implement synodality. But it is not the only one. And it is certainly not the most important.

Two examples from history highlight how non-monarchical elements have become part of the life of the Church with the approval of the institution and of the papacy.

The development of the College of Cardinals

The first example is the cardinalate. For centuries cardinals embodied the power of the aristocracy that surrounded and supported the primatial power of the pope. Most of them were Italians, usually appointed upon recommendation of emperors, kings, and national governments (cardinali della corona). Institutionally they were in that middle area between the Renaissance Roman court and the Roman Curia.

Slowly after the fall of the Papal States in 1870, and more quickly after the end of World War II, the cardinals began to embody a “cardinal collegiality” complementary to episcopal collegiality. This has accelerated under the current pope.

The internationalization of the College of Cardinals has brought a significant change to this exclusively man-made institution that is a singular feature of the Roman Church. Paul VI defined the cardinalate as “a synthesis of the urbs (the city of Rome) and the orbis (the globe)”.

The legal and institutional effects of this change (on the role of cardinals in the

global Church and the way they shape papal primacy with the election of the Bishop of Rome) have followed an evolution of the institution that was not preceded by a change in the law.

For example, the tendency to eliminate lay cardinals (that existed, albeit in small numbers, until the 19th century) had to do with the disappearance of the Papal States. The popes decreed laws that clericalized the cardinalate only later, in the 20th century. Canon law (especially the first Code of 1917) followed an institutional and ecclesiological evolution that emerged largely from external events, mainly the fall of the Papal States.

The emergence of national episcopal conferences

A second example of how non-monarchical elements have become part of the Church’s life and governance is the emergence of national bishops’ conferences. The first were organized in the 19th century.

By the early 20th century some of them had assumed an important role as the voice of the local episcopates vis-à-vis the national government. At times some of these also challenged the Vatican.

This did not go unnoticed in the Roman Curia. Between 1924-1926, the pre-cursor to the current Congregation for Bishops (the Sacred Consistorial Congregation) debated fiercely about the role of the bishops’ conferences.

Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, who was head of the congregation at the time, deemed them to be “utterly dangerous”. He accused them of parliamentarianism and of violating Canon Law, warning that such conferences usurped the role of plenary councils. Furthermore, De Lai said the conferences were too “political” and not respectful enough of the prerogatives of the Vatican. Faced with the pressure from the Consistorial Congregation, Pius XI (not exactly a liberal) moved to regulate the bishops’ conferences, but he refused to prohibit or suspend them.

His immediate successor, Pius XII, took a further step in 1955 by approving the newly devised council of the Latin American episcopate (known as CELAM). Then at Vatican II, as Church leaders debated extensively over episcopal collegiality, the decision was made to mandate the creation of national bishops’ conferences.

In the post-conciliar period they have become fundamental in the Catholic

Church. And Pope Francis (the only pope to have served as president of a national episcopal conference) is giving them even more prominence. (Just take a look at the footnotes in his encyclicals and exhortations). These two examples – the clericalization of the cardinalate and the emergence of episcopal conferences – tell a story about the ecclesiological and institutional evolution of the Church.

Between the 19th and the 20th century, the Roman Catholic Church has surrounded the monarchical papacy with new mechanisms of aristocratic power with the cardinalate and the episcopate – also known as collegiality.

From collegiality to synodality

The process continues to develop and today the Catholic Church is taking a further step towards synodality. As with collegiality before, there is no existing legal framework capacious enough to contain the push towards a synodal Church – a push that Pope Francis has approved and unequivocally endorsed, never more forcefully than in his October 2015 address to mark the 50th anniversary of the Synod of Bishops.

The law always consolidates a movement only decades or centuries later. In the case of synodality, the debate began in the 1990s. But Francis is the first pope to fully embrace and develop it. The 82-year-old pope's conception of ecclesial synodality no doubt has its limits and ambivalences. One of these is his intense focus on the Synod of Bishops, which technically is a tool of

papal primacy and only in a limited way of episcopal collegiality, much less of ecclesial synodality.

Some have suggested that Francis should better utilize the College of Cardinals and consult with it more often. But regardless, he is clearly giving the Catholic Church space and time to experiment and begin to live with synodality, just as Pius XI did concerning bishops' conferences and John XXIII did with episcopal collegiality.

Of course, the law plays a role in this process, but it is a limited one. Vatican II affirmed fundamental principles for the understanding of the Church, but it did not give the Church a formal juridical constitution. In the immediate post-conciliar period of the early 1970s, the project for a "constitutional law" (*Lex Ecclesiae Fundamentalis*) for the Catholic Church was abandoned.

Neither the Code of Canon Law (1983) nor the Catechism (1992), both post-Vatican II documents of the papal magisterium, is the constitution of the Catholic Church. Conservative Catholics, especially, need to understand that the codification of the Church's laws (in one book) and its catechetical teachings (in the form of a universal Catechism) are recent inventions in Church history.

If there is a constitution for the Church, it's the Gospel. And the Supreme Court is not the Roman Curia, but the Church's living tradition, which in the last two

centuries has provided us with interesting examples of how to change the systems of ecclesial governance.

The limits of Canon Law and a new paradigm shift

We often hear from conservative Catholics that "the Church is not a constitutional democracy". They emphasize the rejection of parliamentarianism and proceduralism, while tending to forget that members of the Church have rights and are not at the mercy of an absolute hierarchy.

In fact, it is democracy that corresponds better than any other system to what Vatican II calls the "inherent dignity of the human person". Those who reject any parallel between Church order and constitutional democracy usually focus almost exclusively on the concept of "democracy", while neglecting the "constitutional" element.

Indeed, the Catholic Church has no written constitution. Therefore, the axiom "the Church is not a constitutional democracy" cuts both ways. The life of the Church cannot and must not be regulated exclusively by Canon Law. Historically, it never has been. And it would be a concession to technocratic mentality to begin to do so now.

Synodality marks a paradigm shift. It requires finding ways to overcome the limits of a legal framework that is stuck in the old paradigm, all the while preserving the unity and catholicity of the Church. ↻



Plenary Council rocket science a matter of trust

ANDREW HAMILTON SJ

Andrew Hamilton SJ, consulting editor of *Eureka Street*, considers the hopes and possible dangers of the Plenary Council Process. Reprinted with permission from *Eureka Street* August 5, 2019.

Politicians vying for office and churches planning plenary councils sing from the same handbooks. As with rocket launches, where the early stage rockets fall away leaving the manned capsule to go into orbit, political parties put great time and energy into the preparation of policies, running focus groups, and attracting good candidates. When the election campaign begins they drop these activities. Candidates cross the nation offering goodies, shooting down rivals and trying to get the party across the line. The election won, the trimmed ship of state sails on unencumbered.

This is commonly true also of church synods and councils. In the case of the

2020 Catholic Plenary Council, a facilitation team was empowered to seek submissions, design processes of reflection, encourage individuals and congregations to take part, and analyse the results. At the next stage it has invited interested people to help prepare working papers on the key themes. These papers will inform the agenda of the council and its deliberations.

In both political and church processes, as with launching rockets, the focus of the process is placed on the final goal of winning power or making wise decisions. The preliminary processes are seen and evaluated through this lens. What is valuable at each stage is gathered into

the next and the initial processes are then dropped. From the point of view of the executive committees this tightness of focus is both logical and necessary.

From the perspective of rocket riders, lay Catholics or citizens, however, the effectiveness of the process depends on the trust in which government, bishops or management are held. In rocketry, if trust is lacking in the competence or understanding of people working at any level of the project, no one will sign off on or sit in the final stage rocket without revisiting the earlier stages. Similarly, if people do not trust the wisdom, honesty or courage of political leaders or bishops, they will not trust the processes or people managing them unless they are completely transparent.

In current Australian and Catholic public life at the moment that kind of trust

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appears to be lacking. Disengagement from politics and cynicism about politicians' honesty attend the political environment in many nations. In the Catholic Church, too, the crimes of sexual abuse and its cover up have weakened trust in the governance at a time when it faces challenges from diminished numbers, ageing and institutional arthritis.

In such situations any narrow focus on the final result of the process will dismay those attracted by the initial promises of consultation. The initial stages of consultation must be part of a wider commitment to consult those affected by the decisions finally made. In Australian federal politics few signs of this are evident. In response, state and local government and business groups have taken initiatives of their own to address aspects of climate change and Indigenous neglect.

In the Catholic Church the inclusive and consultative processes in the early stages of preparation for the Plenary Council are a vast improvement on previous practice.

They express the desire to involve Catholics in the council. If these processes are simply dropped on completion and not kept alive in the church, however, the trust they have engendered will be lost. Space must be made for groups of Catholics to meet at local levels to continue conversation about the issues raised in the submissions. This demands a commitment by the Catholic Church.

In the present climate transparency is also essential. At a minimum all the Catholics who were encouraged to take part in the process should be able to read the submissions and have available a broad analysis of the frequency with which particular recommendations are made, particularly those that raise controversial theological questions.

The bureaucratic temptation is always to minimise conflict by using generalised language. Support for the ordination of woman, for example, can be described as support for women to have a stronger place in the church. Such specific issues can then

be allowed to disappear in the working documents presented to the delegates to the council. Transparency demands that the working documents be open to comparison with the submissions.

Bishops, priests and church officials will form a large majority of delegates to the council. That is understandable, given the distinctive place of bishops in the Catholic Church, and the international as well as local significance of the council. But the imbalance between lay and clerical, between men and women, has also generated mistrust and disengagement by many Catholics. This makes it all the more important that the Council be seen clearly as a step in a continuing reform of the Catholic Church through encouraging the local initiatives that were part of its preparation.

In a world where trust has been lost, transparency and encouragement of free conversation are necessary for its recovery. That is true both of the federal government and of the Catholic Church. ☞



Third Australian Plenary Council 3-10 September 1905

PETER WILKINSON

This is Part 2 of the article by Peter Wilkinson examining the 1905 Third Australian Plenary Council. Part 1 appeared in the Spring 2019 edition. It is also the sixth in the series looking at the particular (provincial and plenary) councils of the Catholic Church held in Australia between 1844 and 1937.

Evangelizing Australia's Aboriginal peoples

An important item on the 1905 Plenary Council agenda was the evangelization of Australia's Aboriginal peoples. The 1844 1st Provincial Council made no mention of this ministry, but the 1869 2nd Provincial Council decreed that their 'conversion' be confided to some male religious congregation, denounced the injustices committed against them, and recommended a special vicariate apostolic for north Queensland. The 1885 1st Australasian Plenary produced 6 policy decrees (nn. 203-208) for 'propagating the faith among the aborigines' whom it considered 'capable of and willing to embrace Christianity', but the predominantly Irish bishops who had formulated the decrees generally ignored them. The 1895 2nd Australian Plenary Council merely endorsed the 1885 decrees.

In those dioceses and vicariates where missions had been established prior to 1905 to evangelize Australia's Aboriginal

peoples, almost all the hands-on work was done by priests and religious from Scotland, Spain, France, Italy, Austria and Germany. Few Irish clerics got involved in on-the-ground activity, though the Irish bishops Brady and Gibney (Perth), Quinn (Brisbane) and Moran (Sydney) were active organizers.

Prior to 1905, the few female religious involved in the Aboriginal missions were the Sisters of St Joseph (1874-1880) and Sisters of Mercy (1880-1905) in Mackay (QLD), and the Spanish Teresian Sisters at New Norcia (from 1904).

Mission at Beagle Bay (WA)

The French Trappist monks began their mission to the Aboriginal people at Beagle Bay in 1890, funded by Propaganda, their French abbey, the WA government, and donations. Bishop Gibney of Perth wanted them to take responsibility for the Kimberley Vicariate Apostolic established in 1887, but they hesitated, even though by 1895 they had a community of 18 monks. While awaiting their decision the

vicariate was temporarily assigned to Bishop Kelly of Geraldton.

By 1900 the Trappists had established two more missions, at Disaster Bay and Broome, and were ministering to some 900 people. They had baptized at least 200 adults who had relinquished polygamy and given up contact with the Asian pearlers, and were attending Mass. They had also acquired a 10,000-acre lease in addition to the 700,000-acre native reserve, and had erected a monastery, kitchen, saw mill, workshops and other buildings. They offered food to the Aboriginals for work, cultivated vegetable and fruit gardens, and extended the mission herds of cattle and sheep to 700 head each.

In 1899, however, the Trappists abruptly decided to abandon their Kimberley mission. The reasons are not clear, but a change of leadership in 1897 led to morale and unity deteriorating so badly that the Abbot in France ordered Fr Nicholas Emo to commence a quiet withdrawal without advising Bishops Gibney and Kelly. At the time, Gibney and the original superior were planning to extend the mission, raise more funds, and secure title over the mission land. Gibney had even commissioned three mission boats and was planning a visit. Kelly only learnt of the withdrawal in October 1900.



Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Beagle Bay, WA

By early 1900 the mission was in turmoil. The Aboriginals were begging the monks to remain and many monks resented abandoning them. However, Fr Emo dismissed the children, locked the women out of their rooms, put the wine and other provisions under lock and key, and started selling the cattle to finance the monks' homeward passage. Natural disasters destroyed several buildings, leaving only the church, refectory and kitchen intact.

After Emo had sent 8 monks to Palestine and was planning to send more, Bishop Gibney, once informed in June 1900, placed an injunction on the sale of the mission cattle, initiated negotiations with the German Pallottines to take over the mission, and in August inspected the mission personally. Any prospect of the Trappists taking responsibility for the Kimberley vicariate was over.

The mission had cost some £11,000 over ten years, with only some £2,000 coming from the WA government (see image). The Trappists had performed 255 baptisms, 153 confirmations, and 48 marriages, and recorded 37 births and 23 deaths in Broome, Disaster Bay and Beagle Bay. Their collaboration with the mixed Filipino/Aboriginal communities in Broome, Beagle Bay and Disaster Bay had irked the Chief Protector of Aboriginals, who worked against their proposal to parcel out land to the Filipino/Aboriginal resident families. As the WA *Land Act 1898* provided for land grants or leases to Aboriginals only, the government blocked their proposal, reneged on its promise of 'land in fee simple', and withdrew financial support.

German Pallotines at Beagle Bay

In January 1901, Bishop Gibney successfully negotiated to have the German Pallotines take over the Beagle Bay mission, and the first group arrived the following April: the German superior Fr Georg Walter, the English Fr. Patrick White, and two German Brothers. They immediately purchased the mission cattle and the mission property in Broome from the Trappists, on terms, while Fr White reopened the school at Beagle Bay, and the Brothers erected new buildings.

With few priests, Fr Walter recruited the two remaining Trappists, Frs Emo and Janny, to minister in Broome, while Bishop Gibney reminded Walter that the 10,000-acre lease carried the condition that there had to be a minimum 12 mission staff.

In December 1902 four more Pallotines arrived, including Fr Heinrich Rensmann, who was soon preaching and instructing in the local Nyul-Nyul language, looking after the school and catechesis, and preparing several women and children for baptism. Three more Brothers arrived in March 1903.

As money was short and the debt heavy, the Pallotines increased their cattle to 1800 head and pigs to 150, and employed 25 Aboriginal workers. They also entered into a 10-year commercial pearl-shelling contract with the mission boats, but a drop in shell prices only increased their debt.

In 1903 the WA government began to remove Aboriginal children from their families and send them to the mission stations which, from May 1903, received

a per-person subsidy. The Beagle Bay mission was now paid £250 per annum, even though it had no religious Sisters to care for the young girls.

In January 1904, while the other priests were in Broome and Disaster Bay, Fr Rensmann was alone in Beagle Bay running the mission with 8 Brothers. When he died unexpectedly, he was replaced temporarily by Fr Russell of Geraldton and a lay teacher hired to run the school. Four more Brothers arrived in May 1904, but there were too few priests, and when Emo continued marrying Aboriginal women to Filipino and other Asians against Walter's wishes, he was dismissed.

In August 1904 the WA Government established a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Condition of the Natives in Western Australia under Commissioner Walter Roth. Roth visited Beagle Bay in October 1904 and found the missionaries more concerned about their cattle and growing their assets than improving the lives of the Aboriginal residents. His Report had not a single word of praise for the German mission, stating that the resident population had dropped by half, that there were no Sisters, that the residents should not qualify for the government payments for indigents, and that in future the 'Lands Department should protect the interest of natives when issuing title to land to missions'.

The Pallotines' pearling venture had also created enemies among the Broome pearlmen, who said they should be training and supplying Aboriginal labourers, not employing them to compete. The Broome police sergeant also told the Commission that Beagle Bay was more of a 'squatting business' than a mission.

Compared to the three other WA Aboriginal missions, the government disfavoured Beagle Bay. From 1896 to 1899 the Trappists had received no funding, while New Norcia had a fixed grant of £450. In 1900-1901 the Trappists received just £250 for 37 children (£6 per child), while the Anglican Swan Mission was paid £718 for 40 children (£17 per child), and New Norcia received £450 (£7 per child) for 64 children. In May 1904 the government agreed to increase funding for all children removed to the missions to the same level as the Swan Home.

At Beagle Bay Fr. Walter lacked support from the Pallotine Brothers, especially after he excommunicated one Brother. When the Trappists pressed hard for their outstanding debt, the Pallotine Superior General suggested that they could take the

Continued page 10



whole mission back, and in March 1905, 6 months before the Plenary Council was due to start, tensions at Beagle Bay were high. Fr Russell and the lay schoolmaster were under attack and more Pallotines were desperately needed.

New Norcia Benedictine Mission (WA)

The Spanish Benedictines had established their mission of the Aboriginal people of the Victoria Plains in 1846. In his 1904 Report, Commissioner Roth stated: *the oldest aboriginal institution in the State is in a most flourishing condition, continues to carry on very excellent work, and is well worthy of the support extended to it by the Department; [it has] an annual government subsidy of £450, educates over 50 children in its school, and has a total of about 200 aboriginals and half-castes under the charge of the Mission; average cost to the Department is £2.5s. per head per annum.*

Data for 1905 in the 1906 *Australasian Catholic Directory* shows the mission having 18 priests (6 secular and 12 religious), 38 religious Brothers and 11 religious Sisters, with 5 churches and 3 primary schools for 180 students.

In 1900 Abbot Rosendo Salvado OSB, who had also been Bishop of [Port] Victoria (NT) from 1849-1888, wrote in his last Report to Propaganda that the twofold object of the monks was: *instructing the Indigeni in religious matters so they can become good Christians and save their souls, and at the same time instructing them in manual trades and mainly in agricultural occupations so that, by this practice, they can obtain the necessary means to live as good Christians wherever they are.*

When Salvado died in December 1900, he left the mission to his Spanish successor, Abbot Fulgentius Torres (1903-1914).

Jesuit Mission to the Aboriginals in the Northern Territory

The Austrian Jesuits at Sevenhill (SA) had wanted to establish an Aboriginal mission since 1866. In 1869 the 2nd Australian Provincial Council endorsed their proposal, but it was not until 1882 that they established their first mission at Rapid Creek in the Northern Territory, followed by Daly River in 1886, and Serpentine Lagoon in 1889, all in Bishop Salvado's diocese of [Port] Victoria. When Salvado resigned in 1888, the Jesuit superior, Fr Anton Strele, was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the renamed Diocese of Victoria and Palmerston.

The Jesuit mission peaked in 1891 with 13 Jesuits, but soon after fell into financial difficulties. By 1892 it was bankrupt.

Strele, in reporting to the 1895 Plenary Council, sought to have the mission continued, and the three missions were subsequently amalgamated in New Uniya. However, in 1896, when the Austrian and Irish Jesuits in Australia were considering a merger, the Irish superior visited the mission and found only 15 children in the school, the mission struggling, and the diocese deserted. By 1897 only one Jesuit priest and 5 Brothers remained. Though 4 Austrian Jesuits were added, when the diocesan administration was transferred to Bishop Kelly of Geraldton in February 1898, the Jesuits lost interest. They maintained the mission until 1899, when it was closed as an 'inspiring failure'. The last Jesuit departed in 1902 leaving the diocese in the care of Fr Ryan of the Geraldton diocese. The small Catholic community was then mainly served by transient priests.



Fr Donald MacKillop SJ (1853-1925), brother of St Mary MacKillop

The Jesuits had tried to align their goals with those of the settler colony, removed the Aboriginals from contact with the Chinese 'coolie' workers, and trained them to replace the Chinese. Fr Donald MacKillop SJ said that 'Religion is primary in our intention, but in a manner secondary in our practice.... [We] must first civilize the blacks.' The Jesuits used the Paraguayan 'Reductions' model of mission, teaching 'self-reliance' in a kind of socialist framework, and seeking to 'induce industry, honesty, unselfishness, and working for the individual and general good', so that 'each man works for himself, his family and the community'. The adult labourers negotiated their daily workload with the missionaries and some young men learnt trades. But the lack of a narrative of 'need' did not assist the Jesuits' fundraising efforts.

After 20 years of intense effort, they had baptized just 197 infants and 78 adults, and another 78 on their deathbed. The Jesuits acknowledged that it would take several generations of Christianising before any lasting results could be achieved.

