



arcvoice

A Report from Australian Reforming Catholics
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Message from the Secretariat

There is no better way to learn than to say what is on your mind in conversation and have it examined by your companions. Whether you are encouraged by agreement or chastened by correction, truth is the winner and you have edged that much further towards understanding and wisdom.

There is no worse way to become mentally impoverished than, because of fear, you do not say what is on your mind when truth is sought in conversation.

Vatican II proceeded on the former assumption. The Curial agenda presented to the bishops was abandoned and the Holy Spirit led them to take up challenges that brave people had already foreshadowed as the topics for genuine reform. Not only Catholics but the world welcomed this open approach and the ground shift that resulted. It has to be regretted that Curial recalcitrance has sought to close the windows John XXIII opened. 'Aggiornamento' (bringing up to date, modernisation) is a word not used today.

The worry about this is that the authoritarian culture of the Catholic Church creates an atmosphere of fear and people at all levels do not say what they actually think. As in all overbearing authoritarian societies (usually patriarchal) this clearly creates a collective mental impoverishment. The Church, however, in spite of this, remains holy because of the golden thread of goodness, compassion and wisdom gracefully and serenely meandering through the ages. This golden thread has always been made up of individuals (at all levels) who have freely talked with the Spirit present in them and with each other in order to know the truth, and have acted humbly and divinely.

The problem in our world today with respect to peace of mind, morality and behaviour has stemmed from the exponential growth of knowledge (in all disciplines) and the speed with which this knowledge has been imparted. Ordinary people know more today than even twenty years ago but do not know what to do

about it. If they look at the Church they may not see the golden thread running through it. They shake their heads and turn away. The humanly overbearing culture of the Church which seems to ignore the Spirit holds no hope or rationale for them. The Church needs to truly believe that Jesus came to set us free, that love is the greatest and only commandment and that his Spirit actually lives in all of us and will inform us if we are open to her/him.

One practical way of enriching the mind and re-establishing the credibility of the Church is through healthy discussion of unfulfilled recommendations of Vatican II. Forty years ago the bishops knew that change had to take place and submitted themselves to the Spirit. At **ARC CAMPFIRE 2004 at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney, on 23/24 October 2004** a number of eminent panellists will lead us in examining the unfulfilled recommendations of Vatican II. Brochures will be sent to you shortly and we look forward to seeing you and hearing what you have to say.

Barbara Campbell

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Joy, Hope and Some Anxiety

Patrick Power

I had the good fortune to be ordained to the priesthood in 1965, the final year of the Second Vatican Council, and to have undertaken my four years of theological studies during the period of the four sessions of the Council. James Madden, President of St Patrick's College, Manly, was one of the Council *periti* and people like Julian Miller, Kevin Walsh and David Coffey kept us abreast with events in Rome, even before we were able to gain valuable insights from Xavier Rynne and others.

Yet as a 23 year old newly ordained, I never imagined the impact that Vatican II would have on the Church and its relationship with the world. I still remain uplifted by the opening words of *Gaudium et spes*: 'The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially the poor and the afflicted, these too must be the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ.'

No longer was the Church to be the closed and sometimes besieged community which I had experienced as a boy growing up in Queanbeyan and Canberra. As Catholics we were challenged to take the Incarnation seriously, to embrace all that was good in society and to be in partnership with all people of good will in building up a more just and peaceful society.

'The split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age.' (GS 43). As Christians, we are called to engage our contemporary culture and to learn from and affirm what is good and to reject what is evil.

Pope Paul VI's 1964 Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* spelt out the need for dialogue as the Christian reaches out to the modern world. Christians are to be aware of what they have to bring to this dialogue, but also of what they have to learn, approaching their partners in

dialogue with consideration and esteem, understanding and kindness.

Equally, I would hope the Australian Church has learnt from some of the recent events and movements in the wider society. The year 2000 began dramatically with an awareness of the world welcoming a very special new year. Later in the year, we witnessed the bridge walks for reconciliation; we saw the best of the Australian spirit in the Olympics, the Paralympics and the Torch Relay. The centenary of Federation in 2001 has helped Australians to strive for greater unity, a unity which can be found in the richness of diversity.

