



arcvoice

A Report from Australian Reforming Catholics Inc.
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Editorial

The letter from John Menadue to the members of his parish, published in this issue, gives rise to a timely reflection on the need to have structures for Church members to express views and ideas about faith and morals. His letter concerning approaches to sexual abuse was discussed by his parish members and parish council with the support of the parish priest. Yet in how many parishes across Australia would a letter like this be distributed and taken up for discussion? Not many, I would venture to say.

The average Catholic family receives little stimulation to explore ideas that promote the development of faith understanding and spirituality. Sermons rarely do this since it is not their purpose and, even if they did, they are seldom accompanied by arrangements to enable serious discussion afterwards. As a result, relatively few Catholics get beyond what they learned about their faith since the last years of their school life.

Vatican II made it clear that the people are the Church and that the bishops and priests should see themselves as the servants to the People of God. However, in the years since the Council little effort has been made to provide structures at national, diocesan and parish levels to enable the vision to be realised. There is no point in having a right to influence if there is no opportunity to exercise it. And, as we well know, even bishops have had immense difficulty influencing the Vatican on vital issues of pastoral care.

This is why a parish newsletter can be such an important organ of communication that, in time, could help spearhead the emergence of regular arrangements that enable the People of God to influence 'their' Church. The newsletter needs to be more than a list of parish events because there is little else that gives a Catholic community a chance to be informed regularly and to express ideas.

This, in turn, raises the question about what we are all doing as members of ARC to bring this all about. We should all be submitting stimulating articles and thoughts to our parish newsletters even if we don't think that we have the talent to write an article or two ourselves. Why not give it a try if you have not done so already. It would be wonderful to hear that through this simple stimulation some ongoing learning and influence was achieved.

John Buggy

In this issue

John Buggy: <i>Editorial</i>	1
(Fr.) Peter Daly: <i>A Parish Priest's hopes for the next Pope</i>	
Cartoon: Alan Holroyd	2-3
Moira Rayner: <i>No lowly scapegoats in 'necessary'</i>	
<i>Royal Commission</i>	
Cartoon: Alan Holroyd	4-5
John Menadue: <i>A letter to fellow members of St Mary</i>	
<i>Magdalene's Parish, Rose Bay</i>	6-7
Jason Berry: <i>A New Inquisition: The Vatican targets</i>	
<i>US nuns</i>	8-10
Christa Pongratz-Lippitt: <i>Swiss abbot makes fiery</i>	
<i>appeal for church reform</i>	11-12
Gideon Goosen (book review): Geza Vermes:	
<i>Jesus the Charismatic Jew: Points to Ponder</i>	12-13
Phoebe Basson: <i>Fish on Friday</i>	13
Alan Clague: <i>Latent Sexism in Modern Biblical</i>	
<i>Translations?</i>	14
<i>Thoughts on Leadership</i>	15
ARC Secretariat - Have Your Say - Subscription form	16

A Parish Priest's hopes for the next Pope

(Fr.) Peter Daly

Like everybody else, I was surprised to hear that Pope Benedict was resigning. But I was also relieved for him. It has been painfully obvious that he is declining. At Christmas, we saw him wheeled around on that rolling platform. He looked tired. It was time to resign.

Perhaps the most important legacy of Benedict XVI's papacy will be his resignation. It has set a very healthy precedent. In an age when medical science can keep us living well into our 90s and maybe even past 100, it is important that popes should feel free to resign when they feel they are no longer up to the task of their ministry. Pope Benedict showed true pastoral concern for the church when he recognized he could no longer carry on.

As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he lived through the final years of John Paul II's papacy. He saw his friend decline, and he knew the church was drifting for the last few years of that long reign. Yet John Paul II felt bound by tradition to carry on until the end. Benedict XVI has freed future popes of that burden and perhaps freed the church from a major problem of having a senile or incapacitated pope. He deserves our thanks for this precedent.

The Benedictines have a saying about the selection of a new abbot: The abbot should be *ne nimis sapiens, ne nimis sanctus, et ne nimis sanus* – not too healthy, not too

wise and not too holy. In other words, they should select a regular guy. That's what I hope for: a regular guy.

What does that mean in the context of the College of Cardinals? They are 120 guys, all pretty much cut from the same clerical cloth. They are all older men and accomplished church politicians who have been serving in church offices, where everyone is Catholic and everyone deferential.

But I hope we get somebody who has at least some experience as a parish priest. I hope we get someone who has heard confessions and done marriage counselling, been on youth retreats and done marriage prep. It would be nice if he had the experience of being alone in a parish where he had to do all the liturgies, week after week, and struggled to inspire the same people with his preaching. I hope he has had to explain the teaching of the faith to skeptical youth and angry adults. I hope he has had to deal with divorced people.

I hope we get somebody who has not lived exclusively in the world of chancery offices where people give him deference and obedience all the time. I hope we get someone who has dialogued with evangelicals, Muslims and atheists as equals. It would be nice if he has a few friends who are Protestant clergy and he has come to respect them as intelligent and sincere Christians, every bit as saved as he is.

I hope we get someone from a big family, with many brothers and sisters. I hope he has a lot of nieces and nephews who have challenged him around the dinner table and in family gatherings. Maybe some of them have married outside the church or have left the church to join other religions. He has attended their weddings only as a family member. Perhaps one of those nieces and nephews has come out to him as gay and he has had to love them still.

THE MIRACLE OF THE PAPACY EXPOSED!
OR, HOW THE POPES PUT THEIR PANTS ON—TWO LEGS AT A TIME.



ONE, TWO.... THREE !!

ALAN MOORE'S ARTS

I hope he has several strong-willed and outspoken biological sisters who have more than a streak of feminism. Maybe they have told their brother that they use birth control. Maybe they have responsible and substantial careers outside the home where women are the boss.