Queensland Vicariate Apostolic for Aboriginals

The Vicariate Apostolic of Queensland for the Aboriginals was gazetted in 1887, but never formally erected. When the Irish Augustinians took charge, the local indigenous people were not their prime concern, and on 10 May 1887 the territory was renamed the Vicariate Apostolic of Cooktown. At the same time the last Aboriginal resistance to European advance on their traditional lands was playing out. When it was put down, a new Government policy of missions or reserves emerged, with the Aboriginals to be provided with food and protection until they died out. The Queensland *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1897* made all Aboriginal reserves subject to the Act, and all missionaries in charge of Aboriginal settlements made Superintendents under the Act.

Apart from the aborted efforts of the Passionists in the 1840s, the disinterest of the Irish Augustinians in the 1860s, and the failed efforts of the Italian secular clerics in the 1860's and 1870s, the most productive missionary activities in Queensland up to 1905 were those of the Scottish Fr Duncan McNab and the French Fr Pierre Marie (Paul) Bucas in the 1870s and 1880s. McNab was a visionary, politically active and practical, while Bucas was more pastoral and focused on local needs. Bucas established an Aboriginal community in Mackay, with an orphanage for Aboriginal children run by the Sisters of St Joseph – until their expulsion by Brisbane Bishop Quinn in 1880 – and the Sisters of Mercy. Neither priest received strong support from Quinn. No further serious attempt to evangelise the Queensland Aboriginal peoples would be undertaken until 1920.

1905 Council and Aboriginal evangelization

The 1905 Plenary heard reports on the missions to the Aboriginals from Bishops Gibney (Perth) and Kelly (Geraldton), Abbot Torres (New Norcia), and the Pallotine Fr Walter (Beagle Bay), and approved an offer from the New Norcia Benedictines to establish a priory – with 'nullius' jurisdiction and annexed to New Norcia – in the Kimberley vicariate. Bishop Kelly of Geraldton also sought to be relieved of the administration of the Diocese of Victoria and Palmerston (NT). Paradoxically, while none of the Irish bishops encouraged their own diocesan priests to work among and evangelize the indigenous Australians on their doorstep, they legislated to establish "a foreign

missionary college” to train Australian priests for mission in the Philippines, China and Japan (Decree 18). The Council also reproduced *verbatim* all the earlier conciliar decrees on Aboriginal evangelization.

Acta et Decreta

After Cardinal Moran closed the Council on 10 September 1905 with a Solemn Mass and a sermon on ‘The Aims of the Catholic Church in Australia in the 20th Century’, the *Acta et Decreta* were sent to the Holy See.

The 1905 Plenary had been a reworking of the 1895 Council, which in turn was a re-working of the 1885 Council. All its new decrees were inserted into the earlier ones and set out in 6 chapters titled: Faith, Ecclesiastical Persons, Sacraments, Discipline, Education, and Ecclesiastical Forum. The 371 decrees included 3 new ones in the Preamble stating that all the decrees would bind across the nation, and another 42, many of which were merely petitions for various faculties and permissions. All the new decrees were original. There were no recommendations for any new dioceses or vicariates.

Among the 9 appendices were the 1866 Roman *Instruction on the Election of Bishops*



French priest, Pierre Marie (Paul) Bucas (1840-1930). As first priest in Mackay, he established a community for displaced Aborigines in 1874 and St Joseph's orphanage for Aboriginal children, operated by the Sisters of St Joseph until 1880, then the Sisters of Mercy until 1885 when it was moved to Neerkool.

in Australia, the 1869 Council decrees (in English) on mixed marriage, a statement on Leo XIII's 1891 Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum*, and the Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Socialism, setting out what aspects could be lawfully accepted and what must be rejected.

When Propaganda reviewed the *Acta et Decreta* of the Council, Cardinal Moran was advised that as many of the decrees were merely ‘petitions’ they should be addressed to the Pope as such. In February

1906, in the name of all the bishops, Moran submitted 12 petitions, including: that Sydney be made a primatial see, and that bishops be permitted to unite independent houses of female religious into institutes. The Roman Cardinals recommended the rejection of all 12 petitions save one: use of the texts of the Divine Office approved for Ireland. Forced amalgamation of religious houses was unacceptable, and Sydney as a primatial see was denied. The Holy See was already considering the establishment of an apostolic delegation instead.

Pope Pius X approved the decrees on 4 September 1906 and official confirmation was announced on 24 September 1906. The decrees were inserted into the 1895 legislation and published in 1907 with the appendices.

Acknowledgment: In preparing this article many primary and secondary sources were consulted. However, special acknowledgment is given to the original research of Dr Ian B Waters in his unpublished doctoral thesis Australian Conciliar Legislation prior to the 1917 Code of Canon Law: A Comparative Study with similar Conciliar Legislation in Great Britain, Ireland, and North America, St Paul University, Ottawa, 1990. ☞

The torment of powerlessness

DANNY GILBERT

This is an edited version of a talk by Danny Gilbert, Co-Chair Cape York Partnership at the Garma Festival 2019 on Constitutional reform for the inclusion of Aboriginal people. The full talk can be viewed at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5xkaxcm>



Danny Gilbert

I start by acknowledging the Gumatj people of the Yolngu nation and I pay respects to their elders past and present.

It's a great honour to be invited to speak here this evening. I'm going to talk about constitutional recognition and the enabling of a voice for Indigenous Australians. And about how this can relieve the ‘torment of powerlessness’, so poignantly expressed in The Uluru Statement from the Heart. I will explain why constitutional recognition is entirely in keeping with our Constitution as it is. And why it is so important to who we are as a nation.

For more than 30 years, I have been gifted with the friendship and trust of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These friendships began in the 1980s in Sydney's Redfern. Redfern was a tough, confronting place. The problems seemed intractable,

beyond remedy. It was emblematic of the tragic failures of the past and the inertia of the present. But Redfern was also a crucible of Indigenous activism. There was a voice there – if only Australia could hear it.

I was in my early 30s. The plight of inner-city Aboriginal people sparked my memories of growing up on Wiradjuri Country in the Western Riverina of New South Wales. I remembered very poor Aboriginal families. I remembered the shacks many of them called home. We looked away. They were outcasts, second class citizens, and seemed to be permanently so. When I was in my late teens my father casually mentioned, for the first and last time, that he had black cousins. One of them was Kevin Gilbert, the Aboriginal activist, artist and writer. I never met him or any of his siblings. They had no existence in my white non-Indigenous family. This was my own experience of what WE Stanner called ‘the great Australian silence’.

Much has changed. Indigenous aspiration and achievement are today part of the

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national mosaic. Indigenous art, music, dance and drama step up whenever we want to tell the world who we are. Indigenous sports people, performers, writers and commentators are household names. Indigenous Australians occupy high places in academia, the media, politics and the professions. We rightly celebrate and recognise these remarkable Australians.

But this is not the only recognition needed. This is because Indigenous people occupy a very special place in our nation – a place unlike any other group. We need to be clear about the nature of the legal relationship, a relationship of disempowerment contained in the document at the heart of our nationhood – our Constitution.

The time has come to correct that relationship. We need an unequivocal statement of recognition levered into place as a cornerstone of our 21st century nationhood. Intrinsic in this recognition, Indigenous Australians must be able to speak to their fellow Australians – to have some say in their destiny. These two elements – recognition and being heard – cannot be separated. They are indivisible. Nothing in this would compromise our national purpose or historic achievements – our democratic institutions and traditions, our successful multicultural society, our place in the world. Nothing in this would compromise our Constitution. What does compromise us – and diminish us – is our relationship with our First Peoples.

I know that not all Australians share this view. Not all will be persuaded that the failed relationship is anything more than an irritating blemish, or that constitutional recognition will do anything to fix it. We cannot assume that what is so appealing and straightforward to us is appealing and straightforward to all Australians or to our politicians in Canberra.

We must respect that what we are asking for will trouble some people. It will seem like a risk to the established order. It's true that support is growing – and growing strongly. But our task is to persuade a majority of Australians in a majority of States that the time has come to make a substantive – but moderate – change to our constitution.

There are very big questions here. How do we unite Australians in this cause? How do we persuade Australians that this matters to them? That it will matter to their children? That it will go on mattering until we fix it? And that, until it is fixed, our claim to greatness is compromised?

A great nation

The foundation of a great nation is a good society. In a good society people are free to be themselves, free to be fully alive. Every citizen is an equally valued part of the whole, regardless of cultural, ethnic and racial difference. Minorities have no reason to fear the majority, but flourish with them. This has never been true for Indigenous Australians, and it is not true today. Making up only 3% of our population, they have no institutional protection of their unique Indigenous rights and interests.

My dear friend the late Ted Kennedy, Catholic Priest of Redfern, recognised this when speaking about Aboriginal Reconciliation more than 20 years ago. He said: *Unacknowledged truth has a way of setting bands on the soul. The paralysis chokes. And unacknowledged truth has one of those perverse ways of imposing a sadness and guilt on the victim's heart.*

The grave injustices meted out to Australia's First Peoples in the first two hundred years of European settlement will be remembered for the next two hundred – remembered for as long as there is an Australia. These things will not go away. They are written into the nation's genesis, into its soul.

A great nation will address these wrongs and, most importantly, their ongoing legacies. The French philosopher, Ernest Renan, said: 'Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more important value than triumphs, for they impose duties and require a common effort'. Now is the moment to recognise those duties and to make that common effort. For this is where the great compromise of our national beginning rests: when we excluded Indigenous people from Australian nationhood and told them in effect, that we would live together, but they must live apart, we left a void where there should have been a foundation stone.

Statement from The Heart

The Uluru Statement from The Heart should be seen as the synthesis and refinement of every request and demand ever made by Indigenous Australians since 1788. Its language is compelling – as compelling and as innately and profoundly Australian as any words uttered by the founders of the Commonwealth, or any of their successors. It is an invitation to join their ambitions and their talents with those of their fellow Australians; to embed their relationship to Country and their spiritual values in our identity and our national and community values. It is an invitation to

share wisdom: to bring the First Australians into the conversation about Australia's future – and the conversation about what is best for them.

It is vital to see and to understand that the Uluru Statement's call for constitutional recognition is simply a further development – natural, appropriate and measured – in the maturing of our country and its legal infrastructure.

I've heard Noel Pearson say 'non-Indigenous Australians don't know what to do with us, they don't know where we fit in'. Constitutional recognition will help Australians answer that question. It will expand our understanding of what Australia is and can be. It will acknowledge the world's oldest living cultures as the bedrock of our Australian identity. It will close the gap in our collective sense of nationhood.

Constitutional recognition in and of itself is but one element of what needs to be achieved. The other element is the empowerment of Indigenous Australians to have an assured say in their future. These two elements – recognition and empowerment – are essential and indivisible. Any separation of them would be a stab to the very heart of the Uluru Statement.

And why is this empowerment so necessary? Well, we need look no further than the 11 Prime Minister's Closing the Gap Reports. In his speech in the Parliament in February this year, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said, when referring to those 11 Closing the Gap statements, 'The process that began in 2008 was born of good heart.' But he went on to say, 'It did not truly seek to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.' Very importantly he added this: 'It was set up to fail. And has, on its own tests. And today I am calling that out'.

The Prime Minister's words confirm his commitment to addressing what the Uluru Statement calls the 'torment of powerlessness'. The position in remote Australia is particularly dire. Too many communities are struggling against the odds. Right here in North East Arnhem Land Aboriginal children live with unacceptably high levels of infectious diseases, anaemia, skin diseases and very poor dental care.

The Menzies School of Health reports some of the highest rates of rheumatic heart disease in the world. The inter-play between poor child health and chronic adult health problems is profound. Other problems of violence, poor education,

shameful levels of incarceration and lack of economic opportunity are so well known we hardly need reminding. At the same time, communities are confronted with their disappearing languages and the everyday struggle of their elders to pass on their knowledge.

A way forward together beyond differences

I want to say a few things to the people who do not support this change. I know you are not indifferent to the plight of Indigenous Australians. And I do not suggest that this change will be a panacea for all ills; that it will miraculously cure long-standing policy failures and entrenched inter-generational disadvantage.

But, properly designed to ensure essential bottom-up community input from on-the-ground grassroots people, we will have community owned, workable solutions across the country. And that, surely, is what every Australian wants. We would all agree with the basic idea that solutions are more likely to be found if the people most affected are consulted and given the opportunity for input. It's an idea that goes with freedom and democracy. It's an idea that goes with respect and dignity.

I don't think it can be fairly said that constitutional recognition would privilege one group of Australians over others. I also think it is mistaken to say this will divide the country on race. On the issue of equality, the fact is that Indigenous Australians have never had it. This is the opportunity to change that. Substantive constitutional change will invigorate the prospects for their more complete participation in our nation.

As for the fear of a racial divide, that divide is the existing reality: the result of our treatment of Indigenous people over the past 230 years. Their separate collective identity was, of course, imposed from the very beginning in 1788. It was reaffirmed in the Constitution in 1901 and again in 1967. The Uluru Statement offers a pathway towards lessening, not deepening, that divide. Some people say the Constitution should not give preference based on race. But the Constitution already gives the Parliament power to make special laws based on race. It is commonly known as the "races power" – the power used by the Parliament to make laws about Australia's First Peoples.

I see the Uluru Statement as fundamentally an invitation to listen, now and into the future. Let's move forward and participate openly and honestly in a dialogue about

how the Constitution can ensure that Parliament and the Government listen to and hear Indigenous voices. Let's not allow a rejection of the Uluru Statement to be added to that long list of rejections borne so heavily by Indigenous Australians for 230 years. And let's not breach the trust the Uluru Statement places in us.

The challenge for those of us who support constitutional recognition is to understand that not all fair-minded people will agree with what I am saying. That said, I strongly believe that the widest range of reasonable concerns can be properly and safely addressed. In this, we must mount our arguments with clarity, care, generosity and respect. In return, I ask sceptics to stand in the shoes of people whose 65,000 year-old civilization was so purposefully, negligently or carelessly devalued and disrespected. And who were then made outcasts in the nation created by that conquest.

To those who think it's fanciful, remember there were plenty who thought Federation was fanciful. And that the Native Title Act was fanciful – and even dangerous. On both occasions many sensible people of goodwill doubted that such divergent interests could ever find common ground. But common ground was found, and on each occasion the nation took a step forward.

I'd urge sceptics to consider this about those two great national steps forward: out of the 1890s Federation movement came a generation of leaders of outstanding competence and patriotic vision. The genius of the nation was framed in those constitutional debates. Similarly, with Mabo and the Native Title Act: from those complex 1990s negotiations a brilliant generation of Indigenous advocates was born.

Consider how much we stand to gain when Indigenous people are given a constitutional guarantee that their voices will be heard in the nation's deliberations. Not only will it go some way to correcting historic failures, it will add another dimension to the national debate. It will be a lesson in the virtue and rewards of boldness. When we face the truth squarely and challenge ourselves to find answers, we gain in ways we never contemplated. When we shy away, fearing that the debate might get awkward, or raise difficult matters, or come to nothing, we lose – and in more ways than can be counted.

And if we don't, as a nation, seize this opportunity, what will that say to future generations of Indigenous Australians? ☪



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Synodality means walking together

MYRON PEREIRA SJ

Synodality is the way Pope Francis is shaping a new conversation in the Church writes Father Myron Pereira SJ who is a media consultant based in Mumbai, India. This article looks at how this might work at the Amazon Synod. Does it have implications for the Australian Plenary? Reprinted with permission from *La Croix International* September 6, 2019.



Pope Francis will next month preside over one of his most important assemblies yet, the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region. A working document released in June 2018 identified what the synod's three key themes would be: the role of women in the Church, the rights and traditions of indigenous people, and the need to provide greater access to the Eucharist.

The last of these may become the occasion of two major innovations: the ordination of married men and a modification of Eucharistic requirements.

Why have these two needs surfaced? The Amazon region faces a shortage of priests capable of serving remote rural populations.

As Brazil's Cardinal Claudio Hummes put it a few months ago, 'the Amazon needs a Church with an indigenous face,' rather than 'a transplanted European Church.' He then asked: 'How can we think of an indigenous Church if there are no indigenous clergy?' And again, since the wheat-based bread normally used for the Eucharist is ill-suited to the Amazon's humidity, the synod may consider allowing the use of the region's yucca-based bread instead.

Today we have a pope who is willing to make changes when there is a pastoral need. This was seen five years ago, at the very first Synod on the Family (October 2014) which the pope held in Rome.

The 2014 synod was like no other – for two important reasons. Firstly, the bishops

took as their topic the Catholic family and its pressures in today's society, basing itself on surveys which had been circulated worldwide at least six months before. Earlier synods had been largely on doctrinal issues.

These surveys brought up issues never spoken of in public in the Church: communion for divorced Catholics; artificial contraception and its use among Catholics; and homosexuality promoted as an alternate lifestyle. And in the context of South Asia, the growing place of interfaith marriages and solidarity with persecuted Catholic families, especially where these are Dalits and tribal people.

The interim report prepared at this synod was circulated to all the dioceses in the Catholic Church and the pope asked that these results should be studied and discussed by everyone. Which brings me to the next point: the way in which the discussions took place.

Speak up!

During earlier synods bishops and cardinals kept mum. It was the pope who spoke and handed over a prepared report. No one was allowed to discuss anything in public. This is how things used to be.

No longer! Pope Francis insists that everyone – bishops, priests, laity – 'speak up!' He wants a Church where everyone participates. This is so astonishingly new that it takes a long time getting used to.

For as long as we can remember, no one

was allowed to question anything which came from church authority, which might mean the pope or your local parish priest. The worst time in recent years was during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, who censured bishops and theologians for raising questions on church policy and doctrine.

In other words, Catholic religious formation, which was known to rest upon free critical enquiry, receded to the level of indoctrination, as any formation does which represses freedom.

Long ago, one of the ways in which Vatican II described the Church was 'a pilgrim people,' which captures the image of a large mass of pilgrims moving toward a common goal. The word 'synod' implies this meaning: people walking together. Yet another term is 'accompaniment,' as when different people share each other's joys and trials, and assist each other thereto. In the Indian tradition, the word is 'samanvaya.'

Synodality/samanvaya means being accustomed to different paces, to different partners, to different narratives. There are no heretics anymore where the narrative is one of dialogue. In this as well as in so many other ways, Pope Francis has shaped a new style of conversation in the Church.



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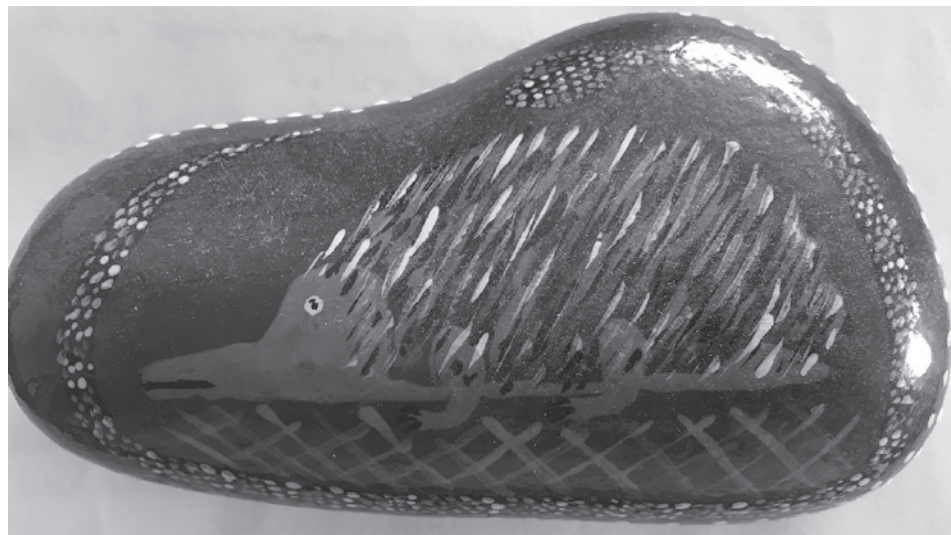
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Catholics and our Indigenous Peoples

RICHARD FRANCIS

Richard Francis writes about the impact of the loss of language, land and culture in Indigenous Australia. He then compares this to the experience of loss in Catholic Australia and asks what can we learn from Indigenous sisters and brothers.