Vatican II asks Christians to take on board such valuable lessons. 'Just as it is in the world's interest to acknowledge the Church as an historical reality, and to recognize her good influence, so the Church herself knows how richly she has profited by the history and development of humanity.' (GS 44)

I am writing this just after the retirement of Sir William Deane as Governor-General. I like to think that Sir William and Lady Deane personify the best of the spirit of Vatican II in so many areas. Whole articles have been written about their invaluable contribution to Australia during their five years in office. Suffice to say that their humble leadership and their calls to reconciliation, inclusiveness and care for the 'little people' gave great heart to our nation.

From an Australian point of view, one of the most obvious effects of Vatican II has been the discovery of the ecumenical movement. The origin of the modern ecumenical movement is generally traced to a missionary conference in Edinburgh in 1910, where it was concluded that a Christianity which was divided could not effectively bring the message of Christ to non-believers. While individual Catholics showed interest in the movement it was only with the Second Vatican Council that the Catholic Church as a whole became part of it. When the Decree on Ecumenism acknowledged that the ecumenical movement was truly under the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Council Fathers were admitting that the Holy Spirit had been at work outside the Catholic Church for the previous fifty years and more.

Since Vatican II Australian Catholics have rejoiced in being able to pray and dialogue with their sisters and brothers in other churches, to take part in ecumenical services, sometimes as a powerful witness to the wider community, such as was the case in the wake of the Port Arthur and Thredbo tragedies. While there is still the pain of being unable to share Eucharistic communion with other Christians and, at times, difficult issues in inter-Church marriages, we thank God that we have moved on from some of the un-Christian attitudes and practices which were part of Catholic life 50 years ago. It is sometimes said that in relation to other Churches we Catholics have moved from conflict, competition and caution, to co-operation, and in some cases to covenanting, but we are still striving towards full communion.

In a society which is recognizing its cultural and ethnic diversity, relations with non-Christians become a greater challenge. The teaching of Vatican II in this area therefore assumes greater importance.

In the years immediately following Vatican II we hardly needed Future Shock to remind us that change was beginning to accelerate at every level. Man landing on the moon in 1969 highlighted many of the recent scientific advances. But such scientific and technological progress was also in danger of undermining human dignity.

New moral dilemmas began to emerge in the wake of *Humanae Vitae* in 1968 and the outbreak of the Vietnam War (or at least Australia's involvement in it). The right to question and even dissent, the sanctity of conscience and the whole notion of religious freedom all found justification in the documents of Vatican II. Suddenly a Church, which previously seemed to have had all the answers, now appeared to accept that there were lots of grey areas. Good and faithful Catholics often found themselves on opposite sides of a debate.

Different models of Church emerged and the primary description of the Church as the People of God gave greater empowerment to lay people and religious while still recognizing the unique role of the ordained ministry. Yet tensions would arise in the understanding of the hierarchical nature of the Church and that of the Church as communion.

The strong emphasis on the sanctity of marriage and family life as well as the universal call to holiness meant that there was no longer any justification for seeing lay people as second class citizens. The influence of Joseph

Cardijn was clearly evident in much of the Council's teaching, giving extra impetus to the youth and indeed the whole lay apostolate. The dignity of the human person was fundamental to much of the Council's teaching.

The notion of collegiality was seen not only as applying to relationships between bishops and the Bishop of Rome but was to have its impact at every level. Roman and diocesan Synods, Councils of Priests and Parish Pastoral Councils were just some of the instruments for enabling the gifts of all God's people to be brought to the service of God and his people. The principle of subsidiarity was often invoked in the implementation of collegiality.

One of the first documents produced by the Council was the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Yet in many ways its implications were to go far beyond the liturgical life of the Church. When the language of the liturgy was changed to the vernacular, it was clearly more intelligible. In encouraging all the people of God to participate actively in the worship of the Church, Vatican II was encouraging Catholics to do more than 'pay, pray and obey'.

In mid-1973, I worked for two months in a New York parish during a three-year period of study in Rome. While expecting to find some radical expressions of Catholicism in the United States, I was shocked to find pockets of aggressive conservatism in the Catholic Church. The resulting polarisation was obvious. A publication called *The Wanderer* blatantly promoted the conservative position. I thanked God that such division did not exist within the Church in Australia.

