



arcvoice

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Editorial

Render to My Caesar

Time and again we refer to Church structures that prevent equity in the participation by everyone who belongs to it by Baptism. Sometimes we even excuse members of the hierarchy for not doing what we assume they would prefer to do because the structure prevents them. But we now have an example of appalling lack of leadership in a situation that has nothing to do with Church structure as such.

In August, Germany's Catholic bishops decreed that people who opt out of the 'church tax' collected by the State should not be given the sacraments and burials within the Church. That decree also lists a wide range of activities from which such people will be excluded, including employment. The decree has been approved by the Vatican's Congregation for Bishops. This appears to be a blatant attempt by the German bishops to stem the flow of those leaving the practice of their religion on a regular basis by effectively implying an 'excommunication'. Parish priests are given the task of having to inform parishioners of the consequences.

What a way to open the dialogue! 'Help me to understand why you are disillusioned with the Church and I will tell you what happens if you don't pay up'. The collection of a State tax for the benefit of the Church is a practice that should have been abandoned ages ago. If you opt out of the tax, the State informs the Church authorities and now the Church comes down heavy upon you. Perhaps the poor can remain without paying as long as they don't have a taxable income.

The spirit of what Jesus intended is entirely lost in a mindset which says that if you don't pay then it is reasonable to judge that you don't deserve to belong. This is accompanied by the assumption that the opting out of the tax is, de facto, an opting out of one's religion. The impact of the decree has already affected non-German Catholics living and working in Germany who stated they were

Catholics on visas and do not wish to be taxed by a foreign Government. We wonder how in this modern age the attitudes of the bishops could be so far removed from pastoral wisdom in connecting with their people.

One hopes that the Catholics of Germany, including those who are happy to pay the tax, will react sufficiently strongly and send a message to their bishops and the Vatican. Apparently some have suggested that the bishops should have a new patron – St Matthew, the patron of tax collectors. It should be a sobering thought.

John Buggy

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Letter

The Australian Bishops' Pentecost letter included the statement: *'We commit ourselves to start afresh from Christ'*. What a wonderful ambition, but what a massive task!

Taking on the establishment, as Christ would have done, would be a good way to start! In Jesus' day this would have meant taking on the scribes and pharisees. So what is this establishment today? Having asked a few friends, and finding that they were as vague as I was, I sought to clarify my understanding. I discovered that the twelve congregations, three tribunals and five offices that make up the *Curia* are almost all headed by Cardinals. It is to this core of the government of the Church that the Pope delegates the exercise of his jurisdiction. This is the body that seems focussed on stopping any progressive movements or visionary thought. Why? Are they afraid of change? Are they more comfortable looking back to the past?

I have recently been watching re-runs of *Yes, Prime Minister*. I read somewhere that it was considered essential viewing for Margaret Thatcher's cabinet, because it was so close to the reality of the civil service. This clever, funny but cynical view on the way the cabinet secretaries colluded to prevent any change resonates as much today as it did in the eighties.

Sir Humphrey Appleby's horrified cry, *'How could you accuse me of originality? I've never had an original thought in my life'*, sums up a civil service determined to preserve the *status quo*.

I hesitate to draw an analogy, but the entrenched power represented by Sir Humphrey and his cohorts does to me resemble the aversion to progress of the present governing body of our beloved Church. We can only hope and pray that through our Bishops, who have committed to start afresh from Christ, the medieval thinking of the *Curia* will be challenged and we will be returned to the forward-thinking of Christ.

Noelene Uren
Beacon Hill

Censored

The above letter was sent to the Editor of *Sharing Our Story*, the newsletter of the Frenchs Forest Parish (combining Forestville, Davidson and Terrey Hills Churches). It was in response to a previous editorial concerning the Bishops' Pentecostal letter. However, this reply was censored by a 'management team' on the grounds that it 'might upset' some members of the parish. It is hoped that ARC members are more liberal-minded and will enjoy the humour!

Book Review:

Yves Congar, O.P.

True and False Reform in the Church

2011 English translation, available from

www.fishpond.com.au

Congar, a French Dominican Priest, and one of the most influential theologians of the 20th Century, wrote this analysis before 1950 and updated it after Vatican II in 1967. It was initially censored by Rome, he was asked to withdraw it from publication, he was removed from lecturing and sent into exile. Archbishop Angelo Roncalli (later Pope John XXIII) read it when papal *nuncio* in France in 1950 and asked 'A Reform of the church – is such a thing really possible?' Ten years later, he announced Vatican II. Congar became a *peritus* to the Doctrinal Commission at the Council. He was one of the most important, inspirational and influential contributors to Vatican II documents.

He starts the book with an historical analysis of reform in the Church (*Ecclesia semper reformanda*). The major three sections are:

- Why and in what sense does the church unceasingly reform itself?
- Under what conditions can a reform be authentic and be carried out without schism?
- The ecumenical consideration of the Reformation and Protestantism.

He highlights some of the problems of reform including, for instance, the possible divided spirit among Catholics due to different local Christendoms and cultures. He declares that authentic reform penetrates to the heart of doctrine as a message of salvation for the whole of humanity, retrieves the meaning of prophecy in a living church and is deeply rooted in history rather than superficially related to apostolic tradition. It is not meant to denounce errors of the past, but to update the church's capacity to explain itself to the world, and to revitalise ecclesial life with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

Also just published is the English translation of Congar's *My Journal of the Council*, a fascinating and often humorous rendition of his personal experiences of Vatican II – pp.979, published by ATF Theology \$69.95 (cheaper at Amazon, in hardcover or on Kindle for \$30). A fascinating review by Paul Collins is available on the website www.catholicsforministry.com.au

Peter Meury

Peter Meury is a member of the ARC Secretariat

Rumblings of discontent in high places

Cardinal Martini: 'Church 200 years out of date'

Thomas C. Fox

National Catholic Reporter
Sep. 02, 2012

The Church is '200 years out of date and in need of a radical transformation,' Italian Cardinal Carlo Mario Martini said in an interview two weeks before his death. The progressive cardinal died Aug. 31 at the age of 85.

His remarks appeared in the Italian news daily, *Corriere della Sera*, and have been published in English by various international news services.

