



arcvoice

A Report from Australian Reforming Catholics Inc.
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Editorial

Pope Francis has just scolded the European Union for being ‘old and out of touch’ and spoke of the need to reinvigorate Europe, describing the continent as a ‘grandmother, no longer fertile and vibrant’ and saying it risked ‘slowly losing its own soul’ ... ‘The great ideas which once inspired Europe seem to have lost their attraction, only to be replaced by the bureaucratic technicalities of its institutions.’

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-30180667>

The Church, of course, suffers from the same problems and, however much Pope Francis wants to bring the Catholic Church into the 21st century, he is still hamstrung by a hard core in the Curia who cling desperately to the past. Cardinal George Pell has even declared that the task for Catholics ‘over the next 12 months is to explain the necessity of conversion and the nature of the Mass’, adding that there will be ‘no doctrinal backflips’ at next year’s Synod! (see cartoon P.13)

It is ironic to expect an all-male, celibate Synod to make decisions on ‘family life’ of which they have very little first-hand experience. The exclusion of women from their lives means that they have not been exposed to the tidal wave of feminist ideas and values which, since the 1960s, has changed so much of western society for the better. A good cohort of wives and daughters would have knocked some sense into these intractables!

ARC Member, Harding Burns, sums up his frustration in these words:

The Bishops in Rome have resolutely turned their backs on the Laity to applaud the beatification of the Papal ‘Hamlet’, Paul VI. At one stroke, they have affirmed *Humanae Vitae* and dashed the hopes and expectations of the considerable minority in the Church who experience failed marriages and divorce. So the Church gradually slides into decline as the faithful drift off to go their own way. Cardinal Pell (SMH 21 Oct) says ‘We are not falling in a heap’. But it is hard to see how his fellow Australian Bishops can give a credible account to the Laity when they return to their dioceses after their celebrations.

So the image of a large gathering of men in long frocks and silly hats becomes synonymous with diehard conservatism. It is the reason why so many once faithful church-goers now describe themselves as ‘lapsed’ (some even ‘collapsed!’) Catholics – and

why so many young people (despite their Catholic schooling) drop out.

ARC is most indebted to John Buggy who has put much time and energy into networking with other reform groups from a number of countries, and for shaping the format and writing the first paper in the series of documents presented to the Synod through Catholic Church Reform International. Thanks to his efforts too, contacts with media outlets have been established and we can be sure that the hopes of families are kept well to the fore in preparation for the Bishops’ Synod in October 2015. Dare we hope that, after 14 years, Australian Reforming Catholics are finally being seen as a force to be reckoned with!

Margaret Knowlden
Editor

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Synod on the Family

– has the egg slightly cracked?

The Vatican rather than Rome itself evokes in me a host of mixed emotions. On the one hand, seated in St. Peter's Square at the candle-filled prayer gathering for the success of the Extraordinary Synod on the Family, I felt solidarity with Catholics from many countries celebrating our Church that we love. On the other hand, I sit in front of the seemingly impenetrable fortress of Vatican City, an institution not just resistant to change, but so often at odds with the wisdom and relevance of the thinking world.

I went to Rome in the days before the Synod to unite with the people from several countries with whom I have been working by phone and e-mail over the past year, seeking to influence this Synod because Pope Francis wanted everyone to be involved. I particularly wanted to link ARC personally into what is now a network of groups from many countries crying out for reform in our Church. Over several days prior to the Synod opening on 5th October we, the representatives of these groups, got to know one another better, formed personal bonds of greater trust, discussed what our organisations want from the Synod and pledged to continue urging for the reform that Pope Francis indicates that he wants. We, as ARC, will continue to do this through the strategy and activities of Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI) and I will assist in developing this as a member of its Strategic Committee. You can follow what is happening by going to the website:

www.catholicchurchreform.com

We presented the papers to the Secretary General of the Synod on the vital topics that some of you discussed in August, along with the feedback that you and many others provided. We took a lot of trouble to engage the Press in order to make our presence known as much as possible and managed to speak with some bishops who said that they saw the value in what we were saying. We carried banners in St. Peter's Square on the day of the opening, expressing that there should be more families involved in the bishops' deliberations. Our effect at this stage is unknown, but more people know that we are a responsible network seeking change and that we will continue to be so.

Pope Francis, we believe, is serious in stating that he wants new ideas and insights into the path ahead for the Church and especially on the issues that relate to the family. He told the bishops at the Synod that he wanted them to speak openly about what they think and not simply tell him what they think he wants to hear. Not many have accepted that invitation and many more have said little because they oppose what he is trying to do. He is meeting with strong resistance because he has openly criticised the 'clericalism' that dominates the culture and administration of the institutional Church. Pope Francis showed his intention to overcome some of the secretiveness of that culture when he insisted that the votes be shown at the end of the *'Relatio Synodi'*, the report prepared at the close of the Synod.

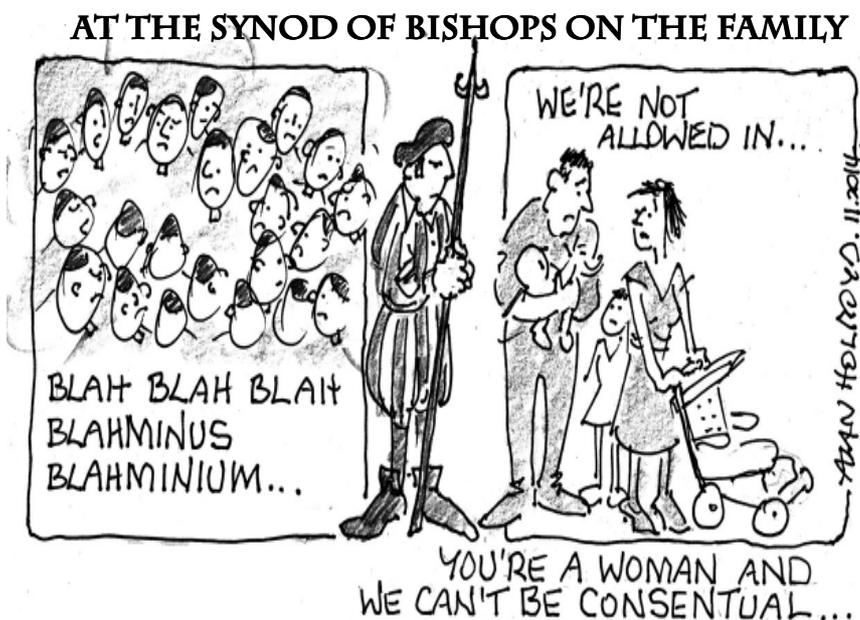
Statements about two large issues in that report indicate that we can expect some fierce debate over the coming year. The first is the issue of allowing those who are divorced and re-married to receive the Eucharist again. Cardinal Kasper addressed the bishops prior to the Synod at the invitation of Pope Francis. Both men are aware of the anomaly of having so many people barred from the sacraments following domestic upheaval arising from such a variety of circumstances. They are seeking a pastoral solution that enables the Church to recognise that not every situation can have a perfect resolution. This should be able to be achieved without denying the indissolubility of marriage.