I hope he is a man who has many old friends. That he has kept his friends since childhood and that some of the people on his Christmas card list still call him by his first name. Maybe some of them can still remind him of the stupid things he did or impetuous statements he made in his youth. There is nothing like an old friend to bring you down to earth.

I hope we get somebody who is in touch with his own humanity. It would be nice if he was a man who admits that he, too, is a sexual being who has struggled with human desires and impulses like everybody else.

I hope we get a man with a sense of humour. It would be nice if he was not too much of a ninny. He might even be able to tell a joke once in a while and laugh at himself.

I hope we get somebody who puts on his pants one leg at a time. In fact, it would be nice if he would wear pants. Clerics should leave behind the silly affectation

of dressing like they are still living in some Renaissance villa or a Baroque painting.

I hope we get a man who knows what it is like to be poor. It would be nice if he has dealt with the homeless and drug addicts and the sick for a few years of his life. It would be good if he has had to struggle like the rest of humanity for his daily bread. It would be nice if he has held a job and had to pay his own bills.

Maybe the cardinals could look around the room and perhaps even look outside the room for the new pope. There is nothing in canon law that says they have to elect a cardinal.

One thing is for sure: We need to try something new if the church is to be revived. What Yogi Berra said about baseball managers is also true about the cardinals' choice: 'If you do what you have always done, you are going to get what you have always got.'

Fr. Peter Daly is a priest of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., and has been pastor of St. John Vianney parish in Prince Frederick, Md., since 1994.

Source: 18.2.13: *National Catholic Reporter*



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from 2 – 5 pm

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Afternoon tea provided

Hat Hill Rd is between the Park and Anglican Church, just past the shopping centre, on the right.

Continue at least 2½ km, past the old airport, into the National Park. Mt Booralee Estate is on the left, through a large iron gate which will be open. Parking available on the property. WARM clothes are always suggested.

Please advise Jennifer if you are travelling by train – she will meet you and return you in time to travel home.



For catering purposes and to coordinate car arrangements, if you plan to attend, please advise Margaret Knowlden on knowlden@optusnet.com.au
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Saturday Trains

depart Central	8.18 am	arrive Blackheath	10.32 am
"	10.18 am	"	12.32 pm
"	11.18 am	"	1.32 pm
depart Blackheath	5.13 pm	arrive Central	7.13 pm
"	6.13 pm	"	8.31 pm

No lowly scapegoats in 'necessary' Royal Commission

Moira Rayner

A Royal Commission is or should be a rare sight. A Royal Commission is a short-term, immensely powerful 'star chamber' set up by the executive. They should be few, because governments shouldn't be allowed to force people to give evidence, possibly incriminate themselves and be exposed to public obloquy, without compelling reason.

There is such reason, and the blood has been crying out for justice for far too long. Adult survivors of sex crimes against them as children, by men who presented as the personification of God, have seen their assailants protected by the institutions they worked in. They and their advocates were finally backed up, surprisingly by police. It takes the force to confront the misuse of force.

It started with the Victorian Police Commissioner's submission to the feeble Parliamentary inquiry established by Premier Baillieu this year. He was scathing about the local Catholic Church's obstruction of police investigations and its staggeringly complete failure to report known paedophile priests.

Then Peter Fox, a senior Newcastle police officer, went public and, in his own words, 'threw away' his career by demanding a Royal Commission into these cover-ups. When he was, instead, handed an inquiry into the response to reported sex crimes in his own district, the ensuing public disgust became politically necessary to assuage.

It was the quickest and most effective campaign I have ever seen, and bore fruit when the Prime Minister announced a Commission into institutional responses to sex crimes against children in their care. [November 2012]

Peter Fox has already been vilified as 'unstable', as it is ever the case for a whistleblower. He was a brave and decent man. [ABC 7.30 Report, 15.11.2012]. So was Frank Brennan, the 'meddlesome priest', who told the ABC later that evening that responsibility for the repulsed investigations and the wretched decision-making that put the interests of the institution ahead of the love of

God, goes high. Very high. There can be no lowly scapegoats here.

This inquiry will be different. It must, because it would be another crime to indulge in titillating tales of torture, rape and beatings, and community outrage against 'beasts' who do these things. The beasts include ourselves.

This investigation will be into the machinations of the institutions which represent the obligation of the state to protect children from exploitation and torture, and to facilitate their recovery. This duty is best set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but that has only been with us since 1990, when Australia ratified it.

But it is also into the wretched writhing of bodies who set themselves up in the name of God and religion and the eternal, who claim privileges in everyday life, and whom we trusted. Whom children trusted. Who betrayed them.

I have worked my entire professional life for the right of every child to be heard, treated as a human being of innate worth and dignity, and taken seriously. I have appeared in courts, written papers, books and set up a commission for children's rights.

So it is not lightly that I say that our lack of care has taken away childhoods. Adult survivors have had their souls stolen, and every insulting excuse (it was only after Vatican II; we didn't know; a man is entitled to be presumed innocent; a child can't be believed; we sent him away for treatment; we didn't know then what we know now) reminds them daily about the ultimate betrayal of trust.

This Commission must find a way to institutionalise the right of every child to be heard. It isn't about punishing the predators. We have to change, deeply. We must learn to listen to every child, as a moral equal.

One of the informing moments of my career came from the survivors of a family which had finally disclosed that an authoritarian, imposing father had beaten and raped every one of his children under the very eye of their mother, who 'noticed' when he introduced his latest sexual partner, her eldest daughter's best friend, into the bed – and came to me.