'The church is tired,' Martini said in the interview. **'Catholics lack confidence in the church. Our culture has grown old, our churches are big and empty and the church bureaucracy rises up, our religious rites and the vestments we wear are pompous.'**

He singled out church teaching on marriage and divorce as an important issue the church must face. **'Unless the church adopts a more generous attitude towards divorced persons, it will lose the allegiance of future generations,'** the cardinal added. The question, he said, is not whether divorced couples can receive Holy Communion, but how the church can help complex family situations.

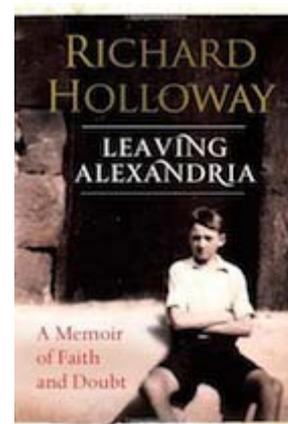
'A woman is abandoned by her husband and finds a new companion to look after her and her children. A second love succeeds. If this family is discriminated against, not just the mother will be cut off but also her children. In this way the church loses the future generation?'

'The child sex scandals oblige us to undertake a journey of transformation,' Martini said, referring to the child sex abuse that has plagued the church for several decades.

The advice he leaves behind to attack what he called **'the tiredness of the church,'** is a **'radical transformation, beginning with the Pope and his bishops'.**

He retired as archbishop of Milan in 2002, where he was known as a strong pastor and administrator, and as a very careful, thoughtful advocate of wider discussion and dialogue on some delicate and controversial church positions.

At various times, he expressed openness to the possibility of allowing married Latin-rite priests under certain circumstances, ordaining women as deacons and allowing Communion for some divorced Catholics in subsequent marriages not approved by the church. □



At fourteen, Richard Holloway left his working-class home north of Glasgow and travelled hundreds of miles to an English monastery to be trained for the priesthood in the Episcopalian Church. By twenty-five, he had been ordained and was working in the slums of Glasgow.

In 2000 he controversially resigned as Bishop of Edinburgh, having lost heart with the Church over its condemnation of homosexuality.

In his years as a priest Richard touched many lives, but behind his confident public face lay a mind troubled by questions:

- why is the Church, which claims to be the instrument of God's love, so prone to cruelty and condemnation?
- how can a person live with the tension between public faith and private doubt?

With this long-awaited memoir, Richard gives us a wise, poetic and fiercely honest book that recounts a fascinating life and attempts to answer those questions.

Why did Catholic culture collapse so spectacularly?

Graham English

If Catholic Education has failed, it happened in the 1940s and 50s...

The first generation of Australian Catholic priests, nuns and religious to leave in large numbers had all left school by the early 1960s. The first generation of Australian Catholics to leave in large numbers were from this same cohort.

Younger people have continued to leave ever since, but these now-older folk were the first. These first 'defectors' are now in their early eighties, their seventies and their late sixties. Among them were provincials and other leaders, seminary staff, novice masters and mistresses, leading theologians, philosophers and Church historians. There were a lot of people of considerable talent and goodness who had been or who looked to be the hope of the side. And there were a lot of just ordinary people who could no longer see the point of what they had been raised in.

All of this generation was schooled in rote learning of the catechism. Throughout their schooling they did not know the Bible except as a collection of Bible history stories that were all presented as literally true, and as a set of proof texts and answers to controversial issues, for example to show that we should indeed pray for the souls in purgatory, and trust in good works. Much of what they learned was aimed squarely at refuting the claims of the Protestant Reformers from three and four centuries before and the many Protestants who then surrounded us. At some schools they had also learned apologetics; that is how to argue a rational case for 'the faith'. For example they knew how to argue the case for transubstantiation, why Anglican Orders were not valid and why we are indeed the One True Church.

Supported by a strong religious sub-culture...

They had also grown up in a deeply pious and devotional church with the rosary, scapulars and medals, the nine first Fridays, benediction, myriads of saints and feasts, the Assumption, the Immaculate Conception and a profound fear of death, judgement, heaven or hell (the 'four last things' as they were called). And they were supported by a strong religious sub-culture.

Part of that sub-culture was the high social position given to priests and the prestige given to families from which there were vocations to the priesthood, the convent or the monastery. Entering a seminary or a novitiate was seen by the young as a very viable lifestyle choice. The pope could not be wrong, and priests, brothers and sisters were by definition good and to be trusted implicitly. Many parents were pleased when their children made the choice to 'enter'. Each year in many Catholic schools several students left home for religious orders or seminaries. It was of the normal order of events.

Then, before Vatican II had much effect in Australia it all began to fall apart.

So if Catholic education failed the Church in Australia as some people persist in claiming, it was not in the 1970s and after that it failed. It failed in the 1940s and 50s and these older people now, the ones who were young about 1960 are the ones that it failed. Something the Church and the schools were doing then led to the collapse of the old Australian Catholic Church. Otherwise surely this generation of Catholics would have fought off the changes, resisted the collapse, and kept the old style Church alive.

They didn't because most of them did not want to or need to. They were looking for something else.

Eventually Vatican II kicked in and it changed things but I believe that had Vatican II not happened the Church here would have collapsed as it did. It wasn't Vatican II that caused the collapse. It may have hastened it but it did not cause it.

So why did it collapse?

Why is it that the ones at school in the nineteen fifties mostly walked away, even the ones who for a time entered seminaries or novitiates or were ordained. Whatever it was that stuck to the older people it did not stick to them. And why did it happen so quickly? I think there are lots of reasons, no one enough in itself but all together a fatal or life-giving mix, depending how you view it all.

Below are some of the things I have observed and reflected on from my Catholic growing up. I think they explain some of the collapse.

