



# arcvoice

**A Report from Australian Reforming Catholics Inc.**  
**April 2015** **Issue No. 55**

## Editorial

Following the Extraordinary Synod on the Family last October, the Vatican issued a complicated and almost unintelligible questionnaire for the faithful to interpret and complete. The intention, ostensibly, was to gain ideas on how the faith can grow and be passed on through the family. So many bishops around the world ignored it and a few of our own bishops tried to make it easier to understand by cutting it down a bit. We tried to engage with Bishop Peter Comensoli of the Broken Bay diocese (see p.6) and bring attention to the need to draw in the larger majority of Catholics who do not attend Mass regularly, but he did not deem our assistance necessary. Approaches made by others to Archbishop Coleridge (see p.7) and Bishop Hurley, the official representatives of Australia at the upcoming Ordinary Synod in October 2015, also received lukewarm receptions. It appears most likely that answers to the more difficult questions will be cobbled together in each diocese, probably sending the impression to the Vatican that all is well.

There is enormous resistance throughout the hierarchy across the world to the desire for reform that Pope Francis has expressed. Just recently, for example, some 500 priests in England signed off on a statement that they would resist any change to Church teaching that might arise from the Ordinary Synod. There are many like them who will try to gag the discussions before they even get started.

Meanwhile, Pope Francis continues to drive the spirit of his message by his focus on the dignity of the poor. He set up free washing and hairdressing facilities for the homeless and free entry to the Vatican museum, highlighted by his meeting with them in the Sistine Chapel. He is showing visibly what he wants pastors around the world to emulate, but will sufficient bishops support him when it comes to making decisions that require changes in Church teaching? So much interpretation of traditional teaching that discriminates unjustly is contrary to the Gospel message and the lack of empathy for those who struggle does not enhance the evangelisation that Pope Francis is seeking.

We maintain that Pope Francis must take a stronger role as a leader within the Synod in exposing the anomalies if we

are to see the critical changes required. It will not be enough for him to simply hope that sufficient bishops will be moved by his example. That is why I have spent so much time in helping to formulate the objective and strategy that aims to influence Pope Francis directly rather than through bishops who are unlikely to listen (see p.3). Pope Francis has stated that he wants to hear from everyone. If official Church channels do not facilitate that effectively, then other ways have to be tried.

*John Buggy*

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## Letters to the Editor

I always look forward to *ARCvoice* and read it from cover to cover. I had already noted Pope Francis' description of Europe as like 'a grandmother, no longer fertile and vibrant' and wondered how many others cringed at the blatant ageism in that analogy.

As a grandmother and no longer fertile (*Deo Gratias*) but still vibrant, I think we must support the many elderly women who have remained faithful to the Church despite her many failings, and whose wisdom and experience should be listened to.

I'm not blaming the Pope of course, just getting it off my chest!

*Ann Ryan  
Kingston, TAS*

I thought your editorial in *ARCvoice* issue 54 was brilliant. Whilst I deeply believe in Jesus Christ and his message of hope and love, I am finding myself more and more disillusioned by the hierarchical church, even with Pope Francis at its head. The men 'in long frocks and silly hats' truly believe that they are the sole custodians of human spiritual truth and that the Mass is the major access to Jesus. They clearly do not entertain that there are many paths to the deity – some through Jesus and some through other spiritual traditions – and that within Christianity there are many ways of relating to Jesus. Furthermore, the Catholic Church as an institution is clearly not fulfilling a deep spiritually invigorating role. In the meantime people vote with their feet.

The only reason I stay an active member is that I know there are many people with true prophetic voices in our time who keep their heads down and work away at spiritual renewal. I am active in the Christian Meditation movement and know of such people. I wish I lived closer to one of the major cities and could attend some of your meetings.

Keep up with the good work in spite of the feeling of banging your heads against a brick wall even if the latter is gradually crumbling!

*Geoff Lee  
Sunshine Coast QLD*

As Mass finished this morning (Saturday of the first week in Lent) and the assembly had endured my stumbling attempt to chew the gristle of the post-Communion prayer, a parishioner was heard to say, not so *sotto voce*, "I think we should pray for the translators of the new Roman Missal – after all he did say we should pray for our enemies." The resultant laughter and smiling was like a beam of light in a dark place!

*(Fr) David Osborne, Cranleigh, Surrey  
The Tablet 5.3.15*

Hi Marg .. you are to be congratulated on No 54 .... Close to the best ever. There is a very healthy scepticism of the possibility of imminent reform because the red-hatted brigade in charge have no desire to be a mass movement for the sake of the future of mankind. One is tempted to see a fixation to preserve Mummy's Church intact! ...Irrational? ...What's so strange about that? ... That is simple devotion! ... Pope Francis has set himself an extraordinarily difficult task which could well result in another Orthodox Church ...

*Brian Nunn  
Pascoe Vale VIC*

The recent (2015) instruction in our Parish to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Fridays during Lent reminded me of an experience I once had. I was about twenty and my sister Kath and I were on a coach tour in Tasmania. All meals were included and when we stopped for lunch on Friday the menu was steak and salad. We were the only Catholics on board so we said we couldn't eat the meat, we'd just have salad. When our meal arrived it was salad, but with delicious Tasmanian crayfish. You can imagine the rubbishing we endured from the others about our so-called penance!

*Noelen Uren  
Brookvale, NSW*

..... and more about fish on Friday!

I started work at Mercy Family Life Centre in Waitara, NSW, on Ash Wednesday in 1984. For lunch I was invited to accompany some of the staff to the nearby Blue Gum Hotel. Walking with two of the Sisters of Mercy, I reminded them (sanctimoniously) that we couldn't eat meat that day. They both rounded on me in indignation: 'Who says we can't?' 'The priest told us that at Mass on Sunday.' 'In which case', they replied in unison, 'we are definitely going to eat steak!' It was my first encounter with rebellious nuns – and it changed my life for ever!