The second significant issue is the way in which the Church considers homosexuality. In an attempt to overcome the misguided discrimination that the official Church has traditionally maintained, the first report from the Synod stated that homosexual people had 'gifts' and recognised the value in committed people supporting each other. These sentiments were watered down in the *Relatio* where the reference to 'persons with homosexual tendencies' seemingly attempted to ignore the reality of homosexuality, while agreeing that there should be no unjust discrimination. But the *genie* is now out of the bottle with regard to at least these two issues and more considered pastoral solutions in these matters should lead to changes in others. The time it will take to reach those solutions is still a matter for concern.

We now have one year to try to exert further influence on the Ordinary Synod which will be held in October 2015 when decisions will be made on the matters discussed last October. No doubt, directives will be given to bishops to engage in some sort of dialogue or discussion at the diocesan and parish level. But we cannot wait for that to happen. Just as the questionnaire that was sent out by the Vatican prior to the Synod had limited effective distribution and missed some of the important matters, we may also be kept in the dark about the results of anything reported back to Rome, just as we were previously. Through CCRI we will be developing a new questionnaire based on the statements of the *Relatio Synodi*. It will be on the CCRI website and with accompanying promotion it should draw responses from around the world. We will use information from this to enhance carefully prepared papers with the support of theologians that we can submit to the Synod through the contacts we have now developed in Rome. Having also developed some good relationships with key journalists, we will attempt to ensure that the wider community in various countries knows about our efforts by releasing Press statements about what we are doing and writing. Our hope is that, even if Pope Francis is prevented from actually reading what we send into the Vatican, he should get to know about our efforts through what he hears and sees through the media.

It will be an interesting and busy year but we should take every opportunity to respond to the Pope's wish to hear from all Catholics and in some ways quite directly. We are convinced that he is trying to open up a path to newer ways of making the Church's teaching relevant and understood. I was so pleased that, through your support, I was able to go to Rome and assist in linking ARC more firmly into an international effort aimed at developing a united voice for all those seeking genuine reform in our Church.

John Buggy



ARC Secretariat news

JIM TAVERNE was a founding member of Australian Reforming Catholics and from the beginning has played an extremely active part in its management, particularly as effectively the 'membership secretary' and the 'treasurer – although we don't use such titles in ARC. It was Jim who for so many years made new members welcome with a phone call or a note. He maintained meticulous records. Failing health is now forcing Jim to be less active on the administrative side, but with the strong support of his wonderful wife, Margot, Jim will continue to be passionate about reforming the Catholic Church. We look forward to having Jim and Margot as ardent members of ARC for many years to come.

AMANDA JORDAN has been a more recent addition to the team. In her time, she has assisted with the organisation of ARC meetings, and made many wise contributions to our discussions. We thank her for her joyful presence and support. The needs of sick members of her family have forced her to resign.

An Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Renewal

'For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them' (Matthew 18:20)

Most Rev Denis J Hart DD
President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
GPO Box 368
CANBERRA, ACT, 2601

Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (2014)

Dear Archbishop Hart,

On behalf of the Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Renewal (ACCCR), I write regarding the outcomes of the recent Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops called by Pope Francis to reflect on the situation of the family and, more particularly, the reflections he has requested of the local Churches in the year leading up to the Ordinary General Assembly in October 2015.

It is ACCCR's understanding that the reflections put forward and voted on by the Extraordinary Assembly and contained in the *Relatio post disceptionem*, are intended to raise questions and indicate perspectives that need to be discussed and clarified by the reflections of the local Churches.

ACCCR was greatly encouraged by the decision of Pope Francis to call the Synod to discuss the Pastoral Challenges of the Family and for his emphasis on women's participation in decision-making within the context of evangelization, and even more encouraged by the manner in which the Extraordinary Assembly conducted its business: with attentiveness to the married couples who addressed it, collegiality, transparency and mutual respect.

It is clear that Pope Francis wishes all reflections on the family to take place using a synodal approach. He wants all the faithful – bishops, clergy, religious and lay women and men – to 'walk the road together', and as they walk, to talk. For some this walking and talking together may be a new experience, but if there is to be boldness and creativity such an approach is necessary. As Pope Francis has pointed out, 'a proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory' (EG, 33).

ACCCR is passionate for the welfare and support of families and for women's equality in the Church and in contemporary Australian society. It sees the family as a unique incubator of faith and love and it wants the educative capacity of each family for the spiritual, cultural and intellectual development of its members to be strengthened and enhanced. ACCCR is well aware that most families in Australia face great and diverse challenges, but at the same time their lived experience of the faith is a rich resource and a genuine expression of the *sensus*

fidei/ sensus fidelium. The Catholic families of Australia, in all their diversity, have a unique capacity to contribute to the reflections which our local Church can make to the Ordinary Assembly in 2015.

As the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference prepares for its November 2014 Plenary Meeting, ACCCR assumes you will be giving consideration to how, as a College of Bishops, you might best consult with the faithful of each diocese and the entire faithful in Australia on the matters set out in the *Relatio*.

The period between now and the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod in October 2015 is a rare opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue with all the faithful, especially families of every kind at the grass-roots level, on issues and challenges which are extremely important to them and keenly felt. Early planning for an inclusive dialogue with the faithful in every parish and every diocese will be essential.

ACCCR is ready and willing to offer assistance in planning such consultations. If it would be helpful for our representatives to address the forthcoming Conference meeting we would be pleased to do so. Some of our members already have experience in planning and conducting discussion *fora* on some of the issues before the Synod, and would be pleased to share that knowledge. Please contact us if we can be of any assistance at ACCCR, PO Box 4053, Manuka. ACT. 2603, or choices@netspeed.com.au.

