



arcvoice

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Editorial

Although the ‘new translation’ of the Mass will not be officially launched until November when it becomes ‘compulsory’, our Parish (Frenchs Forest, NSW) has already started to use it. So it would be interesting to hear how it is being received. Perhaps ARC members have some questions like: Why it was necessary? What does it hope to achieve? How will its effectiveness be measured? Is it just an exercise in semantics? Did the instigators not realise that most people answer more out of unthinking habit than deep spiritual conviction? Will it bring ‘disaffected Catholics’ back to the fold? Finally, what did it cost?

It is worth reflecting on the protests throughout the English-speaking world against these changes. In an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (19.2.11) it was reported that ‘at least a dozen Australian priests have indicated they will refuse to use the new Mass translation which comes into force later this year, and hundreds more are angry about the lack of consultation over the translation’. Fr John Crothers of Peshurst Parish has courageously spoken out, saying he could not in good conscience use the text, which he believed to go against the 1960s Vatican Council’s spirit of ‘aggiornamento’, meaning ‘up-to-date’. ‘I’ve no problems with changing things – it’s part of my philosophy that you’ve got to change and grow and develop. It’s the fact that this is going backwards instead of going forwards,’ he said. ‘I won’t be saying the priest part. If the people wanted to do the responses in the new translation, it’s up to them.’ It is a pity others aren’t as outspoken as Fr John, but at least I can’t be defrocked for speaking my mind!

The first thing that struck me with this new translation was the revival from the past of the Church’s obsession with sin. In the first choice of opening Penitential Acts we are admonished to acknowledge our ‘grievous’ sins (and strike the breast)! I was immediately transported back to repressive pre-Vatican II days – the insistence on regular confessions and terrifying ‘hell-fire and brimstone’ missions. This has all the hallmarks of an extreme right wing group whose stated aim is to take the Church back to pre-Vatican II days – the ones who persuaded the hierarchy that Reconciliation of the Third Rite was ‘illegal’.

In the real world, people are judged innocent unless proved guilty. However, our Church seems to assume that each of us is always in a state of grievous sin. What does this say about ‘Reconciliation’ and ‘Forgiveness’? Is it an attempt to bring back the infamous ‘Catholic Guilt’, encouraging the examination of peccadilloes and scruples such as ‘eating meat on Friday’ and ‘mortal sins of impure thought’?

How much more life-giving would the Mass be if, although acknowledging our failings, we commit ourselves to do good for others and recognise the gifts we have been given – instead of just ‘beating our breasts’ – then the need for a better translation would have more impact.

I welcome readers’ comments.

Margaret Knowlden

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Letter to the Editor

Once again I feel it is necessary to make some pertinent comments on the June Editorial of *ARCvoice*.

If John Buggy expects to be taken seriously he must support his statements with evidence. He must state times and places and authorities. In any scientific symposium this is standard procedure. Otherwise the author is 'like a boxer hitting the air'. Let me give an example. Buggy states, 'Surely there must be many priests and bishops who do not believe in miracles'. So far a gratuitous statement. On what basis does he make this assertion? Unless the assertion is supported, it remains unconvincing.

Again, Buggy states that, 'For decades the most prominent scripture scholars and theologians have accepted that the miracles Jesus performed can be explained in a manner that is not outside the natural order of the world.' Names please! Does he include Kung, Kulman and Collins? We need to know.

Does he include the miracle of Lazarus in the above? Or the man who was blind from birth?

Does he include the Resurrection of Jesus as being explained as a natural phenomenon.

Really, not a very convincing editorial. I would have expected a more disciplined and scholarly approach.

Ross L. Clifton
Vaucluse

Debunking the Miraculous – a response

The expectation of Ross Clifton expressed in his letter to the editor that my editorial in the last issue should have the evidential rigour of a scientific symposium appears to be demanding a lot from a few paragraphs. Perhaps it should be pointed out that an editorial is an expression of opinion on something that is topical, usually drawing on a few fairly self-evident facts to which the writer adds a personal perspective. Pick up any serious newspaper and you won't find a list of references and footnotes at the bottom of the editorial page. Or should I be flattered that he expected more of our humble quarterly?

However, Ross does have every right to question what is printed and I wish more of our members would contribute by writing letters or articles. In the interests of clarity I would like to point out that my statement that for decades the most prominent scripture scholars and theologians have accepted that the 'miracles' that Jesus performed can be explained in a manner that is not outside the natural order of the world is almost self-evident. Dip into any relatively conservative yet erudite dictionary of theology such as *Sacramentum mundi* edited by Karl Rahner or *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* by Xavier Leon-Dufour (both of which contain many contributors) and this will be confirmed.

Both these references point out that miracles recorded in the Gospels are fundamentally authenticating signs of the presence of God but they are not an arbitrary exhibition of God's omnipotence (Johann Baptist Metz and Xavier Leon-Dufour). The synoptic Gospels use the word *dunameis* (mighty deeds) to describe them and this is better translated as 'manifestations of power'. In no way are they outside the natural order any more than the deeds of the faith-healers of today. If you want to call these miracles then that is up to you. But, on the other hand, it is ridiculous to think that Jesus literally suddenly stopped a raging storm.