*Margaret Knowlden  
Editor*

## Catholic Church Reform International

## Objective to October 2015 SYNOD

John Buggy

**By drawing on Catholic voices worldwide who are seeking reform, to influence Pope Francis in his interaction with the Synod on the Family and in his final decision-making to move toward a just, inclusive, and compassionate church:**

**Goal:**

Realising that change must start with the smallest cell of Church, the family, collect tangible evidence of conversations, listening sessions, stories of lived experiences, and public affirmations that support a just, inclusive and compassionate Church.

**Strategy:**

Prepare, publicise and present sound arguments for reform in the approach to key issues supported by as many Catholics as possible and seek to make that well known.

To maximise our efforts in doing this, we will undertake the following:

1. Increase the number of people and organisations who seek reform and the above objective through CCRI
2. Develop new and also draw upon existing evidence of the desire for reform within Catholic communities
3. Present to the Vatican and the Pope well-argued papers on specific reforms drawing upon any research arising from (2) and publicise it through the Media
4. Provide information to and seek the support of key people who have the ability to influence the discussions that take place at or in the lead-up to the Synod's deliberations.

**Tactics and tasks:**

To ensure that the strategy is put into action, the following tactics and tasks associated with them will be undertaken:

**In relation to 1:**

Establish an outreach committee to make contact with individuals and other organisations in order to draw them into the network under the banner of justice and inclusion, especially from countries not currently represented.

**In relation to 2:**

- Develop and distribute a Living Poll that provides a professionally valid questionnaire for eliciting the experience of Catholics as they live their lives in relation to Church teaching
- Promote the German survey and seek to cooperate with the student authors in tallying and utilizing the results
- Conduct another round of Regional Gatherings to gain personal experiences (possibly in conjunction with COR and Future Church in order to have a similar format)
- Draw from and collate any salient information coming from diocesan discussions/information arising from the questionnaire issued by the Vatican

**In relation to 3:**

- Respond to the Synod by April 15 with a CCRI perspective on what should be on the Synod agenda (drawing from our questionnaire and summary report in 2014)
- Prepare provocative papers on key issues, drawing in information from (2), and seeking advice from selected theologians and appropriate experts to ensure accuracy on key issues that are likely to be of divided opinion at the Synod. Such topics could include:
  - divorced/remarried welcomed to the Sacraments
  - the recognition of homosexuality
  - primacy of conscience, especially in relation to artificial contraception
  - more contemporary attitudes to the roles of women
  - pastoral support and the need for married clergy
  - honesty and integrity in dealing with sexual abuse
  - cultural issues unique to specific countries
- Prepare Press releases to accompany each paper to enhance our visibility
- Prepare a summary document in September which highlights the most salient features of our arguments, research and our recommendations.

continued next page

**In relation to 4:**

- Write to Presidents/Leaders of Episcopal Conferences and Nuncios on particular issues where their actions could influence the Synod on issues of justice and inclusion, highlighting the fact that the Church cannot teach what it does not practice. This would also include individual bishops who support reform and gain their consensus in bold support of our message.
- Develop relationships with significant journalists and seek their advice in order to gain their interest in promoting our Press releases.

## Open letter to English-speaking bishops

One of the great blessings in my life has come from teaching (and learning) from many of you when you were seminarians or young priests and took courses with me in Rome (1973–2006) and elsewhere. Some of you came to me for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Many of you have invited me to lecture or lead retreats in your dioceses and welcomed me when I came. I have treasured our friendship and been encouraged by your example.

My hope is now that you will act quickly to help English-speaking Catholics participate more effectively in the liturgy – a central recommendation in Vatican II's very first document. You all know that your episcopal conferences approved a revised translation completed after 17 years of work by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. You also know that this 1998 translation, when sent to the Congregation for Divine Worship (CDW), was simply rejected without any dialogue. Roman authorities set up a committee called *Vox Clara* ('a clear voice') which was largely responsible for a 'revised' translation in 2010 that came into force in November 2011. Ironically, the results produced by *Vox Clara* were too often unclear and sometimes verging on the unintelligible. This 2010 translation regularly sounds like Latin texts transposed into English words rather than genuine English. Mgr Ronald Knox, like many others before and after him, wanted translations that 'read like a first-rate native thing'. Who could say that of our present Missal?

Those who prepared the 2010 Missal aimed at a 'sacral style' – something that is alien to the direct and

familiar way of speaking to God and about God practised by the psalmists and taught by Jesus. He never encouraged us to say: 'graciously grant, we pray, that you give us our daily bread', or 'may thy will, we pray, O Lord, be done through your prevenient grace'. He asked us to pray simply and directly to God: 'Thy will be done; give us this day our daily bread'.

What would Jesus say about the 2010 Missal? Would he approve of its clunky, Latinised English that aspires to a 'sacral' style which allegedly will 'inspire' worshippers?

Many of you have copies of the 'Missal that wasn't', the 1998 translation summarily dismissed by the CDW. It's easily available on the internet. Set it alongside the 2010 Missal and there should be no debate about the version to choose. Like the Lord's Prayer and like the Psalms, which fed the prayer life of Jesus, the 1998 translation is straightforward. As an example of genuine English, it is incomparably better than that imposed on English-speaking Catholics in November 2011. Remembering the blessing of your long-standing presence in my life, I yearn for a final blessing, a quick solution to our liturgical woes. The 1998 translation is there, waiting in the wings. Please pass on now to English-speaking Catholics the 1998 translation that you or your predecessors originally voted for only a few years ago.