I wonder if we realize how much we Catholics have in common with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, and how much we can learn from their painful story. Their culture, their spirituality, their rituals were snatched away from them. That culture grounded their lives in a spirituality woven around the mystery of creation, their Dreamtime, their sacred stories! They had languages to express how they experienced the gift of creation. And they celebrated that gift in dance and music. The strong river-gum was their brother, the earth their life-sustaining mother. Then, they became in more ways than one 'the lost generations'! Rudderless and lost, is it any wonder they tried to kill their pain the way we do! But without the riches to buy all the 'pain-killers' we can afford, some of them fell into alcohol, drugs and abusive relationships, the addictions of the poor! They, like us Australian/Irish Catholics, have been made a 'spectacle' to our society. Through little fault of their own, their culture was all but wiped out. We, on the other hand, have brought our pain upon ourselves. We gave away our culture; we became 'of the world' rather than 'in the world'. We learned to live in the halls and market places of power and prestige, pomp and pomposity! We tried to ignore or cover over our need for God and our status of creature. We followed the way of the world and tried to live without the God of Jesus of Nazareth. We had our own god and it has made us 'rudderless'. Our old people still cling to 'some glimmer of hope' but

their pain is expressed in their body language, they don't seem to be engaged at Mass, and few of our young ones are there. If you don't believe me look at their faces the next time you are at Mass. Thank God, for the 'new arrivals' to our shores – the Vietnamese, the Filipinos, Catholics from the Middle East and Africa.

However, we need to understand that the culture we have lost was mainly the culture and language of our immediate Irish past. Our grief is palpable and our lethargy is there for all to see. I believe we became addicted to being comfortable, unchallenged by the Gospel story and the life of Jesus. Our leaders became addicted to empire building, to power, to status in the community and we loved it! We went from being the 'poor Irish' to people of wealth.

We must recover a culture to 'live in', to live by, otherwise we will be more than 'a lost generation'. We will look ridiculous, a 'spectacle' of ridicule. Look at the 'imported' priests from other cultures. They are either all 'at sea' without the culture of their homeland, or they import that culture with them which sustains their view of reality. We are quick to criticize them because they can't adjust to a society and Church that has little spirituality at its most basic understanding of itself.

What a marvelous opportunity all this doom and gloom presents to us and we have the example our Indigenous sisters and brothers to thank for it. They have shown us the way out of our predicament,

our grief. As they have gone back to their Dreamtime to recover the ground of who they are, so must we go back to the true ground of our lives – the Good News of the Gospel stories. As they try to recover their languages and ritual to express where and who they are in relationship to this world, so must we go back to our Dreamtime – the story of Jesus, his life, his message, his death. And let us not rush to resurrection before our 'death' lest we miss out on the necessary dying! The Gospel is where we have come from, it is what we have been baptized into! It's there we will find a language to give life to new rituals – rituals that express the universality of a suffering Christ as redeemer of the world that God so loved that God gave us the great gift of the Spirit. New rituals to express how precious is 'our common home' and our compassionate desire for justice and peace are needed. Rituals that will engage us in a conversation as we try to find our way back to our roots.

Did you know that the Germany that so adored Hitler and gave him so much power was 60% Lutheran and 30% Catholic? Did you know that many right-wing, militaristic dictatorships in South America forbade the singing of Mary's 'Magnificat' in public worship? Read it and you will see why! Let someone threaten our comfortable lifestyle. Do you think we would be any different to the German people, or the dictators protecting their power and wealth? Only the true Christ of the Gospels will make the difference. Look at the immigration policies of our government with regard to refugees and asylum seekers, they rightly believe theirs is a policy that finds favour with their electorate! They rightly believe they speak for us with their desire to minimize expenditure on the disabled and homeless.

We must become a people who have enshrined The Beatitudes in our hearts and find a new language to express these most fundamental beliefs that our faith rests upon. Only this will give meaning to our lives as we endeavor to be Christ like, Christ centered in the world. And we, like our Indigenous Australians, are being driven there by our failures and the world's ridicule. We must learn again to love with a crucified love for only that love will save the world; will heal its wounds, divisions and hatred. It is for us to become immersed in the pain and suffering of our world not its superficial riches and favours. Can we become a Christ-centered Church serving Christ's mission to the widow, the orphan, the homeless, the abused? ☪

A story to light and life

JOHN RYAN

John Ryan, retired Sandhurst priest, reflects on the paradox of life, beauty, sex and sin.

This story has been evolving consciously and consistently over seventy-five years. I first noted it as I snuck behind my mother and her sister as they were talking on the front veranda. My Aunt Mary was a spinster who came regularly to visit us from the city where she lived alone and worked as a seamstress. Her mother, my nan, a most beautiful soul who lived with us (my mother, father, elder sister and younger brother) as long as I could remember. They formed our core family unit and our eccentric Aunt Mary was a significant adjunct in our small weather board home. And all of them played parts in this story.

The topic of interest this day was the goings on of the young women who were our neighbors from across the road. They were pretty, sociable, full of life and very interested in the young pilots who were regularly visiting from the nearby Air Force Base. My aunt seemed to be leading the discussion and clearly found fault in what she observed to have been happening. In Aunt Mary's view these young women were clearly playing with fire and she judged their behavior as disgusting and immoral. It was relatively easy to follow her drift even for a seven or eight-year old precocious lad!

What I might have seen as fun and a source of pleasure, she did not have any such adjectives. Everything looked to be wrong. Yet had the conversation gone to another topic that seemed closely connected the tone would have been completely different.

When on another occasion the topic came to discuss babies Aunt Mary was on another page and singing another tune. A connection was forming within the story amidst of wandering confusion. How something so wonderful could lead to such a negative, even evil outcome! The beginning of a lifelong question was forming that would plague me and torture me until now.

How could the outcome of stupid, dangerous and soon to be spoken as sinful behavior connect with birth, life, beauty and motherhood. Was there a connection and if so, how so? These questions of mine and similar ones I soon discovered belonged to the ages. The ancient philosophers and early religions tangled



with the questions and it was consoling to learn that one was not alone on such a journey.

Of course, I soon came up against answers to my questions from the teachings of my Catholic faith. These answers mainly arose from negativity, from each answer the reply was so often a resounding No. Of course, I was delving into the realm of sex and sex and sin were strange bedfellows. That love which is the *raison d'être* of the Gospel could dissect in such a way?

The paradox of sex and sin

There was beauty, joy and occasions for thanksgiving and alongside was dirt, shame and sin. True there is a possibility for separating meanings however as light and dark conjoin, sin and life seem to conjoin. Here we are being drawn into the realm of paradox and similar literary devices as we try to untangle the possible outcomes.

For brevity sake I will make a diversion to skirt the philosophical puzzles and try to move forward to my point.

I regard opera as one of life's blessings and one of my special operas is Verdi's *La Traviata*. Within poetry, magnificent music, deep philosophy and more, the principals engage in a contest between pleasure and love. Violetta sings for pleasure, Alfredo for love, the mystery and the heartbeat of the universe. Love which embraces pleasure but so much more, mysterious and noble, both cross and ecstasy – *Misterioso, misterioso, altero, croce, croce e delizia, croce e delizia, delizia al cor*. If possible, do listen and look at this piece of music!

In life, pleasure, joy and delight come and so too does pain, darkness and the cross. The offer of pleasure is a way to love! The whole opera is a masterpiece of psychology, mystery rendered musically.

Back to my thought. Within the mystery of life comes pleasure, grace and life, as

does the cross and death. When one is touched the other is near. The 'both/and' of love and life is challenged by the divisive 'either/or' of experience within the culture and belief system that I have been born into.

Come back to my Aunt who sees sex as a problem leading to lust and sin whereas sex leading to babies is so wonderful. Here she is faced with a dilemma, a paradox and may I suggest her inability to hold into the mystery leads to confusion and misguidance. The balance which allows what is sometimes called the 'yin and the yang' of life to coexist is shattered. Of course, there are many who fall into the trap of finding only one part of the puzzle! I believe many have so fallen and I would dare to suggest that some followers of Saint Augustine are a particular example. They came via several paths to decry sex and eventually they came to see it as the cause of all evil and sin. The possibility of seeing positives dissolved and with a heavy dose of 'either/or philosophy' sex becomes prisoned as evil. Even the conception of babies came to be seen as sinful!

The possibility of the paradoxical nature of life allows us to see that pleasure could lead to either sin or grace. Too much pleasure and within certain confines can engage lust and the balance is eroded. A great blessing in my early priestly life was the chance to live alongside Father Maurice Duffy, a true prophet of our times. Maury spoke of the power of sin and the power of grace, he asked fellow Catholics to identify which is the strongest and challenged them with their answers.

When facing the negative dichotomy within our sexuality, we are challenged to seek balance instead of a one-sided path to virtue, virtue with its ability to be within, 'Virtus stat in medio'.

Our classical thought patterns are too restrictive and need redemption by modern evolutionary thinkers who are open to experiences of pleasure. Certainly, the blame predates Augustine, but his legacy has given rise to so many questionable areas of concern such as original sin that we need to address.

To return to my beginning and my question of pleasure, we desperately need to be freed from the limitation that Roman Catholicism has put on the Gospel. The challenge is critical for any real possibility for renewal. Our current official position is an obstacle for honest and searching men and women. ☪

Catholic reform movements meet in Poland

IAN MCGINNITY

Ian McGinnity, Parramatta priest, reports on the International Catholic Reform Movement meeting held in Poland in September.



Centre in wheelchair Halina Bortnowska next to her on the left Zuzanna Radzik

On the 22 to the 27 September this year I attended the 5th gathering of the International Catholic Reform Network in Poland, just outside of Warsaw, at a place called the Marina Diana hotel on the banks of Lake Zegrzynski. Prior to this I was already in Europe doing a two-week course at KU Leuven on enhancing Catholic school identity so was fortunate to make a short flight from Brussels to Warsaw. I had never been to Poland previously and was fortunate, due to the hospitality of an Australian Polish friend, to see the sights of Warsaw and make a quick trip to the shrine of our Lady of Czestochowa which quickly immersed me in the rich Polish Catholic heritage and culture with all its pros and cons.

The hotel was obviously built during the Communist era but was very comfortable and a scenic venue for the conference. There were 26 participants at the conference who came from western and central Europe, Russia, the USA, Brazil, India and 2 representatives from Australia -myself (former NCP chair) and David Timbs, representing Catholics for Renewal. The ICRN is a global network of Catholic Church reform organisations: which includes lay and ministerial priests' organisations who first gathered in Bregenz, Austria in 2013. We saw the need to dialogue and collaborate with each other for solidarity and support. Apart from the occasionally disturbing sound of the discharge of a cannon shell from a neighbouring Polish military base (and

maybe the occasional metaphorical mortar being lobbed into the conference conversation regarding the institutional Church!) the setting and the informal conversations over meals were fantastic.

The first part of the conference focused on the Catholic Church in Poland both historically and its present-day reality. We were privileged to hear from seven Polish lay men and women,

journalists, in the print and electronic media, academics, theologians, teachers and lawyers, most practising Catholics, facilitated by the extraordinary and dynamic co-host of our conference Zuzanna Radzik. Zuzanna (born in 1983), who specialises in Christian Jewish relations, is a theologian, journalist and contributor to the Polish Catholic weekly, with an interest in feminist efforts in the Catholic Church. She gave an awesome (in the true sense of the word) rundown of Polish history from the conversion of the nation to Christianity in 966 A.D. to the present day.

We then heard from the revered Halina Bortnowska (who turned 88 on that day), one of the first female theology graduates in Poland who after having Karol Wojtyla as her professor at Lublin University became a lifelong friend of the future Pope John Paul II. She edited his book *Love and Responsibility* (1960) and as a journalist covered the 3rd session of Vatican II. Her insights into John Paul II were unique and whilst she had a great admiration for him, she did not idealise him, and was uncertain of the rapidity of his canonisation. Halina was convinced of the need for a wide-ranging reform of the Polish and universal Church and had even written to Pope Francis urging him to summon Vatican Council III!

One of the issues discussed at the conference was the influence of Pope John Paul II on Polish Catholicism and whether the cult that surrounded him has stymied

the need for reform in the Polish Church. One observation made was that Pope Francis rarely got a mention by the current Polish bishops who nostalgically seem to yearn for the days of the church of yesteryear – resisting communism, then emerging with excessive nationalism that seemingly blurred the roles of Church and State.

We also heard of the emergence of the scale of clerical sexual abuse of children and vulnerable people through a recent documentary and the culture of episcopal denial and cover-up. The input from the other six very impressive and highly intelligent lay men and women revealed not only their love for the Church but also their frustration about bringing renewal and reformation to a very entrenched and powerful hierarchy. Some of whom seem to work hand-in-hand with the government in its resistance to refugees and people on the fringe, particularly the LGBT community.

After our immersion into the Polish history and current scene on the Monday, the following day was spent reflecting on the ongoing projects for the working groups of the ICRN. The group that I belonged to tabled the final draft of *A Charter of Fundamental Rights for our Church* outlining the principles for a Charter of fundamental rights and responsibilities for Catholics originally articulated by the Ordinary Synod of Bishops in 1971. A copy of this can be found here: <https://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie/2019/10/a-charter-of-fundamental-rights-for-our-church-from-the-international-church-reform-network-icrn/>

It is hoped that this charter can be promoted at every level of the church but particularly among local church communities and perhaps discussed amongst Diocesan and Parish Pastoral Councils.

Wednesday's agenda primarily looked at the ICRN network itself. Its purpose, membership and future. It was agreed that the ICRN should continue as an international forum for not only the sharing of ideas but for the development of common strategies for Church reform at both local and international levels.

The ICRN (prior to the Synod on the Amazon) wished to support Pope Francis's vision of synodality (journeying together) and to promote this at all levels of the church. Discussion ensued over the two national Synods (Plenary Councils) in

Continued page 18

preparation in Australia and Germany. We hoped that in both cases, these would be genuine attempts to listen to the local Church and lead to genuine reforms for the good of the Church.

In the evening Sister Jeannine Grammick spoke on her work on *New Ways Ministry* which she co-founded with the late Fr Nugent. She is a remarkable lady whose long-time ministry with and for gay and lesbian Catholics has at times seen her banned by the institutional Church, slandered and maligned by others, but this softly spoken American woman shows extraordinary faith and courage and a passionate belief in the unique God-given dignity of members of the LGBTI community.

A press release was issued by the ICRN network expressing our sadness at the Polish hierarchy's response to the LGBT community. <https://icrn.info/press-statement-from-2019-warsaw-conference/>

On Thursday, we were keen to look at models for a future Church that had been reflected on in some of our working groups, particularly in the light of the critical decline of active priests in ministry and its effects on parish community life.

The first was a solution from south-eastern Africa presented via Skype by Father Joseph Healy MM, about the work of small Christian Communities. He outlined that there are around 160,000 of these small local faith communities that are flourishing in nine southern African countries.

The second, was Fr Helmut Schüller's project to form a core group of women and men to provide lay leadership in his parish utilising a variety of gifts that flow from their baptism, with special focus on the key ecclesial ministries of teaching, preaching and community leadership.

At the end of the conference Catholics for Renewal's (Australia) book *Getting Back on Mission. Reforming Our Church Together* had its international launch. There was a review of this book in the Spring 2019 edition of *The Swag*. Helmut Schüller spoke briefly about the significance of this book not only for the Australian Catholic situation but also its application and portability across international church borders.

The next meeting of the ICRN work is planned for 2021 in Mumbai, India hosted by Virginia Saldanha and a coalition of Indian reform groups which will move us hopefully out of our Eurocentric Church worldview and focus on the Church in Asia. ☪

Exclusion vs the open table of Jesus

FRED T BUGARIN

Fr Fred T Bugarin, retired priest from Alaska, offers a homily on the ten lepers.

We encounter the leper in the readings this Sunday, the iconic figure which has become the symbol of exclusion. The leper was saddled with three problems that forced him into a life of seclusion and exile:

1. Physical/medical – The leper was rendered “impure” (contagious) for his sickness and therefore shunned by the community.
2. Social/communal – The leper had to leave his family and community and moved to the outskirts of town living off the kindness of his family and friends for day to day sustenance.
3. Religious/moral – The leper was laden with the burden of sin. The prevailing belief in that culture was that any sickness or physical defect was due to sin, either a personal sin or an inherited sin; that is, someone in his/her family committed a sin for which he/she is now being punished.

As a symbol of exclusion, the leper, doomed to live out the rest of his/her life in bitter seclusion, represents the excluded in our time.

Who are the lepers among us, the excluded, the impure of society? These are the marginalized, the alienated, the victims of discrimination, racism, sexism, bigotry, prejudice; the demonized for their belief in our culture and society; all those men and women who are different from us. Exclusion can affect the following groups: immigrants & refugees; AIDS victims; members of the LGBTQ community; the handicapped; elderly & widows; women; children; people of color; people of different religion, different philosophy or political ideology; even people with different theology or spirituality. These are the ones whom we place conveniently in black and white categories of left-wing vs right-wing, conservative vs liberal or progressive, etc. Those who are quick to label others do not often see all the colours of the social rainbow, those grey areas of things. These are people who suffer from blindness, from blind spots – prejudices and biases.

The Open Table of Jesus

What does Jesus say about exclusion? Jesus is all about inclusion. All are invited, all are welcome to Jesus' table. First thing's first: those who are hungry are given food; those

who are thirsty are given drink. This is the pastoral approach. No questions asked. Personal details of nationality, education, profession, religion, politics, sex, etc. will be for a later conversation after all are welcomed. There is always an atmosphere of warm welcome at the table of Jesus where fellowship is primary. It is all about building relationship, making friends and making disciples, ones who have the potential of becoming apostles (apostle: one who is sent; in other words, a missionary).

It all starts with feeding and eating. Jesus even eats with sinners and tax collectors. In the house of Simon, we see a woman who washes the feet of Jesus with her tears and dries them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50). Jesus shows to the self-righteous Simon that only God can see through the heart (of the women who is judged as evil by everyone except Jesus); and that he has a special place in his own heart for the repentant sinner. In contrast, Simon the host, neglects to perform the customary ablutions: washing the feet of his guest, Jesus, which Jesus was quick to point out to Simon.

We also see Jesus dining with the tax collector, Matthew and other tax collectors (Matthew 9:10-17). By going to the house of Matthew, Jesus was making a statement: do not judge lest you be judged. God's ways – compassionate and understanding, merciful – are not your ways. Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36). Give people a chance to rise to the expectation of God. Set them free to realize their full potential. Matthew later becomes his disciple who will carry out his mission. The open table of Jesus is a venue for making disciples and apostles.

The table of Jesus is a venue for education and formation. Here, he slowly deepens their understanding until they catch fire with the Holy Spirit, the flame of love. Some have remarked: 'Were not our hearts burning within us as He spoke with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?' (Luke 24:32)

At his table, Jesus teaches them about service and commanded them: 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me

Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So, if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. (John 13:12-15)

The Open Table of the Amazon Church

Pope Francis has just convened a Synod at the Vatican inviting the Church of the Pan-Amazon region to discuss ways of being Church in that area given their special and unique circumstances. Because of the distance, many people are deprived of the sacraments. Some villages would go without the Eucharist for months, sometimes years before a priest can visit them. Baptisms, confirmation, confession and communion, even weddings have to be postponed until a priest could visit the village. Church leadership headed by Pope Francis is trying to find ways to be Church given those special needs and circumstances.

The hierarchy together with the religious and lay are seeking ways to be relevant and pastoral to a very diverse group of people including indigenous people of the huge region of the Amazon rainforest. Cardinal Claudio Hummes, the Pope's designated Relator General (convener, moderator, communicator) made this remark: *The Church cannot remain inactive within her own closed circle, focused on herself, surrounded by protective walls and even less can she look nostalgically to the past... The Church needs to throw open her doors, knock down the walls surrounding her and build bridges, going out into the world and setting out on the path of history.* (Cardinal Claudio Hummes, at the Amazon synod at the Vatican, on Oct. 7, 2019)

I think we are seeing, in this remark, a new model of church emerging, a new paradigm for dealing with issues that the current church systems have not been able to address, much less solve. There are critical issues facing the Church today that need to be addressed in ways that won't set us back. We need to open new doors and let in fresh air to permeate our conference rooms and our prayer rooms. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide us as we move forward to a much brighter future.

Cardinal Hummes' remark at the opening of the Amazon Synod in Rome reminded me of another scene, another time when we saw a short, fat and elderly figure of a man at the Vatican opening the doors of St. Peter in a symbolic way and convening the Second Vatican Council with the

catchword, *aggiornamento*, meaning updating, renewal and reform. He pointed to the world outside the doors and said, that's where the Church should be. He supposedly also said, 'It has gotten stale here inside these closed doors. We need fresh air.' Pope John was supposed to be a temporary Pope, safe to elect because of his age. Since the cardinals and bishops could not decide who to elect as Pope, they wanted to buy a little time and figured that Cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli could not possibly do much 'damage' while he reigned as Pope John XXIII. Little did they know what this old man was going to do: invite leaders of other religions to an Ecumenical Council.



That was St. Pope John XXIII just before the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. We were coming out of an entrenched and besieged Church which the Councils of Trent and Vatican I wanted to protect and safeguard. There was an air of defensiveness in the Church during this era. With Vatican II, we have a Church that is now open and dialogic. Unfortunately, in the 50 years of Vatican II, there have been setbacks and retrenchments.

Sadly, our current Church is polarized reflective of societies and governments of powerful nations. We need another inspiration, another Pentecost to get us moving forward once again. Pope Francis is showing us a way and leading us forward.