1. Entering a seminary or a novitiate was often a plausible, even praiseworthy way to leave a dysfunctional family. Many people entered as pre-pubescent teenagers or children. Mostly they didn't consciously seek to get away from their family, though some did, but they did it nevertheless. For many of these people what appeared like a free choice was not really a free adult choice at all.
2. Most Catholics, most Australians until the 1950s were working class, insufficiently educated and inexperienced, and they saw no viable alternative to the lives they had grown up in.
3. One of the things I have noticed at reunions of former and current Christian Brothers (the order I know best) is how many of the men who left were good, ordinary men. They are not rebels or backsliders. They entered in good faith, often as children, almost entirely inexperienced, but after the 1960s when they had the opportunity as adults to leave they did. They left because they now had a choice. I am also intrigued how many times I have heard former priests and religious say of some really good man or woman who left, 'We felt that if HE/SHE could leave we could too'. Quite often one good person leaving led to an exodus of others who had not been sure but were reassured by the 'good man' or 'good woman' going that they could go too.
4. 'A viable alternative' is possibly the biggest factor in Catholics and former Catholics walking away from the Church and in former priests and religious walking away from priesthood or religious life. Had the alternatives become possible earlier, the Church would have collapsed earlier. I have known older priests and religious who have said, 'Had the changes occurred earlier I'd have left too. But I am here now so I'll stay.' They were not backsliders either; just people who realised the choice had come too late for them.
5. It is possible the Depression and World War II and the consequent hardships forestalled the collapse of Catholicism. Then the relative affluence and the widespread secondary and tertiary education of the 1960s hastened it.
6. The Church authorities did not see it coming and they had no plan B. They didn't know what to do.
7. Then the authorities made the mistake of listening to those who tried to crush change. They thought that the answer was to do the old tested things only harder. This failed dismally.
8. Possibly the changes and the collapse were inevitable and unstoppable anyway. This was made worse because so much of what people had been encouraged to do and believe just didn't make sense when looked at in the light of alternatives.
9. Superstition and authoritarianism that were accepted by poor, uneducated people with no voice just couldn't sustain the old culture. A few small cracks in the wall and the dam burst taking everything with it.
10. Lots of Catholics in my parents' generation were advised to put up with it because 'when you die you will be in heaven'. 'Offer it up' could have been the motto of the generation my mother came from, especially for the women. One day a critical mass of Catholics asked 'Why?' and no one had a convincing answer.
11. Eventually fear does not work. A former colleague who is a good actor used to do a demonstration of why hitting your child as the main form of discipline eventually fails. He'd stand pretending to talk to a son. 'Why? Because I say so!' SLAP! Here he would mime bending over and punching the son in the head. Next time the bend was less and slap had to be higher as the son was taller. Next time the slap higher, then higher again, then when the son was taller than the father, 'Why? You don't want to? And if I do that again you will punch me in the head? Oh!' The problem with using fear as the motivation for folk to live good lives is that one day some of them will catch on that there is nothing to be afraid of. In even the most oppressive societies there are always some souls who see through it, some souls who are brave enough to defy you. What do you do when most people don't believe in hell and are not frightened?
12. The same goes for cultural identity. You can denigrate the neighbours. You can warn what will happen if we mix with them. You can threaten sanctions if we marry them. But one day someone will fall in love with one of them, or discover their cooking is better than ours, or find their poetry is startlingly good and want to read their prose too. You find that their hymns are better musically and theologically and you want to sing them. You find that their theologians (think Bonhoeffer, Bath, Bultmann) are addressing the current milieu better than yours are. You cannot stop that. It is what humans do; it is what makes other places and people interesting and what enlivens us at the same time.
13. The Church has a tendency to make good ideas and useful speculation into dogma. Thomas Aquinas suffered from this from the time he was reinstated in the 19th century. The theologian who was at the cutting edge of philosophy in his day and was suspected of heresy in his lifetime was treated as if his words were perennial and 'the last word on everything'. We pretended we were ahistorical and acontextual and that Aquinas was. This stopped Catholics thinking and asking the right questions.
14. Travel confirms some people in their prejudice that what we do is clearly the best. But most people grow out of this. Anyone who has been in foreign places has heard boofhead Australians shouting 'Ozzie! Ozzie Ozzie! Oi! Oi! Oi!' and felt embarrassed but this is just the jobs. We are not all like that. Just look at the variety of ethnic and fusion cookbooks in any bookshop. Some things they do better than we do and we want to share in it. From the 1950s Australians have been inveterate travellers. And we have become multi-cultured. Catholics are typical Australians in this respect and are possibly more multi-

cultured that average. After all we always knew the Chinese could be saints as much as we could.

15. 1968 and *Humanae Vitae* made a very big difference. When the authorities talked about God, theology, the Immaculate Conception and all those many esoteric things people listened, or didn't, but as they were mostly uneducated and mostly had far more to worry about than whether Mary was a virgin before, during and after the birth of Jesus, they didn't care much. That was priests' talk. But the ordinary people did know about sex and marriage and they did desire some form of birth control. And when Paul VI used theology to deny them, they revolted. They just did not believe him. 'If he is wrong about that he might be wrong about many other things'. The authorities lost credibility. Loss of credibility is a very difficult thing to restore even for popes.
16. The Catholic sub-culture was based on things that were likely to pass. Working people intent on upward social mobility will change when they achieve it. Identity based on mainly one ethnic group will fade as the group alters through migration or intermarriage. Schools that encourage working class people to attend university are also encouraging them to think and to question. Tight-

knit communities are put under pressure by questioning, especially when it is applied to everything not just the things the authorities want questioned.

17. Cultures based on defence, on thwarting or resisting an enemy (Protestants, modernism, communism in our case) will lose their power if the enemy dissolves, gives in or turns out to be no enemy at all.

So there you are. I still marvel at the changes that have occurred in my lifetime. I am still amazed at the people I know or knew who seemed so much part of the 'Catholic Thing' who left, or who now practise but in ways very different from those we were brought up to think were non-negotiable. I am just as amazed that something that in 1960 seemed so solid, eternal, almost fell apart so completely and so quickly. And we won't be getting it back. It is gone.

As Ned Kelly almost said, 'Such it seems is life!'

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Poetry and Religion

Les Murray

Religions are poems. They concert
our daylight and dreaming mind,
our emotions, instinct, breath and native gesture
into the only whole thinking: poetry.
Nothing's said till it's dreamed out in words
and nothing's true that figures in words only.

