



arcvoice

A Report from Australian Reforming Catholics Inc.
 March 2012 Issue No. 43

Editorial

When Australian Reforming Catholics was formed one of the objectives was to establish small discussion groups in various locations so that members could get to know one another. The discussions would, hopefully, generate ideas on what should be ARC's focus. Achieving this objective proved difficult owing to the wide geographic spread of the membership. The members meeting together has largely taken place at AGMs and conferences whenever they are held.

However, at the AGM in October 2011 there was strong support by those who attended for the opportunity to spend a few hours questioning and discussing what is on our minds about the way we believe and practise our faith today. Lectures and conferences are helpful, but the opportunity to raise issues in an unstructured way appears to be desired as well.

Given that we have been able to obtain a satisfactory venue right near a train line and next to adequate parking, as proven by good conference attendances, we have responded to this need for a more informal gathering. The Dougherty Community Centre at 7 Victor St Chatswood has been booked for the afternoon of Saturday 31st March. Sometimes in formal conferences there can be a reluctance to ask questions because one feels that it might not be related to the topic or that perhaps it is a 'dumb' question. Or it might be that there is simply no time to get one's question into the mix or to get it formulated. Now is your chance in an open agenda amongst friends.

In the previous edition of *ARCvoice* the Irish priest Father Brendan Hoban reflected that it was now very difficult being a pastor in a complex world 'where old answers make no sense to new questions'. Questioning our faith is not a sin. Gaining new meaning can be enlightening and liberating, often enhancing a mature spirituality. I am reminded of Blessed John Henry Newman's famous after-dinner toast (abbreviated): "I shall drink to conscience first and to the Pope afterwards." Please come both to question and to share your wisdom.

John Buggy

"Old Answers Make no Sense to New Questions" **An open and informal discussion among friends**

Dougherty Community Centre,
 7 Victor St Chatswood

Saturday March 31st 2012, 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Come along and express your doubts, raise your questions, and share your wisdom in an atmosphere of trust with like-minded people

Mark this date in your diary now and come with all the questions you have ever been afraid to ask. Bring along anyone you know who may gain from the opportunity to explore matters of faith and belief.

Please register your intention to come NOW so that we know how many to expect

Call Margaret Knowlden (02 9449 7275)
 or John Buggy (02 9451 8393)

Or e-mail knowlden@optusnet.com.au

Tea and coffee will be provided

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Letter to the Editor

Domus Australia – a Mausoleum?

The handling of funds in the Church continues to be of concern. One case in point is the acquisition and renovation of a chapel in Rome as a 'home' for some of the allegedly large numbers of Australian tourists/'pilgrims' (tens of thousands?) who can afford to visit Rome each year (see www.domusaustralia.org). No criticism of the beauty of the place, but why for heaven's sake do Australians need a home in Rome? It was an initiative and apparently pet project of the Archbishop of Sydney, and the estimated \$30 Million cost was financed by two archdioceses (Sydney and Melbourne) with contributions from at least another Australian Diocese. The Italians call it a 'casa per ferie' – a holiday home! According to *The Catholic Weekly* of January 8th, Cardinal Pell also travelled to Naples before Christmas to purchase a Christmas crib 'for the new Australian centre in Rome'. One question arises here: Was an Australian artist not good enough to create our own work of art for such a project, and does the Cardinal have time for such escapades, or does he have other more important pastoral duties?

More importantly, half the world's population is starving, and Caritas and other Catholic charities are constantly looking for funds. Meanwhile some Bishops are spending our money lavishly on such an unimportant issue which, in the end, will provide accommodation to Australian clergy in Rome, and perhaps some other visitors. I cannot accept the justification of the Archbishop that it is a good financial investment! Keep investments in Australia.

The building was opened by the Pope during the recent ad limina visit of the Australian Bishops to Rome. One cannot avoid pondering whether this is the price the Bishops had to pay in what could almost be looked at as a conspiracy in contempt of morality in the denial of natural justice to their fellow bishop Bill Morris of Toowoomba. One may well think: 'What would Jesus say?' Are these the Leaders of our Catholic Church in Australia?

On a positive note: Could this money have been better spent to create a pilgrimage place by Australian Catholics in Australia in honour of Saint Mary McKillop? It may even have had an evangelising effect!

Peter Meury
Budgewoi NSW

Visit to Sydney by Professor JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN

A "Common Dreams on the Road" Event jointly sponsored by a cooperative of progressive groups in and around Sydney, assisted by the Progressive Christian Network of Victoria.

John Dominic Crossan is a renowned international progressive biblical scholar. He is visiting Sydney, Australia, to deliver a series of Lectures and one major Public Address in September 2012.

The Events: Nine Lecture series delivered over three days, 4 September to 6 September 2012, 10.30am to 4.30pm. Venue: Pitt St. Uniting Church, 264 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW.

"THE POWER OF PARABLE: HOW FICTION BY JESUS BECAME FICTION ABOUT JESUS"

Based on the book of the same title, published by HarperOne, San Francisco, CA. The book was published on 6 March 2012.