That is precisely why I made the distinction when I stated that I was speaking about something that is outside the natural order and assuming that Father Brennan was doing likewise. The problem is that so few clergy are either unable to or are not permitted to make these distinctions and speak about them without raising attention to themselves. The Vatican has a vested interest in not having this matter explained too clearly since the proclaiming of saints has been tied to miracles.

This brings me to perhaps the most important issue that Ross Clifton's letter raises. He accuses me of making a gratuitous statement that there are probably many priests and bishops who do not believe in miracles. Well I happen to know quite a few in Australia who do not and I certainly would not be prepared to name them for reasons that should be very obvious to anyone who regularly reads *ARCvoice*. We all know how authority in the Church is constantly abused by the silencing of theologians and other scholars who question official teaching and practice and about the retribution that they suffer. When Bishop Geoffrey Robinson launched his book on the reasons for sexual abuse in the Church and also raised questions relating to doctrine, he pointed out that there were many who supported him but that thanking them openly would not be helpful to them. Such is the climate of fear and threat of punishment that accompanies genuine attempts by those seeking to bring out the truth. The Catholic Church is sadly in need of much reform and that is the underlying desire of those who are members of Australian Reforming Catholics or who support us.

John Buggy

The looming disaster of not enough priests...

Brian Coyne

Editorial, *Catholica*

1 March 2011

The Report, *Catholic Parish Ministry in Australia: Facing Disaster?* commissioned by Catholics for Ministry, funded by Women & the Australian Church (WATAC), and compiled by Peter J Wilkinson, is one of the most comprehensive assessments of the looming not just crisis, but disaster, the Catholic Church is facing across the island continent of Australia in delivering the core sacraments and pastoral care to the continually increasing Catholic population of the nation. The harsh reality facing many Catholics alive in Australia right now is that when they die in the next 10, 20 or 30 years time, their families will simply not be able to find a priest to provide them with the last rites. There will not be enough priests available across large parts of the continent, or they will be so stretched providing the last rites or pastoral care to others, that the families will have to 'make do' with the services provided in-house by funeral directors or they will increasingly have to rely on government-licensed funeral and marriage celebrants. Regular participation in the other core sacraments, including the Eucharist, particularly in the remote and regional dioceses will become a rarer and rarer event.

The only 'saving grace' to the situation is that fewer and fewer of the baptised seem to bother enough to participate. That, however, can scarcely be put forward by any bishop as an excuse as to why they have failed in their primary responsibility of not only maintaining participation rates but fulfilling the core mission of Jesus to 'bring the Good News to all people'. The 'bottom line' – as many bishops already know – is that the nation is simply running out of priests. The Church is no longer recruiting enough new priests and the prospect of importing them from other countries looks dimmer and dimmer whichever way you look at the projected statistics 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50 years into the future.

The report is broken into fifteen sections of what basically amounts to a comprehensive statistical analysis

of the state of the Catholic Church as it appears now, as it has appeared in the past, and based on population, recruiting and participation trends what the situation will be at various points in the future. These are the section headings:

- Introduction
- Dioceses & Bishops
- Catholic Population
- Parishes
- Priests
- Migrant Chaplains
- Seminarians
- Priests recruited from overseas
- Permanent Deacons
- Religious Sisters
- Lay Pastoral Associates/Pastoral Workers
- Religious Brothers
- Mass Attendance
- Parish Schools
- Priests in parish ministry: 2010-2025

The report then concludes with three sections:

- A short essay entitled 'Parish Ministry Disaster?' which explores the core doctrinal and pastoral understandings the institutional Church has developed down through the centuries of the central rôle of the priest and his rôle as leader and spiritual guide to his parish community and how it is going to be increasingly difficult to meet these, given the growth in population and the decreasing number of priests and pastoral associates.
- A five-part section examining various 'Options for Action' under the following headings: Recruiting autochthonous or local priests; Recruiting overseas priests; Doing Nothing; Rethinking parish ministry; and Rethinking the identity of priest.
- The Report then finishes with the following Conclusion which we present here in full:

To the question 'Is parish ministry facing a disaster?' the evidence, at an institutional level, suggests the affirmative. It also suggests that the bishops seem unsure of how to deal with it.

The rebuilding of a strong and vibrant autochthonous presbyterate in the short-term appears impossible, with new local priests insufficient to replace those retiring over the next 15 years. As if in despair, the bishops have attempted to 'hold the parish ministry fort' with a short-term strategy of recruiting overseas priests, a program of merging existing parishes, and putting a heavy brake on establishing new parishes. The result is parish ministry in retreat at the very time when the Catholic population is growing rapidly.