A poem, compared with an arrayed religion,
may be like a soldier's one short marriage night
to die and live by. But that is a small religion

Full religion is the large poem in loving repetition;
like any poem, it must be inexhaustible and complete
with turns where we ask Now why did the poet do that?
You can't pray a lie, said Huckleberry Finn;

you can't pose one either. Is it the same mirror:
mobile, glancing, we call it poetry,
fixed centrally, we call it a religion,
and God is the poetry caught in any religion,
caught, not imprisoned. Caught as in a mirror
that he attracted, being in the world as poetry
is in the poem, a law against its closure.
There'll always be religion around while there is poetry
or a lack of it. Both are given, and intermittent,
as the action of those birds – crested pigeon, rosella parrot –
who fly with wings shut, then beating, and again shut

Need for reform: Telling it like it is

Gideon Goosen

A recent book, *Flying in the Face of Tradition*, (only 102 pages) expresses many things you might have been thinking about the current deplorable state of the institutional Roman Catholic Church (the formal institutional hierarchy in the Vatican and in local churches) but were afraid to express aloud. It is a book that sums up the current upheaval of the institutional Catholic Church – an upheaval or crisis which comes around every five hundred years according to some (the Dark Ages, Schism with the East, Reformation, Vatican II and aftermath). The author gives a concise account of this crisis in a way that we can all readily understand.

Although the author, an American Christian (de la Salle) Brother, is well informed theologically, he writes in a plain language most will follow with ease and in a style that is often humorous. The title is meant to point to the fact that the resistance to change and reform that we find in the institution at present is actually not according to tradition which down through the ages has always been open to adaptation and change. It is, in fact, our tradition to change. It is not our tradition to lock onto a particular period (like the Constantinian Church or Trent) and stick to that forever.

The author does a useful and necessary job in situating the Church in the modern world which has changed so much over the last century. Topics like the meaning of church, self-criticism, globalisation, democratisation, pluralism, relativism, diversity are all weaved together to form the fabric of this book. We are reminded that the new generation is growing up in a reality that is described as ‘new, intangible, interactive, interconnected, interweaving, instantaneous and technological’. Communication with this generation will require a new approach to evangelisation.

He is not afraid to tackle the controversial issues (for some generations) like the ordination of women. He also points out the movement to a greater sense of communion and community and less emphasis on hierarchy and status. The focus for all Christians should be on the sacrament of baptism rather than ordination. Evangelisation is more about bringing Christ to the people than bringing people to the Church. Clericalism

is one of the weaknesses that will have to be confronted (How, for example, could Pope Benedict XVI not censure Cardinal Sodano after the latter’s unbelievable comment regarding sexual abuse as so much ‘idle gossip’?)

This book is worth a read either to confirm and deepen the beliefs of thinking Catholics or to persuade over-trusting and uninformed ones how bad things are. But it is not without hope. It is the institutional Church that has got it wrong. The essence of Christianity remains. We know what the Gospel is calling us to; we know what a Christian life should look like; we know that the Holy Spirit ultimately guides us. We also know that sexual abuse, cover-ups and lying are not acceptable.

The book is available at Pauline Books & Media in Sydney. At \$14.95 it is both a bargain and food for religious thought. □

Louis De Thomasis FSC, *Flying in the Face of Tradition*
(Mulgrave: Garratt Publishing, 2012).

Gideon Goosen, theologian and author of *Hyphenated Christians*,
(Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011)

Disturbance Prayer

Lord, make me a channel of disturbance.
Where there is apathy, let me provoke.
Where there is compliance, let me bring questioning.
Where there is silence, may I be a voice.
Where there is too much comfort and too little action,
grant disruption.
Where there are doors closed and hearts locked,
grant the willingness to listen.
When Laws dictate and pain is overlooked...
when tradition speaks louder than need...
when we refuse to take control of our own lives...
our own church...our own poor...
disturb us, O Lord, teach us to be radical.
Grant that I may seek rather to do
justice than to talk about it,
to be with, as well as for, the poor,
to love the unlovable as well as the lovely,
to touch the passion of Jesus in the pain of those we
meet,
to accept responsibility to be church.
Lord, make me a channel of disturbance.

Author Unknown

Ten Steps to a Healthier Church

Michael Kelly SJ

My high school chemistry teacher's motto, 'The facts are friendly,' applies to a lot more than scientific experiments.

The English version of the German magazine, *Der Spiegel*, offers a summary of, and explanation for, the disarray and confusion at senior levels of the Vatican that have resulted from rivalries, scandals, blunt and even brutal administrative acts, falsification of facts and monumental mismanagement.

Almost daily, the woes of the Vatican are made more extreme by coverage of the scandals of the Church in the United States where one senior cleric has been convicted of 'child endangerment' and a bishop will go on trial in September to face a charge of failure to report the sexual abuse of a child. The US bishops' conference has embarked on a high-risk strategy to oppose President Barack Obama over contraception insurance, a subject where a majority of Catholics in the US, especially women, don't share their bishops' passion.

After the failure of his first attempt to overthrow the rule of the Russian Csars, Lenin asked, 'What is to be done?' It's a frequent question when we are faced with failure and a mess.

We can bemoan the misfortune, look for scapegoats, blame anything from evil people through to the Devil (as people in the Vatican have done), start a revolution, just walk away or try a combination of these.

Or we can, with my high school teacher, say that the facts are friendly. It has taken a long time to create the mess and it may well take longer to remedy it. But for everyone's sake, fix it we must.

Here are ten tips that might be considered as ways out of the mess.

1. Learn to listen. A maxim dating from Patristic times is that the teaching Church is first of all the learning Church. That was one of the great achievements of Vatican 2: the Council fathers heard what the world in its diversity was saying to and about the Church. Preoccupation with the supply side – what I have to tell

you – to the exclusion of the concerns and interests of the 'consumer' – always leads to a breakdown in communication.

2. Learn other languages. To become part of the Church's leadership, it is necessary to speak Italian and know Canon Law. Without them, not much can get done in the Church as currently governed. But, they greatly narrow the range of possibilities for hearing from fresh thinkers, understanding the cultures and concerns of those outside the inner circle of *Vaticanistas*, or hinder even knowing that such cultures and concerns exist.

3. Don't shoot the messenger. At last the Vatican is being forced to realise what every other public institution, government or business knows: that it is impossible to hide bad news and that lamenting the motivations or actions of those who expose a crisis is the worst form of crisis management. Rather than trying to hide behind cover-ups that exacerbate the problem, it is necessary to admit problems and be clearly seen as taking the situation and its rectification seriously.