1. September 4.

Theme 1: Biblical Traditions and Jesus' Parable

Lecture 1: Riddle Parables and Mark 4.

Lecture 2: Example Parables and Luke 15.

Lecture 3: Challenge Parables and Divine Transcendence.

2. September 5.

Theme 2. Jesus' Parables and God's Kingdom

Lecture 1: The Good Samaritan as Challenge Parable

Lecture 2: Hearing Parables with Galilean Peasant Ears

Lecture 3: The Parable-Medium is the Kingdom-Message

3. September 6.

Theme 3: God's Kingdom in Gospel Mega-Parables

Lecture 1: Mark and Matthew: Challenge and Attack

Lecture 2: Luke-Acts: Rome as the New Jerusalem

Lecture 3: John: God's Dream for the World

A major Public Address exploring a Christian theology of the Bible, 7.00pm on 7 September 2012. Venue: Pitt St. Uniting Church, 264 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW: "IS GOD VIOLENT? HOW TO READ THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE AND STILL BE A CHRISTIAN"

Registration Costs:

3 Days of Lectures

Ordinary \$160

Theology student \$50

1 Day of Lectures

Theology student \$20

Evening Lecture only

Ordinary \$30

Theology student \$10

All Lectures (Package)

Ordinary \$185

Theology student \$55

An Early Bird Registration/Payment on All Lectures only (Cut off date: 2 July 2012)

Ordinary \$155

Theology student \$40

How to lodge your Registration for this 'not-to-be-missed' Event:

Via Internet: Go to www.commondreams.org.au click on the John Dominic Crossan tab and follow the links

Via post: Complete a Registration form (attached) and forward to: Common Dreams – Crossan, Pitt St. Uniting Church, 264 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000. Make cheques payable to: *Common Dreams - Crossan*.

Maximum Registrations is 350

“The Pope’s War:

Why Ratzinger’s Secret Crusade
Has Imperilled The Church
and How It Can Be Saved

Matthew Fox

Reviewed by Jackie Wall

I remember back in the 1980’s when *Original Blessing* and other books by Matthew Fox were all the rage and influenced many Catholics to take a fresh look at their faith. He also introduced me to Hildegard of Bingen and her works. I hadn’t read anything of his for many years until I found *The Pope’s War* on Amazon and promptly bought it.

Fox is now an Anglican (Episcopal) priest having been silenced by the then Cardinal Ratzinger in 1988 and, expelled from his Dominican order, has continued his creation spirituality ministry outside the Catholic Church.

The Pope’s War is divided into four sections:

The first is titled ‘The Making of an Inquisitor: Ratzinger’s Life Story’ in which he traces Ratzinger’s life and the effects on it which have influenced his actions, especially since 1969 (Ratzinger’s Conversion).

Section Two, ‘Ratzinger’s Chosen Enemies’, outlines his ‘war’ against several eminent theologians of the 1980’s: Bernard Haring, Leonardo Boff, Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga, Ludmila Javorova and Fr Jim Callan and also his own Creation Spirituality Movement. This includes a letter written to Ratzinger by Fox in 1988 (pp 78-100) and I am not surprised that Ratzinger held Fox in aversion after reading this. Still I suppose he knew he had nothing further to lose so wrote accordingly.

Section Three deals with Ratzinger’s allies: right wing lay organisations – Opus Dei, the Legion of Christ and Communion & Liberation – and also with Sister Jane who blew the whistle in America on the Pedophile Crisis.

Section Four, titled ‘The End of the Catholic Church as We Know it and the Birth of a Truly Catholic Christianity’ deals with myths Catholics need to surrender, what can be saved from the burning building that is worth saving, and twenty-five steps to take Christianity into the future. It ends with a list – a ‘Wailing Wall of Silenced, Expelled or Banished Theologians and Pastoral Leaders under Ratzinger’.

I found this ‘Wailing Wall’ fascinating. So many names I knew well, whose writings grace my bookshelves and who were household words at Manly in the 1970’s and 80’s; eminent theologians, bishops and leaders including Rahner, Küng, Schillebeeckx, Curran, Boff, Gutierrez, Archbishop Romero, our own Michael Morwood and Paul Collins – 92 in all, and no doubt still growing. In passing, I noted our Bishop Geoff Robinson is called, wrongly, ‘George Robinson’ consistently throughout the book.

Since Matthew Fox is one of the silenced theologians pursued zealously by Cardinal Ratzinger and hounded from his Order and from his Church, one can hardly accuse him of being completely unbiased. Allowing for that natural prejudice, the book is, on the whole, objective and well researched, and sources are quoted to support his statements.

The chapter on Ratzinger’s allies was chilling. It traces the rise to power of Opus Dei (with which most of us are familiar) and also of The Legion of Christ and Communion & Liberation which I did not know. The financial and sexual scandals of these organisations and their favoured treatment by Pope John Paul II and our present Pontiff make distressing and depressing reading.

Fox’s final chapter is his ‘wish list’ for the future of the church: a theology to bring the Catholic Church back to its Christian roots, valuing all people and standing up for justice for the powerless. It is idealistic and mostly unlikely to be implemented in his lifetime given the present hierarchy in Rome. It would take more than another Vatican Council to achieve most of it. In fact it would probably need the Second Coming of Christ!