However we live in a 'global village' and what I witnessed in the United States in 1973 is now very much part of the Australian scene. Worse still, quite a distorted picture of life in the Church in Australia has been relayed to the Vatican in a way that has damaged our reputation with the Holy See. It is generally acknowledged that this was the background to the dialogue which took place late in 1998 (immediately prior to the Oceania Synod) between leading Australian Bishops and Vatican Cardinals and Archbishops. Immediately following the meeting, the Australians felt that the conversations had been a good exercise in dialogue. However, the subsequent Statement of Conclusions hardly reflected the positive spirit initially reported from the meeting.

In his opening speech to the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII warned of the 'prophets of gloom'. I believe his warning is just as timely today. The 1997 Vatican Instruction on the Relationship of the non-ordained with the Ordained, the 1998 *Statement of Conclusions*; *Dominus Jesus* (2000) and most recently *Liturgiam Authenticam*, all, to my mind, represent a deliberate regression from the teaching and spirit of Vatican II.

It is significant that none of these documents are papal writings and their spirit and letter are in sharp contrast to Pope John Paul's 1995 Encyclical on Christian unity (*Ut unum sint*) and his apostolic letters for the opening and closing of the year of great jubilee (*Tertio millennio adveniente* and *Novo millennio ineunte*) which consistently call upon the teaching of Vatican II. One can only hope that Pope John Paul's vision will prevail.

In a talk which I originally gave in 1996 and which I have since adapted for other audiences, I expressed my hopes that the Church of the future would be:

- ❖ a more human Church
- ❖ a humbler Church
- ❖ a less clerical Church
- ❖ a more inclusive Church (and therefore truly catholic)
- ❖ a more open Church
- ❖ a Church that finds unity in diversity
- ❖ a Church that re-discovers its whole tradition
- ❖ a Church which truly reflects the person and values of Jesus.

On most days I retain hope that the vision of the Second Vatican Council will be reclaimed, rejoiced in and allowed to put fresh heart into all believers as they seek to share with each other and all people the saving word of God.

August 2001

(first published in the April 2002 edition of *The Mix*)



Synods

Since Vatican II (a period of nearly forty years) there have been four Synods in Australia: one in Brisbane, one in Maitland and two in Canberra-Goulburn. This may sound bleak to the ordinary people of God but it may not be as bad as it sounds.

Pre-Vatican II synods took little note of the wisdom of the ordinary Catholic. They were basically meetings telling the faithful what to do. Post-Vatican II synods would have to have changed radically. And that has happened. In fact, the equivalents of synods have taken place in many dioceses in Australia. In Broken Bay, for example, a consultative process involving all the parishes took place over a couple of years in which all Catholics learned a lot about each other, together developed a Mission Statement and undoubtedly influenced the direction of the diocese. The four synods which actually did occur were highly inclusive.

The last Canberra-Goulburn Synod occurred 14-16 May 2004 in Canberra. The ordinary people were very much involved. However, there were those who considered that some important items were not on the agenda. The Ordination of Catholic Women (OCW) undertook to hold an Alternate Synod on the Saturday to cover these matters which were: women's participation; homosexuality; divorce/remarriage; young adult inclusion. Four resolutions arose out of this meeting and presented (and received graciously) to the Synod late in the afternoon.

The preamble and resolutions were as follows:

In an atmosphere of dialogue and prayerful desire to be led by the Spirit of God, this assembly asks the Canberra-Goulburn Catholic Archdiocesan Synod to consider these resolutions from our deliberations today:

1. That the local Church of Canberra-Goulburn continue to use its resources to support and nurture marriage for life, but when divorce and remarriage occurs, the Church accept and value divorced remarried Catholics as full members and not exclude them from the Eucharist.
2. That the Synod acknowledge the Spirit's calling of women to priestly ministry and urge the immediate lifting of the ban on discussion of women's ordination.
3. That our Archdiocese admit its contribution to the pain of exclusion of homosexuals, and through its preaching and teaching welcome them and value their uniqueness and spirituality.
4. That our Archdiocese initiate and fund an ecumenical 'Shared Space' with resources and a salaried worker, for young people to explore spirituality and social justice issues, and support them in constructive action.

*Barbara Campbell
A witness to the alternate proceedings*

The wild and the tame geese

Once upon a time there were some wild geese. At the time their migration would begin they met some tame geese. They got to like them so much, that they did not want to fly away at once. They hoped that they could bring the others to fly higher, every time a little higher, so that they would at least have the chance to last the distance – free from that pitiable, mediocre life which they spent as respectable tame geese waddling around on the ground.