4. Tensions are natural. There is no escaping the tensions of the world in which we live. Sanity and success come from managing those tensions, threats, risks and uncertainties. People who hold different views offer an opportunity to enrich your own if you are willing to avoid viewing them as enemies to be eliminated.

5. European culture wars are for Europeans. They aren't for export and don't mean much to people who don't appreciate their genesis or history. There are culture wars elsewhere, but they have a local genesis and can only have local resolutions. People in Asia, Africa and the Americas look at Europeans and wonder what all the fuss is about. The Church's leaders would do well to accept the relativity of cultures, forget the fiction of Europe as a benchmark and work with other cultures as they are rather than as Eurocentric imagination thinks them to be.

6. Learn from Max Weber. Weber's observations about the connections between increased specialisation, complexity, the need for open ways of operating and clear rules for limiting the claims of authority have become more relevant as populations grow, organisations diversify and specialisation increases. In light of this, the Church's practice of appointing office holders in its centralised organization on the basis of status rather than competence is a recipe for disaster. To fix it, the Vatican must restructure itself to limit the power of particular parts of the organisation to control the whole, specify how the elements of the bureaucracy



interact so that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing rather than having things done by one office surprising the others. The Vatican can only work better if there is a commitment to choosing competence over status in making appointments.

7. Learn from the history: Today's problems in the Church are mostly of Western origin. The history of the last two hundred years in the West has emphasised that if people don't have a say in their destiny, they at least opt out or even overthrow a regime. In many parts of the West, people are walking away from the Church, most especially women who want to make a contribution but are held in check by male hierarchies. To fix it, Church leadership in general and the Vatican in particular need root and branch reform to foster effective participation, including that of women, in decision-making at all levels.

8. Recognize that people have options and are exercising them: Gone are the days of 'command and control' as a sustainable management strategy for any organisation. Long gone for many Catholics in the West is a religion of rituals, tribal or national bonds and a

culture of fear as a motive for submission. The future of faith is in the free choice to accept a persuasive invitation to join a journey. Vatican practice is perceived as more related to the procedures of the Inquisition than to the message of Jesus. To fix it, the operations of Vatican offices need to accept the dismissive attitude of many Catholics to it and recognize how much trust has to be regained.

9. Become really catholic again: The numbers say it all; there are three Asians, a few Africans, and a sprinkling from the Americas among the top leaders of Vatican offices even though the only places the Church is growing are in Asia and Africa. Within the old world, the exclusion of fresh thinking and discussion of issues that societies are facing – the role of women, the place of homosexuals, the reexamination of moral rules formed when biological knowledge was primitive – have marginalized the Church as a discussion partner not only in society, but even in Catholics' minds. To fix it, the Vatican has to see that real catholicity calls for inclusiveness and a more representative leadership for the Church. This means that the Church is truly Catholic when, for example, dioceses are seen not as branch offices of a centralised multinational but as the authentic local realisations of a universal faith.

10. Accept that the facts are friendly: God 'writes straight with crooked lines.' But to appreciate just what God is up to requires a sober acceptance that the lines are crooked. Jesus tried to burst the bubble in which religious leaders of his time were living. He appeared to them to be at least destabilising and perhaps demonic. But he confidently worked in the real world because in that world God is at work and 'Wisdom is proved right by her deeds' (Matt 11:19). In the Incarnation the Son did not enter some perfect realm, but took on the reality of a particular time and place. The Vatican has nothing to lose by doing the same, engaging with the real world, listening to it and learning from it. And it has everything to gain.

Source: *Cathnews*

Fr Michael Kelly is the Editor of Cathnews USA. He is a frequent writer, publisher and broadcaster who was founding publisher of the Australian Jesuits' *Eureka Street* Magazine. This article is not written with any malice, but with the eyes of an educated, experienced missionary. www.aquinas-academy.com/news_article

Credo

Gabriel Lomas

Part of our worship service is often a creed that proclaims our beliefs and the beliefs of the people we are with. However, we need to ask if what we say every Sunday does this.

For instance:

- in what is called the *Apostles' Creed*, we proclaim that we believe Christ 'descended into hell';
- in the version given to us as the *Nicene Creed*, we claim that Christ is 'consubstantial with the Father';

Are these notions truly part of our belief system today? Perhaps a brief survey of texts that have been used for credal statements down the ages might help a little.

Some early creeds

An early credal statement seems to lie behind *1 Corinthians 15.33ff*:

For I passed on to you in the first place what I myself had received:
that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried,
and that he was raised on the third day,
according to the scriptures,
and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve,
then to more than five hundred brethren at once ...
then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles ...

Similarly, *Romans 1.3ff*:

Concerning his son,
who was born of David's seed by natural descent,
who was declared Son of God
with power by the spirit of holiness when he was
raised from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord
through whom we have received grace ...

While in *1 Peter 3.18ff* we find:

For Christ also suffered for our
sins, the just for the unjust,
to bring us to God,
slain indeed in the flesh but quickened in the spirit,
in which he went and preached to the spirits in
prison ... through the rising again of Jesus Christ,
who is on the right hand of God,
having ascended into heaven,
angels, authorities and powers having been
subjected to him;

Baptism creeds

There is much evidence for underlying scriptural creeds such as these being present in the early church. And when we turn to evidence from practice, it is mainly in baptismal liturgies that credal statements appear.

Thus, Cyril of Jerusalem describes (*Catechetical Lectures* 348 CE) how neophytes avowed:

I believe in the Father, and in the son,
and in the Holy spirit,
and in one baptism of repentance.

The *Catechetical Lectures* of Theodore of Mopsuetia (c. 350-425 CE) carefully expound a variant of the Constantinopolitan credal formula, which he said was recited "before baptism". The provenance of this creed is still debated vigorously, but it is truly œcumencial in that it is accepted not only by the Greek and Roman Catholic communions, but by the various 'heretical' bodies of the East and also by the great majority of Protestant churches. It calls for belief not *in* the church, but simply says it believes [the] *church*.