I interviewed every one of those children, and told her what they told me. In my presence and in theirs, she swore she didn't know: that it had always happened while she was working to support the family, usually on night shifts. In my presence two of those children said, 'But we told you, Mum'. She didn't hear. Even then, she didn't hear.

This is not to be an inquiry into the monsters who, like that father, take advantage of the needy and vulnerable. I expect it to reveal more than we might like about why men and women just don't hear what children say or inquire into what they might say, who don't notice patterns of behaviour in popular or powerful men, and turn a blind eye to the demonisation of the children who go 'wild'.

I expect it to challenge some, at least, of the many men and women who, in their ordinary work and routine, deny the probability or truth of children's stories; of managers and pastors who choose to defer and refer responsibility to others and who wash their hands of the results of others' failure to achieve justice; who choose, in committees and after conferences with counsel, to decline to participate in investigations; and who may even be naïve enough to accompany a paedophile to court; who escort from their desks those who try to act effectively about reporting and protecting the abuse of children's rights; who take comfort in their

insurers' advice; and protect the reputations and safety deposit boxes of their respectable institutions.

It will take years – the Irish commission took ten – and millions, and will destroy some reputations and lives and ambitions: and it may not be fair. It will not target just the Catholic Church.

This is a direct call, to reassess the status of children. Compensating damaged adults and listening to them now is not enough. It sends a warning to all those comfortable people who believe in their own virtue. You should not be comfortable. Your sacred space has been defiled. Your institutions designed to protect children instead have given comfort and protection to their rapists and bullies.

May there be hope for the boys and girls who are being groomed and frightened today and tonight. May this Commission's work tie a millstone around the necks of those who have hurt these little ones, by not loving and respecting their rights. May we see a sea change.

Moira Rayner is a barrister and writer
Article published in Eureka Street 7.1.13
(printed with permission)



A letter to fellow members of St Mary Magdalene's Parish, Rose Bay

John Menadue

I have found great beauty in the Catholic Church. Inspired by the Eucharist, I joined the Catholic Church over 30 years ago. That inspiration remains. Despite its failures the Church remains for me the greatest influence for good in the world. I am grateful for its worldwide works of justice, mercy and charity. At the local parish level I have found wise and generous leadership along with a pulsing, lively and loving community of believers. I hold in highest affection the women and particularly the Sisters in the Church who day after day 'keep the show on the road'. I will never leave this Church. But I am greatly disturbed by the state of affairs into which we have allowed the Church to drift.

The problem of Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church

This abuse is the ultimate in the violation of the human person, the human spirit and the soul. It is an appalling betrayal of trust by priests, religious and some lay people. Many parents were too ashamed to report rapists to the police.

Sexual abuse is an awful part, but it is only a part of a wider problem – the systemic abuse of clerical power.

The former president of the Australian Bishops' Conference, Philip Wilson, said only recently that the abuse crisis is 'the biggest crisis in the history of the Catholic Church in Australia'.

This abuse has stemmed from many factors and influences.

- We have a male Church; a very patriarchal church. Sexual abuse is largely but not entirely a male problem. Blokes get the rank and glory and make most of the mistakes;
 - Obligatory celibacy;
 - The mystique of priesthood – 'Yes Father, No Father'. Adult Christians should behave as adults and recognise both the strengths and weaknesses in each of us;
 - The issue of abuse was made public by the secular media and not the Church. The secular media has done the Church a great service;
 - Both John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger (Head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and later Benedict XVI) ignored the issue. They were silent or defensive. This is an unpalatable fact that we must face. The cardinals and bishops gave loyalty to silent Popes. Criminality was allowed to fester. Our leadership let us down. The Vatican lost touch with the Church of the Faithful;
 - The Vatican was able to do this because it was not really accountable. The Curia lives in a remote thought bubble. It could hardly be said to comprise 'servants of the servants of God'. Problems continued because power and control flowed from the top, as in all absolute monarchies;
 - Many of the hopes of Vatican II have been allowed to run into the sand.... synods of dioceses, local bishops' conferences, global collegiality and much more;
 - The faithful were ignored or remained quiet. Maybe we have got the church today that we deserve. It is certainly not the church that Christ wants. We should remember that the early Catholic Church in Australia was a lay Church. Priests and the hierarchy came later;
 - It would be a mistake to shrug our shoulders and say that these horrific crimes against children can be left to the new Pope. The evidence is that the silence and avoidance under John Paul II was continued under Benedict XVI;
 - Too often the Church passed the problem to the police and lawyers when it was fundamentally a moral and governance issue for the Church itself.
- 'The problem' is not a passing issue. The Royal Commission will be with us for at least three years and probably more.

Expressing sorrow and contrition will be essential, but it will not be sufficient. The apology by Kevin Rudd and the Australian Government and people to the Stolen Generation and indigenous people was genuine and heartfelt. We all felt better about ourselves. But has much changed as a result? Indifference seems to have won the day! Will it win again in this crisis in the Catholic Church?

Until there is genuine reform, the church will continue in its trauma.

The whole Church, including the large majority of priests and religious, is tainted by this scandal.

Many Catholics are discouraged.

At the local level we are in a sense living in a parallel church that is out of alignment with the hierarchical church.

What could we do in the parish?

