



arcvoice

A Report from Australian Reforming Catholics Inc.
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Editorial

During this month of June the undersecretary for the Congregation of the Clergy, Archbishop Celso Morga, has a special message to priests in conjunction with the dedicated Year for Priests. In a world so troubled by conflict and injustice, so often fuelled by prejudice and greed, one might expect some inspiring words to highlight how the priest gives witness to the contrasting values that Jesus held. But what message did the priests get? He said that priests should be pious and docile, with the strong implication that in this way they will be like Jesus.

My thoughts immediately went to the 'docile' Jesus turning over the moneychangers' tables and to the 'docile' Jesus confronting that 'brood of vipers', the Pharisees, for their self-justification and hypocrisy. My thoughts went immediately to the many instances where Jesus showed anger when the rights of the poor and oppressed were compromised. And how was Jesus 'pious'? Few people today would know what this even means, but those who do would know that it means a faithful observance of all religious rituals for their own sake. Jesus spurned such an approach and put the law of love and doing good deeds above this every time.

We could dismiss the admonition to be pious and docile as 'old world' expressions from a hierarchical representative out of touch, but more importantly, there were some additional expressions that betray the ever-present implication that the Church is the hierarchy. The overall message is clear: the priority for the priest is to say his prayers and be obedient to his superiors and in doing so he trusts the Church.

We could imagine that there would be little room for the Holy Spirit to move in if priests and the many other Christ-like followers throughout the centuries simply embraced the warped ecclesiology and numbing subservience that underlies this message. Here we are about to celebrate the canonisation

of Mary MacKillop and all that the Spirit led her to achieve. We know for a fact that she did not do this by being pious and docile. Perhaps priests might do better reflecting on the actions of her and others like her if they are to give witness to Jesus with any real credibility.

John Buggy

A video is available of the morning of the ARC Annual General Meeting including the address by Paul Collins *What Chance Reform?* Copies can be obtained by contacting John Buggy on 02 9451 8393 or jbuggy@ozemail.com.au
Cost: \$10

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Letters to the Editor

I always read the *ARCvoice* cover to cover, and the current piece by Fred Jansohn struck a strong chord with me, especially his comment about organisations side-stepping ethical and legal obligations.

Some years ago, I was director of a community-based disability organisation, and a number of our clients complained to me about conditions at a notable Catholic organisation. The staff were paid around half what they should have been – which meant most didn't stay long. Temporary vacancies were filled on at least three occasions by priests 're-evaluating' their vocation – which hardly made for qualified or committed staff.

Anyway, a specific complaint was that what the staff was paid was called three different things depending on circumstances – to attract government subsidy, they were called 'wages'; for the purposes of assessing payroll tax, they became 'allowances', and to the staff themselves they were called 'stipends' (with the implication that they should look to spiritual rather than temporal benefits in their work).

Because of the implications for the quality of care and the complaints that young disabled people had made to me, I raised the issue with a diocesan officer and was rapidly put in my place when I was told, "This [organisation] is beyond criticism. Do you think you can say what you like about a Church body?" That was it. Finish.

I truly believe that community-based organisations aim for higher ethical and moral standards than many of the Catholic welfare organisations I have encountered.

Keep up the good work.

Kevin Baker

Thank you for continuing to send me the magazine. I find the content (with which I don't always agree – and there's a potential article in that as well) to be a mix of the interesting and the sorrowful. I was particularly moved by the former nun who preferred anonymity. I may be reading too much into her choice to not have her name seen in print, but it reminded me of the fearful and often life-long impact severe trauma has. Clearly she, too, was traumatised and suffers to this day. The Church does good works; but it has much to answer for.

Fred Jansohn

The article on the new translation of the Eucharistic prayers in *ARCvoice* was informative and practical. I am going to try it on my parish!!

Gideon Goosen

Freedom in Christ

The church authorities are flexing their muscles again, telling us what to do; a few thousand clergy telling the rest of us the words we should or should not use in worship. I assert that this is not God's way but man's – certainly no women are giving orders. The dominion is all male. This sort of power must be exercised now and again or it loses its grip and the people grow strong. This raises the issue of where the Holy Spirit resides. The answer is in each of us, in all of us.

In my perception God's greatest gift to each of us in Creation is life. Next is personal freedom. Call this 'free will' if you like. I choose not to because Nietzsche (and Hitler) have ruined the word and idea. In God we should perceive Will as Love, because it is. If there is any doubt that Love intended freedom for each of us then observe the behaviour of God-made-human. Jesus left everyone free. The cleansing of the Temple could be the exception which proves the rule.

The Apostles were called in freedom, people were forgiven their sins in freedom, the authorities took and tried Jesus in freedom and killed him in freedom – they were left free to do so. The woman at the well in Samaria is an outstanding example of God trusting someone's freedom.

What don't current Church authorities understand about this? What's new? It has been going on for centuries. But wasn't there a new understanding with Vatican II? We thought so and perhaps God and Jesus thought so too.

What we have is a small group of the faithful lording it over the rest. It is all over a few words. We must say it this way! A minority will is prevailing over millions of people who are created free. Now this may happen in politics (until the next election), in education, in business, etc. Should it happen in the Church? The time is ripe to say "No!" The example of Jesus says so. The example of God says so. How can the church authorities be so brave (brazen?) as to coerce those to whom God has granted freedom. Please find God's way of doing it!