One Coptic baptismal creed (500 CE) exhorts us:
to believe in one true god, father of all creation
and in his only begotten son, Christ, our lord and
saviour and in his holy spirit, living, third, same
being one god, one power, one reign, one faith,
one baptism in the catholic, apostolic church
in life eternal

while a baptismal interrogation of the same times from Ethiopia asks:

do you believe in one god, father of all creation
and in his one son Jesus Christ, lord and our saviour
and in the holy spirit, living universal creature third,
equal to god
and in one god, one reign, one faith, one baptism in
holy catholic church
in life eternal?

And an interesting Armenian baptismal credo from that era says:

we believe in a holy trinity, in father and son and holy
spirit, in the annunciation of Gabriel
[in the conception of Mary]
in the birth of Christ in baptism
[in feasts]
in suffering [voluntary]
in the crucifixion
three days in the tomb
[blessed] resurrection
in the ascension in the form of god
in the seating at the right hand of the father in the
terrible [and glorious] coming

Apostles' Creed

Notions grew up over the years that the apostles must have formulated a catechetical list of beliefs. One myth told how each one of the twelve had made his own contribution to it. This list – quite fictitious – was called the *Apostles' Creed*.

Rome enormously expanded its jurisdiction in early Western Christendom, but not in Eastern. At Florence (1438-45 CE), the Orthodox Christians firmly rejected the Roman push to use the *Apostles' Creed*. Marcus Eugenius (Patriarch of Ephesus) said: "We do not possess and have never seen this creed of the Apostles. If it had ever existed, the book of the *Acts* would have spoken of it." [J Haufman, *Acta conciliorum* IX, 842a-842e.]

Those in the West were less fortunate, less free. Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457), an Italian academic and cleric, rejected the notion that the apostles composed the AC. He was forced to recant. Bishop Reginald Peacock (St Asaph 1444; Chichester 1450) denied the apostolic authorship of the AC, and rejected 'he descended into hell'. Reginald was forced to resign his see in 1458.

G J Voss (1642), a Dutch clergyman, and James Ussher (1647), Archbishop of Armagh, espoused the ideas of Valla and Peacock with impunity. (Ussher also managed to calculate the exact time of creation – the night preceding Sunday, 23 October, 4004 CE.) By 1850 CE it was generally doubted if anything like the AC had ever existed in NT times.

We as Church need to do what Jack Mahoney has suggested in his book and 'submit experience to the bar of belief and belief to the bar of experience'. The result would then probably be something like this:

Symbol or creed

We believe in the Divine Creator,
Source of all Being maker of this cosmos,
of the billions of stars and planets of the vastness of
time and space of our immense universe,
and of all the wonders of this our planet Earth.

We believe in Jesus Christ the Eternal Word
in whom the presence and immanence of the Divine
reached such a peak of intensity
that the Creator actually became human
and lived like us
to lead us through the common evolutionary
fate of individual extinction
to a new level of being
in the Source of all Being.

We believe in the Spirit of Holiness, Sustainer of
everything that is actively dwelling in each of us,
in whom we live and move and have our being.

We believe in the one Holy People of God,
divinised and gathered together
to journey along the way Christ shows us.

We believe that we are this Holy People selected and
chosen to be Spirit-filled the sign of Christ's Body
today living and serving the human race and the
whole of creation.

Amen

A confession of belief(s) became known as a *Symbol*, and often these were formulated or used at Synods and Councils as a way of expressing common beliefs. The *Symbol* became incorporated into liturgies, especially Baptism and Eucharist, and that's where we still encounter it. There's lots of evidence showing the evolution of liturgies in Christian communities, tracing how these *Symbols* changed and 'grew'.

Main sources for this article:

Denzinger, H & A Schönmetzer. 1973. *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (Editio 35) Herder, Freiburg.
Kelly, J N D. 2006. *Early Christian Creeds* (3rd Edition) Continuum, London.
Mahoney (SJ), J M. 2011 *Christianity in Evolution: A*

The Problem with Reform:

The Dean of Blangermont to the country Priest of Bernanos:

'God preserve us from reformers!'

The dialogue continues:

'Dean, many saints have been reformers.'

'God preserve us from saints as well!'

John Dominic Crossan (Dom) Reaffirms the Dream of God

Maikel Annalee

When I finished reading Dom's book *The Power of Parable*, it was crystal clear how his work facilitates our understanding and 'divine' participation in the 'salvation' of Creation by standing-in for Creation itself, from its gift to us, of our self-Creation.

Discovering also that he is a disciple of the One and Only Creator who engenders and sustains us as aboriginal and not yet 'civilized' people. For he writes:

God did not come up with a bright new idea called Jesus around 4BCE. The eternal and generative dream of God was for a world of justice and peace... was always *with* God and *was* God. But John claims, it became embodied, incarnated, revealed humanly in Jesus.... Jesus of Nazareth is the visionary dream of God as embodied humanly in time, place and sandals. [p 225]

And without the sandals, 'the visionary dream of God as embodied humanly in time (and) place' was aboriginally first here 'Down Under'. That's why any blackfella fellow-theologian can affirm:

We don't need no 'Reconciliation', for we never waged war in the One and Only Creator's name on our fellow-believers. Yet you do so to us and to your own people according to your *law*, and so dishonour both this *law* and yourselves in the eyes of the One and Only Creator and those like us, who honour the aboriginal Creator's *lore*.

This *lore* applies equally to black-fellas as well, even if in *law*, they're winning their war.

The poet Kevin Gilbert stated, when the South African freedom-fighters came over here to show local blackfellas how to 'win the war' and be free as they were over there:

Life in this world is not a fight to the finish; it is a gift from our Creator and a portal for our journey into eternity. We may have been forced to submit to unjust *laws*; but we will not reject our traditional *lore* and wage war in revenge.

Kevin was no saint, for he spoke with the experience of a convicted murderer. But his understanding matched that of Jesus as related by Dom:

The difference, Pilate, between the kingdom of Rome and the kingdom of God... is that yours is based,

supported and defended by violence and mine is not. No, not even to free me from you, Pilate, would or could my followers ever fight and use violence. [p 242]

As Dom's message and Kevin's both reflect: 'the visionary dream of God as...embodied, incarnated, revealed humanly in Jesus', then this creates a level playing-field for Christianity and Aboriginality in a shared tradition that honours self-respect for all Creation from all Creation.