Exclusion is the result of ignorance. More specifically it is fear of the unknown. Did you know that prejudice is a form of blindness? We exclude, we discriminate, we even wipe out entire civilizations out of ignorance and blindness. What are we afraid of? We have been through this before, this period of unclarity and confusion. We still have the same Holy Spirit with us in the Church, the Spirit of Jesus guiding us into a brighter future if we be open and willing.

The Open Table of the Church Catholic

What does it mean to be Catholic? Being Catholic means being diverse culturally, racially, ethnically, even politically, philosophically, theologically and spiritually. Plurality and diversity in unity in Christ is the mark of Catholicism. We are all parts of the Body of Christ. All share in the Blood of Christ. We are many parts of the same loaf and the one cup of Jesus the Christ (1 Cor 10:16-17).

Being Catholic is being all-embracing, being who we are: universal Church. At its roots, catholic (*katholikos* in Greek; *catholicus* in Latin) derives its meaning from 'kata' (about) and 'holos' (whole). In essence, Catholicism is about wholeness. Even the parts of the whole (the base communities of faith, the congregations, the communities of disciples of Jesus, even the small pockets of communities within the parish community) each carry within them a wholeness and completeness, for even the smallest part carries the 'image and likeness' of the Christ 'the Son of the invisible God' in Col. 1:15-16.

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him....

Jesus the Christ is the Christ of the universe, the Catholic Christ, the Cosmic Christ. The essence of Catholicism is wholeness in Christ which ultimately points to the universality of Christ Jesus. We in the Roman Catholic Church or in the Eastern Catholic Churches do not have a monopoly on the universal Christ. Jesus Christ is the "savior and Lord" of all creation.

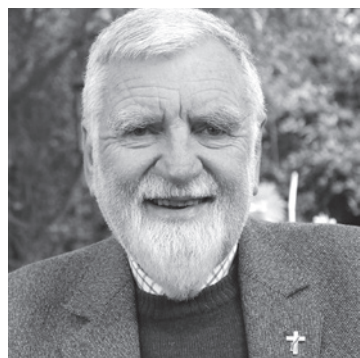
Jesus is all about inclusion, not exclusion. He healed and restored the lepers to their rightful place at his table. We must re-read and take heed his last command: 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

I would like to conclude with these words from Ephesians 4:1-5: *I therefore... beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.* ☩

Why is the permanent diaconate growing so slowly in Australia?

NICK KERR

In preparation for the Plenary Council 2020, the National Association of Deacons has made a submission on the permanent diaconate. This article, written by Nick Kerr, chair of the National Association of Deacons discusses the main points of the submission.



Vocations to the permanent diaconate are growing faster than any other specialised vocation in the Church. But in Australia the number of deacons is still small. Why is this? Why are things moving so slowly in Australia?

That was how a submission from Australia's deacons to the Plenary Council began. The submission was prepared by the executive of the National Association of Deacons (NAD). NAD prepared a draft and sent it to every Australian deacon they could reach – all but a handful – for comment and then modified the draft in the light of the response. Some individual comments were attached as an appendix to the main submission.

According to the figures supplied by the International Diaconate Centre, based on Vatican statistics for 2017: *The biggest increase in numbers among vocations – a yearly increase of about 2.7% – was found in the case of permanent deacons. However, their number (46,312 worldwide) represents just approximately one tenth of the number of priests. The majority of new deacons is to be found in Asia, South and Central America. Their relative share in the clergy is the biggest on the American continent where there are almost 25 deacons for every 100 priests, in Europe there are eight and in Africa one.*

But the number of permanent deacons in Australia is still relatively small. According to the *Official Directory of The Catholic Church in Australia*, Australia had 2900 priests at the time the submission was prepared and only 176 permanent deacons. Some Australian dioceses do not have deacons at all. Some have only one or two. Some dioceses that do have deacons do little to promote vocations to the diaconate.

The diaconate is one of the apostolic orders found in the New Testament and declared by the Second Vatican Council to be, with the episcopate and the priesthood, a permanent feature of the Church. Therefore, a diocese without the diaconate is incomplete.

What's holding us back from embracing the permanent diaconate?

We deacons wonder why every diocese is not enthusiastically embracing the diaconate and promoting vocations to the diaconate. The grace of ordination strengthens us in our ministries. The structures of daily prayer, liturgy and ministry are mutually enriching. While we understand that different dioceses have different needs and different resources, all dioceses have dedicated people doing diaconal work – for example in chaplaincy, in pastoral care, in evangelisation, in administration, in social welfare ministries – that demonstrate Christ's love to the world. Many of them could be encouraged to discern whether or not Jesus Christ is calling them to express that love through the diaconate. It astounds us that it is up to each individual bishop to decide whether to promote vocations to the diaconate or not.

It is impossible to overestimate the value of the grace of ordination. The small number of deacons – the drought of deacons – is hindering the ministry of the Church. The theology of the diaconate is summarised well in *Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Guidelines for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2016, pp 15- 24). Pope Francis has called us ambassadors of Christ and “ambassadors of our incarnate God who shows solidarity up until death and beyond death.” (Message to the International Diaconate Centre golden jubilee conference, Rome, 20 October 2015).

We work especially closely with our bishop. We are a bridge between the Church and the world, but also between the bishop and his diocese. A large part of our role is to work with others to encourage other ministries. Some people seem to see the diaconate as a threat to lay ministry. A deacon who is not stimulating lay ministry is failing in his own ministry.

With so few deacons the ministry of the Australian Church is hampered. The

Australian Church has a powerful tool for evangelising and ministry waiting to be used fully in the way we believe the Vatican Council intended. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit we are failing to use to the full.

We're told that some bishops fear that deacons can be a financial risk to their dioceses. We find this surprising. Unless they are actually employed by the diocese, deacons are usually self-supporting.

Bishop's new guidelines for the diaconate

We congratulate the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference for giving the Australian Church the excellent *Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Guidelines for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* of 2016. They set out a concise theology of the diaconate. They also provide a comprehensive guide to building up the diaconate in all Australian dioceses. We believe that the whole Australian Church – and every diocese in Australia – should now make the most of the opportunity the bishops have given the Church to develop a vital diaconal ministry across the whole country.

Our hope is that there could be a rich harvest of men in ordained ministry to serve Jesus Christ and his people and to be a witness to Christian family life in every diocese in Australia.

We also applaud the fact that diaconal formators have been meeting. They held their third meeting in March 2019. We realise that smaller dioceses can find it difficult to form men for ordained ministry. The fact that diaconal formators are coming together and sharing ideas and resources is extremely encouraging.

We share Pope Francis' vision for diaconal ministry and a diaconal Church. We believe that deacons can do a great deal for evangelisation and renewal in our Church.

This is our main point – a plea to the bishops in every diocese to make a deep commitment to the permanent diaconate and to the promotion of vocations to the diaconate.

Many Australian Catholics still know little about deacons and our ministry.

If there were a solid commitment to the diaconate and to the promotion of the diaconate and to vocations to the diaconate, the number of deacons in Australia could double or treble within the next ten years.

A handful of dioceses has shown that

growth is possible. Deacon Tim Grauel, national coordinator for the permanent diaconate, has presented some statistics based on material supplied by Dr Trudy Dantis, director, National Centre for Pastoral Research, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. Figures show that there has, in fact, been a marked increase in the number of deacons in Australia in the last ten years – from 94 to 176. However, this growth has been restricted to five dioceses, Sydney, Parramatta, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, and the number of deacons in Australia is still very low.

The cost of the permanent diaconate

We would also like to see some uniformity across Australian dioceses in meeting the costs of *diaconal formation* and *ministry expenses*.

In many dioceses – but not all – men preparing to become deacons pay for part, or even all the cost of their formation. Men preparing to become priests do *not* pay their own academic fees. In many dioceses men preparing to be deacons are required to pay these academic fees – on top of all the costs of maintaining a family. This can be a very heavy burden on a man, his wife and his whole family. There is a danger it could make the diaconate available only to the comparatively wealthy and those approaching later middle age, when their family responsibilities are less. It could exclude many others.

In some dioceses deacons receive some ministry expenses but in others they don't receive even petrol money. We argue that all deacons should have at least their basic ministry costs covered. Many deacons and their families make real financial sacrifices for the sake of ministry and this should be taken into account.

Adopting these two proposals could encourage more to consider the possibility of ordained ministry. That in turn could lead to more men in ordained ministry to serve the church and to bring the lessons of lives lived in marital unity to their dioceses.

We firmly believe that deacons can help the Church to be a more effective witness to the love of Christ and that the Church should make it financially possible for comparatively younger men to be deacons. We know that different dioceses have different financial and human resources. However, our association would be happy to be represented on a working party to look at all aspects of encouraging diaconal vocations across the Australian church and all other relevant issues, including financial support and proper reimbursement of expenses. ☪

Call me John, not 'father'

JOHN DREW

John Drew, bishop of the Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand was made a cardinal in 2015. This reflection on clericalism was written in his newsletter on April 4, 2019.



When I was doing formation work at our National Seminary many years ago, I used to often say to the students that when ordained, they would be privileged to be called 'Father.' But I also used to say that they had to earn the privilege of being called 'Father' because of the way they were living their lives – serving the people of God in such a way that they were bringing life and hope to the People of God.

Last weekend I read an article written by a priest from France, Jean-Pierre Roche, entitled *Stop calling me Father*. Like him, I now wonder why we priests are called 'Father.'

In August last year Pope Francis wrote a Letter to the People of God, to all of us. The Holy Father appealed to all of God's people to take action against 'clericalism' which he sees as the source of abuse perpetrated by priest and bishops. In his article Jean-Pierre Roche says that we may be able to make some small changes to overcome clericalism by not expecting to be called 'Father.' He wrote about three reasons why we should not be called 'Father.'

The first reason is to be found in the Gospel. We are all disciples of Jesus who said *You are not to be called 'Master' – you have but one Master, and you are all brothers and sisters. And do not call anyone on earth 'Father,' for you have but one Father who is in heaven.* (Matthew 23:8-9) These words are, of course, difficult to interpret and understand, but the meaning is clear. Jean-Pierre Roche says that to be called 'Father' is to usurp the place of God. It becomes even more serious if a priest begins to play God – and sometimes that is what 'clericalism' is.

Secondly, calling us 'Father' makes our people act in such a way that people are put into a relationship of parent and child. It is not possible to have equal relationships between adults who are brothers and sisters if we call one of them 'Father.'

We all share the dignity of the daughters and sons of God. If we want the Church to be a family where we care for and look after one another we need to reflect on these words from the Second Vatican Council: *Even though some, by the will of Christ, are made doctors and pastors for the good of others, in terms of the dignity and activities of all the faithful in the edification of the Body of Christ, there is true equality among all.* (Lumen Gentium 32)

Finally, he says that the practice of calling us 'Father' can be unhealthy because it becomes an expression of dependence which is based on a false and unreal idea of obedience.

Being called 'Father' may seem important to some priests, but is it really that important? What is more important is that we live and act in such a way that we treat one another as the daughters and sons of God.

Making a choice to tell the people we serve not to call us Father might seem a very small thing to do, but it may be the beginning of the reform in the Church which we have been asked to do by Pope Francis.

Our priesthood is our response to living out our Baptism. It is our common Baptism that gives us the dignity of the daughters and sons of God.

For each priest to make the choice to ask the people he serves to stop calling him 'father' might seem a small thing to do but it will not be an easy custom to overcome – requiring practice by priest and people equally. We will all need to get over the initial awkwardness of entering into a new relationship of equality.

But this little beginning may be the spark of the reform in the Church with Pope Francis is asking for. It's a new practice that highlights the fundamental truth that through baptism we are all sisters and brothers of Christ – using our baptismal names highlights this – and God is our focus and centre. ☪

The fascinating Christian story

ERIC HODGENS

Eric Hodgens discusses how history has affected our Christian story and the need to reclaim its essence and original imagination and the role of good scholarship in doing so.

We all have our personal story. And it is just one part of the bigger story of our family, our tribe, our nation – the things that have shaped us. Institutions, too, have a life of their own – and their own story. Where did they come from? What made them as they are? Religions are such. We need storytellers with long memories. And, if we get really serious about understanding all this, we need good historians. Christianity has the story and the historians who, over the last couple of centuries, have become better at their game.

Christianity did not start out as a religion. It began firstly a movement within Judaism. There was the pre-existing story of Israel. Israel's story had two strands – one establishment, with temple and priesthood; the other prophetic. The prophets were the critics of society. As the establishment got set in its ways, the prophets wanted constant review to keep true to their original purpose. They troubled the establishment.

Jesus was such a prophet. His focus was on the best way to live to keep in tune with God – to make God's Reign a reality. As he gathered followers, both of himself and his way, the establishment got his movement in its sights and we know how that ended up.

But that was only the beginning of a new story. The movement grew and Jesus became the focus of its story. Then, following the tradition of Israel, they started to write. Paul was the first writer – letters of advice to cells he had set up. Then Mark created a new form of literature – the gospel. His purpose was to bolster his community which was struggling against opposition from outside and disintegration within. Then Matthew and Luke copied that style and wrote their own version of Mark's story, focussing on the needs of their particular communities. Finally, John wrote his version for his community whose preoccupations you can glean if you read the text closely – if you do a critique of the text.

The first thing you need to do in critiquing the text is to discern why the writer composed it. Each writer has his own reason for writing. This, in turn, affects the way he writes. The gospels, for example, are anything but re-plays of what was said and done. Discerning the writers background, biases and purpose clarifies your understanding of the text.

For the believer, the scriptures are sacred texts, but they remain texts none the less. Around the beginning of the 20th century scripture scholars started to look at them with an eye to their history. Who wrote them? When? In what social context and to what purpose? This new approach was called the historical critical method. Used skilfully, it gives new insights into the text and its context. Raymond E Brown was a brilliant student and researcher. Using this method, he showed us that early Christian communities varied tremendously. He expounds his case in *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*. His insights into another unusual community in which the Fourth gospel was written gave us *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*.

The historical critical method made scripture scholars into historians. They saw that the texts themselves were dynamic. Original texts were edited, modified and added to, documenting an equally dynamic movement. The Jesus movement was growing and always adapting to its changing context.

The organization of the Jesus movement

changed dramatically when the Roman Emperor made it the state religion. Bishops got political power. Ruling replaced pastoring as their primary duty. Constantine prized order and wanted a unified voice on belief. Hence the early councils of the Church. The result? A doctrinaire organization replaced communities of shared faith and mutual support. The period from 4th to 8th centuries is known as Late Antiquity. And who better to show us what happened than a historian of Late Antiquity?

The doyen of this field is another Brown – Peter Brown – Emeritus Professor from Princeton. His first book – a biography of St. Augustine (d. 430 CE) – showed, amongst other things, just how different Augustine's Christianity was from that of the early Jesus movement. The hope and optimism of the imminent arrival of the Reign of God was overshadowed by the Fall and Original Sin, making salvation a shaky future possibility. Fearfulness played a part in the rise of the cult of the saints and asceticism such as that of the desert hermits of Lower Egypt. In *The Body and Society* he showed the origins of devotion to virginity, chastity and sexual renunciation – all accidents of history; all part of the big story of Christianity. Brown teaches us of *The Rise of Western Christendom, Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* and how wealth played out in the early Church in *Through the Eye of a Needle*.

Christianity, both formed by and forming society has been anything but static during the whole of its history. Yet churchmen have always claimed that it was. The motto of the leader of the conservative faction at Vatican II, Cardinal Ottaviani, was *Semper Idem – Always the Same*. They claimed that you cannot change God's revelation. The unspoken implication was that they would tell us what that revelation is.

Again, a historian to the rescue. John O'Malley SJ. He is as good a teacher as he is a research historian. His books on the Councils of Trent, Vatican I and Vatican II are monumental. His most recent *When Bishops Meet* shows how Church change happens despite efforts to disguise it.

So, the story continues. It is a troubled one for the Christian Churches today. That, too, is part of the big story. Historians are our best friends helping us to make sense of it all. We are part of making the story. Becoming amateur historians will help us make sense of it. ☺

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Some Canon Law is no longer fit for purpose

JOHN SCANLON

John Scanlon explores the restrictions Canon Law could place on a synodal Plenary Council in 2020 in Australia. Is it time to change Canon Law to match the dominant Vatican II image of church as the People of God, so this might be reflected in the Council and thus ensure a more effective outcome?



I understand that during their *ad limina* visit to Rome earlier this year, the Australian bishops asked the relevant Curial authorities whether it was possible to redefine the statutory membership of the 2020 Plenary Council so as to make a significant increase in the number of lay people to be included. The answer they received was that Canon Law did not permit any change. This answer immediately gives rise to two further questions; was the idea of increasing lay representation reasonable, and is the current Canon Law on this subject out of touch with the reality of the Church?

In the apostolic constitution *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*, which embodied the 1983 revision of the Code of Canon Law for the Latin Church, Pope John Paul II had this to say:

“Foremost among the elements which express the true and authentic image of the church are: the teaching whereby the Church is presented as the People of God (cf. Const. *Lumen Gentium* n.2) and its hierarchical authority as service (ibid n.3); the further teaching which portrays the Church as communion and then spells out the mutual relationships which must intervene between the particular and the universal church, and between collegiality and primacy; likewise the teaching by which all members of the People of God share, each in their own measure, in the

threefold priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, with which teaching is associated also that which looks at the duties and rights of Christ’s faithful and specifically the laity; and lastly the assiduity which the Church must devote to ecumenism.”

This passage embodies the ongoing tension between the second and third chapters of *Lumen Gentium*, in which the view of the Church as the People of God, supported by the great majority of Council Fathers, is counterbalanced by the view, insisted on by a small but highly vocal minority, of the Church as a hierarchical institution. I will at some other time discuss whether the Church can continue to live with this inbuilt schizophrenia. For the moment, we should concentrate on the fact that the papal statement above recognises the right and duty of lay people to think, speak and be heard, during their exercise of their share in the threefold office of Christ. This statement not only emphasises a much larger view of the place of lay people in the Church than that existing prior to Vatican II, but it places this larger understanding in the context of an updating of Canon Law.

I suggest that when one looks for structures and events in the Church that are particularly appropriate for the hearing of lay voices, it would be hard to find a more appropriate structure and event than a National Plenary Council. In some ways it is a more opportune occasion for the voicing and hearing of lay views than another National Conference of Australian Laity would be, because the work of the Holy Spirit is more likely to emerge when bishops walk together with sufficiently representative numbers of priests, religious and lay people in a properly synodical fashion. Therefore I believe that it was entirely reasonable for the Australian bishops to consider a significant increase in the number of lay representatives among the Plenary Council membership.

This leaves the second question to be considered; is the current Canon Law on the subject in need of change? It might be helpful to begin by recognising that changes to a formal body of law inevitably lag behind the events that have

demonstrated the need for change. This will be even more the case when lawgiving is part of the prerogative of an absolute monarchy than it is in a parliamentary democracy. Vatican II gave rise to the need for a substantial revision of the 1917 Code, which was drawn up by people for whom Vatican I happened yesterday and the Council of Trent a week ago. The 1983 revision was intended to take account of the outcomes of Vatican II as far as that was possible; but the effort would have been directed mainly towards the canons directly affected by the most important decisions of the Council. Canons that concerned purely administrative details of peripheral and infrequent events were not going to be priority items.

It is of course possible to agree to a change to a particular canon without having to revise and relaunch the whole code. A number of changes have been promulgated since 1983 and it is always open for the relevant Curial body to process a change when the overall benefit to the Church is clear and the adverse implications are minimal or do not exist.

We live in very different times from 1983. Between then and now stands the cataclysm of the clerical sexual abuse crisis. Any reasonable person from any group within the People of God can see the hierarchical vision of the Church has lost credibility with the laity, because the hierarchy has lost the trust of the laity. If it is possible for that trust ever to be regained, it will happen only if events such as the 2020 Plenary Council are conducted as true Synods of the People of God, with a membership definition that recognises the significance of laity numbers, the predominance of women among active laity, and the relative importance of lay concerns. Any pettifogging provisions of Canon Law that stand in the way of this outcome need to be put in the rubbish bin of history. ☪

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A spirituality of life as gift

GREGORY MOSES

This article by Rev Dr Gregory Moses is a follow on to his article published in the Autumn 2019 edition of *The Swag*. There he attempted to make sense of the kind of society and culture we seem to be in right now. In the last section of that article he mentioned some possibilities in the way of where we might go from here. This is the first of two articles, the second of which will be in the Autumn 2020 edition. This article looks at Process Theology. The next will follow up on this looking at what Eugene Stockton called the Aboriginal Gift, for our sake as church and for our sake as human beings living in this country.

These two articles taken together are a re-writing of a paper given in Sydney in July, 2019 at the Australian Catholic Theological Association conference.