Yours in Christ,

Marilyn Hatton

For the Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Renewal (ACCCR) Co-ordinating group.

The Coalition, established December 2011 currently includes Catholics for Ministry (CfM), Women and the Australian Church (WATAC), Catholics for Renewal (CathfR), Inclusive Catholics (IC), Australian Reforming Catholics (ARC) The Friendship Group (WA), Aggiornamento and the Cyber Christian Community. Each of the groups has its own focus and history and all are united in the call for renewal in the Church.

cc:

All Bishop members of the ACBC
Fr Brian Lucas, General Secretary, ACBC
Executive of Catholic Religious Australia
Executive, National Council of Priests
Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Papal Nuncio

Australian couple explains the joy of sex to Pope Francis

Mavis and Ron Pirola have called for the Catholic Church to welcome homosexual couples and for married couples to recognise the importance of sex.

A devout Australian couple married for 55 years have explained the joys of sex to Pope Francis and senior members of the Catholic Church while calling for the inclusion of homosexual couples within the faith. Ron and Mavis Pirola, former members of the Pontifical Council for the Family and directors of the Australian Catholic Marriage and Family Council, were one of six couples chosen to address 200 bishops from around the world at the Vatican's Synod on the Family on Tuesday.

The Sydney couple, who have four children, said married couples need to view sex as an essential foundation for their relationship and spirituality as sexual attraction brought them together and has sustained their marriage for more than half a century.

'That attraction that we first felt and the continued bonding force between us were basically sexual. The little things we did for each other, the telephone calls and love notes, the way we planned our day around each other and the things we shared were outward expressions of our longing to be intimate with each other,' they told the crowd, which included Archbishop of Melbourne Denis Hart, the only Australian prelate in attendance.

The Pirolas, who also operate *Smart Loving*, a relationships website for Catholics, said the inclusion of homosexuals into the church would be a 'model of evangelisation' for parishes around the world.

'Friends of ours were planning their Christmas family gathering when their gay son said he wanted to bring his partner home too. They fully believed in the church's teachings and they knew their grandchildren would see them welcome the son and his partner into the family. Their response could be summed up in four words, "He is our son".'

They also called for 'church documents' to be updated for modern-day Catholics and for future generations of followers. 'Occasionally we looked at church documents, but they seemed to be from another planet with difficult language and not terribly relevant

to our own experiences', they said. 'We need new ways and relatable language to touch people's hearts.'

The Pirolas' presentation left members of the audience, which consisted predominantly of celibate men, speechless. 'That's not what we bishops talk about mostly, quite honestly,' British Cardinal Vincent Nichols told the Associated Press. 'But to hear that as the opening contribution did, I think, open an area ... and it was a recognition that that is central to the wellbeing of marriage often.'

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, the local organisation that selected the Pirolas to participate in the synod, was pleased with the couple's address. 'Dr and Mrs Pirola were selected by the bishops because of their extensive experience in marriage and family issues. We are grateful for their contribution to the synod,' a spokeswoman said.

Former NSW premier and practising Catholic, Kristina Keneally, said she was grateful the groundbreaking address was made to the most senior levels of the Catholic Church at a meeting of some of the world's most senior clerics who are focussed on change.

'The Australian sense of honesty and frankness is a welcome gift to the Catholic Church', she said. 'Ron and Mavis Pirola have said what many Australian Catholics have been saying for years regarding divorced people, single parents and homosexuals who also want to have a relationship with God.'

'The response from some of the bishops was both amusing and depressing. Amusing because it's a little embarrassing as the issues are a little outside their comfort zone, but it's also depressing because they have been obsessed with ideas of sex and relationships for decades without having any real-life experience.'

The synod – a two-week meeting of bishops from around the world – was an initiative of Pope Francis for the church to workshop how traditional teachings on a range of family issues such as marriage, divorce and homosexuality can be made more relevant to today's Catholics. The pontiff is expected to issue a final document with recommendations offered by the synod next year.

Four of the 16 experts selected to attend the conference are Australian lay people. The director of the Archdiocese of Sydney's Life, Marriage and Family Centre, Chris Meney, and Billings' Ovulation Method specialist, Joan Clements, have also joined the Pirolas in Rome.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life/australian-couple-explains-the-joy-of-sex-to-pope-francis-20141008-113553.html#ixzz3FczyjCCs>

A Pilgrim People

Gabe Lomas

One of the images of ‘church’ that I find attractive and easy to manage is that of our being a pilgrim people. I image a crowd of people, spread out both crossways and lengthways, individuals going at various speeds and moving in a variety of ways, some well ahead, others dragging and holding back, some exploring different things along the route, maybe going off at a tangent here and there, maybe influencing a block of people to shift course just a little now and then.

That’s the sort of church I belong to – one that’s characterised by diversity, energy and tolerance when it comes to seeking Truth, and by warmth, acceptance, generosity and love when it comes to travelling together. That’s the church I’m focussed on: a pilgrim people seeking Truth together as we stumble and shuffle along.

If our concept of church is a top-down model – various authority figures presiding over and directing the rest of us – then there are indeed causes for concern about the present situation: emptying pews, grumbling and carping, wanton use of power, the well-known community breaking up and dispersing. But if, instead, our concept is that of a pilgrim people, then things aren’t quite so gloomy. We ARE Christ, sharing in his mission and all that this involves – in biblical terms: ‘priesthood’, ‘prophecy’ and ‘kingship’.

Of course, these time-honoured jingo words need to be revisited, and the cobwebs brushed away from what they stand for. In particular, the notion of ‘kingship’ needs to have its connotations of autocracy and inertia removed. While ‘leadership’ isn’t an entirely satisfactory substitute for it, at least it moves away from the static, set-in-stone, notion that ‘kingship’ and ‘kingdom’ conjure up. We need to see this leadership as an invitation to serve and be concerned about others. It’s a leadership in which we all share, not just the servants (ministers) of the community. We’re all called – anointed – to exercise this leadership of service to others, to be part of its realisation.

We’re made priests by this anointing – servants of the Divine and servants of our fellow human beings,

sharing with Christ the responsibility of living out our lives for others – a sacrifice, or offering. Such an offering requires constant and total love that is unstinting and unconditional: Christ-like. We are called to be pilgrims with and on behalf of others, repairing as best we can any damage caused by ourselves and by others as we journey along together. Such reparation is salvific, restoring the image of Christ in the community, maintaining his presence among us. This is most clearly realised in our eucharistic gatherings, when we bring ourselves and all we are into communion with others, and we become truly the body and blood of Christ as we break the bread and share the cup together.