Dom supports such a reflection, when confirming his Jesus is no imaginary non-historical figure, he compares him to the "Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'.... If it was just fictional... a dream from which one woke to a reality that negated it even as a human possibility.... It might have been objected (to).... But because Dr King was an actual person who did it... his vision could not so easily be dismissed.' [p 251-52]

And echoing Macbeth ironically: 'If it were done, it could be done again – and by others.' Dom confirms his transition from 'a theologian of parables' to 'our personal spiritual trainer': 'That, of course, is the challenge of Jesus as an actual, factual, historical figure. If any one human being can do anything in life and death other human beings can do likewise.' [p 252]

The ultimate reality for humanity, as Dom sees it, goes even beyond the glittering gold of winning the race of eternal life from penultimate death. It is: 'to co-create with God a world of justice and love, peace and non-violence.' [p 252]

For Dom understands Jesus to affirm: 'the kingdom of God – here below upon this one and only earth, in this one and only world' is also God's reality and not, as it is unreally imagined to be, in heaven.

This is an affirmation we can all take heart from, for it enables us to face up to the real day-to-day challenges, for most of which we are spiritually ill-prepared. Extermination rather than our ab-original creation in the Mind of God has been our Armageddon affirmation that nullifies the gift of co-creation of Life: 'the eternal and generative dream of God in Jesus' [p 225] which combine in Christianity and Aboriginality Down Under.

For by re-affirmation of this 'the visionary dream of God' we can all share in common, we reclaim our gift of co-creation as the Aboriginal Dreaming tradition of Australia, this Land Down Under, has uniquely retained. All Australians should take heart from sharing in this inheritance and should make this loud and clear to those who are now too tired or disenchanted to dream: whether On the Block or Out the Back or Around the World.

Dom's words inspired me to find 'our Down Under personal spiritual trainers', who combine their Christianity and Aboriginality as does he. Firstly, in this 2009 quotation of the aboriginal Pastor of The Way, the Seventh Day Adventist outreach on The Block at Redfern:

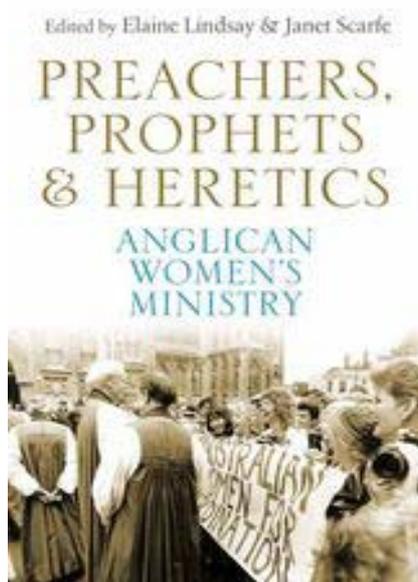
Johnny Murison concluded the day with a sermon that corresponded with the day's theme, 'God's Dream'. Johnny made a call that God was inviting each one to be in eternity with Him. All could be a part of God's dream: either by being a part of a church so that one doesn't have to travel the spiritual journey alone, by participating in Bible studies, or re-committing their lives to Jesus.'

And in December 2001, Pastor Ray Minniecon, who also works on The Block and head of Indigenous Programs for World Vision Australia explained in an interview that it also works for blackfellas:

'It varies place to place. But one of the essential elements of our beliefs is that everything in our culture is connected. From birth, right through. In our Aboriginal belief system.... what we call the *Dreaming*. The other thing to note is that for us, from a theological point of view, God doesn't live hidden behind the blue skies and stars. Our understanding of God is that he is here. This is where God lives. That's his home. That's his address. That's where he has, within himself, all the Spirit Children – from creation time forward'

This 'COMMON DREAMS' message-stick is shared not only by Dom, Kevin, Johnny and Ray; but also by those sponsoring Dom's journey Down Under, which they identify as: 'A "Common Dreams on the Road" Event.' So that across time and space, our sharing in such COMMON DREAMS enables us to 'walk the talk' of Christianity and Aboriginality and so inspire the hearts and minds of all of us, who have hitherto been too tired or disenchanted to dream, with: 'the visionary dream of God as embodied humanly in...Jesus.'

MAIKEL ANNALEE has studied the Bible both at Aquinas Academy and the University of Sydney. However, he now realises that these studies were of doubtful validity as they were based on still-contradictory and hence unreliable scripture. Other catholic scholars, such as Dom Crossan, having also reached a similar understanding, are providing some of the insights necessary to restore our confidence in our scriptural tradition for groups such as Australian Reforming Catholics.



Elaine Lindsay (ed.), Janet Scarfe (ed.),
9781742233376, UNSW Press,
September 2012, 432pp, PB ,
234x153mm
Availability: Plenty
Price: AUD\$59.99 (AUD\$54.54 ex-tax)
NZD\$79.99

The Catholic Church continues to maintain its refusal to ordain women – despite decline in vocations and diminishing numbers of priests, many of whom are ageing and suffering from poor health. This book will give heart to those Catholic women who believe they have a genuine calling to priesthood and refuse to accept the Vatican's argument that Jesus only ordained men. Role models in the Anglican Church will inspire Catholic women to follow their lead.

As the Anglican Church tied itself in legal and theological knots over the ordination of women in the 1980s and early 1990s, the Australian public watched in amazement. The spectacle spilled out of church synods into ecclesiastical tribunals and civil courts, and made media headlines.

Twenty years have passed since women were first ordained as priests in 1992. Since then women have become much more visible in the church hierarchy – except in the powerful Diocese of Sydney, the only metropolitan diocese that doesn't allow women priests. More than 500 women have been ordained as priests – and they haven't stopped there, some have also gone on to become bishops.

This first book to document and analyse the debate includes chapters from key players and observers, including Peter Carnley, the Archbishop of Perth who broke the impasse by ordaining women before national legislation was passed, religion producer and broadcaster Rachael Kohn, and the Very Reverend Dr Jane Shaw, an internationally recognised author and commentator.