Nevertheless, signs of hope are present. The permanent diaconate has been revived, there is an increasing presence of lay pastoral associates and community leaders in parish ministry, and Catholic schools, now overwhelmingly in the hands of laypersons, are well-placed to stimulate the faith of young people and play a significant rôle in inculturation. But if the disaster is to be averted, more is needed. It is not enough to treat the symptoms of the crisis; the causes must also be addressed. The vision of Vatican II must be totally unshackled, full co-responsibility implemented in every facet of ministry and church life, proper consultative processes with transparency and accountability put in place, the priestly ministry opened up to married persons, and the essential role of women in ministry properly recognized. The misuse of power must cease and the paradigm of service prevail.

The on-going priest shortage cannot be solved simply by recruiting priests from overseas on short-term contracts. Only long-term and broader policies can rebuild a vibrant autochthonous presbyterate. These will have to deal courageously with the current 'priestly package' of male, celibate, life-long and full-time. In this, Australia's bishops will need to show leadership and initiative, and a willingness to discuss with their people all the options, including the ordination of married men and the role of women in ministry. Vatican II stated:

'The Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ Himself under the lead of the befriending Spirit. Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served. To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel' (Gaudium et Spes)

The times are always changing, as are human environments, and all organisms which exist in these environments must also change and adapt if they are to survive and thrive. The Church is an organism in this changing world and it too, if it is to survive and thrive, has no choice but to adapt. Guided by the Spirit and holding fast to the Gospel, it can.

The purpose of Vatican II was '*aggiornamento*', ensuring continual renewal of the Church, making it relevant to today's world, and adapting it to its new environment. The Church, universal and local, is always in need of boosts of renewal. Now is surely the time for one in Australian Catholicism.

Catholic Parish Ministry in Australia: Facing Disaster?
is available

at www.catholicsforministry.com.au
or a hard copy can be ordered for \$10 from
WATAC (Women & the Australian Church)
37/121 Anzac Avenue Engadine, 2233
email: watac@watac.net

Peter Wilkinson, the author of the report **Catholic Parish Ministry in Australia: Facing Disaster?** reviewed above, will speak at the Australian Reforming Catholics' Panel Discussion and Annual General Meeting on 29 October 2011

Peter was ordained in 1961 as a member of the Columban Missionary Society. He obtained degrees in Missiology and Education and taught in the Columban seminaries in Melbourne & Sydney. He also worked for four years as in South Korea. Resigning from clerical ministry in 1976, he worked as Director of the Clearing House on Migration Issues at the Ecumenical Migration Centre, as a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, and as a Guest Lecturer in Missiology at Yarra Theological Union. Now retired, he spends much of his time engaged in what he hopes will be useful research. He is a member of **Catholics for Renewal**, a community-based group of Australian Catholics in Melbourne. Its purpose is to promote the ongoing renewal of the Catholic Church, especially in Australia.

It aims to do this by:

1. encouraging and enabling all Christ's faithful to speak out on their concerns for the good of the Church, as is their right and duty;
2. promoting co-responsibility in the mission and ministry of the Church;
3. urging authentic collegiality and subsidiarity;
4. advocating responsive church structures which allow the voice of the faithful to be heard and facilitate open dialogue with their pastors;
5. promoting an outward-facing, transparent and accountable church; co-operating with other community-based groups with similar aims and objectives.

The Pope or the Virgin

Armand Veilleux

Abbot of Scourmont

A certain personality cult has developed in the church in our time, and it is not in line with the gospel message.

It is rather a form of secularisation

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A new kind of rosary is available, in which the central medal doesn't carry an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It has one of John Paul II on one side, and Benedict XVI on the other. This rosary was on sale in Rome last year (before either of the above was beatified). Certainly, it was not put on sale by the Vatican, but the fact that it was sold in Rome shows how far a certain kind of personality cult has gone. There are also watches, pens, even toothbrushes with the pope's picture on them. But – the pope on a rosary! How far has personality cult gone in the church?

In our epoch, the Roman church has been blessed with a long line of popes with outstanding spiritual and human qualities. It is a grace for which we thank God. They have surely earned great respect from those who do not share our faith. But this has had a secondary effect. It is the development in people at large (not always believers) of a personality cult. Attention is gradually displaced from the message to the messenger. It is hard to know how many in the crowds gathered around John Paul II (young or not so young) and who cried more and more 'Viva il Papa!' gave real attention to his message.

We live in a post-modern society blocked in its development at its adolescent phase. It is that of the cult of the hero. There are a number of movements in the church marked by the strong personality of a charismatic founder or foundress. They have acted successfully as pressure groups within the Roman administration. They have concurred largely in developing a concentration of attention on *Supreme Authority*. There has followed a considerable weakening of the authority and autonomy of all subordinated authorities.

There is another dangerous consequence of this development. The church tends to be more and more identified with its leaders, and that at all levels. As long as the heads are holy men, with admirable courage, intelligence and moral grandeur, all goes well. What a beautiful church! But the corollary is also true. If one or other of its authorities, be it a bishop, a religious or a priest, manifests reprehensible moral behaviour, it is the credibility of the whole church that is at stake. Look at Belgium in our days.