This is a book which should be read by all Catholics who love their Church and who are distressed and horrified at the direction it has taken over the past twenty to thirty years.

JACKIE WALL was resident on the Northern Peninsula (Sydney) for fifty odd years and has been in the Blue Mountains for the last ten. She was parishioner firstly at Mona Vale, then Terrey Hills and now Richmond (St Gregory’s at Kurrajong). She obtained her BTh. at Manly in 1979 and was a member of Women-Church and MOW. She is currently a member of WATAC and ARC. Jackie had a legal practice at Mona Vale until retirement and now idles away her time gardening, spinning, weaving and attending to grandmotherly duties.

What are the possibilities today for identifying as Catholic?

Graham English

Insanity is the compulsion to keep doing something that has always failed in the belief that THIS TIME it will surely work. Psychologists call it repetition compulsion. It is a sign of serious dysfunction.

The Catholic Church is dysfunctional in this way. Too many people keep doing things that have failed in the belief that THIS TIME they will work. This makes it very hard for me, trying to remain sane, to continue identifying as Catholic.

I still identify as Catholic but the insanity of the organisation is getting me down so that in the recent census while I ticked the box 'Catholic', for the first time in my life I had to think about it.

If you looked at my CV you'd wonder why I'd pause. For, as well as being christened, I've done all the other Catholic initiation things (the sacraments, daily rosary when I was a child, nine first Fridays, my middle name is Joseph etc), then I was a Christian Brother for seventeen years, and I spent all my working life, forty-six years of it in one or other form of Catholic education. I've even written a small book on prayer.

But for some years now I have been wondering: 'Why bother? Do I NEED this? Is what I gain worth the pain and effort? Would it be better for me to just walk away?'

I am of the last generation who experienced the Church as it was before Vatican II, then the excitement and hope of the Vatican II years, then all that has happened since. I have seen a complete and confident community of whom about 70% was at Mass every Sunday change to one where now less than 15% are there on Sundays and, except in migrant areas, most of those are senior citizens. Beside that we are in disarray. We fight amongst ourselves. Our leaders do not have our confidence or respect.

When I was a child and a young man there were lots of good reasons to identify as a Catholic. We were mostly socially cohesive. We were nearly all of Irish or British ancestry with some Italians and others who were expected to fit in.

We were a substantial minority where the majority, being nearly all British, were basically anti-Catholic. We had an enemy. We knew where we stood.

We also had our own schools. They were mostly poor, some were very inadequate. In secondary school I attended one. But we had something to strive for. We wanted state aid. We wanted to be upwardly mobile, to be successful, to beat everyone at sport. We had over-full seminaries and novitiates. The future looked assured.

Of course we did not know the Bible. Until I was fifteen I thought the psalms were something the Salvation Army had. We did not have a strongly intellectual Church. Most Catholics were poorly educated. They were not academically unintelligent of course, many were wise or canny. But no one I knew in my parents' generation completed secondary school. Few of my contemporaries, male or female, went further than year nine. I was fifteen before I met anyone other than the two Catholic doctors in town who had been to university.

Still I grew up in a Church full of possibilities. There were lots of places to discover and things to find out. Being a young Catholic was an exciting if narrowly focused place to be.

But as vital and as permanent as that Church seemed to me as a fifteen-year-old, and as hopeful and exciting as it still seemed when I was in my early thirties, most of the reasons for being Catholic in Australia were social. They were to do with identity, cohesion, having somewhere to go on Sundays, and someone to feel commonality with. Catholicism was meeting social needs that depended on a lack of mobility, lack of communication, strong peer pressure, and on few alternatives.

The major social changes in the whole of Australian and Western society in the 1970s, the disappearance of bigotry among them, dissolved much of what held us together. The changes in the Church at Vatican II: *Humanae Vitae*, and the resistance to change from many of our leaders; the restorationism of the last two papacies; and the general collapse of all institutions and authority, secular and religious, finished off the rest. Then the technological revolution that allowed easy travel, an explosion of information and an impression of being connected with the whole world finished off what was left.

Many Catholics do not need the Church any more.

So what are the possibilities today for identifying as Catholic, especially here where we are in the developed West? The short answer is: I do not know. I find it hard sometimes to maintain hope. Because the Church only has a future (only has a present!) if people NEED it. And the question is: Do I NEED to be Catholic now?

I am not sure the answer is yes.

The Church I am told is flourishing in under-developed environments. Some Third World countries are sending us missionaries. But I do not live in the Third World, or Eastern Europe. Nor do most Australians. Things that might work there and lead to a flourishing Church do not apply here. The old ways of doing things no longer work and the old gang running things seem to have no idea what to do except the insanity of trying the old things over and over.

So my questions are, 'Does the Church have anything to say to us here? Is there something in Catholicism that we need?'