Sharing Australia: Ecumenism in Transit

Extract from Newsletter of the NSW Ecumenical Council Incorporated
trading as Churches Together NSW/ACT issue 2 2012

Address at the Annual General Meeting of Churches Together NSW/ACT, on 16 June 2012
by Rev'd Dr David Gill, former General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia

The Churches have come a long way in relationships with one another,' declared David Gill at the AGM of *Churches Together*. 'We need to remember that, especially when the Ecumenical movement confronts a moment of uncertainty. We need to keep the historical perspective in front of us. We are at one of those moments of uncertainty, not only in Australia, but in many parts of the Western world. We are at a moment of transition.'

Churches Together NSW/ACT faced the reality of the withdrawal of the Catholic Church from membership of the ecumenical body at its annual general meeting in June.

The meeting heard that 14 of the current 17 member churches have renewed their commitment, and since then, the Salvation Army and the Greek Orthodox Church have confirmed their future participation. Any suggestion of an 'ecumenical winter' has now passed.

The past two years have been a time of review of ecumenical structures in NSW and the ACT. *Churches Together NSW/ACT* has been involved in a thorough analysis of its mission and calling to develop a new vision of ecumenical cooperation. The majority of member churches has resolved to remain in membership 'to explore new ways of working ecumenically'.

Changes will involve a smaller more proactive Executive Committee, a greater emphasis on regional and local ecumenism; the maintenance of an electronic communication network, and the encouragement of projects by the Commissions of *Churches Together* which foster ecumenism. David Gill reminded his audience:

'While Inter-church relationships have struggled in recent years, at the same time Interfaith relationships have taken on a fresh urgency. These two factors can be distractions from the older and less exciting task of Christian unity. Interchurch relationships are in need of a fresh impetus. It is true that enormous progress has been made. Cooperation now happens on many fronts. I would like to raise six points of new emphasis.

1. The recent emphasis to developing receptive ecumenism is a welcome one. We still have a lot to learn from each other.
2. We need a more self-critical ecumenism. What is it about my church that makes it hard for others to accept?
3. We need a more anticipatory ecumenism. It would be much better if we anticipated problems long before they arose, and if we could talk through the issues before they became divisive.
4. We need a more mutually supportive ecumenism. At difficult times we need one another.
5. We need a more empathetic ecumenism. We have made a lot of progress on the cerebral level, but the challenge is not just to understand but to feel what it is like to be the other.
6. We need a more confident ecumenism. Too many eyes have been fixated on problems, too much time spent lamenting the frustrations, too many voices speaking of an alleged 'ecumenical winter'.

Finally – we need a less bureaucratic ecumenism. Our mode of operating must change. The ecclesiastical bureaucracy to which we have been accustomed, a curious late 20th century phenomenon, is no longer sustainable.

Contributed by *Lynne Green csb*. She has been an active ecumenist since 1984, first as Registrar of a member college of Sydney College of Divinity, then as Liaison Officer of Sydney Catholic Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission: 1991-1996. Her understanding is that Cardinal George Pell announced at the 2011 AGM that all the Catholic dioceses would be withdrawing, and for some time it was feared that the ecumenical state body would shut down. But, between that announcement and this year's AGM, in June, other churches were consulted, and indicated their willingness to continue to be active, supportive members. It is now a smaller group, but very focussed on moving on, and growing itself into a more practical, pro-active ecumenical group.

If any ARC Members have any comments to make as to why Catholics were withdrawn from such a vital group, please let us know!

Editor

Extract from Pope John XXIII's Opening Speech to Vatican Council II

October 11, 1962

“In the daily exercise of our pastoral office, we sometimes have to listen, much to our regret, to voices of persons who, though burning with zeal, are not endowed with too much sense of discretion or measure. In these modern times they can see nothing but prevarication and ruin. They say that our era, in comparison with past eras, is getting worse, and they behave as though they had learned nothing from history, which is, none the less, the teacher of life. They behave as though at the time of former Councils everything was a full triumph for the Christian idea and life and for proper religious liberty.

“We feel we must disagree with those prophets of gloom, who are always forecasting disaster, as though the end of the world were at hand.

“In the present order of things, Divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relations which, by human efforts and even beyond our very expectations, are directed toward the fulfillment of God’s superior and inscrutable designs. And everything, even human differences, leads to the greater good of the Church.

“The greatest concern of the Ecumenical Council is this: that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously. That doctrine embraces the whole of our beings, composed as we are of body and soul. And, since we are pilgrims on this earth, it commands us to tend always toward heaven.

“Our duty is not only to guard this precious treasure, as if we were concerned only with antiquity, but to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us, pursuing thus the path which the Church has followed for twenty centuries. The salient point of this Council is not, therefore, a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church which has repeatedly been taught by the Fathers and by ancient and modern theologians, and which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all.

“For this a Council was not necessary. But from the renewed, serene, and tranquil adherence to all the

teaching of the Church in its entirety and preciseness, as it still shines forth in the Acts of the Council of Trent and First Vatican Council, the Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine, which, however, should be studied and expounded through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought. The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter that must be taken into great consideration with patience if necessary, everything being measured in the forms and proportions of a magisterium which is predominantly pastoral in character.

“At the outset of the Second Vatican Council, it is evident, as always, that the truth of the Lord will remain forever. We see, in fact, as one age succeeds another, that the opinions of men follow one another and exclude each other. And often errors vanish as quickly as they arise, like fog before the sun. The Church has always opposed these errors. Frequently she has condemned them with the greatest severity. **Nowadays however, the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations.** Not, certainly, that there is a lack of fallacious teaching, opinions, and dangerous concepts to be guarded against and dissipated. But these are so obviously in contrast with the right norm of honesty, and have produced such lethal fruits that by now it would seem that men of themselves are inclined to condemn them, particularly those ways of life which despise God and His law or place excessive confidence in technical progress and a well-being based exclusively on the comforts of life. They are ever more deeply convinced of the paramount dignity of the human person and of his perfection as well as of the duties which that implies. Even more important, experience has taught men that violence inflicted on others, the might of arms, and political domination, are of no help at all in finding a happy solution to the grave problems which afflict them.

On the eve of his death, Pope John XXIII said:

“It is not the Gospel that changes; it is we who are beginning to understand it better. The moment has come to recognise the signs of the times, to seize the opportunities offered, and to look far ahead.” (Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph Komonchak, editors, *History of Vatican II - Volume II*, Orbis Press, 1997, 582)

Have your say!

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

Your contributions, letters, articles or comments are most welcome

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

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