Jesus of Nazareth spoke and acted with authority, but he always refused every exercise of power and above all the paraphernalia of power. He even put his disciples on guard against this temptation like 'The leaders of the Gentiles', adding 'But it must not be so with you.' When, at the end of three centuries of persecutions, the church obtained right of existence within the Roman Empire, in the epoch of Constantine, it adopted the administrative methods of this Empire and its bishops adopted honorific signs of Roman Imperial functionaries. It was the first form of secularisation within the church. This secularisation has known many further stages. The fact that rosaries can now be sold with the effigy of popes on them shows that we are at a new stage in this development.



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02 9371 8519 rbrian@vtown.com.au

Church or church? Linguistic and theological confusion

A discussion paper

Gabe Lomas

Nowadays, we commonly use the word ‘church’ when referring to buildings or to a religious service, as in, ‘Did you go to church today?’, and you hear things like, ‘The church teaches that the pope’s infallible’, or ‘The church should update its theology’, or ‘You’ll find the church down the road, on the right.’ I once heard someone say to a prospective seminarian: ‘Ah, John, I hear you’re going to join the church.’ We have a schema of concepts tucked away in our minds to help us predict what ‘church’ might mean in such cases. However, instead of giving distinct labels to these different concepts and tidily putting them in order, we use the same single label over and over again, sometimes beginning it with a capital letter – difficult to do in speech – if we want to signal that we think it significant.¹ We use this same word to cover a multitude, not of sins, but of related ideas. And, alas and alack, what we usually end up with is a dysfunctional schema, tangled up and confused, and this has a significant impact on how we think and behave as people chosen and singled out to belong to the lord.

Toowoomba data

Consider some of the language that has been generated around the forced early retirement of Bill Morris from Toowoomba diocese, and note what the word ‘church’ is being used to mean in each case.

Bill Morris wrote or said:

- 01 ... pastoral questions and matters which are in ferment generally across the Church²
- 02 I would continue to serve the Church in Australia ...³
- 03 ... out of my love for the Church ...⁴
- 04 ... your brothers and sisters in the Local Church ...⁵
- 05 .. the people, who are the Church, the Body of Christ ..⁶
- 06 ... my love for the Church ...⁷
- 07 The church is at its best when it’s transparent, but it’s at its worst when it’s not.⁸
- 08 There is a creeping centralism in the church at the moment. There’s a creeping authoritarianism...⁹
- 09 ... I think we damage the church when we are not so clear ...¹⁰
- 10 The church is governed with all the bishops in the world and the Pope and I think in many ways the local bishops have been sidelined – they’ve become like branch managers – and have lost a lot of their voice ... in the governance of the church.¹¹

Benedict/Ratzinger wrote:

- 11 ... [JP2] decided infallibly and irrevocably that the Church has not the right to ordain women to the priesthood¹²

Philip Wilson wrote:

- 12 We commit ourselves anew to teaching faithfully what Christ taught as the Church has handed it down.¹³
- 13 We are hopeful that Bishop Morris will continue to serve the Church in other ways in the years ahead.¹⁴

Tom Roberts said:

- 14 ... it’s not what the church wants to see ...¹⁵

John Cleary (ABC 8 May 2011) said:

- 15 What are you asking from the wider church here? Is there a message to the people of the church?¹⁶

Andrew Hamilton wrote:

- 16 It will certainly arouse debate in and outside the Catholic Church. It is ironical that action taken to preserve unity in the church should so strain unity of hearts and minds.¹⁷

Brian Greiner wrote:

- 17 Morris West lamented that he had lived to witness a shift in the Church from the primacy of charity to the primacy of authority.¹⁸

Brian King wrote:

- 18 The holy father should really understand the church is about its people.¹⁹

Peter Johnstone wrote:

- 19 If we are to save God’s church from this abuse of power, the people of the Church need to demand a more inclusive regime.²⁰

The mind-sets of Bill Morris and of Benedict/Ratzinger can be further illustrated. Thus, while Benedict Ratzinger was still a Roman cardinal, in 1997, he wrote of the movement *We are Church*:

- 20 These groups far exceed the bounds of legitimate concerns ... they propagate among the faithful an unacceptable democratic model of the Church...²¹
- 21 which deny Catholic teachings and are in flagrant opposition to Church discipline. It is self-evident that such initiatives cannot be condoned by the Church in any manner.²²

Bill Morris wrote recently:

- 22 I believe the Vatican hasn’t given me a voice ... and that means it hasn’t given the people a voice.²³
- 23 It has been my experience and the experiences of others that Rome controls Bishops by fear and if you ask questions or speak openly on subjects that Rome declares closed or does not wish to be discussed, you are censored very quickly, told your leadership is defective, that you are being unfaithful to the Magisterium, that you have broken *communio* and are threatened with dismissal.²⁴

It seems that Bill Morris uses ‘church’ to signal parishes, gatherings (including non-clerical?), the institution in Australia, the people of God assembled locally, and the Vatican. Philip Wilson uses it of the Vatican, the institution in general and the institution in Australia. Tom Roberts uses ‘church’ to mean the Vatican or the pope. John Cleary, interviewing Bill Morris, puts the epithet ‘wider’ before ‘church’, probably indicating the institution (and perhaps

people) beyond the bounds of the diocese. Andrew Hamilton indicates the Catholic institution and the institution in general. Morris West (quoted by Bill Greiner) betokens the institution, the Vatican and the pope, while Brian King seems to mean the institutional structures. Peter Johnstone dignifies 'church' first with the epithet 'God's' – indicating the institution – and then with 'people of', meaning the non-clerical members.