The object of this article is to help develop a spirituality, a total way of doing business with respect to the past, the environment and community and the transcendent. Right now, in consequence of my previous article and research before that, I think we need a total way of doing business which is *neither organic*, everything determined for us in advance as supposedly in traditional societies and cultures; *nor individualistic consumerist*, with the main goal being supposed individual happiness (effectively for those who can afford it!) as increasingly in our culture starting to gobble up everything; *but something more like artistic*, a *creative non-organic post-modern way of recouping a kind of identity which truly re-integrates community and nature and the transcendent*. Inspired by a certain kind of thinking I have been in for a while (see next paragraph), for this purpose I will have a go at developing something along the lines of a way which experiences the total way we have been given in creation and community and human life as *gift* to be more or less creatively received in a way which is best for all of these in our activity in the present moment. This reality in its turn then becomes a *gift* passed on for the sake of a certain total future for ourselves, our communities and creation.

To do this I will be using something called Process, or Process-Relational Philosophy and Theology, something I picked up in Leuven in 1978 and have been part of in some way ever since. As well as being inspired by it, this is the only kind of theology I know really thoroughly, as well as anyone in the country probably. So, if I am going to make even a small contribution to the kind of spirituality we might need in our society and culture, it has to be out of this!

In the paragraph before last, I say 'supposedly' on purpose. There is evidence that the cultures of our First Nations people had

inbuilt resources for adaptation to changing circumstances, new stories, new ceremonies etc. it is just that the intensity and speed of the threefold invasion of European diseases, European addictions and European settlers was such as largely, in some places almost totally, to overwhelm those resources. Whether our resources are any better for adapting to our circumstances and our many problems, well, we will find that out, or our grandchildren or great grandchildren will.

1. The Process Relational Metaphysical Vision: the background theory

The notion of Process Relational Trinitarian Theology as what I call an Artistic Spirituality of Life and Creation as Gift starts with the 'background theory', the Process Relational metaphysical vision. Don't be scared of the word, "metaphysics". It is just a way of talking about people having a go at describing what the world might really be like. This kind of vision about what the world might really be like had its origins after Relativity and in the early days of Quantum Physics, and it strives to be compatible with and inspired by contemporary sciences, though without being restricted to that. It attempts to overcome all the modern dualisms, towards 'a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience might be interpreted.' (Alfred North Whitehead, *Introduction to Process and Reality* from 1929). It does this in the name of adequacy to all of our experience, including scientific, ethical, artistic and religious experience. It does this also for the sake of the smoother attainment of the good and the beautiful in our lives, in our relationships with each other, in respect of our communities, and within the concerns we have as an emergent, creatively interacting part of Nature.

The Process vision first of all is thoroughly dynamic. Process people suggest that the world consists in events, happenings, more or less dynamic processes of various kinds in sometimes complicated connections. This is the case, rather than the world consisting in substances or enduring

substantial things with properties which more or less maintain their identity independently of time and relation. Substances are cashed in as certain kinds of connected systems of happenings or processes where the complexity of relations are strong enough to maintain a certain evolving continuity of character over time though never exactly the same. In some versions, these events or processes or connections of events may be nested inside each other. In other versions all bona fide events are microscopic. For all versions time is of the essence, and everything takes some time to happen. Don't worry too much about this.

Secondly, and more importantly for our spirituality probably, the Process or Process-Relational universe is strongly relational, strongly connected rather than either atomistic lots of little bits more or less existing by themselves or totally holistic, just one big whole. It is also into creativity in a big way.

Everything, including you and me here and now, is a more or less creative taking account of a certain total past environment, and a giving of itself to be taken into account by the future of that environment. This is broad enough to include electronic events on the one hand and the event of you here and now reading this article, or me here and now writing it. (I get this kind of example from a Process Theologian Marjorie Suchocki, reflecting on herself sitting in a library preparing a lecture for her students, and what has brought her to that point). That latter is also a particular way of taking account of your/my total social and natural environment including but not only your own past, at a certain point in your life, for the sake of the future of that environment, including your own future and everyone and everything connected to you. Striving to be less anthropomorphic in our statement but rather more abstract: everything is reception, transformation and transmission of something like energy and information from total past environment to total future environment.

In other words, everything is an environmentally sensitive event or else a connected series of such events. But not only that. Everything, and everyone, adds something to the process, everything and everyone makes a difference in the world, albeit oftentimes oh so slight.

This latter conviction is one of the features which stops the scheme being strongly holistic to the point of being totalising. Everything is an environmental event, but it is also a little bit individual, it cannot be entirely cashed in terms of its ensemble of



social relations, one is not just a product of all the things and people that/who influence you.

The Process Theologian Marjorie Suchocki puts all this in language which is even more in line with the intentions of this paper. From her Preface to *The Call of the Spirit: Process Spirituality in a Relational World* (P&F Press, Claremont, CA, 2005), pp. x-xi:

Spirituality is the integration of the experience of the Other and the others into the depths of the self and a consequent giving of the self to the Other and others in responsible (and "response-able") living. In and through this giving and receiving, the self is continuously formed as spirit. In a sense, of course, every instance of the self is a receiving of otherness into the becoming of the self, and integration of this reception, and a consequent giving of the self in influence to others, over and over again. We live in this process of receiving, integrating, and giving in every moment of our lives. But as we know too well, it is possible to live very shallow lives... Spirituality seeks to overcome this...to overcome smallness of being, to develop a wideness of personality that lives and acts towards a greater good.

Thirdly, though really putting the same in different words, the Past, Being in the sense of what is, what is already there as a result of previous becoming, is also gift.

In respect of this, see Charles Hartshorne, introduction in *Philosophers in Process*, edited D. Browning (Random House, N.Y., 1965), p. xix. 'to be is to be available for all future actualities'. Compare *Process and Reality*, p. 27: '...every item in its universe is involved in each concrescence. In other words, it belongs to the nature of a 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming.' [Note: 'a concrescence', literally 'a growing together', is a Process technical word for the more or less creative environmentally sensitive events or happenings or processes which make up the world.]

One of Charles Hartshorne's ways of explaining all this was to cite a poem called *The Builders*, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Look it up for yourself on the Internet! What is important here is that the way we have been given is not to be looked at as some kind of limitation, but as rather a bundle of potentialities for constructing our present and future lives, from the poem, "the blocks with which we build". This construction would then become itself a gift, a bundle of potentialities given to me for further constructing a certain total future, my own future, that of all the people connected to me, and that of nature in respect of which we are all creatively interacting parts. And so on.

2. The Theological Vision in broad outline

Enough of this metaphysical stuff, even if it does seem to be doing a lot of our work for us. Let's get on to the theological vision.

In the theological vision, this appropriation of life and creation as gift happens under the influence of the Divine Lure or Divine 'Initial Aims', God's dreams for us and for our communities and creation, but made specific to the present situation in which I find myself. But slow down a bit, first I need to say a little bit on Divine Action

Divine Action

For process relational metaphysics generally, the ultimate laws of nature, i.e. the laws that govern individuals of whatever level or quality and also 'compound individuals' (like us) are all *probabilistic* rather than deterministic. It is only aggregates like tables and billiard balls which admit to (nearly) deterministic laws.

All action of individuals on individuals is manifested, thus, as a *shifting of probabilities*, e.g. high grade natural events we call 'mental' events shifting the probabilities of the firing of neurons in various segments of the brain.

Divine action is modelled in somewhat similar fashion. The Divine Lure or Divine

Continued page 26

Initial Aims as they are called in theistic Process Relational Thought (see later), bring about a shifting of probabilities which sets the cosmic process up in the first place, without which there is no cosmos, but which also enters into the coming together of every particular occasion.

The element of the Divine Lure being made specific to the situation in which I find myself is also obviously very important when it comes to situations of discernment and counselling in pastoral practice. What Pope Francis tells us to do in complicated situations of daily ministry thus turns out, in Process thinking, to have a metaphysical ground!

Inside this general shifting of probabilities there can be a localized shifting of probabilities where for one reason or another the Divine Lure gets to be intensified. We now go on to look at this as it applies to us Christians.

The Christ, the Christian Community, Church and Sacraments

Jesus' life and work and the community of disciples around Jesus brings about a focussing and local intensification of the Divine Lure, to such an extent as even to shift the probabilities of certain kinds of events occurring: demons are cast out, the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

The in-breaking of the Reign of God continues, hopefully, in the Christian community or communities of disciples, extending the focussing and local intensification of the Divine Lure, God's dreams for us and for our communities and for creation, throughout history and in every place and time.

Preaching, liturgy, prayer and sacraments combine to keep the focussing alive in the community of disciples, as does Christian community life of charity, constituting the community of believers itself, hopefully, as a grace-filled relational matrix out of which believers and non-believers and even the natural world (cf. Romans 8) may draw and to which believers in turn contribute.

Thus the basic structure, as related to the 'background theory'. We now go to reflect some more on God and Trinity in Process Relational Thinking, and how this perspective may be able to enhance our Spirituality of Creation and Life as Gift.

3. God' and 'Trinity' in Process Relational Thinking

I won't spend too much time on this, as

one could go for ages, just a little bit more on God and the importance for our spirituality of the doctrine of the Trinity, even though the latter is a minority position among us Process people.

What all Process Theists agree on is belief in a God who affects all and is affected by all, affected by the fall of the sparrow in the silent spring and the flowers of the field or lack thereof and the hair on your head falling out.

This is, moreover, a God who persuades and does not determine, not by any means an overgrown absolute monarch or some kind of power-mad patriarch, in Thomas Jay Oord's terms, *a God of Uncontrolling Love*. [See Thomas Jay Oord, *The Uncontrolling Love of God: An Open and Relational Account of Providence*, (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 2015.) I am not sure I agree with everything he says, still trying to work that out.] This is also a God who is genuinely compassionate and not just metaphorically so – though almost everybody says that nowadays.

Within this vision, God is like the initial Giving, the true and Cosmic Giver, ground of the Cosmic Process in the first place, without which there would be no Cosmos and no us, and which also determines the kind of Cosmos. This makes a universe in the sense of a Cosmos possible, sets up the boundary conditions within which the universe happens but also opens up possibilities within the universe as it happens.

But God is also a fundamentally relational Process of Reception, Creative Transformation and Transmission, or Receiving, Integrating into the Divine Life, and Giving Back (even apart from the Trinity). In the Christian mystery the receiving and integrating is like the life, passion, and death of Christ, followed by the resurrection and ascension of the crucified Lord into the life of God. The flowing back into the universe, the Divine Creative Response in turn = in the Christian mystery the descent of the Holy Spirit, in consequence of the passion and death of Christ and his resurrection and ascension into the life of God.

These three or four moments in God's relation to the universe are sometimes given names: *the Primordial Nature of God* = God as Creator, the element within God which is unconditioned, primordial and self chosen; *the Consequent Nature of God*, the universe as it happens received in its completeness by God, creatively taken up into God's life; and sometimes *the Projective or Superjective Nature of God*, the flowing back into the universe, like the descent of the Holy Spirit. Calling them

Natures can be a little bit misleading however. God has only one Nature, God is all of the above.

Which is to say: God = Creative-Responsive Kindness and Love, though as Whitehead notes not without an element of judgement, separating the wheat from the chaff as history goes on.

Process Trinitarian Theology

The three-fold structure of primordial, consequent and projective turns out to be less useful for Trinitarian theology than might be thought at first sight: these describe God-in-relationship-to-us and the rest of creation or creation-in-relationship to God rather than a structure within God.

What is more useful is the fundamentally relational character of every reality, In God this becomes unrestricted and in the Divine case can easily be pushed in the direction of the ancient idea of perichoresis or circum-incession, each in the Heart of the other.

Each person constitutes itself and is constituted on the basis of a totally open completely unrestricted actively receptive relationship of kindness and love with the other two. In Process technical language, there is no negative prehension in God: what is received is taken up and what is taken up is creatively and lovingly responded to and in turn received and taken up...

Joseph Bracken, the most important of us Trinitarian Process Theologians, gains further clarity in the direction of preserving the Divine unity with the introduction into process conceptuality of the notion of Fields (compare magnetic or gravitational fields) ontologically equiprimordial with, just as important as, the Events which constitute themselves on their basis and which in turn co-constitute the Fields out of which their successors draw.

This leads eventually to the notion of three Series of Divine Events (a person = a particular kind of series of events or happenings) in unrestricted relationship constituting themselves on the basis of and co-constituting one Divine Field of Activity. This Divine Field of Activity in turn constitutes the final environment for all Cosmic happenings: three Persons in One God, with operations ad extra, beyond God, always involving all three persons. [But a lot of process people don't like the extra ontological baggage, and Joe Bracken seems himself to have moved on a bit.]

This is just a start: much more could be said (though this is probably more than you might want!). I suspect the low status given to the doctrine of the Trinity in Process

Theology in its classical phrases has more to do with the mostly liberal protestant background of the key people involved, rather than with the background theory as such. It might also have something to do with the fact that the background theory was originally constructed by Unitarians.

Once Trinity is introduced it becomes possible to recoup into Process Theology and into our Process Relational Spirituality of Life and Creation as gift the Jewish-

Christian-Islamic experience of the gracious giftedness of Creation, while also having an even more intrinsically relational personal God. Without Trinity, Creation becomes a kind of necessity in order for God to be a fully-fledged personal reality, to give God something to relate to so to speak, though not necessarily this creation. This considerably enhances the spirituality of creation and life as gift, while also giving an even stronger metaphysical ground to

the relationality of all creation, taking us way beyond individualistic consumer logic.

The best thing I have read lately on Process Theology is by Roland Faber, *The Becoming of God* (Cascade Books, Eugene, Oregon, 2017). For Process Theologians on Trinity, see among others: *Trinity in Process* edited Marjorie Suchocki and Joseph Bracken, (Continuum, N.Y., 1997). For Joe Bracken, see *The One in the Many*, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2001). ☪

How the Eucharist evolved

FRANK O'DEA SSS

Frank O'Dea SSS looks at how the Eucharist developed and what it might mean for Eucharist today. This is the second article following on from the article in *The Swag*, Spring 2019. This article is based on a chapter from a book by Frank called *Eucharist: the Basic Spirituality* which can be found online at: www.theeucharist.wordpress.com

Communion Becomes Rare

Around the 4th century a most regrettable development occurred, one that would drastically change the Eucharist for over a thousand years and lead to a serious misunderstanding of the Eucharist.

Christians were reluctant to receive the Body and Blood of Christ because a new kind of vocabulary of awe and fear was attached to the sacred mysteries. This situation was not reversed in any significant way until the early twentieth century with the letter of Pius X urging frequent communion. (Baldovin, p.47)

The sense of unworthiness encouraged a mini-penitential rite (*the Confiteor*), inserted just before communion together with the words of the centurion, 'Lord, I am not worthy to receive you...' (Matthew 8:8)

Not receiving the bread and wine was an extremely serious loss of peoples' participation in the mysteries, in some ways a denial of what the Mass is all about. By the thirteenth century the reception of communion had become so rare that the Church made a law that everyone must receive communion at least once a year. That such a law should be necessary indicates how poorly the Eucharist was understood at that time.

Orientation of the Church

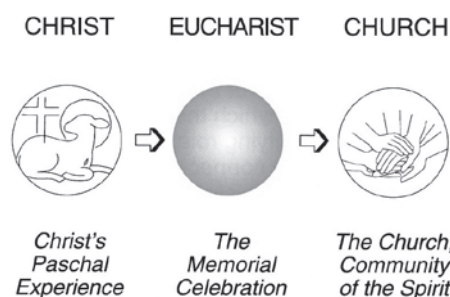
Another development occurred with the priest having his back to the people. When churches were custom built for Mass the altar was placed at the western end so the priest could face the east which was symbolic of the risen Christ. In doing so he faced the people who were on the other side of

the altar to him, facing west. Around the eighth century the altar was moved to the eastern end of the church but the priest still faced east which meant he now had his back to the people. The priest's back prevented the people seeing what he was doing at the altar. The people now just looked on while the priest 'said the Mass'.

One of the most significant changes that were made following Vatican II was to again have the priest facing the people, enabling the congregation to feel they are participating more fully in the Eucharist, and the altar again became a free-standing table instead of a bench against the wall.

The Dynamic Conception of the Eucharist

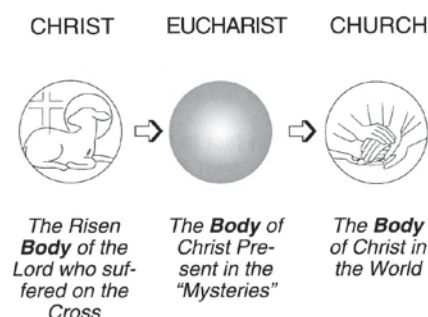
In the early Church it was clearly understood that the Eucharistic celebration was a powerful movement of transformation from dying to rising by remembering the death and resurrection of Jesus. By participating actively in the Eucharist, the people were transformed through the same dying and rising process. We can illustrate this in the following diagram.



(Tony McSweeney SSS, *Together*, no. 76, June 2002, p. 39; *Together* was an international journal of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation)

The death and resurrection of Jesus, the paschal experience, is remembered when we celebrate the Eucharist. This gathering of people becomes the Church. Henri de Lubac S.J. is known to have famously said, "The Eucharist makes the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist."

We could rework the above diagram using the word 'body' to link the three images.



The Eucharist is the connecting link between the risen Christ and the Church. It is by means of the celebration that the dying and rising of Jesus produces the evangelising Church.

This was achieved in the early centuries because the Eucharist focused on the twin events of the dying and rising of Jesus and the faithful participated fully in the Eucharist. Alas, this model crashed during the Middle Ages!

The Emergence of a Static View of the Eucharist

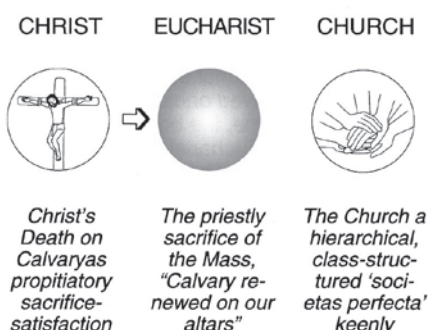
During the Middle Ages, Jesus' suffering and dying became the focus of the spirituality of the faithful while the resurrection was neglected. In fact, the Easter Vigil, the most important ritual of the whole liturgical calendar, was dropped altogether. The principal focus of the Eucharist came to be seen as making the bread and wine into the 'real presence' of Christ which took place at the moment the 'words of consecration' were uttered.

Continued page 28

The focus on the 'real presence' brought about a *static* conception of the Eucharist. Christ is present, no need to proceed any further. Our diagram now looks like this:

The dynamism of the Eucharist that we saw in the first model was completely stalled. It was considered the Mass fulfilled its function by bringing Christ onto the altar.

The arrow link between the Eucharist and the Church was removed. The Church is no longer perceived as a fruit of the Eucharist; it is constituted juridically by legitimate "institution" and has no perceived need of the sacrament to subsist as Church.



Instead of the Eucharist being seen as an upward movement of praise and thanks to God for his love and his gifts, the Eucharist was seen as a downward movement of Christ onto the altar as a sacrifice to expiate the sins of humankind.

The Eucharist as a 'Devotion'

An emphasis on the presence of Christ in the bread and wine led to devotions such as Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction, visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Forty Hours. These are all good in themselves but they became substitutes for receiving communion. An extraordinary devotion for offering Mass for the release of the souls in purgatory grew to such an extent that at the Cologne cathedral a hundred priests spent the whole day celebrating Masses for the dead! Sometimes Masses were celebrated by the priest alone. This was considered acceptable because the Mass was making propitiation for the sins of humankind and appeasing God's wrath whether the people were present or not.

With his back to the people, the priest had to hold the host and chalice up high so they could be seen and adored. It was believed that extraordinary graces would be given when they were thus seen, and to ensure people didn't miss the moment, bells were rung and incense used. People would sometimes call out, "Hold it higher, priest." Some were so keen on this practice they would run from one church to another just to be there for the moment of consecration!

Further Changes

The following innovations also took place:

- unleavened bread in the form of thin wafers made by consecrated people, usually nuns, was used from around the ninth century, and wine was specially made as 'altar wine' (this was making the elements sacred *before* the celebration)
- communion was given on the tongue with the communicant kneeling to show penitence and subservience
- only the priest gave communion and did the readings
- the cup was not given at all to the laity from the fourteenth century
- only a priest could touch the 'sacred vessels' such as the chalice and the ciborium
- the cloths (corporals and purificators) had to be washed three times by a priest and the water poured down the sacarium so that it went into the garden, before the sacristan could wash and iron them
- altar rails were installed to define the sacred area, the sanctuary, where only priests, male ministers and altar servers could be present during Mass
- a white altar rail cloth ran the full length of the altar rails; this was lifted and turned over the altar rails before communion, and the communicants had to place their hands under the cloth and hold it up under the chin to catch any crumbs that may break off the host; as a further safeguard the altar boy had to follow along with the priest and hold a 'communion plate' under the chin of the communicant
- the Eucharistic prayer was recited silently by the priest except for the words of consecration which were voiced a little louder but not so loud as to be heard by the people

- because the people couldn't hear the Eucharistic prayer, and even if they could they would not understand the Latin, many filled in the time by reciting the rosary or other devotional prayers during Mass

I can remember very clearly all of these practices some of which still linger. The result was the people were alienated and moved to the role of spectators while the priest performed every function *for* them but not *with* them.