We have some things going for us. Catholic schools are much better educationally than they were when I went to school. The teachers are much better educated. People want to send their children to Catholic schools though research shows that the reasons children are sent to Catholic schools are not always the ones some Catholic officials hope. Discipline, pastoral care, and a homogenous ethic all count for more than religious education for most parents.

The social justice agencies like the Edmund Rice Centre, the various refugee centres and advocacies are doing great work too. On the Thai-Burmese border the Gospel is the motivation for really good work done by Jesuit and Marist-organised ventures. The infrastructure of religious orders still works. Many Catholics work in voluntary and other agencies for the disadvantaged. We have a health infrastructure that is flourishing.

Words like empathy, compassion, truth and acceptance are what some of us think the Gospels are all about and they provide the motivation for many Catholic-inspired institutions. And I still value being a member of the Church that had Mozart, Ozanam, Merton and Newman as members. I love Romanesque art and I feel at home in Notre Dame in Paris.

But I also love Bach and Bonhoeffer and any number of other Christians, Jews and Buddhists. I am enriched by agnostics and atheists like Wittgenstein, John McGahern or George Orwell as much as by St Benedict, Aquinas or Herbert McCabe. My prayer comes from the psalms which are Jewish. My struggle against personal anxiety is helped by Zen.

Catholicism is by no means the only source of truth or the only way to live a good life. I find much of the vitality I need for my spiritual life outside the Church where once I was assured there was no salvation. My experience tells me that claim is just not true. I have learnt to trust my experience instead of being swayed

by other people's need for power or their ideologies or neuroses. Salvation is where you find it, as God is. Many people find God and salvation outside the Church. They do not need it. It gets in the way.

So what are your needs? I need beauty, insight, poetry, contemplation to enable me to have a still mind, good liturgy, and awareness that this is the way it is and it is okay. I need empathy, compassion and love in a caring community. For me these are the thick inner core.

I don't care about the Temple Police and I am happy to be thought a 'cafeteria' Catholic. There are lots of things about Catholicism I do not need. There are many things that are harmful to me. It is not a club where you either accept all the rules or get out. It is a community where anyone who identifies as a Catholic has the right to be accepted and it is a community of people, especially the bruised reeds and the outcasts.

Jesus says,

Wherever two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them'.

That is basis enough for a Catholic community. Where I experience that, I find it possible to identify myself as a Catholic. □

Graham English gave this paper as a member of the panel at ARC's Discussion and AGM on 29 October 2011. He is a former lecturer at the Australian Catholic University



Brother Charles Howard, FMS

May he rest in peace

Brother Charles was a strong supporter of ARC and will be greatly missed. At his funeral Mass on 24 January 2012, Seán D. Sammon, FMS recorded these words:

Charles lived during a time in history that will be described years from now as an age of tremendous change not only in terms of scientific and technological advances but also in a deepening of faith and an understanding of the human person. He had passed sufficient years in the world prior to Vatican II to understand the need for radical change in our Church and lived long enough to be a midwife to the fundamental transformation called for by that historic gathering. For he was one of those rare men given a chance to help shape the age in which he lived. □

Liturgical Reform?

Gabriel Lomas

There's a sequence in a film where Paul Hogan is threatened by a man with a knife. He looks at the weapon and says, 'Call that a knife?' Then he produces a huge bush knife, and says to the man, 'That's a knife!' A similar dialogue, edited a bit, could apply to the current 'reform' of the liturgy. We're confronted by an impotent coterie of clerics trying to push us around. That's not liturgical reform.

Consider this letter:

Description of an Agape celebrated at the Jesuit Theological College in Maastricht, Holland, c.1963

We celebrated an Agape here as a conclusion to our eight days retreat, that is to say a genuine celebration of the Last Supper.

Everyone just sat round an ordinary table (there were twenty of us). We began with a blessing and an opening song, followed by a confession of guilt done by one person in the name of all present.

Soup was served while all sang a second hymn. During the actual meal there was talking in the ordinary way. After the soup there was a reading from Scripture followed by a short homily given by one of the priests present.

This was followed by another song. Grace before meals was now said in the form of the 'Our Father'.

Then bread, meat, jam and coffee (typical Dutch supper) were served and there was more talking. Cheese and a glass of wine followed.

When all had had enough, another song is sung and all pray the Creed while the Eucharist is celebrated at the same table. The priest prays a shortened Canon in the Vernacular and then the dish with the bread and the cup are passed round and all go to communion under two kinds. A hymn of thanks follows.

Now all have the opportunity to put forward intentions which are made up into a litany by the priest.

Fruit is now produced and, when all have had their fill, a final song is sung. A celebration closed with a blessing and a 'sending forth'.

You can imagine that this is most impressive. Of course it is not a form that has already received official sanction, and it is only done at a few centres of experimentation. We are one of these centres, and so we have Hyper-modern liturgy here.

Here we are fifty years on, and still awaiting the reform that Vatican II promulgated.

Vatican II made an immediate start, with the 'constitution' *Sacrosanctum Concilium*¹, which legislated in some detail for the reform of the liturgy. But things quickly ground to a halt as the Vatican Curia dragged its heels, and the rest of the world had less and less of a say in things. The process has, predictably, dragged out so long that anti-reformers have been able to re-gain control of it and bring it to a halt. More than that, they have set about dismantling things and have tried to take us back to the Latin language and a pre-Tridentine mind-set.