Ted Lambert

Food for thought

..... the picture of 'a man incapable of carrying either the weight of the world's sins or two thousand years of devotion upon his meagre shoulders and one who, truth be told, would have been shock to see that he had'.
[Albert Schweitzer]

Extract from Gretta Vosper
Without Without God (p.238)

What Chance Reform? The Moment of Truth Has Arrived

Paul Collins

Talk to Australian Reforming Catholics
Rose Bay
Sunday 7 March 2010

I'm convinced that we really are at the turning-point in *post*-post-Vatican II history. Right now there is a serious struggle going on in Catholicism to control the meaning of the Council, to interpret what it was all about.

It has been brought to a head by Pope Benedict XVI's distinction between the so-called 'hermeneutic of rupture' or 'discontinuity' (i.e. the Council brought about a real and distinct break or change from the past), and the 'hermeneutic of continuity' or 'renewal' which 'refers to those who hold that very little actually changed at Vatican II, that it was a "reaffirmation" of all that went before only cast in new language so as to be understandable to the modern era' (Tom Fox, *National Catholic Reporter*, 3/3/10). Tom Fox also commented that dividing people into so-called 'hermeneutic camps has become a favorite tactic of conservative commentators and some bishops ... [in an attempt to marginalize] as extreme anyone convinced that Vatican II ushered in important changes'. This whole tactic is summed up by what Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo, Sri Lanka calls 'the reform of the reform'.

This has led to people like Cardinal Camillo Ruini attacking the definitive history of the Council brought out by what is now called 'the Bologna school' of interpretation of the Council. This is found in the five volume *History of Vatican II* (edited by Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak (Orbis)).

This is not to claim that Benedict, Ruini, Ranjith and others who emphasize continuity call into question the whole work of the Council. There is wide acceptance, for example, of the need for reconciliation with Jews and – interestingly – with Lutherans. The areas of contention tend to centre on liturgy (with the flashpoint at the moment being the 'new' English translation), the 'wider' ecumenism (that is the possibility of salvation through other faiths), collegiality, papal primacy, the nature of ordination and priesthood.

To see this in perspective John Buggy asked me to focus on a period in church history when something

similar happened. I've chosen the period just after the Reformation.

On 13 October 1534 Cardinal Alessandro Farnese was unanimously elected pope after a brief conclave. He took the title Paul III (1534-49). With Farnese's election the Catholic reform of the church *in capite et membris* (in head and members) began in earnest. Not that nothing had been done previously, but the papacy had completely failed to take the Reformation seriously, except for a brief reformist interlude under Pope Adrian VI (1521-23) who was given a terrible time by the Curia. The key problem according to the historian of the council of Trent, Monsignor Hubert Jedin, was that previous popes thought almost exclusively within the context of local politics in Italy.

Two general tendencies quickly emerged during Paul III's papacy as to how to go about reform.

The first was the inquisitorial approach. Although he was not personally sympathetic to this, Paul III established the Roman and Universal Inquisition or Holy Office in 1542 as a response to the initial emergence of Protestantism in Italy and the conversion of prominent Italian Catholics to Protestantism (e.g. Peter Martyr Vermigli and Bernardino Ochino). The inquisitorial approach was – naturally enough – most widely accepted in the Papal States. Its leading proponent was Giampietro Carafa who became Paul IV (1555-59).

In contrast to the inquisitorial was the ecumenical approach which was inspired by Humanists like Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). He was a thorough-going pacifist who had 'never felt any profound sympathy for Luther. The emotional upheaval caused by the German friar was diametrically opposed to Erasmus' tranquil and rather ironic disposition. The one was an impetuous prophet; the other, a lucid and critical mind' (Joseph Lecler, *Tolerance and the Reformation*, London, 1960, Vol. I. p 116).

Nevertheless, Erasmus advised people not to drive Luther to extremes – as did the main Catholic protagonist, Johann Eck. Erasmus was totally opposed to the use of force to put down heresy and his aim was to tolerate the Lutherans temporarily until Christian unity could be restored. In everything he worked toward the unity of the church and peace and security in community.

Erasmus' friend was Thomas More (1478-1535) who was several times his host in England. More's fame in the history of tolerance rests on his book *Utopia* (1516). But when he became a statesman he is seen as being committed to the burning of heretics. For instance in her 2009 novel *Wolf Hall* Hilary Mantel argues that More was a blood-thirsty fanatic. Certainly he was more a practical man than Erasmus and he 'particularly disapproved of seditious

movements and the somewhat coarse polemics of the Lutherans ... For these reasons he did not disapprove in principle of the use of force against heretics.'

Biographer R.W. Chambers has carefully examined More's behaviour as Lord Chancellor. He concludes that 'between 1519 and 1531, the years when More enjoyed the king's favour, no death sentence for heresy was pronounced within his jurisdiction, even after he had been appointed Chancellor. In 1531, during the last six months of his chancellorship, three heretics were burnt at Smithfield; but at that time he had virtually been deprived of all power, although he still had the title. Finally, in 1535, twelve or thirteen Anabaptists were put to death, but by then he was already in disgrace, and a few months later, on 6 July, he was led to the scaffold' (Quoted in Lecler, p 140).