Because our pilgrim church is spread out, and of necessity somewhat disparate, thought patterns, awareness, insights and so forth are all at different stages of evolving growth. The important thing is that they should be alive and on the move, not moribund and static. We’re part not of an immobile kingdom, but of an active, living leadership. If others who are in this pilgrim church disagree with us, then that’s okay: the group as a whole will slowly evolve and move forward, anyway. We know that this has been happening for a while now, and is continuing to happen.

There is something quite wonderful and inspiring about so many of our sister and brother pilgrims travelling along and cheerfully interacting with those around them. So many of us seem aware that ‘real’ or ‘experiential’ knowledge is more important than knowledge that is ‘notional’ or ‘intellectual’ – something John Henry Newman said about one hundred years ago. It’s the actual experience of the Divine, especially in other pilgrims, that inspires us and energises us, and keeps us seeking.

Let me not forget that in choosing you
I have chosen to walk in mystery,
to live neither in heaven nor on earth,
but in you,
that mysterious place that is my home.

Rumi

Gabe Lomas is a married priest who holds degrees in Philosophy, Theology and Linguistics. He ministered in the UK and in PNG for about 20 years, and is now retired.

"A dream of a Catholic Spring"

Fr Donald Cozzens

The following is an extract from the transcript of a talk by Father Donald Cozzens at SS. Simon & Jude in Westland, MI on September 17, 2014. He spoke about his new book, *Notes from the Underground*, and his dream of a "Catholic Spring" and what is shaking the foundations of the Church.

I'm setting the bar rather low, because of the complexity and the countless unknowns that go into any possible response to the likelihood of a *Catholic spring*. But I will nonetheless take a stab at responding to the question of a possible *Catholic spring* now that Francis is Bishop of Rome and our pope. To say that the Church is in trouble – and here I am speaking primarily of the institutional or hierarchical Church – might be understood as a gross understatement. It's in trouble! It's in big trouble! Some say it is in crisis, especially in Europe, where commentators speak of the Church as dying, if not dead, for all practical purposes. And the same commentators and public intellectuals don't hesitate to describe Europe today as post-Christian. Here in the U.S., we feel the tremors of the shaking of the Church's foundations, if the Church hopefully is not dying. I'm just going to mention some of the factors shaking the foundations of the Church:

- the horrible sexual abuse scandals of the Church embedded by the authorities more concerned about avoiding scandal and protecting the Church's assets than the welfare of young Catholics;
- the staggering financial scandals;
- arrogant bishops, calling for the investigation of Catholic sisters, while holding themselves above accountability for their own malfeasance;
- the absence of women in positions of Church leadership;
- dramatic drop in Catholic worship;
- more and more lifelong Catholics are not turning to the Church to marry these days; and they're not turning to the Church to bury their family members;
- our half-full seminaries.

The litany of lament could go on; but I think it is good to remember the Church has always been in trouble in some fashion or another, from its beginning 2000 years

ago, and in some fashion or another, it always will be in trouble. But we could also point out that the Church has been in trouble, especially since it became the establishment religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century. At that time, Church leaders adapted the structures of Roman governance, and bishops donned the vestments that copied the dress of Roman Senators. Popes established papal courts, and thought and behaved like monarchs, and even emperors. As many of you know, in the 5th century, after taking on the invading Huns, Pope Leo the Great took on the titles of *Pope* and *Supreme Pontiff*. And later on, in the 11th century, Pope Gregory the Great assumed supreme secular power, as well as religious power. The Church has been in big trouble ever since. And yet, the troubles we are facing today aren't the worst troubles the Church has encountered. We need but think of the Crusades, the Inquisition, the staggering corruption of the Renaissance papacies, and other examples of a Church in need of reform and renewal.

Here's why Pope Francis gives me hope. It is not only his disarming simplicity and humility, his down-to-earth pastoral instincts, his honesty and his integrity. These characteristics are important. In fact, it's hard to exaggerate their importance. They have caught the attention of a rather cynical media as well as the attention of countless Catholics. If the medium is the message, Francis' humility and simplicity have prompted us to *want* to listen to him. He has captured *our* attention. I'd like to highlight here what I think are a few of the most telling and promising aspects of Francis' vision for a reformed and renewed Church:

First: Pope Francis is willing to turn the light of the Gospel on the Church itself.

Not an easy thing to do. The Lutheran theologian Paul Tillich pointed out how difficult it is for the Church to turn the light of the Gospel on itself: 'If the Church does not subject itself to the judgment, which is pronounced *by* the Church, it becomes idolatrous to itself. Such idolatry is its permanent temptation. A Church which tries to exclude itself from such a judgment loses its right to judge the world, and is rightly judged by the world.' Then Tillich added these painful words: 'This is the tragedy of the Roman Catholic Church.' We take the light of the Gospel, and we judge the world by it; but we seem slow to turn that same light on ourselves, and judge ourselves by it; *and so the world is judging us*. Francis understands that the world is indeed judging the Church; and the world's verdict is cutting to the heart of the Church's integrity. So in his extraordinary *Apostolic Exhortation: The Joy of the Gospel*,

Francis writes, ‘Since I am called to put into practice what I ask others, I too must think about a conversation of the papacy.’ So we have Francis turning the light of the Gospel on the papacy itself. Unheard of! Can we imagine a day when Church authorities might say about a given teaching, ‘We were wrong about that’. I think Pope Francis can.

Second: Francis would like us to teach the truths of our religion with greater humility.

I believe he is uncomfortable with ‘absolute dogmatic certainties’. Here Pope Francis suggests he is familiar with the South African theologian, Fr. Albert Nolan, a Dominican, who wrote in his book, *Jesus Today*, these striking words:

‘Upsetting for some people is the undermining of their long held certainties. The challenge they face may not be that of changing one idea for another; but rather, that of replacing certainties with uncertainty. Obsession with absolute certainty is yet another form of slavery. It is a way of finding security without having to put all our trust in God.’

Pope Francis gets this. While upholding Church teachings, he is putting pastoral compassion and healing mercy ahead of dogmatic teachings. Here Francis is in step with Pope Benedict XVI, who said that Christianity is not a law to be obeyed, but a presence to be embraced, a presence to be seized. That’s what Christianity is about. It’s a relationship with this presence, this mysterious presence that we call God.