1. Continue to express sorrow for the damage the church has done to so many people. This should be expressed consistently in Prayers of the Faithful. The prayers should extend to those giving evidence to the Royal Commission that they find the courage to speak fearlessly. There should be regular reports on what the parish is doing about the issue;
2. Establish a fund to ensure that people who have been damaged are properly advised and referred to professionals in the field. Appoint a lay person – perhaps a parent – to co-ordinate this work;
3. Elect, not select, members of the parish council and the finance committee;

4. Appoint a parish group to consult with the Archdiocese on future appointments of the parish priest;
5. Issue a statement by the parish on how we would like to see the church reformed. This would presumably include such matters as the selection of bishops, women in the church and obligatory celibacy. This would be forwarded to other parishes, the archdiocese and the papal nuncio;
6. Call specifically for annual archdiocesan synods which have a majority of lay people. The Anglican model could be helpful;
7. Make a submission to the Royal Commission focusing on the issue of accountability, not just within the Catholic Church, but in all organisations dealing with young and vulnerable people;
8. Cooperate as much as possible with other parishes;
9. Organise a series of parish/public meetings on abuse. Possible speakers: Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, Kristina Keneally, Danny Gilbert and Francis Sullivan;
10. Review the extent to which money raised in the parish is paid to the archdiocese. We should be very careful about paying parish money to organisations that are not accountable to us. This leverage should be exercised. Perhaps it is the only real leverage we have.

Christ will not abandon the Church, but we must be resolute and courageous in the crisis we face. This is unknown territory. There will be risks, but there will be rewards if we can build a reformed Church. It will then be a Church of greater beauty and less ugliness.

Peace be with you!

John Menadue was head of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet from 1974 to 1976. He was closely involved in the events of November 11, 1975, and worked for Prime Ministers Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser. He was Australian Ambassador to Japan from 1976 to 1980. In 2009, he received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Adelaide in recognition of his significant and lifelong contribution to Australian society as a Public Servant, Diplomat, Critical Thinker, Board Director, Advisor and Public Commentator.)

A New Inquisition: The Vatican targets US nuns

Jason Berry

National Catholic Reporter
Jan 4-17, 2013

Franciscan Sr. Pat Farrell and three other sisters crossed St. Peter's Square through the fabled white columns, paused for a security check and entered the rust-colored Palace of the Holy Office.

It was April 18, 2012 and, on entering the palazzo, they were aware of its history, that in this same building nearly 400 years earlier Galileo had been condemned as a heretic by the Roman Inquisition for arguing that the Earth orbits around the sun.

Today, the palazzo houses the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican office that enforces adherence to church teaching. As president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Farrell and her executive colleagues had an appointment with the prefect, Cardinal William Levada, about the congregation's investigation of their group.

They were walking into what Fr. Hans Küng, the internationally renowned theologian who has had his own battles in the palazzo, calls 'a new Inquisition'.

The sisters were accused of undermining church moral teaching by promoting 'radical feminist themes incompatible with the Catholic faith'. To many sisters, the congregation's action is a turn toward the past, causing a climate of fear and a chill wind reaching into their lives.

The Vatican wants control of LCWR, an association of 1,500 superiors, representing 80 percent of American sisters, most long active in the front lines of social justice.

The main leadership council of American sisters embraced the Second Vatican Council's social justice Gospel, which has taken sisters to some of the poorest corners of the world to work with politically oppressed people, particularly in Latin America. But a stark drama of attrition has unfolded as the Vatican II generation reaches an eclipse. Since 1965, the number of American

sisters has dropped by more than two-thirds, from 181,241 to 54,000 today.

In contrast, the rate of women joining religious orders has surged in Korea, South Vietnam, sub-Saharan Africa and parts of the Caribbean. Nowhere has the increase been more pronounced than in India. Five of the 10 largest religious institutes of women have headquarters in India, where only 1.6 percent of the population is Catholic.

'While India has nearly 50 million fewer Catholics than the United States does, it has over 30,000 more women religious,' wrote Jeff Ziegler in *Catholic World Report*.

The Vatican crackdown of LCWR has exposed a schizophrenic church. Interviews with missionary sisters in Rome, from India and other countries, register a deep fault line between cardinals immune from punishment, and sisters who work in poor regions with some of the world's most beleaguered people. Religious sisters from other parts of the world view LCWR's conflict with foreboding. How far Pope Benedict XVI goes in imposing a disciplinary culture, policing obedience over sisters, is an urgent issue to many of these women – and one sure to colour this pope's place in history.

The doctrinal assessment delivered by Levada was an intervention plan; he appointed Archbishop J. Peter Sartain of Seattle to approve speakers for LCWR gatherings and overhaul its statutes. 'You can impose silence, but that doesn't change anyone's thinking,' Farrell reflected several months later at the convent in Dubuque, Iowa, where she lives.

'This is about the Vatican II church, how we have come to live collegially with participatory decision-making,' Farrell said. 'When I entered in 1965 we studied and prayed with [the Vatican II] documents, implementing new charters. ... We're in a line of continuity with the early history of our communities, assessing unmet needs, going to the margins to help the homeless, people with AIDS, victims of torture and sexual trafficking.'

'When Vatican II requested nuns to search their history, Rome believed in a mythology of plaster statue women,' said Syracuse University Professor Margaret Susan Thompson, a historian of women religious. 'They found instead nuns who took the job literally, and became controversial for doing so.'

The leadership conference endorsed women's ordination in 1977 – 17 years before Pope John Paul II reinforced the church's ban on it with the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. Farrell says LCWR has not

campaigned for women's ordination. Nor has it endorsed abortion. The doctrinal congregation's demand that the leaders speak out against abortion and gay rights is a battle over conscience, forcing words into superiors' mouths.

'These women are really rooted in Christ and committed to the poor,' said Sr. Nzenzili Lucie Mboma, executive director of Service of Documentation and Study on Global Mission in Rome. A Congolese member of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Mboma had two friends murdered in political violence in the 1960s, during her novice years. 'It is painful to see the Vatican carrying on these kinds of things,' she said.

'In certain parts of the church we have an us-versus-them mentality,' said Fr. Míceál O'Neill, an Irish Carmelite Prior in Rome with background as a missionary in Peru. "Us" is religious, and "them" is officers of the Holy See.'