Essentially the Humanist approach advocated at least some form of reconciliation with the Protestants to be achieved largely through contact and conversation with them. There were even those who advocated some form of religious tolerance, that is recognition of religious difference.

After Erasmus there was a second generation of theologians who tried to bridge the gap created by the Reformation. On the Catholic side there was the Venetian statesman, diplomat and Cardinal Gasparo Contarini (1483-1542), the English cardinal Reginald Pole (1500-1558), cousin of Henry VIII, and Marcello Cervini (1501-1555) who was elected the short-lived Pope Marcellus II (April-May 1555). Among the Protestants was Philip Melancthon who drew up the Augsburg Confession (1530), a strongly ecumenical document.

The roots of tolerant ecumenism lay in Erasmus' humanism and this was a continuing influence among the many people working for reconciliation. Erasmus had a big influence at the court of Emperor Charles V – as well as among other German courts, both Catholic and Protestant – and it was the Emperor who encouraged the setting up of a series of colloquies between Protestants and Catholics.

At the Diet of Augsburg (1530) Melancthon had tried very hard to conciliate with Catholics, but as Lecler points out 'it was easy to reproach him with vagueness, with passing over essential points, and with ambiguous statements' (p 228). Luther was not happy and nothing came out of it all. There were two Disputations at Leipzig in 1534 and 1539. When the promised ecumenical council had still not materialized, Charles V who was facing problems with France and the menace of Islam and the Turks, proposed a series of colloquies. These were opposed by the papal legates, Cardinals Farnese and Morone.

Eventually the Emperor got his way and two colloquies were held in 1540-41, the first at Worms and the second at Regensburg where the papal legate was Cardinal Gasparo Contarini. He was full of hope for what could be achieved. He was a good theologian and a man of courtesy and discretion and made a deep impression on everyone. 'I hope to God that no outward obstacle will block our path. As I have often said to the pope, in essentials the differences are not as great as many think', Contarini told Farnese on 12 February 1541.

Things started well. Within a fortnight agreement was reached on the doctrine of justification. But then a breakdown occurred as they debated the powers of a general council, transubstantiation and penance. Further discussion proved futile and the session closed on 29 July 1541. There were a couple of further colloquies but nothing substantial was achieved. In 1545 the Council of Trent opened with the Protestants attending briefly.

Essentially the breakdown was caused by the intransigence of both sides as hard-liners always had more influence than those who wished to reach across the increasingly wide divide. What's new?

So what are we to do in our situation? What can we do that is practical? How do we save ourselves from making the same mistakes as in the past? Or is Christian humanism so delicate a flower that it cannot survive the slings and arrows of rabid, simplistic orthodoxy, the kind of attitude that asserts truth with a capital 'T'?

I think that there are some things we can do: firstly, we must demand accountability from the bishops and even eventually from Rome. We have to force the hierarchy to obey their own rules; your namesake organization, ARCC in the US developed *The Charter of the Rights of Catholics in the Church*. Examples of rights denied in Australia: Peter Kennedy and the Saint Mary's Community in Brisbane and the treatment of the Redfern Community in Sydney. As Peter de Rosa recently commented there is 'an endemic brutality' at the heart of the clericalist regime.

Secondly, we need to co-operate together to give ourselves a voice that is heard. And we need to be persistent. We are in the words of Father Daniel Berrigan SJ involved in 'the spirituality of the long haul.' This is our contemporary asceticism. In order for that to become real we need to be fully and emotionally involved, to have a sense that this is our church, our family, and we truly value it. You won't change the church by leaving it.

Thirdly, we need to be politically astute, i.e. to know how to apply pressure and use the media. This can be focussed through choosing the right 'stories' that have appeal.

Fourthly we need to remember that there are alternative precedents in church history to the ultra-high papacy and lack of accountability that we experience today. Two that come to mind are Conciliarism, the theory that everyone in the church must answer to an ecumenical council and that no one (including the pope) is superior to it. This was articulated by the Council of Constance (1414-18). The second are the doctrines of listening to the faithful in all ecclesial affairs and reception by the faithful of church teaching. Both were articulated by Cardinal John Henry Newman.

Finally, we need to get this message out so that people don't take refuge in apathy or in the disabling sense that they can't do anything – 'Because this is the way Christ set up the Church'. No it's not! The real test may be the forthcoming attempt to impose 'olde' English on us without consultation with the faithful or 'by your leave'. How are we going to handle this? Will the faithful 'receive' it?

These are the questions we need to ask!

Book Review

Centre for Progressive Religious Thought (Sydney)

On 2 June 2010, three ARC members attended a meeting at North Ryde organised by the Centre for Progressive Religious Thought (Sydney). The guest speaker was Dr. Noel Preston AM and his topic was billed as: *Observations on the Story of St Mary's in Exile: from Orthodoxy to Orthopraxis and Authority to Authenticity – What progressives might learn from the saga of Peter Kennedy and the St Mary's community.*

Dr. Preston is a retired Uniting Church minister and he is Adjunct Professor, Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance, Griffith University. He has been a long time friend of Peter Kennedy and for twenty years participated in the congregation now known as St Mary's in Exile. He referred to the book, *Peter Kennedy: The Man who Threatened Rome* (Griffith Press) and in particular his chapter titled, 'Beyond the Creeds: Reflections of a Protestant Catholic'.