Third: Pope Francis’ prophetic imagination which breaks into our own sleepy imagination like a splash of cold water hitting us in the face.

Francis pays his own hotel charges after being elected. He lives in a hotel rather than in a palace. He cold calls ordinary people. He creates a new form of communicating with his people and non-believers, what we might call the apostolic interview. He kisses the deformed, and washes the feet of young women. He leads by example, and is not slow to correct bishops, who believe they have a right to live like royalty. Francis’ prophetic imagination is awakening the imagination of Catholics everywhere. Is it possible we are witnessing the first blooming buds of a *Catholic spring*? Well, let’s put our imagination on the shelf for a minute. Here’s why I am cautious about Francis inaugurating a *Catholic spring*. There are formidable obstacles holding us back from a *Catholic spring* and pushing us in the direction of the cold and dark days of a metaphorical Catholic winter. I’ll mention three of these formidable obstacles:

- First of all the very structure of the Church. The Church’s structure, originally modelled after ancient Rome’s genius for political control, later modelled to compete with the great national monarchies of the West, has been in place for centuries.
- And then, here is another reason. I’m not really sure we’re headed to a *Catholic spring*, and that’s what I am going to call a theology of security. Modernity and our secular society have made the hierarchical Church as nervous as it was at the time of the Protestant Reformation. In this condition of anxiety and fear, religious faith has been reduced to religious belief. This is an important distinction between faith and belief. Our Church authorities want to be crystal clear about what must be believed, and who is in, and who is out, in terms of Church membership. In a theology of security, assent to dogmas and doctrines, along with moral rectitude, especially in sexual matters, are the distinguishing marks of a real Catholic. Often here we find orthodoxy masquerading as faith.
- The third reason for being wary of an imminent *Catholic spring* and that is what I am calling a culture of privilege. It is hard not to be seduced by privilege. Those who enjoy privilege can’t imagine being without it. It is very soon taken for granted. Privilege is one of the deepest roots of classism, racism, sexism and patriarchy. We ordained have to remember that. Pope Francis certainly does. But many of his brother bishops don’t get it. These bishops prefer to see themselves weighted with a heavy responsibility to defend the Church from the forces of materialism and relativism. The privileges these prelates enjoy, they believe, are meant to free them up for this noble defence. While some bishops are downsizing and trying to simplify their lifestyles, other bishops are ordering gold mitres. Privilege, like power, is difficult to surrender. So we would be naive not to see, now and in the months ahead, considerable pushback to Pope Francis’ initiatives of reform and renewal.

Fr. Donald Cozzens was ordained in 1965, and has been a teacher, a pastoral psychologist, a seminary rector, and vicar for clergy in the diocese in Cleveland. He is a well-known writer and has published many books.

For the full text of this talk, contact the editor:
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To Sip or to Dip - a dilemma for our times

I would like to raise the issue of the insistence by the Catholic Church that the wine should be drunk from the shared communion cup. I see it as an unhygienic, let alone dangerous, practice, especially when considering how rapidly flu epidemics can spread throughout the community – to say nothing of threats of hepatitis, TB, cold sores, fever blisters, laryngitis, herpes, gastro-enteritis and other nasties (? Ebola). Moreover, there is no guarantee that divine intervention will ensure the community is protected.

Personally I would not want to share even a coffee mug with one other person, unless it had been thoroughly washed after each use. A simple wipe with one communal cloth will not suffice to remove germs, saliva and lipstick – yet this is what the Church expects of its members.

Fortunately it would seem that only a few in our church obey the order. Some defy and still continue to dip the host, whilst the majority accept the host but refuse the wine altogether. In other churches the congregations may be more compliant, but have they considered the health implications?

The following is an extract from a Frenchs Forest Parish bulletin:

The Church does not permit self-intinction. *Redemptoris Sacramentum*, the 2004 instruction on the proper celebration of the Mass in the Roman Rite, states at Clause 104: ‘The communicant must not be permitted to intinct the host himself in the chalice ...’

There are a number of reasons for this. Theologically, Communion is meant to be offered to the faithful and then received. Self-intinction, however, involves reaching forward and taking, and that is not the intention. There is also the issue of hygiene, for hands are a far greater source of bacteria than are one’s lips.

I wonder by what contorted theology these conclusions were reached and, if hands are so infectious, why are we encouraged to greet each other at the Sign of Peace!

This is just another example of the Church issuing orders without prior consultation of the Faithful and expecting everyone to follow in blind obedience. Such a dictatorial stance might have been acceptable in pre-Vatican II times when Catholics were expected to pay, pray and obey, but things are different now. We are told that this instruction was given in 2008 which would have been under Pope Benedict’s reign. I like to think that Pope Francis would treat the matter with the caution it deserves, in light of the real issues facing the Church today.

What is the experience in other Dioceses – how is it handled in your parish?

Margaret Knowlden
Editor

Danger of infection from communion cups – an under-estimated risk?

Source: *Zentralblatt für Hygiene und Umweltmedizin*
International journal of hygiene and environmental medicine (1998)

Volume: 201, Issue: 2, Pages: 167-188

The problem of a risk of infection from the common use of chalices has been discussed controversially in literature. Opinions were mainly based on laboratory experiments and theoretical considerations.

The authors examined bacterial counts and species existing under normal conditions after communion. For this purpose, contact samples were taken from the inside and outside of chalices at the rim. *Staphylococci* and *alpha-haemolytic streptococci* were found on all chalices examined. On more than 80%, there were *apathogenic micrococci*, *nonhaemolytic streptococci*, *apathogenic neisseria* and *apathogenic corynebacteria* as well as *lactobacilli* and *bacilli*. *Staphylococcus aureus* was found on 26.4% of chalices.

Although the risk of infection for healthy persons from a commonly used chalice can be rated as low, **it should not be underestimated for persons with reduced resistance and immunocompetence, or with reduced defences as a result of therapeutic measures.** From the hygienic point of view, the most favourable approaches to avoiding infection would be the use of individual chalices for all participants in the communion or the immersion of wafers or bread in wine or in grape juice by the priest (intinction).

I would recommend that we clearly request that people refrain from drinking wine from the chalice when there is any sign of them being sick in any way or immunocompromised (e.g. receiving radiotherapy, chemotherapy or on antibiotics).