'We have a church that is doctrinally conservative and pastorally liberal,' O'Neill said. 'The Vatican is trying to assert control, "we are in charge". ... Many people are saying the two churches are not coming together.'

'There is a fundamental problem of honesty.'

Farrell, 65, came of age in Iowa in the years of Vatican II. She joined the Franciscans at 18, and in her 30s worked with Mexicans in San Antonio. She moved to Chile in 1980 during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Disappearances were common. 'It was routine for police to torture people in the first 72 hours,' she said. Demonstrations were banned, yet protests were the only way to put a spotlight on abductions when lives were at stake.

She joined 'lightning demonstrations,' unfurling banners of the anti-torture protest movement in congested traffic, spreading leaflets that gave people information on the missing, who were airbrushed out of news reports. At one point she was arrested, with 100 other people, but coverage in a growing clandestine media saw them released the same day.

In 1986, she moved to El Salvador with a handful of sisters to help people reeling from a civil war with U.S. military support of the Salvadoran government. Farrell spent her first weeks sleeping at night in a church sacristy, getting to know people, and eventually moving into a sprawling refugee camp, living with villagers displaced by military bombings. American sisters were a nonviolent presence, giving thin cover to locals.

'We learned never to leave the road because any area off defined footpaths could have land mines,' she

explained. 'I remember walking down one long hill with trembling knees to meet a group of soldiers who entered the camp. Part of our role as internationals in the camp was to keep the military out and I was on my way down to ask them to leave. That time they did, thank God.'

Religious processions common to Latin America took on heightened meaning. For a newly repopulated community to show up en masse, with banners of saints and the Virgin Mary, conveyed 'a political statement,' Farrell said: 'We are not afraid. We have a right to be here. Our faith continues to be a source of strength to us.'

In 2005, Farrell returned to her Dubuque convent. Elected to the LCWR board several years later, she was midway through her one-year term as president when LCWR leaders made their annual trip to Rome in 2012 to update church officials on their work. With Farrell were Dominican Sr. Mary Hughes, past president; president-elect Franciscan Sr. Florence Deacon, and Janet Mock, the executive director and a Sister of St. Joseph of Baden, Pa.

Before their appointment in the Palace of the Holy Office, they held an hour of silent prayer in a Carmelite center.

The sisters had met once with the doctrinal congregation's investigator, Bishop Leonard Blair of Toledo, Ohio, but had not seen his report. The sisters were expecting some conclusion to Blair's inquiry but had no indication about what it would entail. Blair was not in the meeting that day. They were to meet with Levada, who was about to turn 76 and retire to his native California.

After a cordial greeting, Levada read aloud an eight-page, single-spaced assessment that his office was just posting to the Internet. The assessment accused the sisters of 'corporate dissent' on homosexuality and failure to speak out on abortion. The assessment also castigated LCWR for ties to NETWORK, a Washington-based Catholic lobbying group that supported the Affordable Care Act, and the Resource Center for Religious Institutes, a group in Silver Spring, Md., that gives religious orders canon law guidance on property issues.

Leaving the Holy Office, Farrell felt numb. 'It was in the press before we had time to brief our members,' she recalled.

'The reaction of rank-and-file sisters was anger. Now there is a stage of deep sadness and concern for the climate in the church and the misrepresentation of religious life,' she said.

continued

A darkly ironic twist involves the doctrinal congregation's handling of the clerical sexual abuse crisis. The congregation has processed 3,000 cases of priests who have been laicized for abusing youngsters. Several hundred are reportedly pending.

Yet those procedures, which Benedict, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, put in place as prefect in 2001, have a large loophole. The office has not judged bishops and cardinals whose negligence in recycling abusers caused the crisis.

The most glaring example is Cardinal Bernard Law, whose soft-glove treatment of pedophiles ignited the Boston scandal. He resigned as archbishop in 2002 and in 2004 he was named pastor of a great Roman basilica, Santa Maria Maggiore, with a \$10,000 per month salary and a highly influential role in choosing new American bishops.

Law was a driving force behind a preliminary investigation of all American religious orders of women, according to several sources interviewed here, and a May 15 report by Robert Mickens, the respected Vatican correspondent for the British Catholic weekly, *The Tablet*. Law, who has not spoken to the media in a decade, refused an interview request. But Cardinal Franc Rodé, 78, retired prefect of the congregation that oversees religious orders, confirmed Law's role. In a wide-ranging interview at his residence in the Palace of the Holy Office, Rodé said, 'It was the American milieu in the Roman Curia that suggested it.'

The 'apostolic visitation' of all but the cloistered communities of U.S. women religious was the initial phase. The doctrinal congregation's aggressive investigation of the main leadership group soon followed.

'Some people say this is an attempt to divert attention from the abuse crisis, like politicians do,' a missionary sister from a developing country with her order in Rome, said of the doctrinal congregation's investigation. She asked that her name not be used because the order depends on donations from U.S. Catholics channeled through dioceses.

'The Vatican is trying to assert control, to say, "We are in charge,"' she continued. 'This envisions a different church from Vatican II. Many people are saying that the two churches are not coming together.'

LCWR has indeed pushed the envelope by giving forums to theologians who have questioned celibacy and the evolution of religious life. As liberal theologians clamor for change, LCWR has collided with the

doctrinal office over freedom of conscience, a core principle of Vatican II.

Rodé, as prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, ordered the 2009 visitation of American sister communities. He told Vatican Radio of his concern for 'a certain secular mentality ... in these religious families and perhaps also a certain 'feminist' spirit.'

Rodé was also prompted by a 2008 conference he attended on religious life at Stonehill College near Boston. Dominican Sr. Elizabeth McDonough, a canon lawyer, accused LCWR of creating 'global-feminist-operated business corporations' and 'controlling all structures and resources.'