He offered some interesting analysis of this saga as well as some prognosis about where St Mary's in Exile is going. Finally he shared some observations which may speak to the so-called 'emerging church', 'the progressive religion movement' or, as he has sometimes named it, 'neo-Christianity'.

ARC members are invited to attend the CPRT Regional Gathering on Saturday August 28 2010. The aim of the gathering will be to discover an appropriate spirituality to support an ethic which is responsive to the challenges of the new millennium. The conference will address the problem concerning parents and grandparents caring for the younger generation who will be confronting ethical choices without the reference points traditional religion has provided in the past. Together with input from the St. James Ethics Centre, the Conference will begin by posing the questions, 'What do we mean by ethics?' 'What kind of ethics relate to progressive religion?' and 'What does this mean in practice?' Ethics will be promoted as an instrument of personal and social transformation, a perspective which, although costly, leads to the adoption of an 'eco-centric' perspective.

<http://www.cprtfreedomtoexplore.org>

With or Without God

Why the way we live is more important than what we believe

Gretta Vosper

(Canada, Harper Perennial)

Gretta is pastor of West Hill United Church in Toronto, and founder and chair of the Canadian Centre for Progressive Christianity. In this national bestselling book, she envisions a future in which the Christian church plays a viable and transformative role in shaping society. She argues that if the church is to survive at all, the heart of faith must undergo a radical change. Vosper believes that what will save the church is an emphasis on just and compassionate living – a new and wholly humanistic approach for religion. Without such reform, Christianity as we know it faces extinction.

Australian parishes face a bleak future with declining numbers, combined parishes, imported clergy and a hierarchy out of touch with the aspirations of their parishioners. This inspirational, and often humorous, book may well provide a blueprint for future directions and a new way of being church in our times.

Editor

A Paradox For Reforming Catholics

Alan Clague

Attempts by reactionary forces in the Vatican and senior clergy to rewrite history and reverse some of the reforms agreed to at Vatican II are a source of great concern for Catholics who welcomed these reforms. In this article I suggest that, paradoxically, attempts to reverse the reforms may have an unexpected benefit for the cause of reform in the Catholic Church.

The changes of Vatican II were conservative: introduced by Church leaders anxious to maintain continuity with the traditions of the past, but determined to introduce changes in direction appropriate to the contemporary world. They were not attempting to introduce 'ruptures', an unfortunate term that has been used by many Vatican II commentators. The struggle to achieve an appropriate, conservative change in direction by participants in Vatican II is faithfully documented by John W. O'Malley in 'What happened at Vatican II'.

This process of reversal of some of the Vatican II reforms is acknowledged by most Catholics, even those that approve of such changes. Thus, contemporary Catholics are aware, from their own experience of these changes to Vatican II, how the Church does make changes to its stance on issues. This is of real importance in influencing the acceptance by 'middle-of-the-road' Catholics of future change.

Although the Vatican is reluctant to acknowledge the adoption of change in the Church, conservatism in the Catholic Church has always been compatible with change. One example from the 20th century concerns biblical research. The encyclical in 1907 of Pope Pius X *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (On the Doctrines of the Modernists) which suppressed the scientific investigation of the Bible by Catholic scholars, initiated a period of vigorous suppression of Modernism. He ordered 'those who show a love of novelty in history, archaeology, biblical exegesis' to be excluded from Catholic academic posts (Paragraph 48). However, this was reversed by Pius XII in his encyclical of 1941 *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (On promoting Biblical Studies) in which he endorsed the use of archaeology (Paragraph 11) and the use of original Hebrew and Greek texts (Paragraph 15). He stated that such studies 'cannot be neglected without serious detriment to Catholic exegesis' (Paragraph 38). This allowed Catholic biblical scholars to conduct modern research on the Bible, some centuries after it was

advocated by the famous Catholic scholar, Erasmus, and commenced by Protestant scholars. Although this reversal is well known to those interested in Catholic biblical exegesis, it is not known by most Catholics.

Nonetheless, there is a conservative hesitancy to change traditions of the past in order to accommodate the current situation. This can be seen in the approach of the Church to artificial contraception. The great reformist Pope John XXIII was reluctant to implement personally changes to the Church's conservative approach to contraception, but wished to avoid the implacable opposition of the more conservative bishops to any form of contraception from finding its way into Vatican II pronouncements. He therefore set up the Pontifical Commission for the Study of Population, Family, and Births to make recommendations.

The Church's condemnation of contraception had been enunciated clearly in Pope Pius XI's 1930 encyclical *Casti Connubii* (On Christian Marriage), and this became the benchmark for subsequent considerations. The setting of this encyclical is of considerable interest. The substance of most encyclicals is not written primarily by the Pope himself but by an expert whom he commissions. In this case it was Fr. Arthur Vermeersch, a Belgian Jesuit. He wrote at a time soon after World War I, when Belgium was considered to be seriously underpopulated, and had a great loss of reproductive males from the war.