Leonie J. Crampton
Clinical Project Coordinator
HIV Epidemiology and Prevention Program

Re-marriage After Divorce in First and Twenty-first Centuries

Alan Clague

The recent Synod on the Family did not endorse the relaxation of prohibitions directed at re-married divorcees hoped for by reformist Catholics. The more fundamental issue, however, is whether the Church's traditional teaching on re-marriage after divorce has an unambiguous Scriptural basis. Our New Testament sources here are the Gospels and St Paul.

The Gospel accounts of Jesus' statements were actually written after Paul's epistles, at least 40 years after Jesus' death, and their interpretation needs to take into account the nature of the communities for whom they were written. Mark was the first gospel written, and its pronouncements are unqualified, neither men nor women can divorce their spouse and remarry (*Mark 10:11-12*). This is also true for Luke (*Luke 16:18*). We can be fairly certain that Jesus did not actually say this, as Jewish law at that time and place forbade women from initiating divorce, whereas it was allowed in Greek and Roman society. Jesus' original pronouncements were altered to accommodate the mixed Jewish and Gentile communities' situation.

Matthew, who based his text partly on Mark, but was writing for a predominantly Jewish community, has a more complex setting. In Matthew 19:3-12, Jesus is asked 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce a woman for any cause?' This is referring to a controversy of the time between two Rabbinical schools, one of which asserted that a man could divorce a woman for a trivial thing like burning a meal, whereas the other demanded more stringent criteria, such as marital infidelity. Jesus condemns divorce and asserts that men who remarry commit adultery, and should practise celibacy instead (hyperbolically: 'make themselves eunuchs'). In Matthew 5:31-32, looking at it now from the woman's perspective, he says a man who divorces his wife forces her to commit adultery, and a man who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery. However, he allows '*porneia*' as a reason for divorce. This is usually translated as 'fornication' or 'sexual immorality', but the Catholic

Church has defined it as the presence of a marriage disallowed by Leviticus 18:6-20, which protects women from sexual exploitation by family members. Other Christian Churches accept the usual translation. It should be noted that this pronouncement also occurs in an environment of hyperbole by Jesus, where he recommends self-mutilation to avoid sin (*Matt 5:29-30*), and forbids the taking of oaths (*Matt 5:33-37*), neither of which is interpreted literally by the Church.

Although Paul was convinced that the second coming of Jesus was imminent, he was fully aware of the strength of human sexual urges (*1 Cor 7:2-9*), stating 'It is better to marry than to be aflame with passion'. He did not allow divorce (*1 Cor 7:10*), but accepted that if a person who converted to Christianity was deserted by their non-Christian spouse, they could remarry (*1 Cor 7:15*). This has become known as the 'Pauline Principle', and is accepted as grounds for divorce and remarriage by the Catholic Church. In more recent times, the Catholic Church has expanded this principle to include, with qualifications, a person who was already a Christian at the time of marriage.

How should we interpret this concession given by Paul to the community at Corinth? At the community's request, he was laying down in Chapter 7 some principles to address a number of their specific problems with sexuality. He affirmed that if a member of the community was in a marriage that impaired their ability to practise their Christianity, they could not only divorce their spouse but also remarry. Although the Church has interpreted this exclusively in a Christian/non-Christian sense, it could be argued that Paul was addressing just one specific example, relevant for that community, of a general problem, namely that of a marriage that was significantly detrimental to the spiritual well-being of its members.

In today's Catholic communities, the irretrievable breakdown of a marriage enforces either continuation of a married life that is emotionally and spiritually destructive or unwilling adoption of a celibate single life. Given Paul's stated understanding of the strength of the sexual drive, both of these available options would be considered detrimental to the spiritual welfare of the parties involved. In today's world, more complex than that of first century Corinth, the desperate desire of many divorced and remarried Catholics to remain in active communion with their Church in the face of their rejection by that Church, attests to the spiritually destructive nature of irretrievable breakdown of marriage.

In summary, I have outlined the modification of Jesus' original, possibly hyperbolic, statement on divorce and remarriage by three of the early Christian communities. In particular, in the community at Corinth, Paul reiterated the prohibition on remarriage after divorce, but allowed a dispensation in a specific situation where the spiritual well-being of a community member was endangered. If Paul were alive today how would he advise us? Today's Catholic leadership have tweaked Paul's original concession, but not reassessed its intent for application to today's world where irretrievable breakdown of marriage is widespread and spiritually destructive. Like the Church leaders forty or more years after Jesus' death, today's leaders have the authority to act and protect the spiritual welfare of a deeply traumatised part of their flock.

Alan Clague is a member of the ARC Secretariat

Pope says annulment process should be cheaper and more efficient

By Francis X. Rocca

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

Pope Francis said the church's marriage annulment process should be more efficient and perhaps even free of charge, and he decried any attempts to exploit it for profit. "Some procedures are so long and so burdensome, they don't favour (justice), and people give up," the pope said. "Mother church should do justice and say: *'Yes, it's true, your marriage is null. No, your marriage is valid.'* But justice means saying so. That way, they can move on without this doubt, this darkness in their soul."

The pope made his remarks on 5 November, in a meeting with diocesan officials and canon lawyers enrolled in a course offered by the Roman Rota, the Vatican tribunal primarily responsible for hearing requests for marriage annulments.

Pope Francis said participants at the Oct. 5-19 Synod of Bishops on the family had expressed a desire to "streamline the process" of judging requests for annulments, and he noted that he had recently established a special commission to do so.

As an example of the burdens faced by those seeking annulments, the pope recalled that a tribunal he oversaw as archbishop of Buenos Aires exercised jurisdiction over dioceses as far as 150 miles away. "It is impossible to imagine that simple, common people should go to the tribunal. They have to take a trip, they have to miss days of work, also the cost, so many things," the pope said. "They say, 'God will understand, I'll move on this way, with this burden on my soul.'"

Pope Francis warned that annulment cases must not fall within the "framework of business," which he described as an all-too-frequent occurrence. "I am not talking about anything unusual. There have been public scandals," he said. Apparently referring to his time in Buenos Aires, the pope recalled: "I had to dismiss one person from the tribunal, some time ago, who said: 'I'll handle both proceedings, civil and ecclesiastical, for 10,000 dollars.'"