The comments numbered 20 and 21 illustrate 'church' being used of the Vatican and the institution, while numbers 22 and 23 bring out clearly the association of 'Rome' with control, and 'Magisterium' with draconian threats. Numbers 20 to 23 serve to illustrate the differing mind-sets of Bill Morris and Benedict/Ratzinger.

Overwhelmingly, these data show that 'church' as used in the Toowoomba debate carries the meaning of institution, Vatican and/or pope, but is also seen by some (e.g. Bill Morris, John Cleary and Peter Johnstone) as meaning all members of the community, cleric and lay. The word can be modified by a preceding attitudinal epithet, while extra dignity or force can also be signalled in writing by capitalising its first letter.

Pinning down meanings

As part of our current writing conventions, we use the capitalised word Church of wider Christian communities when we give them titles, such as: the Uniting Church, the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the universal Church, and so on. Church is used to indicate institutions and officialdom – the pope, the Vatican curia, the hierarchy, the diocese, the parish, and so on. When used like this, it can be put *in tandem* with ameliorating epithets such as 'holy' and 'mother', which tend to blur and perhaps soften the image somewhat. Thus it is that 'Holy Church' appears almost benign as it wages war on the Saracens, establishes the Inquisition, and silences theologians who differ from the theology espoused by clerics in the Vatican. In the same way, 'Mother Church' conjures up the image of someone or something loving and caring, to be loved and admired by all. One would hardly think of putting forward an opinion contrary to that of 'Mother Church' – much less, to that of 'Holy Mother Church'.

Vatican 2 produced a hugely significant document on the church, *Lumen gentium*²⁵, in which the term for church, *ecclesia*, is used throughout with an initial capital letter²⁶. The word occurs in lower case only twice, and on its first such appearance²⁷ it is given a capital 'C' by its English language translators²⁸. For its second appearance²⁹ – as the plural, *ecclesiae*, quoted in the context of small local assemblies³⁰ – the translators follow the Latin original, and keep all the letters small.

It is rarely that we use church in this manner nowadays, to talk about local groups of Christians. We have largely drifted away from that meaning, even though it is the basic one from which all the others have evolved. The word itself, 'church', is derived – *via* the Old English *cīr(i)ce* and the West Germanic *kirika* – from the Greek *kuriakē* or *kuriakos*, meaning 'belonging to the lord'. The Greek *ekklesia*, from which we get the Latin transliteration *ecclesia*, occurs only three times in the Gospels³¹, and carries the meaning, 'people called out (or chosen) and gathered together'. This concept mirrors the Hebrew use of *q'hal* in the story of the group of Hebrews called out of Egypt and assembled together by YHWH, God. The word used in Hebrew for 'group' is *q'hal*, and the Hebrew Testament talks about the *q'hal yhwh* – God's chosen and assembled people³².

The early Christians seem to have been aware of themselves as being such a group, called out and set apart by God, belonging to the lord, modelled on that section of the Hebrew nation that had previously been chosen and gathered together by YHWH. The ancient liturgical text of 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 and the similar record in Luke 22:14-20 and its parallels, show how the early Christians saw themselves as being a newly-formed covenant people. Early Christian writings used the word church in this sense over and over again, for example about the Christians at Ephesus, in Laodiceae, throughout Judea, at Antioch, at Cenchræe³³ – and, indeed, there are 100 or more mentions of such groups in the Greek NT.

Where Church is actually and fully to be found

In his seminal theological writings, Karl Rahner saw Church as realised in local church assemblies³⁴. For him, these reflected the 'remnant' of faithful ones spoken of in the Hebrew Testament³⁵, in each group of which was embodied the whole of God's Chosen People. The Eucharist celebrated by the local church assembly is an instantiation of the whole Church; the total Church becomes 'Event' – truly and really present³⁶. Thus it is precisely in the Eucharistic assembly, not in a gathering of bishops or clergy – even one that is ecumenical – that Church is actually and fully to be found.

This was a theological interpretation espoused and promulgated by *Lumen gentium*, and it can help us to begin sorting things out a little if we focus on a local assembly or group when we use Church. Parishes, taken together, constitute what we now call a diocese, which we can refer to as church. This, in fact, is the growing usage today. Thus the diocese of Rome is also the church of Rome, and maybe we should use the label 'Vatican church' for the group of Christians that, in the current set-up, controls the institutional structures and members of most Catholic

Endnotes

churches – as we have seen in regard to bishop Bill Morris and the church of Toowoomba.