The need for liturgical reform has been apparent for many years, and pre-dated Vatican II by a few decades. Researchers ratified what the Church Community already knew – that liturgy is about involving all those present in an act of worship. This requires not an exercise of power imposing a strange ritual on everyone, but the sharing of up-to-date authentic actions and words as people gather to express thanks to their Creator and discern how best to align their lives and activities more closely with what they're called to be and to become. Ideally, the whole community brings its daily life to the act of worship, celebrating the way it is living and behaving, reflecting about it, and resolving to amend it as appropriate. The community then disperses to live out this experience of being Church, of being chosen out and called by the Creator to the special task of witnessing to the rest of creation what it means to be at one with the Divine.

There is something of this in every liturgical event, although different rituals give different emphases to specific areas of life's journey. Thus Rites of Passage – such as births, marriages and deaths – are occasions when the community needs to focus more sharply on a specific part of its journey. But, by and large, the sustenance for continuing of the journey is to be found and celebrated in the gathering that we call 'Thanksgiving', or, more usually, 'Eucharist'². This is also where liturgists usually begin when they set about considering liturgical reform.

It is in the eucharistic celebration that Church is fully and properly present, head and members. Community members are meant to bring their whole lives to the assembly: their triumphs, their joys, their enterprises, their failures, their sorrows, their problems, their good ideas, their insights; their work, their relaxation, their dark thoughts, their happy thoughts; the people they love, those they hate, those they think blameworthy, those they think praiseworthy; indeed, all they have, all they think and do, their whole world. These are the elements of their offerings to the Creator, the things they symbolise and embody by their very presence at the celebration. And it is these elements they hold up to be blessed and made holy, to be transformed and changed into Christ, so that he becomes truly present in Eucharist and beyond Eucharist, and a corner of creation becomes transparent as being the Kingdom present here and now, and for the future.

Liturgical reform is about working towards making all of this happen.

It's about sharing what others have tried to say of their experiences – both individual and communal – of the Creator. Our ancestors, who preceded us on this journey, have left behind records of such things, words of wisdom and insight for us to listen to and properly discern, to discuss together and reflect upon. We need space in our Eucharist for this to happen.

Clearly, we need to select different configurations of Eucharist for different occasions. And, sometimes, we need just to let Eucharist take shape among us as we celebrate being Church together.

This is where we should be going with liturgical reform. Where we should have gone from the outset – although it is never too late to get things back on track, to reform.

As it is, it seems that we of the Latin rite never got much further than trying out transliterations of the Roman canon, adding a few extra anaphora (formal eucharistic prayers) – regarded at the time as 'revolutionary' – to sit within the framework of the Vatican liturgy³. While Vatican II was predominantly concerned with the Latin rite, one wonders if liturgists looked very far beyond this and considered other non-Western liturgies and their adaptability to our present society? One wonders where the studies are on adapting the liturgies of Basil, Cyril or Gregory, or any of the Coptic rites. I have searched high and low but found no study on the adaptation of the Qurban of Addai and Mari, or of any of the thriving liturgies of the Eastern Church.

For the most part, we of the Latin West selected only Roman rites as templates on which to base our reforms. Even the innovative liturgies that have grown up in many Church communities in neighbouring Papua New Guinea – which could teach us much about liturgy – are usually based on Latin rite templates.⁴

The Latin rite may be more familiar to us than other rites, but it is no less remote from our everyday lives. Its symbols, its actions and (now, yet again!) its words require that we turn our back on the world we know, and wrap ourselves in make-believe rituals that grow out of other, ancient cultures and experiences.

That's not liturgy. That's the death rattle.

Now more than ever we need to be able to come together to share our lives and experiences; to listen to and reflect on the wise words of others; to seek ways together to become better people, a better Church; to celebrate and rejoice in our calling to be Christ; to gain strength from our Thanksgiving, to witness with growing constancy to the transformation of the whole of creation by the Creator. We can gain impetus for all this by a full and proper immersion in a Eucharist that springs from

our shared, common situation, drawing us together as the vibrant People of God.

It's not too late. Many of the current and ancient anaphora are based on the Jewish Blessing Prayer – the Birkat Ha-Mazon⁵ – of the Talmud⁶, which offers a good starting point for reconstructing current eucharistic prayers. At the heart of the Birkat Ha-Mazon are a series of blessings, offered in gratitude to the Provider for the nourishment of food, for the land that produces the food, for continued safety and well-being, for divine goodness and graciousness, for the whole of creation, and for the promise of peace and glory begun now and to be with us forever.

This constitutes the core of the anaphora or eucharistic (thanksgiving) prayer, to which other elements are added, such as initial greetings with one another; a pause to recall and confess any short-comings in following up resolutions of the previous Eucharist; listening to words taken from the testaments of earlier witnesses; discussion of these words and a mutual sharing of insights; a declaration by the community of actions to be taken and lived out.