In the beginning the tame geese found the situation quite amusing and they liked the wild geese very much. But it did not last long before they got tired of them, hurled all sorts of rude remarks at them and considered them fanciful fools, unsophisticated beings without any experience of life or wisdom.

But..., oh well, the wild geese had taken up with the tame ones to such an extent, that these got power over them, so that gradually they believed their words. And this had the result, that the wild geese became tame.

For heaven's sake, watch out for one thing: as soon as you perceive that tame geese get power over you, fly away with the migration, so that you will not end up as a tame goose, who lives blissfully waggling in pedestrian pitifulness.

(translation of a quote from Søren Kierkegaard)

About Myth

From time to time, when I mention that the scriptures are the mythologies of Judaism and Christianity respectively, I receive passionate protests or amazed silence from the people around me. But I feel I am in pretty good company: the late Prof Joseph Campbell who taught many students and wrote many books about mythologies from every time and place, and the great Benedictine Bede Griffith. I quote from both Campbell and Griffith:

Although the word is popularly used to denote falsehood, myth is actually a perennial vehicle for expressing truth. Myth and symbol are fundamental and essential properties of all religions; they are the special language of religious experience. What appear to be diverse religious traditions are actually different expressions of a unitary experience that is shared across all cultures.

(Joseph Campbell *Thou Art That*, New World Library CA 2001 p 102)

“The Myth of the Church: In Christian tradition the figure of the Mother is found in the Church. In an early Christian writing, The Shepherd of Hermas, the Church appears in the form of an old woman. When it is asked why she appears as an old woman, the answer is given: ‘because she was created first of all. On this account is she old, and for her sake was the world made’.

It is necessary to see the Church in this cosmic aspect. The Church as a historical institution has a very recent origin and occupies a very small part of the world.

But the Church in herself is the eternal Mother; she is the created aspect of the uncreated Spirit. ‘For her sake was the world made’.

The fact that Rome became the centre of Christendom is an accident of history and the Bishop of Rome only acquired his present position after many centuries. One may hold that this development was providential, but there is no reason to believe that the present structure of the papacy is permanent, or that the Church may not acquire a new structure in the context of future history. All church structures are subject to the law of historical growth.

In the same way the doctrinal structures, built up by the Western mind on the foundation of the faith of the apostles, are all historically conditioned and bear the mark of the limitations of the Western mind. It is certain that the people of Asia will never accept Christianity in its present form.

We have to go beyond all these historical structures and recover the original Myth of Christianity, the living truth which was revealed in the New Testament.. But this cannot be done by the Western mind alone.”

(The Marriage of East and West by Bede Griffiths OSB part III of Chapter IV, Fount paperbacks 1982)

Jim Taverne

Quotable quotes

- √ If God meant us to do philosophy, he would not have created us. (Filosofie Magazine)
- √ Why Priests? (Title of an essay written by Hans Küng in 1971)
- √ A Christian remains a pagan in his innermost thoughts. The Church must treat her pagan origin seriously. (Henk Veerkamp in Volzin 2 January 2004).
- √ ‘Holy, catholic and apostolic’ should be translated ‘humble, pluralistic and prophetic’. (Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz at the conference of Boston College 16/17 April on *Church in the 21st Century*, quoted in NCR the National Catholic Reporter 14 May 2004)
- √ The *reformer* introduces new impulses and energies into an existing tradition, institution or community, or even, perhaps, gives it a new direction. (page 52 of Hans Küng’s *WHY priests?*)
- √ The best way to start every day is: when you wake up, think whether today you cannot bring some joy to at least one other person. (Friedrich Nietzsche)
- √ If you limp you still move forward. - Open Sesame! I want to get out! - When rumours get old they become myths. - The collision of two myths results in a very real event. - The heroes of the old myths were almost naked. - The heroes of the new myths are totally naked. (from *Ungroomed Thoughts* of Stanislaw Jerzy Lec)

International Observations

Jim Taverne

Feed my sheep

Thomas Gumbleton, Auxiliary Bishop and Pastor
St Leo's Parish in Detroit

Jesus took Peter aside and began to question him. 'Do you love me?' Peter answered: 'I love you. You know I love you. I love you!' Then Jesus gave a commission to Peter. Notice what it is: Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.' It's a ministry of service, a ministry of nurturing, a ministry of love.