When we offer an opinion or comment about the church, we need to indicate clearly about whom and what we are talking. Often we mean institutional structures, and in such cases it is better to use labels such as ‘the institutional members of the church/Church ...’, or perhaps ‘the Vatican church’, ‘the clergy’, ‘the bishop’, ‘the sisters’, ‘the curia’ – and so on. We need to make it clear, both to ourselves and to those we are addressing, what we mean. Similarly, it might be better to use the label ‘church building’ rather than ‘the church’ when we mean the physical structure. Likewise, ‘church service’ can usefully replace ‘church’ when we’re talking about the activity within that building.

The true Church is not of its nature an institution, hidebound by protocols and locked into set ways of functioning. The Church is people. The Church is us. And if time has allowed accretions to grow on some institutional structures so that they hamper our proper freedom, then we should be quite able to pull them off and re-align the structures to be what they were always meant to be – supports that allow the new people of God to be and to become. How much easier and less painful it would have been had this been the operative reality when people in the Vatican started getting anxious about Toowoomba.

Christ did not found the church as it exists today, with all its hierarchical and institutional trappings. He is reported as saying that he is present whenever two or three are gathered in his name. Maybe it is along these paths that the Spirit is guiding us, the Church, to be and to become more fully what God has called us to be.

- ¹ For instance, in which of the examples above would *you* have used an initial capital letter?
- ² Letter to Administrator, 30 April 2011
- ³ – *ditto*
- ⁴ – *ditto*
- ⁵ Letter to the Parishes, 30 April 2011
- ⁶ Letter to Administrator 30 April 2011
- ⁷ Interview reported by Brooke Baskin & Lizzie Stafford in *CourierMail.com.au* 3 May 2011
- ⁸ Video of Toowoomba events at Guardian.co.uk , 10 May 2011
- ⁹ ABC TV Compass 5 June 2011; *Brisbane Times* 9 May 2011
Radio interview report
- ¹⁰ Local ABC TV video of interview concerning Toowoomba situation 5 May 2011
- ¹¹ ABC radio interview 4 May 2011
- ¹² Letter to Morris (12?) November 2009
- ¹³ ACBC letter to Finnegan 12 May 2011
- ¹⁴ – *ditto*
- ¹⁵ ABC Radio broadcast, hosted by John Cleary, 8 May 2011
- ¹⁶ – *ditto*
- ¹⁷ Eureka Street 2 May 2011
- ¹⁸ Eureka Street – Comments 3 May 2011
- ¹⁹ – *ditto*
- ²⁰ – *ditto*
- ²¹ Letter 1 about the *Wir sind Kirche*, June 1997
- ²² Letter 2 about the *Wir sind Kirche*, June 1997
- ²³ ABC Radio *Religious Affairs* 4 May 2011
- ²⁴ Letter to Administrator 30 April 2011
- ²⁵ AAS 57 (1965) 5-75. *Lumen gentium*. Vatican Archives.
- ²⁶ www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v2lumlat.htm is mistaken in giving *Ecclesia* at n.28
- ²⁷ *Lumen gentium* n.8. 1965. Vatican Archives.
- ²⁸ Abbott, W A. 1966. *The Documents of Vatican II*. London-Dublin.
- ²⁹ *Lumen gentium* n.26. 1965. Vatican Archives.
- ³⁰ Acts 8:1; 14:22-23; 20:17, *et passim*.
- ³¹ Matt 16:18; Matt 18:17 (twice)
- ³² Numbers 16:3, 41; *etc.*
- ³³ Rms 2:1; Rev 3:14; Acts 9:31; Acts 11:26; Rms 16:1; *etc.*
- ³⁴ K Rahner 1962 p.23 *The Episcopate & the Primacy*, trans K Barker, P Kerans, R Ochs & R Strachan. NY. (Episkopat unde Primat 1961 p.23 Freiburg)
- ³⁵ *Cfr* 2 Kgs 19:31; Is 10:20; Ez 11:13; Zech 8:6 – and over sixty other instances
- ³⁶ K Rahner 1962 p.24 *The Episcopate & the Primacy*, trans K Barker, P Kerans, R Ochs & R Strachan. NY. (Episkopat unde Primat 1961 p.24 Freiburg).

Gabe Lomas began work in Héla Húli in 1968, after several years in ministry in the UK. He served in Burani, Goloba, Gubari (near Tari), and Gumu (Komo) for a period of over 14 years, being parish priest in the last three places. He was part of a strong drive to incorporate Húli customs – especially various language genres – into Catholic liturgies, and has published many materials in Húli, a number of them in conjunction with Húli men and women. Gabe holds an MA in Theology, an MA in Linguistics from the University of Sydney and a PhD in Linguistics from Macquarie University. He has lectured in linguistics, and worked in the Australian Adult Migrant Education Program. He is now retired and lives in Sydney.