The core element, the anaphora itself, comes at this point, with the shared meal in which Christ and his People are most clearly present – one cup, one body, one blood and flesh. Such a simple anaphora could easily be put together by an informed Church – the group that's celebrating – and a rich and enriching celebration be experienced.

'Impossible!' I can hear you say, 'That's all pie on the sky ...'; 'Yes, but the reality is ...'; 'You'd never get people to agree ...'; 'It can't be done...'; 'It wouldn't be allowed ...'. 'We're unable to ... too scared to ...' And so on ...

However, such reforming of the eucharistic liturgy by local Churches is indeed possible, given minimal educational assistance and resourcefulness. Things would grow and flourish from there, and demonstrate that we the Church are not averse to change in liturgical language and practice, not out to kick up a bit of fuss but then settle back and accept whatever our clerical 'leaders' decide. We are serious about liturgical reform, as Vatican II was.

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Endnotes

- ¹ See The Documents of Vatican II. 1966. Chapman. London-Dublin. p.135
- ² Sometimes also called Agape in early source documents; the mediaeval term Mass is frequently used nowadays of the Roman anaphora and accompanying rites.
- ³ Maybe the centrepiece was the anaphora that claimed lineage with the 3rd to 4th century West Syrian Anaphora that existed before the Roman canon did.
- ⁴ See, for example, the celebrations of the Par Church Community at <http://www.vimeo.com/18569805>.
- ⁵ A set blessings said after meals, based on Deuteronomy 8.10.
- ⁶ A written record of Rabbinic discussions, dating from app. 200 CE.

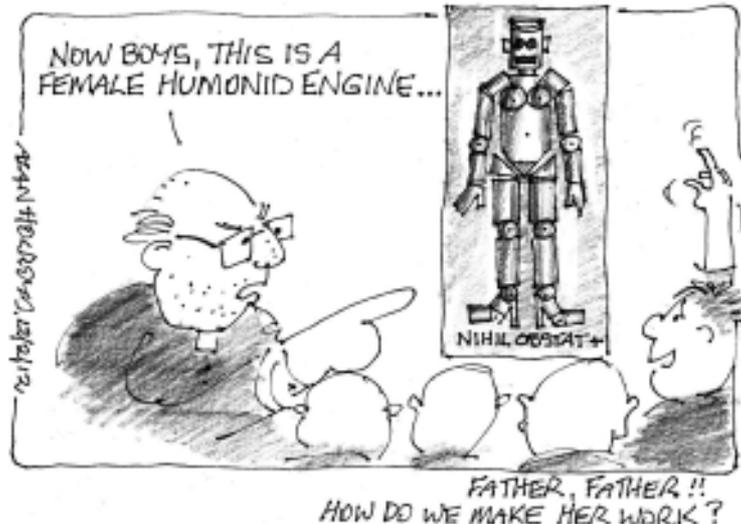
Pope Benedict et al His Bishops American Religious Zealots

The following quotes are from an article by David Anderson:

Women's bodies from the beginning of hominid emergence out of the savannas of Africa were viewed by men primarily as an engine of population growth and pleasure – and temptation. Many men throughout the world today continue to view women's bodies in this way. Pope Benedict is one of them. So let it be known by this blog: the real medical care debate centres on whether women should have the right to view their bodies as they themselves want and not as those on the far right of the three religions of Abraham tell them.

..... Religious belief that supports unlimited population growth must necessarily be exposed for the human suffering it is causing and will continue to cause. A problem on the Abrahamic side of the equation arises out of the just mentioned Hebraic biblical mandate to multiply. This is a part of the belief system of Roman Catholicism as well as parts of Jewish and Christian orthodoxy, also Islam generally – and Mormonism. The biblical justification for this mandate as it applies to a 21st century world needs to be openly challenged.

Text of the complete article is available from
knowlden@optusnet.com.au



Year-Long Catalyst Celebration!

The 50th Anniversary of Vatican II

Building on Our Past
Imagining The Future ...

Come join with us in a series of stimulating
conversations as we remember and dream ...

“Q & A in the CRYPT”

(St Patrick's Church, Sydney City)

Sundays, May 27th, June 24th, July 29th,
August 26th and September 30th.

Interesting speakers will share their stories,
thoughts and dreams

Hosted by Fr MICHAEL WHELAN sm
catalyst-for-renewal@tpg.com.au

Forums

Our special guest from overseas will be

CLIFFORD LONGLEY

from *THE TABLET*

Canberra: 3rd May 2012

Brisbane: 4th May 2012

Sydney: 9th May 2012

CUSTOMS HOUSE, Circular Quay - 7 pm

Melbourne: 11th May 2012

Who is Clifford Longley?

CLIFFORD LONGLEY is well-known as an author, broadcaster and journalist who has specialised since 1972 in the coverage and analysis of British and international religious affairs, for 25 years on *The Times*. In 1996 he was consultant to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales for the drafting of *The Common Good* and the Catholic Church's Social Teaching; in 1998 for *The Catholic Church and Human Rights*; and in 2010 for *Choosing the Common Good*.