'I'm unaware of any such facts that would back up that claim. It sounds like a sweeping indictment of the direction many orders have taken which the hierarchy found offensive or disloyal, summed up in the "radical feminism" catch phrase,' said Kenneth A. Briggs, author of 'Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of American Nuns'.

'Most orders were scrounging to come up with funds to support retired sisters, often selling off property that belonged to them to do so. It seems clear to me that the aim of the Stonehill meeting was to paint a picture of disobedience as a pretext for a crackdown,' Briggs said.

Rodé in an interview brushed off suggestions that the apostolic visitation was unfair.

Rodé had requested \$1.3 million from religious communities and bishops to cover travel and other expenses for the visitation, which he appointed Mother Mary Clare Millea, superior general of Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to carry out.

The funding request raised eyebrows among many missionary orders.

'Why would you want to pay them to investigate you?' asked one of the missionary sisters in Rome.

The study by Millea has not been made public.

'Vatican II was the most important event that changed the Catholic church,' said Sr. Nzenzili Lucie Mboma. 'Jesus was a carpenter. He didn't build cells, but windows to see every culture.'

She paused. 'Why is this investigation happening?'

Jason Berry is the author of *Render Unto Rome: The Secret Life of Money in the Catholic Church*

Swiss abbot makes fiery appeal for church reform

Abbot Martin Werlen speaks during a news conference of the Swiss bishops' conference in Bern Sept. 15, 2011. (Reuters/Ruben Sprich)

Christa Pongratz-Lippitt

National Catholic Reporter December 20, 2012

A fiery appeal for church reform by an influential Swiss abbot has attracted widespread attention throughout Europe, and has, moreover, been welcomed by the future president of the Swiss bishops' conference.

Fifty-year-old Abbot Martin Werlen, leader of the Abbey of Einsiedeln and himself a member of the Swiss bishops' conference, first voiced his appeal in a sermon on the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Second Vatican Council in October. The sermon was later published in a 39-page brochure that sold out within three days and is now in its third edition.

Titled 'Discovering the Embers Under the Ashes,' it echoes remarks by Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini in his last interview before his death Aug. 31. Referring to the state of the church today, Martini spoke of his sense of powerlessness and how Catholicism's 'embers' were 'hidden under the ashes.'

Werlen said he is alarmed by the present state of the church. 'The situation of the church is dramatic, not only in the German-speaking countries,' he said. 'It is dramatic not only because of the rapidly decreasing number of priests and religious or because of plummeting church attendance. The real problem is not a problem of numbers. What is missing is the fire! We must face the situation and find out what is behind it.'

He said there is leeway for reform and discussed possible reforms at length.

For example, he said, the church could learn from the way the Orthodox Church deals with remarried divorced people, who are not barred from Communion. The Catholic Church has never condemned the Orthodox approach, Werlen emphasized.

Local churches should also have more say in episcopal nominations, he said, recalling that religious orders have always elected their superiors democratically over the centuries.

On priestly celibacy, he quoted the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1990. The code says that clerical celibacy 'is to be greatly esteemed everywhere,' but adds that 'likewise, the hallowed practice of married clerics in the primitive Church and in the tradition of the Eastern Churches throughout the ages is to be held in honor.'

There is also a lot of leeway as far as cardinals are concerned, Werlen pointed out. Women and men from all over the world, both young and old, could be elected to the cardinalate for a period of five years and could meet with the pope every three months in Rome. 'Such meetings could bring a new dynamism into church leadership,' Werlen suggested.

The church could also 'rediscover' synodal processes. 'If bishops' synods are so influentially prepared and accompanied by the Roman Curia that nothing new can emerge, is that a witness of faith?' he asked. As at Vatican II, 'bishops should realize their responsibilities and with the help of theologians, and together with the pope, face changes in full faith – and let paper remain paper!'

Werlen wrote that he deplores the lack of courage, vision and creativity in today's church, which he says is crawling along 'with the hand brake on.'

'The problems are known. Pope Benedict on occasion refers to them. But nothing concrete is done to solve them,' Werlen said.

Sweeping problems under the table or forbidding discussion of certain issues undermines the church's credibility, he warned.

'Not taking a situation or a person seriously is an act of disobedience. When those in authority in the church do not fulfil their duty and are therefore disobedient, initiatives are started as emergency measures ... which can lead to schisms or to people leaving the church. The disobedience deplored by church officials is often the consequence of those very church officials' own

disobedience. I can understand why so many initiatives were started in recent years.'

But polarization between conservatives and progressives in the church, which he said has now reached a 'frightening' level, has a deadening effect, he cautioned.

'I myself, together with the Einsiedeln community, would like to take another path, namely that of seeking the embers in the ashes,' he said. He pointed out that Einsiedeln is in dialogue with both the Lefebvrist Society of St. Pius X and the progressive Catholic theologian Fr. Hans Küng.

Within a week after the brochure was first published, Werlen received more than a 1,000 emails and 100 letters, many from prominent Catholics. He said he was 'quite overwhelmed' by this and added, 'The embers are there. One can feel people of different generations heaving a deep sigh of relief.'

After reading the brochure, Bishop Markus Büchel of Sankt Gallen, newly elected president of the Swiss bishops' conference, released the following statement:

Abbot Werlen has taken up urgent questions the faithful are asking; he has outlined the problems very clearly and has put forward possible solutions. This is an impetus for very necessary discussions in the church that are also a great concern of mine. That is why I am most thankful to him.

Büchel has been elected to succeed Bishop Norbert Brunner of Sion as conference president for three years starting January 1.