Need for Reform

By the beginning of the sixteenth century a movement for reform began to take hold. This culminated in the new missal of Pope Pius V in 1570 and became the standard for the Western Church.

Pius V best expressed the spirit of the reform. It was to be a return to the sources, a return beyond medieval liturgical innovations to discover the traditions of the early Church. Pius V was in fact a courageous innovator, and the remarkable paradox is that his name is invoked by those who oppose the similar reform initiated by Vatican II. (Robert Cabie, translated by Lawrence J. Johnson, *History of the Mass*, The Pastoral Press, Washington, 1990, p.88)

Pius V made full use of the understanding of the early Church in so far as it was known at that time.

In his missal there was only one Eucharistic prayer called the Roman Canon, now known as Eucharistic Prayer 1. The Roman Canon was generally considered to be unchangeable. However, in 1962 Pope John XXIII did the unthinkable – he added the name of Joseph, husband of Mary, to the Roman Canon. This may seem to us now as something fairly trivial but at the time it was considered revolutionary because the pope had done what had been considered unchangeable, in spite of the fact that some modifications had been made in 1604, 1634 and 1914.

Further Reforms

Since the reform of 1570, a lot more was discovered about the Eucharist of the early Church and this enabled Vatican II to restore the liturgy more accurately to the traditions that had been lost. Change began with the restoration of the Easter vigil ceremonies in the 1950s and made a mighty leap forward with the reforms of the Council of Vatican II in the 1960s.

The principal changes that Vatican II made are the following:

- the Eucharist is celebrated in the local language
- the presider faces the congregation
- there are responses for the people
- the laity may read and give communion
- the gifts are brought to the altar by the laity
- the chalice is made available to all
- there is a variety of Eucharistic prayers
- the music is better suited to the laity
- some spontaneity is tolerated
- fasting has been reduced to one hour

We are so fortunate to be living at this time in history when we can enjoy the fruits of research and reform! Our spirituality is enormously enriched by the rediscovery and implementation of the genuine traditions of the early Church. ☪

Nonviolence nurtures hope and can renew the Church

PAX CHRISTI

The following statement was affirmed by most of the participants at the 2019 *Path of Nonviolence: Towards a culture of peace* workshop, sponsored by Pax Christi International and held at the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

As Christians committed to faithfully following in the footsteps of Jesus, we are called to take a clear stand for active nonviolence and against all forms of violence. In this spirit, people from many nations gathered for *Path of Nonviolence: Towards a Culture of Peace*, a consultation held at the Holy See's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development on April 4-5, 2019 in Rome. This was an important follow-up to the Nonviolence and Just Peace conference held in Rome in April 2016 co-sponsored by the then-Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International.

Our recent gathering of people of God from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Oceania, Europe, and the Americas included lay people, theologians, members of religious congregations, priests, bishops, and cardinals. Many of us live in communities experiencing violence and oppression. All of us are practitioners of justice and peace.

We are grateful for the special focus that Pope Francis has placed on the spiritual and practical power of active nonviolence to promote integral human development and cultures of peace, including through the 2017 World Day of Peace message on *Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace*, where he proclaimed: 'To be true followers of Jesus today... includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence.' We know that Jesus consistently practiced nonviolence in a context that was extremely violent, but 'nonviolence was not just a response to particular situations in the life of Jesus – it was the whole life of Jesus' (Cardinal Peter Turkson, University of San Diego, October 7, 2017).

Signs of the times in the light of faith

The Second Vatican Council taught us to see and respond to *the signs of the times* so that the Church can discern how we are called to live the way of Jesus in our lives and our world today. Our recent two-day gathering in Rome urgently called our attention to two critical *signs of the times*: the global crisis of violence with the unspeakable suffering it unleashes and, by the grace of God, the spread of active and powerful nonviolence. Violence, which includes killing, is not in accord with



human dignity. Rejecting the legitimization, reasoning, and actualization of violence and war, we need a new path – a paradigm shift to full-spectrum nonviolence – to take us into the future.

Just peace is the goal, nonviolence is the way. A sustainable culture of peace can only be established by nonviolence that absolutely respects human dignity. Rooted in the interconnectedness of God's creation, it also opens the way to an 'integral ecology,' as expressed by Pope Francis in *Laudato si'*. Violence undermines this interconnectedness. Nonviolence sustains it. Nonviolence teaches us to say 'no' to an inhuman social order and 'yes' to the fullness of life.

This is a spiritual reality, but also a practical truth. Over the past century nonviolent practice has increasingly been applied successfully inside and outside the Church to transform lives and to create change. We rejoice in the rich concrete experiences of people engaged in work for just peace around the world, many of whose stories we heard during this gathering. They illuminate the creativity and power of nonviolent practices in many different situations of potential or actual violent conflict. Moreover, credible empirical research into nonviolent and violent conflict in the twentieth century has confirmed that major nonviolent resistance campaigns were found to be twice as effective as violent (or armed) campaigns. And even when they fail, the consequences of their failure are not as disastrous as the consequences of violent approaches.

For the Church, alleviating human suffering is not a pretext, but a moral duty. As Christians we must not 'stand idly by the blood of a neighbour' (Leviticus 19:16). We have a duty to protect the life of our neighbour with every tool of

nonviolence available to us. In the same way, we have a duty to prevent violence, preserve just peace, and promote reconciliation.

Actively embracing the nonviolent way in the Church and the world

We encourage the Church as institution and people of God to a deeper understanding of and commitment to active nonviolence – following Jesus, embodiment of the nonviolent God, crucified and risen, who taught us to love our enemies (Matthew 5: 44), to put down our sword (Matthew 26: 52), to offer no violent resistance to the one who does evil (Matthew 5: 39), and to not kill. This commitment to nonviolence is formed of compassion and nourished by Eucharist, enabling a nonviolent encounter with the broken heart of God. Through him we discover and apply concrete ways to embrace nonviolence as a core teaching of our faith; to resist violence without violence; to put the power of love into action; and to develop the virtue of nonviolent peacemaking.

In this kairos moment, we strongly urge the Church to bring nonviolence from the periphery of Catholic thought on war and peace to the center – to mainstream nonviolence as a spirituality, lifestyle, a program of societal action, and a universal ethic.

As we recommit ourselves to furthering Catholic understanding and practice of active nonviolence on the road to just peace, and challenged again by stories of hope and courage in these days together, we call on the Church we love:

- to recognise that the Church – ordinary people, saints and martyrs – has done much to promote peace and nonviolence, while confessing the past and present complicity of our Church with cultural, structural, and direct violence; to restructure relationships in the Church to just partnerships; and to embrace an ethic of nonviolence as the pathway to genuine and enduring reconciliation, in fidelity to the consistent call of Christ in every situation of conflict;
- to root our conversion to nonviolence in the intense experiences of those most affected by violence – women, youth, migrants and the earth itself – and to recognise that their sufferings are an urgent call to that conversion process;
- to integrate Gospel nonviolence at every level of the Church – dioceses, parishes, families and the "domestic Church,"

Continued page 30

- religious orders, seminaries, universities, and schools – through formation, preaching, pastoral life, advocacy, research, and education, with particular attention to developing nonviolence and peace studies programs in all Catholic universities;
- to commit to a nonviolent just peace ethic for Catholic teaching on sustainable peace and conflict, violence and war; to include in the Catechism of the Catholic Church a definition of nonviolence, key nonviolent practices, and the norms of a just peace ethic;
- to advocate for increased public and private, intellectual and financial investment in education for nonviolence and in key nonviolent practices such as restorative justice, nonviolent communication, unarmed civilian protection, trauma-healing, nonviolent resistance, and nonviolent civilian-based defence;
- to consider poor and suffering people, especially those in violent conflicts, as the first persons to be protected by nonviolence and a theology of peace, even as we will seek to protect all people;
- to promote integral disarmament for humanitarian purposes – eliminating weapons already banned and nuclear weapons, continuously reducing all arms and weapons, and ending the development and production of new weapons systems;
- to consider nonviolence as a necessary condition of integral human development, as well as an ecological and social way of mutual relationship and mutual hospitality;
- to initiate a global conversation on nonviolence within the Church, with people of other faiths, and with the larger world to respond to the crises of our time with the vision and methodology of nonviolence;
- to contribute to an ecumenical theology of peace, promoting dialogue between believers and all people working for a peaceful world.

In every age, the Holy Spirit graces the Church with the wisdom to respond to the challenges of its time. In response to what is a global epidemic of violence, we are being called again and again to invoke,

pray over, teach, and take decisive action in the spirit of Jesus' nonviolence. Nonviolence is at the heart of the Gospel. It is the calling of the Church. It is not passive or naïve. It is a way of faith and action. It is an effective alternative. It is a constructive force to protect all people and our common home. It includes a broad spectrum of approaches and activities. It is the core of a new moral framework. It is essential to integral human development and at the heart of a culture of peace. It is at the core of the witness and action of Jesus and many who have come after him, including Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Dorothy Day, Beatus Franz Jägerstätter, Saint Oscar Romero, Berta Caceres, Lanza del Vasto, Wangari Muta Maathai, and the many people involved in nonviolent social movements.

In a violent world, nonviolence nurtures hope. Actively embracing the way of nonviolence can renew the Church and invite the entire world to discover the powerful hope of creative nonviolent solutions to the monumental challenges of our time. ☪



Where do we find the authentic catholic voice?

Eric Hodgens, Melbourne priest, looks at the current forces that offer credibility to divergent voices, especially lay voices.



Cardinal Pell got his voice heard from prison. Furthermore, surrogate Pell voices are heard from bishops he has promoted in Sydney,

Melbourne and Hobart. But, on three current issues polls show that most Catholics disagree with them. So, which voice is authentically Catholic?

A Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region will take place in Rome in October 2019. Its aim is to identify new paths for the evangelization of that region. The working document for the synod was issued in June this year. The main preoccupation of the synod is the Amazon and its people. The evangelization of the people has, in turn, raised some secondary issues such as the ordination of married indigenous men and the role of women. These secondary issues rang the alarm bells of the reactionary faction of the culture wars currently bedevilling the Catholic Church and, indeed, much of the Western World.

Pell has been a prominent voice of the right-wing faction all his life – dogmatic and authoritarian. Though convicted and in jail for paedophilia, he has used a letter to his supporters to add his voice to opposition to the Amazon Synod.

Pell's style is reaction. That style echoes in statements of his proteges the archbishops of Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart. Recent Australian legislation has given them material for reaction on the three hot button issues: same-sex marriage, standardising abortion legislation and assisted dying. These are the issues that really get them going – not refugees, immigration or climate change.

The episcopal voices are supported by ideological, right-wing activist groups such as Sydney-based Notre Dame University's Institute for Ethics and Society, the JP II Institute in Melbourne, the Christopher Dawson Centre in Hobart.

These institutes are part of a world-wide collection of similar organizations pushing the right-wing, ideological agenda. Italy has the Dignitatis Humanae Institute

promoted by Steve Bannon. The USA has the Napa Institute promoted by Timothy Busch and supported by Archbishop Chaput of Philadelphia and an array of others including George Weigel. These movement are highly organized and well-funded.

Polls show that, while Australian Catholics have mixed opinions on the morality of these issues, a heavy majority are against criminalising them. Catholics, in the main, appear to be at home in a pluralist, secular society, and judge that it is not right to force their opinions on others. They have a different ethical standard to the bishops and a more compassionate moral compass.

The days of coercive intervention by bishops are over. This explains why Archbishop Comensoli got such heavy fire when he vetoed Sr. Joan Chittester from speaking at a national Catholic Education Conference in Melbourne. This Pell-like intervention was met with a "who does he think he is?" reaction. Being a bishop carries little weight in public debate anymore – even with Catholics.

Vatican II shifted the centre of gravity of the Church from the hierarchy to the

People of God. This decentralising movement led on to a new doctrinal development – Reception Theology. For a doctrine or moral opinion to be authentic it must be received by the body of the faithful. In disputed matters, what Catholics believe is as important as what the hierarchy proclaim. *Humanae Vitae* was the watershed moment. The pope proclaimed that contraception was sinful; the Catholic body did not receive it.

So, where can the voice of the faithful be heard? Movements for continuing the renewal started by Vatican II have grown

in number and strength. Examples include the Voice of the Faithful in the USA, the Pastor’s Initiative in Austria and Catholics for Renewal in Australia. Originally treated with disdain by bishops, these are now mainstream movements. Bishops are routinely ignored these days. Maybe some will come to realize that they need to take notice of what their people believe.

The decision of the Australian bishops to hold a Plenary Council in 2020 has brought a surprisingly large number of submissions from Catholics – surprisingly large because most Catholics under 50 have given up.

Catholics for Renewal have produced a booklet of their submissions, *Getting Back on Mission*, published by Garratt Publishing. The situation is fluid. It is a plenary council of the bishops. The laity is signalling where they stand. If the bishops ignore them, they could well see a re-play of Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical and its aftermath of departures from the Church.

World-wide the lay voice is being formulated and speaking out. It is imperative that the bishops get theologically up to date and realise that the lay voice is part of the game. ☪



Three new ‘beacons of hope’

MATTHEW LAU

Newly ordained priests Dominic Hoang, Peter (Tam) Duong and Savio Nguyen reached the ultimate vocational goal as brothers-in-Christ when they were Ordained to the Priesthood by Bishop Michael Morrissey in St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Geraldton on 6 November.



The trio began their discernment process around the same time in their homeland of Vietnam, moved to WA in 2012 at the invitation of then-Bishop of Geraldton Justin Bianchini, received their Candidacy in 2017 and supported each other along their journey to the Diaconate in May of this year.

Bishop Michael Morrissey welcomed his diocese’s new shepherds and commended their support networks that enabled them to accept the invitation of Bishop Bianchini, to leave their home and travel to Australia.

“You knew very little about Australia, its language and culture, which is quite different to your own, yet you came with faith and trust in God’s call. Little did your parents know when you were baptised, that

you would be ordained priests for the Diocese of Geraldton,” said Bishop Morrissey.

“Together, you will be beacons of hope within communities in need of hope, where you will go to places where others would not go, to be men of compassion like Jesus, the Good Shepherd. This

community now calls you to the ministry of priesthood in Christ, to preach the Gospel, to love and care for the people, and celebrating the sacraments of the Church.

“In your ministry, you will be the hands and face of Christ, offering forgiveness of sins in the name of Him who is compassion incarnate and offering comfort to the sick and those senior in years through anointing. Carry out this ministry cheerfully as St Paul calls you to do.”

Bishop Morrissey reminded the newly formed priests to remember the words of Pope Francis in his letter, *The Joy of the Gospel*: “Do not lose the joy evident in your life”.

“Dominic, Savio and Tam, I have already

heard how you are being the face of Christ to people in our hospitals and nursing homes, and witnessed for myself this joy in your relationships with people, even when the situation might be difficult or challenging for you. Share this joy always with your brother priests for they will journey with you in your priesthood. Share this joy with the people you serve with love and compassion. They will accompany and ensure that you are not alone and welcomed always into the communities you serve,” Bishop Morrissey expressed.

“However, there will be moments in your life, when you will not feel cheerful, when things become difficult or challenging. For myself, prayer is a great antidote for those moments of doubt, conflict and despair. This same antidote is there for all of us as people of faith.”

Bishop Morrissey then encouraged his new priests to never lose their love for prayer, which, he added, includes “those moments of personal meditation and reflection deepening our awareness of the abiding presence of Jesus Christ”.

“Your own personal relationship with Jesus Christ deepens through constant prayer every day of your life, together with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“Centre your life on Christ bringing the hopes, disappointments, joys, doubts, mistakes and happiness into your ministry of priesthood and life itself,” he continued.

“As you begin this ministry in the Diocese of Geraldton, remember your family in Vietnam. Cherish and love them always whether in this life or in their eternal life. You began your journey of life with them, they will support you with their love and prayer.” ☪

While Fiona Patten made some points that all should be treated equally in Australian law and that the legislation was not needed because we already had laws covering discrimination, she did not address the real problem with these cases which have much to do with how vulnerable people might be protected when religious 'fervour' becomes harmful for vulnerable populations.

In the Porteous case, the complainant, Martine Delaney, pointed out in her *New Matilda* article (Sept. 30) that the complaint was not about presenting Catholic doctrine which all would expect the Archbishop to do but the way it was presented was inaccurate and harmful to some people. She said: *The booklet ... used questionable, cherry-picked research to lend an unwarranted sense of factual authority. The resulting document told us, as fact, same-sex-attracted people are, somehow, 'not whole'; their relationships no more than friendships and inferior to heterosexual marriage in quality and importance; that they raise unhealthy children; and, most offensively, that same-sex parenting is 'messing with kids'. The bishops had to know that, for almost every Australian, 'messing with kids' directly refers to paedophilia.*

Folau's arrangements with his employer are his business, but it is important to call out when Christians misquote their own texts in ways that hurt, vilify and potentially harm vulnerable populations.

Folau's misquoting and/or misinterpreting of a text that causes harm should not be supported but called out for what it is – harmful. When Delaney and the Rugby Australia are saying we believe this is dangerous talk that damages, even if primarily to their brand in Rugby Australia's case, it is that we should protect, not the misinformed.

When Delaney met with Archbishop Porteous, she held out hope that he might understand what was at stake not be misrepresented for political purposes.

Delaney notes in her article: *I simply asked him to express those beliefs in a manner which made it clear they were statements of Church doctrine, not fact, and to re-word the more offensive phrases so they weren't as overtly accusatory and demeaning to LGBTIQ Australians and their families. I would have been happy with a booklet that I wholeheartedly disagreed with, so long as it didn't imply a factual link between same-sex relationships and sexual abuse. I also offered a possible solution – an edit of the booklet, to achieve the above. He declined.*

There is an irony, the Australian Christian Lobby director wants to have the right to

sack people for spreading misinformation that hurts people, but wants the law to protect the rights of religious organisations to sack people who speak up for the vulnerable who may be harmed by hurtful speech.

Silver Wattle Quaker Centre Bungendore

About thirty years ago, Franciscan Friar Richard Rohr, started his Centre for Action & Contemplation in New Mexico. He was motivated by the realisation that activists tended to confront as enemies those they were campaigning against.

He felt an alternative approach was needed, in keeping with Jesus' teaching to love one's enemy. This is what Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr also sought to practise. He concluded that a contemplative lifestyle was best equipped to achieve this. The Silver Wattle Quaker Centre (SWQC) attempts to offer something similar.

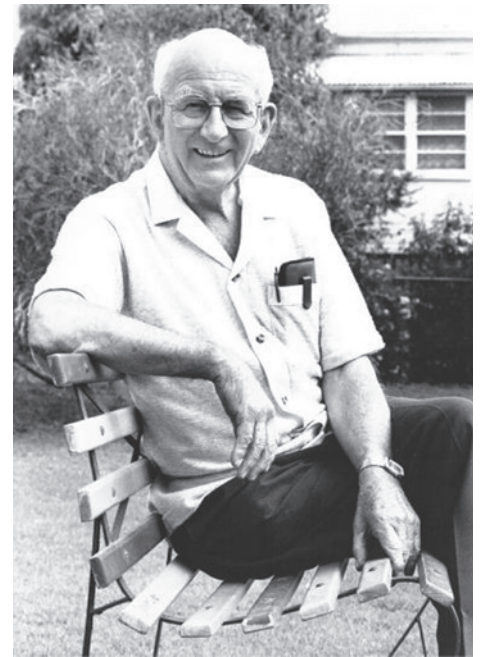
Silver Wattle Quaker Centre is located on the shores of Lake George, amid stunningly beautiful surroundings. Because this was a place of plenty (the Lake was full then), coastal and inland indigenous groups would gather here. More recently, it operated as a sheep grazing property and later the St Joseph's House of Prayer, a Catholic community. Silver Wattle was purchased from the Canberra Archdiocese by the Religious Society of Friends as a place of spiritual renewal and regenerative landcare.

Programs are offered for people of all faiths and Friend in Residence (FIR) program is for people who would like to share in the community life based on the monastic traditions of both East and West. The goal is to become 'contemplatives in action'. For more information: www.silverwattle.org.au

Missionary Sisters of Service Founder book launch

Sixty people gathered at Yarra Theological Union, a campus of the University of Divinity, on the evening of 2 October for the launch of *Dear Mother Dear Father: Letters Home from John Corcoran Wallis 1927-1949*.

This significant volume makes available letters of Fr Wallis covering two decades of his younger life. They offer a window into another era of the Australian Church and, in particular, into a man who would make a unique contribution through the founding of the Missionary Sisters of Service. The book is the result of the vision, scholarship and dedication of Sr



Bernadette Wallis mss, Missionary Sister of Service and niece of Fr Wallis. Its publication is one activity marking 75 years of the Missionary Sisters of Service.