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The Deep Within

Towards an Archetypal

Theology

Eugene Stockton

In barely more than a hundred pages, Eugene Stockton – priest, writer, archaeologist, anthropologist, contemplative – launches his readers into ‘the deep within’. His range of reference is astonishing, explained only by the interests that have filled his fifty years of thinking and writing, and then further back to his childhood in the bush of the Central Blue Mountains.

From the depths of his own awareness, he invites us all into the depths of ‘the Kingdom of God within you’, of the real self of connections and relationships, too often neglected and ignored by the restless ego of routine life. Guiding the descent into the depths of the true self are a wide variety of religious, philosophical and psychological markers, ‘since it is difficult to describe on the surface what is shared in depth’.

One constant resource and guide is the Aboriginal experience and Eugene Stockton’s long familiarity with the spirituality of the original Australians. In short, there is something both homegrown Australian and genuinely universal about this book. The depths into which this author calls us will be a wondrous refreshment for all his readers.

*Professor Anthony Kelly
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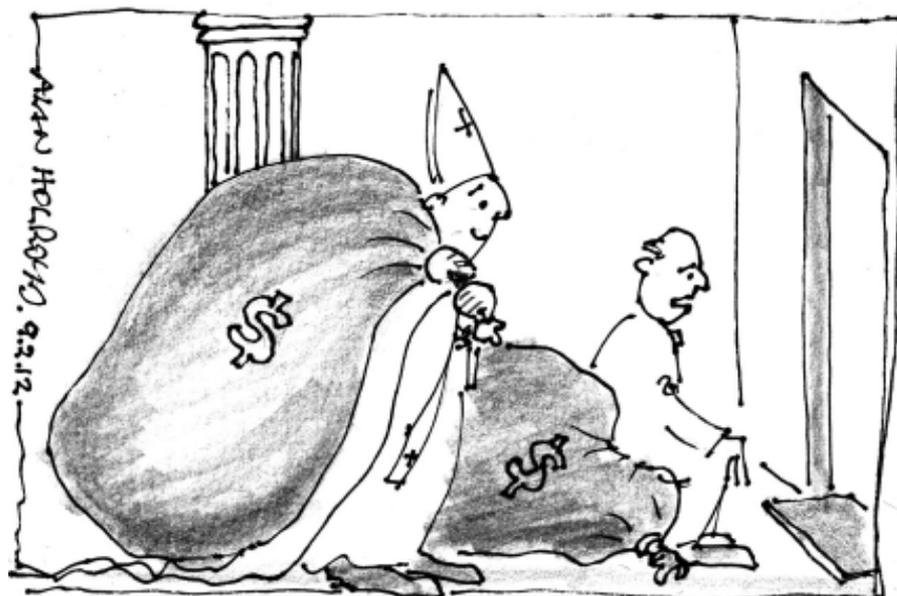
The Second Catholic Tsunami

Gideon Goosen

When one thinks about the reforms that you and I would like to introduce in the Catholic Church there are probably many. Aside from our agenda, things just happen. Few would have forecast the ‘First Catholic Tsunami’ in our times, that is, the cases of sexual abuse by the clergy. It is far from over and, like many tsunamis, is claiming hundreds of lives. I believe there is a Second Catholic Tsunami on the way to engulf the Church and it is the Abuse of Money in the Church. It has been set in motion by the first tsunami.

There have been warning signs with people becoming more wary of just giving to the Church without knowing where the money is going. The contributing base of many Churches has diminished yet Churches often proceed to new costly buildings. The advice (and commitment) to share buildings across denominations has been largely ignored. The Global Financial Crisis has also contributed to Churches running short of money and then having to ask for more. In general, Church leaders have chosen to ignore the warning signs.

For a greater appreciation of what is happening in the USA in the Catholic Church and elsewhere, there is the impressive account given by Jason Berry in *Render unto Rome: The Secret Life of Money in the Catholic Church*, (2011, New York: Crown Publishers). Financial accountability seems to be absent on many levels, starting with the parish and diocesan finances. Audited annual statements, including slush funds, should be available to all as a start. Berry gives a sad account of how in some cases bishops have tried to sell off wealthy parishes to get the money to pay compensation to victims of sexual abuse. This has pitted bishop against parishioners. Truly a time for reflection and reform! □



CAN'T SHARE BUILDINGS WITH THEM
YOUR GRACE. WE JUST CAN'T FIT IN...

A welcoming place for 'Homeless Catholics'...

Emmy Silvius

Greg Reynolds chose the First Sunday of Advent as a fitting time to celebrate the Inaugural Mass for **Inclusive Catholics**. After all, Advent is a time of anticipation and expectation. It is a time to consider our inner yearnings and allow the reality of who we truly are to emerge. It allows us the space to ponder where Christ is in our lives today and what it is we deeply long for from our God. We can also ask ourselves what our role is in making God's presence tangible in our communities. The inclusiveness of this particular gathering certainly contributed to God's presence being felt by all.