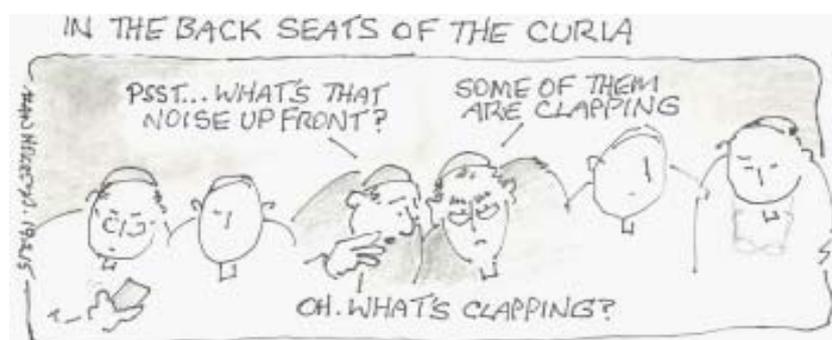
*Gerald O'Collins SJ,*  
Parkville, Australia  
05 March 2015

## Pope Francis' Christmas message to the Curia

The Vatican's top administrators would have been expecting an exchange of pleasantries at their annual Christmas meeting with Pope Francis on Monday. Instead, Francis chose the occasion to issue a stinging critique. Apparently, he was heard in silence and there was only tepid applause. The rest of us should be applauding him loudly!

### Pope Francis's 15 'ailments of the Curia'

- 1) Feeling immortal, immune or indispensable. 'A Curia that doesn't criticise itself, that doesn't update itself, that doesn't seek to improve itself is a sick body.'
- 2) Working too hard. 'Rest for those who have done their work is necessary, good and should be taken seriously.'
- 3) Becoming spiritually and mentally hardened. 'It's dangerous to lose that human sensibility that lets you cry with those who are crying, and celebrate those who are joyful.'
- 4) Planning too much. 'Preparing things well is necessary, but don't fall into the temptation of trying to close or direct the freedom of the Holy Spirit, which is bigger and more generous than any human plan.'
- 5) Working without coordination, like an orchestra that produces noise. 'When the foot tells the hand, 'I don't need you' or the hand tells the head 'I'm in charge.'''
- 6) Having 'spiritual Alzheimer's'. 'We see it in the people who have forgotten their encounter with the Lord ... in those who depend completely on their here and now, on their passions, whims and manias, in those who build walls around themselves and become enslaved to the idols that they have built with their own hands.'
- 7) Being rivals or boastful. 'When one's appearance, the colour of one's vestments or honorific titles become the primary objective of life.'
- 8) Suffering from 'existential schizophrenia'. 'It's the sickness of those who live a double life, fruit of hypocrisy that is typical of mediocre and progressive spiritual emptiness that academic degrees cannot fill. It's a sickness that often affects those who, abandoning pastoral service, limit themselves to bureaucratic work, losing contact with reality and concrete people.'
- 9) Committing the 'terrorism of gossip'. 'It's the sickness of cowardly people who, not having the courage to speak directly, talk behind people's backs.'
- 10) Glorifying one's bosses. 'It's the sickness of those who court their superiors, hoping for their benevolence. They are victims of careerism and opportunism, they honour people who aren't God.'
- 11) Being indifferent to others. 'When, out of jealousy or cunning, one finds joy in seeing another fall rather than helping him up and encouraging him.'
- 12) Having a 'funereal face'. 'In reality, theatrical severity and sterile pessimism are often symptoms of fear and insecurity. The apostle must be polite, serene, enthusiastic and happy and transmit joy wherever he goes.'
- 13) Wanting more. 'When the apostle tries to fill an existential emptiness in his heart by accumulating material goods, not because he needs them but because he'll feel more secure.'
- 14) Forming closed circles that seek to be stronger than the whole. 'This sickness always starts with good intentions but as time goes by, it enslaves its members by becoming a cancer that threatens the harmony of the body and causes so much bad scandals especially to our younger brothers.'
- 15) Seeking worldly profit and showing off. 'It's the sickness of those who insatiably try to multiply their powers and to do so are capable of calumny, defamation and discrediting others, even in newspapers and magazines, naturally to show themselves as being more capable than others.' □



1 February 2015

Bishop Peter A. Comensoli  
Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay  
P O Box 340  
PENNANT HILLS NSW 1715

Dear Bishop Peter,

As a very concerned Catholic in your diocese, I am writing to you regarding the questionnaire that is designed to provide input to the Synod on the Family in October 2015. The *Lineamenta* issued by the Vatican, containing 46 (in reality 94) questions, is a difficult instrument for achieving that input from the faithful as it contains inbuilt prejudices and judgments and even a well educated Catholic would have difficulty understanding it, confirmed by many who have expressed this to me. Your diocese, along with Sydney, Melbourne and Armidale have attempted to simplify the questionnaire by cutting down on the number of questions but I doubt that the outcome will be much different if the intention is to gain significant input from the average Catholic. I also do not see how it could reach or engage the larger number of Catholics who do not attend Mass regularly but who need to be engaged if the Church is to be true to its mission of evangelisation.

I am a member of an organisation of committed practising Catholics which includes priests and religious who yearn for greater implementation of the ideals of Vatican II. For over fifteen years we have sustained that hope as a group through our education and publications. A large proportion of the hundreds of members are in your diocese. As the elected spokesperson for them, I was invited by Bishop David Walker in 2007 to address his Curia leaders during a two-day workshop on strategies for engaging disillusioned and lapsed Catholics owing to our contact with many of them, even though nearly all of our members practice their faith. This, of course, was before the exposure of the widespread sexual abuse by clergy that has had further adverse impact on the Church.