Fr Edmund Campion observes: *The letters are a rare window into the spiritual life of Catholics in this period [and] are remarkable in the way he [John Wallis] shared with his family ... his deepest thoughts on religion and his vocation (p110).*

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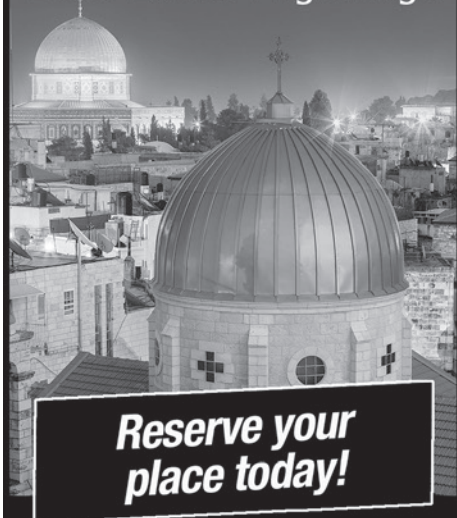
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Why do married men have to be of 'proven virtue'?



The Pan-Amazon Synod discussed the ordination to the priesthood of 'married men of proven virtue', the *virii probati* as they have become known, in order to ensure better access to the Eucharist for the many tens of thousands of Catholics who are denied regular Eucharist because of the shortage of priests.

Father Bill Grimm MM, publisher of ucanews and based in Tokyo, questions the need for the term *virii probati*. It both insults married men as it presumes they need to prove their virtue and is ridiculous, if not comic, in that it suggests celibate or and non-married men don't need to prove their virtue (ucanews, Oct 21).

Recent scandals might indicate the opposite or at least imply there is no difference between men of different marital status. 'Certainly the evidence does not show that celibate priests are greater exemplars of virtue than other men' said Grimm.

Grimm goes on to point out that the only reason for this is the fear of sex as married men's lives involve women with whom they have sex. He said: *There is a long history in the Catholic Church, especially perhaps among clerics, of considering sex to be somehow defiling and women to be invitations to sin. That attitude is one of the reasons (not the sole one nor, one hopes, the chief one) underlying the emphasis upon celibacy.*

Grimm concluded: *let's expect those men to be virtuous, as we expect all Christians to be virtuous. But let's stop acting as if married men are somehow more in need of vetting by the virtue police or vice squad than unmarried men, whether celibate or merely single.*

Pope Francis gives the word to women

Pope Francis has given another example of his desire for a more evangelical Church reports Nicolas Seneze for *La Croix International* (Oct 1, 2019).

Pope Francis has declared the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time to be the Sunday of the Word of God. Francis reaffirms the role of

God's Word along with the Eucharist to emphasise how 'the relationship between the Risen One, the community of believers and Sacred Scripture is extremely vital for our identity.'

Francis proposed a new way of seeing ministry of the Word where women and men are capable of authentically proclaiming the Word. 'It is clear that, unlike the permanent Ministry of Lector, the new ministry Francis envisions will be accessible to both men and women' the article noted.

Through this motu proprio, which is firmly rooted in the revitalized tradition of Vatican II, Francis also continues to sketch out the Church of the future. It is a Church more attentive to the Gospel and concretely expressing the active participation of the laity.

As he says in his motu proprio, the article continued: *Those who draw daily nourishment from God's word become, like Jesus, a contemporary of all those whom they encounter: they are not tempted to fall into sterile nostalgia for the past, or to dream of ethereal utopias yet to come.*

Irish Catholics support women priests

Monday, September 23, 2019 – 06:25 AM
Irish Times

A spot survey at all Masses over three weekends in Killala diocese, made up of north Mayo and west Sligo, resulted in 1500 people participating. The bishop promised the results would be taken into policy and planning in the diocese, it was reported in the *Irish Times* (Sept. 23).

- A 300-strong diocesan assembly voted on a range of issues with the following results:
- 85% backed the view that priests be allowed to marry;
- 81% supported priests who have married being returned to active ministry;
- 80% backed women being ordained to the diaconate;
- 69% agreed that women be ordained to the priesthood.
- The delegates voted 86% in favour of the Church's teaching on homosexuality and those excluded from the Church being changed to reflect the inclusion of all people regardless of sexual orientation, marital status, or family status.

Findings from an *Irish Examiner/ICMSA* opinion poll of farmers and rural families found that 74% of respondents said religious services have been cut back or curtailed in their local area and that 73% backed the ordination of female priests. ☪

Responding to the Australian Plenary Council

The winter edition of *The Swag* published the April 2019 statement from 27 Melbourne Parishes about urgent changes in the Church that should be discussed at the Plenary Council. This statement was an attempt to articulate a set of views about those changes which is widely shared by priests and people across many parishes.

Since then we have received a number of comments. They range from 'good on ya but it's a waste of time 'cos they won't do anything' to the language is too strong, to some of the language needs to be stronger, in areas such as the position of women in the Church and climate change.

We were also told on good authority that group work does have an effect, and that collaboration between parishes could have a powerful impact.

As a consequence, the lay people (from five separate parishes) who wrote the Joint Statement invited others to join with them to create a website: senseofthefaithful.org.au. The objective is to understand more fully the views about necessary changes in parishes across Australia, and not just in Melbourne. To the extent to which there are strong, shared views we seek to make them explicit and draw the attention of the Plenary Council to them.

The title of the website – *PC 2020 and Beyond: Parish Conversations about Change* – is intended to make clear what it is all about.

This is a website for communication between parishes across Australia, rather than individuals. Parishes are asked to nominate 1-3 persons as persons approved by their parish to submit material or views on behalf of the Parish. This approach is designed as a way of managing the risks of disruptive or unauthorised posting of material.

The Committee agreed that initially there be seven pages in the website:

1. About – the objective and other features of the website, including our desire to receive diverse views on these issues.
2. Pope Francis – a page about Pope Francis, and his views and statements about relevant issues.
3. News and Events – information about news and events relevant to PC 2020, from both Australia and overseas. For example, material on the German synodal process and on the Amazon Synod might be appropriate.

4. Around the Parishes – information submitted by parishes about activities, statements and initiatives at the parish or deanery level. This might involve a collection of parish submissions to the PC, and plans underway for the second stage process.

5. Joint Parish Activities – a page dedicated to the 27 May 2019 Statement by 27 parishes, and to any further suggestions about how parishes might collaborate.

6. Conversation Corner – this will be the forum for the exchange of views between parishes, and debate about them.

7. Articles and Contributions – here articles and other contributions judged to be of relevance of participating parishes will be posted.

You may well wish to help build some momentum towards Plenary 2020 by looking up the website and joining in the parish conversation.

Fr Gerry McKernan, Templestowe VIC

I suggest the following topics should be discussed at the upcoming plenary council:

1. We must pray that Bishops will listen to and accept that the suggestions put forward might have some merit and could lead to a stronger and more vital Church.
2. Remove double standards by allowing Catholic priests who have married to rejoin as priests if they wish when we have over 30 Anglican married priests now practising as Catholic priests.
3. Celibacy is a human rule brought in to protect Church property from being inherited several centuries ago. Consider discarding it and make it a choice.
4. Allow women to be ordained and recognise women's value and uniqueness in the Church.
5. Pope John XXIII specifically set up the Papal Commission on Contraception separate from the Second Vatican Council. It was to report back to him separately to the Council and actually voted 72 to three in favour of accepting contraception. Unfortunately, he had died by the time the result was handed down and the next Pope would not budge from the previous rule. About time this was recognised by the Church as there is no reason for the Church to fail to consider that Jesus never expressed any views about sex and yet it is a total obsession in today's Church hierarchy.

6. Have priests professionally trained in public speaking to help them give sermons with meaning, enthusiasm and practicality. Allow laypeople with expertise to give homilies.

7. Immediately accept the Royal Commission's recommendations on clerical pedophilia, particularly the ones around redress and without time limits.

8. Review marriage breakdown laws in the church. I cannot picture a God who demands couples to live in toxic relationships. Maybe Church needs to recognise these facts and after some period of separation accept that the marriage will not be reconciled and allow an amicable separation. As God is all about relationships, maybe recognise divorce and allow remarriage after a certain period of time.

Marty O'Donnell, Manly NSW

Facing the problem is the best way

Reading Patty Fawcner's article on censorship, which is apparently still alive and active in the Church, brings to mind my recent experience. I seldom use my kindle as I prefer to read books. My kindle lay unused for perhaps two years. I picked it up and recharged it. When I opened it a page appeared which I had never seen before and which I had not called up. I looked at it and moved the cursor to read it, but it immediately disappeared. I managed to get it back again for a brief period and again it disappeared.

This behaviour and the pertinence of the subject aroused my interest. The book which kept disappearing was *Potiphar's Wife* by Kieran Tapsell and it apparently deals with the question that is currently and tragically involving the church in scandal. After much effort and with a number of failures I managed to obtain a copy of the book, which is currently unavailable on kindle or just about anywhere else. I wonder who is the censor and why. A pretty powerful agency whoever or whatever it may be.

I have found flaws in the Church. What human organization does not have flaws? Something evil has happened. Are we going to sweep it under the carpet in the hope that it will be gone? How do we deal with evil if it is swept under the carpet? If we cannot look at it, can we deal with it or will it arise again and overcome us? Evil is always with us. It is the other face of good and good is the only quality which can deal with it and it needs light to do so. Hidden in darkness, evil will prevail.

Continued page 36

This is a church-wide problem and it needs the wide church to deal with it. Unless the laity are empowered and engaged in the battle to deal with it, we will fail. Sexual abuse, including the abuse of children has always been a human experience and we must control it, but we will fail if we try to conceal the problem or the perpetrators. We need to bring this matter out into the open and accept the consequences no matter who is involved.

Mark Stokes, Somers VIC

The Swag

May I congratulate all associated with *The Swag*.

I have been involved in various forms of ministry throughout Australia and several countries for over sixty years.

I would hope that *The Swag* be regular reading and conversations in every presbytery, parish and Catholic school community. The wide array of informed articles is a credit to the contributors and the editor.

At this critical time of addressing key issues in church life it is so vital that our people be well informed, especially now in the Plenary Council process.

What a valuable resource would *The Swag* be for parish council readings and discussions!

Dr Kevin Treston, Wilston QLD

Thank you for this wonderful publication. It gives me some hope and comfort. Many articles are so brave and courageous.

As a lifelong Catholic, now 80 years old, I feel despair for our Church.

The shocking sexual abuse by clerics (even some Bishops and Cardinals) – and the cover ups – even more scandalous.

God bless your work.

Margaret Coffey, Ashfield NSW

The Spring edition of *The Swag* has just arrived!

I really enjoy and value your magazine and generally pass it on to others 'to keep them up-to-date' with the excellent and relevant material that is offered.

I offer my congratulations to those who provide the articles...keep up the good work!

Margaret Chandler RSJ, Forth TAS

A chat on a hat

Bishop Peter Cullinane (*The Swag*, Spring 2019) in his article *A Matter of Style*, raised many relevant challenges for our contemporary Church. The reverence and respect that is rightly due to those who hold episcopal office should not depend on sartorial trappings. The crozier is, par excellence, a bishop's symbol of office. The appropriately coloured zucchetto is more than adequate as ceremonial headgear.

Mitred bishop's their shadows cast in the present and the past.

Millinery that's out of date should be hurried to its fate.

If this were so, 't would be a sign that we're no longer By-zan-tine.

There is no need for lengthy discussions to achieve this end. It could be done at *the drop of a hat*.

Rob Egar, Adelaide.

Marriage – a forgotten Sacrament?

After 48 years helping prepare then preside at some 350 Marriages – I still find myself asking this question, as one like we all, living in a culture increasingly more-secular, indeed more-hostile to this beautiful Vocation.

During these years, I've come-across several Renewal Movements in our Church – one in particular continues to speak strongly to me about what Marriage is and can be.

Late in 1975 I had to opportunity to experience a Marriage Encounter Weekend. That was an indelible, life-changing experience for me, towards living my own Vocation, as well as an immense help working with couples-to-be-married.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter (WWME) began in Spain in 1952. A young priest Fr Gabriel Calvo gave a series of talks to married couples, to enhance their relationship, to facilitate them living their Sacrament.

The mission of WWME is to proclaim the value of Marriage and Holy Orders in the Church and the world. After the mid 1960's WWME spread to Latin America, to the USA, to other parts of the world, including Australia, in 1971. Today, in about 100 countries, it is the largest pro-marriage organisation in the world.

A WWME Weekend offers married couples a unique weekend experience to explore and recharge the precious nature of their relationship; to offer the means to keep their passion alive in a gentle, nurturing environment, away from daily

life pressures, taking their relationship further to enrich and revitalise their marriage; to rediscover their best friend they first married, and join the millions of couples worldwide who have also learned how to keep their marriage vibrant and alive!

WWME is not a retreat, definitely not marriage counselling nor guidance, nor group sensitivity; it doesn't aim to equip couples to deal with obvious, current marriage problems. There are various government services and privately funded counselling agencies which offer assistances for marriages in crisis. In a few words, the Weekend experience and follow-up by couples, aims to assist a good marriage towards becoming a great marriage. A M/E Weekend does give couples the on-going opportunity to grow in love with each other. In Jesus' words: 'people will know you as my disciples by your love for each other' (Jn13:35). It's the heart of Evangelising...giving personal witness...a bit like trying to live the Beatitudes...we're living beyond the 10 Commandments!

I believe a M/E Weekend experience is also of great value for we religious and priests. I have come to appreciate better, how the Sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders dovetail...very much of my inspiration and personal support for my own vocation has come and continues to come from married couples. Part of this raised awareness is the M/E expression: 'to love is a decision'.... a motivation, for me, to instinctively reflect: 'what's the best, most loving decision I need to make' for this person / couple / situation now? After stepping-aside from ministry in schools, end of 2016, I was fortunate to re-connect with M/E via a second Weekend experience in August 2018; that continued the life-changing experience M/E has been for me. I'm now very happily connected with WWME Eastern Region.

A Forgotten Sacrament? Probably, for many, with only a vague idea of what marriage is and can be. If Sacramental Marriage is at the heart of God's loving plan for humankind...and I believe it is ... then we priests ought to 'bend over backwards' warmly welcoming a rarely-made request by an M/E couple to give a short Pulpit Talk at Sunday Mass. Who knows how God's gentle Spirit may touch and motivate couples present, to seriously consider what could be a life-changing opportunity to enhance their marriage, from the personal, lived testimony of another enriched couple?

Fr Terry Herbert MSC

Humanae Vitae an exercise in clericalism

Celebrating Freedom of Speech, Val Noone (editor), 2019. Privately published. For copies email: valnoone@iinet.net.au or phone 0437 625 223. Cost \$15.00 (incl postage). This book includes the papers given at the 50th anniversary colloquium of *Humanae Vitae* held in Melbourne in October 2018. Reviewed by Peter Maher.

Amazingly, 50 years after *Humanae Vitae* was promulgated, it remains the touchstone of orthodoxy in the Catholic culture wars. For some it remains the test of orthodoxy while for others it has been consigned to history as irrelevant. Some have done so from the day of the promulgation. Yet it broke the hearts and spirits of many laypeople and priests, sending many to follow paths outside the church and religious life.

The papers delivered at the colloquium in 2018 explore the process of producing the encyclical, the tragic outcome for the Catholic church upon the promulgation reversing the hope held out by Vatican II, the implications for hierarchy, moral theologians, pastoral care and the people and the unintended positive outcomes.

The historical details about the Commission and the majority and minority reports, the role of Karol Wojtyla, the reception or lack thereof and the tragic consequences of the treatment of clergy in Australia are well explored. While no longer important because the import of the teaching has not translated into the lives of Catholics and according to the authors of this book, never did, the analysis of the way it played out in the ecclesial space offers a very useful insight into moral theology today, the reality in the pews, the entrenched nature of the culture wars and

the way *Humanae Vitae* became the beginning of the end for clericalism.

There are memories of Gilroy's announcement with interesting photographs, a detailed coverage of the attempts of moral and pastoral theologians to resist the encyclical and its effect on married couples and their pastoral priests, an analysis of the destructiveness of hardliners like Knox in Melbourne and some of the implications of a failure of intellectual integrity by the clericalist minority team of the commission egged on by Wojtyla which carried right through to the current touchstone of orthodoxy by the culture warriors, John Paul II's the Theology of the Body. The intellectually indefensible 'natural law' basis for the teaching against contraception which was engaged by the minority view who held power at court to cover for their fear that if they acted with intellectual integrity and with the wisdom of the significant majority of the commission who voted for change, Catholic sexual morality would fall like a house of cards. They feared that it would signal the end of 'intrinsic evil' of particular acts and where would that lead?

The irony is that the encyclical did produce the end of the magisterium's moral authority, the rise of awareness of the role of conscience and the beginning of the decline in clerical power – although that



would not have full effect till the clerical sexual abuse crisis. The irony of that is not missed on the authors either as they note that while controlling clerics were trying to control each and every sexual act of good married couples trying to manage parenting responsibly in a new context, some clergy were acting with impunity behind a clerical wall of silence abusing children.

This is an important book on a moment in church history destined to follow the old adage if we are not diligent: history unexamined is in danger of being repeated. There is much to learn from this moment in church history is we are to support Francis in the restoring the vision first presented in Vatican II. ☪

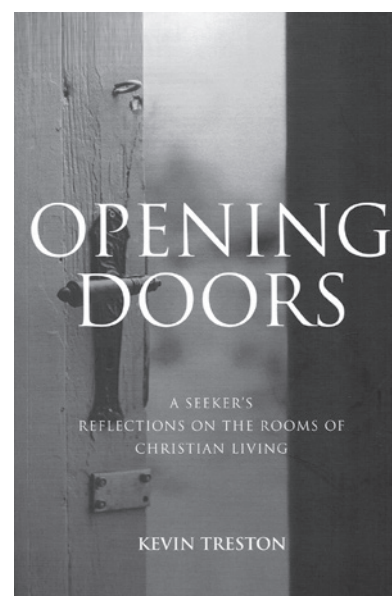
Naming and growing faith today

Kevin Treston has been writing books to assist Catholic adult faith formation for many years. In this, his latest work, he opens up ways of reflecting on the issues that face Australian Catholics. As we lead up to the Plenary Council it is a timely resource for individual and group reflection. *Opening Doors, A Seeker's Reflections on the Rooms of Christian Living*, Coventry, 2019. p142. Review by Peter Maher.

This is a book for those seeking to reflect on the issues the church faces today from a gospel perspective. Treston invites us into eleven rooms for reflection including the universe story, grace, God, church, ministry, women, ethics, spirituality and our place in the multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-faith and multi-faceted world.

In the introduction Treston quotes a Chinese proverb – Teachers open the door; you enter by yourself. This in some ways describes the methodology of the book.

Each room explored offers insights, information, reflection in today's context and some questions for personal and/or group reflection. The reader however can engage with the text in many ways to foster their own adult learning. Each room is presented as a place for wandering around as Treston opens the door on the topic to be explored. The learning however is to be adult learning – self-directed, based in one's own experience and directed by the learner to the creation of a better life and a better world.



Continued page 38

REVIEWS

This book is easy reading but each chapter asks hard questions and calls on the reader or group to discover ways ahead in service of the future church and world. It invites readers to address the critical questions of the incarnate God in everyday realities while reminding us of the cosmic dimension of the living God. We are invited to reflect on the meaning of human existence on a planet that is self-destructing, while taking us to the heart of

the questions for our church in the 21st century. Clericalism, church governance, women, LGBTI, conscience, making ethical decisions, spirituality, ecumenism and secularism are all addressed in the course of the journey through the rooms.

It is a book that marries good information and good reflection in the service of the adult learner finding a path to wholeness and holiness in the current context of the Catholic church. Treston invites adult

reflection into the complexities of the current church crisis. However, he is always positive leaving the reader hopeful that as a group of Catholic adult faith learners, we can together carve out a future based on gospel values.

It is this marvellous mix of balanced statement of belief and practical method that makes this book a useful support to journeying toward the Plenary Council 2020 individually or in groups. ☪

Inventing Melbourne

The Invention of Melbourne: A Baroque Archbishop and a Gothic Architect, edited by Jaynie Anderson, Max Vodola and Shane Carmody. Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2019. Hardback \$55.00. Reviewed by John Luttrell FMS.

‘Marvellous Melbourne!’ exclaimed British journalist George Sala after his visit in 1885. Yet Melbourne was a very recent city, booming in population and wealth after the gold rushes of the 1850s. *The Invention of Melbourne*, an impressive and aptly illustrated Miegunyah imprint of Melbourne University Press, shows that Melbourne’s growth was in culture as well as in material wealth. Specifically, it elaborates the contribution of two British immigrants to Melbourne’s architectural, artistic and cultural heritage.

James Alipius Goold, an Augustinian priest from Ireland, was the first Catholic Bishop, and then Archbishop, of Melbourne, from 1848 to 1886. Goold ambitiously and forcefully led the diocese in constructing impressive stone churches for at least thirteen parishes, marked most significantly by his undertaking the construction of St Patrick’s Cathedral. His favoured architectural style was Gothic Revival which he implemented in partnership with architect William Wilkinson Wardell who migrated from England to Melbourne in 1858 and is the second subject of this volume.