Comment on the Open Letter to Pope Benedict XVI and the Catholic Bishops of Australia

Gideon Goosen

The *Open Letter to Pope Benedict and the Australian Bishops* (2011) often cites Canon Law and this is understandable. However, I would like to include the promising things said re the laity at Vatican II and subsequent documents that have not been realised. The hierarchy has betrayed the faithful on the following four accounts. These statements encapsulate the foundations of church membership:

(1) *The Holy Spirit inhabits all*: regarding the Spirit, *Christifidelis Laici* teaches that the living presence of the Spirit reaches the depth of every individual's heart. It is thus that lay people are formed in the church 'in mutual communion and collaboration of all her members: clergy, religious and lay faithful' (#61). All members of the church receive the Holy Spirit and have gifts of various kinds.

(2) *All Work Together*: in exercising their gifts, there is two-way relationship: the laity are encouraged to work in close union with bishops and priests in their mission (*Gaudium et Spes*, #10), while the clergy and religious should cooperate with laity (GS #26). The role of the clergy with respect to the laity is to: 'recognise their services and charismatic gifts that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one heart.' (*Lumen Gentium*, #30)

(3) *Laity Co-responsible*: the responsibility of the mission is such that 'the whole church ought to feel more strongly the Church's responsibility to obey the command of Christ 'Go into the world... (Mk 16:15)', (CL, #64).

(4) *Laity Involved in Decision-making*: the responsibility goes even beyond consultation to decision-making in some cases. When speaking about the participation of the faithful in these councils (Pastoral Councils and broad consultation) the principle of collaboration can be applied. The participation of the laity can go beyond consultation and collaboration can also apply 'in certain instances' to 'decision-making' (CL, #25).

With some notable exceptions, in my experience, the Pope and Bishops (since Vatican II) often act as if the laity do not also receive the Holy Spirit; they fail to collaborate with the laity; they behave as if the laity are not co-responsible; they do not involve the laity in decision-making. They have gone back on the teachings of Vatican II.

To view the open letter and to add your signature, go into:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/adlim11/petition.html>

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Keynote Speaker MARGARET MAYMAN with VAL WEBB

Rev. Dr. Margaret Mayman is the minister of St. Andrews on the Terrace in Wellington, NZ. She is a graduate in political science and religion; she also holds a B.Theol. degree, STM and M Phil. degrees in Christian Ethics, and was awarded her PhD in 2001. She has been working to promote the inclusion of gay and lesbian people in wider religious structures. From 2002 to 2005 she participated in the Annual United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women. She also advocated for the passage of the NZ Civil Union Act (2004). Since 2006 Margaret has been working with the Kettering Foundation in the US, fostering citizen participation in Democracy. She is currently an international research fellow with the Foundation looking at faith communities as bases for public dialogue. Margaret lives with her partner, Clare, who is also a Presbyterian minister and her 23-year-old son, Andrew who is a unique person with autism.

Dr. Val Webb is the author of *Like Catching Water in a Net* and has written several other publications including *Why We're Equal – Introducing Feminist Theology* and *Florence Nightingale – The Making of a Radical Theologian*. Her latest release is *Stepping out with the Sacred: Human Attempts to Engage the Divine*. Dr. Webb is a teacher, artist, scientist and theologian. At her appearance at our workshop at Kirribilli she delivered a stimulating address on the subject, "Does God Create Religion or Religion Create God?"

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Loved leader defended dispossessed

SMH July 1, 2011

Spiritual leader ... Sister Marnie Kennedy was dearly loved for her generosity and warmth

Sister Marnie Kennedy was a nun and an educator, counsellor, activist, spiritual leader and defender of the rights of the dispossessed and marginalised. She was greatly valued and dearly loved for her warmth, grace, wisdom, generosity of spirit and capacity for love.

She loved family and friends, enjoyed her social life and rejoiced in the achievements and happiness of others. As well, her powerful sense of duty helped her lead a life of value. She loved her church, even though she wearied of its leadership. She believed the role of women in the church was undervalued and looked forward to a time when their full potential could be realised.

Margaret Mary (known as Marnie) Kennedy was born in Sydney on December 2, 1927, one of four children of Jack Kennedy, a doctor, and his wife, Peg. She grew up in Marrickville in the family home, where Jack had his medical practice. Jack and Peg were compassionate people interested in being of service to others especially the poor – and encouraged their children in this spirit.

Marnie was educated at Ashbury with the Ursuline Sisters, as a boarder at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Rose Bay and at the University of Sydney. She joined the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1948, then completed her university studies before taking her final vows in Rome in 1956.

She had deliberately and joyfully chosen to leave mainstream society and embrace a life of contemplative prayer. In the mid-1950s, she could not have foreseen where this commitment would lead. For the next two decades, she worked as a teacher and later as principal of Sacred Heart schools in Rose Bay and Elizabeth Bay. Most of those years were spent in an enclosed convent environment, wearing the full habit, nurturing young

novices and students. However, when Vatican II came, bringing an end to the restrictions of this way of life, Kennedy welcomed its changes.

She wrote of that time: “Vatican II broke open for us – and for me in particular a whole new vision of life. For 20 years I have been totally enclosed while, at the same time, endeavouring to educate young women in their senior years at school to face an ever-changing world. In many ways, these young women were my educators.”