You state on the website that you have responded to the desire of Pope Francis to give as many Catholics as possible the opportunity to contribute to this most important Synod. We do not believe that the long questionnaire or your shorter version will achieve this on its own, based on what we are hearing from many people, and other opportunities should be provided. Would you be willing to meet with a group of us so that you would gain valuable direct reflections on the issues raised in the *Lineamenta* and the *Relatio Synodi*? We would also hope to draw into that group some Catholics who are disillusioned yet still yearn for a Church that understands their needs. We would probably be able to bring a significant gathering together at short notice or a smaller representative group if you prefer.

In the spirit of what Pope Francis is trying to achieve, we look forward very much to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

*John Buggy*  
Spokesperson  
Australian Reforming Catholics (ARC)

## An Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Renewal

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

PO Box 4053,  
Manuka ACT 2603

3 January 2015

Most Rev. Mark Coleridge, DD BA DSS,  
Archbishop of Brisbane,  
The Francis Rush Centre,  
277 Elizabeth St.,  
Brisbane QLD 4000.

Dear Archbishop Mark,

We write to you as the elected episcopal representative of the Church in Australia at the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2015. We welcome the Synod, and we are encouraged by Pope Francis’ determination to involve all the faithful, reflecting Vatican II’s vision for transparent, accountable and inclusive governance.

Pope Francis has called for a *communal search* in “re-thinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelisation” at the local level (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n33). He wants bishops to encourage and develop the means of participation with “*the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone*” (*EG*, n31). In supporting this communal search for the Australian *sensus fidelium*, we highlight some challenges and questions on which we would appreciate your response.

The first challenge is **evangelisation and inclusiveness**. The 2011 Census recorded 5.4 million Australian Catholics (ABS), yet the ACBC’s Pastoral Research Office found that only 662,000 (12.25%) were in contact with the Church through regular Mass attendance (*Mass attendance in Australia: A critical moment*, December 2013). The reflections of the 87.8 percent described as ‘drifting away’, often because of the doctrinal and pastoral issues at the core of the Synod, are critical and need to be heard. The voices of Catholics in rural areas, where parishes are being closed and the Eucharist is rarely available, must also be sought and heard. Do you intend to reach this wider Catholic audience in the communal search and synodal reflection?

The second challenge is **the *Lineamenta*** itself. This highly complex document is not readily accessible and most unlikely to elicit useful reflections. The survey

devised by the Archdiocese of Melbourne is also unlikely to engage the faithful. Indeed, such complex matters require a facilitated process of discussion at the parish level. Do you plan a form of communal search that might garner a better response from the faithful?

The third challenge is what the *Lineamenta* refers to as ‘**missing aspects**’.

Evangelisation and pastoral care of the family are particularly threatened by the Church’s non-accountable system of governance that does not listen effectively to the faithful, with structures that can detract from a Christ-like culture. The Synod on the Family has not yet addressed these governance problems that impact all decision-making and which are a major cause of so many Catholics ‘drifting away’. The Pastoral Research Office report *Catholics who have stopped attending Mass* (February 2007, Ch. 6) indicates that even regular Mass attendees may disappear from Church life unless new pastoral strategies with more accountable, inclusive and transparent structures and culture are developed and implemented. Are plans being developed to address these governance issues and appropriate pastoral strategies?

Pope Francis writes that women are “needed in all expressions in the life of society . . . (and) the presence of women must also be guaranteed in . . . settings where important decisions are made, both in the Church and in social structures” (*EG*, n103). Yet the *Lineamenta* gives scant attention to the faith formation role of mothers and wives, and women’s constrained role in the Church. Nor does it adequately recognise the heroism of those women raising and educating their children as single parents, or the scourge of violence against women in families. In Australia, 22% of all families with children under 15 years in 2004–2006 are one-parent families (ABS, Australian Social Trends, 2007), and 23% of all women in a marriage or *de facto* relationship have experienced violence by a partner at some time during the relationship (ABS, 1996). The Church’s attitude to women’s equality continues to undermine the status of women across the world, sadly legitimising in the minds of some offenders their unjust treatment to the point of violence. Will you seek to have these matters critical to the interests of women in families included on the Synod agenda?

The *Lineamenta* makes no mention of the damage done to families by the sexual abuse of children by clerics and religious, by the breaching of trust, and by the cover-ups by some bishops. This damage to families and its causes must be faced by the Synod, which has to confront a governance system and clerical culture that failed not only the abused children but their families as well, and worse, exposed further children to harm. Can you ensure that these issues are recognised in the ACBC's input to the Synod?

The final challenge is **a more representative lay presence** at the 2015 synod. The lay presence at the 2014 synod was positive, but not sufficiently representative of the diversity of families. Will you advocate for a large presence of men and women, mothers and fathers and gay parents at the Ordinary Assembly and whom will you consult for Australian lay representatives?

The *Lineamenta* urges episcopal conferences to “choose a suitable manner of involving all components of the particular churches” including academic institutions. We are disappointed that to date our academic institutions have not provided leadership in breaking open theologically many of the issues that concern couples and parents, such as contraception,

cohabitation, and admission to the sacraments after divorce and remarriage. Catholics want to understand what lies behind the Church's teaching and practice on such issues, and the possibilities for change. Will you encourage these institutions to involve themselves much more in engaging a better-informed and more reflective faithful?

ACCCR is an alliance of lay movements across Australia seeking renewal of Christ's Church. Please know that you have the support and prayers of us all as you enter the doors Pope Francis has opened. We would appreciate your early response to our questions.

We are writing in similar terms to your brother bishop Eugene, also elected to represent the Church in Australia at the Synod.

Yours in Christ,

Marilyn Hatton  
Convenor

on behalf of *Australian Catholic Coalition for Church  
Renewal (ACCCR)*

cc: Rev Mgr John Kallarackal, Chargé d'Affaires,  
Apostolic Nunciature

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



Here is the text of the 'Pact of the Catacombs' which Vincent Long, Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne, outlined at a Spirituality in the Pub meeting in Shepparton on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015. He stated that he has adopted it for himself. We might hope that more will stand up for these ideals now.