Werlen became abbot of Einsiedeln in 2001. The abbey is a famous pilgrimage shrine in the oldest part of Switzerland, its heartland. Between 150,000 and 200,000 pilgrims annually visit the shrine, which at times rivalled Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

Christa Pongratz-Lippitt is an Austrian correspondent for the London-based weekly Catholic magazine *The Tablet*.

Book Review

By: Gideon Goosen

Geza Vermes: *Jesus the Charismatic Jew: Points to Ponder*

Pope John XXIII got the idea of Church reform from reading Yves Congar's book, *True and False Reform in the Church*. He asked: 'Was reform possible?' The Fathers of Vatican II went into labour and delivered a fine set of healthy documents which showed that some reform was possible, at least in theory. However, fifty years on, one cannot say that the mother and child are doing well. The child has stunted growth and the mother has all kinds of health problems, many of a sexual nature.

The Catholic Church is in a crisis worse than the Reformation of five hundred years ago. Many members of the hierarchy still do not see the heinousness of sexual abuse by the clergy and have been less than transparent about the whole affair. Some bishops seem to be working against the reforms of Vatican II. Long-

awaited reforms of the Curia are not forthcoming. Many churchgoers are leaving in disgust. Some say they are still Christian but not proud of being Catholic. In this context, the new translation of the Mass prayers emphasizes 'the *holy* Church' when we should speak about the *sinful* Church. (In so far as the Church is from God, it is holy; in so far it is from human beings, it is sinful. Now is hardly the time to be boasting about being 'holy'. That the hierarchy could have changed the wording to 'holy' at this time indicates the heart of the problem of clericalism.)

Geza Vermes is a scholar with an unusual background. Born into a Jewish family, he and his parents became Catholics when he was seven years old. Later he studied theology at Louvain and was ordained a Catholic priest. Later still he switched back to Judaism and became a noted scholar of Judaism at Oxford. He describes in some detail, in *Christian Beginnings from Nazareth to Nicea AD 30-325*, how the Jesus movement changed over the first three hundred years. From being a theo-centric movement led by a charismatic Jew, it became a Christo-centric institutional religion led by a bureaucratic hierarchy. There is now the call for a reach back to the basics of the Jesus movement (otherwise known as the 'Gospels').

I do not agree with his criticism of the development of Trinitarian theology which seems to ignore ongoing revelation within the Church. But leaving all that aside (and this is a huge consideration regarding the book), he makes some valid points for today's reformers.

Power and Control:

At the time of Jesus the caste of Levitical priesthood in Judaism controlled the ceremonies, temple worship and enforced the Law of Moses (Judaism being primarily a religion of deeds not dogmas.). But a group of lay intellectuals challenged the Levitical priests. These were the Pharisees, a group of lay lawyers. We can see strong parallels today in the Catholic Church where the priesthood has tried to maintain strong control over ceremonies, etc, including the language of the Mass. The new translation is a good example of a power-play. Today, lay people are more theologically informed and are challenging the old ways of control.

The idea of Church:

Nowhere in the synoptic gospels do we find mention of 'Church'. The verses about building a church upon a rock are seen as a later interpolation. Jesus promoted the Kingdom of God, not a Church. The theology of church has a good solid basis. But the criticism is that too much weight has been given to the institutional aspects of church and not enough to the Kingdom of God. The spirit of Jesus of Nazareth has been lost in the corridors of institutional bureaucracy. Those caught in the power plays in the Vatican can endorse this.

Act Justly:

Justice should be a cornerstone of all religion. Vermes reminds us that the Roman Emperor Trajan, when speaking about religious offenders, insisted that officials not act on anonymous accusations (p.158). Charges without identified accusers 'are terrible examples and not all in keeping with our age'. That was nearly two thousand years ago. This is a higher standard than that applied to modern 'heretics' where the Holy Office/CDF have often withheld the names of accusers.

Circumcision:

Vermes cites the case of Justin Martyr (p.184). The topic is 'Circumcision and why it should not be seen as a means of justification'. Justin Martyr says circumcision is a ritual for males only and thus it is anti-sex equality! So today one could argue that ordaining only those with male genitalia is against sex equality.

This scholarly yet readable book of Vermes could help the process of reform and raises many valid points. His overview of all the early Church writings is informative and throws light on where we are today.

Geza Vermes: *Christian Beginnings from Nazareth to Nicea AD 30-325*. London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2012.)

Gideon Goosen is a Sydney theologian.

His latest book is *Hyphenated Christians*, Peter Lang, 2011

Fish on Friday!

I was astonished to read Cristina Odone's comment *Fish on Friday is back!* Cristina Odone is a distinguished journalist and academic which makes it all the more surprising that she would consider observance of a dietary recommendation to be a hallmark of Catholic faith. She describes as 'brilliant' the UK bishops' re-introduction of fish on Fridays.

Worse still, she apparently favours it as a means of distinguishing between Catholics and what she disparagingly terms 'the rest'. I thought we had abandoned the concept of exclusiveness, of no salvation outside the Catholic Church, and were working towards a more ecumenical approach.

I would sincerely hope that there are more significant ways for Catholics to show pride in their faith than observance of what is no more than a dietary custom, not a Scriptural injunction or an article of faith. In fact St Paul in Colossians 2:20 says *Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch. All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings.* (New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition). Tertullian, writing in 200 AD famously said of the early church that its adherents were recognised by virtue of their charity: *See how they love one another.* In the twenty-first century do we really want to be identified as Catholics primarily for eating fish on Fridays?

Phoebe Basson

Vauchuse NSW

I asked an English friend, Bridget, to comment on the new ruling and she replied:

Regarding the eating of 'fish on Friday' rule in the church, it seems to have returned to the 'no meat' scenario – nothing to do with having to eat fish – just refraining from meat; there's plenty of nourishment in cheese, eggs and veg! I don't know how seriously the majority of church-going Catholics take this; many with a pinch of salt, I suspect! The pope wants his flock to walk meekly to heel and not to range ahead smelling out their own pasture!