Goold is actually the predominant subject of the book, as he is the focus of Parts 1, 2 and 4 which cover respectively his biography, his passion for collecting Baroque art, and his amassing one of the most significant private libraries in colonial Australia. While Wardell is the focus of Part 3, even this part is entitled ‘Goold’s Architectural Patronage in Melbourne’. Nevertheless, two of its three chapters are largely about the career and contribution of Wardell as Gothic Revival architect, first in England and then Australia.

This study of Goold and Wardell is a major result of collaborative research by a range

of historians and cultural specialists with funding and/or support from the University of Melbourne, the Australian Research Council, the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission and a number of other institutional and private helpers.

There are seventeen specialist writers involved in the fourteen chapters. I would suggest that key chapters for each of the four parts are Max Vidola’s opening biographical survey of Goold as ‘Pastor and Cultural Patron’, Jaynie Anderson on Goold’s ‘Collecting for Conversion and Passion for Late Baroque Painting’, Paola Colleoni’s ‘Building the Diocese’ (on the working partnership of Goold and Wardell), and, for Part 4, ‘Divining a Purpose: the Logic of Bishop Goold’s Library’.

The other writers link and complement these key chapters. For instance, Colin Barr’s chapter 5 pungently delineates Goold’s independent style as a bishop in the face of pressures from the Empire network of Irish bishops presided over by Dublin’s Paul Cullen. Klaus Krüger and Angelo Lo Conte elaborate the cultural tradition and riches underlying Baroque art. Peter Lovell’s chapter on the E.S. & A.C. Bank in Collins St, Melbourne, shows Wardell continuing the Gothic Revival in Melbourne a year after the death of Goold. While many colonial buildings have been replaced, it remains (in Lovell’s words), ‘a building that is to this day a remarkable and beautiful survivor from a period when Melbourne was a truly great Victorian city’. These are examples of the strong scholarship of all the writers.

The book will be an enduring product of the collaborative research project on the contributions of Goold and Wardell to Melbourne. Another fruit of the research



is that the Mannix Library of the Catholic Theological College has gathered over 1000 items from of Goold’s now dispersed library into its Archbishop Goold Special Collection with its own website <https://gooldlibrary.omeka.net/>. A free public exhibition based on the project is featured at the Old Treasury Building Melbourne from August 2019 to 2 March 2020 and is also entitled ‘The Invention of Melbourne: A Baroque Archbishop and a Gothic Architect’. You can also find a clear and illustrated print overview of the project and exhibition in the June 2019 issue of the Journal of the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, *Footprints*, volume 34, Number 1. ☪

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Francis forges ahead with reform in his way

The Pope Francis Agenda by Father Donal Dorr, Veritas. Reviewed by Michael Gill.

From the moment of his election, Pope Francis attracted the attention of millions, keen to know more about him, his journey in life. Many authors responded with essentially biographical accounts tracing the chronology of Jorge Mario Bergoglio from his birth in 1936 to his papal election in March 2013

Fr Donal Dorr has a different approach in this book. He is a member of St. Patrick's Missionary Society (Kiltegan). For many years he has devoted himself to working with teams, Church and community groups with a special emphasis on empowerment, community-building and conflict resolution.

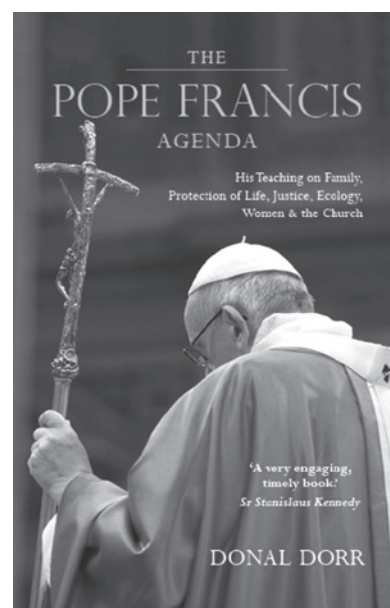
Fr Donal explores the agenda of a man who really had no right to have an agenda. Francis came late to the Papacy having just missed out to the Pope Emeritus in 2005. And the electorate should have been so conservative. But against all realistic expectations, he hit the ground running and, in the process, has inspired Christians and non-Christians alike.

The Pope Francis Agenda explores why that is, topic by topic. Much is written about his care for the earth and care for the poor

(the major interconnectedness theme of *Laudato Si*), but the coverage goes well beyond this.

Fr Donal provides an account which is easy to read and understand for the laity, of the teaching and example of Pope Francis. Topics include: Defence of human life and of the family; Care for our common home; The role of women in the church; Migration and trafficking; The condemnation of war including nuclear arms; His criticism of unjust structures including the shortcomings of the market economy; The need to use simple language in liturgical celebration; The core role of mercy and compassion and chapter 24, 'More to Do' has 11 categories or challenges.

Fr Donal clearly sees much good in this new direction of the Church under the leadership of this new man from the end of the earth. However, he is not without criticism, especially as regards the role of women and the child sexual abuse scandal. He touches on without exploring in detail the challenging clash between the advocacy of synodality and on the one hand and the call for quick central fixes on the other. The ordination of women and married men is a good example.



Fr Donal sees the change taking place in the Church and welcomes it. He sees a Pope showing us how to spend less time at the pulpit and more time at the periphery finding Christ with the poor and disadvantaged. Fr Donal does this very well with a wide range of source material including Encyclicals, books, articles and interviews. An excellent way to get a good understanding of the agenda of the Bishop of Rome. ☺

Hope for our times

Developed from retreat talks for priests, this book offers a timely antidote to the prevailing gloom that covers the Church and the world. *A Time to Hope*, Paul Castley MSC (2019), Coventry Press. Reviewed by Peter Maher.

In a time in the church where polarisation is a daily threat and when there is talk of schism, when millions of Catholics are denied regular Eucharist and many feel despondent at the state of things either because orthodoxy is at risk of being abandoned or because there seems little hope for the 'aggiornamento' once announced by Pope John XXIII over 50 years ago seems yet ever more distant, a book like this comes at the right time.

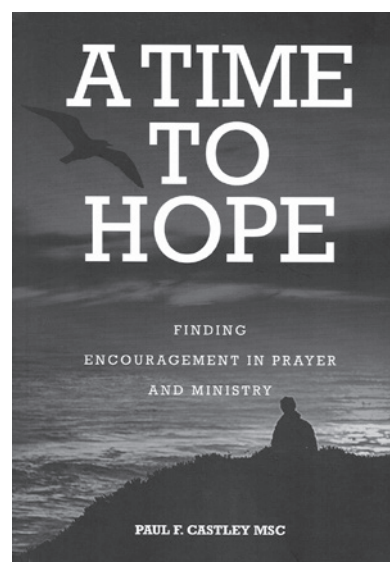
How do we navigate the sense of hopelessness that confronts us at every turn. Even though this book was born of talks for priests, it has much to offer anyone needing a deep biblical spirituality to assist them face the current reality.

Castley firstly reminds us of the passionate loving God who is on our side. The God of the Song of Songs, Isaiah and Jesus is holding us even in the lost hopes of our dreams and the flagging fervour of our faith.

The exploration of the well-canvassed spiritual themes of vulnerability, silence, dryness in prayer, disillusionment and inadequacy in pastoral practice seem to come alive as these themes are fleshed out by references to the great traditional spiritual writers and the freshness of modern spiritual guides that work for greater inclusion, compassion, justice and equality.

It is this mixture of old and new that gives a wonderful freshness to the text. The reader is reminded that the way ahead is by being gentle with ourselves and others. I was particularly encouraged by the chapter about paralysis in ministry which suggests we befriend our vulnerability and let go. Can we recognise the moment of connection in our frailty?

The chapter on lament is very enlightening as it reminds us that we are sometimes called to simply live with what is and enter



into the space of disillusionment with gratefulness and the knowledge of the God presence in all things. Those who dip into this easy to read volume will not be disappointed. ☺

Returned to God

JAMES (JIM) FEENAN

01/08/1926 – 03/09/2019

✠ Jim, the second youngest of six (Mary, Francis, Nan, Rose and Betty), was born at Port Hill County Armagh, to Francis (Frank) and Mary (née Kenny) Feenan. The family were farmers so Jim grew up doing chores on the farm with his siblings and roaming free in the green pastures of Tullyherron.

Jim was educated at St Teresa's Tullyherron, St Patrick's College (boarding) Armagh and started studying for the Priesthood at St Patrick's College Maynooth. After 12 months Jim contracted pleurisy. Because of the extreme cold, Jim was advised not to return to the college and so began studying at St Patrick's Carlow. He was ordained in Ireland for the Archdiocese of Melbourne on 10 June 1956 and arrived in Melbourne on 11th December 1956.

During his priestly life in Melbourne he served as Assistant Priest in Diamond Creek, Clifton Hill, Geelong West, Gardenvale, Gordon and East Moorabbin. He was Parish Priest of Brandon Park and Sunbury, and from 1977 until his retirement in 1990, of Manifold Heights (Geelong).

Jim was a gentle Irishman who was dedicated to his priestly role and recently celebrated his 63rd anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood.

He was kind and caring – a wonderful priest, a great listener and counsellor and a very dear friend to many. The last thing Jim would say at mass was, "Thank you for praying with me".

Your family and friends in Ireland and Australia thank you, Fr Jim. You will be remembered with deep love and gratitude.

BURNS HUGGAN

09/02/1934 – 10/09/2019

✠ Burns was ordained on 23 August 1997 at St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne. Following ordination he was appointed Assistant Priest at Kew (1997), St Patrick's Cathedral (2000) and finally at North Reservoir (2006) until his retirement and appointment as Pastor Emeritus in 2007.

Burns served the Church in a very positive and pastorally enriching manner, giving fine example to both his brother priests and the community. The Archdiocese is most grateful for the untiring service to the Church of Melbourne of this fine and gentle man.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

BARTHOLOMEW (BART) JOSEPH HUYNH SAN

25/04/1948 – 10/10/2019

✠ Bart arrived in Australia in the early 1970's from Vietnam, as a seminarian for the Diocese of Nha Trang in South Vietnam. During his time in studies, his homeland of South Vietnam fell to the communists. His then Bishop, Francis X Nguyen van Thuan was imprisoned by the communist government for thirteen years and Bart was unable to return to his homeland.

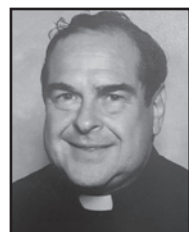
Bart was ordained on 18 August 1979 at St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne. Following his ordination, Bart was appointed Assistant Priest at Collingwood (1979) and worked with the Vietnamese Catholic Community in the Archdiocese from 1980 becoming full-time Chaplain in 1986. Bart was the pioneer Chaplain of Sts Hoan-Thien Catholic Centre, Keysborough, recently renamed as Our Lady of Lavang Shrine. He was then appointed Parish Priest of Rosebud from 2013 – an appointment he held until his death.

Bart served the Church and the refugee Vietnamese community in a very positive and pastorally enriching manner. He was determined and skillful in assisting refugees to settle well and make a good life in their new home. Bart and others like him have been instrumental in paving the way for the magnificent contribution of the Vietnamese community to the life of the church and the broader Australian community. The Archdiocese is most grateful for the untiring service to the Church of Melbourne of this fine, determined and faith filled man.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

MARK FRANCIS SPORA

07/12/1932 – 23/08/2019



In his homily at the Pontifical Requiem Mass for Mark Spora in the Berala parish church on 28 August 2019, Sydney's Vicar General, Dr Gerry Gleeson, praised Mark's "gentle humanizing influence", displayed as a seminary teacher and then for many years as the parish priest of Auburn South in western Sydney. He also spoke of Mark's abiding interest in the Bible and classical music.

The homilist recalled that Mark, teaching Gerry's class about the Scriptures at the Springwood seminary in the 1970s, "had introduced us to the riches of modern biblical scholarship". He also echoed a tribute paid to this "gentle pastor" by others – that he was never known to speak ill of people.

It was also at Springwood, mostly at the time "a pleasant enough place" where the seminary system "was beginning to break down", that Mark "contributed to our human formation by helping us to not take life too seriously". It was in tune with this principle that his teaching style "allowed for the varying levels of student engagement" and that on at least one occasion he preferred to continue a game of tennis, which he played with joy but with less than Wimbledon-level skill, rather than arrive punctually for a liturgy where he was meant to preside.

Mark was born in Arncliffe and educated in St Francis Xavier's primary school there. At 13, he went for his secondary studies to the minor seminary in Springwood, where he later commenced his seminary Philosophy course. This continued for six months in 1951 at St Patrick's College, Manly, from where Cardinal Gilroy sent him, aged 18, to Propaganda Fide College, Rome. There he completed his Philosophy and Theology studies from late 1951 to mid-1956, being ordained in the College chapel by Cardinal Micara on 21 December 1955. After leaving Propaganda he lived as a boarder for three years in Rome's Nepomucene College, while completing a Licentiate degree in biblical studies.

Before his nine years teaching Scripture at Springwood, Mark was an assistant priest for the best part of a decade in Lewisham, Cabramatta, Neutral Bay and, for most of that time, at St Mary's Cathedral. After Springwood he was Administrator of Dover Heights parish in 1978 before becoming Auburn South's well-loved pastor from 1979 to 2012, when he retired. At that point, the South Auburn parish was amalgamated with Berala.

Mark had been ordained in Rome with nearly 30 other priests from about 18 countries, mainly in Africa and Asia. He always stayed in touch with three other classmates who served in Australian dioceses – the late Peter Vandeleur (Cairns), the late (Irish-born) Tim Norris (Brisbane) and Michael Costigan (Melbourne). They celebrated landmark ordination anniversaries together, usually in Tim Norris's Geebung parish, where he served for over 50 years. May he rest in peace.

JOHN THORNHILL SM

13/05/1929 – 28/07/2019



John, born in Brisbane, was educated at Marist Brothers Ashgrove and St John's College Woodlawn NSW. After entering the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers), he was chosen for doctoral studies and ordained in Rome in 1955. John's life was mainly in theological ministry – in teaching and guiding seminary students, as an author, theological consultant and in Adult Faith Education. He was Superior of the Marist Seminary, Director of Sydney's Aquinas Academy and a member of the Provincial Council. He published books and many articles, with a special interest in the Church and the faith / culture relationship.

John was the first Australian on the International Theological Commission (1981-85) and also a member of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (1983+). He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the Australian Catholic University in 2007. When John died, his life's work was acknowledged by Archbishop Mark Coleridge – "The Australian Catholic Bishops acknowledge the remarkable contribution which John made for so long to the Church in Australia and far beyond. John combined high intelligence with deep faith, a theologian's mind with a pastor's heart, an ability to listen with a readiness to stand his ground". One example illustrates the John Thornhill who stood 'his ground.' He publicly dissociated himself from the International Theological Commission's view in the document prepared for the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985. That document denied that Bishops' conferences 'can be said to share in collegiality in any theologically proper sense.' John considered such a view subversive of the Church's best interests in a crucial period of institutional development.

John Thornhill was a man with a deep capacity for affection and friendship. In many ways, it marinated his Marist and priestly life but also his outstanding intellectual gifts and as a communicator. John Thornhill's memorial card carries a very apt quote from the Hymn for the Office of Readings for Doctors of the Church.

Prudent in judgment, gentle towards all others, open, unselfish in the love he offered.

All his days the Gospel was his wisdom, Christ his true teacher.

CHRISTOPHER TOMS

20/07/1948 – 20/10/2019

✠ Christopher Edward Henry Toms, Administrator of St Mary Magdalen's Parish, Jordanville, Victoria, passed away suddenly on Sunday, 20 October 2019. Chris was ordained on 24 May 1975 at St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne. Following ordination he was appointed Assistant Priest at Sunshine (1976), Preston (1979), Mount Waverley ((1981), Greensborough (1983) and Kingsville (1986). After undertaking studies overseas, Chris then worked for the Catholic Education Office Melbourne from 1989 and was later appointed Parish Priest of Templestowe in 2002. In 2012, Chris was appointed Administrator of Jordanville – a position he held until he died.

Chris served the Church in a very positive and pastorally enriching manner. He was loyal to family and friends and most caring of his parishioners who, in turn, loved and supported him. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

JOSEPH YU

09/03/1926 – 19/10/2019

✠ Joe was ordained on 7 December 1954 in the chapel of Propaganda College, Rome. He arrived in Australia in 1955 and devoted himself to his work as Chaplain to the Catholic Chinese Community and as Assistant Priest in East Kew (1958), Ascot Vale (1963) and North Brunswick (1968). Joe was appointed Parish Priest of the newly formed parish of North Reservoir in 1970 – a position he served for more than 32 years. Upon his retirement in 2002, Fr Joe was appointed *Pastor Emeritus*. In his retirement, he continued to minister to the residents at Villa Maria Aged Care Residence in Bundoora until his move, due to ill health, to the Little Sisters of the Poor, Northcote. Joe served the Church in a very positive and pastorally enriching manner. The Archdiocese is most grateful for his untiring service to the Church of Melbourne. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

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the swag



Returned to the God, we hold them in prayer.

† Robert Carroll (Diocese of Parramatta).....	21/10/2019
† Peter Gerard Daly OMI (Oblate Fathers).....	28/09/2019
† Anthony Lovis OSB (Benedictine Monks).....	11/09/2019
† Frank Nieman (Diocese of Bunbury).....	17/10/2019
† John Rate MSC (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart).....	22/09/2019

Please email obits to Sally at: national.office@ncp.catholic.org.au

Specifications: **Text as a Word Document (max. 350 words)**

Digital photos not less than 300 KB sent as a separate .jpg file (not to be included in the Word Document).

EDITORIAL NOTE

The Swag policy of submission and publication of articles



It has come to my attention that there is some confusion about the process for submitting articles and letters and the policy around how we receive articles and letters and

accept them for publication.

Submitting articles

All submissions should be made by email either in the body of the email or as a word document attachment so I can easily compile the texts for publication. Please do not send material in pdf format. We also like a picture of the author or something appropriate in jpeg form at least 400 kb size. Email these to: editor@theswag.org.au

Handwritten or typed articles sent by mail may not get to publication because we don't have the support to type them up. However, I will respond to every submission made by any form – so if you don't get a response it means I have not got your email or letter. Please persevere and send it again as we value your contributions.

In the unlikely event that a submission is considered unsuitable or unable to be published, I will always discuss this with the sender and explain why. The general

policy is that we publish all original texts that are not defamatory or open to a legal challenge. Sometimes a poorly written article will need revision before we consider it for publication. On very rare occasions I will consult an expert on difficult topics to see if the material is suitable and print worthy. However, no article or letter will be rejected because of the opinion expressed. Sometimes for copyright reasons we cannot publish articles sourced from elsewhere because we can't get permission.

Sometimes it has been a little unclear if the email is a comment for the benefit of *The Swag* team or a letter for publication. We appreciate feedback, so if you are offering feedback that is NOT for publication please make that clear.

Protocols around accepting or rejecting articles and letters

When a submission raises a concern around its content, I proceed according to the following policy which was ratified by the NCP Committee in 2015:

The editorial board is made up of the editor and up to three members chosen by the NCP executive. Generally, it will be the decision of the editor to decide on the acceptance of articles that meet the general guidelines for The Swag. When the editor is unsure or would like a second opinion on an article's suitability, the article will be emailed to the editorial board for discussion. A positive reply

from two members of the board would be sufficient to publish. Otherwise a discussion by email would decide if the article is to be published.

It is also policy that opinions expressed in articles are that of the writer and not necessarily that of the editorial board of *The Swag*.

Thanks for your support

I hope this clears up any confusion about the way we receive articles and letters submitted for *The Swag*. As you may be aware the editor's job is a voluntary role and so I hope you will be gentle with me if I miss something when compiling each edition. The production side of *The Swag* is ably handled at the NCP national office and through a design company. I am very grateful to Sally Heath and Christine Moore and their production and dissemination team for that side of the process.

I feel privileged to offer this service to the Australian church and I am grateful that so many value the magazine. The feedback from our readers is overwhelmingly very positive.

Thanks for your articles and letters. We also like book or film reviews of something that has got your attention recently. Keep them coming. It's your submissions that keep *The Swag* fresh and inviting.

Peter Maher, editor.

Email: editor@theswag.org.au

NCP working for our members



NCP Memberships 2020

Invitations & renewals
will be sent mid-February.
Memberships due
31 March 2020.

The Tablet

Greatly reduced
subscription rates
for NCP Members
(\$AUD139.00).
Contact the
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Websites

[www.nationalcouncil
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www.theswag.org.au

The Official Directory Website

catholicdirectory.com.au is
updated regularly to ensure
current information is
always available.

Ordination Dates

Another free search
on the directory
website.

Find A Catholic Church

findacatholicchurch.com.au

Prayer Calendar

The deceased clergy
listing is a fee search on
the directory website.



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.