Pope John XXIII's Commission was continued by Pope Paul VI, and after considerable debate by this conservative group of clergy and laity (both men and women), a report was sent to Pope Paul VI recommending change. This report was undermined by a minority, comprising four of the nineteen members of the Commission, determined to prevent deviation from *Casti Connubii*. They sent a dissenting Minority Report. The advice by this minority and by the Curia influenced Pope Paul VI to reject the text of the Commission's draft encyclical and prepare the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (On the Regulation of Birth). This history is documented extensively in 'The Encyclical that Never Was: The Story of the Pontifical Commission on Population, Family and Birth 1964-66' by Robert Blair Kaiser.

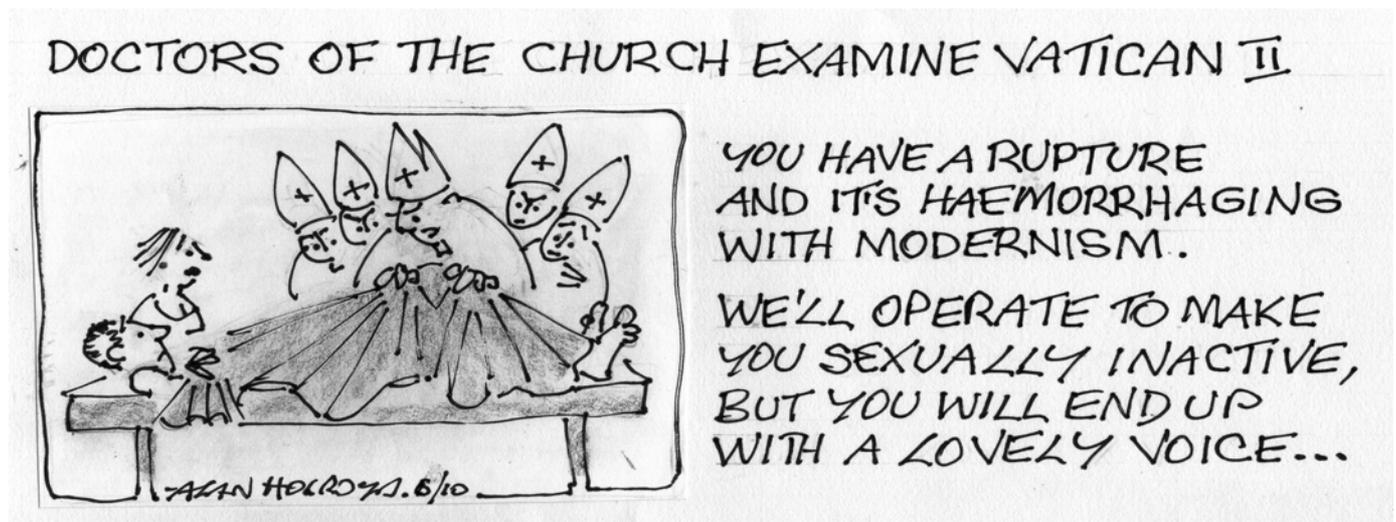
In contrast to the retention of the ban on contraception, other pronouncements in *Casti Connubii* have been dropped. Pope Pius XI rejected the separation of civil power from the Church (Paragraph 127), but this separation was endorsed by Vatican II. He also rejected the 'economic emancipation of women' (Paragraph 74), but this rejection is not now promoted by the Church. Again, these reversals are not well known generally.

This knowledge of contemporary Church reversals is of importance in a number of areas where future reform is necessary. One important issue that will damage the Church grievously in future generations is its stance on artificial contraception. This has already caused major damage since *Humanae Vitae*, with the majority of sexually active Catholics ignoring the ban on contraception (and not believing they are sinning by so doing), and with widespread revulsion at the Church's unjustifiable ban on the use of condoms for the medical purpose of preventing the spread of AIDS within marriage. The damage will be compounded when the effects of gross world overpopulation become impossible to ignore. The Church will need a way to retreat gracefully from *Humanae Vitae* and *Casti Connubii*. This way is provided by the paradox that the reactionary attempts to undermine not just a papal encyclical but some clear statements of the Vatican II Council gives today's Catholics a contemporary example of change to Catholic teachings, providing a precedent

for introduction of such critically important progressive changes as the modification of the ban on artificial contraception.

I am not advocating a lessening of efforts to retain and fully implement the reforms envisaged by participants in Vatican II, but suggesting that knowledge of attempts to reverse these changes will condition the 'middle-of-the-road' Catholics to accept additional reformist changes as an integral part of the response of a fundamentally conservative Church to changed circumstances. If these reforms are not undertaken, the damage to our beloved Church will make reactionary resistance to changes of Vatican II seem minor by comparison.

ALAN CLAGUE is a retired Chemical Pathologist and Biochemical Geneticist. Since retirement he has obtained a Master of Theology degree. He is a member of ARC Secretariat.



Irish abuse scandals DANIEL O'LEARY Painful but cleansing

The moral authority of the Catholic Church in Ireland has been severely compromised by the disclosure of the cover-ups of the widespread abuse of children by clergy. The revelations indicate a much wider problem which Catholics must confront head-on if the Church is to survive and grow.