Noting that some participants at the synod had called for making the annulment process free of charge, Pope Francis said "we will have to see," but added that, "when the spiritual is attached to an economic interest, this is not from God". □

The Future of the Uniting Church in Australia

Keith Suter

Does the Uniting Church in Australia have a future? On the one hand, it has a declining number of members, and church buildings are being closed. On the other hand, the social welfare side (in total financial terms) is worth more than most of the corporations listed on the Australian Stock Exchange.

I have been involved with the Uniting Church right from the outset in 1977 when the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches came together to form the first 'Australian' church. In the business world, 80 per cent of mergers and acquisitions fail – and so the Uniting Church was being formed against the odds.

I have just completed a Ph D on the future of the Uniting Church. The Ph D uses the technique of 'scenario planning'. This is the first time that this management technique has been used on an Australian church (interestingly the US Episcopalian/Anglican Church is now embarked on a similar venture).

Scenario planning is not about 'prediction' but 'possibilities'. It asks what *could* happen. It is designed to encourage people and organisations to think about the unthinkable; to think about matters which are not currently on their mental horizons.

Four possible scenarios have been created. Each scenario needs a memorable name.

First, 'Word and Deed' examines how the Uniting Church could become a church of a small number of large parishes providing both spiritual activities and social welfare. This would require the enforced amalgamation of small churches into 'regional' ones.

Second, 'Secular Welfare' examines how the Uniting Church could let the parishes just continue to fade away and instead focus on the provision of social welfare (albeit derived from a Christian tradition). Most of the Uniting Church's finances are already focussed on that work, such as in aged care and child care.

Third, 'Return to the Early Church', examines how the Uniting Church could react against the corporate managerialism required by government to run social welfare programs, and instead decide to stop accepting government contracts. The church could reinvent itself as per the first three centuries of the Christian church and so base itself on the 'emerging church' movement. Australians may not like the 'church' but there is still an interest in Jesus.

Finally, 'Recessional' examines the scenario in which the Uniting Church is wound up and its assets dispersed. The Uniting Church would need an explicit exit strategy.

The dissertation has re-affirmed that the Uniting Church has fundamental organisational problems, not least in lacking a clear line of command. The Protestant tradition was formed in reaction against the Catholic Church, which does have a more explicit command structure (even if that language is no longer used).

Both Catholic and Uniting Churches have problems coping with an increasingly secular society. Australians are not necessarily hostile to Christianity; they are just indifferent to churches and see the challenge for the Uniting Church, then, is in recognising the seriousness of its plight and taking explicit action. If it just drifts along, then it will gradually fade away.

Soft copies of the Ph D can be sent out free of charge; send requests to keith.suter@bigpond.com

Keith Suter is Managing Director of World of Thinking: www.worldofthinking.com.au

Book Review

Benedict, Me and the Cardinals Three

The story of the Dismissal of Bishop Bill Morris by Pope Benedict XVI

William Martin Morris

If ever a book has made me ashamed to belong to the Catholic Church, this is it. If it were about the Cold War, the undercover workings of the Kremlin or of Nazi Germany, there would be few surprises. But the Vatican's systematic hounding of a good and much loved Bishop, paying heed only to a small group of 'temple police', must stand out as a disgraceful indictment on the leadership of our Church. Hans Küng, writing to Bishop Morris, puts it in a nutshell:

Your removal from your Episcopal chair of the Diocese of Toowoomba is a clear betrayal of the Second Vatican Council, which solemnly declared the collegiality of the Pope with the Bishops. Your removal has been achieved in the medieval authoritarian way without consulting the Australian bishops, your own clergy, and your own community.

Despite the Diocese's vastness (nearly twice the size of Italy), the Vatican commissioned the Archbishop of Denver, Charles J Chaput, to undertake a review of the Toowoomba Diocese in three working days – with

no prior knowledge of local conditions or the Australian culture. He subsequently wrote a report, which Bishop Morris was never permitted to see. Minutes of other meetings in Rome with three Cardinals were also denied him. Nor was he ever informed of the reasons for his dismissal – other than Pope Benedict's claim that 'It is God's Will that you resign'!

It would seem that the Vatican's main gripe with Bishop Morris concerned his Advent pastoral letter in 2006 about the future of the Church and the shortage

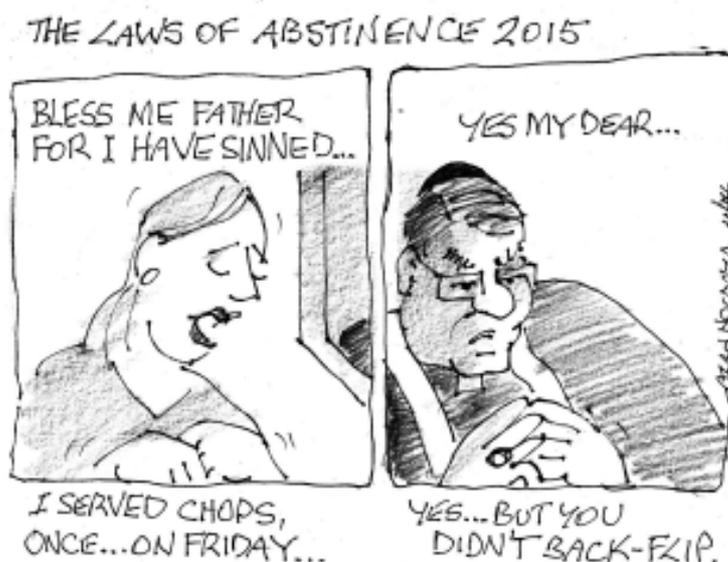
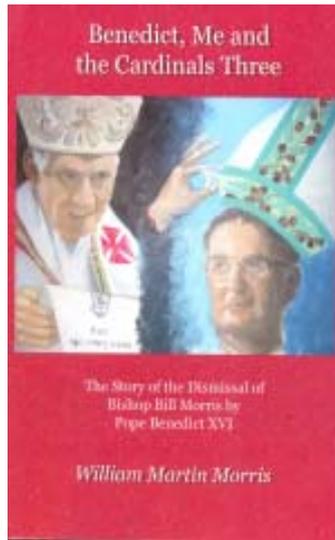
of priests. In it, amongst other options – all of which are being openly discussed internationally, nationally and locally – he put the suggestion of 'ordaining women, married and single'. By mentioning the unmentionable, 'infallibly decreed by JPII', he had provided a noose for his own neck – as far as the Vatican was concerned.