## The Pact of the Catacombs (Domitilla)

### A poor servant Church

AS VATICAN Council II drew to a close in 1965, 40 bishops met at night in the Domitilla Catacombs outside Rome. In that holy place of Christian dead they celebrated the Eucharist and signed a document that expressed their personal commitments as bishops to the ideals of the Council under the suggestive title of the Pact of the Catacombs. The only place we have found its complete text transcribed is in the Chronicle of Vatican II by the Franciscan bishop Boaventura Kloppenburg. He titled the document Pact of the Servant and Poor Church. It is known that the bishops were led by Archbishop Helder Camara of Recife, Brazil, one of the widely respected 20th-century champions.

**W**e, bishops assembled in the Second Vatican Council, are conscious of the deficiencies of our lifestyle in terms of evangelical poverty. Motivated by one another in an initiative in which each of us has tried avoid ambition and presumption, we unite with all our brothers in the episcopacy and rely above all on the grace and strength of Our Lord Jesus Christ and on the prayer of the faithful and the priests in our respective dioceses. Placing ourselves in thought and in prayer before the Trinity, the Church of Christ, and all the priests and faithful of our dioceses, with humility and awareness of our weakness, but also with all the determination and all the strength that God desires to grant us by his grace, we commit ourselves to the following:

- We will try to live according to the ordinary manner of our people in all that concerns housing, food, means of transport, and related matters. See Matthew 5,3; 6,33ff; 8,20.
- We renounce forever the appearance and the substance of wealth, especially in clothing (rich vestments, loud colours) and symbols made of precious metals (these signs should certainly be evangelical). See Mark 6,9; Matthew 10,9-10; Acts 3.6 (Neither silver nor gold).
- We will not possess in our own names any properties or other goods, nor will we have bank accounts or the like. If it is necessary to possess something, we will place everything in the name of the diocese or of social or charitable works. See Matthew 6,19-21; Luke 12,33-34.
- As far as possible we will entrust the financial and material running of our diocese to a commission of competent lay persons who are aware of their apostolic role, so that we can be less administrators and more pastors and apostles. See Matthew 10,8; Acts 6,1-7.
- We do not want to be addressed verbally or in writing with names and titles that express prominence and power (such as Eminence, Excellency, Lordship). We prefer to be called by the evangelical name of "Father." See Matthew 20,25-28; 23,6-11; John 13,12-15).
- In our communications and social relations we will avoid everything that may appear as a concession of privilege, prominence, or even preference to the wealthy and the powerful (for example, in religious services or by way of banquet invitations offered or accepted). See Luke 13,12-14; 1 Corinthians 9,14-19.
- Likewise we will avoid favouring or fostering the vanity of anyone at the moment of seeking or acknowledging aid or for any other reason. We will invite our faithful to consider their donations as a normal way of participating in worship, in the apostolate, and in social action. See Matthew 6,2-4; Luke 15,9-13; 2 Corinthians 12,4.
- We will give whatever is needed in terms of our time, our reflection, our heart, our means, etc., to the apostolic and pastoral service of workers and labour groups and to those who are economically weak and disadvantaged, without allowing that to detract from

the welfare of other persons or groups of the diocese. We will support lay people, religious, deacons, and priests whom the Lord calls to evangelize the poor and the workers by sharing their lives and their labors. See Luke 4,18-19; Mark 6,4; Matthew 11,4-5; Acts 18,3-4; 20,33-35; 1 Corinthians 4,12; 9,1-27.

- Conscious of the requirements of justice and charity and of their mutual relatedness, we will seek to transform our works of welfare into social works based on charity and justice, so that they take all persons into account, as a humble service to the responsible public agencies. See Matthew 25,31-46; Luke 13,12-14; 13,33-34.
- We will do everything possible so that those responsible for our governments and our public services establish and enforce the laws, social structures, and institutions that are necessary for justice, equality, and the integral, harmonious development of the whole person and of all persons, and thus for the advent of a new social order, worthy of the children of God. See Acts 2,44-45; 4,32-35; 5,4; 2 Corinthians 8 and 9; 1 Timothy 5,16.
- Since the collegiality of the bishops finds its supreme evangelical realization in jointly serving the two-thirds of humanity who live in physical, cultural, and moral misery, we commit ourselves: a) to support as

far as possible the most urgent projects of the episcopacies of the poor nations; and b) to request jointly, at the level of international organisms, the adoption of economic and cultural structures which, instead of producing poor nations in an ever richer world, make it possible for the poor majorities to free themselves from their wretchedness. We will do all this even as we bear witness to the gospel, after the example of Pope Paul VI at the United Nations.

- We commit ourselves to sharing our lives in pastoral charity with our brothers and sisters in Christ, priests, religious, and laity, so that our ministry constitutes a true service. Accordingly, we will make an effort to “review our lives” with them; we will seek collaborators in ministry so that we can be animators according to the Spirit rather than dominators according to the world; we will try to be as humanly present and welcoming as possible; and we will show ourselves to be open to all, no matter what their beliefs. See Mark 8,34-35; Acts 6,1-7; 1 Timothy 3,8-10.
- When we return to our dioceses, we will make these resolutions known to our diocesan priests and ask them to assist us with their comprehension, their collaboration, and their prayers.

May God help us to be faithful.

## Rev. Richard McBrien, Dissenting Catholic Theologian, Dies

Sam Robertsjan

The New York Times 291.15

The Rev. Richard P. McBrien, a theologian and professor at Notre Dame who unflinchingly challenged orthodoxy in the Roman Catholic Church for five decades and popularized and perpetuated the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, died on Sunday at his home in Farmington, Conn. He was 78. The University of Notre Dame, which announced his death, said he had a rare brain disorder. He retired in 2013 and had recently returned to Connecticut, where he was born and raised.