She greatly valued her involvement with the Jesuits from the mid-1970s. After studying at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, she joined the spiritual direction team at the Jesuits’ Canisius College in Pymble. As a spiritual director, she conducted retreats and helped many people come to know God as loving and compassionate rather than demanding and judgmental.

Her brother, Father Ted Kennedy, as parish priest at St Vincent’s in Redfern, was bringing a more open and inclusive church to some of Australia’s most marginalised people. Redfern had become home to many Aboriginal people from all over NSW, especially for members of the *Stolen Generations* finding a new connection with their people.

Kennedy’s connection with Redfern led her to what she saw as her most formative experience. She embarked with others, including the late Sister Maureen Flood, in offering ‘street retreats’ in the inner city. In this work, Kennedy formed a close and lasting connection with the poorest, most powerless and most marginalised people. In 1987, with Sister

Patricia Ormesher, she moved to Redfern to continue her religious work.

The last years of Kennedy’s life, after the death of Ted in 2005, were difficult. She was deeply disappointed by what she saw as the deliberate dismantling of all that he and others had built over 30 years at St Vincent’s. In these circumstances, she did as she had always done: she said what she thought and did what she thought was right. She gave unfailing support to the community, writing frequently to authorities about the injustices she perceived.

Marnie Kennedy is survived by her niece Margie, nephews John, Mark and Peter and their respective families.

Kathleen Gilbert



Film: Pink Smoke Over the Vatican

When Jules Hart was asked to make a film about Roman Catholic Women priests, she initially wasn't interested. 'I didn't see that as a very big deal,' said Hart, who was raised in a Christian Science home and didn't realise that Roman Catholic tradition doesn't include women priests. Hart, 55, of Monterey, Calif., a photographer and filmmaker for 25 years, often focusses on women's issues. As she talked to the people involved in the movement for ordaining women in the Roman Catholic Church, she grew interested in a film project. 'It was the social justice part that intrigued me,' she said.

The film won several awards in 2010, including best documentary at the Santa Fé Independent Film Festival; and best faith-based film and best female-made feature film in the Action on Film Festival in California.

The film, Hart said, explores the complex choices made by women who, for the most part, have been faithful church members, sometimes working in parishes or schools. Yet, they have felt a call to a priesthood that their church says isn't available to them.

Janet Goetze

Pink Smoke Over the Vatican is an award-winning documentary film about the controversial movement of women seeking to be ordained as priests in the Roman Catholic Church.

On June 3, 2008, The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which is the modern name for The Holy Office of the Inquisition, issued a sweeping order of excommunication for 'the crime of attempting sacred ordination of a woman'.

Pink Smoke Over the Vatican chronicles the events that led up to this severe punishment and tells the stories of the determined women and men who, through the forbidden and illicit path of female ordination, are working to end the underlying misogyny and outdated feudal governance that is slowly destroying the Roman Catholic Church.

Pink Smoke Over the Vatican explores the complex ethical choices made by the women who are painfully discerning the difference between man's law and God's law. Their struggles encompass both the internal battles wrought by going against the Church they love as well as the external battles with the Church hierarchy, centuries-long tradition, police, and the rampant prejudice that still prevails against women in positions of power.

But it is the impression that all have been undeniably touched by the spirit that is certain to move both Catholics and the general public alike. Informative, beautifully filmed and edited, with a powerful soundtrack, this film will inspire any women or men who have experienced discrimination and marginalisation to stand up to power, no matter the odds, and follow their true call.



Negotiating Catholic Identity: An Investigation of a Progressive Religious Movement

Dr Jane Anderson
Research Fellow

School of Social and Cultural Studies – University of Western Australia

The above research is currently in progress and I was privileged to meet with Jane in Sydney and spent several hours discussing her research and the place of progressive movements in the Church. She is travelling to various parts of Australia gaining a wealth of information from many individuals and groups who can be identified as progressive.

We canvassed some of the categories that her research is leading her to identify at this stage of her study. For example, there are those who wish to reform what is already there (like ourselves), those who wish to be active

in advancing social and ecological issues with less emphasis on Church reform, and there are those who are more contemplative and seek wisdom and enlightenment through a range of influences.

Jane is a lovely engaging person and I am very confident that her research will be very revealing. We may have the opportunity to meet with her at some stage when it is completed. I also hope she may find time to write something for *ARCvoice*, especially as she is now a member of Australian Reforming Catholics.

John Buggy

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

Please send material to:

The Editor
ARCVoice

32 Awatea Road

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Tel: 02 9449 7275 Fax 02 9449 5017

ARC Secretariat

Barbara Brannan 02 9451 7130
barbarabrannan@mac.com

Rob Brian 02 9371 8519 rbrian@vtown.com.au

John Buggy Spokesperson 02 9451 8393
jbuggy@ozemail.com.au

Alan Clague 07 3374 1889 clague@aapt.net.au

Margaret Knowlden Editor 02 9449 7275
knowlden@optusnet.com.au

Peter Meury 02 4390 9208 petermeury@bigpond.com

John Shervington 02) 9349 1282 jshervington1@bigpond.com

Jim Taverne 02 9449 2923 jagota@ozemail.com.au

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