Around 120 people came from far and wide to attend this historical event at Caulfield in Melbourne. Immediately when people entered the hall there was a buzz of welcome and familiarity. For some it was as if they were coming home after having broken ties with their church community for many years. One person had described herself as a 'homeless Catholic' as she did not feel she belonged in her parish. This, I believe, is quite apt of how many Catholics are feeling today and this, then, explains why the churches are being deserted and people are seeking alternative forms of spirituality in different settings.

Many people feel distressed, disillusioned and disturbed by some of the church's teachings — particularly those relating to women, people of same sex orientation, divorcees, etc. Of course, many more are outraged by how the sex abuse scandal has been handled by church authorities. Greg Reynolds believes strongly in equality for all people and following the rule of 'what would Jesus do?' As we know, Jesus did not turn anyone away, nor did he put demands or set limitations on who could or could not be part of his community. Let us never forget that Jesus' blood was shed 'for you and for all' and not just for the many who fit into the mould of what most church authorities define as suitable to sit at the Eucharistic table.

Greg firmly believes in blurring the distinction between clergy and laity. He is convinced this separation is exaggerated by the use of clerical collars, elaborate vestments, compulsory celibacy and restricting certain

tasks to the ordained. In future, for example, he will be encouraging men and women from his community to deliver the homily. There are many capable people who have not attended a seminary, but who quite probably have studied more theology than the ordained. However, an academic background is not what is required to reflect on the lessons of life that speak to those of us in the real world. What is required is a preparedness to share insights and prod the thinking of others by being willing to ask the hard questions — for example, why is it that there are only six sacraments for women and seven for men?

As Greg pointed out, women have been discriminated against for far too long. In a previous article I have brought historical facts to light that indicate how women have held prominent and priestly roles in the earlier Church. We know that the wheels of the hierarchy turn slowly, but surely it's time to acknowledge that arguments such as 'Jesus was a man, so no woman can become a priest' or 'Jesus only appointed male apostles so it is his will that women are excluded from ordination', as justification for denying women their right to follow their deepest calling. As we know, there are currently a few hundred Catholic women priests (mostly in the USA). Greg hopes that **Inclusive Catholics** will support any Catholic woman who feels called to the ordained Priesthood. It is beyond comprehension that a Church that proclaims the dignity and equality of every human being denies the equal rights of women.

A community seeking to live up to its name...



Greg Reynolds, former incardinated Roman priest, but now sees himself in the 'annexe' to the 'official tent'.



In his homily, Greg pointed out the importance of using inclusive language: 'It influences people's very identity, and when it relates to something as important as the images of God, it matters greatly.' As God has been called Father for the past two centuries, it is now imperative that we call God Mother for the next two centuries; in order to bring back some balance. Greg went on to explain that because the community gathered in a hall instead of a church building, the celebration was none the less significant because it is the people that make up the Church and not bricks and mortar. Though church buildings can provide sacred spaces, they are not essential. Consider, for example, the very poor – they cannot afford buildings; the persecuted – they need to stay hidden; and loyal dissenters like this community, who are refused the usage of a church.

Greg clearly wishes for **Inclusive Catholics** to remain part of the Roman Catholic tradition. An essential element of being Catholic is that we are a Sacramental Church. As such, Greg is determined to retain the Sacramental Life of any community along with the Scriptural teachings. Inclusive Catholics 'may well be seen as the Black Sheep or the Lost Sheep, but we are still part of the flock'. As mentioned previously, Greg's focus is on truth and justice for women, gays and remarried couples. Unfortunately, these loyalties are not shared by the church authorities. As a consequence there is no more room in the 'official tent' for Greg and his community who now find themselves in the annexe.

Greg sees himself as a 'loyal dissenter' as was Jesus when he cleansed the Temple. Jesus became angry when he saw how religion had become corrupted by manipulative practice – it had become more human-centred rather than God-centred. Could there indeed be a parallel here? If there is, then over time this movement could prove to be prophetic. Despite this, Greg still very much sees the Catholic Church as a potential force for unbelievable good in the world.

Justice and Compassion are the foundations of my actions. I take comfort from the words of St Thomas Aquinas: 'I would rather be ex-communicated than forced to act outside my conscience.' My hope is that

my venture will not encourage shouting matches or culture wars but will help sharpen peoples thinking and help to uncover deeper truths and greater justice. Jesus prayed and died for unity, but the Gospel also says that Jesus came not to bring peace but the sword.

What the future holds for **Inclusive Catholics** is an unknown. At this stage Greg would like to get a Website and Blog up and running as a means of providing ongoing information about the group. As such, he is very keen to speak to anyone who will be able to assist him with the technical expertise for this. He is also keen for community members to become involved in areas of social justice, liturgy etc. **Inclusive Catholics** is, as the name states, all about welcoming and including every member of the community. Thus, I sincerely encourage those who currently feel excluded to knock on this particular community's door. A place has already been set for you at the table.

As Greg would say:

'May God our Mother bless us all'



FURTHER INFORMATION:
To obtain information regarding future events please contact Greg directly by emailing: greg.reynolds3@gmail.com or phoning 0400 534 557

This article first appeared on *Catholica* (6.12.11)
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