For the full text of this very confronting article, refer:
THE TABLET 16 January 2010

John XXIV at Oxford in 2040

George Ripon

An edited version of the address given by the retired
Pope John 24th in the Great Hall at Christ Church
Oxford on the Feast of All Saints, Nov 1st

It's good to be back in Oxford, my old stamping ground, and to reflect on my years away. It was in 2017 that I got the call. Happy here in academia, lecturing in Spirituality and Liturgy at the Catholic Theology College, I had a call from my friend William (Archbishop of Westminster) that he needed to see me. After a quick examination of conscience as to what I had done wrong, I was on my way to London. A warm greeting reassured me that no secret reports (by Temple Spies) had been made about heretical utterances of mine. He quickly got to the point.

James, he said, 'I've had a call from them'. We both knew that that meant Rome and I again wondered if I had transgressed. 'Fear not', he said 'it's all good. Paul VII needs your help in setting up a new Commission on Spirituality in the Liturgy.' To say I was shocked would be an understatement! 'This, William' I said, 'is your doing. In my mid-fifties I'm too young for Rome.' 'I was approached', he said, 'and consulted by the personal secretary to His Holiness so it's direct from the very top. What could I say?' he went on. 'Especially as I realised that you were an ideal choice and on my last *ad limina* I sensed that 'the winds of change' were blowing around St. Peter's. So James', he said, 'you'll go?' The rest is in my book. Autographed copies will be available at the St. Aldate's Gate later.

As a humble priest, my one visit to Rome some ten years before had been as an interested tourist. So returning to live and work there was a shock to the system. With seminary Latin and a reasonable smattering of Italian I started to cope. First up was a one-on-one meeting with Paul VII lasting over an hour, when I learned things which must await the fifty years opening of the archives. Suffice it to say it was an eye-opener. 'There are some here', he said, 'who think they are God, others think I am God and they are all wrong. Many have passed their use-by date but what do I do with them? Your first task is to rewrite the Mass in good modern English and you will have my full support. I say this because you will encounter stiff resistance from those who didn't learn last time. You will recall the chaos we had when my predecessor in 2010/

11 tried to impose archaic English on the faithful. So go to it and keep me posted.'

And I started first to resurrect the ICEL (The International Commission for English in the Liturgy), with new English scholarship and some of the original members who had been eased out by anti-ICEL elements in the Curia. As I got going I was conscious of scrutiny by the Inquisition and the 'Old Latin Brigade'. Happy with my progress after 18 months Paul VII honoured me with the Red Hat and I became James Cardinal Robertson. Some who had been there 'for ever' were not happy with my promotion, but who was I to object?

A well-known Australian politician once said 'Life was not meant to be easy' and this hit us all in Rome when Paul VII died suddenly after only seven years in office. So it was on for one and all. Who would succeed? Even before the funeral little groups formed: old, young, Latins, English, American, African and others. They gathered in corners and over *lattés*, speculating, gossiping and, yes, scheming. If anyone thought that political parties knew how to lobby (when not lobbying!!) they should come to Rome pre-Consistory.

My adversaries had a little gloat. 'Now we'll see about your new English when we elect the right man. We will soon be back to business as usual. But don't worry; you will probably get a nice posting to the Bahamas. It's fun there!!' I was concerned as I did not want to see a repeat of the 2010 liturgy shambles, and yes, I prayed a little harder and for a good Pontiff.

While open lobbying was forbidden (??) in the church, nothing then stopped the media and they had field days every day. Would we go back to an Italian or, as lately, a European? Was it time for another English Pope – only the second since Adrian IV (1154-1159). Maybe as Obama, time for a black Pope or, horror of horrors, an American Pontiff. Rumours abounded. Who would get the nod? But no clear favourite emerged. As the election day got near, a black African, Archbishop Ludono, was put in charge of the Conclave and voting began. I do believe that very few of the 110 assembled Cardinals – unlike those in the civil political scene – wanted the job. As the youngest present I looked forward to enjoying my first conclave.

After two weeks with four or five ballots daily no favourite emerged and Archbishop Ludono started talking of a lock-up with bread and water. So, after more prayer, strong support for two cardinals appeared. However they were neck and neck with neither near the two-thirds plus one majority required. Extra time for consultation was granted and, after the two main groups finished conferring, a note of hope was sensed. After the next

ballot no numbers were announced but to my horror I saw my erstwhile friend William Westminster and the black Archbishop approach in my direction. 'It's you!' they said. 'No!' I said. 'I can't be. It's a mistake. I'm too young.' 'Yes' they repeated, 'will you serve?' 'Yes, serviam' I said and 'God help me'. The cry went out *'Habemus Papam'* and I shed a tear as all, even my adversaries, cheered. It was relief all round except for me. 'You'll be fine', said Westminster. 'Yes' I replied 'and it's all your fault.' But as the second English Pope I was happy to have his blessing and support.