“No Catholic theologian in the United States has made a larger contribution to the reception of Vatican II than Richard McBrien did,” the Rev. Charles E. Curran, a professor of human values at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, said in an interview on Tuesday. After he was ordained in 1962, Father McBrien, the son of an Irish-American police officer and an Italian-American nurse, wrote 25 books and a nationally syndicated weekly column. He became the chairman of the theology department at Notre Dame, president of the Catholic Theological Society of America and a consultant during the making of the 2006 movie *The Da Vinci Code*.

“At his peak in the 1980s and ’90s,” *The National Catholic Reporter* said in its obituary, “it is arguable that McBrien had a higher media profile than anyone in the Catholic Church other than Pope John Paul II. He was the ideal interview: knowledgeable, able to express complex ideas in digestible sound bites, and utterly unafraid of controversy.” That fearlessness manifested itself in his outspoken support for the ordination of

women as priests, the repeal of obligatory celibacy and the acceptance of birth control; his defiance of the papal doctrine of infallibility; and his willingness to publicly confront the crisis of pedophilia in the priesthood. (He called for the resignation of Cardinal Bernard F. Law of Boston shortly after it was revealed in 2001 that he had kept abusive priests working in parishes. Cardinal Law stepped down in December 2002.)

In 1984, in collaboration with the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, Notre Dame's president, Father McBrien invited Gov. Mario M. Cuomo of New York to speak at Notre Dame to reconcile his personal convictions as a Roman Catholic with what he saw as his public responsibility in a pluralistic society to uphold access to abortion. That extraordinary address by Mr. Cuomo, who died this month, came after his public debate with the new archbishop of New York, John J. O'Connor, who said he did not see "how a Catholic in good conscience can vote for a candidate who explicitly supports abortion" – a circle that included Mr. Cuomo and Geraldine A. Ferraro, that year's Democratic nominee for vice president.

Father McBrien told *The National Catholic Reporter* in 2012: "If there are any reasons for the bad patch the church is now going through, it is the appointments to the hierarchy and the promotions within made by John Paul and Benedict. By and large, they have all been conservative. That's why so many Catholics have left the church, are on extended vacations, or are demoralized or discouraged."

Richard Peter McBrien was born on Aug. 19, 1936, and grew up in West Hartford, Conn. He earned a bachelor's degree from St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, Conn., and a master's from St. John Seminary in Brighton, Mass. His first assignment as a priest was at Our Lady of Victory Church in New Haven. He obtained a doctorate at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he was captivated by the work of the French Dominican theologian Yves Congar.

Father McBrien taught at the Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Mass., and Boston College, and in 1975 was named the first visiting fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. In 1980, he was recruited by Father Hesburgh to serve as chairman of Notre Dame's theology department, ostensibly to fortify its Catholic character. Father McBrien had no illusions about the symbolism of his

new position. "At other universities, if they are less Catholic than they should be, it doesn't have the same effect," he said. "If Notre Dame went secular, it would be like turning St. Patrick's Cathedral into a restaurant." But he differed with doctrinarians over the definition of a theologian, contrasting it with the catechist, whose role is to present the unalloyed fundamentals of Catholic belief. "The theologian's job," he said, "is one of critically reflecting on that tradition or raising questions about it, even challenging it, and that's how doctrines evolve and move forward." He was chairman until 1991, then president of the faculty senate, and remained a professor until his retirement. He is survived by his brother, Harry, and his sister, Dorothy Heffernan.

Father McBrien was never formally rebuked for his forthrightness but, since the 1990s, a number of diocesan newspapers had dropped his column. The Committee on Doctrine of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, reviewing his book *Catholicism* in 1996, complained that it made "inaccurate or at least misleading" statements that allowed or stimulated readers "to make a choice" about the virgin birth of Jesus, homosexuality, women's ordination and other doctrines. Father McBrien had anticipated that criticism. "There is only one Christian faith," he wrote, "but there have been literally thousands of beliefs held and transmitted at one time or another" – some of which endured, while others "have receded beyond the range of vision or even of collective memory."

He also wrote *The Church and Politics*, *Lives of the Popes* and *Lives of the Saints*, among other books, and was general editor of *The Encyclopedia of Catholicism*.

Father McBrien maintained that the church, grounded as it was in egalitarianism, would do better to beatify regular holy folk with whom most Catholics could identify. "Saints are examples rather than miracle workers or intercessors," he said. "They are signs of what it means to be human in the fullest and best sense of the word. Which is also why the church has been wrong to have canonized so many priests and nuns rather than married lay people who lived ordinary lives in extraordinary ways, rejoicing in their children and grandchildren and doing good for so many others." □

# Church report into sexual abuse offers Catholic wake-up

Kristina Keneally

Last Friday the Australian Catholic Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council released a groundbreaking report on child sexual abuse. That morning, ABC's Samantha Donovan interviewed the council's chief executive, Francis Sullivan, and asked him if he had received any response yet from the Vatican.

Sullivan laughed and said, 'No, not at all.'

'You're laughing there?' said Donovan.

Sullivan replied, 'Well, I think they're all asleep at the moment ... [awkward pause] ... with it happening overnight.'

I know what Sullivan meant, but it is hard not to think that when it comes to child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, many in the Vatican are still asleep.

The council's report publicly named two aspects of church practice as possible contributors to the sexual abuse of children by priests: obligatory celibacy and clericalism (that is, that only ordained men exercise power in the church). Most Australians, Catholic or not, were likely to have responded with the equivalent of 'well, duh ... yeah'.