Editor

'For They Were Afraid'

(Mark 16:8)

Latent Sexism in Modern Biblical Translations?

Alan Clague

This is the last sentence in the short version of Mark's Gospel, and most biblical scholars believe it was the original Gospel ending. Why would the evangelist finish on such a negative note? In the previous verse the young man at the tomb promises the three 'afraid' women the return of the living Jesus to the disciples and Peter in Galilee – a statement of Jesus' triumph over death. To evaluate this apparent lapse of good dramatic construction, we need first to look at the women involved: Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome. These were the courageous women who stayed with Jesus when Peter and the apostles fled, and were Mark's witnesses to the truth of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Why finish the story with their loss of courage?

A possible explanation lies with the translation from the original Greek. The word used in the text is derived from *phobos* (fear), and its simplest meaning is to be afraid. As is frequently the case in Greek, a word can have a variable translation into English depending on the context. It is often translated as 'awestruck' or a similar word when referring to the response of observers to an act of supernatural power. Why do I suggest that sexism may be involved in the usual translations? Words derived from *phobos* occur thirteen times in Mark's gospel. In eight occasions it is referring to the presence of fear, but on five occasions it is a response of awe to a mighty act.

These five are the reaction of the disciples to Jesus calming the wind and sea (Mark 4:41), their reaction to Jesus curing the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:15), the reaction of the woman cured of menorrhagia (Mark 5:33), the reaction of Peter, James and John to Jesus' transfiguration (Mark 9:6), and the reaction of the women at the tomb. English translations vary, but there

is a tendency to separate some of these out by translating the word as 'awestruck' not 'afraid' or 'terrified'. A modern English translation, the New Revised Standard Version, translates one of the three responses of the male disciples as 'filled with great awe' (Mark 4:41). However, the cured woman is 'in fear' and the three women were 'afraid'. A 2002 interpretation, Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Mark, translates the men's responses as 'a deep sense of awe' (Mark 4:41) and 'awestruck' (Mark 5:15 and 9:6). In contrast, the woman with menorrhagia has 'fear', although in the commentary on the text it acknowledges that she 'approached Jesus with a religious awe that arises from contact with a divine power'. The three women at the empty tomb showed 'bewilderment' (*ekstasis* – usually translated as 'astonishment' or 'amazement') and were 'afraid', but again in the commentary it states: 'It is not clear whether Mark intended the women's reaction to be sheer terror or holy awe'.

I suggest that it makes better sense to treat all five responses to these awe-inspiring events in a common way, and to differentiate them from simple fear. In particular, this would change the ending of Mark's gospel from an anticlimactic 'For they were afraid' to a triumphant 'For they were awestruck' or even, to use the English word derived from *ekstasis*, 'For they were ecstatic'.

It would be improper and incorrect of me to ascribe any overt sexism to the differential treatment of men and women in English translations of a Greek text, but it is a fair question to ask whether two thousand years of consistent denigration of women by Catholic commentators has not left a residue of reluctance to attribute loftier meanings to the actions of these heroic women.

Alan Clague is a retired Chemical Pathologist.
He holds a Master's degree in Theology. He is
a member of the ARC Secretariat.

Thoughts on Leadership

Below are extracts from the leader in the French's Forest Parish Bulletin for the weekend of 9/10 February 2013, printed just before the announcement from Rome of the Pope's resignation. One can but wonder if the author, Fr Richard Leonard SJ, is not a modern-day prophet!

It is time to elect a world leader, and yours is the deciding vote. Here are the facts about the three leading candidates:

Candidate A associates with crooked politicians, consults with astrologers, has had two mistresses, is severely disabled, chain smokes and drinks 8 to 10 martinis a day.

Candidate B was kicked out of office twice, slept until noon, used opium at university, is an undiagnosed manic-depressive and drinks a bottle of whiskey every day.

Candidate C is a decorated war hero, vegetarian, doesn't smoke or drink, except for an occasional beer and has never had an extra-marital affair. Who would you choose?

Candidate A is Franklin D. Roosevelt

Candidate B is Winston Churchill

Candidate C is Adolph Hitler

Sometimes the best candidate on paper is the worst leader in reality. Thank goodness Jesus did not hire a management consultancy to help him recruit his earliest disciples. On paper Peter, James and John would not have got past expressing interest in the job. Jesus recognised, however, that they had the three things necessary for Christian leadership: faith, hope and love.

.....

May we pray in this Eucharist for the humility in the Church to accept that God can turn our judgments, laws, customs, protocols and management strategies upside down and sometimes bring forward, from the most unexpected quarters, leaders who show us new dimensions to God's power shining through our human weakness.

© *Richard Leonard SJ*

A Lesson from the Canadian Geese on Leadership

As each bird flaps its wings, by flying in a V-formation, the whole flock adds 71% flying range than if each bird flew alone.



LESSON: people who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are travelling on the thrust of one another.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the 'Lifting Power' of the bird immediately in front.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as a goose, we will step into formation with those who are headed where we want to go.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

LESSON: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks, and sharing leadership, interdependent with each other.

The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

LESSON: We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging ... not something less helpful.

When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of the formation and follow to help and protect. They stay until the goose is either able to fly again or dies.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as the geese, we'll stand by each other like that.

Authors: Farid A. Muna, (Meirc Training & Consulting, Dana Point, California, USA), Ned Mansour, (Meirc Training & Consulting, Dana Point, California, USA)

Have your say!

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Your contributions, letters, articles or comments are most welcome

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