The pomp and ceremonials I had to endure are now all history. Having accepted the job I was anxious to get to work and I started a little black book with 'Things To Do'. Early entries included the following: the appointment of bishops, women in the church, good vernacular liturgies, lay involvement in leadership and many others. And I decided to start with bishops because, like many in the Church, I was intrigued by the mysterious process by which new bishops emerged. I recalled my early involvement in clergy golf days (no bishops allowed) when, after 18 holes, a good lunch and a few drinks, priests opened up. Terms like 'Bishops who would not say boo to a goose!' or 'Rome wouldn't have a clue what goes on in parishes!!' The trend to 'safe' episcopal appointments had become obvious in the reign of JP II and it continued under BXVI. Paul VII, despite some resistance, started querying some proposals, even rejected some to the chagrin of some local Cardinals and senior Archbishops who thought they had divine rights. More on this later.

Early on I found a certain loneliness in the job so I decided to get outside help. As the Pope can't just hop on a plane and go to London, I asked William, Westminster (now forgiven!), to invite Geoffrey of Canterbury to come with him to Rome for a pow-wow. Geoffrey was delighted to come to what he described as his second Head Office to greet the second English Pope. As three old Oxford men, we had great reminiscing before getting down to business. Paul VII in his short reign had broken down some barriers. Inter-communion had been encouraged when other Christians joined us at the Eucharist and Catholics had been urged to attend from time to time and participate fully in non-Catholic Sunday Services, subject of course to maintaining financial support for their own parishes!! For bishops he had abolished the hat (*Mitre*), the big stick (*Crozier*) and the great cloak (*Cappa Magna*) as symbols of medieval triumphalism!!

Geoffrey Canterbury was frank about Anglican problems, similar to ours: smaller congregations, a lack of interest in matters spiritual, and less financial support. Vocations to the priesthood, with no celibacy, were better than ours but marital separation was becoming a problem.

After some thirty years women had settled in as priests, though many Anglicans, including women, still preferred a male minister. At that stage I thought, let's concentrate on the episcopate. So we got down to bishops. My own wish to open up the closed process was well known and I was looking for some Anglican guidance as to a democratic way. Canterbury was very honest when he said, 'Don't go down our process for Archbishops where we need separate majority support from the bishops present, the clergy present and the group of lay people involved. When we don't achieve this first time round, the whole process has to start again and, once rejected, good men, carefully selected, rarely nominate a second time. It's now a matter of record that in catholic dioceses regional bishops, however recommended by the authorities, cannot be elected without the support of the registered catholic voters in the particular region. The 'Club' of senior clerics who once ruled the roost are still not happy with this. But, as I often reminded them, I was elected to serve the whole church.

Regularly, through my time as Pope, I was confronted with comments like, 'Your Holiness ... your predecessors did it this way ...' or 'Do you want to set aside centuries of 'Tradition'? 'Yes!' I would respond. 'It's Vatican II or maybe it's time for Vatican III'. They had no response to this possibility.

Now for what I always saw as the big problem in my time: the rôle of women in the church. Unfinished business but I am happy to be judged on my progress. Having settled the bishop problem, I again went out on a limb and called a meeting of the groups pressing for the ordination of women. They came to Rome, surprised. But I was quick to advise them against expecting quick solutions or indeed miracles. I started with three questions to them, pleading for honest answers:

1. if we opened the Seminaries tomorrow to women would you accept seven years of theology, philosophy and Canon Law?
2. would you accept celibacy?
3. how would you feel about a solitary life in a presbytery in charge of a parish?

This gave rise to serious consideration and, having broken the ice, we were able to get down to serious business. As we, by consent, excluded the media, frank discussion was possible and a recurring theme emerged: Why should women accept a regime rejected by men? Let's bring real ministry into the third millennium. So I played my trump card: Let's be patient and start again. Thus was born the 'Commission on Women in the Church' with sharp teeth and a majority of women members. At our first formal meeting (in private) I said, 'Those out there' – indicating

the various Vatican Offices – ‘are dead against you in this and against me too, so I favour an indirect approach. So as a start I propose to open the diaconate to women and abolish celibacy for this order for both sexes. Between these four walls I can see this leading to greater things, but not just yet.’

You good people here in Oxford will recall the nineties with the revival of interest by the ‘magisterium’ in the diaconate. After a thousand years in Limbo it was seen as a part solution to the shortage of priests. True as always to tradition, the revised rôle would be that candidates be male only, celibate (unless already married), directly under the oversight of the local bishop (his eyes and ears??) and have several years’ training, mainly part-time, with great emphasis on Theology and Canon Law. The process varied in different areas. When the proposed duties were revealed some said, ‘Wait on!! These rôles have already been performed for some time by Pastoral Associates, the majority of whom are women, so why deacons?’ – a good question, I thought at the time. So I had a brilliant thought: ‘Why not combine the rôles and allow Pastoral Associates access to the diaconate – a much less complicated process and now *Viri probati* could be joined by *Feminae probatae* prepared to make a commitment to serve in his or her parish. The Rome model allowed local bishops to exclude deacons from working in their own parish. This represented the fear still in Rome of allowing the People of God to participate actively in their own parishes. I quickly abolished this rule as I saw it as one to be ‘more honoured in the breach’. Anyhow, as you all know, deacons male and female (robed or not, by choice) are now a major element in parish life.

No, I did not get to the ultimate: the *ordination of women*. But my successor has that in his basket. By simplifying the priestly formation process and combining it with the diaconate we could well see a new form of ministry open to men and women. Meanwhile the right of deacons (women and men) to preside at the Eucharist in the absence of a priest has taken much of the heat out of the move to the full ordination of women.