Though the council's observations may seem obvious, the church has firmly refused to acknowledge that enforced celibacy can create serious 'psychosexual development' issues in some priests. Given the privileged position of unchallenged power that priests and bishops hold in the Catholic Church, it isn't hard to see how the sexual abuse of children by clergy happens.

Indeed, this is the first church report – certainly in Australia, possibly in the world – to call for reconsideration of obligatory celibacy as a way to prevent abuse. A 2011 report prepared for the US Catholic bishops flatly denied that a celibate priesthood made any contribution to child sexual abuse.

Disappointingly, it only took 24 hours for the new Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher, to do the same.

The sexual abuse of children in the Catholic Church can't be about celibacy, Fisher said, because sexual abuse happens in families and in other organisations where people aren't celibate.

I can't decide whether to scream or cry when I hear a bishop or cardinal deny that the Catholic Church has a particular and serious problem with child sexual abuse by pointing out that such abuse happens outside the church as well.

Please, Catholic cardinals and bishops, let's just stop making those claims and try to get our own house in order. Let's remove the plank from our own eye first. The church is meant to represent the Kingdom of God on earth, the Body of Christ. 'Let the little ones come to me,' Jesus said. 'To enter the Kingdom of Heaven, you must become like a little child.'

We are supposed – well really, you are, since most of us have no ability to exercise leadership or power in the church – to have a higher standard when it comes to caring for children.

As Sullivan said, the church cannot bury its head on the issue of obligatory celibacy: 'To put it very plainly, when you have a national inquiry into the sex crimes within the Catholic Church then issues of sexuality and psychosexual development clearly need to be examined.'

Reading the Truth, Justice and Healing Council's report last week, I experienced an odd reaction. For once I felt proud of the Australian Catholic Church and the way it was responding to the child sexual abuse crisis. Humility, shame, compassion and unflinching honesty about the tragedy of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church are hallmarks of the council's work.

Page after page, the council openly acknowledges the thousands of victims, the church's failure to act in the best interest of children, the willingness of the church to protect perpetrators, and the lack of compassion and support for victims who brought forth claims. Its report makes strong and detailed recommendations on how the church should change its legal, administrative, financial and pastoral responses to victims.

The council has also been unafraid to hold a mirror up to the church so the hierarchy and all of the church's members can reflect on what needs to happen to prevent abuse in future.

The council frankly states that for too long church leaders acted to protect the institution rather than sexual abuse victims. The refusal of Fisher and others to

discuss obligatory celibacy smacks of the same inclination — valuing the institutional rules that maintain the status quo, rather than considering changes that might improve children’s safety and well-being.

The council’s report represents a landmark moment, but it is not speaking in a lone voice. Former bishops Bill Morris, Pat Power and Geoffrey Robinson argue that priestly celibacy should be optional. Even Cardinal

George Pell, a year before the council’s report, noted that there could be a link between celibacy and child sexual abuse. It’s time current church leaders in Australia and the Vatican wake up to these calls.

Kristina Keneally is a former NSW Premier and a Catholic.

## Sisters deserve an apology

NCR Editorial Staff | Jan. 13, 2015

Now that the quaintly named apostolic visitation of U.S. women religious is over and the current leadership of the Vatican agency that oversees religious orders has decided that the women are worthy of praise, admiration and gratitude, it is quite appropriate to ask: ‘What was that all about?’

The investigation can now be seen for the sham it was, and we as a church should be ashamed of the abuse these faithful women suffered because of it. They deserve an apology.

In the final analysis, it is apparent that the investigation of U.S. women religious by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life was far more about what’s wrong with the male clerical culture than anything worrisome about the sisters. The wrong group in the church was placed under scrutiny. Actually, that fact was apparent from the start.

The genesis of the investigation can be traced to worn-out memos from a relatively tiny corner of the church, where ultraconservatives are convinced that the decline in numbers of sisters and priests is, first, disastrous for religious life in general, and two, caused by the orders abandoning old modes of dress and practice, and if only those practices and garb were restored, the numbers would soar again.

The first presumption is based on the false notion that a parochial structure requiring major parish plants with rectories full of priests and convents stuffed with sisters is both the norm and essential for maintaining and spreading Catholicism. Evidence enough exists to

disabuse one of the first notion. Rectories full of priests who believe themselves so significantly different from the rest of humankind that they can be accountable only to other men similarly set apart we now know can breed the worst church scandal in hundreds of years.

Demographers have amply demonstrated that the iconic Catholic ‘plant’ of recent decades is an unsustainable model and that the numbers of clerics and vowed women that made such a project possible for a brief time constituted a blip on the historical screen. Those numbers were the anomaly. They had not existed before and likely will never exist again. The often vaunted growth of ‘traditional’ orders should be viewed with caution. Most are small groups and will likely remain a small portion of the population of women religious.

The requirement, then, is not to wish for a return to some romanticized version of 1940s or ‘50s Catholicism, but to imagine and understand what shape the parochial structure must take in the future and how it will be organized and led. Laypeople will have to take more individual and corporate responsibility for what it means to be Catholic and for passing on the faith. They will have to be trusted to a much greater degree than they now are — and given positions of responsibility.

The tired old memos were acted upon because men in the church felt comfortable determining that women had a problem, that they (the men) understood what the problem was and that they knew what to do about it without ever consulting women religious. Cardinal Franc Rodé, head of the Vatican congregation that initiated the investigation in 2008, publicly made the judgment in 2010, long before the process was complete, that ‘the secularized culture has penetrated into the minds and hearts of some consecrated persons and some communities, where it is seen as an opening to modernity and a way of approaching the contemporary world.’

belief. “The theologian’s job,” he said, “is one of critically reflecting on that tradition or raising questions about it, even challenging it, and that’s how doctrines evolve and move forward.” He was chairman until 1991, then president of the faculty senate, and remained a professor until his retirement. He is survived by his brother, Harry, and his sister, Dorothy Heffernan.