The book is a valuable record of the background and events leading up to Bishop Morris's forced 'early retirement' on 2 May 2011. He told a WATAC meeting on 26 November that the book has been sent to Pope Francis. Let us hope that he will have the graciousness to apologise to

Bishop Morris on behalf of the Church for the injustices done to him. Meanwhile we can only wonder: What would Jesus have made of this?

Margaret Knowlden
Editor

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Setting up an Australian Catholic Development Fund in the Cloud

John Edwards

In Max Charlesworth's article *A Democratic Church – Reforming the Values and Institutions of the Catholic Church* (ARCvoice 53), he suggested that the conflicts between the values of a liberal democratic society, such as Australia, and those of a closed, hierarchical, monarchical and inequalitarian institution, such as the church, would trigger change towards more democratic institutions.

However, it was also implied that another more potent driver for change was already evident within Western democracies and that was the notion of ethical investments. This occurs when individuals decide to invest only in those institutions that act in an ethical way and exhibit openness, inclusiveness, representativeness, transparency and accountability in their structures. To provide a vehicle for reforming Catholics to drive change within the church, via ethical investments, it was suggested they set up an Australian Catholic Development Fund (ACDF) to invest only in those parishes, schools and diocesan or Catholic institutions which reflect democratic values. While at first this might seem like a daunting task, yet in our internet-connected world setting up online ventures such as the ACDF is relatively straightforward. This article suggests how this might be done.

In broad brush strokes, what is required is for the ACDF to register with ASIC as an Australian not-for-profit organisation and for the ACDF to register its own website www.CathDevelopmentFund.org.au to enable it to receive funds from contributors and to disburse those funds to Catholic institutions which are approved by contributors and which meet the ACDF's ethical investments criteria. The ACDF website would allow contributors to register online, to state the parish they

belong to if they so wish, to select from a list of ethically approved Catholic institutions they wish to donate to or select a set of donation rules they are happy with, and to make an online donation or set up regular donations to the ACDF. On the donations' side of the ledger, Catholic institutions wishing to receive funds could register online with the ACDF and would step through a series of requirements they would need to meet in order to qualify for donations. Furthermore, the ACDF would publish monthly records of disbursements which contributors could log in and access at any time.

Now to put a bit more flesh on the bare bones of the ACDF outlined above. The key to setting up the ACDF rests on five fundamental anchor points. These are, firstly, that the ACDF is itself an ethical institution; secondly, the heart of the ACDF will be its people, connected via a virtual office; thirdly, it will utilise social networks to provide the momentum for institutional and axiological change; fourthly, the organisation is *cloud*-based; and lastly,

it will need to harness the magic of database programming to automate much of the work.

Turning to the first point, the ACDF would itself need to pass the ethical investments test that it seeks to impose on others. It would need to exhibit openness, inclusiveness, representativeness, transparency and accountability. It would register as a legal entity with ASIC and fully meet its

obligations as a responsible Australian company. Its accounts would be regularly audited and the reports available online. Its mission statement should clearly define its purpose, values and ethical commitments, and it should seek both internal audits (from its members) and external audits to establish that it is meeting its goals and its members' and the community's expectations. Elections of board members would occur annually and all ACDF account holders would be entitled to vote. The ACDF would be a democratic workplace reflecting the values of both a liberal society and a Christian community.

Secondly, the heart of the ACDF will be its people. None more so than its initial directors who will be the public face of the organisation. These will work with two key teams: the development team and the ethical assessments team linked via a virtual office. The ethical assessments team would determine the criteria for ethical



investments and which institutions the ACDF would seek to fund. Such assessments of institutions could be done online by members situated in any state or territory and linked via the internet. Some members of the assessment team could in fact be ACDF account holders who volunteer to validate applications and to meet with members of the institutions seeking validation. Also, ACDF members might wish to nominate institutions for consideration, such as Caritas Australia or the St Vincent de Paul, or indeed many of the reforming Catholic organisations themselves which are doing such important work. Once an institution had been validated, it would be registered on the ACDF database and would become eligible for funding. Whether it was funded or not would depend on contributors' instructions – that is whether they nominated specific institutions for funding or only that they be ethical and open institutions. Thirdly, the virtual office which the ACDF utilizes is merely another way of acknowledging that today we are all part of a virtual society linked via multiple social networks. Some networks are social, as the name implies, but others such as the ACDF would be instruments for change, for transforming society and making it a richer place for all to live in and thrive in. This would highlight yet another dimension of such networks, the spiritual dimension that transforms both the institutions and the lives of those they touch. Such is the goal and the challenge for the quarter of Australians who identify as Catholic!

The fourth and fifth points might seem somewhat technical but they will have a significant impact on the viability of the ACDF. This will involve the work of the development team mentioned above. The fourth point has already been hinted at, and that is that the key infrastructure of the ACDF would be *cloud*-based, to use the modern parlance, and it would use a distributed workforce within a virtual office. A key component of this cloud-based infrastructure would be the ACDF website which would be built using open source software such as DRUPAL, the same software used by the White House in the United States (www.whitehouse.gov). The open source community shares a common commitment to openness as the ACDF in that it seeks to make internet software available to all, free of charge, to provide access to today's essential communications tools. The Drupal

society in Australia is well-established and well-placed to assist with this task, although as part of a global open source community such development could be outsourced and completed over the net or overseas. Such work has been done in the past *pro bono* for NOT-not-for-profit organisations and this might be a possibility worth exploring. This raises the point that payment in kind would be an important resource for the ACDF and that such assistance would be readily and gratefully acknowledged.

Lastly, another key ingredient for this venture is to utilise the magic of database programming. Modern websites are database-driven and so too is the business logic of an organisation. So not only should most of the interactions between contributors and the ACDF be able to be done through the website interface, but

so too should the work of moving funds from donors to recipients be transacted automatically. What donors want to do with their funds is embedded in the instructions they give when they set up their online accounts, which in turn is recorded in the database which generates the rules for moving funds from donors to intended recipients. Of course, there needs to be corroboration that the funds proffered

have been realised in the bank – which is simply another online task! Finally, moving funds can be automated and processed through financial clearing houses. What makes the above achievable is the magic and the logic of programmable databases, together with some careful planning. Programmable databases become the automated workers that non-profit organisations need. But what of the funds to do this? Well if the ACDF is fashioned as an ethical institution then perhaps some of the donations, either in kind or in cash, could be directed towards this early development. Perhaps the starting point is setting up a forum such as ACDFNet which would provide the means for ongoing discussion about how to take the ACDF forward.

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

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