Consider this in contrast with what is recorded in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus said, 'Simon, you are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church... Whatever laws you make, they shall be made. Whatever you undo, those laws will be gone'. Both of these incidents concern what we call the Primacy of Peter, which now resides in Peter's successor, Pope John Paul II.

But notice the difference between the two versions of this event. In one, the commission is a primacy of love and service, in the other, the commission is a primacy of jurisdiction and order.

Down through history there has been a struggle between the primacy of jurisdiction and the primacy of love. It seems that we have let the primacy of jurisdiction overwhelm the primacy of love that was entrusted to Peter.

Yesterday I happened to see a headline that I think illustrates how distorted the primacy of jurisdiction can become... The headline said, 'Cardinal refuses sacrament to Kerry' (That's Sen. John Kerry). This is an example of jurisdictional power. Can you see anyone exercising the primacy of love who would turn somebody away from Communion? Why would you turn them away?

People who are divorced and remarried without an annulment, we have said to them, 'Well, that's not the way of Jesus. It's not the primacy of love. Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs. Serve them. Minister to them.' This commission is not just for the Holy Father, of course. All of us are commissioned. We're not in the place of primacy, but we're part of the community, and it is up to us to reach out and welcome people. We are supposed to draw people in, not to exclude them from our Eucharis. Are we to say, 'You're a sinner, you can't come'? Jesus said, 'Come' He wants all of us who follow him, who recognise him as the risen Lord, to be welcoming ministers of love and ministers of service.

(Excerpt from *The Peace Pulpit* of 25 April
printed in NRC 14 May) □

"Wir sind Kirche"

(We are Church), Germany

Dear friends,

This weekend, "Wir sind Kirche" (We are Church, Germany) is sending 13,000 letters to all German Roman Catholic parishes announcing its campaign "Wir feiern Hoffnung" (We celebrate hope) in response to the Liturgy Instruction of the Vatican.

Wir sind Kirche encourages the parishes to continue the liturgy based on Vatican II and to develop it further.

The letter expresses fear that the Instruction can have serious consequences for parishes and points in particular to nrs. 183 and 184 of the Instruction, wherein everyone is told "to do all their power to ensure that the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist will be protected from any and every irreverence or distortion and that all abuses be thoroughly corrected. This is a most serious duty incumbent upon each and everyone, and all are bound to carry it out without any favouritism. (183)

'Any Catholic, whether Priest or Deacon or lay member of Christ's faithful, has the right to lodge a complaint regarding a liturgical abuse to the diocesan Bishop or the competent Ordinary equivalent to him in law, or to the Apostolic See on account of the primacy of the Roman Pontiff. It is fitting, however, insofar as possible, that the report or complaint be submitted first to the diocesan Bishop. This is naturally to be done in truth and charity. (184) □

21 May 2004 □

Swiss Catholics for more freedom in the Church!

Press release from Luzern, 22 May 2004

The results of a survey show that about 90% of the Catholics support the following postulates:

- Eucharistic sharing: 90% for, 6% against
- Voluntary celibacy: 89% for, 6% against
- Equal rights for women: 87% for, 10% against
- Stronger ecumenism: 94% for, 4% against
- About ¾ of the Catholics want the next Pope to introduce the ordination of women: 76% for, 17% against
- About 2/3 of the Catholics feel strongly about:
 - church weddings for persons who have been married before, 70% for, 22% against
 - election of bishops by the local churches, 65% for, 22% against
 - stronger dialogue with the other world religions, 65% for, 31% against

The survey was commissioned by the Herbert Haag Foundation for Freedom in the Church, whose President is Hans Küng. He appealed to the bishops to take the feelings of the ordinary Catholics seriously, if they don't want to become bishops without people. And he asked them to talk candidly with those who carry the responsibility of electing the next Pope. □

Have your say!

ARCvoice is a report of news, opinion and reflection on the renewal and reform currently experienced in the Catholic church.

Your contributions, letters, articles or comments are most welcome (maximum length: articles 700 words, letters 100 words)

The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Editor (Margaret Knowlden) nor of ARC

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