So how am I, a retired Pope, here reminiscing in this hallowed hall? Well it started in 2009 in a far-flung outpost in what became known as the ‘Father Bob Affair’. As he approached seventy-five, he failed to offer his resignation to his bishop. This did not go unnoticed and he had a visit indicating that his offer to resign (expected) would be accepted and the ‘keys of the kingdom’ (parish) should be handed in within thirty days. Bob, well known for his independence and his great work for the poor over many decades, wished to continue so he dug his heels in and

politely refused. With great local and media support he got a reprieve. I mention this as it focussed attention on the retirement age for clergy.

I was aware that at parish level around the world priests at seventy-five were often encouraged (even pressured) by the bishop to ‘Do another year Father’ and ongoing. So we made a rule that, at seventy-five, priests could insist on retirement and get good care in old age. They could also by personal choice continue to serve, and many did so.

It was a different kettle of fish in the Vatican where many over seventy-five continued in office expecting the status and comforts to continue till death ‘made them part’, despite being well past their ‘use-by’ dates.

Paul VII started with gentle persuasion, asking the oldies to make way for the younger men we desperately needed in Rome. Real progress started as some of the bishops elected by *vox populi* (the voice of the people) joined our ranks. It’s now compulsory for all Vatican hierarchy to retire at seventy-five and at the next Conclave Cardinals over seventy-five will not be attending.

So where did that leave me? Well talking here tonight, as I could not make a rule for others and not me!! Having myself by now passed the magic age, I offered my resignation to myself and accepted it. So in Rome we now have what sportsmen around the world would describe as a ‘New Ball Game’. Will I return to England? Maybe from time to time.

In my twenty-plus years in Rome I fell in love with Italy and the Italians. I have a small villa about two hours by car south of Rome where, subject to his authority, the old PP allows me to help with the Sunday Masses in his three small churches. My successor (Paul VIII) often puts on civvies and dark glasses and drives down for a yarn, *spag bol* and a glass of the local *vino*. We chat about ‘Church’ but he does not have to tell me not to interfere. I know my place now and I did my best. God will be my judge in His time.

Good night to you all and don’t forget my book!!

GEORGE RIPON, now in retirement, is a parishioner at St. Patrick’s Church, Murrumbidgee in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. In his 41 years there he has (in his own words) interfered in all areas of parish life including the Pastoral Council, School Board, Liturgy, Music, Meditation and Ecumenism and now Church reform. This article was first published in *Catholica*. If you would like to discuss the article with George, contact him on: gripon@optusnet.com.au

Attitudes to Clericalism

Gideon Goosen

Clericalism is an attitude of some clergy that privilege above others gives them certain entitlements. It is a feeling of superiority and includes secrecy and a preoccupation with status. But some of the laity support this attitude in an uncritical way. If the laity rejected these attitudes they could not persist in the church.

Here are some examples of clerical attitudes and how the laity are complicit in supporting them. The examples are taken from George Wilson's book, *Clericalism: The Death of Priesthood* (The Liturgical Press, 2008).

Do you agree that these attitudes show clericalism?

Example 1.

Clergy: because I belong to the clergy I am automatically credible. I don't have to earn my credibility by my performance.

Laity: there's a diploma on the wall so I can put my trust in her (or him).

Example 2.

Clergy: people use a special title in addressing me, so I must be something special.

Laity: she's got a title; I better shape up.

Example 3.

Clergy: the laity accept these manifestations of privilege so they must be deserved.

Laity: it is showing respect for the cloth.

Letter to the Hierarchy

Dear Cardinal / Archbishop / Bishop ...

We write to seek an assurance from you as our Bishop that the many issues of concern raised by Dr Hans Küng in his open letter to the Catholic Bishops of the World will be considered by the Federation of Bishops Conference of Oceania at its meeting to be held shortly in Sydney. We further ask that the approaches to these issues recommended by Dr Küng be given favourable consideration by the assembled Bishops.

Two ARC members feel so strongly about the state of the Church that they wrote this to Cardinal Pell and Bishop Coleridge.

Dr Küng sets out simply and directly, clearly and in elegant English, his concerns for the Church-in-Crisis. Many clergy and laity in Australia and abroad feel just as he does, and are looking for leadership.

The Madrid press release by *We Are Church* echoes the same sense of urgency. There have been numerous references to these matters in the lay press and journals both here and overseas.

Küng's proposals are practical and concrete. He has always been consistent in his views. He reflects the social and political philosophies, and the mood of the Third Millennium. Pope Benedict's letter to the Irish is in the style of the 19th century. Letters to *The Sydney Morning Herald* April 22 and reports from Ireland in *The Tablet* March 27 reflect the incredulity of the laity on reading the letter.

Should Hans Küng's letter be dismissed out of hand, and the concerns of the laity be ignored, the authority and credibility of the Australian Church will continue to decline, as has happened already in the Church in Ireland and in Rome. The opportunity for reform should not be lost.

Hans Küng and Timothy Radcliffe have said that they have no intention of leaving the Church. We remain members of St Joseph's parish Edgecliff, and St James' Adelong, and feel the same way.

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

The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or of ARC

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