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have been literally thousands of beliefs held and transmitted at one time or another” – some of which endured, while others “have receded beyond the range of vision or even of collective memory.”

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## Review

# We need a Church drawing on the Wisdom of the South!

Gideon Goosen

Diarmuid O’Murchu (2014),  
*The Meaning and Practice of Faith*  
New York: Orbis Books.

(Pauline Books and Media, A\$25.95)

**T**his is a must-read book for anyone interested in church reform. Entitled, *The Meaning and Practice of Faith*, it is not a 300-page-thick theological volume for which you have no time, and less interest. This is a slender 136-page, user-friendly, inspirational book on reform with short chapters and points for personal, or group reflection, at the end of each chapter. Parishes could use this book for an Advent or Lenten programme.

The author, O’Murchu, is well known for his creative thinking, good research and pastoral groundedness. He is a good communicator as well. There are therefore many points raised in the book that will set us thinking about our religious ideas now and the church of the future.

Let me take one example. The term ‘Kingdom of God’ is a well-worn phrase we use, but what does it

mean? O’Murchu goes back to the Aramaic (not Hebrew sources), and then comes up with what he thinks is a more faithful translation, ‘Companionship of Empowerment’. God’s grace works within us all and we together are empowered. At least that is the idea.

Whereas this idea might be present in some parishes, many do not give the feeling of empowerment at all. Quite the contrary. The patriarchal structures and attitudes in the Catholic Church have often kept people in a state of dependency and powerlessness. Witness the letter of two years ago, addressed to the Pope from the Catholic Australian reform groups complaining about not being heard. ‘Companionship’ has often been missing because the top-down, hierarchal system has stressed the vertical over the horizontal aspect of our lives. Experiences of church as a ‘community of believers’ and a good networking of its members might help introduce us to ‘empowerment’.

Among the other issues in the book to think about are: God is not a person; indoctrination and personal growth in faith; expressing our faith in our own words versus the Latin-contorted-English of the new translation of the liturgy; the presence of God’s Spirit in other religions and movements throughout the world; lay insights versus clerical wisdom; the collusion of laity in clericalism; the judging of orthodoxy by Roman criteria; the rebirth of the church as servant and herald of the new companionship. And there is much more.

Perhaps we needed a leader from the South, like Pope Francis, to help us re-appraise our Christianity. □

# Cardinal Raymond Burke: 'Feminized' church and altar girls caused priest shortage

David Gibson

*Religion News Service* Jan. 7, 2015

Cardinal Raymond Burke, a senior American churchman in Rome who has been one of the most outspoken critics of Pope Francis' push for reform, is roiling the waters yet again, this time arguing that the Catholic church has become too 'feminized.'

Burke, who was recently demoted from the Vatican's highest court to a ceremonial philanthropic post, pointed to the introduction of altar girls for why fewer men are joining the priesthood.

'Young boys don't want to do things with girls. It's just natural,' Burke said in an interview published Monday. 'I think that this has contributed to a loss of priestly vocations. It requires a certain manly discipline to serve as an altar boy in service at the side of priest, and most priests have their first deep experiences of the liturgy as altar boys,' the former archbishop of St. Louis told Matthew James Christoff, who heads a Catholic men's ministry that called the New Evangelization Project. 'If we are not training young men as altar boys, giving them an experience of serving God in the liturgy, we should not be surprised that vocations have fallen dramatically,' he said.

The Catholic church dropped its ban on girls assisting the priests during Mass in 1983, and today it is common to see more girls than boys helping on the altar. Only one U.S. diocese, in Lincoln, Neb., still bars altar girls, though a number of individual parishes have barred them in hopes of encouraging more boys and men to consider the all-male priesthood.

In the interview, Burke also blamed gay clergy for the church's sexual abuse crisis, saying priests 'who were feminized and confused about their own sexual identity' were the ones who molested children.

Researchers have disputed that claim, and experts note that the reported rise in the number of gay men entering the priesthood since the 1980s coincided with a sharp drop-off in abuse cases.

Burke spoke to Christoff in December during a visit to La Crosse, Wis., where Burke served as bishop in the

1990s before being named archbishop of St. Louis. In 2008, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI called Burke to the Vatican to head the church's top court and made him a cardinal, a prestigious position that lent weight to his increasingly sharp and direct criticisms of Francis' agenda.

Francis effectively demoted Burke in November, shifting him from his job in the Roman Curia to a largely ceremonial post as patron of the Order of Malta, a global Catholic charitable organization based in Rome.

Vatican observers suspected the switch would actually give Burke more freedom to speak his mind, and in this latest interview, the cardinal doubled down on themes he has often struck: Liberalizing changes in both society and the church, especially 'radical feminism', have gravely undermined the Catholic faith since the 1970s.

Burke said he recalled 'young men telling me that they were, in a certain way, frightened by marriage because of the radicalizing and self-focused attitudes of women that were emerging at that time. These young men were concerned that entering a marriage would simply not work because of a constant and insistent demanding of rights for women.' He said that 'the radical feminist movement strongly influenced the Church' as well.

The focus on women's issues, he said, plus 'a complete collapse' of teaching the faith and 'rampant liturgical experimentation,' led the church to become 'very feminized.' That turned off men who 'respond to rigor and precision and excellence', Burke said.

'Apart from the priest, the sanctuary has become full of women,' he said. 'The activities in the parish and even the liturgy have been influenced by women and have become so feminine in many places that men do not want to get involved.'

Burke, a liturgical traditionalist and a doctrinal conservative, also said that 'men need to dress and act like men in a way that is respectful to themselves, to women and to children.' □

## Have your say!

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

Your contributions, letters, articles or comments are most welcome

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

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